THE FIRST URBAN CHURCHES 6
ROME AND OSTIA

WRITINGS FROM THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD
SUPPLEMENT SERIES

Clare K. Rothschild, General Editor

Number 18

SBL PRESS

THE FIRST URBAN CHURCHES 6
ROME AND OSTIA

Edited by

James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn

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Atlanta

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

First urban churches / edited by James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn.
volumes cm. — (Society of Biblical Literature. Writings from the Greco-Roman world Supplement series ; Number 7)
Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-62837-102-4 (v. 1 : pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-62837-104-8 (v. 1 : ebook) — ISBN 978-1-62837-103-1 (v. 1 : hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-88414-111-2 (v. 2 : pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-88414-112-9 (v. 2 : ebook) — ISBN 978-0-88414-113-6 (v. 2 : hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-88414-234-8 (v. 3 : pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-88414-235-5 (v. 3 : ebook) — ISBN 978-0-88414-236-2 (v. 3 : hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-62837-226-7 (v. 4 : pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-88414-337-6 (v. 4 : ebook) — ISBN 978-0-88414-336-9 (v. 4 : hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-62837-261-8 (v. 5 : pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-88414-418-2 (v. 5 : ebook) — ISBN 978-0-88414-419-9 (v. 5 : hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-62837-400-1 (v. 6 : pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-88414-506-6 (v. 6 : ebook) — ISBN 978-0-88414-505-9 (v. 6 : hardcover : alk. paper)
1. City churches. 2. Church history—Primitive and early church, ca. 30–600. 3. Cities and towns—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Harrison, James R., 1952– editor.
BV637.F57 2015
270.109173'2—dc23 2015021858

Contents

Abbreviations

Primary Sources

1 Clem.	1 Clement
1 En.	1 Enoch
1QH[a]	Thanksgiving Hymns[a]
1QS	Rule of the Community
2 Apol.	Justin, *Apologia ii*
2 Bar.	2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)
Ab urbe cond.	Livy, *Ab urbe condita*
Ach.	Aristophanes, *Acharnenses*
Aen.	Vergil, *Aeneid*
Agr.	Tacitus, *Agricola*
A.J.	Josephus, *Antiquitates judaicae*
Alex.	Plutarch, *Alexander*
Am.	Ovid, *Amores*
An seni	Plutarch, *An seni respublica gerenda sit*
An virt. doc.	Plutarch, *An virtus doceri possit*
Ann.	Tacitus, *Annales*
Ant. rom.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates romanae*
Anth. pal.	Anthologia palatina
Apoc.	Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis divi Claudii*
Apoc. Ab.	Apocalypse of Abraham
Apol.	Tertullian, *Apologeticus*
Ars	Ovid, *Ars amatoria*
Ath. pol.	Aristotle, *Athēnaīn politeia*
Att.	Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum*
Aug.	Nicolaus, *Vita di Augusto*; Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*
Bapt.	Tertullian, *De baptismo*
Bell. civ.	Appian, *Bella civilia*
Ben.	Seneca, *De beneficiis*

Bib. hist.	Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*
Bibl.	Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*
B.J.	Josephus, *Bellum judaicum*
Brev.	Eutropius, *Breviarium historiae romanae*
Brev. vit.	Seneca, *De brevitate vitae*
Brut.	Cicero, *Brutus* or *De claris oratoribus*
C. Ap.	Josephus, *Contra Apionem*
Caes.	Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*; Plutarch, *Caesar*
Cal.	Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula*
Carm.	Horace, *Carmina*
Cels.	Origen, *Contra Celsum*
Claud.	Suetonius, *Divus Claudius*
Clem.	Seneca, *De clementia*
Comm. Dan.	Hippolytus, *Commentarium in Danielem*
Comm. Jo.	Origen, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*
Conf.	Augustine, *Confessionum libri XIII*
Cult. fem.	Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*
Decal.	Philo, *De decalogo*
Descr.	Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio*
Diatr.	Epictetus, *Diatribai*
Dig.	Digesta
Dom.	Suetonius, *Domitianus*
Ecl.	Einsiedeln Eclogues
Ecl.	Calpurnius Siculus, *Eclogae*; Vergil, *Eclogae*
El.	Propertius, *Elegies*; Sophocles, *Elektra*
Ench.	Epictetus, *Enchiridion*
Ep.	*Epistulae*
Epit. rom.	Florus, *Epitome rerum romanorum*
Eth. nic.	Aristotle, *Ethica nicomachea*
Etym.	Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*
Eum.	Aeschylus, *Eumenides*
Fam.	Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares*
Fast.	Ovid, *Fasti*
Flacc.	Philo, *In Flaccum*
Geogr.	Strabo, *Geographica*
Gramm.	Suetonius, *De grammaticis*
Haer.	Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*
Har. resp.	Cicero, *De haruspicum responso*
Herm. Man.	Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate

Herm. Sim.	Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude
Herm. Vis.	Shepherd of Hermas, Vision
Hist.	Herodotus, *Historiae*; Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*; Polybius, *Historiae*; Tacitus, *Historiae*; Thucydides, *Historiae*
Hist. eccl.	Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*
Hist. pag.	Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*
Hist. rom.	Dio Cassius, *Historiae romanae*; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae romanae libri duo*; Zonaras, *Historia romanorum excerpta*
Hom.	*Homilae*
Ign. *Eph.*	Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*
Ign. *Magn.*	Ignatius, *To the Magnesians*
Ign. *Rom.*	Ignatius, *To the Romans*
Ign. *Trall.*	Ignatius, *To the Trallians*
In Rom.	Aelius Aristides, *In Romam oratio*
Inst.	Gaius, *Institutiones*; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*
Inst. Iust.	Institutiones Iustiniani
Jub.	Jubilees
Jul.	Suetonius, *Divus Julius*
Leg.	Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*; Plato, *Leges*
Legat.	Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*
Ling.	Varro, *De lingua latina*
Lys.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Lysia*
Math.	Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos*
Met.	Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
Mil.	Cicero, *Pro Milone*
Mort.	Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*
Nat.	Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*; Tertullian, *Ad nationes*
Nat. d.	Cicero, *De natura deorum*
Ner.	Suetonius, *Nero*
Noct. att.	Aulus Gellius, *Noctes atticae*
Num.	Plutarch, *Numa*
Oct.	Minucius Felix, *Octavius*; Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia*
Oed. col.	Sophocles, *Oedipus coloneus*
Oed. tyr.	Sophocles, *Oedipus tyrannus*
Off.	Cicero, *De officiis*

Ol.	Pindar, *Olympionikai*
Onom.	Pollux, *Onomasticon*
Opif.	Philo, *De opificio mundi*
Or.	*Oratio*; Tertuallian, *De oratione*
Or. Graec.	Tatian, *Oratio ad Graeco*
Paed.	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*
Pan.	Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*
Per.	Livy, *Periochae*
Pers.	Aeschylus, *Persae*
Phil.	Lysias, *In Philonem*
Phoen.	Euripides, *Phoenissae*
Praescr.	Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*
Prax.	Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*
Prom.	Aeschylus, *Prometheus vinctus*
Puls.	Galen, *De pulsuum differeutis*
Pun.	Silius Italicus, *Punica*
Pyth.	Pindar, *Pythionikai*
Quaest. nat.	Plutarch, *Quaestiones naturales* (*Aetia physica*)
Recog.	Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*
Rep.	Cicero, *De republica*
Rer. gest.	Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum Libri XXXI*
Res gest.	Res gestae divi Augusti
Resp.	Plato, *Respublica*
Rhet.	Aristotle, *Rhetorica*; Philodemus of Gadara, *Volumina rhetorica*
Rhet. Her.	Rhetorica ad Herennium
Saec.	Horace, *Carmen saeculare*
Sat.	Juvenal, *Satirae*; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*
Satyr.	Petronius, *Satyrica*
Scap.	Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*
Sept.	Aeschylus, *Septem contra Thebas*
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
Sign. diut.	Aretaeus, *De causis et signis diuturnorum morborum*
Spect.	Martial, *Spectacula*; Tertullian, *De spectaculis*
Strom.	Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*
Subl.	Longinus, *De sublimitate*
T. Benj.	Testament of Benjamin
Tib.	Suetonius, *Tiberius*
Trach.	Sophocles, *Trachiniae*

Trist.	Ovid, *Tristia*
Tro.	Euripides, *Troades*
Urb. cond.	Livy, *Ab urbe condita*
Verg. Aen.	Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneidem commentarii*
Verr.	Cicero, *In Verrem*
Vir.	Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus romae*
Vit. phil.	Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*

Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
AE	*L'Année épigraphique*. Edited by René Cagnat et al. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1888–.
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AGRW	Associations in the Greco-Roman World, http://www.philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
ANRW	Temporini, Hildegard, and Wolfgang Haase, eds. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*. Part 2, *Principat*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AR	*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BGU	*Berliner Griechische Urkunden (Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Kgl. Museen zu Berlin)*
BMC	British Museum Catalogue
BMCRE	Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum

BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BR	*Biblical Research*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd ed.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CIJ	*Corpus inscriptionum judacarum*. Vatican City: Pontifico Instituto di Archeologia Christiana, 1936–1952.
CIL	*Corpus inscriptionum Latinarium*. Berlin, 1862–.
CIMRM	Vermaseren, M. J. *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*. 2 vols. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956-1960.
CJ	*Classical Journal*
ClAnt	*Classical Antiquity*
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
CP	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CRAIBL	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres*
DocsAug	Ehrenberg, Victor, and A. H. M. Jones. *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1955.
DocsGaius	Smallwood, E. M., ed. *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
EA	*Epigraphica Anatolica*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExAud	*Ex Auditu*
FOst	Fasti Ostienses
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
Hesperia	*Hesperia: Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HvTSt	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies* (*HTS Teologiese Studies/HTS Theological Studies*)
IAquileia	Brusin, Giovanni. *Inscriptiones Aquileiae*. 3 vols. Udine: Deputazione di Storia Patria per il Friuli, 1991–1993.
ICC	International Critical Commentary

ICUR	Inscriptiones christianae urbis romae
IEph	Wankel, Hermann, et al., eds. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. 8 vols. Bonn: Habelt, 1979–1984.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*. Editio Minor. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1924–.
IGRR	Cagnat, René, et al., eds. *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes*. 3 vols. Paris: Leroux, 1906–1927.
IGUR	Moretti, Luigi. *Inscriptiones graecae urbis Romae*. 4 vols. in 5 parts. Rome 1968–1990.
IJO	Noy, David, et al., eds. *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*. 3 vols. TSA J 99, 101, 102. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.
ILS	Dessau, Hermann. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916.
ILCV	Diehl, Ernst. *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*. 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1924–1931.
ILLRP	Degrassi, Attilio, ed. *Inscriptiones latinae liberae rei publicae*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. of vol. 1. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963–1965.
JACSup	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Supplements
JdI	*Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JIWE	Noy, David. *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–1995.
JJMJS	*Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting*
JNG	*Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*

KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KlPauly	Ziegler, Konrat, and Walther Sontheimer, eds. *Der kleine Pauly*. 5 vols. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1979.
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
MAMA	Calder, W. M., et al., eds. *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*. London: Manchester University Press; Longmans, Green, 1928–.
MDAIR	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*
MÉFRA	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Antiquité*
MM	Moulton, James H., and George Milligan. The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930.
NCE	Nuovo Catalogo Epigrafico
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NewDocs	Horsley, G. H. R., et al., eds. *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. North Ryde, NSW: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1981–.
NIB	Keck, Leander E., ed. *The New Interpreter's Bible*. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OCD	Hornblower, Simon, and Antony Spawforth, eds. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
OGIS	Dittenberger, Wilhelm, ed. *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–1905.
PIR^1	Klebs, Elimar, and Hermann Dessau, eds. *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III*. 3 vols. Berlin: Reimer, 1897–1989.
PIR^2	Groag, Edmund, et al., eds. *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III*. 2nd ed. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1933–.

P.Lond.	Kenyon, F. G., et al., eds. *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*. 7 vols. London: British Museum, 1893–1974.
P.Med.	Papyri Mediolanenses, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan
P.Oxy.	Grenfell, Bernard P., et al., eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898–.
P.Qaṣr.Ibrîm	Papyrus Qaṣr Ibrîm
PSI	*Papiri Greci e Latini*. Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto. Florence: Ariani, 1912–.
PW	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. New edition by Georg Wissowa and Wilhelm Kroll. 50 vols. in 84 parts. Stuttgart: Metzler and Druckenmüller, 1894–1980.
RAC	Klauser, Theodor, et al., eds. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum: Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–.
RACr	*Rivista di archeologia cristiana*
REL	*Revue des Études Latines*
RFIC	*Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica*
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*
RIC 1	Sutherland, C. H. V. *31 BC to AD 69, Augustus to Vitellius*. Vol. 1 of *Roman Imperial Coinage*. 2nd ed. London: Spink, 1984.
RIC 2	Mattingly, Harold, and Edward A. Sydenham, eds. *Vespasian–Hadrian*. Vol. 2 of *Roman Imperial Coinage*. London: Spink, 1999.
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RQ	*Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
SEG	Supplementum epigraphicum graecum
SIG	Dittenberger, Wilhelm, ed. Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum. 4 vols. 3rd ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924.
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPAW	*Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*

StPatr	*Studia Patristica*
TAM	Kalinka, Ernst, et al., eds. *Tituli Asiae Minoris*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1901–.
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TynBull	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WGRWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

The City of Rome from the Late Republic to the Julio-Claudian Period: An Epigraphic, Archaeological, and Numismatic Portrait

James R. Harrison

1. Introduction

This volume is structured in three parts. Part 1, the introduction, consists of two essays that I authored, one focusing on the material and documentary evidence of Julio-Claudian Rome and the other concentrating on the same evidence for Ostia, the harbor port of the capital, though the latter essay is not confined to the first century CE in its coverage. Part 2, comprising seven thematic essays, has contributions by Mary Jane Cuyler, James R. Harrison, Richard Last, Annelies Moeser, Thomas A. Robinson, Michael P. Theophilos, and L. L. Welborn. The topics discussed are, respectively, the Ostian synagogue; an examination of Rom 1:2–4 against the backdrop of Julio-Claudian adoption and apotheosis traditions; the Sergii Paulii considered from the context of Rom 16; the relevance of the Pharaonic obelisks at Rome for contemporary auditors of Rom 9:17; the exegetical significance of the numismatic background to the Epistle to the Romans; and the Epistle of 1 Clement. Part 3, an evaluation of Peter Lampe's *From Paul to Valentinus*, consists of two essays: Jutta Dresken-Welland assesses archaeologically Lampe's magnum opus, while Mark Reasoner provides a "traditional response" to Lampe's arguments on ecclesiology. Peter Lampe completes this section by responding to both of his interlocutors. Throughout readers are provided with a rich demonstration of how the material evidence of the city of Rome illuminates the emergence of Roman Christianity, especially in the first century CE.

In this introduction to the material evidence of the Julio-Claudian city of Rome, I draw upon my earlier publications, cited in the notes below. Throughout the essay the discussion of the epigraphic, archaeological, and numismatic data is brought into dialogue with the evidence of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Readers who are keen to pursue this material focus on Julio-Claudian Rome and its importance for our understanding of the Epistle to the Romans should consult my latest monograph on the issue, which covers in depth a wide array of topics not covered in this essay.[1] My discussion of the important evidence of the Julio-Claudian Protocols of the Arval Brethren in this essay, not touched on in my most recent monograph, has not been engaged with in any previous scholarship on Romans and adds further background to apotheosis and adoption in my exegetical essay on Rom 1:2–4 in this volume.

2. The Archaeology of Augustan and Neronian Rome: The Ideological Significance of the Intersection of Buildings, Eulogistic Monuments, and Sacred Space

2.1. Augustan Rome

The Palatine and Capitoline Hills and the Forum Romanum

On the Palatine hill, adjacent to a model of Romulus's hut, was the modest house of Augustus, which had once belonged to the orator Hortensius (Suetonius, *Aug.* 71.1–2).[2] Its deliberately calculated placement underscored

1. James R. Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes: Studies on the Social Perspective of Paul* (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2020). Additionally, Harrison, "Augustan Rome and the Body of Christ: A Comparison of the Social Vision of the *Res Gestae* and Paul's Letter to the Romans," *HTR* 106 (2013): 1–36; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 97–323.

2. On the ancient sources on Augustus's house, see Donald R. Dudley, *Urbs Roma: A Source Book of Classical Texts on the City and Its Monuments* (Aberdeen: Phaidon, 1967), 163–65; Peter J. Aicher, *Rome Alive: A Source-Guide to the Ancient City,* 2 vols. (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2004–2005), 1:155–58. For discussion of the house, see Charles Gates, *Ancient Cities: The Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome* (London: Routledge, 2003), 337; Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1:189–92; Susan Walker, "The Moral Museum: Augustus and the City of

that Augustus, as *princep*s ("first man"), was the "new Romulus," the traditional founder of Rome, along with Aeneas in the alternate myth of Rome's origins (Horace, *Saec.* 41–60; Suetonius, *Aug.* 7.2). Augustus himself had sponsored comparisons between himself and Romulus in the taking of the auspices (Suetonius, *Aug.* 95.2). Moreover, each of the founder figures of Rome, Aeneas and Romulus, appeared in the statue program of the Forum Augustum and in the iconography of the Ara Pacis Augustae.

The pathway up to Augustus's house moved along the street leading through the Forum Romanum below the Palatine.[3] Significantly, "this route provided a dazzling display of the triumphal *spoilia* of other wealthy and accomplished Romans before one arrived at the house of the princeps."[4] But the culmination of these republican worthies was found in the figure of the savior of the republic, Augustus, whose house overlooked the monuments of the luminaries from the past below. The same message was displayed architecturally, as we will see, in the Augustan Forum. But the message was also conveyed by the house of Augustus, on

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Rome," in *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*, ed. J. Coulston and H. Dodge (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000), 61–75, esp. 62–64; Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 135–42. On the difficulty of identifying the existing domus on the Palatine with the Augustan house described in the ancient sources, see Claridge, *Rome*, 140–42; T. P. Wiseman, "*Roma Quadrata,* Archaic Huts, the House of Augustus, and the Orientation of Palatine Apollo," *JRA 25* (2012): 371–87, esp. 383–87. Contra, see Irene Iacopi, *The House of Augustus: Wall Paintings* (Rome: Electa, 2008), 7–8, who argues that the present form of the house and its frescoes originated from its Augustan rebuilding in 3 CE onward after the original house had been destroyed by fire.

3. On the Roman forum, see Pietro Romanelli, *The Roman Forum*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico Dello Stato, 1955); Michael Grant, *The Roman Forum* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970); Filippo Coarelli, *Il Foro Romano* (Rome: Quasar, 1992); Diane Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). On Augustus's redevelopment of the Forum Romanum, see Gilbert J. Gorski, "The Augustan Reconstruction (31 BCE–14 CE)," in *The Roman Forum: A Reconstruction and Architectural Guide*, ed. Gilbert J. Gorski and James E. Packer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3–36.

4. Jennifer Ann Rea, "The Locus of Political Power: Sacred and Social Places on the Palatine" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), 50. Crucially, in the Roman Forum there is also the important Julian structure of the temple of Divus Julius erected by Augustus to his adoptive apotheosised father (Res gest. 19, 21; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 14.840–42; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 35.91. Additionally, note the Julian porticus of Gaius and Lucius (CIL 6.36909; cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 29.4; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 56.27.5).

the doorway of which was inscribed the honorific title of *pater patriae* ("father of the country": Res gest. 35.1; cf. Ovid, *Fast.* 4.951–954). This was further graced by laurel entwined around the doorposts and the oak leaves of the *corona civica* ("civic crown") attached to the doorway. The latter award was "given for saving fellow citizens."[5]

Equally as strategic was the placement of the house of Augustus immediately west of the temple of Cybele (or Magna Mater).[6] Located on the southwest corner of the Palatine hill, the temple had been restored by Augustus (Res gest. 19).[7] The geographical positioning was potent for Augustan propaganda: Cybele was considered an ancestral goddess of the Roman people because of her connection with the Trojan prince Aeneas, thereby providing another architectural "nod" to the Trojan origins of Rome. [8]

The house of Augustus was also in close proximity to the Temple of Victory, sanctifying the military triumphs of the Julian ruler by its presence. Furthermore, adjoining the house was the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, with its porticoes and libraries. [9] It has become axiomatic to accept the estimate of Paul Zanker that "recent excavations have shown that a ramp connected the house directly to the forecourt of the temple," emphasizing "the bond between the god and his protégé." [10] The temple of Apollo Palatinus had been vowed by the young Caesar in 36 BCE (Res gest. 19) and was dedicated in 28 BCE. Apollo was Augustus's tutelary deity and

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5. Res gest. 34.2; cf. Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 22.4.8; Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 5.6.11; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 53.16.4–5; Calendar of Praeneste, 11 January, CIL 1.2 p. 231, cited by Dudley, *Urbs Romana*, 164.

6. On the Temple of Victory, see Claridge, *Rome*, 131–32.

7. The Calendar of Praeneste (CIL 1:235) refers to two freed slaves of Augusta (Livia?) and priests making a dedication to the temple of Magna Mater (CIL 6.496: Dudley, *Urbs Roma*, 152–53).

8. See T. P. Wiseman, "Cybele, Virgil and Augustus," in *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus*, ed. T. Woodman and T. West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 117–28; R. McKay Wilhelm, "Cybele: The Great Mother of Augustan Order," *Vergilius* 34 (1988): 77–101.

9. For the ancient sources on the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, see Dudley, *Urbs Roma*, 154–57; Aicher, *Rome Alive*, 159–61. Regarding insciptions honoring the slaves responsible for the Greek (CIL 6.5188) and Latin libraries (CIL 6.5884) of the Temple of Apollo, see Dudley, *Urbs Roma*, 158.

10. Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 51.

his protector at Actium in 31 BCE (Vergil, *Aen.* 8.698–713), empowering (the then) Octavian to overcome militarily the loathsome Egyptian gods of Antony and Cleopatra. Significantly, in the Palatine Museum of Rome there is a painted plaster fragment of Apollo Cithardeus from the area of the house of Augustus.[11]

However, the consensus about a direct link between Augustus's house and the temple of Apollo Palatinus in the form of the ramp has recently been challenged by archaeologists. Some have posited that the space is too confined inside the house, as well as inside and outside of the temple, for the the ramp connection to be the case.[12] Rather, it is now claimed that the ramp never led to the temple.[13] Interpretive caution is thus now called for: the idea that Augustus was the first Roman to connect his private residence to a god's temple should be abandoned.[14]

The nucleus of the bare podium, the upper half of a capital, and a single drum of a column are the only onsite remains of the Temple of Apollo today.[15] But the temple had a greater religious importance for the Palatine than just being the official site of Augustus's tutelary deity. Augustus had removed the Sibylline books, repositories of the prophecies about Rome's future empire, from the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter and had placed them at the base of the statue of Apollo in his Palatine temple (Suetonius, *Aug.* 34.14). As Pontifex Maximus, Augustus was dependent, as the mediator between Rome's gods and its citizens, upon the legitimizing revelation of these traditional prophecies. A terracotta plaque of Apollo and Heracles—symbolizing, respectively, Octavian and Mark Antony—shows each figure in a heated struggle for the possession of the Delphic tripod. This terra-

11. See Adriano La Regina, ed., *Archaeological Guide to Rome: Archaeological guide to Rome: The Roman Forum, the Palatine and the Circus Maximus, the Capitolin and the Capitoline Museums, the Imperial Forums, the Coliseum, the Domus Aurea* (Rome: Electa, 2011), 80.

12. For the scholarship, see T. P. Wiseman, *The House of Augustus: A Historical Detective Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 27–28.

13. Wiseman, *House of Augustus*, 28.

14. Rea, "Locus of Political Power," 44; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 51.

15. On the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, see Olivier Hekster and John Rich, "Octavian and the Thunderbolt: The Temple of Apollo Palatinus and Roman Traditions of Temple Building," *CQ* 56 (2006): 149–68; Stephan Zink, "Reconstructing the Palatine Temple of Apollo: A Case Study in Early Augustan Temple Design," *JRA 25* (2008): 47–63; idem, "Old and New Archaeological Evidence for the Plan of the Palatine Temple of Apollo," *JRA 25* (2012): 388–402; Wiseman, "*Roma Quadrata*," 371–87.

cotta plaque was originally situated in the Temple of Apollo Palatinus but is now located in the Palatine Museum.[16] Rome's oracular future of Rome and its empire, therefore, was inextricably tied, if this iconography is sufficiently indicative, to Augustus's military victories in the recent past and in the present.

Finally, in regard to the Palatine and Capitoline hill, the spacial orientation of its temples to the rest of the city and its wider environs is crucial. What is being articulated in their positioning? Richard Jenkyns has persuasively argued that the gods in their temples look *outward* from their temples, situated upon the higher points of the city, and thus look *down* on the activities of the lower city and beyond. This is the case, for example, with Jupiter upon the Capitol. As Ovid writes, "when Jupiter gazes from his Capitol over the whole globe, he has nothing to look upon which is not Roman."[17] Even in the case of the Roman Forum, situated in the area directly below the Palatine hill, the gods looked out from their temples in the manner appropriate to Rome's patron deities. T. P. Wiseman writes that the "temples of the Forum Romanum … were all turned to where the crowds were, Castor and Saturn facing northeast, Concordia facing southeast, Divus Julius facing northwest."[18] No activity in the Forum, therefore, escaped the notice of the protecting and avenging gods.

The Forum Augustum

The importance of the Forum Augustum as an important clue to the intentions of Augustus has not been sufficiently appreciated by Romans commentators in discussions of the Roman background to the teleology of the Epistle to the Romans.[19] Prior to the Augustan era, the ostentatious

16. La Regina, *Archaeological Guide to Rome*, 79.

17. Ovid, *Fast*. 1.85–86; Richard Jenkyns, *God, Space and the City in the Roman Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 27–31.

18. Wiseman, "*Roma Quadrata*," 386.

19. For ancient texts on the Forum Augustum, see Dudley, *Urbs Romana*, 123–29. On the Forum Augustum, see H. T. Rowell, "The Forum and the Funeral Images of Augustus," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 131–43; E. A. Judge, "On Judging the Merits of Augustus," in Judge, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, ed. James R. Harrison, WUNT 229 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 224–313, esp. 235–39; Judge, "The Eulogistic Inscriptions of the Augustan Forum," in Judge, *The First Christians*, 165–81; James C. Anderson Jr., *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora* (Brussels: Latomus, 1984), 65–100; Zanker,

tomb monuments of the late republican *nobiles* ("nobles") revealed an increasing self-aggrandizement as they sought to outdo each other in a quest for ancestral glory. What had been essentially private monuments became public monuments on a grand scale with the erection of the Theater of Pompey and the Forum of Caesar in the mid-first century BCE.[20] By then the glorification of the "great man" in Roman history had reached unprecedented architectural heights. But with the triumph of Octavian at Actium and the inability of the republican *nobiles* to compete against the new world benefactor, the grandiose monuments of the *familia Caesaris* were enlarged and integrated into the public life and mythology of Rome.[21]

The forum developed out of Augustus's desire to avenge his adoptive father's assassination at the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE. On the eve of the battle, Octavian vowed that he would construct a temple to Mars Ultor, should he be victorious (Suetonius, *Aug.* 29.2; Ovid, *Fast.* 5.569–578; cf. Res gest. 21.1). Forty years later Augustus fulfilled his long-delayed vow when the temple was opened (2 BCE), though in different form than he envisaged because the temple was now included as part of his forum project. In addition to commemorating the deeds of Julius Caesar by means of the temple, the forum was intended to relieve congestion in the existing Forum Romanum by expanding its facilities for public business. Additionally, the victory tokens (e.g., crowns, scepters) of returned *triumphators* were to be placed in the sanctuary of Mars Ultor, and governors on their way to military provinces took their leave there (Suetonius, *Aug.* 29.2).

More important is the design of the forum and the ideological purposes served by the portrait statue program. The temple of Mars Ultor faced the southwest, with the result that Mars Ultor faced the statue of

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Power of Images, 201–5; Gilles Sauron, *QVIS DEVM? L'expression plastique des ideologies politques et religieuses à Rome* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1994), 525–36; Josephine Shaya, "The Public Life of Monuments: The *Summi Viri* of the Forum of Augustus," *AJA* 117 (2013): 83–110. On the Forum Augusti and its relation to the teoleology of Romans, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities,* 170–77, 185–97.

20. See Zanker, *Power of Images*, 11–31.

21. See Penelope J. E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor: Roman Imperial Funerary Monuments from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), passim. The sitting rooms of Nero's Golden House, a Roman *domus* and garden of "cosmic" proportions (Mark Bradley, "Fool's Gold: Colour, Culture, Innovation, and Madness in Nero's Golden House," *Apollo: The International Magazine of the Arts* 156 [2002]: 35–44), exceeded all the land owned by illustrious republican generals (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 36.111).

Julius Caesar, Augustus's adoptive father, which was located prominently in the Forum Iulium. The Forum Augustum was set at right angles to the Forum Iulium, with two semicircular bays (*exedrae*) jutting out on the southeast and northwest sides of the forum. Arrayed around the two *exedrae* and porticoes of the forum were statues of famous republican leaders (*principes*) and of the ancestors of the Julian nobility.[22] Each line of republican and Julian luminaries radiated from a different founding hero of Rome, the republican statues expanding outward from the southeast *exedra* and the Julian statues from the northwest *exedra*.[23] As Ovid explains for the observer:

> On the one side (one) sees Aeneas laden with his precious burden and so many members of Julian nobility. On the other (one) sees Ilia's son Romulus bearing on his shoulder the arms of the (conquered) general and the splendid records of action (inscribed) beneath (the statues of the) men arranged in order.[24]

Each statue was adorned with a distinctive emblem relevant to his career, and below each statue were boldly lettered laudatory inscriptions (*elogia fori Augusti*) that cataloged each man's career achievements. While there is a heavy concentration upon magistracies and military triumphs in the catalogues—many that prefigured Augustus's illustrious career in the Res gestae—there are features in the careers of the republican luminaries that proleptically and symbolically point forward to the civic and moral grounds for Augustus's unprecedented *auctoritas* (Res gest. 34.1, 3). As E. A. Judge observes,[25] each inscription focused on an episode that involved the republican leader in "political crisis management," that is, handling

22. Shaya ("Public Life of Monuments," 85) speculates that "this once-impressive collection originally had more than 100 over-life-sized statues ranging from Aeneas to Drusus, stepson of Drusus." *Pace* Anderson, *Historical Topography*, n. 27 below.

23. Judge ("Eulogistic Inscriptions," 175–76) lists the republican *principes*.

24. Ovid, *Fast.* 5.563–566. See also Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 56.34.2; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 22.7.13; Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 10.11.10. Zanker (*Power of Images*, 201) notes: "In the Forum of Augustus, in the central niches of the two large *exedrae*, Aeneas and Romulus stood as counterparts of Mars and Venus.… Venus' grandson was depicted fleeing from Troy in flames, the son of Mars as *triumphator.* The juxtaposition was not intended to measure the two heroes against one another, but to celebrate their deeds as the embodiments of two complimentary virtues."

25. Judge, "Eulogistic Inscriptions," 169.

a desperate situation that imperiled Rome. Each inscriptional vignette of "crisis management" pointed forward to the decisive way that Augustus had extinguished the civil wars tearing apart the Roman republic (Res gest. 34.1) and had returned his official powers (*potestas*) without recalcitrance to their owners, namely, the senate, the magistrates, and the people (34.1, 3). By exalting his *auctoritas*—his personal dignity and influence in the widest sense[26]—over his rank, Augustus defined exemplary virtue for future generations. Roman history had found its culmination in Augustus, and he provided the yardstick of *virtus* ("virtue," "manliness") for all future rulers of Rome.

In the Res gestae inscribed on bronze tablets in front of his nearby mausoleum (Suetonius, *Aug.* 101.4), Augustus states that the revival of exemplary ancestral practices (*multa exempla mairorum*) in his legislative program formed part of a much wider transmission of "exemplary practices to posterity for their imitation" during his principate (Res gest. 8.5: *ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi*). Undoubtedly, the Forum Augustum formed a pivotal part of this Augustan culture of imitation.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 31.5) provides us insight into Augustus's motives in dedicating statues in triumphal form in the two porticoes of the forum. Augustus had declared in an edict: "I have contrived this to lead the citizens to require me, while I live, and the rulers of later times as well, to attain the standard [*ad exemplar*] set by those worthies of old." The forum became one of the hallowed viewing places for Augustus's civic and military honors:

> During my thirteenth consulship the senate and equestrian order and people of Rome unanimously saluted me father of my country and voted that this should be inscribed in the vestibule of my house, in the Julian senate house, and in the Augustan forum beneath the chariot that had been set up in my honor by ruling of the senate. (Res gest. 35.1)

What, then, do we learn from the fragments of the *elogia fori Augusti* about the fulfillment of the Roman ideals of leadership in Augustus?[27] Three

26. Res gest. 30.1: "I was the leading citizen [*princeps*]"; 34.3: "I excelled all in influence [*auctoritate*]."

27. Anderson observes regarding the number of *triumphatores* originally represented: "The extant inscriptions from the Forum also fail us, as we have no way of

examples will suffice, illustrating important facets of Augustus's propaganda concerning his rule.

First, given the overflow of Augustus's beneficence (e.g. Res gest. 15–24), we observe how comprehensively Augustus replicated and surpassed the beneficence of the republican *principes*. Of Manius Valerius, for example, the statue inscription says that "on his own initiative the senate freed the people from heavy debt" (*ILS* 50; cf. Res gest. 15). In the statue inscriptions of Appius Claudius Caecus (*ILS* 54) and Gaius Marius (*ILS* 59), we see how both men combined their military role with that of civic benefactor.[28] In the case of Caecus's beneficence, the inscription states that, "in his censorship he laid the Appian Way and built an aqueduct into the city; he built the temple of Belonna." Regarding Marius's beneficence, we learn from the inscription that "from the Cimbric and Teutonic spoils he built as victor a temple to Honor and Virtue."[29] In reading these *elogia*, literate Roman residents would be aware that Augustus, like the *principes*, juggled the roles of general and benefactor during his principate, but on a vastly greater scale in terms of their scope and longevity.

Second, in the statue inscriptions the piety of the republican *principes*—a feature of Augustus's rule to which he draws attention (Res gest. 7.3; 9–12; 19; 24; 29.2) and one that his critics derided—is demonstrated by their commitment to the traditional cults in times of crisis. Thus it is said of L. Albinus that, "when the Gauls were besieging the Capitol, he led the vestal virgins down to Caere and there made it his concern that the solemn rites and ceremonies were not interrupted" (*ILS* 51). Similarly, Lucius Papirius Cursor "returned to Rome to renew his auspices" (*ILS* 53). In the Res gestae, however, Augustus underlines his superiority to the *principes* of the Forum Augustum through his telling references to the vestal virgins and the auspices. In Augustus's case, the vestal virgins made an annual

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determining from the fragments how many *triumphatores* were represented, or which ones were in the hemicycles and which in the porticos" (*Historical Topography*, 82).

28. Note, however, the military parallel between Augustus and Gaius Marius. Augustus (Res gest. 1.1): "I successfully championed the liberty of the republic when it was oppressed by the tyranny of a faction." Gaius Marius (*ILS* 59): "while consul for the sixth time, he freed the republic when it was troubled by the revolt of tribunes of the plebs and praetors, who had seized the Capitol under arms."

29. Anderson (*Historical Topography*, 83) observes regarding the *elogia fori Augusti* that "temples built by four of these men were restored by Augustus in confirmation of Suetonius' statement that Augustus restored the works of great generals preserving the original inscriptions (*Aug*. 31.1)."

sacrifice in honor of his return to Rome from Syria (Res gest. 11), and the army of the Dacians was defeated and routed under his auspices (Res gest. 30.2). The republican *principes* ("first men") of the statue inscriptions only anticipate in rudimentary form Augustus's piety and the central position he assumed in the state cult.

Third, a final elogium honors Quintus Fabius Maximus, who had rescued the legion of Mucinius from military disaster and earned thereby from the grateful soldiers the title "Father of the Legion":

> Quintus Fabius Maximus, son of Quintus, twice a dictator, five times consul, censor, twice interrex, curule aedile, twice quaestor, twice tribune of the soldiers, pontifex, augur. In his first consulship he subdued the Ligures and triumphed over them. In his third and fourth he tamed Hannibal by dogging his heels though rampant after numerous victories. As dictator he came to the aid of the magister equitum, Minucius, whose *imperium* the people had ranked equal with the dictator's, and of his routed army and on that occasion was named "Father" by the army of Minucius. When consul for the fifth time he captured Tarentum and triumphed. He was considered the most cautious general of his age and the most skilled in military matters. He was chosen *princeps senatus* at two Lustra.[30]

What was so impressive about Fabius Maximus's selfless and magnanimous act was that the senate had previously snubbed him by giving his military subordinate, Mucinius, the same official power as himself.[31] Fabius Maximus's honor, however, was excelled by the unprecedented honor "Father of His Country," which the Roman people pressed upon Augustus for saving them from a century of civil war (Res gest. 35; cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 58; Horace, *Fast.* 119–144, esp. 127–128; Seneca, *Clem.* 1.10.3–1.10.4). Once again, within the "typological" conventions of leadership articulated in the Forum Augustum, we see how Augustus surpassed the best of his republi-

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30. *ILS* 56. Cicero had the title of "parent of his fatherland" bestowed unofficially upon him for suppressing the Catilinarian conspiracy, and the title was later officially granted to Julius Caesar (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 44.4.4; Suetonius, *Jul.* 85). In the case of Cicero and Caesar, however, the title did not come to have the all-defining status that it assumed in Augustus's career, nor did the Roman people and senate press the title upon Fabius Maximus, Cicero, and Caesar with the same relentless insistence that they did with Augustus.

31. On Fabius Maximus in the Roman annalistic tradition, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 174–77.

can forebears and became the iconic model of political crisis management for future generations.

Finally, Josephine Shaya emphasizes that the monument of the Forum Augusti is fundamentally, among several other ideological projections, an act of commemoration of the great men of Roman history. They had made Rome into what it had gloriously become, but with the historical peculiarity that this process was now teleological in its focus by virtue of its culmination in Augustus.[32] She correctly notes that "the great men were marked for their service to the Roman people and for their virtues of discipline, fortitude and piety."[33] But for Augustus this was not just a case of a static and ossified commemoration of an idealized Roman past. Rather, the exemplum of the great men of the republican past, coupled with the current revitalization of Roman history effected by the Julian house and its world benefactor, ensured the future replenishment of Rome with a new generation of leaders through the Augustan vision of open competition in the political arena along traditional republican lines.[34]

The Campus Martius

The interrelation of sacred space in Rome also conveyed symbolic messages about the ruler in the Campus Martius. Three examples will suffice. First, a few hundred meters away from the site of the Res gestae, which highlighted Augustus's domination of the nations (3.1–2; 4.3; 13; 25–33), was Agrippa's monumental map displaying the extent of the Roman Empire and its peoples.[35] The motif of the conquest of the nations was also employed in the iconography of the Temple of Apollo Sosianus also situated in the Campus Martius. Two northern barbarian captives, possibly Illyrians and part of Augustus's 29 BCE triple triumph (Res gest. 4.1; 30.1), are shown on a frieze block sitting on a parade float, hands bound behind their backs, ready to be hoisted midair for exhibition in Augustus's triumphal procession.[36]

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32. Shaya, "Public Life of Monuments," 87–89.

33. Shaya, "Public Life of Monuments," 88.

34. See James R. Harrison, "Diplomacy over Tiberius' Succession," *New Docs* 10 (2012): 64–75.

35. Richard Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2005), 79.

36. See Keith Bradley, "On Captives under the Principate," *Phoenix* 58 (2004): pl.

Second, there was symbolic connection between the two circular buildings in the Campus Martius: Augustus's mausoleum and the Agrippan Pantheon. The latter building was dedicated to all the gods and included, among other cult statues to the deities (Mars, Venus, and the gods), a statue to the recently divinized Julius Caesar (Cassius Dio, *Rom. hist.* 53.27.2–4). Visitors to the Pantheon would have had direct sightline from the door of the temple to the mausoleum. Penelope E. J. Davies sums up the significance of the spatial relations thus: "The axial connection between his mausoleum and the Pantheon, two circular buildings, expressed the progression from mortal to immortal status: Augustus, like Julius Caesar, and like Romulus on the very Marsh of Capra, would not die but achieve apotheosis."[37] Notwithstanding, we should not discount the literary and epigraphic tradition that emphasized that the Pantheon was used as a meeting place,[38] probably intended to replace "the Curia of Pompey as an extra-pomerial meeting place for the senate" from 25 BCE onward.[39] But as the creation of new buildings in the Forum Romanum accommodated the increasing needs created by the position and status of Augustus, "the primary civic function Pantheon was curtailed."[40] Thus the symbolic significance of the Pantheon in the networks of sacred space in the Campus Martius became increasingly important during the Julio-Claudian era.

Also in the Campus Martius was set the Horologium Augusti, the giant sundial designed by the astrologer Facundus Navius.[41] This monument, dedicated to the sun (CIL 6.709), was placed between the Ara Pacis Augustae and the (later) Columna Antonini Pii. The symbolic importance of the monument is seen in the inscription accompanying the sundial: "On the occasion of Egypt's submission to the power of the Roman people he gave a gift to the Sun" (CIL 6.702: *Aegypto in potestatem populi Romani redacta Soli donum dedit*).[42] The sundial celebrates Augustus's victory at Actium

1; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 70 fig. 55.

37. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, 140, 142.

38. Darryl A. Philips, "The Civic Function of Agrippa's Pantheon," *Latomus* 75 (2016): 650–76, here 661.

39. Philips, "Civic Function," 676

40. Philips, "Civic Function," 676.

41. Additionally, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rer. gest*. 17.4.12; Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.805; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 30.6.71.

42. Cited, in abbreviated form here, in Carole Elizabeth Newlands, *Playing with Time: Ovid and the Fasti* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 24.

(31 BCE) that secured peace in the Greek East, whereas the Ara Pacis Augustae, strategically placed nearby, eulogizes Augustus's establishment of peace in the Latin West.[43] Thus, as Carole Elizabeth Newlands observes, "control over time was closely linked with military control" throughout the empire.[44] It is hard not to draw the inference from the imperial propaganda that Augustus had become the "Lord of time" by being the "Lord of the battlefield."

Third, the Res gestae espoused the message that Augustus had outcompeted all others, enhancing the ancestral fame and glory of the Julian house, though with a view to maintaining the *mos maiorum* of Rome and encouraging a revitalization of republican leadership paradigms for the future. A similar message is visually enunciated in the Ara Pacis Augustae altar (Res gest. 12), itself adjacent to Augustus's mausoleum.[45] The panels of the monument celebrate the advent of the Augustan golden age by means of its iconographic rendering of (1) creation's abundance under the rule of Augustus; (2) traditional piety in religious ritual; (3) reverence for the mythical past, juxtaposing the Trojan and Latin origins of Rome;[46] (4) Augustus's divine lineage and accomplishments; and, possibly, (5) subtle allusions to Augustus's triumph over the barbarian nations.[47]

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43. Newlands, *Playing with Time*, 24. On the Ara Pacis Augustae, see Zanker, *Power of Images*, 172–83; Gates, *Ancient Cities*, 339–42.

44. Note the further observation of Newlands (*Playing with Time*, 24): "The names of the winds and zodiacal signs on the pavement around the obelisk are in Greek, a sign of Hellenistic learning. The obelisk thus specifically commemorated Augustus' military and cultural control over the Graeco-Roman world."

45. On the ancient sources relating to Augustus's mausoluem and the Ara Pacis Augustae, see Dudley, *Urbs Roma*, 193–99; Aicher, *Rome Alive*, 245–51.

46. Dudley, *Urbs Roma*, 195.

47. Charles Brian Rose ("The Parthians in Augustan Rome," *AJA* 109 [2005]: 21–75, at 36–44) argues that the two children with foreign dress on the northern and southern friezes of the Ara Pacis Augustae are Parthian and Gallic barbarian children, symbolizing the Roman conquest of the East and West, and not, as most modern scholarship assumes, Gaius and Lucius, the grandchildren of Augustus. On the Ara Pacis Augustae more generally, see Giuseppe Moretti, *The Ara Pacis Avgvstae*, 4th· ed. (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico Dello Stato, 1975); Charles Brian Rose, "Princes and Barbarians on the Ara Pacis," *AJA* 94 (1990): 453–67; Orietta Rossini, *Ara Pacis*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Electa, 2009); Paul Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos: Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius*, ed. J. G. Younger (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 96–137; Filippo Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 299–302; Claridge, *Rome*, 207–24.

Notwithstanding, as Ernst Emanuel Mayer argues, the Ara Pacis Augustae "also breathes a strong senatorial and even Republican ethos."[48] We see this in the procession spanning the northern and southern friezes of the Ara Pacis Augustae.[49] Whether the procession represents the reception ceremony of Augustus's return from Gaul and Spain (4 July 13 BCE) or the ceremony on the same day consecrating the space where the Ara Pacis Augustae altar was to be erected remains a moot point.[50] Both the northern and southern friezes present a long procession of senatorial priests (*quindecemviri*, *augures*, *septemviri* [north]; *flamines maiores*, *pontifices*, *augures*, *flamines* [south]) from the most prestigious Roman colleges, followed in each instance by members of Augustus's family. On the southern frieze, Augustus's lictors head the procession, carrying his fasces, symbols of his republican offices and powers.[51] Immediately behind them, Augustus is presented as a priest by virtue of his veiled head, which is laurel-wreathed. Agrippa, the son-in-law and coruler of Augustus, follows, heading the members of Augustus's family in the procession, accompanied by other dignitaries. Mayer well captures the social dynamics of the procession in saying that Augustus is shown as "hobnobbing with prominent senators."[52] In sum, Augustus and Agrippa are depicted as magisterial colleagues among other magisterial colleagues, each of whom is a generic example of republican and senatorial virtue.[53] The iconography illustrates effectively the general thrust of Augustus's assessment of his powers (Res gest. 34.2): "After this time I excelled everyone in influence, but I had no more power than the others who were my colleagues in each magistracy."

In conclusion, Mayer insightfully elaborates on the significance of the visual presentation on the southern frieze:

> Augustus and Agrippa were, according to all senator's standards, eminent figures in the *res publica*, and therefore entitled to public praise. Though distinguished through their careers, Augustus' family members

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48. Ernst Emanuel Mayer, "Propaganda, Staged Applause, or Local Politics? Public Monuments from Augustus to Septimus Severus," in *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation and Ritual*, ed. B. C. Ewald and C. F. Norêna (Cambridge: Cambridge Univerity Press, 2010), 111–34, here 120.

49. On the procession, with pictures, see Rossini, *Ara Pacis,* 47–79.

50. Rossini, *Ara Pacis,* 48; Moretti, *Ara Pacis Avgvstae*, 15.

51. Mayer, "Propaganda," 121.

52. Mayer, "Propaganda," 121.

53. Mayer, "Propaganda," 121.

> were not eminent figures. It is of course possible, and even likely, that contemporary viewers tried to name them, but the senators commissioning the monument were very careful not to exalt the members of the imperial family over all the other nobles in the senate—or on the *Ara Pacis*. The imperial house could therefore stand for any noble *gens* and the anonymous priests for the entire senatorial aristocracy from which they were recruited. This way of representing the emperor together with the old aristocracy was unique in Augustan Rome.[54]

2.2. Neronian Rome: A Numismatic Portrait

The accuracy of the numismatic presentation of the city of Rome on the imperial coinage in the provinces and at Rome is a highly controversial issue. Bradley J. Bitner, speaking about the methodology of using numismatic evidence responsibly at Corinth, has warned against assuming that the engraver has accurately replicated the monument depicted on the coin; the image may well be generic and employed for other ideological purposes.[55] Furthermore, we need to realize that there exists a bias in "the so-called *architectura numismatica*." As Jonathan Williams elaborates,

> For the obvious point about buildings on Roman coins, imperial and provincial, is that they are mostly temples or altars. Despite the occasional appearance of the more obviously secular structures such as Nero's Market, Trajan's Forum, or the Colosseum, buildings mostly appear on Roman coins not *qua* public architecture, but as religious monuments.[56]

Notwithstanding, Larry J. Kreitzer has adeptly explored the reverses of the key Neronian coins showing the building projects of the ruler from the period of 64–67 CE, issued several years after Paul's writing of Romans.[57]

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54. Mayer, "Propaganda," 121–22.

55. Bradley J. Bitner, "Coinage and Colonial Identity: Corinthian Numismatics and the Corinthian Correspondence," in *The First Urban Churches 1: Methodological Foundations*, ed. James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn, WGRWSup 7 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 151–87, at 175–76.

56. Jonathan Williams, "Religion and Roman Coins," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. J. Rüpke (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 143–63, here 148.

57. Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 112–25. On Nero's coinage more generally, see Michael Grant, *Roman History from Coins: Some Uses of the Imperial Coinage to the Historian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 26–36.

He proposes, though it is unprovable, that Paul may have seen the beginnings of the vast reconstruction program launched at Rome sometime during his house arrest at Rome.[58] At the very least, he would have seen some of the preliminary building activity in Rome during his travel through the city to imprisonment at the *praetorium* in Rome (Phil 1:13)—itself represented on one of Nero's coins[59]—presuming here that the Letter to the Philippians had its origins in Paul's imprisonment at Rome.[60] It is hard to conceive that Paul did not hear about its beginnings at Ostia and Rome from his visitors.[61] Kreitzer makes useful suggestions regarding the intersections of this numismatic material with Paul's letters[62] but omits to discuss the wider ideological significance of Nero's building program at Rome. Surprisingly, he does not consider how the Neronian motifs of Ostia and Rome may have related to the major themes of Romans, even though the letter was written immediately prior to their construction. Rather than discussing extensively the visual details of the *architectura numismatica*, my emphasis will be on the numismatic image of the Roman ruler projected.

I commence with a sestertius that displays a triumphal arch of Nero. The arch is surmounted by Nero riding in a quadriga, accompanied by Victory and Pax holding triumphal symbols, as well as by two soldiers.[63] The eastern victories of Nero, achieved through his general Corbulo, is the focus. Nero's arch recalls the triumphal arch of Augustus at Rome, whose location is no longer known to us, but it is rendered on a dupondius.[64] However, more than adhering to Augustan exempla is involved here; surpassing the architectural legacy of Augustus is also in the purview of Nero.

The sestertius of the harbor of Ostia is a masterpiece in perspective and design, depicting the harbor sea wall, warehouses, buildings, the harbor lighthouse with its statue of Neptune, the reclining figure of Tibur, and variously numbered ships and boats, depending on the coin.[65] In

58. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images*, 113–14.

59. *RIC* 1, Nero §§ 95–97, 130–36.

60. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images*, 123.

61. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images*, 117.

62. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images*, 123–25.

63. See Fred S. Kleiner, *The Arch of Nero in Rome: A Study of the Roman Honorary Arch before and under Nero* (Rome: Bretschneider, 1985).

64. *RIC* 1, Augustus §359.

65. *RIC* 1, Nero §§178–83.

issuing the coin, Nero proclaims that he had brought to completion the work begun by his predecessor, Claudius. According to an inscription, Claudius began work in 46 CE on the artificial harbor, freeing Rome from the danger of inundations by digging channels from the Tiber to the sea, in order that the water might be dispersed there.[66] Nero's specific contribution to the harbor was the construction of the Darsena, a small inner basin in which the cargoes of ships could be immediately unloaded for transportation up the Tiber River around 64 CE, as well the building of an aqueduct so that the port might have fresh water.[67] However, according to our sestertius, Nero had trumped Claudius's efforts by completing the task, accruing for himself substantial glory as a builder of innovative and helpful civic works. Not only had Nero secured the city of Rome from inundation, but he also had ensured the continuance of the grain supply through the provision of substantial warehouse storage and sufficient space for the grain fleet, even though in reality his contribution to the harbor was much more modest than that of Claudius.[68] The role of Nero

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66. Hilding Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 2 vols. (Lund: Gleerup, 1951–1952), §B1.310 (= CIL 14.85). Claudius "freed the city from the danger of inundations" (VRBEM INVNDATIONIS PERICYLO LIBERAVIT). For full translation, see Dudley, *Urbs Roma*, 44.

67. For the archaeological evidence for Nero's additions to the harbor, see Simon Keay and Martin Millett, "Integration and Discussion," in *Portus: An Archaeological Survey of the Port of Imperial Rome*, ed. S. Keay et al. (London: British School at Rome, 2005), 269–96, here 275–77, esp. 276–77.

68. See David J. Mattingly and Gregory S. Aldrete, "The Feeding of Imperial Rome: The Mechanics of the Food Supply System," in Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome*, 142–65. On the grain fleet at Puteoli (Acts 28:13), see Seneca, *Ep.* 77.1–3, which reveals that Alexandrian grain ships continued to unload their cargoes in Puteoli in Neronian times, presumably because of the spacious harbor there. This perhaps explains why Paul's ship offloaded the apostle at the port of Puteoli as opposed to Ostia. Paul's ship was "an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux" (Acts 28:11b). This ship had originally left Alexandria and wintered at Malta due to the dangerous seas and wild weather (see 27:13–44). But when conditions ameliorated, the ship resumed the journey, with Paul now a passenger, via Syracuse and Rhegium, finally arriving at its destination in Puteoli (28:11–13). The boat's three-month (?) layoff (see 28:11) shows the unwillingness of Egyptian traders to lose such a valuable grain cargo, not to mention the Roman magistrates waiting for its safe delivery. We do not know if Paul's boat was an Alexandrian "mail-boat" sent ahead to announce the coming of the grain fleet (Seneca, *Ep.* 77.1) or one of the Alexandrian boats belonging to the grain fleet itself. For discussion on the Ostian harbor,

as an urban benefactor and patron of the urban plebs, rivalling Augustus in civic spirit, is underscored.

Three other *architectura numismatica* remain to be discussed. First, a hexastyle temple is rendered on aurei and denarii, adorned by three steps within, with Vesta seated facing the entrance, holding a patera and long scepter.[69] This temple was situated next to the Sacred Way at the foot of the Palatine. According to Tacitus (*Ann*., 15.41; *Hist.* 1.43), the Regia (the house of the *pontifex maximus*, the chief priest) and the Temple of Vesta were burned down in the great fire of Rome in 64 CE. Edward Champlin explains the devastating significance of the destruction:

> The temple itself, in the shape of an old Italic hut, was the hearth of Rome, holding the eternal fire of the city, its sacred objects, including the Palladium, an image of Athena brought by Aeneas from Troy; the Penates, the household gods of Rome; and the *fascinus*, a phallus meant to ward off evil from the city.[70]

Thus Nero's prompt rebuilding of the Temple of Vesta, celebrated on his coins, demonstrated that the "city's hearth was secure," allowing him in the process to rebuild the Augustan House of the Vestal Virgins in a much expanded form.[71] This facilitated his reconstruction of the Sacred Way, which, crucially for Nero's public image, led up to his new palace, the Golden House (Domus Aurea) and its extensive garden.[72] Undoubtedly

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see my essay in this volume: "Romans 1:2–4 and Imperial 'Adoption' Ideology: Paul's Alternative Narrative to Julio-Claudian Sonship and Apotheosis."

69. *RIC* 1, Nero §§61–62.

70. Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 188. For the ancient sources on the Temple of Vesta, see Aicher, *Rome Alive*, 129–32.

71. Champlin, *Nero*, 188. On the Temple of Vesta, see Gilbert J. Gorski, "The Temple of Vesta," in Gorski and Packer, *The Roman Forum*, 313–32. For an inscription honoring the "head priestess of the Vestal Virgins," erected "in recognition of her chastity, purity, and her outstanding knowledge in ritual and religious matters," see *ILS* 4938 (trans. Aicher, *Rome Alive*, 134, §50.10). On Vestal Virgins, see Robin Lorsch Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins: A Study of Rome's Priestesses in the Late Republic and Early Empire* (London: Routledge, 2006); Andrew B. Gallia, "Vestal Virgins and Their Families," *ClAnt* 34 (2015): 74–120.

72. Built after the great fire of Rome in 64 CE, the Domus Aurea extended over parts of the slopes of the Palatine, Esquiline, Oppian, and Caelian hills, covering 100 to 300 acres. For the literary sources on the Domus Aurea, see Dudley, *Urbs Romana*, 138–42. Generally, see Larry F. Ball, *The* Domus Aurea *and the Roman Architectural*

the reconstructed Sacred Way was Nero's counterpart to the street that threaded its way through the Roman Forum leading upward to Augustus's house on the Palatine. We see here not only Nero's *pietas* to Augustus and the sacred traditions of Rome but also his opportunistic enhancement of his public image at Augustus's expense.

Second, on a sestertius reverse we see the Macellum Magnum (Great Market), a magnificent two-story columnar tholos roofed with a dome and dedicated by Nero in 59 CE. [73] This structure outstripped all previous markets in the city, including the impressive Macellum Liviae (Market of Livia), with its large porticoes, in the Esquiline region. This was built by Augustus and named after his wife in 7 BCE (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.8). Once again, Nero has surpassed in size and grandeur one of the monuments of his Julio-Claudian predecessors; he would do the same in grand style with the construction of his *hortus* ("garden") in Rome.

Third, Nero, building upon the public numismatic image of Claudius,[74] made sure that he was depicted as one who had gained the loyalty of the praetorian guard at Rome. The incision of the praetorian camp in the background of the sestertius, with Nero, accompanied by the praetorian prefect, addressing three soldiers in the foreground, presents a picture of an affable, relaxed, and confident ruler before the troops.[75]

What portrait of Nero emerges from this numismatic distillation of his building program?[76] Suetonius's assessment is censorious: "There

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Revolution (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). On the symbolic ties of Nero's octagonal room to the sun's cycle and its ideological relation to Nero's self-imaging as Sol, see Robert Hannah, Giulio Magli, and Antonella Palmieri, "Nero's 'Solar' Kingship and the Architecture of the Domus Aurea," *Numen* 63 (2016): 511–24. On Nero's garden (*hortus*) and the relevance of the imperial conception of "nature" for the Epistle to the Romans, see Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes*, 219–57, here 229–31.

73. *RIC* 1, Nero §§109–11, 184–89. On the varying representations of the dome or, alternatively, a truncated cone on the coinage, see Lawrence Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 242.

74. *RIC* 1, Claudius §§7–8.

75. *RIC* 1, Nero §§95–97, 130–36. On the praetorium, see J. Coulston, "'Armed and Belted Men': The Soldiery in Imperial Rome," in Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome*, 76–118, here 83–85; Samuel Ball Platner and Thomas Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 106–8.

76. The Neronian coins do not provide a comprehensive picture of the ruler's building program. On the Neronian baths in the Campus Martius, see Martial,

was nothing, however, in which he was more ruinously prodigal than in building" (*Ner*. 31.1). This comment undoubtedly reflects the hostile perspective of the senatorial order toward the rule of Nero. A more modulated and nuanced judgement comes from David Shotter: "the coinage indicates an Emperor who was sane, who knew what he wanted to achieve, but who ultimately found himself increasingly frustrated and angry because of the refusal or inability of others to recognize his aims."[77] While this is true, a more basic Roman aristocratic drive animates Nero in this instance: equaling and excelling the deeds of the great men of the past from one's house. Augustus boasted, Suetonius tells us (*Aug*. 28.3; see also Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 56.30.3–4), that he "found (Rome) built of brick, and left it in marble." Nero's architectural program built upon Augustus's foundation and sought to surpass it.

We have seen that, because of the monumentalization of Rome, the capital had become the "theme park" of the Julio-Claudian house and a purveyor of its ideology of rule at the time of the composition of Romans, that Augustus, as the new Romulus, was the culmination of Roman history, that he, as the heir of Caesar, would be apotheosized, and that he, as the exemplum and repository of all republican virtue, would inspire a new generation of leaders at Rome, steering Rome away from the chaos of civil war toward the elite replication of the virtue of the luminaries of old. In the case of Nero, we saw that he sought to rival and surpass architecturally the legacy of Augustus at Rome, at least in the numismatic projection of the capital he sponsored. It is therefore significant that the Roman authorities loom large in the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle advocates that honor should be accorded to the ruler, as well as the payment of taxes and obedience to him (Rom 13:1–7). Notwithstanding

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Spect. 7.34.4; CIL 6.9797 (trans. Aicher, *Rome Alive*, 307). On the ancient sources relating to the Golden House, see Aicher, *Rome Alive*, 176–78. On the Golden House, see Claridge, *Rome*, 326–28. On the Neronian building program generally, see Jas Elsner, "Constructing Decadence: The Representation of Nero as Imperial Builder," in *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History and Representation*, ed. J. Elsner and J. Masters (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 112–30. We must not forget, however, the contribution that Claudius made to the city via his aqueduct program (Aqua Claudia, Aqua Anio Novus); see Hazel Dodge, "Greater Than the Pyramids: The Water Supply of Ancient Rome," in Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome*, 166–209.

77. David Shotter, *Nero Caesar Augustus: Emperor of Rome* (London: Routledge, 2016), 198.

these honorific caveats, in reducing the governing authorities to God's "servant" in line with LXX and gospel perspectives (see John 19:8–11), Paul stripped the ruler of all his stratospheric accolades promulgated in the imperial propaganda.[78]

Moreover, the *individual* within the body of Christ who has the economic resources to win the ruler's approval by being beneficent should do so (Rom 13:4: *τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποίει*), whereas the *entire community* is to contribute to the needs (*κοινωνοῦντες*) of the saints and be hospitable (*διώκοντες*) to strangers (12:13b). The interplay between the Christian individual and the community acting as benefactors is intriguing in an ancient benefaction context. In Greco-Roman civic honorific decrees eulogizing benefactors, the community is reliant upon the generosity of its benefactor or, at Rome, upon the imperial corn dole (*cura annonae*). There is no sense in these honorific inscriptions, as there is in Paul's social construct, that the *community itself* should be the primary solution to its economic needs by collective and voluntary giving resulting in equality (see 2 Cor 8:13–15), over and above the individual gifts of benefactors. In the association decrees, however, we see a similar interplay between the gifts of benefactors and individuals, who all contribute to association burials, banquets, and *sportulae* (little gifts of food) through fines, membership dues, and voluntary giving.[79] What is shocking about Paul's social construct, however, is the extension of beneficence even to the enemy (Rom 12:20a: ψώμιζε … *πότιζε αὐτόν*), reinforced dramatically by the authoritative citation of the LXX (Prov 25:21, 22 [Rom 12:20]) and the concluding exhortation: "overcome [*νίκα*] evil with good" (12:21b). There is no place here to hide behind anonymous communal giving: the *individual* must address the enemy beneficently.

Furthermore, Paul operates on two rhetorical fronts in explaining the unique place of Christ in salvation history, in a manner reminiscent of the statue program of the Forum Augustum. There two lines of ancestry, one

78. See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 271–323.

79. See Richard Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklêsia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context*, SNTSSup 104 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 83–148; Ralph J. Korner, *The Origin and Meaning of Ekklêsia in the Early Jesus Movement*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 68–79; John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 162–85, 245–64.

focused on the Julian forbears and the other centered on the republican *principes*, found their culmination in Augustus as *pater patriae*. In the Epistle to the Romans, the creation narrative and the covenantal story of Israel coalesce in Christ. Humanity's enslaving ancestor, the disobedient Adam, is supplanted by the prophesied obedient man, Jesus Christ, the risen Lord of overflowing grace (Rom 5:12–20). He transfers his righteousness to the unrighteous and liberates his dependents from the reign of death (5:18–21). Concomitantly, Abraham, father of the Jews and gentiles through justifying faith, becomes the exemplum of those who would place their faith in the soteriological work of Christ and subsequently receive the right to call God *abba* ("Father") through the indwelling Spirit (4:1–25; 8:1–17). Paul's two foundation narratives about God's multiethnic family in Christ also rhetorically engaged the two foundation narratives of Rome's origins, that of Aeneas and Romulus, who were each represented in the statue program of the Forum Augustum. The ubiquity of the two foundation narratives of Rome many well provoked the apostle to consider how his rhetorical alternatives, centered upon Adam and Abraham, might persuade his auditors to move away from the ethnocentric vision of imperial Rome, the civilizer of barbarians and Greeks (see Rom 1:14), and embrace the multiethnic universalism of the body of Christ (10:12–13; 15:7–12).

3. The Roman Noble's Quest for Glory in Late Republican and Julio-Claudian Rome

In this section we will focus on how the Roman *nobiles* ("nobles") saw their quest for ancestral glory—which fueled the politics, patronal relations, and military expansion of republican Rome—increasingly constricted under the Julio-Claudian rulers, notwithstanding Augustus's sincere desire to keep traditional republican competition for magisterial posts and military triumphs open for the leading men of his day. Not only had the noble houses been depleted through the high death count attending the civil war prior to 31 BCE, but also the venerable pathways to ancestral glory were increasingly replaced by an imperially sponsored *cursus honorum* ("course of honor") for different groups of Julio-Claudian clients (the freedmen, the army, the provincial elites). Ultimately, the old republican noble houses were supplanted by the new dynasty of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian houses in the New Testament period, having been outcompeted for clients by Augustus as the world benefactor.

3.1. The Triumph of the Julian House

The Roman Noble’s Quest for Glory: The House of the Scipios

The epitaphs of the republican Scipionic family set out the pedigrees (filiation, magistracies, military victories and official posts, priesthoods, board memberships etc.) of each of the deceased members.[80] The ethos evinced by the epitaphs points to the vitality of the Roman nobleman’s quest for ancestral glory. Two epitaphs in particular demonstrate this. Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Hispanus (*praetor peregrinus*, 139 BCE) lists the magistracies of his pedigree and then adds this highly revealing *elogium*:

> By my good conduct I heaped virtues on the virtues of my clan: I begat a family and sought to equal the exploits of my father. I upheld the praise [*laudem*] of my ancestors, so that they were glad that I was created of their line. My honours have ennobled [*nobilitavit honor*] my stock.[81]

This epitaph sums up succinctly the worldview of the Roman *nobiles* (“nobles”). The ancestral virtues of the noble house had to be replenished by each new generation. The praise accorded the ancestors placed enormous expectations on each new generation of nobles. Each noble had to equal (and, hopefully, surpass) by virtuous conduct the achievements of the ancestors,[82] with the exploits of the immediate father being the starting point. If the replication of ancestral merit was successfully carried out by each new generation, the *nobilitas* of the family was rendered even more noble and virtuous. Remarkably, the dead ancestors are depicted as still

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80. See Richard E. Smith, *The Aristocratic Epoch in Latin Literature* (Sydney: Australasian Medical, 1947), 8–10.

81. Eric H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin: Archaic Inscriptions*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), “Epitaphs,” §10; for all the Scipionic epitaphs, see §§1–10. Note the comment of Mario Erasmo (*Reading Death in Ancient Rome* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008], 170): “That his dead ancestors would be happy … with his moral character illustrates a readership joined, rather than separated by death. Thus the epitaph reflects a need for accuracy since self-representation would have an objective assessment by ancestors who now form the contemporary family of the deceased, as would his descendants who will join him and their ancestors and face a similar reckoning of their accomplishments and virtues.”

82. Cicero (*Fam.* 12.7.2) also speaks of the *nobilis* surpassing his own accomplishments: “do your utmost to surpass yourself in enhancing your own glory.”

vitally interested in the replenishment of the family honor attached to their line.[83]

What happens, however, if the noble's life was prematurely cut short by his death before he could add to his ancestral glory? The answer is given with moving simplicity in the epitaph of a young Scipio who had only achieved "the honored cap of Jupiter's priest" before he died:

> Death caused all your virtues, honor, good report and valiance, your glory [*gloria*] and your talents to be short-lived. If you had been allowed long life in which to enjoy them, an easy thing it would been for you to surpass by great deeds the glory of your ancestors [*gloriam maiorum*]. Wherefore, O Publius Cornelius Scipio, begotten son of Publius, joyfully does earth take you to her bosom.[84]

Here we see how the Scipios handled their less-successful members, when their advancement in the *cursus honorum* ("course of honor," i.e., magistracies) was cut short either by death, as was the case with Publius Cornelius Scipio above,[85] or by a lack of significant magistracies.

Finally, the *elogium* on front of the sarcophagus of Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, consul in 260 BCE, was added two hundred years after the original epitaph was placed on the lid ("Lucius Cornelius Scipio, son of Gnaeus"). The *elogium* is as follows:

> Lucius Cornelius Scipio Long-beard, Gnaeus' begotten son, a valiant gentleman and wise, whose fine form matched his bravery well, was aedile, consul and censor among you: he took Taurasia and Cisuana, in fact Samnium; he overcame all the Lucanian land and brought hostages there-from.[86]

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83. D. C. Earl ("Political Terminology in Plautus," *Historia* 9 [1960]: 235–43, here 242) comments regarding the role of *virtus* in Plautus and the Scipionic elogia: "[*Virtus*] consists in the gaining of pre-eminent *gloria* by the winning of office and the participation in public life. It concerns not only the individual but the whole family, not only its living members but the dead members and the unborn posterity as well."

84. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §5. Smith (*Aristocratic Epoch*, 10) observes: "We see the constancy of the ideal, consisting still in public honours and public office, to the extent that even where the dead man took no part in public life, the only comment is on what he would have done had he lived longer."

85. See Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §8: "Cornelius Scipio Asiagenus Nevershorn, son of Lucius, grandson of Lucius, sixteen years of age."

86. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §§1–2.

What is fascinating about the *elogium* above is that it represents a posthumous enhancement of the career of Barbatus after his death. First, Barbatus's original epitaph had to be supplemented with a more fulsome eulogy. The fame of his later descendants (e.g., Scipio Africanus) would have surpassed Barbatus's achievements if the original epitaph, merely his name, had been left unadorned. Second, two anachronistic elements are added retrospectively to the career of Barbatus. Erasmo argues that the description of Barbatus as "a valiant gentleman and wise" is "a reference to a Hellenic education, for which Barbatus is historically too early, but a trait ascribed to his famous descendant (great-grandson) Scipio Africanus."[87] Further, the reference to his physical beauty ("whose fine form") points to his inner virtue ("his bravery").[88] As Erasmo notes, it is "another anachronistic cultural detail superimposed on stone and onto the character and personality of the deceased."[89] In this *elogium* we have a blend of Greek (wisdom, beauty) and Roman elements (magistracies, victories) that ensure that the later descendants did not outshine the original ancestor of the Scipionic house.[90] It also symbolically connects Barbatus, the founder of the house, with his descendants' later preoccupation with Hellenistic culture.

Finally, scratched on a tufa near the sarcophagus of Barbatus is this inscription (ca. first century BCE): "To every man his own gravestone."[91] Is this the humorous protest of a critic of the Roman aristocracy concerning the restriction of glory to the elite at funerals? Surely every person had the right to commemorate personal "glory" on a gravestone, the critic asserts, notwithstanding one's lack of social pedigree? Here we see the importance of interpreting the use of public space and the interrelation of its monuments in understanding the Roman conception of death.

Death for the Roman noble in the republic was an opportunity for the descendants of the aristocratic houses to commemorate for posterity the magisterial and military record of their forebears. The ancestral glory of a noble's house had to be maintained and surpassed by each new

87. Erasmo, *Reading Death*, 166.

88. Erasmo, *Reading Death*, 166.

89. Erasmo, *Reading Death*, 166–67.

90. On the posthumous addition of an *elogium* to the original epitaph of Lucius Cornelius Scipio, the son of Barbatus (Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §§3–4), see Erasmo, *Reading Death*, 168–70.

91. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §11.

generation. This was the case irrespective of whether death had curtailed the opportunity of family members to advance in the *cursus honorum*. As we have seen, the *elogium* of unsuccessful family members, by virtue of its special pleading, ensured that the ancestral glory of the house was in no way imperiled by their premature death. Moreover, the achievements of the house founders (e.g., Cornelius Scipio Barbatus; Lucius Cornelius Scipio) could not be superseded by the achievements of their descendants. The descendants of the Scipio house retrospectively enhanced the virtue of their ancestors by adding *elogia* generations later.

The Roman Noble's Quest for Glory: The Triumphal Monument of Duilius

While the famous inscription of the consul Gaius Duilius does not use *gloria* terminology, it is, in my view, one of the best examples of boasting that the Roman quest for ancestral glory spawned. Duilius was the consul of 260 BCE who single-handedly brought the First Punic War to an end by his invention of the *corvus*, or "crow," a clever grappling device (specifically, a rotatable spiked boarding bridge) that immobilized the Carthaginian ships and allowed the Roman troops to board the enemy vessel and conduct the battle on deck. Above the inscription in honor of Duilius, located in the Forum Romanum, rose a large column from which jutted representations of the different prow types belonging to the Carthaginian ships sunk by Duilius (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 34.5; Silius Italicus, *Pun.* 6.663; Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.7.12). On top of the column, not unexpectedly, stood Duilius's statue.[92] The inscription, as I have observed, exemplifies the republican tradition of boasting in deeds done on behalf of the state:

> and the Segestaeans … he (Duilius) delivered from blockade; and all the Carthaginian hosts and their most mighty chief after nine days fled in broad daylight from their camp; and he took their town Macela by storm. And in the same command he as a consul performed an exploit in ships at sea, the first [*primos*] Roman to do so; the first [*primos*] he was to equip and train crews and fleets of fighting ships; and with these ships he defeated in battle all the most mighty troops of the Carthaginians in the presence of Hannibal their commander-in-chief. And by main force he

92. For a nineteenth-century reconstruction of Duilius's triumphal column, see Philip Matyszak, *Chronicle of the Roman Republic: The Rulers of Ancient Rome from Romulus to Augustus* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 83.

> captured ships with their crews, to wit: one septireme, 30 quinqueremes and triremes; 13 he sank. Gold taken: 3,600 (and more) pieces. Silver taken, together with that derived from booty: 100,000 … pieces. Total sum taken, reduced to Roman money … 2,100,000.… He also was the first [*primos*] to bestow on people a gift of booty from a sea-battle, and the first [*primosque*] to lead native free-born Carthaginians in triumph.[93]

The fourfold repetition of *primos* underscores cumulatively the contribution that Duilius made to ending the war and securing the safety of Rome. By contrast, each single use of *primos* shows the novelty of Duilius's accomplishment in each case. The achievements are tabulated by means of mnemonic diagrams. By recounting tallies of various kinds (e.g., totals of ships captured and sunk, plunder in gold and silver reduced to Roman currency) and by listing different categories of victory (e.g., battles waged on land and sea, ships sunk, plunder captured, triumphs celebrated), the composer of the inscription was able to underscore the breath-taking scope of Duilius's achievement.[94] The "glory" that the house of the Duilii inherited as a result of their famous consular forebear is left in no doubt. Not unexpectedly, Duilius was one of the republican *principes* celebrated in the Augustan forum.[95]

The Unraveling of the Roman Noble's Quest for Glory: Cornelius Gallus

The crisis precipitated by Gaius Cornelius Gallus (70–26 BCE) highlights the increasing sensitivity of Augustus and the senate to independent

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93. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Honorary Inscriptions," §1.

94. See E. A. Judge, "Roman Literary Memorials," in Judge, *The First Christians*, §5. The same type of mnemonic diagram is found in the triumphal citation of Pompey, cited in Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 7.97–98.

95. Attilio Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae Vol. 13: Fasti et Elogia* (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1937), §13: "[…] ships […] did he capture. First was he over [the Carthaginians a] naval [triumph to lead]. To him it was permitted after dining out to return home with [fluteplayer and] torchbearer, and a statue with [a column] near the court of Vulcan was placed." Schooled in the same eulogistic tradition as Duilius, Augustus leaves it in no doubt that he was the "first and only" to achieve various feats as well (Res gest. 16.1; 22.3). But it is the extent and variety of Augustus's achievements and accolades, relentlessly driven home with carefully tabulated figures and lists throughout the Res gestae, that ensures that the Roman boasting tradition finds its glorious culmination in Augustus.

careerists.[96] The grievance was that ambitious generals such as Gallus aspired to the style of leadership characteristic of the *nobiles* ("nobles") of the past, without sufficient reference to the new military and patronal dominance of the house of Caesar in the present. In 30 BCE Augustus had appointed Gallus as the first *praefectus* of the new Roman province of Egypt. At the command of Augustus, Gallus built the Forum Julium at Alexandria and duly dedicated it to his patron and friend, Augustus, and his son, Tiberius.[97] Moreover, as a professional poet, Gallus also wrote an epigram in honor of Augustus's forthcoming victorious return to Rome in 29 BCE.[98] So far his career reflected the gratitude of a grateful *cliens* and *amicus* to his patron.

However, upon crushing local rebellions and receiving Ethiopia into Roman protection, Gallus erected a boastful trilingual inscription on 15 April 29 BCE at Philae celebrating the feats of his unprecedented expedition in the grand style of the Scipionic elogia and the inscription of Duilius. The translation of the Latin text, as opposed to the Greek text, is cited below, because the likelihood is that it came from Gallus's own hand, as the elegant literary structure of the Latin demonstrates.[99]

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96. On the career of Gallus, see Jean-Paul Boucher, *Gaius Cornélius Gallus* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres de Lyon, 1996), 5–65.

97. David C. Braund, *Augustus to Nero: A Sourcebook on Roman History 31BC–AD 68* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), §424.

98. Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §426. See, however, R. D. Anderson, P. J. Parsons, and R. G. M. Nisbet, "Elegiacs by Gallus from Qaṣr Ibrîm," *JRS* 69 (1979): 125–55, who argue that Gallus's epigram refers to Julius Caesar, not Augustus, and is datable to ca. 45–44 BCE. Additionally, see Janet Fairweather, "The 'Gallus Papyrus': A New Interpretation," *CQ* 34 (1984): 167–74. In my opinion, the honorific sentiments of the epigram are consonant with the honorific sentiments of the 30 BCE inscription and thus point to the epigram being written a few months later. The Augustan reference in Gallus's epigram (P.Qaṣr.Ibrîm 1, ll. 2–5 [first century BCE Egypt]) is set out below:

My fate, Caesar, will then be sweet to me, when you
    will be the greatest part of Roman history
and when I read that after your return temples of many gods
    Pare richer, hung with your spoils.

99. Friedhelm Hoffmann, Martina Minas-Nerpel, and Stefan Pfeiffer, eds., *Die dreisprachige Stele des C. Cornelius Gallus: Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 45–118, translate and provide a commentary on the hieroglyphic version of the inscription demonstrating how the Egyptian priests depicted Gallus with traditional Egyptian motifs. This is reinforced, so it is argued, by the iconographic depiction of Gallus as a horseman fighting against an enemy soldier in the upper part

> Gaius Cornelius Gallus, son of Gnaeus, Roman eques, first [*primus*] prefect of Alexandria and Egypt after the defeat of the kings by Caesar, son of a god, put down the uprising of the Thebaid in 15 days, in which he defeated the army, having won two pitched battles and taken five cities by storm—Boresis, Coptus, Ceramice, Diospolis Magna and Ophieion; the leaders of these uprisings were captured and our army was led beyond the (first) cataract of the Nile, whither neither the arms of the Roman people nor those of the kings of Egypt had previously advanced; the Thebaid, a source of fear for all kings alike, was subdued and envoys of the king of the Ethiopians were given audience at Philae and that king was received into protection, and a ruler of the Ethiopian Triakontaschoenus was established; he made this dedication to the ancestral gods and to the Nile, his helper.[100]

This inscription was accompanied by further inscriptions being inscribed on the pyramids, in addition to his statues being erected throughout Egypt. Augustus reacted immediately, recalling Gallus from his post and renouncing his friendship, with the result that Gallus committed suicide in 26 BCE (Suetonius, *Aug.* 66.1–2; *Gramm.* 16; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 53.24.1; see also Ovid, *Am.* 3.9.61; *Trist.* 2.445–446).

What was wrong with the tenor of the inscription? Gallus did not mention that he was sponsored by Augustus, which the inscriptions of Augustus's senatorial, equestrian and military protégés were careful to do.[101] The outstanding accomplishments of Roman nobles were signaled

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of the stela, identified in the cartouches as the chosen agent of the new ruler of the country, that is, "Romaios" or Rome (31–40, esp. 32–33). The depiction, it is convincingly shown, is indebted to Egyptian iconographic renderings of the early Pharaonic and later Ptolomaic conquests of the enemy (26–31).

100. Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §425 (CIL 3.14147 = *ILS* 8995 = *OGIS* 2.654). On this inscription within the framework of Roman boasting conventions, see E. A. Judge, "*Veni. Vidi. Vici*, and the Inscription of Cornelius Gallus," in Judge, *The First Christians*, 72–75.

101. E.g., Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §§360, 446, 465, 467, 479, 721. In the case where a singular accomplishment is claimed (§370: "first of all the Paelignians to become a senator and to hold these offices"), the patronage of Augustus is clearly acknowledged ("legate of divine Augustus for two years"). On how the ruler controlled the wealthy and the aristocrats through the offer of honors and priesthoods, see Jon E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131–39, 166–68. Concomitantly, eulogistic speeches in praise of the republican houses and their ancestral heroes, delivered publicly at the funerals of Roman *nobiles*, were curtailed in the early imperial period. Valerie M.

in the inscriptions by the adjective *primus* ("first"). Gallus's deliberate use of the word for his prefecture, though technically true, can only mean one thing: he locates his claim within the rhetoric of the boasting of the Roman *nobiles*, as the Duilius inscription demonstrates. The fleeting mention of Augustus's defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BCE ("after the defeat of the kings by Caesar, son of a god") is overwhelmed by the carefully tabulated list of Gallus's victories. The list adheres to the literary eulogistic convention of multiples of fives (five cities taken in fifteen days, in the case of Gallus).[102] The rapidity with which Gallus's victories were accomplished is then topped by another singular accomplishment that distinguished Gallus from the rest of the commanders, a refrain also characterizing the Duilius inscription: neither the Romans (including the victorious Augustus) nor the Egyptian kings had ever advanced militarily beyond the first cataract of the Nile.[103] Indeed all kings, with the sole exception of prefect Gallus, feared the Thebaid.

Finally, Gallus ends the inscription on a very Augustan note with the foreign kings either being subdued or seeking his protection (Res gest. 27–33). All this stands in vast contrast to the previously restrained self-estimate of Gallus's 30 BCE inscription ("chief engineer of Caesar, son of a god"), with its clear indication that the building of the Forum Julium was "by order of Imperator Caesar." Seemingly, in the flush of personal achievement generated by his unprecedented military victories, Gallus drew the mistaken conclusion that the traditional republican conventions of self-advertisement among the *nobiles* would be maintained in Augustus's principate. While acknowledging his competitor, Augustus Caesar, in the inscription, Gallus excels him by his superior accomplishments, so that Augustus slides into oblivion by contrast. However, Augustus recognized a challenge to his honor early in his rule and did not let the issue slide.

Hope (*Roman Death: The Dying and the Dead in Ancient Rome* [London: Continuum, 2009], 78) observes: "In Imperial Rome family praise of the dead may have been better placed in private contexts. In public any praise had to be tempered by the knowledge that the emperor was not to be surpassed." For a balanced discussion of the reduced aristocratic military activity under the Julio-Claudians, see also Matthew B. Roller, *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 99–101.

102. Judge, "*Veni. Vidi. Vici*," 72.

103. Res gest. 26.1–27.3 can be seen as Augustus's elaborate reply to self-serving careerists such as Gallus who wanted to boast about the extent of their military conquest.

The Triumph of the Julio-Claudian House and the Decline of the Republican Roman Noble Houses and Their Quest for Glory

With the victory of Augustus over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium (31 BCE), bringing an end to a century of civil war at Rome, the traditional republican quest for glory, so the imperial propaganda and inscriptions tell us, was also considered to have found its culmination in the reign of Augustus.[104] The decisive political and military victory of the Julian house over its noble rivals meant that the honorific rituals of self-display and the protocols of status were reconfigured under Augustus and his heirs. In particular, the acclamation of victorious generals in processional triumphs in the capitol was confined to Tiberius after 19 BCE. Significantly, Agrippa, Augustus's coregent, declined two senatorial decrees of triumphs in 19 and 14 BCE (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 54.11.6; 54.24.7), notwithstanding the fact that the *princeps* had initiated each. Which nobleman would now consider proceeding with a demand for a triumph after Agrippa twice declined the honor, letting slip his hope of acquiring the honorific names that nobles traditionally coined for themselves to denote their victories (Africanus, Asiaticus, Numidicus, etc.)?[105] The *princeps*, it could be argued, overcompensated for the loss of such privileges on the part of the nobles, either through the resuscitation of traditional honors (i.e., the *ovatio*) or by the creation of new ones (i.e., the *ornamenta triumphalia*), so that in each case the victorious general did not enter Rome on his triumphal chariot but nevertheless still received recognition and considerable status. However, as Karl Galinsky rightly observes, the perception of overcompensation on Augustus's part is wrong: such "compensatory" honors (Suetonius, *Aug.* 38.1; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 54.12.1; Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. rom*. 2.104.2) were only offered twice, in 7 BCE and 12 CE.[106] Did the remaining noble houses discern with ever-increasing clarity the dramatic shift toward

104. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 225–28.

105. Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretative Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 385. John Henderson (*Figuring Out Roman Nobility: Juvenal's Eighth Satire* [Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997], 27, emphasis original) speaks of the contemporary powerlessness of "long-dismantled names in the names-race" that had so characterized the republican nobility: "names … marked *Republican* fame, for (along with the triumphs) they dried up long since. Save for *royal* conquerors, the Emperors, who monopolised all such kudos."

106. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 385.

a monopolized glory in the Julian house and thus shy away from public competition lest they inadvertently exhibit the hubris of Cornelius Gallus? For some, this may well have been the case. But for others, as the narrative of Tacitus shows, individuals of high birth still asserted themselves periodically, and the Roman ruler had to work out how to respond. Furthermore, as Ronald Syme notes, various titles, honors, and privileges—the preserve of the aristocratic elites—were debased by being allocated to the nonelites: for example, the allocation of the *ornamenta praetoria* to the treacherous equestrian Aelius Seianus in 19 CE and the *ornamenta consularia* to the imperial freedmen Antonius Pallas in the reign of Claudius.[107] Last, public building in Rome would progressively become the preserve of the imperial family,[108] with senatorial families erecting inscriptions, statues, and monuments outside of the capitol, either in the Italian home towns of the aristocrats or in the provincial cities with which they had established a client-patron relationship. Architecturally, then, Rome would become a Julio-Claudian "theme park."

Second, Tacitus tells us that Augustus did not debar a Taurus, a Philippus, or a Balbus from applying the spoils of war or the overflow of their wealth "to the greater splendour of the capital and the glory of posterity (*posterum gloriam*)" (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.72; see also his *Hist.* 3.34; Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. rom.* 2:89; Suetonius, *Aug.* 89). Tiberius, like Augustus, also allowed Marcus Lepidus, a man of moderate wealth, to restore and embellish at his own expense the Basilica of Paullus, a famous building of his Aemilian family. The revealing phrase that Tacitus lets slip, however, in describing the early principate is, "public munificence was a custom still" (*Ann.* 3.72). The implication is plain: public munificence would be progressively wrested from the *nobiles*, thereby cutting off one traditional route of establishing ancestral glory. No one now had the reserves to compete against the Julio-Claudian benefactors of the world (e.g., Res gest.15–24, appendix 1–4). Moreover, Augustus severely restricted the ways in which public largesse was distributed or the festivals and gladiatorial shows funded by private beneficence (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 54.2; cf. 55.5). There was one benefactor in the capital, and increasingly, although he might have wished otherwise, he would share his glory with no one else.[109]

107. Ronald Syme, *Some Arval Brethren* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 115–16.
108. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 384.
109. See Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Plural-*

Third, in Tacitus's monograph honoring his father-in-law, Gnaeus Julius Agricola (49–93 CE), the governor of Britain, the historian reveals a personal family perspective on how the pursuit of military glory, a traditional pathway to ancestral glory for the *nobilis*, had ended under the principate by the turn of the first century. As Tacitus reports (*Agr.* 5.3), "There entered (Agricola's) heart a desire for that military glory [*miltaris gloriae*] that was unwelcome to an age that regarded eminence of every kind unfavorably and in which good report [*magna fama*] was as perilous as bad." With Domitian firmly in view (*Agr.* 41–42), Tacitus concludes (*Agr* 42.2) that *gloria* now consisted in a prudent submission to the ruler while one was of use to the state:

> Let those whose way it is to admire only what is forbidden learn from him that great men can live even under bad rulers and that submission and moderation, if animation and energy go with them, reach the same pinnacle of fame [*laudis*], to which more often men have climbed by perilous courses but, with no profit to the state, have earned their glory [*inclaruerunt*] by an ostentatious death.[110]

Fourth, the savage eighth satire of Juvenal (50/65–post 120 CE) makes fun of the traditional values of the Roman *nobiles* as they recalled their ancestral glory through the continuous parade of genealogies, ancestral busts, honorific names, and so on.[111] Rome was free, Juvenal asserts, only when the republic was led by *principes* of exceptional merit such as Marius

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ism, trans. Brian Pearce (London: Penguin, 1990), 386–90. Note Ronald Syme (*The Augustan Aristocracy* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1986], 9) regarding the role of Caesar in relation to the decline of the *nobiles*: "At Rome the aristocracy demanded deference, and it was not denied, but their *clientelae* were lapsing to the *patronus* of the plebs, the dispenser of games and largesse." However, on the *nobiles* being "natural enemies" of Augustus, see D. C. Earl, *Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 85.

110. As Earl (*Moral and Political Tradition*, 90–91) notes of the period leading up to Gnaeus Julius Agricola: "*Gloria* was to be no longer the pursuit of individual pre-eminence ruinous to individual and state alike. It was to be tempered by obedience, *obsequium*, above all a military virtue. Public men must act as soldiers, winning by their deeds in the service of the state such glory as was consistent with their position, but obedient always to their commander, the emperor.… *Gloria* with moderation and prudence, obedience and subordination: the Republican noble would have termed it slavery."

111. See Henderson, *Figuring Out Roman Nobility*.

and Cicero (*Sat.* 243–253). However, Rome had by Juvenal's time experienced the bloodied sword of Augustus (*Sat.* 240–243), the humiliation of nobles performing on the stage and in the Neronian arena (*Sat.* 185–210), and the horrid singing of the "megastar" Nero (*Sat.* 211–230). Here we have a radical dismantling of the Roman ideal of ancestral glory. Under the principate, the Roman *nobiles* had been unable to replenish themselves with new leadership equal to that of the republican past.[112] The Julio-Claudian rulers, too, were a pale shadow of the great republican *principes*. Above all, Juvenal's satire is a systematic debunking of the lists of republican *nobile*s, culminating in Augustus and his family line, which were mentioned in the imperial propaganda of Horace (*Carm.* 1.12.33–60) and Vergil (*Aen.* 6.808–886).

In conclusion, we have seen that the effusive self-promotion that characterized the Roman *nobiles* in their relentless quest for glory, military and civic, during the republic disintegrated before the defining triumph of the Julian house at Actium (31 BCE) and the culmination of glory in Augustus and his heirs. The failure of the hubristic Cornelius Gallus to perceive this dramatic shift in the Roman quest for glory led Augustus to renounce his friendship with his former client. What particularly provoked Paul regarding the futility of human boasting in his letters (e.g., Rom 2:17, 21; 3:27; 4:2–3; 15:17–18; see also 1 Cor 1:28–29a; Phil 3:5–11) was the refusal of self-sufficient and idolatrous humanity to give glory to God or honor the cruciform Lord of glory (Rom 1:21–23; 1 Cor 2:6–8). Thus the apostle adopts a radical strategy regarding contemporary boasting culture. In 2 Cor 11:16–12:10 he ruthlessly parodies his ancestral inheritance and personal achievements in the grand boasting style of the Scipionic *elogia* and the professional rhetors, with a view to demolishing the invidious comparisons that the Corinthians had began to draw between himself and the boastful "super-apostles" intruding at Corinth.[113] Paul set the foundation for the ultimate triumph of humility as a virtue in Western civilization. It is therefore surprising that few New Testament exegetes have sought to understand Paul's "boasting" and

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112. Earl (*Moral and Political Tradition*, 86) observes regarding the demise of the Roman aristocracy: "But when Juvenal mocked the value of pedigrees, his examples, the descendants of the Republican nobility, were dead and of no account."

113. On Paul's rebuttal of boasting, see James R. Harrison, "In Quest of the Third Heaven: Paul and His Apocalyptic Imitators," *VC* 58 (2004): 24–55, esp. 46–55.

"glory" terminology in Romans against the backdrop of late republican and early imperial discussions of *gloria*.[114]

4. The Difficulty of Defining the "Poor" at Rome

References to the poor in the epigraphic evidence from Rome are not plentiful, but they provide us some insight into the fraught existence of those at the margins of Roman society, notwithstanding the slipperiness of definitions of poverty in the inscriptions and in the Roman literature (i.e., Juvenal, Martial, Seneca).[115] In one tombstone of a female slave honorand could not afford her tombstone, having it paid for by a fellow slave (CIL 6.9980).[116] Other examples of this phenomenon are found in the inscriptions of Rome. A vow to Hercules was paid by two sons, Marcus and Publius Vertuleius, on behalf their father, Gaius, who had experienced the reversal of all his wealth at Sora, south of Rome. Notwithstanding Gaius's decline in wealth, his sons remained well-off enough to fulfill his vow:

> Marcus Vertuleius and Publius Vertuleius, sons of Gaius, in payment of the vow which their father, disheartened, dishevelled, despairing in his smitten fortunes, vowed here, bestow willingly as his children, and most deservedly, a gift upon Hercules, having set aside a tithe and having offered it at a sacred banquet.[117]

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114. See, however, Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 201–69; Harrison, "Augustan Rome and the Body of Christ."

115. On poverty at Rome, see Neville Morley, "The Poor in the City of Rome" and Greg Woolf, "Writing Poverty in Rome," in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. M. Atkins and R. Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21–39, 83–114, respectively. Generally, see Charles R. Whittaker, "The Poor in the City of Rome," in *Land, City, and Trade in the Roman Empire*, ed. Charles R. Whittaker (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 1–25; Richard P. Saller, "Poverty, Honor and Obligation in Imperial Rome," *Criterio*n 37.2 (1998): 12–20; Rena van den Berg, "The Plight of the Poor Urban Tenant," *Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité* 50 (2003): 443–77; L. L. Welborn, "The Polis and the Poor," in Harrison and Welborn, *First Urban Churches 1*, 189–243. I am indebted to several CIL translations of epitaphs, cited below, at "The Faint Voices of the Poor of Ancient Rome," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220a.

116. Similarly, see CIL 6.14404: "The earth, lighter than the mound which itself is light so that it may not weigh down on the bones, holds above itself that mound laid on it by such skill as a poor man can afford."

117. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Dedicatory Inscriptions," §78 (150 BCE).

The terror that the prospect of poverty stirred in the hearts of ancient Romans living in the capital can be clearly seen in the way that poverty is invoked as a curse on tombstones: "But you, spiteful man, who bemoans that my little bones lie here, may you live, with your death deferred, … sick and poor" (CIL 6.24800). The general prejudice against the poor in the mercantile society of Rome is well exemplified by a graffito from nearby Pompeii (150 miles from Rome): "I detest beggars [*pauperos*]. If somebody asks for something for free, he is an idiot; let him pay his cash and get what he wants" (CIL 4.3.4.9839).

By contrast, the poor often claim postmortem virtue on their tombstones. A soldier of the third praetorian cohort, retired in 29 CE, says of himself: "I always lived well, as much as I desired, poor, honest [*pauper honeste*], I cheated no one. Now this means pleasure for my bones" (CIL 6.2489). Here poverty is idealized ethically, proposing a frugal but disciplined lifestyle that freed the honorand from the temptations of avarice and dishonesty. In another example, a slave *paedagogus* and freedman of Augustus admits that he has no debt at all. Once again the motif of poverty is rhetorical, being employed in a metaphorical contrast in order to emphasize the honorand's richness of character:

> Gaius Gargilius Haemon, son of Philagrus Agrippianus, freedman of the deified Augustus, while still alive; paedagogus as well as freedman. Dutiful and august I lived for as long as I could, without lawsuit, without a row, without controversy, without debt, I lived up to my duty to my friends as best I could, poor in terms of personal property, rich in spirit [*peculio pauper animo divitissimus*]. May he be well, who reads this inscription of mine. (CIL 6.8012)

Again, another freedman tombstone proclaims the virtue of its honorand publicly on the Appian Way:

> Stranger, stop and turn your gaze towards this hillock on your left, which holds the bones of a poor man of righteousness and mercy and love [*continentur ossa hominis boni misericordis amantis pauperis*]. Wayfarer, I ask you to do no harm to this memorial. Gaius Attilius Euhodus, freedman of Serranus, a pearl-merchant of Holy Way, is buried in this memorial. Wayfarer, good bye.[118]

118. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §60.

It is likely that these strong assertions of epigraphic moral status on the part of the poor are provoked in reaction to the social reality that virtue was traditionally reserved for the wealthy noble houses and their clients. In this system of moral status allocation, the lowly of Rome, including recently impoverished individuals from the upper classes, were excluded. Upon the death of Nero, the pro-senatorial Tacitus editorializes on the moral vacuum that was the legacy of the Nero's reign. The sharp division in moral status between the elites and the lowly is readily apparent in his analysis:

> The respectable part of the common people and those attached to the great houses, the clients and freedmen of those who had been condemned and driven into exile, were all roused to hope. The lowest classes, addicted to the circus and theatre, and with them the basest slaves, as well as those men who had wasted their property and, to their shame, were wont to depend on Nero's bounty, were cast down and were grasped at every rumour. (*Hist.* 1.4 [Moore])

The poor who speak to us in the tombstones are not the truly destitute at Rome. Rather, some of the honorands of these inscriptions have been subjected to periodic or "one-off" experiences of privation, but they have either managed to retrieve the situation partially or fully or, despite living on the margins, have nevertheless survived on limited resources. Others who are called poor in the commemorative inscriptions owe no debt at all to anyone, choosing instead to assume the guise of poverty for their own rhetorical ends.[119] For those facing genuine privation at their death, their fellow slaves, burial society, or family would pay for their internment and erection of an epitaph.

Finally, in the case of the truly destitute, they pass by anonymously, as Martial observes (*Ep.* 8.75), carried by the *vespillones* in the early evening to their pauper's pyre without any epigraphic commemoration. Nevertheless, historical caution is required here lest we assume that the archaeological evidence of mass burial at the Esquiline cemetery, unearthed by Rodolfo Lanciani in all its horrifying grotesqueness,[120] is considered the norm

119. CIL 6.8012: "Dutiful and august I lived for as long as I could, without lawsuit, without a row, without controversy, without debt, I lived up to my duty to my friends as best I could, poor in terms of personal property, rich in spirit [*peculio pauper animo divitissimus*]."

120. Rodolfo Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1898), 64–65.

for the burial of the poor at Rome and elsewhere. As we will see, burial in the so-called *camp dei poveri* ("the field of the poor") at Ostia's Isola Sacra cemetery, a mere 30 km from Rome, has genuine elements of social ambiguity regarding the precise identity of the poor interred there.[121] Furthermore, the freeborn poor living on the edge of subsistence but not genuinely destitute were not buried in the mass graves of Lanciani but instead sought different forms of burial and memorialization. The recent research of Emma-Jayne Graham sets out comprehensively the material evidence for this.[122] Obviously, this type of background evidence, with its inherent ambiguities, has direct relevance for modern scholarly discussions of Romans, where the social constituency of the Roman house churches and *insulae* is considered to be primarily the poor. How, then, do we methodologically determine who the truly poor were at Rome from the sources? More thought has to be given about the slippery nature of our documentary and material evidence in reconstructions of the socioeconomic profile of the house churches at Rome.

Despite the difficulties we have in defining precisely the poor in Roman society, Paul is clear regarding the operation of beneficence in the body of Christ in the Epistle to the Romans. The gentiles who were providing for the poor at Jerusalem through Paul's collection could not, as reciprocity rituals demanded, expect recompense from their impoverished recipients sometime in the future. Rather Paul inverts the dynamics of indebtedness in the case of the gentiles: *ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοις* (Rom 15:27b). He explains to his gentile auditors that they are reciprocating their Jewish brothers in Christ for the spiritual beneficence of the gospel that came to them via the proclamation and ministry of the mother church at Jerusalem (15:27), resulting in the blessing of the gentile world. Moreover, the anteriority and privileged status of Jews in salvation history (1:16a; 9:3–5; 11:16, 18b; 15:8) ensured the centrality of the Jews

121. See James R. Harrison, "Ostia, Harbor Port of Rome: An Epigraphic and Archaeological Portrait," in this volume.

122. See Emma-Jayne Graham, "Death, Disposal and the Destitute: The Burial of the Urban Poor in Italy in the Late Republic and the Early Empire" (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2004); Graham, "Discarding the Destitute: Ancient and Modern Attitudes towards Burial Practices and Memory Preservation amongst the Lower Classes of Rome," in *TRAC 2005: Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Birmingham 2005*, ed. Ben Croxford (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006), 57–72.

in God's eschatological plan (11:26–32), despite Roman attitudes of superiority toward conquered Israel and its alleged feeble god.[123] Last, Paul's exhortations to be beneficent to those in need, including the enemy (12:8, 14–15, 20–21), stripped Greco-Roman benefaction rituals of all their accrued status and cut through the slipperiness and ambiguity of Roman attitudes towards the poor.

5. The Imperial Cult, the Arval Brethren, and the Roman Circus

The epigraphic records of the Arval Brethren span three centuries, commencing with the reign of Augustus (21/20 BCE) and concluding with Diocletian (304 CE), resulting in a corpus of 116 datable inscriptions, collected and translated by John Scheid.[124] I will confine our epigraphic investigation mainly to the Julio-Claudian period, which comprises twenty-nine inscriptions (21/20 BCE–68 CE). The inscriptions record in intricate detail, year by year and day by day, the ritual offerings and cult organization touching on the worship of the traditional Roman gods and the Roman ruler. The latter rituals include prayers for the health and safety (*pro salute*) of the imperial family, expressed in an annual vow and sacrifice performed each January, as well as cultic recognition of their birthday celebrations.[125]

Above all, the activities of the Arval Brethren were centered upon Dea Dia, an archaic and obscure fertility goddess. She was a divinity of the

123. See Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes*, 299–342, here 325–29.

124. For the French translation of the Arval inscriptions, see John Scheid, *Commentarii fratrum arvalium qui supersunt: Les copies épigraphiques des protocoles annuels de la confrérie arvale (21 av.–304 ap. J.-C.)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1998). On the Arval Brethren, see Syme, *Some Arval Brethren*; Mary Beard, "Writing and Ritual: A Study of Diversity and Expansion in the Arval Acta," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 53 (1985): 114–62; John Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères: Le college des frères Arvales, modèle du culte public dans la Rome des empereurs* (Paris: École Française de Rome, 1990); Robert Schilling, "The Arval Brethren," in *Roman and European Mythologies,* ed. Y. Bonnefoy, trans. W. Donniger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 113–15; Sarah Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion: Augustus and the Fratres Arvales" (MA thesis, McGill University, 2010).

125. For the birthdays, see Livia (Schied, *Commentarii*, §5f.3 [30 January 27 CE]), Gaius (§12c.79 [31 August 38 CE]), Agrippina (§25b.6 [6 November 57 CE], and Nero (§27.30 [15 December 58]). On prayers *pro salute* for the ruler in the Julio-Caludian period, see §5f.11 (Augustus), §8.4 (Tiberius), §12a.18 (Caligula), §§26a.14, 27.28, 28a–c.12, 28.de.25 (Nero).

"clear sky," suggestive of her suitability for the ripening of crops and whose worship is attested only in the epigraphic records of the Arval Brethren.[126] "The Arval brothers," our earliest source, Varro, informs us, "was the name given to those who perform public rites to the end that ploughshares may bear fruits" (*Ling*. 5.85).[127] Dea Dia was worshiped in a sacred grove located at the fifth mile marker outside the *pomerium* of Rome along the Via Campania. Any mishap in the grove necessitated cultic expiation, especially regarding episodes involving their sacred trees.[128] In terms of the archaeological remains of the site, our evidence is almost entirely confined to the Severan period, with the exception of a section of the Temple of Dea Dia and the circus. It would be historically irresponsible to infer what the Julio-Claudian site might have looked like from these much later material remains.[129]

Excavated by John Scheid and Henri Broise from 1975 to 1981,[130] the site of the sacred grove (*lucus*) had two terraces, one on the top of the hill, the other farther down the hillside. Because Dea Dia was the most important deity, her temple and altar, accompanied by twelve to thirteen further altars dedicated to subordinate deities (*arae temporales*), dominated the top terrace. The Caesareum and its *tetrastylum*, the *balneum*, *papiliones*, the circus, and an altar were situated in front of the sacred grove on the lower second terrace. In what follows each building is briefly discussed, with the exception of the circus, which is devoted fuller attention below.

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126. Schilling, "The Arval Brethren," 113.

127. Rather than being a cult in rapid decline (or extinction) in the late republic before its revivification by Augustus in 29 BCE, Beard ("Writing and Ritual," 116) argues that the cult still had continuing vitality in the period, signified by the present-tense *ugare* of Varro, who was writing in the final phase of the republic. On the literary sources on the Arval Brethren, see Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères*, 13–14.

128. Expiation is required for trees falling from old age (Schied, *Commentarii*, §2 col. 1.4; §12d.3) or in a storm (§42 col. 1.14), trees being damaged in a snowstorm (§30 col. 1.21–22), and laurels being hit by lightning (§94 col. 2.7–8).

129. Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 33.

130. See Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères*, 41–182. John Schied, "Le bois sacré de *Dea Dia* et la limite du territoire de la cité de Rome," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 157 (2013): 151–66; Henri Broise and John Scheid, "Recherches au bois sacré de Dea Dia (La Magliana, Rome)," *Bulletin de la société Française d'archaéologie classique* 21 (1987–1988): 199–202; Broise and Scheid, "Étude d'un cas: Le *lucus deae Diae* à Rome," in *Les bois sacrés: Actes du colloque international, Naples, 23–25 novembre 1989*, Collection du Centre Jean Bérard 10 (Paris: de Boccard, 1993), 145–57; Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 33–55.

The Temple of Dea Dia, Her Altar, and the *Arae Temporalis*. The circular temple of Dea Dia, 25 m in diameter, was surrounded by the wooded area of the grove. Broise and Scheid have demonstrated that the eastern area of the rotunda where the *fastigium* was located, first noted in the Arval protocols of Commodus, dates back to the second century BCE, but the rest of the temple is Severan.[131] The altar of Dea Dia, in front of the temple, was devoted to expiatory sacrifices, noted above. The *arae temporalis* ("temporary altars"), denoting altars to subordinate deities, are first mentioned in the reign of Alexander Severus (7 November 224 CE).[132]

The Caesareum and Its *Tetrastylum*. The Caesareum, an independent building noted for the first time in the reign of Commodus,[133] contained a *tetrastylum* (atrium) large enough for the banquet of the Arval Brethren. On one side, an apse had nine statues spanning the Flavian, Antonine, and Severan Caesars (118–119/241–244 CE), seven of which have been identified.[134] We see here the progression of the imperial cult over the three dynasties. Beginning with Hadrian and concluding with Gordian III, each ruler was dressed in Arval garb.[135]

The *Balneum*. We first hear of these baths, 28 m long and 35 m wide, in the reign of Elagabalus.[136] More revealing is a subsequent reference in the reign of Gordian III. The Arval vice-president, Fabius Fortunatus Victorinus, after returning the sacrificial entrails to the altar of Dea Dia, turned back in the *tetrastylum*, took "precautions according to the book and walked into the *balineum*," whereupon he received his colleagues who had arrived.[137] After noting, again according to the book, that they had all been present in celebrating the sacrifices, the Arval Brethren concluded these ceremonies with a banquet in the *tetrastylum*, whereupon they

131. On the *fastigum* in Commodus's reign (8 February 183 CE), see Schied, *Commentarii*, §93 col. 1.21–22. On the possible meanings of *fastigum* and their architectural ramifications, see Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 40–41. On the second-century BCE dating, see Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères*, 149.

132. Schied, *Commentarii*, §105b.6, 8. On the names of the subordinate deities, see §105b.8–12. For discussion, see Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 43–44.

133. Schied, *Commentarii*, §94 col. 2.5, 13 (13 May 183 CE).

134. For their identity, see Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères*, 162.

135. For busts of four emperors in Arval garb (Augustus, Antoninus Pius, Lucius Verus, Marcus Aurelius), each wearing a wreath of corn, see Jane Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context*, Image and Context 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 88 figs. 46–49.

136. Schied, *Commentarii*, §100a.10 (27 May 218 CE).

137. Schied, *Commentarii*, §114 col. 2.7–8 (29 May, 240 CE).

returned to the sacred grove of the Temple of Dea Dia to offer more sacrifices and engage in further cultic activities beyond that.[138] Here we gain a sense of the complexity of the cycle of sacrificial rituals and banqueting across the cultic complex.

The *Papiliones*. In these pavilion-like structures, the Arval Brethren changed into their white vestments and sheepskin sandals before proceeding to the *tetrastylum* for a banquet.[139]

Having gained a precious glimpse into the cultic activities and the facilities at the sacred grove in the Severan era, we can only guess at what continuities and discontinuities there were with the sacred grove of the Julo-Claudian period. Two important questions remain. What do the Julio-Claudian protocols of the Arval Brethren show us about traditional Roman religion and the imperial cult? Further, what do we learn about the shadowy Arval Brethren themselves?

5.1. The Julio-Claudian Protocols of the Arval Brethren: The Issue of Apotheosis

Augustus restructured the priestly college of the Arval Brethren and its worship of Dea Dia, probably in 29 BCE,[140] as part of his policy of favoring little-worshiped and disfavored cults in the late republic. The first extant Protocol of the Arval Brethren is datable to 21/20 BCE, although there could have been epigraphic texts produced prior to this.[141] We might wonder what fired Augustus's interest in the Arval Brethren as a priestly college. Possibly the college's mythological association with Romulus, a strategic legitimation narrative for Augustus as the new Romulus of Rome, was decisive.[142]

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138. Schied, *Commentarii*, §114 col. 2.14–21 (29 May 240 CE). On the order and nature of the cultic rituals and banqueting, including the famous *carmen Arvale* (i.e., hymn to Mars: Schied, *Commentarii*, §100a.32–38 [29 May 214 CE]), see Syme, *Some Arval Brethren*, 115; Schilling, "The Arval Brethren," 114.

139. Schied, *Commentarii*, §114 col. 2.42 (29 May 240 CE); cf. §100a.20.

140. Alison E. Cooley, *Res gestae divi Augusti*: *Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 137.

141. Schied, *Commentarii*, §1.

142. According to Masurius Sabinus, cited in Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 7.7.8, the twelve brothers were born of Acca Laurentia, but when one brother died, Romulus was adopted into the family. On Augustus as the new Romulus, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 172, 331–32.

The twelve Arval Brethren, among whom the emperor was an honorific supernumerary, were presided over by a *magister*, an annual magistracy spanning Saturnalia (17 December) to Saturnalia. The *magister* was also assisted by a priest, a *flamen*.[143] The social constituency of the Arval Brethren was select and exclusive, of senatorial extraction, though they were seldom visible at Rome except to elect new members at the Temple of Concord.[144] Syme has observed that "among them were no doubt men of quiet habits and averse from dangerous ambitions, with no common doctrine in life or thought save acquiescence in the rule of the Caesars."[145]

However, Syme's portrait does not align with the political realities at the outset of Augustus's reign. Sarah Limoges has intensively studied the prosopography of the first cohort of nine Brethren in the highly fragmentary Arval College Protocol of 21/20 BCE.[146] There, significantly, seven out of the nine were political opponents of Augustus: "There were four men who had previously been Antonians, and one who had previously been a Pompeian, as well as two members that had been opposed to his rule independent of faction ties."[147] In sum, the selection of Arval Brethren was designed to placate Augustus's political enemies and symbolically underscored the sincerity of Augustus's restoration of the republic in 27 BCE.[148] However, from a study of the prosopography of the Protocol of 14 CE, it is clear that these nine consuls mostly owed their rise to power to the patronage of Augustus.[149] The early fractious political climate had dramatically changed by the end of Augustus's reign. Finally, the senatorial composition of the Arval Brethren remained strong up to and including

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143. For references, see Schied, *Commentarii*, "magister" and "flamen" in the index. Note Augustus's statement regarding his own status as an Arval brother among other priestly and cultic honors (Res gest. 7): "I have been chief priest, augur, one of the Fifteen for conducting sacred rites, one of the Seven in charge of feasts, Arval brother, member of the fraternity of Titus, and fetial priest."

144. Syme, *Some Arval Brethren*, 102.

145. Syme, *Some Arval Brethren*, 110.

146. Schied, *Commentarii*, §1. Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 57–69.

147. Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 58.

148. Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 56. On the sincerity of Augustus in restoring the republic, see Mason Hammond, "The Sincerity of Augustus," *HSCP* 69 (1965): 139–52; E. A. Judge, *The Failure of Augustus: Essays on the Interpretation of a Paradox* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2019), 85–110, 181–84, 231–54, 265–80.

149. Schied, *Commentarii*, §2. Limoges, "Reconstructing Religion," 69–79.

the Neronian period, with only two figures of obscure origin being present in the Protocols of 63 and 66 CE.[150] Although the social prestige of the aristocracy declined during the Julio-Claudian period, they still continued to be heavily represented in the college of the Arval Brethren.

What do the Protocols of the College of the Arval Brethren reveal about the imperial cult in the Julio-Claudian period? First, the Protocols point to the fundamental importance of adoption and apotheosis for the legitimation of the Julio-Claudian house. Curiously, Julius Caesar is bypassed despite his apotheosis, demonstrating that the Arval Brethren only registered honor to those rulers with whom the College had personal encounter during their reign as a priestly supernumerary. In Protocols §§3–10 (15–37 CE), Tiberius's refusal of divine honors is consistently respected, but the apotheosized Augustus, Tiberius's adopted father, is referred to four times.[151] Mention of the apotheosized Augustus also occurs four times in the reign of Caligula, but occurrences explode under Claudius and Nero, either referring to Augustus's temple or to him singularly.[152] Reference to the apotheosized Claudius appears frequently in the reign of Nero.[153] The Genius of Nero is also worshiped.[154]

Strikingly, in the 54 CE Protocol the Arval Brethren summon the god Salus to protect the young prince Nero: "*Salus publica* of the Roman people of the Quirites, [we demand] and pray that you keep safe and sound Nero Claudius, child of Agrippina Augusta, son of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus] Germanicus, divine prince [*diuini principis*] and [public parent, prince of youth, and, consequently, to expedite it] as soon as possible [to exempt him from serious] illness."[155] This Protocol, addressed to Claudius

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150. Syme, *Some Arval Brethren*, 118. For the two obscure figures, see Q. Tillius Sassius (Schied, *Commentarii*, §29 col. 1.8, 14, 29, col. 2.3 [63 CE]) and Q. Postumius Ca[---] (Schied, *Commentarii*, §30ab.3; 1.gh.5, 30; 2.cef.2 [66 CE]).

151. Reign of Tiberius: Scheid, *Commentarii*, §§5a–e.11; 5f.12; 7 col. 1.1–2, 7 col. 2.6.

152. Reign of Caligula: Scheid, *Commentarii*, §§12c.19, 88, 94, 99, 104; 13abed.10; 13fgh.2. Reign of Claudius: §§17.8, 17; 18.4, 15; 19.1, 8; 20.22–23. Reign of Nero: §§25.5; 26a–lr.15, 19; 27.5, 40, 45; 28.28.a–c.43; 30 col. 1.cd.25–26; 30 col. 2.5–6, 34, 39; 32.1; 33.3; 35 col. 2.ab.1, 6.

153. Reign of Nero: Scheid, *Commentarii*, §§26a–lr.14, 19; 27.12, 39, 45; 28.a–c.29, 44; 28.de.26; 30 col. a.cd.26; 30 col. 2.6, 34, 39; 32 preface; 33 preface, 4; 35 col. 2.ab.preface, 1; 39.1.

154. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §30 col. 1.cd.27.

155. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §22.23–25 (28 June 54).

while he was still alive, is intriguing in that the young prince-in-waiting, Nero, is addressed as "divine." The flattery of the future ruler by the Arval Brethren is potent: the implication is that Nero is now considered godlike—but certainly not divine because apotheosis was the senate's prerogative upon the honorand's death. We see here in advance something of the rapturous reception that would soon be accorded to Nero in the Einsiedeln Eclogues, among other literary and documentary texts, upon his accession to power. Moreover, when Nero becomes ruler upon Claudius's death in 54 CE, the Arval Brethren underscore his claim to legitimation by not only highlighting the apotheosis of Claudius but also by referring to his adoption by his Julio-Claudian predecessor on two occasions.[156]

The apotheosis of the female members of the Julio-Claudian house is also emphasized.[157] First, in the case of Julia Augusta—that is, Livia, wife of Augustus and mother of Tiberius—the Arval Brethren commemorate her birthday, sacrifice to Dea Dia for "what is good, beneficial, and fortunate" for Tiberius and his mother, and offer sacred prayer wishes and sacrifices of a cow for the health and safety of both of them.[158] Upon Julia Augusta's deification by Claudius in 42 CE and the ratification of her new title of *diva Augusta* (Suetonius, *Aug.* 101), her equality with other apotheosized family members is unequivocally asserted in the Protocols: "the magister Lucius Vitellius offers as a sacrifice in the name of the College [of the Arval Brethren] a male bovine [to divine Augustus, and] a cow [to divine Augusta - - -]."[159] This is later reinforced by her parallel association with the two other senate-apotheosized Julio-Claudian rulers and their

156. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §26.a–lr.29.

157. Note the celebration of the birthdays of Antonia Augusta and Aprippina the Elder: respectively, Scheid, *Commentarii*, §12c.7 (31 January 38 CE) and §13.fgh.13 (24/26 October 39 CE).

158. Birthday of Julia: Scheid, *Commentarii*, §§5f.3; 10.1; 12c.2. Sacrifice to Dea Dia for Julia and Tiberius: §4q.17. Sacred wishes and sacrifices of a cow for the safety of Julia and Tiberius: §§5a–e.5; 6.13; 17.8–9, 18; 18.16. Prayer for the safety of the Roman ruler was a central concern of the Arval Brethren: e.g., a prayer to Jupiter for Tiberius amid unspecified perils (Scheid, *Commentarii*, §§7 col. 2.a.21 [3–4 January 33–36 CE]); "the discovery of the nefarious intentions of Cnaeus Lentulus Gaetulicus" against Caligula (13fgh.18–19); prayer for Claudius's protection from "bad sickness" (22.25–26); sacrifices to the gods upon "the discovery of criminal designs" against Nero (30 col. 1.cd.2–3; 30 col. 2.20–21).

159. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §18.13–17.

sacrificial offerings.[160] Indeed, the initial connection between the *domus augusta* of Claudius and Augustus, by virtue of Livia's presence in each case, functions to legitimize Claudius's succession as ruler in 41 CE, but the deification of Livia alongside Augustus could well have predisposed public expectation to his future divinization, notwithstanding Seneca's savage mockery of the apotheosized Claudius in his *Apoc.* 1–15.

Second, the apotheosis of Julia Dusilla (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 59.11.2.), sister of Nero and niece of emperor Claudius, is recorded in the Protocols for 38 CE, when she is consecrated in the new Temple of Augustus and is subsequently called *diva Drusilla*.[161] After the death of Caligula, however, her worship is never mentioned again in the Protocols.

Third, the second wife of Nero, Poppaea, and their daughter Claudia were both honored with the title *Augusta* upon the birth of the daughter. Poppaea Augusta has prayer made for her good health on 21 January 63 CE, whereas on an unspecified day an offering of a male bovine is made to Jupiter on behalf of Poppaea Augusta and Claudia Augusta upon the arrival of Nero back in Rome.[162] It is interesting that the young child, who died of illness at four months old, had already acquired her mother's honorific title before her death and was apotheosized upon her death ("the divine virgin Claudia").[163] However, as with Drusilla, the worship of Poppaea (and, indeed, Claudia) does not extend beyond 66 CE, the year of her apotheosis (*diva Poppaea Augusta*).[164]

Last, the hypostatization of virtues and abstractions as substitutes for the ruler's presence in a worship context and their attachment to specific members of the imperial house appears in the Protocols as a further aspect of the imperial cult.[165]

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160. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §26.a-lr.19: "in [the new temple of divine Augustus two male bovine]s, to divine [Augusta two cows, to divin]e Claudius [two male bovines]."

161. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §12.c.99 (23 September 38 CE), 103. Seneca (*Apoc.* 1) mocks Drusilla's apotheosis by virtue of her association with the frail Claudius: "Still, if I must produce my authority, apply to the man who saw Drusilla going heavenward; he will say he saw Claudius limping along in the same direction." On the numismatic and bust images of Drusilla, see Susan Wood, "Diva Drusilla Panthea and the Sisters of Caligula," *AJA* 99 (1995): 457–82.

162. Prayer wishes: Scheid, *Commentarii*, §29. col. 1.20; offering to Juno: §29 col. 2.6.

163. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §30 col. 2.cef.6, 33, 39.

164. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §§30 col. 1.27; 30 col. 2.34.

165. See J. Rufus Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," *ANRW* 2.17.2: 827–948. E.g., *Clementia*, *Concordia (Neronis)*, *Felicitas Augusta, Pax*

5.2. The Circus

I noted above that the circus was a feature of the first-century sacred grove of the Arval Brethren. The Protocols of 29 May 38 CE (Scheid, *Commentarii*, §28.c.48–51) reveal that the Arval Brethren attended the circus site on the lower terrace of the sacred grove and commenced the races:

> On the same day, at the same place, Caius Caesar Augustus Germanicu[s, magister] of the college of Arval Brethren, with Appius Silanus, flamen of Dea Dia, sacrificed the best lamb and gave the signal to the chariots and the horse riders.

Moreover, the slave charioteer, in the consulship of Caius Cestius and Marcus Servilus (35 CE), won twice at the games in honor of Dea Dia, a clear reference to the chariot races held at the sacred grove of the Arval Brethren:

> Fuscus, charioteer of the Green [racing stable], lived twenty-four years. At Rome he won fifty-three times, twice at the games for the goddess Dia, once at Bovillae; having been called back twice [from false starts] for one palm of victory, he won the same. Out of all charioteers, he won immediately on the very day he was first sent out. Machao, his fellow slave, [set up this tablet] for the sake of his memory in the consulship of Gaius Cestius and Marcus Servilius.[166]

In conclusion, the Protocols demonstrate the absolute centrality of the imperial cult as much at Rome as in the Greek East. This is demonstrated by the meticulous attention that the Arval Brethren paid to the correct cultic honoring of the ruler and his family, along with their devotion to Jupiter, Dea Dia, and her subordinate deities. Thus Paul's searing denunciation of idolatry in Rom 1:21–22 would have been viewed by Romans as a dangerous abandonment of the cultic rituals that ensured the continuance of the blessings of *pax deorum* upon Rome. Moreover, the heavy emphasis upon adoption and apotheosis as the foundation for Julio-Claudian legitimation is countered by the apostle with his incisive portrait of the risen

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Augusta, *Providentia Augusta*: for references, see Scheid, *Commentarii*, "Divinités" in index.

166. CIL 6.33950; translation from https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220b.

Davidic and eternal Son of God "in power" in Rom 1:2–4.[167] Further, the aristocratic prestige associated with the Arval Brethren is punctured by Paul's depiction of a God who shows no partiality (2:11). Paul's injunction to the Roman believers to associate with the lowly (12:3b, 16) stands in sharp contrast to the Arval Brethren who, as the Protocol of 13 May 81 CE reveals, had reserved seats at the amphitheater—each assigned according to one's internal status rankings—for themselves, their attendants, family, and friends.[168] Last, the Arval Brethren are animated by their belief in the "*Aeternitas* of the empire," *Aeternitas* being the divine personification of eternity.[169] By contrast, Paul reserves the language of "eternity" for the eternal God and his glory (11:36b; 16:26–27). In sum, notwithstanding the difficulties of interpretation of Rom 13:1–7,[170] Paul dismantles the core rationale of the imperial cult and the continuance of empire in the epistle, other than its dimensions resonant with ancient honor culture (13:7b), but even here the apostle radically reconfigures the operations of the honor system (12:10b; see also 1 Cor 12:24b–26).

6. Associations and Synagogues at Rome

In the dedicatory inscriptions of Rome, there is mention of the associations (*societates*) and guilds (*collegia*). These primarily function as burial, building, cultic, and feasting societies, but they provide valuable comparanda, as the recent explosion of association scholarship has shown,[171] in regard to the body-life of the early Christians. The extant evidence of our epitaphs and dedications at Rome touches on a spread of activities involving the associations and guilds.[172] A few examples will suffice.

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167. See my essay "Romans 1:2–4 and Imperial 'Adoption' Ideology," in this volume.

168. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §48.25–34 (13 May 81 CE).

169. Scheid, *Commentarii*, §30 col. 1.cd.5.

170. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 271–323.

171. See James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit: The Cross and Moral Transformation*, WUNT 430 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 297–302; John S. Kloppenborg, "Associations, Christ Groups, and Their Place in the Polis," *ZNW* 108 (2017): 1–56; Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*.

172. Additionally, see Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), for association inscriptions from Rome dating from the second century CE onward; there is mention of athletic synods

A large pillar at Rome is designated "the property of the guild of cutters or stone-sawyers."[173] A member of the Board of Two, whose name is not available due to the fragmentary remains of the honorific epitaph, provided, as the overseer of "the guild of ring-makers," a burial place for its members from his own funds.[174] Also "the Association of Greek Singers," either furnishing Greek shows or functioning as an association of players and actors, build a tomb for members, with officials of the association being publicly honored, including the patron himself and various freedmen. Another freedman who paid for a subsequent restoration of the monument was also honored on the epitaph in an addition made by a later hand.[175] Last, on the Tiber Island at Rome, two freedmen and the chairman of "the guild of Goat's-flesh Gall-wine" superintend an unspecified building,[176] whereas the guilds of the coppersmiths and the guild of the butchers "near the Fishpond" offered sacrifices to the goddess Fortuna in the city.[177]

Although the trade-based context of the association and guild inscriptions at Rome is different from the meetings of the early Christians, some interesting intersections nevertheless occur in the case of Rome. For example, there are house churches hosted by trades-based coworkers of Paul (Rom 16:2–5; see Acts 18:2b–3). Benefactors, in a manner similar to the associations, assume responsibilities for the needs of the house churches (Rom 12:8b, 8d), with honor (13:7b: "if honor, then honor"; 12:9b) and the obligation of love (13:8–10) being reciprocated by their recipients, though "friendship" is the dynamic of patronage and reciprocation in the case of the ancient associations.[178] Despite the commonalities, the dynamics of

(§§320–21, 325–28), associations involving deities (§§322, 324), epitaphs from the synagogues of Rome (§329), a family association (§323), and an association of Paean singers (§319).

173. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §101.

174. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §102.

175. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §103. Additionally, see the "guild of merchants" ("Dedicatory Inscriptions," §117) and the "guild of Iovius God of Brotherhood" (§128), both inscriptions at Capua.

176. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Dedicatory Inscriptions," §139.

177. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Dedicatory Inscriptions," §§148–49.

178. Note the honorific mention of Proclus, the "patron of the ship builders of Ostia," whose generosity would be reciprocated by the political support of the guild in the harbor city of Rome (Brian K. Harvey, *Roman Lives: Ancient Roman Life as Illustrated by Latin Inscriptions* [Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2004], §12 [CIL 14.292]). On friendship, see Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit*, 316–21.

the social relations, the recipients of beneficence, and the communal and civic ethics of the early believers are differently understood and focused in comparison to the local associations.[179] Moreover, the mixed social constituency of the early Christian groups and associations pose interesting questions about how social relations are worked out in their meetings and in the wider civic life of the city outside their respective fraternities. What organizational similarities and differences emerge in such a comparison? What limits did the early Christians place on the mimicking of the ethos of civic bodies and their public rhetoric, a characteristic that the associations and guilds also shared in their negotiation of a settled place in the Mediterranean cities?[180] In sum, more work needs to be done in charting the *distinctives* of early Christian understanding of intramural community and extramural civic involvement, given the excellent scholarly work recently carried out on the similarities between the local associations and the house churches.

Last, we turn to the epigraphic evidence for the synagogal associations of Rome.[181] The inscriptions were found in three district catacombs (Monteverde, Trastevere, Vigna Randanini) and in one of unknown provenance. This late third- and fourth-century CE epigraphic evidence

179. See Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit*, 257–96; Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes*, 112–19.

180. Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit*, 297–347; Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklêsia*.

181. For select translations of the inscriptions, see Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, §329. For discussion, see Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 135–60; Leonard Victor Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora*, RGRW 126 (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Romano Penna, "The Jews in Rome at the Time of the Apostle Paul," in Penna, *Paul the Apostle: A Theological and Exegetical Study* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 1:19–47; Peter Richardson, "Augustan-Era Synagogues in Rome," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 17–29; Richardson, *Building Jewish in the Roman East* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 120–25; Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 38–40. See also "Jewish Congregations in Late Ancient Rome," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220c. On the Semitic epigraphy, see Per A. Bengtsson, "Semitic Inscriptions in Rome," in *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary Studies*, ed. B. Olsson et al. (Stockholm: Åströms, 2001), 151–65.

reveals either the neighborhood in which the synagogue was situated,[182] the names of their influential sponsors,[183] or the geographic origins of their worshipers.[184] Additionally, there is mention of a synagogue of the Hebrews and of the Secenians.[185] There is possibly epigraphic mention of two more synagogues, but each reading is contested by scholars.[186] The epigraphic evidence also reveals the patrons, leaders, and lesser officials of the synagogues at Rome, the general age expectation of the Jewish elites if these inscriptions are sufficiently representative, the eulogies accorded to

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182. The Calcaresians (i.e., the limeburner's district): *JIWE* 2.165 (additionally, 2.69, 98, 558, 584); the Campesians (from the Campus Martius): *JIWE* 2.288 (additionally, 2.560, 577); the Siburesians (from the Subura district, located between the Viminal and Esquiline Hills): *JIWE* 2.557 (additionally, 2.338, 428, 451, 452, 527).

183. The Augustesians (named after Augustus): *JIWE* 1.189, 2.542 (additionally, 2.96, 194, 547). Philo's effusive panegyric to Augustus (*Legat.* 143–147), notwithstanding its rhetorical motivation to dissuade Caligula from placing his statue in the Jerusalem temple, demonstrates the Jewish cultivation and honor of the Julian world benefactor. The Agrippesians (named after the son-in-law and co-regent of Augustus, Agrippa): *JIWE* 2.170 (additionally, 2.549, 562); the Volumnesians (named after Volumnius: perhaps Herod's friend, the procurator of Syria in 8 BCE, though the name was also widely known in Rome): *JIWE* 2.167 (additionally, 2.100, 167, 577). It is significant that the three explicitly named sponsors, if these synagogue names reflect historical reality, either belong to the Julian house or have contacts with the Herodian house. The Jews in early first-century CE Rome, it would seem, were able to forge not only important diplomatic contacts but also significant relationships of patronage (Penna, "The Jews in Rome," 29). The so-called syangogue of the Herodians, discussed below, would provide further confirmation of this. However, see now Michael Flexsenhar III, "Jewish Synagogues and the Topography of Imperial Rome: The Case of the *Agrippesioi* and *Augustesioi*" (*JSJ* 51 [2020]: 367–97), who argues against this consensus, on the basis of the chronology of the catacombs and inscriptions, that the *Agrippesioi* and *Augustesioi* synagogues belong to the fourth century CE. Flexsenhar posits that the synagogue names were toponyms, signaling instead the location of the Jewish synagogues in Rome, areas that had been associated with Augustus and Agrippa for centuries.

184. From Tripolis, capital of ancient Libya: *JIWE* 2.166; from the city of Elaia, its city of origin in Mysia: *JIWE* 2.576 (additionally, 2.406).

185. Synagogue of the Hebrews (the name prodably designates the oldest synagogue of Rome [Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 149]: *JIWE* 2.578 (additionally, see 2.2, 33, 579); synagogue of the Secenians: *JIWE* 2.436. On the synagogue of the Secenians and the uncertainty regarding the name's significance, see Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 149–51.

186. For a succinct discussion of both inscriptions (*CIJ* 1.173, 501), see Penna, "The Jews in Rome," 29 n. 45.

faithful Jews in a syngogal context, and conventional blessings (e.g., "His sleep is in peace").[187]

Of particular interest is the highly fragmentary inscription containing the name […]ΡΟΔΙΩΝ.[188] Does the text, as Jean B. Frey (*CIJ* 1.173) maintains, refer to a "synagogue of the Herodians"?[189] The expected form of the word, it might be objected, would normally be "Herodeians," as in the references to "Augustesians" or "Agrippesians." But, as Peter Richardson notes, "Herodians" might simply be a spelling mistake in this instance, consonant with the barbarous Greek found on many inscriptions and more likely to be mispelled in Rome as opposed to the Near East.[190] Alternatively, is Emil Schürer's proposal that the text speaks of a "synagogue of the Rhodians"

187. For patrons, see *JIWE* 2.170 ("Kailis, patron of the Agrippesians." For leaders, see *JIWE* 2.117 ("head of the synagogue," *archisynagôs*); 2.165 ("twice leader," *archôn*); 2.166, 167, 288, 577 ("leader," *archôn*); (debatably) 2.216 ("mother," *mêtêr*), 2.288, 576, 578 ("father," *patêr*). On female leadership in synagogues, see Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*, BJS 36 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982). For lesser officials, see *JIWE* 1.189 ("chief elder," *gerousiarchês*). For ages of honorands: 53 years (*JIWE* 2.117); 60 years (2.165); 35 years (2.167); 54 years (1.189); 8 years and 2 months (2.228: male child); 30 years and 42 days (2.557); 41 years (2.578). *JIWE* 2.576 is noteworthy not only for the remarkable age of the honorand ("110 ages old") but also for the clear description of what constitutes a faithful and pious diaspora Jew: love of his covenantal people, love of the torah, a life of good works. Is the reference to 110 years an accurate historical reminiscence, or is it a symbolic indication of a life lived fully in God's service within humanity's allocated time (120 years: Gen 6:3; cf. 47:9)? Last, in terms of the concluding blessing, note the variation in *JIWE* 2.557: "no one is immortal." On this well-known formula, see Pieter W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 120–22.

188. The badly damaged inscription (*CIJ* 1.173)—a large broken marble slab (57 x 45 cm) with unusually large lettering—was found in the Jewish catacomb in Vigna Randanini on the Appian Way in Rome. The version below includes line 1, with its three puzzling incisions of x, entirely ignored in almost all modern discussion:

....] x x x
....] ΓΩΓΗΣ
....] ΙΡΟΔΙΩΝ
ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΠΑΣΙ

189. Jean B. Frey, *Europe*, vol. 1 of *Corpus of Jewish Inscriptions: Jewish inscriptions from the Third Century B.C. to the Seventh Century A.D.* (New York: Ktav, 1975), translates: "…….. of the synagogue of the [He]rodians: blessing to all" (my English trans.).

190. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 123.

more likely?[191] Leon suggests that a personal name is being rendered, as opposed to a synagogue identification: "To Maron, archon of the Synagogue of the Campesians, his son Rhodion set this stone. A blessing to all."[192] However, this restoration requires a much larger slab than we have, so this restoration may be reasonably discounted.[193] Dave Noy (*JIWE* 2.292) has posited that the reference is to an unknown person named Herodion: "[…] of the synagogue […] Herodion […] Blessing to all."

Finally, Richardson has argued that the reference is to synagogue "of the Herodians," proposing that Herod the Great is indirectly being honored by a synagogue.[194]

line 1	[x x x name] x x x
line 2	[ruler of the syna]gogue
line 3	[of the He]rodians
line 4	[age?] A blessing to all

Richardson takes seriously the four incisions of *x* in line 1, which are ignored in other restorations. He suggests that they represent decorations on the right and left (restored) respectively, with a name in the middle in the nominative or dative (restored). Thus line 2 articulates the position of the deceased person (synagogue ruler or scribe?), with the synagogue named in line 3, and possibly the age of the deceased in line 4, along with the stereotypical blessing, the latter squeezed in due to the stonecutter's miscalculation. The advantage of Richardson's restoration over other restorations is that it addresses the entire four lines of the inscription, produces a lucid honorific epitaph that aligns well with the size of the marble slab and its large lettering, finds parallels with the epigraphic practice of synagogues elsewhere, and provides a reasonable explanation for the unexpected spelling of […]ΡΟΔΙΩΝ.[195] Assuming that Richardson's read-

191. Nikos Kokkinos ("A Fresh Look at the *gentilicum* of Felix Procurator of Judaea," *Latomus* 94 [1990]: 124–41, here 133 n. 49), endorsing the original proposal of Emil Schürer (*The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black, 3 vols. [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987], 3.1:98), writes that Frey's restoration "is an error and must be discounted. The correct word is ΙΡΟΔΙΩΝ (people of Rhodes)."

192. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 161.

193. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 124.

194. Richardson, *Building* Jewish, 121–25.

195. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 121–24.

ing and overall rationale is correct, we are witnessing here the high profile of the Herodian house as imperial clients at Rome in the Augustan era, a profile that attracted some Jewish synagogal worshipers in the capital as clients of King Herod. Richardson proposes that the reason for the attraction was that Herod was "active on behalf of Diaspora Jews and was seen as King of all Jews everywhere."[196]

Herodian influence at Rome was still important at the time of the composition of the Epistle to the Romans. There were believers present in the house of the freedman named Aristobulus (Rom 16:10a). Aristobulus, it has been viably suggested, was the grandson of Herod the Great, brother of Herod Agrippa and Herod of Chalcis, and an *amicus* and client of Claudius (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.221–222; *A.J.* 18.273–276; 20.13). The Jewish and specifically Herodian context of this reference is made more likely by Paul's subsequent reference to "Herodion, my kinsman" (Rom 16:11).[197] Probably Herodion was also slave or freedman of the Herodian family at Rome, because "instances of the Latin equivalent of the name refer mostly to imperial slaves or freedmen (for example, CIL 6.9005)."[198] Finally, converts from the Herodian house are also known elsewhere in the New Testament (Luke 8:3; Acts 13:1), as well as the presence of a Herodian party at the time of Jesus (Mark 3:6; 12:13; Matt 22:16). To say that it is unlikely that Roman Jews would have chosen Herod as their patron simply ignores contemporary realities: there were Jews in Palestine who enthusiatically supported the Herodian house, and King Herod was a popular figure internationally. In sum, the fame of King Herod as benefactor throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the *amicitia* ("friendship") of the Herodian house with the ruler at Rome in the Claudian era was well known, so much so the strong possibility is that *CIJ* 1.173 does in fact refer to the "synagogue of the Herodians."

The extent of Jewish auditors in the Roman house churches is posed by the existence of several synagogues at Rome, notwithstanding the fact that Romans is written to a gentile audience (Rom 1:6–7, 13–15; 11:13; 15:15–16). At the very least, we know that there was a minority of Jewish believers

196. Richardson, *Building Jewish*, 124–25. On Herod as benefactor, see Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 174–77.

197. Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 967.

198. Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 77.

in the house churches at Rome: the Jewish συγγενεῖς ("kinsmen") of Rom 16:7 and 16:11 (see also 16:21) clearly belong to the body of Christ despite their meager numbers.[199] We should add to these references Aquila and Prisca (16:3–4), being originally residents of Rome before their missionary travels and activities as coworkers of Paul (Acts 18:2), possibly not even being believers when they first left Rome under the Claudian expulsion.[200] Presumably they already possessed important civic, religious, and trade contacts—outside of their house church—among the independent Jewish synagogues of Rome, which they would have renewed upon their return to the capital early on in Nero's reign. Other names have been suggested as Jewish believers at Rome: Tryfaena (Rom 16:12), Rufus (16:13), Julia (16:15), and Maria (16:16).[201] How, then, did unbelieving members of the synagogues of Rome move into the house churches and become believers? In the book of Acts we find many references to God-fearers or God-worshipers (10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7; see also 13:43), whose historical existence has been confirmed by the famous Aphrodisias inscription.[202] As A. B. du Toit observes, "The synagogues in Rome would have been frequented by such sympathizing pagans," proving "fertile soil for the Christian gospel in Rome."[203] Finally, the travel of believing Jewish businessmen and tradesmen to the capital from their diaspora cities in the Greek East would have been another possible method of dissemination of the faith at Rome via their interactions with the members of the Jewish synagogues while in the city.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the value of looking at the interpretation of Romans against the backdrop of the material evidence of the city of

199. The attempt of Andrew A. Das (*Solving the Romans Debate* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 91–93) to dismiss these references as metaphorical kinship language is unsuccessful. See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 255 n. 184.

200. For arguments, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 256 n. 187.

201. For differing assessments, see A. B. du Toit, "The Ecclesiastical Situation of the First Generation Roman Christians," *HvTSt* 53 (1997): 496–512, here 500–501; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 153–95.

202. See Joyce M. Reynolds and Robert F. Tannebaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary; Texts from the Excavations at Aphrodisias Conducted by Kenan T. Erim* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987).

203. Du Toit, "The Ecclesiastical Situation," 502.

Rome. Inexplicably, many Romans commentators have been reluctant to pay serious attention to the archaeological, documentary, numismatic, and iconographic evidence from the Julio-Claudian capital in which the early believers lived in the mid-50s. The value of this enterprise is seen in the new methodologies spawned, such as visual exegesis, which afford us new insights into the text. However, more fundamentally, if we view the Epistle to the Romans solely from the perspective of Second Temple Judaism, as intensely valuable as that is, we hear only half of Paul's dialogue with his first-century Roman audience.

Beyond the orbit of Jewish believers, gentile God-fearers, and gentile converts from idolatry now worshiping in the Roman house and tenement churches were the unbelieving gentiles who had no contact with either the Jewish faith, early believers, or their communities. They frequented the Roman associations, attended the circus and gladiatorial combats, watched with shock or amusement, as the case may be, the decline of the Roman nobility, saw the culmination of the Roman quest for glory in the members of the Julio-Claudian house, experienced the monumentalization of the capital as a Julio-Claudian theme park, observed the Arval Brethren preoccupied with their rituals or attending the circus, and heard the stratospheric plaudits accorded to the Roman ruler in the endless chatter of the civic inscriptions. Some, such as the destitute, simply disappeared from the historical record, their fleeting presence erased from each citizen's memory.

But others also viewed with suspicion the emergence of a new *superstitio*, a contagion imported from the East and now spreading abroad in their city, whose members Nero was soon to persecute in 64 CE (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15:44; Suetonius, *Ner.* 16). With considerable prescience, Paul was very much aware of this possibility for early believers in writing to the Romans (Rom 8:35: ἤ διωγμός, ἤ μάχαιρα; 13:4: τὴν μάχαιραν), including his sensitivity to the pressures of cultural conformity under which Roman believers lived (12:1–2). Thus when we listen carefully to the complex messages emanating from Julio-Claudian Rome, we discern another dialogue occurring in Paul's Epistle to the Romans that is often overlooked in our exclusively intramural interpretation of his writings: Paul, in critically engaging Roman culture for believers, rhetorically became "a Roman to the Romans" so that unbelieving Romans might be won to Christ in the city. The soteriological power of the gospel and Paul's indebtedness of love to all demanded no less (Rom 1:14–16; 13:8–10).

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Ostia, Harbor Port of Rome: An Epigraphic and Archaeological Portrait

James R. Harrison

The material remains of the port of Rome, Ostia, including its vast corpus of inscriptions, has not especially fired the interest of New Testament scholars.[1] At one level, this is not surprising. The material evidence of

1. I am grateful for the feedback of Dr. Mary Jane Cuyler on this chapter. For studies from the 1970s onward on aspects of Ostian life, by no means exhaustive, see Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973); Gustav Hermansen, *Ostia: Aspects of Roman City Life* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1981); Natalie Kampen, *Image and Status: Roman Working Women in Ostia* (Berlin: Mann, 1981); Ladislav Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses: Edendos, Illustrandos, Restituendos* (Praha: Academia, 1982); Raymond Chevallier, *Ostie Antique: Ville et port*, Le monde romaine (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1986); Carlo Pavolini, *La vita quotidiana a Ostia* (Rome: Laterza, 1986); Jan Theo Bakker, *Living and Working with the Gods: Studies of Evidence for Private Religion and Its Material Environment in Ostia (100 BC–500 BC)*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 12 (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1994); Ida Baldassarre et al., *Necropoli di Porto: Isola sacra* (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Strato, 1996); Jean-Paul Descoeudres, ed., *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique* (Geneva: Musée Rath, 2001); Jean Andreau, Anna Gallina Zevi, and John H. Humphrey, eds., *Ostia, Cicero, Gamala, Feasts, and the Economy: Papers in Memory of John H. D'Arms* (Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2004); Simon Keay et al., *Portus: An Archaeological Survey of the Port of Imperial Rome* (London: British School at Rome, 2005); Anne Helttula, ed., *Le Inscriaioni sepolcrali latine nell'Isola Sacra*, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 30 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2007); L. Bouke van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks: Inscriptions, Buildings and Spaces in Rome's Main Port* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012); Douglas Boin, *Ostia in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Angelo Pellegrino, *Mosaici e pavimenti di Ostia* (Monte Compatri: Edizioni Espera, 2017); Alessandro Batty, *The Domus del Ninfeo at Ostia (III, VI, 1–3): Structure, Function, and Social Context*, BAR International Series 2909 (Oxford: BAR, 2018). For useful popular archaeological guides to the site, see Guido Calza and Giovanni Becatti, *Ostia*, rev. M. F. Squarciapino (Rome: Instituto

Rome itself seldom features in modern commentaries on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, apart from a few notable exceptions.[2] So the chance that Ostia would be considered a source of valuable exegetical insight for Romans studies is even slimmer. Furthermore, the tendency of early generations of Ostian scholarship to perceive the port as both a colony and "suburb" of Rome, located a mere 30 km from the mouth of the Tiber River, as opposed to being a city of complexity, prosperity, and sophistication in its own right,[3] has dimmed the expectations of what Ostian studies might potentially contribute to our understanding of the New Testament documents. However, the recent focus of New Testament scholars on the Ostian, Herculanian, and Pompeian *insulae* as a lens for understanding the first-century CE *insulae* at Rome—proposed to be not only accommodation for believers but also sites for communal worship supplementary to the city's house churches (Rom 16:3–5, 23; see also Acts 16:14–15;

Poligrafico e Zecca dello Strato, 2008); Angelo Pellegrino, *Ostia: Guide to the Archaeological Excavations*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Il Cigno GG Edizioni, 2013). Classic works of Ostian scholarship should not be overlooked: e.g., Ludovico Paschetto, *Ostia Colonia Romana: Storia e Monumenta* (Rome: Pontificia Accademia Romana d'Archaeologia, 1912); Lily Ross Taylor, *The Cults of Ostia: Greek and Roman Gods—Imperial Cult-Oriental Gods* (1913; repr., Chicago: Ares, 1976); Dante Vaglieri, *Little Guide to Ostia*, trans. R. Weeden Cooke (Rome: Loescher, 1914); Guido Calza, *La Necropoli del Porto di Romano nell'Isola Sacra* (Rome: La Libreria dello Strato, 1940); James E. Packer, *The Insulae of Imperial Ostia* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1971). The magisterial *Scavi di Ostia* series, currently seventeen volumes (1953–2019), will be commented on below.

2. See James R. Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes: Studies on the Social Perspective of Paul*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2020). In this monograph I concentrate on the material evidence of the capital. The current chapter, therefore, represents an important methodological addition to what I have already written. For the exceptions, see, principally, Robert Jewett, *Romans,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007). The 1983 magnum opus of Peter Lampe, translated as *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (trans. Michael Steinhauser [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003]) has opened up significant pathways for Romans commentators to venture down.

3. Note the perceptive comment of Genevieve S. Gessert, "Urban Spaces, Public Decoration, and Civic Identity in Ancient Ostia" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001), 2: "Ostia's role as Rome's architectural repository has had the unfortunate effect of disguising the impact of town pride and civic identity on urban development, portraying Ostia as merely an extension of the capital, constructed to Roman requirements. This interpretation of Ostia's civic monuments has resulted in the general view of Rome and Ostia not as a capital city and autonomous colony, but as *urbs* and *suburbs*."

17:1–9; 18:1–3; 1 Cor 1:11, 14–16; 16:15–18, 19; Phil 4.22; Phlm 22)—signals a welcome change in focus for our discipline.[4] Therefore, I will bypass a detailed discussion of the *insulae*, only referring to them on the way through in relation to specific issues.[5] This chapter will undertake an examination of the archaeological, epigraphic, and iconographic evidence of Roman Ostia,[6] concentrating on the middle to late republican and Julio-

4. On the relevance of the Pompeian *insulae* to the Epistle of Romans, see Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010), 11–15. On the use of apartment blocks (*insulae*) as early Christian meeting places, see Robert Jewett, "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church: The Implications of a Form-Critical Analysis of 2 Thessalonians 3:10," *BR* 38 (1993): 23–43; Jewett, "Are There Allusions to the Love Feast in Rom 13:8–10?," in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, ed. J. V. Hills et al. (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 265–78; Jewett, *Romans*, *passim*. Notably, Oakes identifies limitations to Jewett's nonhierarchical model for social relations in house and tenement churches (*Reading Romans in Pompeii*, 91–92). On the other sites available for Christian meetings, see Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013). For a scholar arguing for the relevance of the Pompeian, Herculanian, and Ostian *insulae* as valuable comparanda for the *insulae* of Rome, see Paul Trebilco, "Early Christian Communities in the Greco-Roman City: Perspectives on Urban Ministry from the New Testament," *ExAud* 29 (2013): 25–48, here 25–34. For arguments rejecting the anachronistic use of second- and third-century CE evidence of Ostian tenements in order to establish the presence of believers living in *insulae* at first-century Rome, see Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and Household Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 17–24, here 23. However, Balch later changed his mind temporarily, asserting that the early Christians also met in workshops and tenement buildings: Balch, "Rich Pompeiian Houses, Shops for Rent, and the Huge Apartment Building in Herculaneum as Typical Spaces for Pauline House Churches," *JSNT* 27.1 (2004): 27–46, here 28. But he subsequently reverted to his former position in Balch, *Roman Domestic Art and Early House Churches*, WUNT 228 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 14–15: "Relying on second-third century CE archaeology to clarify the Pauline social context would be like quoting Justin and Cyprian to interpret Paul."

5. See Packer, *Insulae of Imperial Ostia*; Hermansen, *Ostia*, 17–53; Alfredo Marinucci, "La maison de Diane," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 230–44; Batty, *The Domus del Ninfeo at Ostia.*

6. An Ostian mint was established under the emperor Maxentius in 309 CE; see Fred C. Albertson, "Maxentian Hoards and the Mint at Ostia," *Museum Notes (American Numismatic Society)* 30 (1985): 19–41; Patrizia Calabria, "La monnaie d'Ostie," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 137–40. One famous coin with Ostian motifs predates this: *RIC* 1 Nero §178, discussed in my exegetical essay in

Claudian periods, with a view to not only illuminating the Epistle to the Romans at particular points but also engaging with several wider debates of New Testament scholarship from an Ostian viewpoint.

We commence with a history of modern excavations of Ostia, the methodological problems these have posed historically for the discipline, and a discussion of the epigraphic evidence of the city and its limitations.

1. Modern Excavations of Ostia: The Methodological Limitations of Our Evidence

1.1. The Decline of Ostia from the Third to Ninth Century CE

Ostia Antica flourished as a city during the imperial period,[7] enjoying considerable prosperity because of its commercial importance to Rome as its harbor port. Indeed, by the late empire Constantine publicly recognized the "mature status" of the city by making the harbor settlement "an independent community."[8] Nevertheless, from the third century CE the city gradually declined due to a variety of factors, transitioning from a "maritime center to backwater,"[9] before its eventual abandonment in the ninth century CE to a few squatters.[10] The implications were serious for Ostian archaeology. First, upon the conversion of Constantine to Christianity,

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this volume. Tenny Frank ("Rome's First Coinage," *CP* 14 [1919]: 314–27, here 315) also suggests that early Roman bronze coins of a prow "may commemorate Rome's establishment of her first maritime colony, Ostia," as opposed to commemorating the capture of the fleet of Antium (338 BCE).

7. I use the term Ostia Antica here to distinguish ancient Ostia from the modern Roman *municipio* of Ostia (i.e. Lido di Ostia). Hereafter I use Ostia.

8. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 88.

9. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 8.

10. For extensive discussion of the history of excavation of Ostia, upon which I have drawn, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 8–55; https://www.ostia-antica.org/dict/topics/excavations/excavations.htm; Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 102–10; Thomas Ashby, "Recent Discoveries at Ostia," *JRS* 2 (1912): 153–94, here 161–92; Carlo Pavolini, "Survey Article: A Survey of Excavations and Studies on Ostia (2004–2014)," *JRS* 106 (2016): 199–236. On the decline of Ostia, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 83–101. The ostia-antica.org. project is an invaluable online resource, and readers are encouraged to access the web references throughout the chapter to the Ostian archaeological finds for the enrichment of their learning about the site. Modern Italian archaeologists have divided Ostia into five regions (*regio*), which were then subdivided into blocks (*insula*), accompanied by numbers designating individual buildings.

some Greco-Roman monuments could have been destroyed or defaced by Christians, inevitably depleting the site of valuable historical artifacts.[11]

Second, the reuse and relocation of epigraphy, especially epitaphs, to different sites robbed our documents of their original in situ identification. One of the most important inscriptions damaged in this regard were the Fasti Ostienses, the municipal calendar of the city, discussed below. It provided the earliest record of Ostian local government. The Fasti Ostienses were reemployed as pavement and building materials at various sites throughout the city. Consequently, the size of the fragments varied dramatically, and new pieces were rediscovered in Ostia or in museums across Europe.[12]

Third, prosperity declined from the third century CE onward due to earthquakes and tsunamis (third–fourth century CE), political instability, and economic recession caused by a decline in trade. However, this tendency toward decline was not uniform in all areas. The region north of the Decumanus, for example, experienced periods of revival due to imperial restoration of various sites there (e.g., the baths under Constantius and Constans [CIL 14.135, ca. 325–350 CE]; the cella of the Tempio di Ercole, Regio I, Insula XV, 5 [CIL 1.14.1]).[13] Moreover, in the fourth century CE the commercial and public buildings in the east of the city were gradually supplanted by lavish domestic buildings of wealthy senators in the coastal regions, but who only briefly visited their holdings in favorable seasons.[14] The consequences were clear. As Russell Meiggs comments, "the total absence of fourth-century inscriptions recording the public careers of local magistrates and the activities of the guilds is a sign of the times."[15]

Fourth, the invasions of the Goths and Vandals in the fifth and sixth centuries CE, too complex to cover here, culminated in the Sara-

11. See below for my discussion of the (Christian?) defacing of the round marble altar in the Piazza dei Lari (Regio I). For an archaeological discussion of the Christianization of pagan, mythological, and imperial statuary by means of the addition of a cross, as well as the random destruction or official relocation of statues, see Ine Jacobs, "Production to Destruction? Pagan and Mythological Statuary in Asia Minor," *AJA* 114 (2010): 267–303.

12. For the public exhibit of a fragment of the *fasti Ostienses* (91–92 CE or shortly after) at the Vatican Museum, excavated in 1802, https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220e.

13. For a masterly discussion of the period, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 89–97. See also https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/15/15-5.htm.

14. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 8.

15. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 95.

cen invasions of the ninth century.[16] By the fifth century CE Ostia was a "decaying city;" but by the twelfth century there was just "a handful of people" residing there.[17] Ostia continued to be exploited until the advent of the Renaissance for its basic agriculture, salt extraction, lime kilns, and building materials for Rome (e.g., marble). Moreover, the site became progressively malarial due to the silting up of the imperial harbors and its undrained marshes.[18] This health problem remained a serious threat until the late nineteenth century, when the issue of the lethal swamps finally began to be addressed, though not with full success until World War II in the next century.[19] Notwithstanding, the seaside sites of Ostia were frequented by travelers and amateur "archaeologists"; tellingly, the remains of Ostia were opportunistically pillaged for ecclesiastical building materials by popes and bishops, the finds being relocated to cathedrals at Pisa and Florence, among other sites.[20]

1.2. Ostia, the Renaissance, and the Revival of Interest in Classical Culture among the English and Scottish Elites

The revival of interest in classical culture heralded by the Renaissance led to the voracious acquisition of Ostian sculpture and inscriptions by savants and wealthy Italian families, who, in the case of the family of Lorenzo de Medici, added relentlessly to their personal collections. Consequently, the record of the original find spot find was seldom kept, diminishing its historical value for future researchers; worse, find spots were fraudulently concocted to increase the value of a particular archaeological find on the open market.[21] However, by the eighteenth century, the first excavations began at the site. During this period, artists and intellectuals were generally the pioneers, conducting yearly campaigns. Nevertheless, in the case

16. See Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 97–101.

17. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 97, 101.

18. See http://www.ostia-antica.org/dict/topics/excavations/excavations08.htm and https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f; Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 8–11. On salt extraction, see Adalberto Giovanni, "Les salines d'Ostie," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 36–38.

19. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 12. The problem of malaria was not finally solved until American troops used DDT at Ostia from 1944 onward.

20. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 10–11.

21. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 11.

of the very first excavation, a Portuguese team whose discoveries are found in the Lisbon Museum kept no written records of the expedition.[22]

The first *documented* expeditions to the site of Ostia was undertaken by the Scottish painter and explorer of Latium, Gavin Hamilton (1723–1798), in 1775, 1778, and 1793.[23] The other central Italian sites excavated by Hamilton from 1771 onward were Tor Colombaro, Monte Cagnolo, Castel di Guido, and Gabii. Two of the very famous statues that he found at Ostia were: (1) a Venus, deriving from a fourth-century BCE Greek type, excavated in 1776, characteristic of the Greek sculptor Scopas (395–350 BCE) and considered by contemporary English critics to be an original as opposed to a Roman copy (see Pliny, *Ep*. 36.5);[24] (2) a Roman sculpture of the colossal Antinoos, a Hadrianic work found in 1772 by Hamilton, a beautifully polished marble statue "illustrating Hamilton's concept of ideal beauty."[25]

The other key figure in this period was Jack Fagan, the English painter and British consul (1761–1816). He resumed excavations in Hamilton's trenches at the Porta Marina in 1794, returning annually to Ostia and breaking ground at new sites until 1800.[26] Eventually Fagan moved toward Tor Bovacciana, hugging the coastline of the imperial period. Numerous works of art were found, most of which became acquisitions of the pontifical collections: (1) the Fortune in the Vatican, a circular bath (?) structure with a mosaic pavement of marine scenes, a now-lost statue of Mars, and a Ganymede also in the Vatican; disappointingly, few inscriptions were found (mostly statue bases);[27] (2) the significant discovery of a mithraeum whose benefactor, C. Valerius Heracles, we know through several inscriptions (CIL 14.64 [*CIMRM* 1.311], CIL 14.65 [*CIMRM* 1.313], CIL 14.66 [*CIMRM* 1.315]), along with dedicators of inscriptions to Mithras at other Ostian mithraea.[28]

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22. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 13.

23. See David Irwin, "Gavin Hamilton: Archaeologist, Painter and Dealer," *The Art Bulletin* 44 (1962): 87–102; Ilaria Bignamini, "Histoire de la découverte et de la recherché: Du Moyen Age à 1800," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 41–47, here 44.

24. Irwin, "Gavin Hamilton," 91–92.

25. Irwin, "Gavin Hamilton," 92. For a thorough coverage of Hamilton's finds, see his letter to Lord Townsend (1774), cited by Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 103–4.

26. On Fagan, see Bignamini, "Histoire de la découverte," 45.

27. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 13–14; Ashby, "Recent Discoveries at Ostia," 162.

28. For the Fagan mithraeum, along its inscriptions, statues, and reliefs (era of

1.3. The Papal Period and the Eventual Commencement of "Scientific" Exploration

When Carlo Fea, Director General of Antiquities, finally outlawed excavations at Ostia by private persons, Pius VII, due to the Vatican's ownership of Ostia, enlisted Giuseppe Petrini to carry out digs at the site from 1801 to 1805.[29] Although new mounds, untouched by previous explorers, were designated for excavation, in reality excavations were mainly concentrated in the city center (the Capitoleum), as well as in the west side of the Forum and other unidentified places. Although the first archaeological plans of Ostia were produced during this period,[30] any new Ostian edifices uncovered were abandoned afterward; the provenance of the finds were rarely recorded; pieces without any recognized artistic merit were sold quickly and the funds added to the papal treasury; and rich marble flooring and architectural decoration found within the Tempio di Vulcano (the Capitolium) were removed for reuse in Rome. Most of the significant "artistic" and epigraphic finds ended up in the Vatican Museum.[31] The relentless

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the emperor Commodus), see https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/fagan/fagan.htm. On the dedication ("Felicissimus has made [the mosaic] because of a vow") and its mosaic in the mithraeum of Felicissimus (Mitreo di Felicissimus, Regio V, Insula IX, 1: mid-third century CE), see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §40, 104–7, as well as http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio5/9/9-1.htm. More generally, see M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956–1960). For the mithraea at Ostia, see Bakker, *Living and Working*, 111–17. For discussion of Ostian and Dura-Europas inscriptions revealing the diversity of Mithraic congregational office bearers, see Manfred Clauss, *The Roman Cult of Mithras: The God and His Mysteries*, trans. Richard Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2000), 138–39.

29. For a fine discussion of the period, see Filippo M. Recchia et al., "Les fouilles pontificales, du XX^e siècle jusqua'à Rodolfo Lanciani," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 48–55.

30. For the areas explored and buildings uncovered in the early and later 19th century, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/dict/topics/excavations/excavations.htm. One of the 1805 Ostian archaeological plans of Pietro Holl can be seen there, with the theater, Forum, and Tempio Rotondosible clearly visible on the plan. For in-depth discussion, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 14–16, upon which I draw.

31. For the public exhibit of Giuseppe Petrini's Ostian finds at the Vatican Museum, see https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220e. Note the three inscriptions attributed to the mithraeum of the Seven Spheres of Ostia in *Regio* II, as well as an impressive relief of Mithras *tauroctono* (the "bull-slaughterer").

drive of the papal taskmasters for treasure inevitably meant that so-called insignificant sites were trashed in the quest for more statues.

Further excavations were sporadic until the arrival of Pietro Ercole and Carlo Lodovico Visconti (1803–1880), who worked under the auspices of Pope Pius IX from 1851 to 1870.[32] In particular, Meiggs sums up the archaeological deficits of the period 1824–1834 thus:

> The various excavations carried out between 1824 and 1834 marked a return to the attitude of the eighteenth century. They were designed to secure inscriptions and sculptures, and paid little attention to buildings: no systematic account was published.[33]

Visconti, as Gessert highlights, "had a vision of Ostia as 'una rediviva cità,' condemning his predecessors for their lack of concern for topographical and architectural conservation."[34] The fact that the pope visited Ostia six times underscored the professional and patronal tightrope that Visconti perpetually walked. He had to appease the relentless papal acquisition of new artifacts (statues, inscriptions, mosaics, paintings) for the Vatican and Lateran Museums, as well as unearth new building materials for Rome (marble, granite), while, in contrast to past practice, promoting a responsible attitude toward archaeological excavation. Nevertheless, Visconti's finds were impressive and set forth a new paradigm of disciplined site exploration for Ostian archaeology: a mithraeum at Tor Bovacciana (1861), a cult center of Isis at the city center (1862), and, later, at Porta Laurentina (1870), private houses, guild *scholae*, another mithraeum, and the Campo della Magna Mater (Regio IV, Insula I, 1).[35]

Last, Visconti published three collections of inscriptions, a feat that had not been accomplished so far in the collections arising from Ostian archaeology.[36] This would lead to the eventual publication of the Ostian

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32. For the period of 1806–1855, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 16–17.

33. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 106.

34. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 17; for Gessert's discussion of Visconti, see 17–19.

35. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/1/1.htm.

36. Titles are translated here from the Italian: Carlo Lodovico Visconti, *Ancient Ostia Inscriptions Brought to Light by the Excavations of the Year 1856, Chosen and Published on the Most Auspicious Occasion That the Holiness of N.S. Pope Pius IX Goes to Observe Them* (Rome [?]: n.p., 1856); Visconti, *Five-Year Lapidary of the Ostian Excavation* (Rome [?]: n.p., 1859); Visconti, *Ostia Inscriptions Brought to Light in the Renewed Excavation* (Rome: n.p., 1866).

inscriptions in CIL 14 (ed. H. Dessau, 1887) and its subsequent CIL 14 supplement (ed. L. Wickert, 1930). A helpful selection of these (in total) 6,500 Latin inscriptions has been collected and translated into French by Hilding Thylander in 1952, accompanied by a second volume of plates.[37] A recent revision of the sepulchral epitaphs of Isola Sacra has also been published, along with an updated version of the Fasti Ostienses.[38] Recently, an edition of one hundred Ostian Latin inscriptions, originally published in French and now revised and republished in Italian, discusses the selected texts in their archaeological and historical contexts.[39]

1.4. State Excavations, Pre- and Postfascism: The Pivotal Contributions of Dante Vaglieri and Guido Calza for Ostian Research

A new era began when Ostia was no longer a papal property but became the possession of the new Italian state, placed under the administration of the office of Commissario alle Antichità. The promising rebuilding of the Casone del Sale for a local museum began during 1877–1875; however, it would have to wait until 1934 for completion.[40] The famous archaeologist of Rome, Rodolfo Lanciani, worked at the site of Ostia between 1877 and 1889.[41] But it was only in 1907 that truly scientific exploration of the site began with Dante Vaglieri (1865–1913), the first excavator to live in Ostia and the head of excavations from 1907 until 1913.[42] Vaglieri provided proper documentation for his team's archaeological finds, focused on a single area of investigation at one time, gave attention to stratigraphy, and

37. Hilding Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 2 vols. (Lund: Gleerup, 1952).

38. Helttula, *Le Inscriaioni sepolcrali latine*; Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses.* I have not seen the edition of Barbara Bargagli and Cristiana Grosso, *I Fasti Ostienses: Documento della storia di Ostia*, Itinerari Ostiensi 8 (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1997).

39. Mireille Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Maria Letizia Caldelli, and Fausto Zevi, É*pigraphie latine* (Paris: Colin, 2006); Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia: Cento Iscrizioni in Contesto* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2010).

40. For a nineteenth-century depiction of the museum, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/dict/topics/excavations/excavations.htm.

41. For Lanciani's contribution, see Recchia, "Les fouilles pontificales," 53.

42. On this period, see Paola Olivanti, "Les fouilles d'Ostie de Vaglieri à nos jours," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 56–65, here 56–59.

frequently published his work.[43] He reexplored sites previously excavated and preserved previously exposed buildings. The paradigm-shifting excellence of Vaglieri's archaeological research enabled Ludovico Paschetto to publish in 1912 his dissertation for the Pontificale Accademia Roman d'Archeologia. Paschetto's classic work combined all previous work done by Ostian archaeologists and antiquarian savants in one volume, enhanced throughout by Vaglieri's state-of-the-art methodology and supplemented by the author's own exhaustive archival exploration of all previous state and papal records.[44] This book was followed closely afterward in 1914 by Vaglieri's small popular guide book, printed simultaneously in English and Italian.[45]

The most famous of Ostian archaeologists, Guido Calza (1888–1946), first came to the site in 1914, the year after Vaglieri's death. Calza shared responsibilities at Ostia from 1914 to 1924 with the remaining members of Vaglieri's archaeological team and became the official director of excavations from 1924 to 1946.[46] Some of the considerable achievements of Calza were:

- the completion of excavations of the ruins between the Porta Romana and the northern side of the Decumanus by 1919, including the discovery of the famous two-storied *insula* Casa di Diana,[47] as well as the restoration and conservation of structures in the process;
- from 1924 onward the excavations to the west of the forum, revealing the basilica, the Curia, the temple of Roma and Augustus, among others;
- the unearthing of the substrata of the imperial forum, finding further indications of Ostia's original settlement, enabling thereby a

43. For discussion of Vaglieri, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/dict/topics/excavations/excavations.htm; Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 21–23, upon which I draw.

44. Paschetto, *Ostia Colonia Romana.*

45. The 1914 translation and publication of Vaglieri's archaeological guide to Ostia (*Little Guide to Ostia*) placed in the hands of the English world for the first time the results of his own and previous excavations.

46. For discussion of Calza, see Olivanti, "Les fouilles d'Ostie," 60–62; Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 24–34, upon which I draw.

47. See Packer, *Insulae of Imperial Ostia*, 127–34.

scholarly reassessment of the foundation myth in Roman literature;

- the tracing of the "Sullan" walls from the republic, exposing two new gates to the south and west;[48]
- a monograph on the Ostian Theater in 1935;[49]
- the excavation of the necropolis at Isola Sacra between 1928 and 1931, with the publication of another monograph in 1940;[50]
- the fevered preparation of Ostia as an archaeological park though excavation and restoration from 1937 onward for Mussolini's projected L'Eposizione Universale di Roma, to be held in 1942 but eventually canceled; this revealed new cult complexes (the large guild house on the eastern Decumanus [Sede degli Augustali]),[51] the Constantinian bishop's basilica on the western Decumanus, and the houses of the wealthy (House of the Dioscuri, House of Cupid and Psyche),[52] among other finds.

However, not all of this was accomplished in the later years without significant personal compromise on Calza's part with Mussolini's fascist government. First, the pressure of the 1942 exhibition meant that Calza abandoned from 1938 onward many of the meticulous standards of archaeology that he had formerly upheld.[53] Second, it resulted in Calza unconsciously imbibing "fascist ideals of social harmony and architectural monumentality," promoting in his reconstructed Ostia a continuity between the Roman Empire and the new fascist regime.[54] Third, even in the earlier "nonfascist" period of excavation in 1924–1927, we have no written documentation for the city, in contrast to Calza's articles published on the earlier period (1917–1921).[55] Nevertheless, Calza highlighted the

48. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 86–103.

49. Guido Calza, *Il Teatro Romano di Ostia* (Rome: Società Editrice d'Arte Illustrata, 1935).

50. The results of these excavations were published in Calda's classic work, *La Necropoli del Porto di Romano.*

51. See Margaret L. Laird, "Reconsidering the So-Called 'Sede degli Augustali' at Ostia," *Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome* 45 (2000): 41–48.

52. Pellegrino, *Ostia*, 124–25, 126–27.

53. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 29–32.

54. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 28.

55. Axel Gering, "Ruins, Rubbish Dumps and Encroachment: Resurveying Late Antique Ostia," in *Field Methods and Post-excavation Techniques in Late Antique*

archaeological and cultural uniqueness of Ostia, contrasting its middle-class ethos with *domus*-based Pompeii.[56] Due to the effects of World War II, Ostia was occupied by troops from 1942 to 1944. Calza died in 1946, depriving him of the fruition of his elaborate publication plans and the transformation of Ostia into a site equally amenable to the general public and archaeologists.

1.5. Summing Up

What has been the impact of this history of excavation over the last three centuries in the port colony upon recent Ostian scholarship? First, the work of Visconti and Calza before the war established the postwar momentum for the magisterial publication of Russell Meiggs on Roman Ostia in 1960 (which he substantially revised in 1973),[57] as well as the subsequent contributions of Raymond Chevallier and Carlo Pavolini, both in 1986. From then on the stream of publications on Ostia has never diminished.

Second, Calza's plans for a series of monographs (the *Scavi di Ostia* series), to be written by his collaborators and students, eventuated in his case in a rough draft of the first volume before his death in 1946. The volume traced the development of Ostia from its foundation to its decline, presenting the history of excavation from Hamilton onward, with a focus on the city's topography and architecture. For our purposes, the section on Julio-Claudian and early Flavian periods is comparatively thin, with most attention being devoted to the periods of Trajan and Hadrian.[58] Other Ostian scholars supplemented Calza's evidence after 1946, with the result that the first volume was published in 1953, unleashing a prestigious archaeological series that has now witnessed the appearance of its seventeenth volume (2019).[59]

Archaeology, ed. Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 249–88, here 250.

56. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 26.

57. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia.* On the pivotal contribution of Meiggs to Ostian studies, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 38–41.

58. Guido Calza et al., *Scavi di Ostia I: Topografia Generale* (Rome: La Libreria dello Strato, 1953), 115–22 (Julio-Claudian), 123–28 (Trajan), and 129–39 (Hadrian).

59. For the first fourteen volumes of *Scavi di Ostia*, see Patrizio Pensabene and Lorenzo Lazzarini, *Ostiensium Marmorum Decus et Décor: Studi Architettonici, Decorativi, e Archeometrici*, Studi Miscellanei 33 (Rome: Bretschneider, 2007), xxi. See also Stella Falzone and Angelo Pellegrino, *Scavi di Ostia XV: Insula delle Ierodule* (Rome: Il

Third, the historical tug between the archaeologist's patronal indebtedness (the art-collecting elites, the papacy, Mussolini) and the increasing professionalism of the archaeological discipline at Ostia, while inevitably leading to periodic compromises of quality in order to ensure excavation outputs, nevertheless saw the ultimate triumph of quality in archaeological methodology over expediency.[60] We owe Vaglieri and Calza a great debt, notwithstanding their shortfalls.

Fourth, our understanding of Ostia itself has been revolutionized. In contrast to the small country towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum, playgrounds of wealthy Romans, Axel Gering observes that middle-class "Ostia offers a unique insight into a real metropolis like Rome, it containing buildings up to five floors high, and with a population estimated to be at least 40,000."[61] Perhaps Ostia, as opposed to Pompeii, represents for New Testament scholars a better point of evidential comparison for the Epistle of Romans, other than, of course, the extant material remains of Rome itself. The enormous advantage of Pompeii, of course, is that the site is not "contaminated" by buildings postdating 79 CE.

2. Ostia from the Middle Republic to Julio-Claudian Rule

Our discussion will focus epigraphically and archaeologically only on the Ostian periods of the middle to late republic and the transition of Ostia to Julio-Claudian rule. This keeps the discussion closely tied to the time frame of the composition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans in the early Neronian period. We will briefly discuss at the end of this chapter what a study of Julio-Claudian Ostia might contribute to our understanding of Paul's epistle. This means that the dramatic urban expansion of Roman Ostia during the Flavian and Severan periods will be bypassed.[62]

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cigno GG edizioni, 2014); Nicoline Bauers, *Scavi di Ostia XVI: Architettura in laterizio a Ostia; Ricerche sulle insulae "dell'Ercole Bambino" e "del soffitto dipinto"* (Rome: Il cigno GG edizioni, 2018); Ilario Romeo, *Scavi di Ostia XVII: I ritratti, parte III; I ritratti Romani dal 250 circa al Secolo d.C.* (Rome: Il cigno GG edizioni, 2019).

60. Notwithstanding the vibrancy of Ostian research and its diligent funding from 2004 to 2014, Carlo Pavolini ("Survey Article," 230) warns that "we should never forget the need to allocate substantial and continuous funding for conservation and maintenance" at the site.

61. Gering, "Ruins, Rubbish Dumps and Encroachment," 252.

62. For discussion, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 133–48; Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 231–331.

2.1. Republican Period: Ostia the *colonia militum*

The traditional founder of Ostia, the Roman literature attests, was Ancus Marcius, the fourth king of Rome, who, it is said, founded Ostia in 622 BCE.[63] An inscriptional dedication from the imperial period (CIL 14.4338, with additional fragments added by Fausto Zevi) says the same:

A[*nco* ---]	For A[ncus]
Mar[*cio* ---]	Mar[cius]
re[*gi* ---]	(the) k[ing]
quarto [*a R*]*omul*[*o* ---]	fourth [after] Romul[us ---]
qui ab urb[*e c*]*ondit*[*a* ---]	who after the [f]oundation ---] of the cit[y][64]
[*pri*]*mum colon*[*iam* ---]	[fir]st (the) colon[y ---]
[*c*(*ivium*) *Rom*(*anorum*)]	[of Roman citizens]
[---] *dedux*[*it* ---]	[---] found[ed ---][65]

Since Ostia was a military colony, its oldest known settlement was the *castrum*,[66] a rectangular fortress (194 x 125.7 m) constructed of large tufa blocks, built from the early third century BCE around the later Forum, with the four gates serviced by two main streets, the Cardo and the Decumanus. The *terminus post quem* for the construction of the *castrum* is around 300 BCE, indicated by the pottery excavated from the *castrum* foundations.[67] It was built as a response to periodic pirate attacks upon Rome and engagements with hostile neighbors.[68] Consequently, Rome set

63. Cicero, *Rep.* 2.3.5; 2.18.33; Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 1.33.9; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 3.44.4; Florus, *Epit. rom.* 1.4; Strabo, *Geogr*. 5.3.5; Aurelius Victor, *Vir.* 3.5.3; Servius, *Verg. Aen.* 1.13; 6.815; Eutropius, *Brev*. 1.5; Polybius, *Hist*. 6.2a.9 (founded by Numa); Pliny, *Nat.* 3.56.

64. That is, Rome.

65. My translation. For the latest edition of the inscription with Zevi's additions, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §1. See also Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 4.

66. On republican Ostia, see Fausto Zevi, "Ostie sous la République," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 10–19.

67. See Archer Martin, "Un saggio sulle mura del castrum di Ostia (Reg. I, ins.x, 3)," in *"Roman Ostia" Revisited: Archaeological and Historical Papers in Memory of Russell Meiggs*, ed. A. Gallina Zevi and Amanda Claridge (London: British School at Rome, 1996), 19–38.

68. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 63–71. For a photo of the walls of the primitive citadel, see Calza and Becatti, *Ostia*, 77 fig. 6.

up its own navy for future wars, instigating naval *duumviri* from 311 BCE and abandoning its previous reliance on the navy of allied cities along the Italian coastline.[69] By the end of the third century BCE, Ostia had become a fortified city, with its own harbor for ships and resident sailors (Ennius, *Annals* 2, frag. 22). Consequently, Ostia is mentioned by Livy as one among several maritime colonies of Rome in 191 BC (Livy, *Urb. cond*. 36.3).

In the second century BCE, five identical stelae were found north of the Decumanus between the eastern gate of the *castrum* and the Porta Romana (CIL 14.4702).[70] There the *praetor urbanus* of Rome, Gaius Caninius, passed a judgment in the senate that designated the final limits that public land, as another inscription paired with the westernmost stela informs us (CIL 14.4703), could be used for private use. However, beyond that area, access to the river bank was kept free of any private construction so that grain was readily available for the colony and for Rome. The motive behind Caninius's legislation is clear: "By reserving an entire quadrant of Ostia and keeping it free of construction, the *praetor urbanus* of Rome could provide an *ad hoc* solution to the lack of proper harbour facilities."[71] Presumably the Roman grain fleet needed considerable space as well.[72] Notwithstanding, Puteoli on the Bay of Naples remained the emporium for the grain trade of Rome during this period, despite the increasingly important contribution Ostia would make *to annona* ("grain") supplies by virtue of its proximity to Rome.[73]

However, despite the constrictions placed on private development of public land, we hear of significant buildings being erected during this middle republican period. Livy (*Urb. cond.* 32.1) mentions that the Temple of Jupiter at Ostia was hit by a lightening strike in 199 BCE. There was also a sanctuary dedicated to Hercules, dated to circa 90 BCE,[74] in the cella of which there is an inscription datable to 150–80 BCE: "Publius Livius,

69. Fausto Zevi, "Appunti per una storia di Ostia repubblicana," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 114 (2002): 13–58, here 17.

70. For the inscriptions with translations, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §12, 48–50; see also §38, 102–3. Additionally, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §6.

71. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 82–84, here 84.

72. Janet DeLaine, "Ostia," in *A Companion to Roman Italy*, ed. Alison E. Cooley, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 417–38, here 420.

73. DeLaine, "Ostia," 420.

74. See Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §21, 63–68, especially 63–64.

freedman of Publius, gives (this) to Hercules." Additionally, we know that the Ostian benefactor Publius Lucilius Gamala senior (80–30 BCE) built four temples to Venus, Fortuna, Ceres (goddess of agriculture and grain), and Spes (goddess of hope) probably in the imperial period.[75] The so-called Magazzini Repubblicani (Regio II, Insula II, 1–2), initially thought to be a republican store building, was in actuality a complex of shops and workshops built at the end of the first century BCE.[76] Last, an old republican atrium house (Domus di Giove Fulminatore, Regio IV, Domus IV, 3), with peristyle, was built at this time, sporting an apotropaic phallus in a mosaic deflecting evil at the entrance, though the mosaic and its inscription are datable to the second century CE.[77] The republican devotion to a wide variety of gods is readily apparent in the city, as well as in the commercial residences and houses for the Ostian elites.

Finally, in the late republic, the so-called Sullan walls were built to protect Ostia from incursions by various armies during the civil wars (i.e., Marius and Cinna, 86 BCE), rebellious foreign potentates (Mithridates VI of Pontus, 67 BCE), and the threat of Cilician pirates to the Roman grain supply, quelled by Pompey the Great in 67–66 BCE.[78] The construction of these walls—now argued on the basis of new epigraphic fragments to have been commenced by Cicero in 63 BCE and then annexed as a project by Clodius Pulcher in 61 BCE[79]—was completed in

75. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B335 (CIL 14.375); See Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §9, 45–46. For the imperial dating, however, see Mary Jane Cuyler, "Origins of Ostia: Mythological, Historical, and Archaeological Landscapes of the Preimperial Colony" (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2015), 98–113. My gratitude is extended to Dr. Cuyler for extending to me access to her dissertation.

76. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio2/2/2–1.htm.

77. See Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §35, 92–94; https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/4/4–3.htm.

78. On the inscriptions of the Porta Romana of the wall, with translations and discussion, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §2, 14–15; also Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 88–89 (CIL 14.4704) and 90–92.

79. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the two identical inscriptions (CIL 14.4707; second century CE) decorating the main gate of Ostia (the Porta Romana). For a reconstruction of one of the faces of the Porta Romana, with the inscription in the attic, see Zevi, "Ostie sous la République," 17. Scholars had formerly thought that the walls were built by Sulla after Marius's capture of Ostia (86 BCE), but new epigraphic fragments found by Fausto Zevi have created a new consensus that Cicero and Publius Clodius Pulcher built the walls. The key statement made in the inscriptions regarding the construction of the walls is: "Marcus Tullius Cicero,

the early 50s, perhaps by Clodius Pulcher in 58 BCE. Upon their completion, a significant shift in Ostian civic perception occurred. As Gessert argues, "the construction of the walls cemented Ostia's transition from Castrum and make-shift river-harbour to full-fledged town,"[80] including the explosion of public architecture during the Augustan period and the development of the first forum.

2.2. Julio-Claudian Ostia: The Hub of *annona* Importation and the Beginnings of New Urban Development

Life in first-century CE Ostia concentrated mainly around the Tiber and the Forum.[81] The significant event that precipitated this development in the early imperial period was Agrippa's transfer of the imperial fleet in the Mediterranean to the fine natural harbor of Misenum at the outset of Augustus's reign in 31 BCE.[82] Previously Rome's reliance upon Ostia as a *colonia maritima* had necessitated the heavy fortification of the city with substantial walls in the late republic in order to ensure its security from outside interference, allowing Rome's wheat supplies (*annona*) to be delivered untroubled by its fleets from Egypt and Libya. We also saw that the Roman senate had intervened via the *praetor urbanus* of Rome,

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consul, made and oversaw (them). Publius Clodius Pulcher, tribune of the people, completed and approved (them)" (Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §2, 14). It should be noted, however, that the epigraphic reading of Cicero's name is far from secure. See especially Cuyler, "Origins of Ostia," 134–45, who argues that the interpretation is not only historically questionable but also especially problematic in view of the heavily reconstructed lacunae. The literary evidence appealed to in support of the document is Cicero, *Har. resp.* 27.58; *Fam.* 1.9.15; *Off.* 2.17.60. See Fausto Zevi, "Construttori eccellenti per le mura di Ostia. Cicerone, Clodio e l'iscrizione della Porta Romana," *Rivista dell'Instituto Nazionale d'Archeologica e Storia delle'Arte*, 3/19–20 (1996–1997): 61–112; Zevi, "Cicero and Ostia," in Andreau, Zevi, and Humphrey, *Ostia, Cicero, Gamala*, 15–31.

80. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 98.

81. See Michael Flexsenhar III, "Ostia," in *Oxford Encyclopedias of the Bible*, ed. Daniel M. Master, *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*. See https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220h. In what follows I am dependent upon Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 12–13, 126–27.

82. Note the Ostian inscription (Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B73) of a soldier belonging to the praetorian fleet of Misenum: "For the Manes gods. Marcus Flavius Valens, soldier of the praetorian fleet of Misenum. He was a soldier for six years. Bessus of origin."

Gaius Caninius, to limit building development beyond a set boundary of the public domain, so that there were sufficient harbor facilities along the river bank for the unloading and storage of food and grain.

But now, with the Mediterranean fleet based elsewhere, there was more room for substantial urban development. Rome was increasingly dependent on Ostia for its food storage and transportation, despite its vastly inadequate harbor at this stage, with the result that Ostia became the hub for the *annona* supply and its dispersion to the capital. We learn from Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom*. 55.4.4) that various quaestors (ταμίαι) were appointed "to serve along the coast near Rome," including Ostia. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the very first magistracy that the future Roman ruler, Tiberius, held in his *cursus honorum* was the quaestorship of Ostia, conferred on him by his stepfather Augustus so that just administration of the grain trade at Ostia might be assured (Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. rom*. 2.94.3). Apart from Tiberius, we know of another such magistrate, Pacceius, who, as *quaestor pro praetor*, was honored epigraphically by the Ostian shipowners (CIL 14.3603).[83] Furthermore, Plutarch (*Caes.* 58.8.10) tells us that among the final plans of Augustus's adoptive father, Julius Caesar, was the intention to (1) divert the Tiber below the city into a deep channel that would come out into the sea at Tarracina, providing "a safe and easy passage for merchantmen to Rome"; (2) build breakwaters and clear all obstructions dangerous to shipping at Ostia; and (3) "construct harbours and roadsteads big enough for the great fleets which would lie at anchor there."[84] Nevertheless, these unfulfilled plans—notwithstanding the improved administration of the Ostian port by Augustus—would only come to fruition with the redevelopment of the Ostian harbor by Claudius, (minimally) Nero, and Trajan, a project discussed fully in my essay in this volume.[85]

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83. For discussion of Ostia to the third century CE, see George W. Houston, "The Administration of Italian Seaports during the First Three Centuries of the Roman Empire," in *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome: Studies in Archaeology and History*, ed. J. H. D'Arms and E. C. Kopff, Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome 36 (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1980): 157–71, here 157–62. For inscriptions of the Ostian shipmasters, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §7, 34–36.

84. Rex Warner, trans., *Fall of the Roman Republic: Six Lives by Plutarch* (London: Penguin, 1958), 298.

85. See, in this volume, James R. Harrison, "Romans 1:2–4 and Imperial 'Adoption' Ideology: Paul's Alternative Narrative to Julio-Claudian Sonship and Apotheosis."

In terms of the urban development during the Julio-Claudian period, there were the following:

- the theater of Marcus Agrippa (Regio II, Insula VII, Teatro 2), with its identifying inscription of [*M*(*arcus*) *Ag*]*rippa co*(*n*)*s*(*ul*) [--] *po*(*testate*---] (CIL 14.82), datable to his tribunician *potestas* ("power") in 18–17 BCE;[86]
- the early development of the Forum,[87] including (1) the early Augustan version of the later Capitolium (Regio I, Forum Capitolium), lacking the traditional tripartite cella, placed at the northwest intersection of the Cardo and the Decumanus;[88] (2) the small temple west of the Augustan Capitolium, perhaps dedicated to Jupiter or Fortuna;[89] (3) a structure traditionally identified as the Curia of Ostia in the Domitianic age but now believed to be the seat for the *seviri Augustales*: the figure of the *sevir Augustalis*, well known to us from an Augustan-era inscription at Ostia (CIL 14.5322) and many other inscriptions, performed sacrificial rites to imperial statues on important anniversaries;[90]

86. For additional inscriptions, see CIL 14.114, 129. The theater was enlarged in the Severan period and could mount aquatic displays by the fourth century CE. See Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §6, 27–31, here 27. Also, see Calza, *Il Teatro Romano di Ostia*; Alison Cooley, "A New Date for Agrippa's Theatre at Ostia," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 67 (1997): 173–87; Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 115–19. For a plan of the Agrippan theater circa 12 BCE, see J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 144 fig. 74. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio2/7/7–2.htm.

87. On the early imperial Forum, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 114–27. On the later Forum, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §16, 53–56.

88. On the early Augustan version of the Capitolium, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 115–19. The later version of the Capitolium, dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, was built in the center of the city under Hadrian in the 120s CE (CIL 14.32). See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/forum/capitol.htm.

89. See Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 119–20.

90. See Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 121–22, 189–220. Note CIL 14.5322, a dedication to Drusus, the adopted son of Augustus prior to 11 CE, by an *Augustalis* called Pothus and his freedman Nymphodotus. Additionally, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §52. Henrik Mouritsen ("Freedmen and Decurions: Epitaphs and Social History in Imperial Italy," *JRS* 95 [2005]: 38–63, here 56 n. 92) identifies 130 *Augustales* at Ostia from the inscriptions. Generally, see Lily Ross Taylor, "Augustales, Seviri Augustales, and Seviri: A Chronological Study," *Transactions and*

- the Tiberian Temple of Roma and Augustus (Tempio di Roma e Augusto, Regio I, Forum), though some suggest a mid- to late Augustan date;[91]
- an aqueduct in the reign of Gaius Caligula (Regio V, Aqueduct) was built; it is confirmed by Gaius's name being the earliest identification of an emperor found on one of the pipes (CIL 14.5309.9), with the aqueduct being rebuilt in the Severan period of the second century CE.[92]

Last, it is noteworthy from the above evidence that, other than the Claudian harbor and its minor Neronian enhancement, there was no continuing building boom under the later Julio-Claudians (Caligula, Claudius, Nero). However, the cult of Lars Augustus is established, confirmed by a Claudian inscription on a circular monument, circa 51 CE,[93] along with the building of two large *horrea* (storehouses: Regio II, Insula IX, Grandi Horrea, 7) and bath complexes (Terme dell'Invidioso, Regio V, Insula V, 2) in the reign of Claudius.[94]

Proceedings of the American Philological Association 45 (1914): 231–53; Laird, "Reconsidering"; Margaret L. Laird, "Evidence in Context: The Public and Funerary Monuments of the *Severi Augustales* at Ostia," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2002).

91. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/forum/temprom.htm. On the alternative date, see Hanna Stöger, "The Spatial Organization of the Movement Economy: The Analysis of Ostia's *Scholae*," in *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space*, ed. Ray Laurence and David J. Newsome (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 215–42, here 221.

92. Meiggs, *Roman* Ostia, 40. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio5/aqueduct/aqueduct.htm.

93. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 176. The Latin text cited by Herbert Bloch, "A Monument of the Lares Augusti in the Forum of Ostia," *HTR* 55 (1962): 211–23, here 214 no. 1, with my translation here: "For Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, pontifex maximus, (his) eleventh (year of) tribunician power, (his) fifth consulship, censor, *pater patria*, consecrated to the Lares Augusti. The *magistri primi* ('the officers of the neighborhood') erected (this monument) at their own expense." The inscription, Bloch states (214), was probably "part of the architrave of the shrine proper inside the building." For an inscription (CIL 14.4298 [30–10 BCE]) registering the worship of the local Lares at Ostia, before Augustus introduced the worship of the Lares Augusti in 7 BCE, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §14, 51–53.

94. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 170–71. For the *Grand horrea*, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio2/9/9–7.htm. For *horrea Epagathiana* and *horrea Epaphroditiana*, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §31. For the Terme

We turn now to the most significant inscription at Ostia: Why did the Ostians add their own local calendar to the imperial calendar, in contrast to the calendars of other cities in the Italian peninsula?

3. Keeping Calendrical Time: The Fasti Ostienses and Civic Pride

I noted above the great difficulty of reconstructing the original text of the Fasti Ostienses. The text is highly fragmentary at many junctures, due to the recycling of its inscribed stones in Ostian building projects and pavements, found periodically in the excavation process. These differently sized fragments, along with those dispersed to museums across Europe, formed the basis for the demanding reconstruction of the original text.[95] Like the other Italian *fasti*, the Ostian calendar listed the names of the consuls for each year, including significant events at Rome associated with each consulship. In contrast to other municipal calendars (e.g., Fasti Praenestini, Fasti Amiternini, Fasti Antiates, Fasti Caeretani), the Fasti Ostienses are unique in also listing the local magistrates of Ostia (e.g., *duumviri*, *pontifex Vulcani*) and (rarely) important events alongside their Roman counterparts.[96] Covering 250 years of the colony's history, the first six panels of the Fasti Ostienses listed the magistrates and events from the late republic to 100 CE in a double-column format employing white marble, whereas the next sixteen panels, moving from 101 CE to the period of Marcus Aurelius and Faustina Minor, display the information single-column in Proconnesian marble.

The first redaction of the text has been assigned to 44–12 BCE, with 2 CE being the *terminus ante quem*.[97] The site of its location still remains a matter of vigorous debate. Vidman suggested that the Temple of Vulcan

dell'Invidioso, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio5/5/5–2.htm. On the other bath complex west of Piazzale delle Corporazione, see Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 170.

95. See Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 139–47; Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses*; Christer Bruun, "Civic Rituals in Imperial Ostia," in *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Empire: Proceedings of the Eighth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Heidelburg, July 5–7, 2007)*, ed. Olivier Hekster et al., Impact of Empire 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 123–42, here 134–36; Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 511–17. For precision I cite Vidman's textual dates. The textual references are in the source index.

96. Bruun ("Civic Rituals in Imperial Ostia," 136) writes: "it is surprising that so few local entries appear in the *Fasti*."

97. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 141–42.

at the Hadrianic Foro della Porta Marina was the site,[98] given that oldest and most prestigious priesthood of Ostia, the *Pontifex Vulcani et aedium sacrarum*, is mentioned several times in the Fasti Ostienses. By contrast, Gessert proposes the civic forum in the city center, a superior option for a site, arguing that there is no archaeological evidence corroborating Vidman's proposal.[99] What, then, do we discern from the references to local magistrates in the Fasti Ostienses?

Despite the fragmentary state of the text regarding the early republican magistrates, several elite families of Ostia appear and reappear as *duumviri*, both in the Fasti Ostienses and in other Ostian inscriptions, over an extended period of time, including: (1) the heirs of the famous Ostian benefactor, Publius Lucilius Gamala senior—whose large inscription[100] is well known to us, along with the inscription of his equally famous Flavian descendant, the benefactor Publius Lucilius Gamala junior (117–180 CE: CIL 14.376)—are mentioned twice (FOst §§19, 33);[101] (2) the Acilii, mentioned only once in the Fasti Ostienses (Marcus Acilius: FOst §48), are mentioned in other inscriptions;[102] and (3) the representative of the Egrilii is referred to six times (Aulus Egrilius Rufus: FOst §§6, 15, 16, 17 [*maior*], 30, 34, 36), along with possibly his son (Aulus Egrilius Rufus: FOst 36). Note, too the Ergilius (Aulus Egrilius Agricola: FOst §146) who is *duumvir* and *p*(*atronus*) *p*(*erpetuus*) *c*(*oloniae*).[103]

Various *duumviri* hold other magistracies of the highest status in the colony.[104] For example, the prestigious lifelong magistracy of *pontifex Vulcani*

98. Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses*, 86–87.

99. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 142–46, esp. 142–43. Bruun ("Civic Rituals in Imperial Ostia," 134 n. 47) concludes: "Vidman thought that the open space outside the Porta Marina had been reserved for the *Fasti*, but since the space was only built after Hadrian, they need to have been placed elsewhere before, and in any case one can assume that they had a connection to the temple of Vulcanus (the *pontifex Vulcani* was likely responsible for their redaction). The central Forum would seem the most likely place for the *Fasti.*" See Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 494–502.

100. Dated 80–30 BCE; see Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B335 (CIL 14.375)

101. For translations of CIL 14.375–376, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 119–22.

102. See Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 507–9.

103. See Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 502–7.

104. For CIL examples of *duumviri*, see Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Decurions," 43 n. 29, including the two extra Augustan (CIL 14.426) and Flavian (CIL 14.409) examples.

is also acquired by Aulus Egrilius Rufus (FOst §30),[105] to be replaced later by Marcus Naevius Optatus (FOst §36), who also had been a *duumvir* (FOst §31; additionally, Quintus Domitius: FOst §97). Other *duumviri* are given the title of *patronus coloniae*, the highest honor that the colony could confer. Marcus Aelius Priscus Ergilius Plarianus is *pontifex Vulcani* and *patronus coloniae* (FOst §105), as well as *duumvir* and *patronus coloniae* (FOst §106), whereas the *duumvir*, Gaius Nasennius Marcellus (FOst §111), is also called *patronus*.

In this regard, Meiggs notes that there were "no formal duties attached to the position," other than representing the interests of the city, but the individual chosen to be *patronus coloniae* by the local council had to have achieved substantial influence well beyond the boundaries of the colony, either by attaining senatorial or equestrian status.[106] Only such a person could represent Ostian interests before Rome. Obviously, the *patronus coloniae* would have had considerable personal wealth to be called upon as a benefactor when necessary by the colony and by other interest groups such as associations (e.g., Aulus Egrilius Faustus, CIL 14.24, *infra*), with the *patronus* being recompensed reciprocally with commensurate public honors. Thus we witness the phenomenon of catalogs of multiple patronage at Ostia where the *patronus coloniae* is linked to other forms of benefaction, such as the local *collegia* (e.g., CIL 14.303, 4144, 4454).[107]

Another prestigious magistracy acquired by some Ostian *duumviri* and celebrated in the Fasti Ostienses is the *c*(*ensoria*) *p*(*otestate*) *q*(*uinquennales*). Every five years, one of the *duumviri* carried out a census of the population, inspected the colony's finances, and determined the viability of the council's projected budget up until the appointment of the next successor to the post (FOst §§6, 16, 31, 36, 91, 101, 111, 126, 146).

Last, as noted, the Fasti Ostienses occasionally highlight local events (FOst §§2, 91, 94, 112, 115, 127, 140, 146, 152).[108] The most extended

105. On Vulcan as possibly the oldest cult of Ostia, see Taylor, *Cults of Ostia*, 14–20. Note the rededication of the Ostian temple of Vulcan by Trajan on 23 August 11 (FOst §112,45–46). See also the inscription of Quintus Vettius Postumius Constantius, priest of Vulcan and his sacred temple (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §36).

106. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 179.

107. For full details, see Jinyu Liu, *Collegia Cenotariorum*: *The Guilds of Textile Dealers in the Roman West* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 415.

108. See Bruun, "Civic Rituals in Imperial Ostia," 135–36. One fascinating local event, in addition to FOst §152 discussed below, is the visit of the Iberian king Pharasmanes with his wife and son to the city (FOst §45).

example occurs in lines 15–20 of FOst §152, in which a local benefactor whose name we do not know because of the fragmentary nature of our text offers substantial benefits to the colony. There we are told that he dedicated a basilica, on which occasion he also offered *munus gladiatorium* (an exhibition of gladiators), with a *venatio legitima* (legitimate hunt) made up of all the wild animals that any spectator could reasonably expect on such an occasion. In fulfillment of a vow he had made four years previously, he also dedicated from his own funds two statues, one of the Genius and the other of Fortuna. The rarity of such spectacles can be seen from the special mention of the sponsorship of games by P. Lucilius Gamala senior: "When he had received from public means money for games, he gave it back and held it at his own expense."[109] Where the *munus gladiatorium* was actually staged is an important question, since there are no archaeological indications of an amphitheatre at Ostia. In the absence of a permanent structure for such spectacles, something temporary must have been erected. One has to ask, therefore, why such rhetorical prominence in the *fasti Ostienses* has been given to this local act of Ostian benefaction.[110]

First, in the case of the statues of the Genius and of Fortuna Coloniae Ostiensum, there is no mention of a statue offered to the Genius of the emperor, though elsewhere Ostian dedicators of a sacred altar make precisely such a dedication.[111] Therefore it must be assumed that it is the local

109. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B335 (CIL 14.375).

110. There were also athletic competitions of the normal kind at Ostia, as opposed to spectacles. Names of athletes are honored in a mosaic (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §85). The course of athletic competitions and their locations are enumerated in two fragmentary Ostian inscriptions honoring athletes whose names are missing: Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §85 (CIL 14.474: Sebasmia at Damascus; Actia at Bostra [Bosra]; Pythia at Karthaginia; Asclepia at Karthaginia; Severia at Caesaria; Commodia at Caesaria); §86 (CIL 14.4701: Sebasta at Neapolis; Augusti Actia at Neapolis; Olympia at Pisa; Pythia at Delphi; Isthmia at Isthmia; Nemea at Argos). Note also the wrestlers depicted on a mosaic at the meeting place of a Society at Ostia: Richard Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 200 fig. 17. For Ostian pancratiasts, see C. P. Jones, "The Pancratiasts Helix and Alexander on an Ostian Mosaic," *JRA* 11 (1998): 293–98.

111. See Taylor, *Cults of Ostia*, 31–32, 35–36, 44, on, respectively, Fortuna, Genius Coloniae Ostiensium, and dedications to local *genii*. There is a dedication to the Genius of the emperor (*AUG*[*usti*] *GENIO* [---]) made by the public weighers of grain (CIL 14.51: Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §8, 42). The one Genius inscription cited by

Genius of Ostia to whom the inscription refers. Second, the local Ostian emphasis on gladiatorial games, with their wild animal hunts, finds its counterpart in Trajan's celebration of his Dacian victory (107–109 CE), with its extensive exhibitions of gladiatorial pairs and sea-battles on an artificial lake (FOst §§107–109).[112] In the absence of any permanent structure to stage gladiatorial games and spectacles at Ostia, Ostians would normally have had to go to Rome to see such staged events. To have the games staged locally must have been a very special occasion, as the epitaph of Hostilianus, *duumvir* of the city, imperial cult *flamen*, and *curator* of the *ludus iuuenalis*, demonstrates. The epitaph boastfully states of Hostilianus: "the first of all since the foundation of the city (*qui primus om[niu]m ab urbe condita*) who with his wife Sabina [had] organized games with (gladiators?) and women to whom he gave the gladiator sword" (CIL 14.4616+5381+*AE* [1977], 153). The unusualness of showing female gladiators in Ostia probably justifies the boast.[113] Furthermore, the implicit parallel made between Hostilianus and the founding king of Ostia, Ancus Marcius, by means of the phrase *qui primus om[niu]m ab urbe condidata*, is also striking in its status claim.[114] The strong civic pride of Ostia, exemplified by the statues and its own version of the gladiatorial games with accompanying spectacles on special occasions, could not be clearer in a late Roman Empire context.

Several important observations pertaining to the Ostian elites emerge from the evidence outlined above. The remarkable longevity of the Gamala family, serving as *duumviri* and benefactors from the republic to the Flavian era, shows how inherited wealth, astutely distributed in significant

Thylander (*Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B321) is local, even though it is contained in an inscription dedicated to the emperors Severus and Antoninus Augusti: "to the Genius of the porters of the salt bags of all the city of the Roman salt camp." There is a late reference to the Numen of the *domus Augusta* (*Numeni Domus Aug*[*ustae*]; see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §50 [CIL 14.4320]; cf. 14.4319, 5320). For a sculpture of the Genius of winter with cloaked wings, see Calza, *La Necropoli del Porto di Romano*, 231, figs. 128–29.

112. Robert K. Sherk, ed. and trans., *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), §120A–C.

113. For the inscription and translation, see Françoise van Haeperen, "Cohabitation or Competition in Ostia under the Empire?," in *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*, ed. David Engels and Peter van Nuffelen, Collection Latomus 343 (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2014), 133–48, here 134, slightly adapted.

114. Note the inscription of Ancus Marcius (CIL 14.4338), the founder of Ostia, discussed above.

civic projects, ensured continuing political dominance over a long period of time. The same can be said for those who acquired the titulus of *patronus coloniae* by achieving the prerequisite qualification of senatorial or equestrian status and its accompanying wealth. Furthermore, the astute use of wealth by the Ostian elites in civic projects inevitably spawned further distinctions for their families in the form of lifelong priesthoods of Vulcan, as well as the indebtedness of the Ostian *collegia* who also received their benefits, among other groups. Multiple patronage ensured multiple clients who demonstrated their loyalty (*fides*) to their benefactor and his house across divergent contexts.

Equally remarkable is how a founding luminary within the family line could so enhance the family glory that his male heirs, in a singular act of piety (*pietas*), assumed exactly the same name (i.e. P. Lucilius Gamala) generation by generation over a long period of time. This might just be a matter of naming conventions, of course, but given the status of Gamala, I would argue that something more significant is occurring here than just the routine allocation of names. Furthermore, the relentless acquisition of the duumvirate by A. Egrilius Rufus is especially noteworthy, restricting the access of other wealthy Ostian elites to this coveted position: here we see the same type of political dominance in an Ostian context that we see from the Scipios in republican Rome. It would be easy to conclude that this is simply a case of political and social mimicry: Ostia is presenting itself as a "mini Rome." However, the powerful noble families of republican Rome did not survive past the Julio-Claudian age, failing to show the political longevity that some of the wealthy republican elites of Ostia did well into the Flavian period.[115] The Ostians are rightly highlighting the continuity between the late republican and early imperial elite houses and those present in the late Flavian period. In this regard, as Henrik Mouristsen highlights, "a comparison between the funerary record and the local *fasti* suggests the continued existence of old curial families in Ostia."[116]

At a rhetorical level, the heavy concentration of the *fasti Ostienses* upon the local duumvirate and *pontifex Vulcani* corresponds to the Roman consulship and *pontifex maximus,*[117] both magistracies being held simultaneously by the Roman emperor. Again, this might be considered a

115. On the decline of the Ostian nobility, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 208–11.
116. Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Decurions," 44.
117. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 146.

form of rhetorical mimicry, that is, "local and central versions of the same governmental structure."[118] Surprisingly, however, there is no reference in the *fasti Ostienses* to the *pontifex Maximus* magistracy of the emperors, though their consulships and achievements are consistently noted (e.g. the 17th consulship of Domitian: FOst §95), as are the consulships of the other suffect consuls at Rome. Although it is risky to make historical deductions from silence (i.e. is the priesthood of the imperial ruler simply assumed by the redactors?), it is worth speculating whether the Ostians are here prioritizing their oldest(?) indigenous deity and its priest over against the mediation of the emperor, the *pontifex maximus*, before the traditional Roman gods. Local cultic pride, arguably, supplants imperial realities.

In sum, the Fasti Ostienses "creates for Ostia a sense of civic identity," establishing a sense of permanent honor for the Ostian luminaries there represented and underscoring "the collective effort" of the commemorated individuals, as opposed to simply eulogizing, as was the case in other inscriptions, the great man in antiquity.[119] Ultimately, the erection of the Fasti Ostienses represents ritualistic behavior of a sacred kind carried out in a precious sacred space, whether that is the Vulcan temple or the civic forum.[120] Having focused upon the Ostian elites as revealed in the Fasti Ostienses, we turn to the wider epigraphic corpus to gain greater insight into the social profile of the city.

4. The Social Profile of the City

4.1. Case Studies in the Ostian Elites

In this section we will approach our case studies from the perspectives of Roman formal rank (*ordo*) and ancestral privilege (inherited wealth). First, three aristocratic orders existed in Roman society, hierarchically "defined by the state through statutory or customary rules." But under Augustus's

118. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 146.

119. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 146–47. On the "great man" in antiquity, see E. A. Judge, *Paul and the Conflict of Cultures: The Legacy of His Thought Today*, ed. James R. Harrison (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019), 122–37; James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit: The Cross and Moral Transformation*, WUNT 430 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 217–55, 331–37.

120. Bruun, "Civic Rituals in Imperial Ostia," 134.

restoration of the *res publica*, they were given "sharper definition."[121] The senatorial order had to meet the census requirement of 1,000,000 sesterces, having been reduced to 600 members, and purged of the morally unworthy. The equestrian order numbered in the thousands and was likewise subjected to moral scrutiny: it had a census requirement of 400,000 sesterces, with equestrians assigned administrative and military positions, the most prestigious being the praetorian prefect. The decurions or town councilors across the empire were again expected to be morally worthy, and for admission to the order were expected to meet the census requirement of 100,000 sesterces.

In the case of senators at Ostia,[122] their presence is indicated in an association decree discussed below (CIL 14.251), as well as in the Fasti Ostienses, and well exemplified in the careers of Aulus Egrilius Rufus, Marcus Acilius Priscus, and Aulus Egrilius Plarianus Lucius Lepidus Flavius.[123] In terms of the equestrians, they are again mentioned in the same association decree (CIL 14.251), as well as epigraphically honored by their posts being listed in a *cursus honourum*.[124] The extensive inscription of Hermogenes—a Roman knight (*equites*), co-opted as a town councilor (decurion), and a priest (*flamen*) of the deified Hadrian—mentions that during his priesthood "he, alone and first, organised theatrical plays at his own expense" (CIL 14.4642).[125] Last, in CIL 14.409 there are references to Gnaeus Sentius Felix being named (*adl*[*ecto*]) an aedile and decurion by a decree of the decurions (*d*[*ecurionum*] *decr*[*eto*]).[126] The twice-used phrase, *decuriones adlecti*, refers to junior members of the order who have not yet held any magistracy but who possess special merit for future advancement.[127] Significantly, Gnaeus Sentius Felix rose

121. Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 112.

122. For discussion, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, 207–12.

123. For Fasti Ostienses, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §60.1–3; for the two Ergrilii and the Acilius, see §61.1–5.

124. See Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §§62–65.

125. For translation, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §110; for another Roman *equites* of Ostian origin, see §7.1, 37.

126. See Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B339, line 3.

127. For *decuriones adlecti*, see Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B339, lines 3, 5. For further CIL examples of the *decuriones adlecti*, see Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Decurions," 44 n. 30, as well as others from humble unfree descent (44 n. 31).

to absolute preeminence in the city, becoming a *duumvir* and regulating a wide variety of commercial and trade affairs, ranging in terms of his wide social contacts from the procurator of the emperor to the bankers and the public slaves.[128] He also acted as patron of the *decuria* by sponsoring the scribes writing on wax, the copyists, the lictors, and their attendants.[129] In sum, what emerges from this brief overview is how the power of the wealthy Roman elites from each *ordo* was displayed comprehensively across Ostian political, civic, and patronal life.

In terms of the elite benefactors of the city, we possess two extensive inscriptions from the Gamala family, Publius Lucilus Gamala senior (CIL 14.375) and Publius Lucilus Gamala junior (CIL 14.376).[130] We cannot discuss here the Gamala family in any depth nor investigate the debate over the dating of their inscriptions.[131] Instead, we will employ broad categories to summarize their beneficence. Additional to the prestigious magistracies attained by Gamala junior, there were curatorships of records and funds, sponsorship of games and gladiatorial shows, multiple cases of underwriting temple building, restorations of structures (baths, portico, dockyards), and the standardization of weights and measures in commerce. Gamala senior has the same magistracies and largely the same benefactions as Gamala junior, but he had displayed his own distinctive touches beforehand in the republican period: paying the actors in the theatrical games, arranging a banquet for all the Ostian citizens, and donating 15,200 sestertii to the city. Undoubtedly, the replication of the civic career of Gamala senior by Gamala junior generations later (117–180 CE), both in terms of its magistracies and beneficence, is no coincidence; this is a case of the careful *imitatio* by a later imperial family descendant of his famous ancestor.

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128. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B339, lines 7–17.

129. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B339, lines 9–10.

130. For translations of both Gamala inscriptions, CIL 14.375–376, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 119–22.

131. See Lily Ross Taylor, "The Publii Lucilii Gamalae of Ostia," *AJP* 57 (1936): 183–89; Ilaria Manzini, "*I Lucilii Gamalae a Ostia*, *Storia di una famiglia*," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 126 (2014), https://doi.org/10.4000/mefra.2225; Mary Jane Cuyler, "Legend and Archaeology at Ostia: P. Lucilius Gamala and the Quattro Tempietti," *BABESCH* 94 (2019): 127–46.

4.2. The Social Mix at Ostia: From Upwardly Mobile Freedmen to Household Slaves

In this section the collection of Thylander's funereal epitaphs will enable us to discern the social mix of Ostia existing below the apex of the social pyramid. The corpus of Ostian epitaphs comes to circa 2,500 (mid-first century–fourth century CE), so this limited foray will suffice. However, we will also bring to bear several insights from the seminal scholarship of Henrik Mouritsen on Ostian freedmen.[132] First, we find several references to the upwardly mobile freedmen of the *familia Caesaris*,[133] though in sharp contrast to the freedmen inscriptions of Rome, the specific role of the *libertus*/*liberta* is rarely specified. Probably, by contrast, the prestigious association with the *familia Caesaris* at Rome made the mention of freemen professions de rigueur. Notably, the only profession mentioned within the *familia Caesaris* in our selection is an archivist.[134] Freedmen of other unnamed houses are also mentioned, as are slaves of the house of the emperor, public slaves of the state, along with slaves of unknown Ostian houses.[135]

The tombs and monuments at Ostia, Mouritsen argues, were built largely by freedmen (i.e., those of unfree birth who were emancipated) and their children from the late first century CE period onward.[136] What is surprising is that the top Ostian elites chose not to build funeral monu-

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132. Henrik Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Freeborn in the Necropolis of Imperial Ostia," *ZPE* 150 (2004): 281–304; Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Decurions." Additionally, see Lily Ross Taylor, "Freedmen and Freeborn in the Epitaphs of Imperial Rome," *AJP* 82 (1961): 113–32; Nicolas Tran, "The Work Statuses of Slaves and Freedmen in the Great Ports of the Roman World (First Century BCE–Second Century CE)," *Annales Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 68 (2013–2014): 659–84, https://doi.org/10.1017/S2398568200000133.

133. For freedmen of the emperor, see Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A1 (freedman of Augustus), 7 (freedman of Hadrian), 60; for freedmen of other houses, see 1.A5.

134. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A256, 279, B68.

135. For freedmen of other houses, see Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A5. We also hear of a slave of the emperor (A19), a public slave of the state (B339), as well as slaves of other houses (A102, 214 ["born in the house"], 262). For discussion of the use of "drudge slaves" at the port of Ostia, see Tran, "Work Statuses of Slaves," 666–72.

136. In this paragraph I depend upon and draw out implications from Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Decurions," 40–44.

ments in the necropolises during this period. Previously, in republican and Augustan times, the prestigious burial sites were at the Porta Romana and outside the Porta Marina.[137] From the Flavian period onward the most powerful elites promoted their prestigious careers with statues and monuments honoring their munificence in a different civic space: in the forum at the center of the town.[138] As it was, the necropolises were associated with religious taboos and were placed at the outskirts of the city as opposed to its center—a potential sign of social doom for the pretentious if few elites continued to be buried there. Furthermore, precisely because freedmen monuments were ubiquitous at the necropolises, there was also the problem for the top elites of the social undesirability of being associated with the underclasses in the estimation of posterity. Thus the later imperial elites avoided the necropolises as grave sites, preferring instead private burials elsewhere. There is no evidence of another elite necropolis at Ostia. This also meant that the elites are largely hidden from the epigraphic epitaphs from the Flavian period onward.[139] By contrast, the freedmen continued to bury their dead family members in the necropolises as an act of self-commemoration to overcome the stigma of servitude, to compete among themselves for precedence, and to perform a significant act of sentiment for the deceased.

Second, the military forces also feature frequently in the Ostian inscriptions: one a veteran of the emperor, another a veteran of the tenth cohort, others soldiers of the praetorian fleet, another a centurion, and others not given any precise identification.[140] One fragmentary military inscription is particularly interesting. It presents the Fates (*Parcae*) directing the destiny of the young Quintus Gargilius toward his military service in Italy. The celestial goddess ensures his safe trip from Carthage to Italy over the Tyrrhenian Sea in an unstable boat. Because of Gargilius's gratitude for his providential care from the goddess during his sea voyage, eternal and

137. Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Decurions," 43–44. For an important decurion tomb at Porta Romana, see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §42.1 (CIL 14.4642).

138. See the inscription placed in the Forum honoring the decurion Hermogenes (Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §42.1 [CIL 14.4642]).

139. Mouritsen ("Freedmen and Decurions," 43) draws attention to "a highly unusual epitaph … commissioned by a freedman to commemorate no less than nine freeborn *patroni*" (CIL 14.1332).

140. Respectively, Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A191; B150; A178, B73; A31; B18.

powerful Rome, personified in the inscription, co-opts him in an act of benefaction for a soldier's glory in his camp and instills in him the military manliness (*virtus*) characteristic of the old republican noble generals:

> Consecrated to the Manes gods by Quintus Gargilius, son of Quintus, Iulianus, also called Semelius, soldiers, having lived fifty-four years, three months and three days. Carthage, of its own will, and the *Parcae* with their divine potency then sent him to Italy, still a boy, while the celestial goddess showed the way on the blue sea during the Tyrrhenian route with the aid of a pleasing (but) unstable boat. To this (person), full of joy at his divine fortune [*suo numine laeto*], eternal and powerful Rome gave the glory of the camps [*castrorum decus*] and the noble donation [*nobile munus*] of *virtus* (*virtutem*: "manliness"). After such presents …[141]

There is a smattering of other professions, social and religious posts, and benefactors mentioned in Thylander's collection: a doctor, a tutor, two tympanists for Mater Deum Magna, local patrons, and a patron of the emperor.[142] A pantomime, not included in Thylander's collection, should also be noted.[143] But when we add to this data base the vast array of craftsmen, among other professions, represented in the Ostian association inscriptions,[144] far too many to enumerate here, we have a city that seems to have a strong "middle class" base, among whom may have been believers from the craft workers in the mid-50, if Phoebe and Priscilla were in any way representative of the early Christian social constituency (Acts 18:1–3, 18, 19, 26; Rom 16:3–4; 2 Tim 2:19).

4.3. The Ostian Epitaphs and the Terracotta Visual Evidence: Feminine Virtue and Domestic Roles

Alison Jeppesen-Wigelsworth has observed that the most common epigraphic epithets for Roman women in Latin epitaphs are *amantissima*

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141. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A125, translation adjusted.

142. Respectively, Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A50; A17; A92, 142; A269, B53, 55.

143. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §88 (CIL 14.4642).

144. For the fifty-nine associations at Ostia, congregating around six groupings (grain shipping and services, commerce, transport, trades, civil service, cults), see van Hermansen, *Ostia*, 239–41.

(very loving), *bene merens* (well-deserving), *carissima* (very dear), *dulcissima* (very sweet), *pietissima* (very dutiful), *optima* (best), *sanctissima* (most revered), *incomparabilis* (incomparable), *fidelissima* (very faithful), *castissima* (very chaste), and *pudicissima* (very moral or chaste).[145]

We could legitimately conclude that we have here a valuable epigraphic portrait of what a Roman woman (*femina*) should be as a mother (*mater*), wife (*coniux*, *uxor*), daughter (*filia*), sister (*soror*), and patron (*patrona)* in a household and civic context.[146] To some extent, there is truth in this observation, but many of the same adjectival superlatives are also applied to males (*hominus*, *coniux*, *filius*, *frater*, *pater, patronus*) in their epitaphs.[147] So it would be truer to say that we are witnessing here a range of Roman superlatives that could equally be applied to males and females in their *familia* and civic relationships. In a patriarchal society, it might be argued that the Roman females are merely mimicking male virtue, reflecting their submission to the mores of the *pater familias* or to those of her *coniux*, but this would underestimate the explosion of virtues that are accorded females in some epitaphs reflecting their own unique merit.

A fine example is the inscription honoring Aurelia Gemina erected by her Christian husband, a deacon, in which the description of the wife's virtues more reflects Roman values as far as its terminology and content than the portraits of godly behavior of virtuous wives in the New Testament (e.g., Tit 2:3–5; 1 Pet 3:1–6). Nor is there any indication here of the striking reevaluation of Roman mores that we will see in a Christian martyrologi-

145. Alison D. Jeppesen-Wigelsworth, "The Portrayal of Roman Wives in Literature and Inscriptions" (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2010), 34. Note the praise of a husband for "his wife of incomparable chastity (*castitate incomparabili*)" (Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A190). Note how the harmonious marriage of emperor Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina functions as a model for virgins marrying (CIL 14.5326)

146. *Bene merens*: Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.A4, 12, 14, 27, 28, 53, 61, 69, 88, 91, 102, 148, 153, 161, 162, 164, 208, 246, 273, 276, 315; B14, 58, 63, 65, 77, 111, 168, 178, 248; *carissima*: A8, 210; B28, 79, 86, 153; *dulcissima*: A54, 113, 127; B31, 54, 96, 171, 228; *incomporabilis*: A39, 182, 190, 299; B163, 165; *optima*: A24; B68; *pietissima*: A47, 93, 175, 216, 219, 225, 230, 234, 251, 314; B81, 101, 124, 153; *piissima:* A76, 100, 101, 129, 146, 157, 197, 200; *pudica*: 228; *sanctissima*: A15, 172; B75, 166, 235. In Thylander's collection of Ostian inscriptions, *amantissima*, *castissima*, and *fidelissima* do not appear.

147. Instances of the same terminology being applied to males can be traced in Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, vol. 1 indexes, s.v. "*verba*."

cal epitaph to be discussed below. Notwithstanding, there is no indication that Aurelia Gemina is modeling herself on her deacon husband's virtue. Apart from the husband's expression of affection for his spouse (*dulcissima*), she stands before her contemporaries on the basis of her own virtue:

> To Aurelia Geminia, for his very sweet [*dulcissimae*] spouse, free from extravagance [*verecundae*; alternatively, "temperate"], chaste [*pudicae*], a woman of complete innocence [*integritatis*], Felix the deacon [*diak*(*onos*)] has made this plaque.[148]

Occasionally there are descriptions of Ostian women that move beyond the tightly focused semantic domain articulated above. An intriguing case is the Ostian epitaph that says that a woman died "without infamy and without complaint" (*sine infamia*, *sine querella*; CIL 14.963). Is the mention of *infamia* here a matter of legal status or personal opinion? Does it trade upon wider Roman social concepts of *infamia* and disrepute based around particular despised trades?[149] We simply do not know in this instance, but the choice of such unusual terminology to express feminine virtue probably had a pointed social backstory, either in the case of the honorand or the dedicator of the epitaph.

Last, we turn to a singular example of an Ostian visual celebration of a traditional female role: childbirth. A terracotta relief on the façade of a tomb of Isola Sacra graphically shows the parturient seated in her chair with its handgrips.[150] The *obstretrix* ("midwife") reaches between the patient's legs, while "the assistant holds the seated woman's chest to steady her body against the womb's contractions."[151] The visual imagery here reminds New Testament readers of Paul's own imagery of childbirth employed in the Epistle to the Galatians in encouraging his gentile converts regarding Christ-formation in their lives: "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth [ὠδίνω] until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19). Beverly Gaventa has argued that Paul's imagery, drawing upon the connections between apocalyptic expectation and the imagery

148. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B228, my translation.

149. Sarah E. Bond, "Criers, Impresarios, and Sextons: Disreputable Occupations in the Roman World" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2011), 9.

150. Kampen, *Image and Status*, plates fig. 58. See also the Pompeian ivory plaque of a childbirth scene, plates fig. 20.

151. Kampen, *Image and Status*, 69–72, here 69.

of childbirth (LXX Mic 4:10; Isa 3:6, 8; Jer 6:24; cf. 1QH^{a} XI, 6–8), "reflects the anguish of the whole created order as it awaits the fulfilment of God's action in Jesus Christ."[152] While the literary background of Second Temple Judaism is helpful in enabling us to see how Paul's imagery is functioning theologically in an apocalyptically charged letter, the strength of the visual evidence is that it brings us back to exegetical reality: the intense pain of the coming ordeal of childbirth, conveyed by the handgrips being tightly grasped by the parturient and by the physical presence of the assistant restraining her. While Paul's understanding of Christ formation is apocalyptically focused, we must not forget the intense pastoral pain, as well as physical exhaustion, that he experiences as the apostolic mother in birthing a spiritually fully-formed Galatian community of believers.

4.4. The Lower Classes and the Poor of Ostia: The Burial Evidence of Isola Sacra

In terms of the poor, there are stark differences between the graves of the wealthy and the poor at Isola Sacra, given the grandiose tombs of the elites. Nevertheless, in an area that Calaza called *campo dei poveri* ("the field of the poor"), the poor still received a formal burial. They were either deposited in *amphora* graves or *tomba a cassone* (small chest-shaped tombs) that were located behind Tombs 38–43 at Isola Sacra.[153] In terms of numbers, several hundred burials have been found in the *camp dei poveri*. However, historical caution is required here. In the case of chest burials, if portable furniture were brought to the site and appropriately placed around the chest, "the formal meal could also be consumed in accordance with strict Roman dining customs."[154] Such formal funerary

152. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 29–39, here 34.

153. Emily Johnston, "Cities of the Dead: A Study of the Roman Necropoleis at Ostia" (MA thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2017), 27–28. Maureen Carroll ("Memoria and *Damnatio Memoriae*: Preserving and Erasing Identities in Roman Funerary Commemoration," in *Living through the Dead: Burial and Commemoration in the Classical World*, ed. M. Carroll and J. Rempel, Studies in Funerary Archaeology 5 [Oxford: Oxbow, 2011], 65–90, here 70) writes: the grave site consists "of bodies interred in the soil, in terracotta sarcophagi, or covered by terracotta tiles, or cremated and deposited in ceramic urns with the neck of a broken, uninscribed amphora visible above ground to mark the spot and to facilitate the pouring of libations to the dead."

154. Emma-Jayne Graham, "The Quick and the Dead in the Extra-urban Land-

banquets, when conducted on a more elaborate scale than those of the poor, would have demonstrated that the owners of a *tomba a cassone* were located socially somewhere between the wealthy and the poorer groups using the cemetery.[155] But in the case of the poor, unnamed in their burial, they suffered what Pliny the Younger called "the injustice of oblivion" (*Ep.* 3.5.4).

5. Ostian Graffiti

5.1. A Survey of the Graffiti

The Ancient Ostia Graffiti Project began more than a quarter of a century ago as an initiative of Jan Theo Bakker and Eric Taylor, who have documented photographically the majority of extant graffiti. Apart from cataloging an invaluable social resource from Roman antiquity, the project has been necessitated by the progressive deterioration of the exposed graffiti at the site, with some totally disappearing. Consequently, Bakker and Taylor have been aided by a team of colleagues from 2013 onward who have enhanced and expanded the photographic corpus with digital images.[156] The invaluable service that this project has performed for Ostian scholarship is to place in the hands of scholars most of the graffiti from Ostia online, with visual images reproduced and described and the graffiti documented and translated where warranted.[157]

The dominant visual image found among the Ostian graffiti is the ship, hardly unexpected for a seaport.[158] The lighthouse of Portus is also represented (G0230, G0446, G0510), but in one instance it is placed alongside

scape: The Roman Cemetery at Ostia/Portus as a Lived Environment," in *TRAC 2004: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Durham 2004*, ed. J. Bruhn, B. Croxford, and D. Grigoropoulos (Oxford: Oxbow, 2005), 133–43, here 141.

155. Graham, "The Quick and the Dead," 141–42.

156. For full details, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/graffiti/graffiti.htm.

157. See http://www. ostia-antica.org. The Ancient Ostia Graffiti Project lists all its graffiti in the regions and sites in which they were found. The following selection of graffiti is chosen from the various regions and sites, with the number of the identifying number of each graffito indicated, but not its precise site location. Access the graffiti identified in what follows via https://www.ostia-antica.org/graffiti/graffiti-list.htm.

158. There are thirty-five graffiti diagrams of ships at Ostia, too many to be listed here.

a portrayal of Trajan's Column.[159] The latter visual statement is probably another example of Ostian civic pride, in which the iconic image of the Claudian and Trajanic harbor finds its parallel in the popular consciousness with Trajan's famous victory monument at Rome. Nevertheless, the impact of the agonistic culture of Rome, with its associated spectacles, is widely represented visually at Ostia: the gladiators of the amphitheater, the quadriga of the circus, and the green faction of the chariot races all appear.[160] As noted above, with no permanent amphitheater or circus at Ostia, Ostians would only have seen such spectacles at Rome. However, humble local gaming boards and dice games are also represented, indicating what Ostians did in a leisurely moment or, more seriously, gambled on.[161] In terms of the trades, it is not surprising to find a diagram of a millstone in a bakery, a prominent building in the archaeological record of Ostia.[162] This is reinforced by commercial texts among the graffiti mentioning butter, oil and grain, and the purchase of bread and wood (G0366, G0258). Even more intriguing are the mixed-content images. One is described thus: "A slab bearing graffiti of an elephant, a web-footed horse, a four-legged beast with a mouse's snout, a helmeted soldier with shield and lance, a juggler, a boat with an oar" (G0134). This blend of fantasy animals with the social realia of everyday Ostian life shows how the city inhabitants humorously injected their rich imaginations into the mundane world of urban life.

In terms of the graffiti themselves, a wide range of social attitudes emerges in dealing with relationships of equal and unequal status, human and divine. Among the commercial classes of Osia, the heated culture of rivalry and competition is seen in a graffito dealing with an auction: "I bought it for 90 asses, I beat my rival" (G0368). By contrast, texts dealing with slavery reveal differing attitudes toward masters. Denigrating attitudes are evinced in some texts toward the master, elevating the slave to a position of superiority ("Your mistress is far inferior to you"), whereas

159. G0390. For another graffiti of Trajan's column, see G0228.

160. Gladiators: G0161, G0386, G019, G0029. Quadriga: G0387. Green faction of charioteers: G0270. From a vastly different cultural perspective, however, note the impact of Rome's literary culture upon Ostia in the citation of the first lines of Vergil's *Aeneid* (G0380).

161. Gaming board: G0293. Dice games: G0185, G0186, G0187.

162. G0316. On the Ostian grain storehouses (*horrea*), see Geoffrey Rickman, *Roman Granaries and Store Buildings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 15–86.

other graffito writers express gratitude toward their masters and wish them well (*domesticus* [*Domesticus*?] *grat*(*i*)*as aget dominu suo* [?] *opto te bene*) (G0023, G0037). Moreover, the concerned stewards of Publius Actius Martialis petition an unknown person about the release of their master from an unknown predicament and seek his return to his Tiber estate.[163] By contrast, the language of freedman status (*ingenuumtis*) is sometimes intentionally placed in sharp opposition to the language of servile status (*servus*) in one graffito, coupled with a climactic assertion of moral status ("a good man") by the writer: "T. Marcius Ingenu(u)s [a free man], slave of the deified Emperors, a good man" (G0251). Slaves also express their piety toward Mithras in a graffito below the niche of a mithraeum, writing their names in the left column and their gifts (wine, denarii) to the god in the right column (G0015). Does the mithraeum represent an alternative community for slaves, allowing them the possibility of divine blessing outside of their world of unrewarding and unrecognized work?

The security of the city, its imperial rulers, and it inhabitants is also thought of in hierarchical terms where the blessing of the gods or emperor is sought. The rituals of the imperial cult are expressed "formally" by an informal graffito found in a shrine: "For the safety of our lord Severus Alexander, the pious, the happy, Augustus. We, the soldiers of the first cohort of the fire-fighters, the Severan, were stationed in these barracks for 30 days" (G0097). The safety of the city is also ensured by the presence of night watchmen guarding it from threat. In a *vota decennalia* ("a vow recurring every tenth year"), which is indicated by the X in the graffito, the night watchmen renew their allegiance to the emperor for another decade: "Calpurnius, night-watchman from the *centuria* of Ostiensis, from the seventh (or sixth) *cohors*, during the reign of Caracalla, in the year of consuls Laetus and Cerialis, X" (G0011). The gods, too, are routinely honored and their favour sought: "Righteous Hermes (Mercurius), bring profit to Hektikos" (G0260). Sol-Mithras is honored with this graffito: "Lord Sun lives here" (G0354). Lucceia Primitiva promises that she will reciprocate gratitude to Fortuna Taurianensis upon the god's extension of favor ensuring the good health of her and her family (G0199). In other words, the graffiti provide us invaluable insight into the functioning of hierarchical relationships in antiquity, spanning the human and divine worlds, moving

163. G0255: "The stewards of Publius Martialis pray that … releases him from the ocean … to (his estate in) Tibur."

from the honor-driven apex of the social pyramid to the honor-deprived base of the social pyramid, where either submissive and assertive attitudes are variously articulated.

Erotica feature regularly in graffiti, and Ostia is no exception. Unrequited love is sometimes aired in a puzzling manner: "Chrysis, you love Chryseros, but he loves Apella. Many greetings from Iustus Ianuarius" (G0293). The role that Iustus Ianuarius plays in this scenario is uncertain: Is he trying to disrupt each relationship for his own purposes by airing this tawdry gossip publicly? Or, more likely, is the entire scenario an imaginative construct designed to titillate or amuse readers? Certainty of interpretation is unachievable. A sexual threesome, naming the partners, is highlighted, as is oral and anal intercourse, along with (more specifically) cunnilingus (G0034, G033a, G033b, G0313). Homosexuals are also verbally demeaned: "You are a faggot, Hermadion" (G0030).

Additionally, there are three drawings of phalluses (G0063, G0078, G0313): one is strategically placed above the cunnilingus graffito (G0313), another appears solo, and the last is accompanied with a text. Whether the latter two phalluses are merely reflecting the smut of erotica or are intended to function as an apotropaic symbol is difficult to say, given the highly opportunistic positioning of graffiti by their practitioners. Elsewhere in Ostia, however, there are phalluses that are deliberately placed as apotropaic symbols in various buildings: (1) a phallic plaque on the exterior wall of a bath building (Terme dell'Invidioso: Regio V, Insula 5, 2); (2) an interior black-colored phallus in a house (Domus di Giove Fulminatore: Regio IV, Insula IV, 3); (3) the mosaic of the bath attendant in the Terme del bagnino Buticosus (Regio I, Insula XIV, 8) who protects bathers by means of his exaggerated genitalia; (4) a black-and-white seascape mosaic of ithyphallic pigmies in the Isola Sacra necropolis, Tomb 16, with one pygmy penetrating the other and thereby warding off evil spirits.[164] Two other apotropaic inscriptions and mosaics appear at Ostia, designed to ward off the evil eye of the jealous in various architectural contexts.[165]

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164. For discussion, see Claudia Moser, "Naked Power: The Phallus as an Apotropaic Symbol in the Images and Texts of Roman Italy," *Undergraduate Humanities Forum 2005–6: Word & Image* (2006), 58–63, https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220i.

165. Note the mosaic of the Insula dell'Invidiosa at Ostia (Regio V, Insula V: see https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio5/5/5–1.htm), which shows at its entrance the figure of a little grotesque dwarf. He has a bald, pointed head and stretches out both hands with his fingers extended, adopting a well-known stance for conjuration. Above

Last, the entire enterprise of graffiti writing is spoofed by a local Ostian wag: "Every comer scrawls the walls with his graffiti. The only one who's written none is me. Bugger all these scrawlers! My entreaty is to call them *epitoechographs* ['writers on the wall'] like me" (G0305).

5.2. The Philosophers, Toilet Humor, and Graffiti

Several of the famous seven Greek sages (Solon, Thales, Chilon, Bias) are depicted seated in wall paintings at the Baths of the Seven Wise Men (Regio III, Insula X, 2; ca. 100 CE) with Latin texts above them,[166] dispensing pompous opinions on the refined art of defecation to twenty-four Romans, who are presented in the lower register seated in a latrine-like line. The defecatory advice rhetorically imitates the pithy moral imperatives of the sages. Solon is said to have taught: "Solon rubbed his belly to defecate well," whereas "Thales recommended that those who defecate with difficulty should strain," and "The cunning Chilon taught how to flatulate unnoticed." By contrast, the twenty-four Romans offer practical advice in Latin on correct bowel movements.[167] "I'm making haste," one says; another recommends: "Push hard; you'll be finished more quickly." The disjunction between the abstract concerns of the philosophers and rhetoricians and the practicalities of real life is highlighted. One should not presume, however, that this necessarily represented general Ostian

his head is the inscription INBIDIOSOS (= *invidiosus* ["jealous one"]), highlighting the fear of *invidia* ("jealousy") and the evil eye in antiquity, against which the gesture of the small apotropaic figure is directed. For discussion, see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, "Baiarum Grata Voluptas: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989): 6–46, here 44. A mosaic in the Taberne dei Pescivendoli at Ostia (Regio IV, Insula V, 1: see https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/5/5–1.htm) also shows at the front of one of the entrances of the fishmongers a dolphin with a squid in its beak, above which is the inscription INBIDE CALCO TE (= *invide calco te* ["Envious one, I tread on you"]). Katherine M. D. Dunbabin ("INBIDE CALCO TE … Trampling upon the Envious," in *Tesserae: Festschrift für Josef Engemann*, JACSup 18 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991), 26–37, here 35) argues that the apotropaic function of the mosaic in the Fishmonger's shop was to forestall the possibility "that his fish might lose their freshness through the workings of the Evil Eye."

166. The wall paintings of the other three sages, Kleoboulos of Lindos, Periandros of Corinth, and Pittakos of Lesbos, have not survived (Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 73).

167. For the translated Latin texts and wall paintings, see http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio3/10/10–2.htm. See also Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §23, 72–74.

attitudes toward philosophers. Among the statuary found in the tombs of Isola Sacra is an impressive marble bust of a philosopher.[168] Scatological humour, therefore, creates its own niche audience in any society and should not necessarily be taken as representing the majority viewpoint regarding what it lampoons.

In light of the sexually demeaning humor exemplified in the graffiti above, as well as in the visual evidence of Ostia, we can see why Paul, in a parenetic context of the avoidance of sexual immorality (Eph 5:3), speaks about the necessity of transformed language: "Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (NIV).[169] Warnings against a sexually dissolute lifestyle in the Epistle to the Romans carry the same pastoral force in their Ostian context (Rom 13:13).

6. The Ostian Guilds and Jewish Synagogue: Rivalries over Honor

This section will be necessarily brief due to the abundance of epigraphic and archaeological information on Ostian guilds and cultic associations.[170]

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168. Calza, *La Necropoli del Porto di Romano*, 245, figs. 144–45.

169. For the obscene dance mosaic in the bar of Alexander and Felix (Caupona di Alexander e Felix, Regio IV, Insula VII, 4), see Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 86. On Roman humor and obscene language in antiquity, see James R. Harrison, "'Laughter Is the Best Medicine': St Paul, Well-Being, and Roman Humour," in *Well-Being, Personal Wholeness and the Social Fabric*, ed. Doru Costache, Darren Cronshaw, and James R. Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2017), 209–40.

170. For discussion, see Hermansen, *Ostia*, 55–89, 239–41; Beate Bollmann, "Les collèges religieux et professionnels romaines et leurs lieux de reunion à Ostie," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 172–78; Hanna Stöger, "Clubs and Lounges at Roman Ostia: The Spatial Organisation of a Boomtown Phenomenon (Space Syntax Applied to the Study of Second Century AD 'Guild Buildings' at a Roman Port Town)," in *Proceedings of the 7th International Space Syntax Symposium*, ed. D. Koch, L. Marcus, and J. Steen (Stockholm: KTH, Trita-ARK, 2009), 108:1–12, https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220j; John Kloppenborg, "Occupational Guilds and Cultic Associations in Ostia Antica: Patronage, Mobility, Connectivity," in *Roman Imperial Cities, in the East and in Central-Southern Italy*, ed. N. Andrade et al., Ancient Cities 1 (Rome: L'Erma Di Bretschneider, 2019), 401–24. Generally, see John Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). For the archaeology of select Ostian associations, see Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, §§B11–25.

We will confine our investigation to the honorific culture of the associations, concentrating on two guilds (CIL 14.246, 250–251), as well as two synagogal inscriptions (Synagoga, Regio IV, Insula XVII, 1).[171] In a list of nonidentified society members and donors to a temple (CIL 14.246: 140–172 CE),[172] we see the hierarchical nature of Roman benefaction culture in a roster of the society members who had contributed money for the temple enlargement. After the consular year of Emperor Antoninus Pius dating the inscription, ten patrons are listed; then the names of ten presidents (*quinquenalis*) of the society follow, each linked to the consular year, with the special benefaction of one of the presidents appropriately highlighted at the end of the list; last, a list of eighty-one names in seven columns details the society members of inconsequential status in comparison to the luminaries listed above.

What is interesting is how special honorific features are added to the names. For example, the patronymics of seven out of the ten patrons are mentioned, but why are the patronymics of the three others omitted? Whatever the reason, the lack of a patronymic means that they are honorifically diminished in this bare list of patronal names, notwithstanding the fact that hierarchically they belong to the most important group in the society. In the case of the presidents, special achievements, civic status, and benefactions are highlighted. For example, Gaius Sossius Benedictus was "president for life." Another president held the prestigious post

171. On the synagogue at Ostia, see L. Michael White, "Synagogue and Society in Imperial Ostia: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence," *HTR* 90 (1997): 23–58; Maria F. Sqarciapino, "La synagogue d'Ostie," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 272–77; Anders Runesson, "The Synagogue at Ancient Ostia: The Building and Its History from the First to the Fifth Century," in *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary Studies*, ed. Birger Olsson, Dieter Mittenacht, and Olof Brandt (Stockholm: Åströms, 2001), 29–99; Dieter Mitternacht, "Current Views on the Synagogue of Ostia Antica and the Jews of Rome and Ostia," in *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 C.E.: Papers Presented at an International Conference at Lund University, October 14–17, 2001*, ed. Birger Olsson and Magnus Zetterholm, ConBNT 39 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003), 521–71; https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/17/17–1.htm. Most recently, see Daniela Williams, "Digging in the Archives: A Late Roman Coin Assemblage from the Synagogue at Ancient Ostia (Italy)," *American Journal of Numismatics* 26 (2014): 245–73; Brent Nongbri, "Archival Research on the Excavation of the Synagogue at Ostia: A Preliminary Report," *JSJ* 46 (2015): 366–402.

172. Tran. Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, §313.

of *Augustalis*. Significantly, in this particular case, Aulus Egrilius Faustus was a descendant of the famous Ostian family of the Egrilii, well known to us from the Fasti Ostienses. Needless to say, this descendant of the Egrilli had bequeathed in his will four thousand sesterces but with this provision for the society members: "that from the interest on (the) above-mentioned sum, they shall hold a banquet on the fifth of the Kalends of December (November 27) each year." Given that there were 201 members (*corporati*) in the society, the cost of the banquet would have been so substantial that only an elite Ostian family such as the Egrilii could have afforded such an impost.

There are also two other revealing lists of leaders and members in the inscription of an association of sailors and accountants. In CIL 14.250 the honorific structure of the list is the same as the society list above, consisting of nine patrons, three presidents (with one for life), and 125 members, though in this case there is no reference to the consular year of Antoninus Pius.[173] Notably, one of the patrons, Titus Aurelius Strenion, is a freedman of Augustus. The upward social mobility afforded by membership of the *familia Caesaris* is again underscored. Furthermore, on this occasion fewer patronymics are listed, with only three out of the nine patrons having their patronymic mentioned, but nonetheless they are listed first.

In CIL 14.251, after its introduction of the consular year of Antoninus Pius, the list of association members has some interesting variations in its roll of members when compared to the two previous inscriptions.[174] On this occasion three senatorial patrons are listed first and then four equestrian patrons, but with father and son relationships clarified in the case of the two equestrian families. Afterward come the seven presidents, but unexpectedly this list has four presidents for life, while another president is honored for possessing the position "for the second time." In terms of the members of the plebs, 258 names are listed in three columns. The inscription is interesting for its heavy concentration upon status, vaunting its senatorial and equestrian membership, as well revealing unintentionally the heated culture of competition and rivalry among the presidents,[175]

173. Trans. Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, §314.

174. Trans. Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, §314.

175. On rivalry at Ostia, see van Haeperen, "Cohabitation or Competition in Ostia," 133–48.

in comparison to the two association inscriptions above, if the multiple honorifics are any indication. In particular, the rhetorical use of numbers ("for the second time") replicates the epigraphic boasting culture of the republican noble houses and of the Res gestae divi Augusti at Rome, in which magistracies, military victories, and beneficence were listed numerically. The intense rivalry among the elite members of this association is confirmed by the erasure of one of the names of the senators in the list, undoubtedly perpetrated by a (senatorial?) rival consumed with *invidia* ("envy") or by an enemy of the (unknown) honorand's family.[176] Here we see how the associations mimicked Greco-Roman honorific culture by means of their relentless self-promotion and competition among themselves—the longer the list of their members, so much the better. Their patrons were publicly reciprocated by the hierarchical placement of their honors on the stone, with at times intense rivalry among the patrons emerging over what was actually highlighted. In the case of the remaining nondescript members, to have their names associated with a prestigious association and to see their names carved on a large honorific monument in a prominent public place at Ostia was enough.

Finally, we turn to the Ostian synagogal inscriptions. There is brief honorific mention of the *archisynagogos* of the Ostian synagogue that need not detain us here: "For Plotius Fortunatus, the *archisynagogos*, Plotius Ampliatus, Secundinus (and) Secunda made the monument…, and Ofilia Basilia for her well-deserving husband."[177] More intriguingly, in the bilingual inscription below, there is a recension of the original Greek text at lines 6–7 that was written in a later hand and that simply mentioned Mindius Faustus and his family. In the inscription we hear of an undefined gift (ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ δόματων) and the establishment of an ark for the Torah:

> For the health of the emperors [*Pro salute aug*(*g*)]. Mindius Faustus [with his family] built and made (it) from his own gifts [ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ δόματων] and set up the ark for the holy law [τὴν κειβωτὸν ἀνεθηκεν νομῳ ἁγίῳ].[178]

The complexity of this inscription—incorporating two versions of the text in which a later hand has possibly erased the name of the first benefac-

176. See James R. Harrison, "The Erasure of Honour: Paul and the Politics of Dishonour," *TynBull* 66 (2016): 161–84.

177. *JIWE* 1.14:26.

178. *JIWE* 1.13:22, trans. Mitternacht, "Current Views on the Synagogue," 86.

tor, with there being uncertainty regarding the precise donors of each benefaction and their wider relation to the redevelopments of the Ostian synagogue—are beyond the scope of this discussion.[179] Instead, I draw attention to one honorific feature of the text. The Latin dedication to the Roman ruler at the outset of the inscription, a familiar feature in several Ostian Latin inscriptions,[180] is an unusual invocation in a Jewish eulogistic inscription written in Greek. It demonstrates how Roman and (quite likely) Ostian Jews were careful to honor the Roman ruler due to their patronal relations with his house.[181] We should remember the extravagant praise accorded Augustus by the Alexandrian Jew Philo, notwithstanding the fact that its inflated rhetoric was precipitated by the Caligulan crisis (*Legat.* 145–148). The Pastorals and Petrine Epistles, in a much more subdued manner, encourage prayer for the ruler and submission to him (1 Tim 2:1–2; 1 Pet 2:13–17). The apostle Paul also urges obedience to the ruler (Rom 13:1–7), though in the process, I would argue, he strips the Julio-Claudian ruler of every excess of contemporary imperial propaganda, only according him the Neo-Pythagorean and Old Testament designation "servant."[182]

Second, the following inscription, dated by scholars to the second century CE, could arguably indicate that the *gerusiarch* was responsible for more than one Jewish community at Ostia, but at the very least it points to a well-organized Jewish community as Ostia:

> The community (?) of the Jews living in the colony of Ostia (?), who acquired the place from a collection (?) [(*ex conlat*[?])ione], gave it to the gerusiarch Julius Justis to build a monument. It was on the motion (?) of Livius Dionysius the father and …nus the gerusiarch and Antonius … the life-officer (?), in their year, with the agreement of the gerusia. Gaius Julius Justus the gerusiarch made (the monument) for himself and his wife, and his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. 18 feet across, 17 feet away from the road.[183]

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179. For discussion of the substantive issues involved, see Mitternacht, "Current Views on the Synagogue," 85–88; White, "Synagogue and Society," 39–42.

180. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B288, 292–293, 296–297, 301, 327.

181. White, "Synagogue and Society," 42.

182. See James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 271–323.

183. *JIWE* 1.18:33, trans. Mitternacht, "Current Views on the Synagogue," 88–80; for arguments, see 89; White, "Synagogue and Society," 39–42. An alternative recon-

What is interesting for New Testament scholars is the (restored) reference to a collection in the Jewish community/communities (?) at Ostia, established for the purchase of a place for the building of a monument. If the text is correctly restored as "collection," which is by no means certain, is this just referring to the routine giving to the communal treasury,[184] or is this a specific collection undertaken for this particular project? Certainty is unattainable, but if it is the latter, we have entered an interesting social space in terms of benefaction practice. Normally in antiquity such gifts were the preserve of one benefactor or his family, even in a synagogal context,[185] so this is unusual to some extent. It reminds us of the Judean (Acts 11:29–30) and Jerusalem collections of the apostle Paul (Acts 11:29–30; 24:17; Rom 15:25–32; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9), even if the latter is focused on the poor rather than property and translocal and multiethnic in origins as opposed to intramural.

7. Religion at Ostia

We have already touched upon many rich and varied expressions of Ostian religion: statues dedicated to various deities or to the Genius, along with their temples and mithraea; graffiti requests made of divinities; reliefs of apotropaic phalluses erected publicly for protection against the evil eye; the imperial cult and the associated duties of *seviri Augustales*; the cult of the local Lares of the suburbs and, in the Julian age, the Lares Augusti; and the indigenous priests of high social status in the city (*pontifex Vulcani*).[186] The range of gods and demigods worshiped at Ostia is extensive, as this brief selection from the epigraphic evidence demonstrates: Aesculapius, Diana Iobens, Fortuna, Hercules, Hermes, Isis, Iuppiter, Magna Deum Pater, Minerva, Pluton, Sarapis, Satur, Silenus,

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struction of "from a collection (?)" ([*ex conlat*(?)]ione) could be [*ex composit*]*ione*" ("by agreement"), resulting in the translation "who by agreement provided a plot for" (White, "Synagogue and Society," 43 n. 59, 44 n. 61).

184. White, "Synagogue and Society," 45.

185. See Anders Runnesson, Donald D. Binder, and Birger Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 CE: A Source Book*, AJEC 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), §§100, 132, 151, 156; *CIJ* 1.731; 2.861, 1404; Baruch Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967), §§1, 9, 33–55, 57–59, 61, 66.

186. For discussion of Ostian religion, see Taylor, *Cults of Ostia*; Bakker, *Living and Working*; Katharina Rieger, "Les sanctuaires publics à Ostie de la République jusqu'au Haut Empire," in Descoeudres, *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, 247–61.

Sisyphus, Sol, Spes, Tantalus, Venus, Volkanus, Zeus, cult of the Dioscuri, and Bona Dea, among others.[187] The more powerful gods invariably have their own sanctuaries and are honored with inscriptions in the public esplanades and inside private houses.

The strong attachment of Ostia to the imperial cult is seen in the dedications for the safety and return (*pro salute et reditu*) of the Roman ruler in the late empire: Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, Caesar […] Augustus, Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus, Antoninus, and Commodus.[188] The *numen* of the house of Augusta is honored by a *libertus Augusti*, and the entire Flavian house (Hadrian, Trajan, Nerva, Titus, Vespasian), with the exception of Domitian, who in a *damnatio memoriae* is deliberately omitted, is eulogized as divine (*divos*). Moreover, the cultic personnel (e.g., "*flamen* of the divine Vespasian"; "*flamen* of Rome and Augustus, *flamen* of divine Titus") are also praised.[189] However, there are also priests of indigenous gods at Ostia, as the Fasti Ostienses and other inscriptions amply demonstrate regarding the socially prestigious priesthood of Vulcan. We also hear of the *archigalli*, the eunuch priests of Magna Mater (Cybele) and Attis: "Marcus Modius Ma[x]ximus, *archigallus* of the Ostian colony."[190]

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187. For references, see Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, vol. 1, s.v. Indices V. "Nomina Deorum et Mythologica." For epigraphic evidence for the cult of the Dioscuri, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §35. Note the sacred space of the Hercules Temple (with inscriptions and relief: Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §21, 63–68), the sanctuaries of Sarapis (§26, 76–78) and Bona Dea (§30, 82–84; see also Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §20), and the campus of Magna Mater (Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §37, 98–102; see also Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §§38, 39). An old republican Atrium house (Domus Del Giove Fulminatore, Regio IV, Insula IV, 3) has a second-century CE inscription on a small marble altar ("To Descending Zeus"), referring the descent of Zeus (Iupiter) from heaven to earth, who throws down his thunderbolts (Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §35, 92–94, here 93). For the sepulchral evidence of gods and demi-gods, see Calza, *La Necropoli del Porto di Romano*, 232 fig. 130 (Bacchus: mask); 234 fig. 132 (Heros: statue); 239 fig. 137 (Pan: sculpture); 240, fig 138 (Aphrodite: bust).

188. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, B1.288, 292, 293 (CIL 14.293), 296, 297, 301, 321; Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §§21 (CIL 14.4324), 55 (CIL 14.4622a).

189. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §§50 (CIL 14.4320), 49 (CIL 14.202). Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, B1.330.

190. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §39.2. See also the sepulchral relief of an *archigallus* (Calza, *La Necropoli del Porto di Romano*,

Of considerable importance in Ostia are the local crossroad shrines where the *Lares compitales* were worshiped. These public spirits (*Lares publici*) were distinguished in Roman religious practice and thinking (e.g., Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 21.8) from the worship of the domestic Lares (*Lar familiaris*) that protected the family. Because the so-called *Lares praestites* (i.e., the protecting spirits of the city) were public in character, they were worshiped in civic temples but more commonly at shrines near the crossroads of the city suburbs (*compitum*). Consequently, they were also called the *Lares compitales*.[191] Their worship, according to Roman tradition (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 36.70), was instituted by King Servilius Tullius at Rome. But in 7 BCE Augustus, as the second founder of Rome and *pater patriae* ("Father of the Fatherland"), added the worship of the Genius Augusti to the worship of the *Lares praestites* (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.8–9), which in the case of Ostia, commenced in 51 CE.[192] Because the *Lares compitales* presided over the various local divisions of the city—of which there were fourteen in Rome—this strategic Julio-Claudian addition to public worship at Rome and Ostia ensured the domination of the imperial cult throughout the Italian peninsula, just as it had flourished in the Greek East because of the presence of the Hellenistic ruler cult and the eagerness of the provincial elites to acquire imperial favor and cult temples in their cities. Therefore Augustus, as *pater patriae*, was worshiped in the same way as the genius of the *pater familias* was worshiped in the household.[193]

205, figs. 108–9) and the reliefs of *archigalli* sacrificing to (respectively) Cybele and Attis (210–11, figs. 110–11).

191. For discussion, see Bakker, *Living and Working*, 118–33, 191–204.

192. See n. 93 above; see also CIL 14.26, 367 (182 CE), 4570.

193. Bakker, *Living and Working*, 204. One example of the worship of the Lares Augusti will suffice. In the late archival copy of a letter of the imperial freedman Callistus, procurator of the imperial property called *praedia Rusticeliana*, we read about the concession of a place of worship made to the adherents of the cult of Lares Augusti at Ostia (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §51 [June 1, 205 CE]). Callistus writes to Maximianus, an imperial slave, to obey his orders promptly: "I sent you the letter sent to me by the worshipers of Lares Augusti. In this matter, in which religious duty is so strongly implicated, you should make every effort to ensure that the place, once consecrated, is frequented for the safety [*pro salute*] of our August lords, in that, certainly even now, as the worshipers require, you should intervene so that the place is made suitable without delay" (Italian translation adapted).

Notwithstanding this important development, the richness of the pre-Augustan worship of the *Lares compitales* is seen in the round marble altar in the Piazza dei Lari (Regio I) located in front of the Caseggiato di Diana (Regio I, Insula III, 3–4).[194] The altar is either late Augustan or Claudian. The inscription says: "(The) *magistri* arranged the production of (this) marble altar consecrated to the Lares Vicinales(or, Vicinis/Viciniae) at their own expense."[195] The iconography shows the Lares Vicinales ("Lares of the local inhabitants") being led by the god Pan toward Hercules, who stands near an altar preparing to sacrifice a piglet. A thyrsus, supported at the tree near the altar, symbolizes either Dionysius or Liber Pater.[196]

The mutilation perpetrated on the iconography of this outstanding marble altar, Jan Theo Bakker speculates, was probably due to the Christians.[197] If this was the case, then it demonstrates how the Christians were exposed to idolatry at every juncture of Roman cities, whether in the private houses and *insulae* of the suburbs or the city temples and public spaces. They simply could not escape its presence. For example, in the nearby house of Diana, a well-preserved three-story apartment building (*insula*), there was a mithraeum (second–third century CE; Caseggiato di Diana, Regio I, Insula III, 3–4) in (probably) a guild hall, as well as a courtyard relief of the bow-carrying Diana accompanied by her dog and deer—and both of these a mere minute's walk to the round altar of the Lares Vicinales.[198] Consequently, believers would have responded variously to the omnipresent threat of idolatry in the Ostian suburbs. Some, under pressure in difficult circumstances, may well have defaced idolatrous monuments, such as our Lares Vicinales, in the same manner as the divine commands

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194. For discussion, see Maria F. Squarciapino, "L'ara dei Lari di Ostia," *Archeologia Classica* 4 (1952): 204–8, not seen by me; see also https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/forum/lari.htm. The monument is unusual because they were normally square as opposed to round.

195. CIL 14.4298. For the inscription, see Bloch, "A Monument of the Lares Augusti," 223, my translation.

196. For drawings of the iconography, sourced from Squarciapino, "L'ara dei Lari di Ostia," pl. 51, see the chapter "Ostia: *Compitum* de la Place des Lares (Piazzetta dei Lari, I, II, 1)" in Françoise van Haeperen, *Regio I: Ostie, Porto*, by Françoise van Haeperen, Fana, templa, delubra 6 (Paris: Collège de France, 2019), http://www.books.openedition.org/cdf/6411.

197. Bakker, *Living and Working*, 119. See also https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/forum/lari.htm.

198. For the Diana relief, see https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/3/3–3.htm.

given to the Israelites upon entering Canaan (Num 33:50–52). Less aggressively, others may have deemed the idolatrous monuments "demonic" and thus excluded themselves from any social and civic activities associated with idolatry (1 Cor 10:14–22; cf. IEph 4.1351).[199] Others avoided them simply by adopting a dismissive attitude, either mocking their inactivity or ignoring them entirely (1 Cor 10:14; 1 John 5:21), thereby taking to heart Isaiah's satire on the lifelessness of idols (Isa 44:9–20; see also Jer 10:1–16; Rom 1:21–23; 1 Cor 8:1–6; 12:2). None of these options were necessarily mutually exclusive in the choices made by Christian believers as a group over a period of time.

We now turn to the presence of Greco-Roman magic and oracular revelation at Ostia. An alphabetical sequence (-------?/AXBVCTDSR [---]) probably derives from the Ostian cult of *Iuppiter Dolichenus*, either possessing magical value, functioning protectively in an apotropaic context, or providing esoteric oracular revelation.[200] There is also a *tabula defixionis* (curse tablet) with nine names of people to be hit with adversity: what unites them is that they are all female, servile, and have the profession of *ornatrix* ("hairdresser").[201] As such, they constitute an intriguing example of a female *collegia* of *ornatices.*[202] We are not sure why this gendered servile profession has been isolated from others for cursing. Note, too, the third-century CE magical amulet with the name "Solomon" on it and, below the text, a figure dressed in a flowing robe or tunic, possibly Solomon himself.[203]

Additionally, there is mention of a soothsayer (*haruspex*), Caius Fulvius Salvis, who was the official inspector of the entrails of animal sacrificial victims for revelatory signs.[204] The centralized inscription is found at the top of a marble votive relief found near the Hercules Temple (Tempio di Ercole Regio I, Insula XV, 5) and, on the basis of the iconography of the Roman togas and republican spelling of *haruspex* (*haruspexs*), is dated to

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199. IEph 4.1351, a Christian inscription, combines the defacement of the idolatrous Artemis image with the demonic characterization of the idol and its replacement by the Christian image of the cross: "Having destroyed a deceitful image of demonic Artemis, Demeas set up this sign of truth, honouring both God the driver-away of idols, and the cross, that victorious, immortal symbol of Christ."

200. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §46.2.

201. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §24.

202. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, 128.

203. See Boin, *Ostia in Late Antiquity*, 103–8, here 105 fig. 22.

204. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §16.

90–65 BCE.[205] The relief shows three scenes from right to left: (1) two groups of three fishermen are pulling in a net in which there is an empty boat, three fishes, and a cuirassed statue of the demigod Hercules, alongside of whom is a chest; (2) an identically cuirassed Hercules takes a lot oracle from the chest of lots, depicted exactly the same as the previous one, and hands over the oracular response (*sors*) to a small sanctuary attendant, with an open tablet placed above both figures; (3) a togate priest, above whom hovers a winged Victory with a triumphal wreath, hands over the *sors* to another person, now excluded from the scene due to the fragmentary state of the relief.

Two inscriptions are vital for the interpretation of the relief. The centralized inscription identifies the *haruspex* in the third scene: "Gaius Fulvius Salvis, *haruspex*, has given (this relief) as a gift."[206] In the relief itself, on the lot in Hercules's hand, is written [S]ORT(es) H(erculis): "Oracle lots of Hercules."[207] Given, then, these oracular and priestly clues, how should we interpret the scene?

First, Giovanni Becatti has argued that the Temple of Hercules is an oracular shrine, a conclusion that he infers from the central scene of the relief, the drawing of lots.[208] It has been further suggested that the find of the portent (*prodigium*) in the fishermen's nets, depicted in the relief, was based on an actual naval loss of a Greek statue near Ostia on its way from Greece to Rome. The statue was pulled from the sea some time later, along with a box of oracles, in the vicinity of Ostia. Resultantly, one of the oracles from the box predicted military victory in their subsequent use by the *haruspex* in the temple.[209] The prodigy, however, was a *monstrum*, indicating disharmony between the realm of the gods and of humans and requiring the intervention of a *haruspex*.[210] In each case the commemoration of the oracular power of Hercules at Ostia, by portent and temple cult, is celebrated.

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205. See Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 73; Giovanni Becatti, "*Il culto di Ercole ad Ostia ed un nuovo rilievo votivo*" (orig. 1939), in Becatti, *Kosmos: Studi sul mondo antico* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1987), 641–65, here 655–60; for the relief, see fig. 25; Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, 116 fig. 16; https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/15/15-5.htm.

206. CIL 1.2.3037; trans. Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 64.

207. Trans. Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, 64.

208. Becatti, "*Il culto di Ercole ad Ostia*," 646–54.

209. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio1/15/15-5.htm.

210. Douglas R. Boin, "A Hall for Hercules at Ostia and a Farewell to the Late Antique 'Pagan Revival,'" *AJA* 114 (2010): 253–66, here 261–62 n. 55.

Second, Boin has recently challenged whether the temple belonged to Hercules at all, suggesting instead that Vulcan, the chief god of Ostia, is the central figure and that the temple is his.[211] Due to various textual restoration issues, Boin claims that the central text is in Greek, not Latin, and renders the text thus: ΟΡΤ(Η) Η(ΦΑΙΣΤΟΥ), "the festival of Hephaistos." But there are fundamental problems with Boin's proposal. There is no discernible iconographic difference between the two cuirassed figures that would suggest one was Hercules and the other Vulcan. Further, why would the relief carver resort to the Greek form of Vulcan's name (*Hephaistos*) where everywhere else in the Ostian inscriptions the Latin form (*Volkanus*) is used, especially in the urban context of a Roman colony?[212] The carver's change in script is inexplicable and poses even greater problems as solution than the textual problem Boin is attempting to solve.

In sum, this republican votive relief provides us rich insight into Ostian oracular culture in the Temple of Hercules, designed in this instance to assuage the unexpected portentous arrival of a *monstrum* threatening stability, divine and human.

8. Christian Believers at Ostia

We are unable to posit how many Christians may have lived in Ostia in the first century CE, in what regions of the city they may have resided, or with what frequency they traveled between the harbor port and Rome. There is no extant evidence to help us out, and such speculations may well be legitimately dismissed as a lost cause; we are much better placed, for example, to discuss the travels of the Roman emperors to or through the city in the first century CE than we are to speculate about a Christian presence in the city at the time of Nero.[213] Nevertheless, if the base of the mission of Paul was strongly Roman and some of his coworkers

211. Boin, "Hall for Hercules," 259–61.

212. E.g., Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B304,16, 335,4, 21; Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Caldelli, and Zevi, *Epigrafia Latina, Ostia*, §36.

213. E.g., Caligula: Suetonius, *Cal.* 15.1; Claudius: Suetonius, *Claud.* 38.1. See Joanne Spurza, "The Emperors at Ostia and Portus: Imperial Visits and Accommodations," in *Ostia e Portus nelle loro relazioni con Ostia*, ed. C. Bruun and A. Gallina Zevi, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 27 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2002), 123–34.

were Roman business men, as E. A. Judge has argued,[214] then it is possible that there was interaction between the believers living in Ostia and those in the capital. This was facilitated by their geographic proximity and by the business concerns of some of Paul's missionary colleagues that periodically would have necessitated overseas travel, presumably via Ostia or, further away, Puteoli.[215] But, ironically, in our sole New Testament narrative of a believer approaching Rome by boat, the exit point for the land journey to the capital is Puteoli (Acts 28:13), not Ostia, as one might have expected in the Neronian period. However, if the Acts narrative is historically accurate here, the fact that the apostle Paul found believers living at Puteoli, with whom he stayed seven days, suggests the likelihood that Ostia could also have been a place of residence for the first Roman believers. Even "if Christianity was slow to gain a firm hold in Ostia," we should not discount the possibility that a small (and vulnerable) community was there by early Nero's reign.[216] It is hard to believe that at Paul's time Ostia, a mere 30 km from Rome, did not have a community of early believers, whereas Puteoli and (more controversially) Pompeii, some 241 and 242 km away from Rome, respectively, did.[217] Nevertheless, I acknowledge that these arguments are inferential.

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214. E. A. Judge, "The Roman Base of Paul's Mission," in Judge, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, WUNT 229 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 553–67.

215. Although the Ostian harbor had been substantially expanded under Claudius and Nero, its full redevelopment would only finally occur under Trajan. Until then, the established Greek harbor at Puteoli remained a vital entry and exit point for the capital when undertaking sea voyages.

216. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 389.

217. On the controverted visual evidence for Christianity being present at predestruction Pompeii, see Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Crosses of Pompeii: Jesus Devotion in a Vesuvian Town* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016); contra John Granger Cook, "Alleged Christian Crosses in Herculaneum and Pompeii," *VC* 72 (2018): 1–20. Despite the continuing controversy over the evidence of the crosses, the epigraphic evidence for Christians being at Pompeii is now, I believe, secure. In a meticulous epigraphic reediting of CIL 4.679, a charcoal graffito, and a detailed archaeological discussion of its site location at Pompeii (the so-called Hotel of the Christians/Jews: Regio VII, Insula 11, 11, 14), Wayment and Grey convincingly argue that the inscription is indeed a pre-Vesuvian reference to Christians in Pompeii (ca. 62–79 CE). Bovios, a guest of a Pompeian hotel, has encountered Christians preaching and is mocked by his fellow guests. Here is the reedited fragmentary inscription: "Wine … Mary … Bovios is listening to the Christians … if the face of the o(rati)on.…" See Thomas A. Wayment and

Our earliest literary evidence of genuine reliability for the advent of Christianity at Ostia is found in a letter of Cyprian (*Ep.* 24.4 [ca. 250 CE]).[218] There are also accounts of martyrological deaths in the city: the Acta Sanctorum and Acta Martyrium ad Ostia Tiberina sub Claudio Gothico. Famously, Augustine recounted the death of his mother, St. Monica, in the city (*Conf.* 9.8.17b).[219] Jerome, too, spoke of "a home for strangers (that) has been established at Portus" (*Ep.* 77.10 [239 CE]). In terms of the archaeological evidence, in the fourth and fifth century CE religious buildings and epitaphs attest to the expansion of Christianity in the city, though during a period of decline: principally, four basilicas and a mithraeum converted to Christian use, including the Christian burials at the Pianbella Basilica and at the necropolises of Ostia/Portus.[220] We will confine our exploration to the graffiti and the martyrological epitaphs.

The graffiti reveal a clear Christian presence, though this is open to challenge in the case of one graffito. There is a *chi-rho* monogram and a prayer for protection from persecution.[221] More intriguing, however, is the graffito that says: "Read and understand that a dumb man has recovered his speech in the Market" (G0422). At first blush, this sounds like the public proclamation of a Christian miracle at Ostia, exhibiting intertextual echoes with the New Testament narratives about the divine healing of someone unable to speak (Matt 9:32; 12:22; Luke 1:64). Yet as Gessert points out, the translation is by no means clear because the lettering is poor: the graffito could equally mean that there was much gossip in the market.[222] So the interpretative implications of this graffito for Christian

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Matthew J. Grey, "Jesus Followers in Pompeii: The *Christianos* Graffito and 'Hotel of the Christians' Reconsidered," *JJMJS* 2 (2015): 102–46.

218. See Milton L. Torres, "Christian Burial Practices at Ostia Antica: Backgrounds and Contexts with a Case Study of Pianabella Basilica" (PhD diss., University of Texas, Austin, 2008), 69–72; generally, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 388–403. On Christianity at Ostia from the third to the fifth centuries CE, see Boin, *Ostia in Late Antiquity*, passim.

219. See Douglas R. Boin, "Late Antique Ostia and a Campaign for Pious Tourism: Epitaphs for Bishop Cyriacus and Monica, Mother of Augustine," *JRS* 100 (2010): 195–209.

220. See Torres, "Christian Burial Practices," 72–98, 128–247.

221. See https://www.ostia-antica.org/graffiti/graffiti-list.htm, G0072 (monogram), G0282 ("Lord, give us safety from the persecutor"). For inscriptional epitaphs with the monogram, see CIL 14.1935, 1945, 1946, 1974–1975.

222. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 100.

identity and mission at Ostia remain unclear. We turn now to the Christian inscriptions at Ostia and Portus; our focus will be on three martyrological inscriptions, with additional comments on related motifs elsewhere in the Christian epitaphs in the notes below.[223]

Two inscriptions at Ostia mention public works in honor of martyrs: one enhancing an existing monument and the other announcing the erection of a new monument. First, the foundations of a basilica were used to embellish the tomb of three martyrs (Eutropius, Bonosa, Zosima); second, in a structure designed to glorify the Father and Son, a martyrium was built for the holy martyrs Taurinus and Herculanus.[224] Here we see how Ostian believers honored the great martyrs of Christian history in ways that were commensurate with the epigraphic eulogies of the great men of Roman history for their *virtus*. For example, the merits of the martyrs are acknowledged in ways that were rhetorically similar to the eulogies of ancestral merit found on the sarcophagus epitaphs of the republican *nobiles* in Rome. In a Christian inscription to be discussed, the ancestral fathers of the martyr's heavenly household rejoice in the virtue (*virtus*) and merit (*meritum*) of their newly resurrected sister in Christ, notwithstanding her young age. Similarly, the rhetoric of the Scipionic epitaphs depicts the dead ancestors of the prestigious republican noble house rejoicing in the accomplishments of their glorious descendants,[225] praising as well those descendants who had died young before accomplishing their full potential.[226] Notwithstanding these similarities in honorific rhetoric,

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223. For an excellent discussion of the Christian epigraphic evidence at Ostia and Portus, see Torres, "Christian Burial Practices," 99–110, 187–195.

224. Respectively, Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B234 (CIL 14.1937) and B249 (CIL 14.1942).

225. See E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin: Archaic Inscriptions*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), "Epitaphs," §10: "By my good conduct I heaped virtues [*virtutes*] on the virtues of my clan: I begat a family and sought to equal the exploits of my father. I upheld the praise [*laudem*] of my ancestors, *so that they were glad that I was created of their line*. My honours have ennobled [*nobilitavit honor*] my stock" (emphasis added).

226. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §5: "Death caused all your virtues, honour, good report and valiance, your glory [*gloria*] and your talents to be short-lived. *If you had been allowed long life in which to enjoy them*, an easy thing it would been for you to surpass by great deeds the glory of your ancestors [*gloriam maiorum*]. Wherefore, O Publius Cornelius Scipio, begotten son of Publius, *joyfully* does earth take you to her bosom" (emphasis added).

the rationale of our martyr's inscription is animated by rich intertextual echoes from the biblical documents, a distinctive in a Roman context.

An extensive Christian inscription at Ostia, written after the time of the death of the martyrs in 273 CE, recounts the divine reward given to a young female martyr called Zosime. The epitaph, which rhetorically functions as an exemplum of the believer's eschatological vindication in Christ as much as a testimony to Zosime's own faithfulness, is set out below:

> Welcome me, she said, into your house, my Lord Christ. And (with her prayer) immediately granted, she already enjoys the light of the sky, Zosime, the holy sister, after having triumphed over a great danger. Already she sees all the companions of the holy battle, she is happy, when she sees that they are encircling her, surprised. And the fathers admire this young girl so virtuous [*virtute*]. They desire to count her among them and vying with each other they accept her and embrace her in triumph. Already she sees and perceives the spectacles of the great kingdom [*magni* (*spectacula regni*)] and she delights to receive the worthy reward of her merits [*pro meritis*], carrying with you, Paul, the crown, having confronted death. For she has guarded her faith [*fide*] and has finished her race in peace [*pace*].[227]

The text is replete with Christian motifs and biblical allusions and well illustrates the different conception of merit that had emerged at Ostia among believers: the martyr's faithfulness to Christ unto death, which discounts the shame of suffering, because of the coming eschatological reward from God (Heb 12:2). The welcome of the heavenly "fathers" referred to in the inscription probably alludes back to the famous Old Testament covenantal and Second Temple fathers of faith (Heb 11:1–39), as much as the New Testament heroes of faith (Heb 12:1–4; see also Rev 2:13).[228] The text resonates with rich intertextual echoes of the New Testament, highlighting the martyr's postmortem acquisition of the eschatological crown (1 Cor 9:25; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8: 1 Pet 5:4; Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10; 3:11) and the believer's completion of the race of faith (1 Cor 9:24b–26a; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1b). The eschatological postponement of coronal reward, however,

227. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B235 (CIL 14.1938). On crown imagery in the New Testament, see James R. Harrison, "'The Fading Crown': Divine Honour and the Early Christians," *JTS* 54 (2003): 493–529.

228. For another allusion to the New Testament in an Ostian inscription, see CIL 14.1938 (2 Tim 4:7–8).

stands in contrast to the relentless Greco-Roman acquisition of coronal honors, magistracies, and titles in the present age. The "spectacles of the great kingdom" also point to the glorious eschatological outcome for the faithful martyr who celebrates victory in the future kingdom of God, in contrast to the sufferings of the martyrs over the generations in the earthly arena, having experienced *damnatio ad bestias* ("condemnation to beasts") at the hands of their enemies (1 Cor 4:9: "as though sentenced to death … we have become a spectacle [θέατρον] to the world"; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). Last, the Old Testament prediction that God would establish universal "peace" on the last day,[229] experienced in the eschatological "now" of the believer's life (e.g., John 14:27; 16:33; Rom 5:1; 14:17; 15:33; Eph 2:17; Col 1:20; 3:15; Phil 4:7; Heb 13:20), is fulfilled for the martyrs in their postmortem divine rest. Consequently, the motif of divine rest in peace frequently appears in Ostian Christian epitaphs.[230] In sum, despite strong cultural resonances in the rhetorical honoring of their martyrs, Ostian believers resorted to the biblical texts in order to articulate a new understanding of the dynamics of honor and shame in discipleship. This culminated in the postmortem reward of peace for suffering believers and, ultimately, in their divine honoring at the eschatological judgment of all.

9. Implications of Ostian Studies for New Testament Scholarship

At the outset I suggested that, in addition to the studies of Ostian *insulae* and their relevance for understanding the accommodation and worship of early believers at Rome, other profitable exegetical, cultural, and historical insights into the Epistle to the Romans might emerge from a study of the Ostian epigraphic and archaeological remains. These suggestions are only preliminary, pending fuller discussion in the future. On the way through we have already highlighted several interesting intersections with Romans specifically and the rest of the New Testament generally:

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229. Isa 9:7; 26:3, 12; 27:5; 52:7; 55:12; 66:12; Jer 30:10; 33:6, 9; 46:27; Ezek 34:29; 37:26; Mic 5:5; Hag 2:9; Zech 9:10.

230. Peace: Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1B224–225, B227 ("He sleeps in peace"), B237, B240 ("who rest in the peace of Christ"), B244 ("laid to rest in the peace of God"), B246, B275, B284–285. Another Christian funereal motif at Ostia is the resurrection life in God: "Epictesis, may you live in God!" (B232; cf. B247; B259). For an excellent discussion of "will of God" and "sleep" motifs at Portus and Ostia in comparison to Rome, see Torres, "Christian Burial Practices," 103 n. 358.

(1) an Ostian terracotta relief of childbirth and Paul as apostolic "mother" (Gal 4:19);
(2) the Ostian association inscriptions and the craftsworker base of some Roman believers (Rom 16:3–4);
(3) the engagement of Ostian toilet humor and erotica with Paul's injunctions to sexual purity (Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:1–8; 6:12–20; 10:14; Eph 5:3);
(4) submission to the Roman ruler in Ostian synagogal and Latin inscriptions, including dedications to his Genius, and Paul's own exhortation of his converts to honor and obey the ruler (Rom 13:1–7; 1 Tim 2:1–2; 1 Pet 2:13–17);
(5) the presence of the Lares Vicinales and Lares Augusti, suburb by suburb, in Ostia and the strategies of desecration, accommodation, and avoidance that believers undertook in regard to idolatry (Rom 1:21–23; 1 Cor 8:1–6; 10:14–22; 12:2; 1 John 5:21; cf. Num 33:50–52);
(6) the challenge made to traditional categories of honor and shame in a Christian martyrological epitaph at Ostia, drawing upon Old Testament and New Testament motifs.

Other important areas of intersection occur. For example, there is the presence of pantomimes at Ostia (CIL 14.4642), ubiquitous in their travels across the empire, and Paul's appropriation of the "fool" motif in the Corinthian epistles (e.g., 2 Cor 11:16–12:10).[231] Visual motifs touching on the evil eye in Ostia find echoes in the tussles over evil-eye possession in Galatia (Gal 3:1: *ἐβάσκανεν*).[232] The Ostian reliance on oracular lots and magical curses is countered by Paul's proclamation of the Jewish prophetic heritage (Rom 1:2a; 16:25–26), messianically fulfilled, and his warning against the "curse" in antiquity (1 Cor 12:3a).

What is remarkable is the new set of social relationships constructed by the apostle in the body of Christ. The civic pride of Ostia in the achievements of its elites, exemplified by its own local calendar

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231. See L. L. Welborn, "The Runaway Paul," *HTR* 92 (1999): 115–63; Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

232. See John H. Elliott, "Social-Scientific Criticism: Perspective, Process and Payoff; Evil Eye Accusation at Galatia as Illustration of the Method," *HvTSt* 67 (2011), 10.4102/hts.v67i1.858.

in the Fasti Ostienses and by the boasting of the *duumvir* Hostilianus, to cite one instance, is dismantled in the Epistle to the Romans. There Paul rejects all boasting because of the believer's absolute dependence on cruciform grace for acquittal before God (Rom 1:30; 2:17, 23; 3:27; 4:2; 11:18). Indeed, God has chosen the "nothings" of this world over the elites to be part of his redeemed community (1 Cor 1:26–31). Consequently, Paul will not allow the poor to suffer "the injustice of oblivion," as was the case in the Ostian necropolises, ensuring instead that the rights of the impoverished and marginalized are upheld in the meetings of believers (1 Cor 11:17–22).

Heated rivalries over honor in the Ostian associations, leading to erasures of senatorial names on inscriptions, are challenged by Paul's radical reconfiguration of social relations among believers in the body of Christ. They are not to think too highly of themselves (Rom 12:3); they are to outdo each other in showing honor (12:10b); they are to associate with the lowly (12:16a). Furthermore, Paul's commemorative language of "virtue" for men and women applies equally to each gender in Rom 16:1–16, as it does the Latin terminology of the epitaphs, but strikingly, in the case of Paul, it revolves around their *beloved* status *in the Lord* (*τὸν ἀγαπητόν*: Rom 16:5b, 8 [*ἐν κυρίῳ*], 9b, 12b). This reflects not only their elect and justified status as God's beloved (8:28–39) but also the outpouring of God's love in their lives through the Spirit (5:5b). Almost all of the other terms of commendation and conferrals of status are Christocentric (Rom 16:3a: *τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ*; 16:7: *γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ*; 16:9a: *τοὺς συνεργούς ἡμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ*; 16:10: *τὸν δόκιμον ἐν Χριστῷ*; 16:11b: *ὄτας ἐν κυρίῳ*; 16:12a: *κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ*; 16:12b: *ἐκοπίασεν ἐν Χριστῷ*). While other more traditional Greco-Roman commendations occur, such as the endangered benefactor motif (Rom 16:4a), this relentless commendation in Christ has no parallel in Ostian religious thought.

Much more could be said. There needs to be consideration of the social hierarchy of mid-50s CE Ostia and what light it might indirectly throw on the social constituency of the Roman house and tenement churches. The role of the Fates (*Parcae*) in relation to Paul's teaching on the believer's triumph in Christ despite countervailing powers (Rom 8:37–39) might also be considered, or Paul's foundation story, commencing with Adam and culminating in the overflowing beneficence of Christ (5:12–21), in comparison to the Ostian foundation story of King Ancus Marcius, might be explored. The hidden riches of Ostian studies and their contribution to scholarship on the Epistle to the Romans have yet to be unearthed.

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Early Christianity at Rome as Reflected in the So-Called First Epistle of Clement

L. L. Welborn

For one who wishes to know what it would have been like to live as a Christian in the city of Rome in the late first or early second century CE, the so-called First Epistle of Clement would seem to be a primary source.[1] Although the letter aims to quell an uprising in the *ekklēsia* at Corinth, one occasionally catches glimpses of the social conditions of Christ-followers at Rome, principally in passages where the author adduces examples, both of endurance (6.1–2) and of self-sacrifice (55.2). Moreover, at the close

1. The majority of interpreters date 1 Clement to 95/96 CE, finding a reference to Domitian's persecution of Christians in the language of 1 Clem. 1.1; so J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, Part I: Clement of Rome*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1890), 1:27, 346–58; Rudolf Knopf, *Die zwei Clemensbriefe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1920), 43; W. K. Lowther Clarke, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1937), 11; Adolf W. Ziegler, *Neue Studien zum ersten Klemensbrief* (Munich: Manz, 1958), 124; L. W. Barnard, "Clement of Rome and the Persecution of Domitian," *NTS* 10 (1963–1964): 251–60; Annie Jaubert, *Clément de Rome, Épitre aux Corinthiens: Introduction, texte, traduction, notes et index* (Paris: Cerf, 1971), 19–20; J. A. Fischer, *Die Apostolischen Väter* (Munich: Kösel, 1986), 20. Thomas J. Herron ("The Most Probable Date of the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," *StPatr* 21 [1989]: 106–21; Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome: On the Dating of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2008]) argues for a date before the Jewish War, interpreting the reference to sacrifices in Jerusalem literally. Arguing for a date between 80 and 140 CE is L. L. Welborn, "On the Date of First Clement," *BR* 29 (1984): 35–54; repr. as "The Preface to 1 Clement: The Rhetorical Situation and the Traditional Date," in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies in the First Letter of Clement*, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 197–216. Suggesting a date in the last decade of the first century are Andreas Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 12; and Horacio E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 77.

of the epistle (63.3; 65.1), the author provides a commendation for three emissaries from Rome to Corinth; the names of the emissaries enable conclusions about the social status of the bearers. And what of the author of the epistle himself? Although the writing is anonymous, tradition ascribes the letter to a certain Clement.[2] Whatever the value of this tradition may be, the text permits inferences about the cultural milieu, the educational level, and the political ideology of the author. If the identity of the author remains in shadow, even after a close reading of the text, it may prove possible to sharpen his profile by comparison with better-known contemporaries in Flavian Rome.

1. Retrospect on a Neronian Persecution

In keeping with the rhetorical objective of dissuading from discord, the author of the Roman epistle adduces a series of historical examples of suffering caused by "jealousy and envy" (*ζῆλος καὶ φθόνος*), the root cause of strife (4.1–6.4).[3] Following examples of "old times" taken from Scripture (4.1–13), the author comes to "the noble examples of our own generation" (5.1), "the good apostles" Peter and Paul (5.3–7).[4] The author then recounts the mistreatment of a number of Roman Christians,[5] both men and women:

> To these men who lived in a holy manner [viz., Peter and Paul] was gathered [*συνηθροίσθη*] a great multitude of the elect [*πολὺ πλῆθος ἐκλεκτῶν*], who through jealousy suffered many outrages and tortures [*πολλαῖς αἰκίαις καὶ βασάνοις*] and so became the noblest example among us [*ἐν ἡμῖν*]. Through jealousy women were persecuted as Danaids and Dircae, suffering terrible and unholy indignities [*αἰκίσματα δεινὰ καὶ ἀνόσια*

2. Dionysius of Corinth in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.10–11; Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22.1; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.38; 4.105; 4.111.1; 6.65.3.

3. Cilliers Breytenbach, "The Historical Example in *1 Clement*," *ZAC* 18 (2014): 22–33.

4. Martin Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen im ersten Jahrhundert," in *Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze II* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1956), 177–228, here 199–203; David L. Eastman, "Jealousy, Internal Strife, and the Deaths of Peter and Paul: A Reassessment of *1 Clement*," *ZAC* 18 (2004): 34–53.

5. Rightly, Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:32 n. 2: "Thus ἐν ἡμῖν will mean 'among us Roman Christians.'" Similarly, Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 41.

> παθοῦσαι], and, having reached the goal in the race of faith, they received a noble reward, weak in the body though they were. (6.1–2).[6]

The language employed in this paragraph makes clear the author's intention to heighten the affect: *αἰκία*, *αἴκισμα*, and *ἀνόσιος* are found in tragedy,[7] while *βάσανος* occurs frequently in accounts of martyrdom.[8] Indeed, the author has recourse to the rhetorical device of *ἐνάργεια* ("vivid description"),[9] drawing upon the tendency of the mind to imagine things absent as present (*φαντασία*), in order to generate powerful emotions.[10] This stylistic quality is most apparent in the description of women who suffered as "Danaids and Dircae." The unexpected reference to figures from mythology has occasioned consternation among interpreters[11] and has even called forth conjectural emendations.[12] But surely Robert Grant was correct in suggesting that the author alludes here to mythological scenes such as Nero was fond of exhibiting in the amphitheater,[13] "fatal charades"

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6. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

7. For *αἰκία*: Aeschylus, *Prom.* 93, 179; Sophocles, *El.* 486, 515, *Oed. col.* 748; *αἴκισμα*: Aeschylus, *Prom.* 989; Euripides, *Phoen.* 1529; *ἀνόσιος*: Aeschylus, *Sept.* 611; Sophocles, *Oed. tyr.* 353; Euripides, *Tro.* 1316.

8. E.g., 4 Macc 17:7; BDAG, s.v. "*βάσανος*," 168; cf. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 40–41; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 168.

9. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lys.* 7. Cf. Peter A. O'Connell, "*Enargeia*, Persuasion, and the Vividness Effect in Athenian Forensic Oratory," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 20 (2017): 225–51.

10. Longinus, *Subl.* 15.9; Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.2.29, 32.

11. Already the first editor of the text, Patrick Young, *Clementis ad Corinthios epistola prior* (Oxford, 1637); then Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:32–34; Knopf, *Die zwei Clemensbriefe*, 53; Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 1:19 n. 1: "No satisfactory interpretation has even been given of this phrase."

12. Lightfoot (*Apostolic Fathers*, 2:33) favors the emendation proposed by Ch. Wordsworth: *νεανίδες παιδίσκαι*. See also Karl Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Väter: Neubeartung der Funkschen Ausgabe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1924), 38; cf. Alphonse Dain, "Notes sur le texte grec de l'Épître de Saint Clément de Rome," *RSR* 39 (1957): 353–61, here 355–58. See the overview of the history of scholarship by H. C. Brennecke, "Danaïden und Dirken: Zu I Clem 6,2 (mit einem Postscriptum von Luise Abramowski)," *ZKG* 88 (1977): 302–8. Suggesting the insertion of an early gloss, Otto Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarischen Zeugnisse* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 27–30.

13. Robert M. Grant and Holt H. Graham, *First and Second Clement*, vol. 2 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965), 27. Already considered as a possibility (in case the text is not corrupt) by

in which criminals and other undesirables were put to death.[14] According to Suetonius, among the scenes that Nero represented was "one in which a bull mounted Pasiphae, who was concealed in a wooden image of a heifer"; in another, "Icarus fell close by the imperial couch and bespattered the emperor with his blood."[15] Kathleen Coleman has argued that an epigram of Lucillius dating from the reign of Nero records the *crematio* of a thief named Meniscus before a crowd of spectators: "like Hercules before him, he was caught and burnt alive."[16] Evidently Christian women were punished in similar public spectacles involving role play:[17] like the daughters of Danaus, they were killed in retribution for their crimes;[18] like Dirce,

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Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:32. See now the thorough discussion by Tassilo Schmitt, "Des Kaisers Inszenierung: Mythologie und neronische Christenverfolgung," *ZAC* 16 (2012): 487–515, with special attention to 1 Clem. 6.2.

14. K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *JRS* 80 (1990): 44–73, esp. 65–66 on 1 Clem. 6:2. See further Stefan Müller, "'Schauspiele voller Kraft und Charakter': Die Gladiatorenkämpfe als Drama fürs Volk," *Gymnasium* 109 (2002): 21–47, esp. 31–34.

15. Suetonius, *Nero* 12.2; trans. J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius II*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 105.

16. Anth. Pal. 11.184; Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 60–61, concluding that the epigram describes "a real event and not just the product of Lucillius' sadistic imagination." See also Louis Robert, "Dans l'amphithéâtre et dans les jardins de Néron: Une épigramme de Lucillius," *CRAIBL* (1968) 280–88; Gideon Nisbet, *Greek Epigram in the Roman Empire: Martial's Forgotten Rivals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 123–27.

17. Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 27; Fischer, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, 33 n. 49; Schmitt, "Des Kaisers Inszenierung," 485–517. But cf. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 170, who regards the "Danaids and Dircae" as symbolic: "Der Vf. versteht offenbar beide Gestalten als Sinnbild für weibliches Leid im Hinblick auf christliche Frauen, die um ihres Glaubens willen gepeinigt werden, ohne dabei auf Analogien in der Form des Leidens hinzuweisen," resuming the interpretation of Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen."

18. *Scholia in Hecubam* 886 in Eduard Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem 1: Scholia in Hecubam Orestem Phoenissas* (Berlin: Reimer, 1887), 70.3–6 on Lynceus, whose life was spared by his wife Hypermestra: οὗτος δὲ σωθεὶς ἐξεδίκησε τοὺς ἀδελφούς. ἐφόνευσε γὰρ τὰς θυγατέρας τοῦ Δαναοῦ, ἅμα καὶ αὐτὸν, καὶ τῆς τούτου βασιλείας ἐκράτησε τοῦ Ἄργους ἅμα τῇ Ὑπερμνήστρᾳ ("This one having been spared, he avenged his brothers. For he killed the daughters of Danaus, together with Danaus himself, and together with Hypermestra seized the sovereignty of Argos"). See esp. Schmitt, "Des Kaisers Inszenierung," 504–5, with the concluding observation: "Man mag sich lieber nicht vorstellen, mit welchen Variationen ein einfallsreicher Gladiator als Henker dabei aufwartete." In another version of the myth, Danaus offered his daughters as

they were tied to the horns of a bull and dragged to death.[19] Recently Tassilo Schmitt has suggested that, in dramatizing the myths of the Danaids and Dirce, Nero brought to life two of the most prominent sculptures in Rome: the Portico of the Danaids in the Palatine complex and the Farnese Bull in the public library of the Atrium Libertatis.[20] In any case, the reading Δαναΐδες καὶ Δίρκαι (attested by all authorities) should be retained.[21] As Coleman observes, the difficulty of scholars is probably owing to the fact that they "cannot accept the brutality implicit in the manuscript reading."[22]

However rhetorical the description may be, certain features of the text of 1 Clem. 6.1–2 suggest that the author is referring to a historical event. The evidence consists of several phrases that are reminiscent of

sexual prizes to the victors of a footrace; see Pindar, *Pyth*. 9.112–116; Pausanias, *Descr*. 3.12.2. Note the suggestion of Margherita Guarducci ("La data del martirio di San Pietro," *La Parola del Passato* 23 [1968]: 81–117, here 92) that the torture of the Christian women as Danaids took place in the Circus, where the victims were submitted to unmentionable outrages ("oltraggi inenarrabili") and finally executed. For discussion of other elements of the myth that may have been involved in the role play, see Ziegler, *Neue Studien*, 84–86; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 27; Brennecke, "Danaiden und Dirken," 302–8, esp. 307; Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 66.

19. For the myth of Dirce, see Apollodorus, *Bibl*. 2.1.5; 3.5.5; Hans von Geisau, "Dirke," *KlPauly*, 2:99; Franz Heger, "Dirke," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, 8 vols. (Zurich: Artemis-Verlag, 1981–1999), 3:635–44. See the frescos from Herculaneum and Pompeii depicting the myth of Dirce in August Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums, zur Erläuterung des Lebens der Griechen und Römer in Religion, Kunst und Sitte*, 3 vols. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1885), 1:455–60; David L. Balch, *Roman Domestic Art and Early House Churches*, WUNT 228 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 135–37. See also Ziegler, *Neue Studien*, 86–87; Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 66: "Since the mythological Dirce was bound to the horns of a bull by her two stepsons in revenge for having plotted against their mother, it is easy to imagine how realistically her fate could be re-enacted in the arena."

20. Schmitt, "Des Kaisers Inszenierung," 498–505. For the Portico of the Danaids, see Ovid, *Trist*. 3.1.61–63; *Am*. 2.2.3–6; *Ars* 1.73–74; Propertius, *El*. 2.31.1–16; Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. rom*. 2.81.3; Paul Zanker, "Der Apollontempel auf dem Palatin: Ausstattung und politische Sinnbezüge nach der Schlacht bei Actium," in *Città e architettura nella Roma imperial* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), 27–40; Caroline K. Quenemoen, "The Portico of the Danaids: A New Reconstruction," *AJA* 110 (2006): 229–50. For the Farnese Bull, see Pliny, *Nat*. 5.36; Christian Kunze, *Der Farnesische Stier und die Dirkegruppen des Apollonios und Tauriskos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998).

21. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 42; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 169.

22. Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 66.

Tacitus's account of Nero's persecution of the Christians of Rome.[23] In the well-known passage in the *Annals*, the historian explains that Nero sought to dispel the rumor that he himself was responsible for the fire that destroyed most of Rome in 64 CE by transferring the blame to the Christians:[24] "Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty [*quaesitissimis poenis*], a class of men loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians."[25] After a brief history of the origin and spread of the "pernicious superstition," Tacitus resumes his account of Nero's action: "First, then, those who confessed [presumably, their membership in the sect] were arrested; then, on information supplied by them [*deinde indicio eorum*], a vast multitude [*multitudo ingens*] were convicted [*conuicti sunt*],[26] not so much for the crime of arson but on account of hatred of the human race [*odio humani generis*]."[27] There

23. As already noted by Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:32; followed by Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 27; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 41; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 168; without reference to Lightfoot, see Paul Keresztes, "Nero, the Christians and the Jews in Tacitus and Clement of Rome," *Latomus* 43 (1984): 404–13, esp. 411–12.

24. As is well known, Tacitus is the only historian to connect Nero's persecution of the Christians with the great fire of Rome in 64 CE. In *Ner*. 16.2, Suetonius mentions punishments inflicted by the emperor upon the Christians, *genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae*, but does not connect these measures with the fire at Rome, although he provides a full account of the conflagration (*Ner*. 38). Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom*. 62.16) makes Nero responsible for the burning of Rome but does implicate the Christians. None of the Christian writers who denounce Nero as the first persecutor of the church mention the fire as the reason for the persecution: Melito in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.9; Tertullian, *Nat*. 1.7.13–14; *Apol*. 5.1; Lactantius, *Mort*. 2.6. Hence some scholars doubt that an accusation of arson in the aftermath of the great fire was the immediate occasion for Nero's action against the Christians; see Keresztes, "Nero," 408–9. See the thorough analysis of the sources by Elmer Truesdell Merrill, "The Persecution by Nero," in his *Essays in Early Christian History* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 82–130.

25. Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.44; trans. John Jackson, *Tacitus*, 5 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 5:283.

26. The *varia lectio* of Codex Mediceus is *coniuncti sunt*, "were joined together." In that case, the sentence should be translated, "then, on information supplied by them, a vast multitude were joined together, not for the crime of arson, but for hatred of the human race."

27. Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.44; the translation modifies Jackson, *Tacitus*, 5:283, 285. As Keresztes observes ("Nero," 406–7), in cases of persons tried by the *cognitio* process, the judge (presumably the *praefectus urbi*) had wide discretion in making his

follows a gruesome description of the torture and execution of Christians in spectacles staged in Nero's gardens and in the Circus.

As J. B. Lightfoot observed long ago, "The Roman historian's expression '*multitudo ingens*' is the exact counterpart to Clement's πολὺ πλῆθος."[28] Tacitus's *quaesitissimis poenis* recalls the tortures described in 1 Clem. 6.1 as αἰκίαι καὶ βάσανοι,[29] which the Latin version translates *multas poenas et tormenta*.[30] Tacitus's assertion that Christians informed against one another, so that a multitude was arrested "on their disclosure" (*indicio eorum*), corresponds to Clement's ascription of the sufferings of Christians to "jealousy" (διὰ ζῆλος)—in context, the jealousy of fellow Christians.[31] Finally, the verb συνηθροίσθη ("was joined") in 1 Clem. 6.1 may find its counterpart in Tacitus's account of Nero's persecution, if the reading of the most ancient manuscript of the *Annals* (the Codex Mediceus), *coniuncti sunt* ("were joined together"), is preferred.[32]

All these correspondences make clear that the author of the Roman epistle is referring to a real event in 6.1–2.[33] The memory of the dramatic

judgment and setting the punishment, whatever the allegations of the accusers may have been.

28. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:32; followed by Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 27; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 41; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 168. Unfortunately, neither expression gives an indication of the number of victims. Jackson (*Tacitus*, 5:284) notes: "Gibbon compared the terms applied by Livy to the 7,000 people involved in the Bacchanalian scandals—*multitudinem ingentem, alterum iam populum* (39.13), *multa milia hominum* (39.15)." But cf. Marta Sordi (*The Christians and the Roman Empire* [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994], 31) on Tacitus's *multitudo ingens*: "a few hundred victims would justify the use of this term, given the horror of what happened."

29. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 32; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 41; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 168.

30. The Latin translation of 1 Clement is ancient, probably dating to the late second century CE, and was made in Rome; see Adolf von Harnack, "Über die jüngst entdeckten lateinische Überstezung des 1. Clemensbrief," *SPAW* 31 (1894): 261–73. Text in Germanus Morin, *Sancti Clementis Romani ad Corinthios Epistulae versio Latina antiquissima* (Maredsoli: Parker, 1894), 7.

31. Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 27; cf. Keresztes, "Nero," 411–12; Eastman, "Jealousy, Internal Strife," 47. Rejecting this inference, Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 41: "Es ist auch an dieser Stelle unmöglich das διὰ ζῆλος konkret von der Zeitgeschichte her zu deuten."

32. As argued in detail by Keresztes, "Nero," 405–7, 412.

33. Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 123–26; Tassilo Schmitt, "Die Christenverfolgung unter Nero," in *Petrus und Paulus*

and terrible sufferings inflicted upon the Christians of Rome persisted,[34] even into the second century, when Tacitus (ca. 115–120 CE), and likely Clement as well, was writing. The images would have been indelible: of persons who "were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs,"[35] of persons who "were fastened on crosses, and, when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night."[36] Even among those who were convinced of the Christians' guilt, "there arose a feeling of pity," says Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44). Granting much to Tacitus's tendency to tragedize and to Clement's propensity for vivid affect, the reality of a lived experience shows through. For modern readers to countenance this horror, it might be necessary to attend, if only for an instant, to the prediction of German playwright Heiner Müller that, with the rise of hard-core reality TV, "there will be gladiator games again in the not too distant future; there will be performances where people will be actually killed."[37]

2. A Domitianic Persecution?

The author of the Roman epistle looks back upon the events of the 60s from a distance. Although he speaks generally of Peter and Paul as "contenders of our generation" (*ἀθληταί … τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν*, 5.1), internal evidence suggests that two generations of ecclesiastical leadership have passed: the presbyters installed by the apostles have died (44.2), and some of those appointed "later on by other eminent men … have finished their course before now" (44.3, 5). The *ekklēsia* of the Corinthians is called "ancient" (47.6), and the emissaries sent from Rome to Corinth are said to have "lived blamelessly among us from youth to old age" (63.3).[38]

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in Rom: Eine interdisziplinäre Debatte, ed. Stefan Heid (Freiburg: Herder, 2011), 517–37. Contra Brent D. Shaw, "The Myth of the Neronian Persecution," *JRS* 105 (2015): 73–100; Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), 136–39.

34. Sordi, *Christians and the Roman Empire*, 37.

35. For the suggestion that Christians who suffered in this way enacted the myth of Actaeon, who was torn apart by his own hounds (Ovid, *Met.* 3.138–142), see Schmitt, "Des Kaisers Inszenierung," 493.

36. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; trans. Jackson, *Tacitus*, 5:285.

37. Interview with Heiner Müller, cited in Paul Monaghan, "Bloody Roman Narratives, 'Fatal Charades,' and Senecan Theatre," *Double Dialogue: Art and Pain* 4 (2003): 1.

38. Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 16; Barbara Ellen Bowe, *A*

At the time when Clement was writing to Corinth, there is no incontrovertible evidence that the Christians of Rome were being persecuted.[39] The tradition that makes Domitian hostile to Christianity first appears in the apology that Melito of Sardis addressed to Marcus Aurelius more than seventy years after Domitian's death: "The only emperors who, having been induced by certain malicious persons, were disposed to bring false accusation against our teaching were Nero and Domitian."[40] One should not fail to notice that Melito does not say that Domitian used violence against the Christians, only that he sought "to slander" (ἐν διαβολῇ καταστῆσαι) Christian doctrine. One must wait until Tertullian's *Apologeticus* (ca. 197 CE) for an explicit statement that Domitian persecuted the Christians: "Nero was the first who assailed the Christian sect with the imperial sword.… Domitian, too, a man of Nero's type in cruelty, attempted the same thing [*Temptauerat et Domitianus, portio Neronis de crudelitate*]; but as he had something of the human in him, he soon put an end to what he had begun."[41] On what basis Tertullian makes this statement is unknown; he may have been led to couple Domitian with Nero by authors such as Pliny and Juvenal, who called Domitian a second Nero and assimilated the image of the later to the earlier emperor.[42] In any case, Eusebius repeatedly cites Tertullian in support of his belief that only unjust and impious emperors brought suffering upon the Christians,[43] concluding: "When Domitian had given many proofs of his great cruelty,…he finally made himself the successor of Nero's hatred of God and war against God. Indeed, he was the

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Church in Crisis: Ecclesiology and Paraenesis in Clement of Rome (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 2–3; Laurence L. Welborn, "Clement, First Epistle of," 1:1055–60, at 1060.

39. Elmer Truesdell Merrill, "The Alleged Persecution by Domitian," in *Essays in Early Christian History*, 148–73; R. L. P. Milburn, "The Persecution of Domitian," *Church Quarterly Review* 139 (1945): 154–64; Welborn, "On the Date of First Clement," 40–44.

40. Melito in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.

41. Tertullian, *Apol.* 5; cf. T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 149–51.

42. Pliny, *Pan.* 53.3–4; Juvenal, *Sat.* 4.38; Michael Charles, "*Calvus Nero*: Domitian and the Mechanics of Predecessor Denigration," *Acta Classica* 45 (2002): 19–49; Varena Schulz, *Deconstructing Imperial Representations* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 33–38. Merrill ("Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 163) also posits the influence of Melito, observing: "Tertullian's *temptauerat* suggests Melito's ἠθέλησαν."

43. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.4; 3.20.7; 3.33.3; see also T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 136–37, 148–63.

second to stir up persecution against us" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.17). This is slim evidence, if it can be called evidence at all, rather than an apologetic device.[44] Yet a surprising number of scholars, past and present, have credited the tradition of Domitian as the second persecutor of the church.[45]

No Roman historian reports that Domitian persecuted the Christians.[46] The silence of Suetonius is noteworthy: he was resident in Rome during Domitian's reign and was a "scholar" at court;[47] had he known that Domitian took action against the Christians, he might have mentioned the fact, as he did in the case of Nero.[48] On the other hand, an instance of religious persecution is apparently recounted by Dio Cassius: "Domitian slaughtered, along with many others, Flavius Clemens the consul, although he was a cousin and had as his wife Flavia Domitilla, who was herself a relative of Domitian" (*Hist. rom*. 67.14.1). Dio then states the charge on which Clemens was executed: "An accusation of atheism was brought against both of them, on account of which many others who had drifted into the customs of the Jews were condemned" (67.14.2: ἐπηνέχθη δὲ ἀμφοῖν ἔγκλημα ἀθεότητος, ὑφ᾽ ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἤθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν). Dio concludes his account of the episode: "Some of these lost their lives, while others at least were deprived of their property. Domitilla was merely exiled to Pandateria" (67.14.2).

44. Rightly, Merrill, "Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 161–64; S. Rossi, "La cosiddetta persecuzione di Domiziano: Esaume delle testimonianze," *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 15 (1962): 303–41; Christiane Saulnier, "La persecution des chrétiens et la théologie du pouvoir à Rome," *RSR* 58 (1984): 251–79; Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 114; Jörg Ulrich, "Euseb, HistEccl III,14–20 und die Frage nach der Christenverfolgung unter Domitian," *ZNW* 87 (1996): 269–89, esp. 272–82.

45. To cite but a few: Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:81, 351–52; Lowther Clarke, *First Epistle of Clement*, 6; Marta Sordi, "La persecuzione di Domiziano," *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa* 14 (1960): 1–26; L. W. Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 12–18; Paul Keresztes, "The Jews, the Christians and the Emperor Domitian," *VC* 27 (1973): 1–28; Philippe Pergola, "La condamnation des Flaviens 'chrétiens' sous Domitien: Persecution religieuse ou repression à caractère politique?" *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 90 (1978): 407–23.

46. Rightly, Merrill, "Alleged Persecution of Domitian," 157; Jones, *Emperor Domitian*, 115, 117.

47. Pliny *Ep.* 1.24; see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and His Caesars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

48. Suetonius, *Ner.* 16.2; Merrill, "Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 172.

Interpreters have puzzled over what is meant by the charge of ἀθεότης and Dio's attempted clarification of the term by reference to τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἤθη. Had Clemens and Domitilla adopted Judaism, or, in light of Clemens's religious obligations as consul, were they among the "godfearers"?[49] Or does Dio mean to suggest that the husband and wife had professed Christianity?[50] The passage that reports the execution of Clemens is found in the epitome of Dio's text transmitted by the Byzantine monk Xiphilinus. One might think that Xiphilinus would have been eager to claim a Roman consul as a convert to Christianity, had he known that he was one. But the ambiguity is not resolved by this observation, since Dio never mentions Christianity in his *Roman History*, though he must have known of its existence.[51]

Eusebius, in any event, claims that Flavia Domitilla was a Christian and was punished with banishment by Domitian:

> The teaching of our faith shown so brightly in the days described [the reign of Domitian] that even writers remote from our teaching [ὡς καὶ τοὺς ἄποθεν τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς λόγου συγγραφεῖς] did not shrink from transmitting in their histories the persecution and the martyrdoms attendant upon it, … relating that in the fifteenth year of Domitian, with many others, Flavia Domitilla, who was a daughter of the sister of Flavius Clemens, at that time one of the consuls at Rome, was exiled to the island of Pontia on account of her testimony to Christ. (*Hist. eccl.* 3.18.4)

Obviously Dio Cassius cannot have been among the pagan historians to whom Eusebius makes reference, since his account differs in important respects: Domitilla was the wife of Clemens, not his niece; Pandateria was

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49. E. Mary Smallwood, "Domitian's Attitude toward Jews and Judaism," *CP* 51 (1956): 1–13; Keresztes, "The Jews," 1–28; Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, "The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire," *ANRW* 2.13:662–762, at 697.

50. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:34; Marta Sordi, "I Flavi e il cristianesimo," in *Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi vespasianei* (Rieti: Centro di Studi Varroniani, 1981), 137–52; Sordi, *Christians and the Roman Empire*, 43–53; Hermann Bengston, *Die Flavier: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian* (Munich: Beck, 1979), 235–40.

51. See the evidence adduced by Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 142, with the conjecture: "Christianity may have appeared to Dio as a form of Judaism, so that no distinction needed to be made between them."

her place of exile, not Pontia.[52] In his *Chronicle*, Eusebius cites a certain Bruttius as his authority for the exile of Domitilla to Pontia because of her Christian witness.[53] Peter Lampe sets great store by Bruttius, arguing that his "testimony" is "of equal value next to that of Dio and Suetonius."[54] It is impossible to share Lampe's confidence in Bruttius as a source, since Bruttius is otherwise unknown, unless he is to be identified with the senator Gaius Bruttius Praesens, the correspondent of Pliny and friend of Hadrian;[55] in any case, Praesens is not known to have written a history. Nor should the astute observation of Elmer Truesdell Merrill be neglected, that in the case of Bruttius, Eusebius departs from his usual procedure in citing authorities by quoting their words at length:[56] "The conclusion is reasonable that Eusebius had probably never seen the actual text of Bruttius, but relied upon some welcome report of it derived from a Christian source."[57]

Against the authority of Eusebius and his "Bruttius," one should set the testimony of Suetonius, who witnessed the final years of Domitian's reign and recounts his action against Flavius Clemens. Suetonius's report of the execution of Clemens climaxes his account of how Domitian became "an object of terror and hatred" because of his growing suspicion that his life was in danger from his friends, his freedmen, and even his family mem-

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52. See the discussion of the differences between the accounts of Dio and Eusebius by Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 198–205.

53. Rudolf Helm, ed., *Die Chronik des Hieronymus*, vol. 7 of *Eusebius Werke* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1956), 192: "*Scribit Bruttius plurimos Christianorum sub Domitiano fecisse martyrium. Iter quos et Flaviam Domitillam, Flavii Clementis consulis ex sorore neptem, in insulam Pontiam relegatam, quia se Christianam esse testate sit.*"

54. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 199, explaining: "Because Eusebius, both in his *Ecclesiastical History* as well as in his *Chronicle*, renders the circumstances almost identically verbatim, we must conclude that in each case he is accurately reporting from Bruttius."

55. Pliny, *Ep*. 7.3. For the career of Praesens, see Ronald Syme, *Roman Papers V*, ed. Anthony R. Birley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 563–78.

56. E.g., Josephus in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.5.3–4; 1.6.2; 1.6.9; 3.9.1–2. See also Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 17–20, 63–72, 85–86.

57. Merrill, "Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 166, suggesting Julius Africanus as Eusebius's source. Cf. Jacques Moreau, "A propos de la persecution de Domitien," *La Nouvelle Clio* 5 (1953): 121–29.

bers (*Dom*. 14.1–15.1). In order to intimidate his domestic staff, Domitian condemned to death his secretary Epaphroditus, who was rumored to have assisted Nero in his suicide (14.4). Suetonius concludes: "Finally he put to death his own cousin Flavius Clemens, a man of utterly contemptible indolence [*contemptissimae inertiae*], whose young sons he had openly designated as his successors, changing their former names and calling one Vespasian and the other Domitian, without warning and on the slightest suspicion [*repente ex tenuissima suspicione*], almost before the end of his consulship" (15.1). Suetonius does not specify the charge against Clemens, but the context suggests that Domitian had become fearful of the cousin whom he had made his colleague in the consulship and whose sons he had designated his successors.[58] Whatever Suetonius may have meant by characterizing Clemens with the term *inertia* ("idleness," "want of ambition," or "disinterest in public affairs"), the description was clearly intended to accentuate the groundlessness of the suspicion (*ex tenuissima suspicione*) on which the execution was carried out.[59] In any case, there is no mention of atheism or Jewish practices as the grounds for Clemens' condemnation.

Like Suetonius, Pliny the Younger was resident in Rome during the reign of Domitian.[60] As one who entered the senate as *quaestor Caesaris* and who rose rapidly through the *cursus* under Domitian,[61] Pliny may have witnessed the trial of his unfortunate colleague Clemens. Yet a number of years later Pliny wrote to Trajan seeking guidance on how to proceed against the Christians and explained that he had never been present at the trial of a Christian.[62]

In seeking to determine whether the Christians of Rome were suffering persecution at the end of the first century, it is necessary to

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58. Merrill, "Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 149–51; Pat Southern, *Domitian: The Tragic Tyrant* (London: Routledge, 1997), 43–44; Jones, *Emperor Domitian*, 115.

59. Merrill, "Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 149–50; Jones, *Emperor Domitian*, 115.

60. Ronald Syme, *Roman Papers VII*, ed. Anthony R. Birley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 564–65; Christopher Whitton, ed., *Pliny the Younger: Epistles Book II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6–7.

61. Harriet I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 263–65; Karl Strobel, "Plinius und Domitian: Der willige Helfer eines Unrechtssystem?," in *Plinius der Jüngere und seine Zeit*, ed. Luigi Castagna and Eckard Lefèvre (Munich: Saur, 2003), 303–14.

62. Pliny, *Ep*. 10.96.1: "*cognitionibus de Christianis interfui nunquam*."

examine one more text: a passage in 1 Clement itself. Under the influence of the Eusebian tradition of Domitian as the second persecutor, a long line of modern interpreters, beginning with Patrick Young, the first editor of the text, have found in the language of 1 Clem. 1.1 a reference to events in the final years of Domitian's reign.[63] In the preface to the epistle, the author explains that the Roman *ekklēsia* has been delayed in turning attention to the matters in dispute among the Corinthians "on account of the sudden and repeated misfortunes and hindrances that have befallen us" (*διὰ τὰς αἰφνιδίους καὶ ἐπαλλήλους γενομένας ἡμῖν συμφορὰς καὶ περιπτώσεις* [or *περιστάσεις*]).[64] Lightfoot glossed Clement's phrase with a reference to Suetonius's description of Domitian's "cruelty" (*saeuitia*) as "cunning and sudden" (*callidae inopinataeque*)[65] and commented:

> Domitian directed against the Christians a succession of sharp, sudden, partial assaults, striking down one here and one there from malice or jealousy or caprice, and harassing the church with an agony of suspense.… We can well understand, therefore, with what feelings one who thus carried his life in his hand would pen the opening words of the letter, where he excuses the tardiness of the Roman church in writing to their Corinthian brethren by a reference to the sudden and repeated calamities and reverses under which they had suffered.… This language accurately describes the persecution which the Roman Christians endured under Domitian.[66]

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63. See the list of early proponents—Cotelier, Ritschl, Reuss, Hilgenfeld, Gundert, Tischendorf, Lightfoot, Zahn, and others—in Oscar von Gebhardt and Adolf von Harnack, *Clementis Romani ad Corinthios quae dicuntur Epistolae: Textum ad fidem codicum et Alexandrini et Constantinopolitani nuper inventi*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1876), lix–lx. More recently: Knopf, *Die zwei Clemensbriefe*, 43; Otto Knoch, *Eigenart und Bedeutung der Eschatologie im theologischen Aufriss des ersten Klemensbrief* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1964), 11–12; Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers*, 12–13; Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, xxv; Jaubert, *Clément de Rome*, 19–20; Fischer, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, 20; Gerhard Schneider, *Clemens von Rom: Epiostola ad Corinthios; Brief an die Korinther* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), among others.

64. According to Bihlmeyer (*Die Apostolischen Väter*, 35), περιστάσεις is the reading of the Constantinople (now Jerusalem) manuscript, evidently represented by *impedimenta* of the Old Latin version.

65. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:7, citing Suetonius, *Dom*. 11.1.

66. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:81, 383; 2:7.

A number of interpreters have followed Lightfoot in seeing in the language of 1 Clem. 1.1 a reference to Domitian's persecution.[67]

To be sure, caution about this interpretation of the language of 1 Clem. 1.1 was occasionally expressed. The classicist Merrill observed: "The language does not suggest to an unprejudiced eye that anything very terrible has shaken the Roman church."[68] Martin Dibelius expressed surprise at "die fast verhüllende Ausdrucksweise in der der Brief von der eben überstandenen Verfolgung redet" and commented wryly: "Für eine Verfolgung bei der viele … [ihr] Leben lassen musste[n], sind *συμφοραί* und *περιπτώσεις* milde Ausdrücke. Man meint einen stoischen Philosophen zu hören."[69] Alfred Stuiber allowed for the possibility that the phrase in question might be nothing more than "eine sachlich bedeutungslose Entschuldigungsformel."[70]

In an earlier essay I sought to demonstrate that there is no justification for interpreting the pallid hendiadys *συμφοραὶ καὶ περιπτώσεις* (or *περιστάσεις*) as a reference to persecution.[71] The word *συμφορά* commonly means nothing more than "event" or "circumstance."[72] Indeed, "early writers frequently add an epithet" (e.g., *ἄχαρις*, *κακή*) to qualify the term in a negative sense.[73] When the term is used alone in a bad sense, it usually means nothing more than "misfortune" or "trouble," as in a treatise on the emotions wrongly attributed to the Peripatetic philosopher Andronicus: "*συμφορά* is distress arising from unfortunate obstructions."[74] In a

67. E.g., Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers*, 12: "The reference in 1 Clem. 1:1 to the sudden and repeated misfortunes which had befallen the Roman church fits in with the character of Domitian as revealed by the non-Christian literary sources. He did not persecute groups en masse. But he carefully selected and struck down his victims one by one, driven on by madness and jealousy and the belief that everyone of note was his enemy."

68. Merrill, "Alleged Persecution by Domitian," 159–60.

69. Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen," 192.

70. Alfred Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," *RAC* 3:191.

71. Welborn, "On the Date of First Clement," 38–40, 46–48.

72. Herodotus, *Hist*. 1.32; 7.49; Aeschylus, *Eum*. 1020; Sophocles, *Oed. tyr*. 33; *Tr*. 1145; Aristophanes, *Ach*. 1204; Euripides, *Ion* 536; Thucydides, *Hist*. 1.140.1; LSJ, 1687–88, s.v. "*συμφορά*," II.

73. LSJ, 1688, s.v. "*συμφορά*," II.2, referencing Herodotus, *Hist*. 1.41; 7.190 (*συμφορὰ ἄχαρις*); Pindar *Ol*. 7.77 (*οἰκτρὰ συμφορά*); Aeschylus, *Pers*. 445 (*κακὴ συμφορά*); Sophocles, *El*. 1179 (*τάλαινα συμφορά*).

74. Pseudo-Andronicus περὶ παθῶν 2, εἴδη λύπης in *SVF* 3:100.414.23: Συμφορὰ δὲ λύπη ἐπὶ συμπεφραγμένοις κακοῖς.

discourse delivered before the citizens of Tarsus, Dio Chrysostom refers to "some chance misfortune (συμφορά) that might randomly befall one city or another."[75] The most serious event denoted by συμφορά relates to the incidence or consequence of civil strife (στάσις). For example, Diodorus Siculus relates how the inhabitants of Euboea "quarreled with one another" (ἐστασίασαν πρὸ ἀλλήλους) and the island was devastated, but "at long last the parties came into concord and made peace with one another, having been admonished by their misfortunes" (ταῖς συμφοραῖς νουθετηθέντες).[76] Inscriptions illustrate that a reference to συμφοραί was conventional in accounts of civil strife; for example, the record of an embassy from Pergamon to Pitane (second century BCE) reports that the arbitrators endured "many unfortunate labors" (πολλοὶ συμφοροὶ πόνοι) on behalf of both cities;[77] at Olbia (ca. 100 BCE) the city honored one of its own who had perished in a serious conflict: his loss is described as an αἰφνίδιος συμφορά.[78] In a study of the language of unity and division in 1 Clement, Odd Magne Bakke adduced additional texts in which συμφορά describes the consequences of civil strife.[79]

The term περίπτωσις is also quite general, meaning "what befalls" or "experience,"[80] and must be qualified (e.g., περίπτωσις τοῦ τοιούτου κακοῦ),[81] in order to indicate an unpleasant experience or "misfortune."[82] Nor is the term περιστάσις more apposite as a description of persecution, if the read-

75. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 34.28: τις αὐτόματος ἄλλως ἐπέλθοι τισὶ συμφορά. See further Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 17.12, 16; 30.3; 33.22; 34.7; 41.12; Josephus, *B.J.* 2.411; *A.J.* 10.106.

76. Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 16.7.2. See the other examples cited in Welborn, "Preface to 1 Clement," 214–15: Thucydides, *Hist.* 2.59.2; 2.61.3–4; 4 Macc 3:21; Josephus, *B.J.* 5.32.

77. *OGIS* 335.15.

78. *SIG* 2.730.20. See other examples in Welborn, "Preface to 1 Clement," 216.

79. Odd Magne Bakke, *"Concord and Peace": A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Letter of Clement with an Emphasis on the Language of Unity and Sedition*, WUNT 2/141 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 100–105: Isocrates, *Or.* 12.258–259; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 13.48; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 24.30; Philo, *Decal.* 152–153; Josephus, *B.J.* 1.10–11; *A.J.* 9.281–282; 16.188–189.

80. LSJ, 1384–85, s.v. "περίπτωσις": Philodemus, *Rhet.* 2.164; Diocles Magnes *apud* Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 7.52; Plutarch, *An virt. doc.* 3 (440a); *Quaest. nat.* 26 (918c); Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 8.56; Diogenes Oenoandensis, frag. 10. AQ: Please confirm this is fragment 10.

81. Marcus Aurelius, *Ad se ipsum* 6.41.1. BDAG, s.v. "περίπτωσις."

82. BDAG, s.v. "περίπτωσις."

ing of Codex Hierosolymitanus is to be preferred.[83] To be sure, *περιστάσις* is used of a difficult situation or crisis,[84] but the general meaning is "circumstance" or "state of affairs."[85] Thoughtful writers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius take care to clarify the sense in which the term *περιστάσις* is being used.[86] In sum, Andreas Lindemann accurately observes: "*συμφορά* und *περίπτωσις* sind keine für Christenverfolgungen üblichen Termini."[87]

The function of the language employed in the first sentence of the Roman epistle is clarified by consideration of the rhetorical genre of the letter. In a seminal monograph, W. C. van Unnik demonstrated that 1 Clement belongs to the *συμβουλευτικὸν γένος*,[88] a kind of discourse regularly discussed by writers on rhetoric after Aristotle.[89] A subcategory of the deliberative discourse is the appeal for concord, customarily entitled *περὶ ὁμονοίας*, of which numerous instructive examples survive, several in the form of epistles.[90] The authors of these works seek to calm the outbreak of faction within cities and among social groups. That Clement conceived his epistle as a work of this type is indicated by his exhortation in 58.2,

83. Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, 35: *περιστάσεις* H, *impedimenta* L.

84. LSJ, 1388, s.v. "*περιστάσις*," II.b, referencing Polybius, *Hist*. 1.82.7; 4.33.12; 4.45.10; Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum* 18C (SVF 3:49.206); *SIG* 2.731.2; 2 Macc 4:16; etc.

85. LSJ, 1388, s.v. "*περιστάσις*," II: Polybius, *Hist*. 1.35.10; 4.67.4; 10.21.3; Philodemus, *Rhet*. 1.219; Aretaeus, *Sign. diut*. 2.9; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil*. 7.109. Cf. Diogenes, *Ep*. 12; Crates, *Ep*. 35.

86. Epictetus, *Diatr*. 2.6.17: "What do you mean by 'circumstances' [*περιστάσεις*], man? If you call circumstances [*περιστάσεις*] your surroundings [*τὰ περεστηκότα*], all things are circumstances; but if you speak of hardships [*δύσκολα*]…"; Marcus Aurelius, *Ad se ipsum* 9.13.

87. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 26.

88. W. C. van Unnik, *Studies over de zogenaamde Eerste Brief van Clemens: I. Het Litteraire Genre* (Amsterdam: Noord Hollandische Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1970); trans. as "Studies on the So-Called First Epistle of Clement: The Literary Genre," in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement*, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 115–81.

89. Aristotle, *Rhet*. 1.3–4.8; Rhet. Her. 1.2.2; Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.4.15; 3.8.6; [Aristides], *Ars rhet.* in Leonardi Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci,* 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894), 2:503–4; cf. Joseph Klek, *Symbuleutici qui dicitur sermonis historia critica* (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 1919).

90. E.g., Antiphon, *Peri homonoias*; Isocrates, *Or*. 4; *Ep*. 3, 8, 9; Pseudo-Demosthenes, *Ep*. 1; Socratic Epistles 30–32; Pseudo-Sallust, *Ep*. 2; Dio Chrysostom, *Or*. 38–41; Aelius Aristides, *Or*. 23–24.

δέξασθε τὴν συμβουλὴν ἡμῶν, and by the characterization of the letter in 63.2 as an ἔντευξις … περὶ εἰρήνης καὶ ὁμονοίας.[91]

In letters and speeches on concord, one sometimes encounters, usually in the preface, an apology by the author for not having intervened sooner to conciliate the parties involved in strife. In the discourse delivered by Dio Chrysostom in his native Prusa, counseling concord with neighboring Apameia, the orator explains why he has been delayed in addressing the long-standing quarrel between the cities: "I think it is necessary to take some precaution for my body, exhausted from great and continuous hardship, and for my domestic affairs, now in a very bad condition."[92] In a written speech sent to the Rhodians when they were torn by internal strife, Aelius Aristides begins with an excuse: "If, O men of Rhodes, my physical condition were such as I would have wished and you have prayed for it to be, I should have crossed over and spoken to you for many reasons. Since perhaps news of our condition has reached you, I leave the care of my affairs to the gods.… But there remained for me only to send you a written speech, and for the present to be with you in this fashion."[93]

Earlier I suggested that the preface to 1 Clement represents a conventional apology like that found in other letters and speeches on concord.[94] The association of the language of 1.1 with accounts of civil strife suggests that the συμφοραί and περιπτώσεις (or περιστάσεις) of which Clement speaks are hindrances created by internal conflicts in the Roman *ekklēsia*, not calamities resulting from persecution. This inference is strengthened by the clarification of purpose in writing in 7.1: "We are writing these things, beloved, not admonishing you alone but also reminding ourselves, for we are in the same arena, and the same struggle lies before us." As the context makes clear, the "arena" (σκάμμα) is not the pit of the Roman amphitheater but the moral trench where Christian athletes contend, and the "struggle" (ἀγών) is not against wild beasts and gladiators but against the destructive emotions of "jealousy and envy" (ζῆλος καὶ φθόνος).[95] Thus

91. Van Unnik, "Studies on the First Epistle of Clement," 128–46; Bakke, *"Concord and Peace,"* 33–62.

92. Dio Chrysostom, *Or*. 40.2.

93. Aelius Aristides, *Or*. 24.1; trans. Charles A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1981–1986), 2:45.

94. Welborn, "Preface to 1 Clement," 215.

95. Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen," 192–99; Welborn, "Preface to 1 Clement," 215, followed closely by Bakke, *"Concord and Peace,"* 104.

the first sentence of the Roman epistle functions rhetorically as a *captatio benevolentiae*,[96] encouraging the Corinthians to receive the admonition that follows as a *correctio fraterna*, despite the authoritative position assumed by the author elsewhere in the letter (e.g., 63.2).[97] The suggestion that the language of 1 Clem. 1.1 alludes to intramural conflicts between Christians is consistent with Peter Lampe's presentation of evidence for "fractionation"—socially and theologically—between the early Roman assemblies of Christ-followers.[98]

If there is no unambiguous evidence that the Christians of Rome were suffering persecution at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, there is nevertheless no lack of expressions of contempt for Christ-believers among authors from the Roman ruling class. As we have seen, Tacitus, a contemporary of Clement, describes the Christians of Rome as "loathed for their shameful acts" (*per flagitia invisos*) and maintains that they were guilty of "hatred of the human race" (*odium humani generis*).[99] Among the punitive measures that Nero undertook against abuses, Suetonius mentions punishment inflicted upon the Christians, "a class of persons given to a new and evil superstition" (*genus hominum superstitionis novae ac malificae*).[100] Pliny's investigation of Christianity in Bithynia failed to discover anything criminal; nevertheless, Pliny reported to Trajan that he found the Christ cult to be "a depraved and immoderate superstition" (*superstitio prava et immodica*).[101] It is impossible to determine whether this negative attitude toward Christians penetrated the general public at Rome or how far it descended the social scale. Perhaps the common people (*vulgus*) were more sympathetic.[102]

In light of the past incidence of Nero's persecution and the persistent contempt of the Roman intelligentsia, it is remarkable that Clement does not blame Roman authorities for the attack upon the Christians[103] and that

96. Welborn, "Preface to 1 Clement," 215.

97. Fischer, *Die apostolischen Väter,* 11–12.

98. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 357–408.

99. Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.44.

100. Suetonius, *Ner*. 16.2.

101. Pliny, *Ep*. 10.96.8.

102. As noted above, Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44) reports that "pity" (*miseratio*) was aroused by the sufferings of Christians in the time of Nero, though it must have irked him to acknowledge it.

103. Keresztes, "Nero," 411.

his attitude toward the Roman state is consistently positive.[104] A hypothesis will be required to explain this incongruity, when we eventually turn to consider the political theology of the Roman epistle.

3. Evidence of Self-Sacrifice

In 1 Clem. 55, the author brings forward examples of extraordinary acts of self-sacrifice in an effort to persuade the leaders of the uprising at Corinth to accept the counsel of voluntary exile from the community for the sake of the common good.[105] First, Clement gives examples from the gentiles: "Many kings and rulers, after receiving instruction from an oracle, have handed themselves over to death in time of plague, in order to deliver the citizens through their own blood" (55.1). Then Clement supplies examples from the Christians: "We know of many among us who have given themselves up to imprisonment, so that they might ransom others; many have given themselves up to slavery and fed others with the sale price they received for themselves" (*ἐπιστάμεθα πολλοὺς ἐν ἡμῖν παραδεδωκότας ἑαυτοὺς εἰς δεσμά, ὅπως ἑτέρους λυτρώσονται· πολλοὶ ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν εἰς δουλείαν, καὶ λαβόντες τὰς τιμὰς αὐτῶν ἑτέρους ἐψώμισαν*, 55.2). As in 6.1, the phrase *ἐν ἡμῖν* makes clear that the author is referring to Roman Christians.[106]

The rhetorical character of the passage is pronounced, reaching from individual figures of speech to the overall structure of the argument. The use of anaphora—*πολλοί … πολλοί*—heightens emotion.[107] The verse is deftly divided into two sentences of equal length and uniform structure:[108] in both segments, "many" (*πολλοί*) have "given themselves up" (participial and finite form of *παραδίδωμι*, with the reflexive pronoun *ἑαυτούς* as object); in both parts, the preposition *εἰς* refers to the condition into which the Roman Christians have delivered themselves; in both, "others" (*ἕτεροι*)

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104. Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 197.

105. On the rhetorical tropes employed in the passage, see Louis Sanders, *L'Hellénisme de Saint Clement de Rome et le Paulinisme* (Leuven: Universitas Catholica Louvainiensis, 1943), 42–47, 52–55.

106. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:160; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 155; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 563–64.

107. Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 673 (3010); cf. Plato, *Leg.* 12.21; J. D. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 84.

108. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 156.

are the beneficiaries of the sacrifice.[109] The argument takes the logical form *a maiore ad minus*: in comparison with those who willingly sacrificed their freedom and their lives, how much less is required of those who leave the community in order to restore peace and concord. As I have observed elsewhere, a strikingly similar argument in favor of voluntary exile is made by the sophist Favorinus.[110] Finally, in formulating his account of the sacrificial acts, the author of the Roman epistle echoes the language of 1 Cor 13:3, specifically the verbs ψωμίζω and παραδίδωμι.[111] As elsewhere in the epistle, Clement borrows the authority of Paul's voice, while simultaneously altering Paul's message.[112]

Given the manifestly rhetorical character of 1 Clem. 55.2, interpreters have questioned whether the author is reporting actual events. So, for example, Lindemann ponders: "handelt es sich womöglich um einer geradezu 'poetischen' Topos?"[113] But other early Christian texts, including one nearly contemporary with 1 Clement, make statements that justify the conclusion of Grant: however poetically the account in 55.2 is phrased, "Clement is giving facts about the Roman community and its Christian actions."[114] The Shepherd of Hermas, a work of Roman provenance probably dating to the early second century,[115] exhorts, among other charitable

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109. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 563.

110. L. L. Welborn, "Voluntary Exile as the Solution to Discord in *1 Clement*," *ZAC* 18 (2004): 6–21, here 16–17.

111. The allusion to 1 Cor 13:3 was already noted by Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 87: "55:2 is oddly reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 13:3," observing: "The parallels make an enigmatic passage even more enigmatic." See also Donald A. Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 208: "The words παραδεδωκότας and ἐψώμισαν in 1 Clem. 55:2 may recall the similarly used ψωμίσω and παραδῶ of 1 Cor. 13:3." But cf. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 155: "Eine Beziehung zu 1 Kor 13,3 besteht nicht."

112. Insightfully, Clare K. Rothschild, *New Essays on the Apostolic Fathers*, WUNT 375 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 56–57: "Paul argues that various acts of sacrifice are *ineffective* apart from ἀγάπη. Clement adopts and reverses Paul's position. For Clement, such acts are unqualifiedly effective: imprisonment always effects ransom and slavery always effects sustenance."

113. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 156. Similarly, Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 563: "Es bleibt unklar, wie weit die drastischen Angaben von Selbstlosigkeit in der römischen Gemeinde rhetorisch übermalt sind." Cf. J. Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity*, WUNT 32 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 30–31.

114. Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 87.

115. On provenance, Carolyn Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Hermeneia (Min-

acts, "to ransom from distress the servants of God" (ἐξ ἀναγκῶν λυτροῦσθαι τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ),[116] a phrase that Carolyn Osiek interprets as a reference to the practice of "buying out those imprisoned for the faith or enslaved in oppressive situations."[117] In a fragment of a letter of Dionysius of Corinth to the Romans (ca. 170 CE) preserved by Eusebius, Dionysius expresses gratitude for the Roman custom of sending financial aid to Christians in distress:

> From the beginning, this has been your custom [ἔθος], to do good [εὐεργετεῖν] to all brothers in many ways and to send contributions [ἐφόδια] to many churches in every city, here relieving the poverty of those in need and providing support for brothers in the mines [ἐν μετάλλοις δὲ ἀδελφοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἐπιχορηγοῦντας] through the contributions you have sent from the beginning.[118]

Whether the Roman contributions were intended to provide aid to Christians condemned to the mines or to purchase their freedom (through bribery?) cannot be determined.[119] But clearly Dionysius of Corinth regarded the relief of prisoners as an established practice of Roman Christians.[120]

Interpreters adduce instances of non-Christian persons voluntarily selling themselves into slavery as parallels to the actions described in

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neapolis: Fortress, 1999), 18: "The book originates in Rome and its environs." Osiek adds, "Though there is no consensus on dating, the majority of scholars would situate the writing in the first half of the second century" (19). Arguing for a date at the end of the first century, Harry O. Maier, *The Social Setting of the Ministry as Reflected in the Writings of Hermas, Clement and Ignatius* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), 55–58; James S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome: Social Order and Hierarchy in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 106–12.

116. Herm. Man. 8.10.

117. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 130; Osiek, "The Ransom of Captives: Evolution of a Tradition," *HTR* 74 (1981): 365–86, here 371–73. Less clear is the exhortation to "buy afflicted souls" (ἀγοράζετε ψυχὰς θλιβομένας) in Herm. Sim. 1.8.

118. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.10.

119. Osiek, "Ransom of Captives," 380: "No meaningful distinction can be made between efforts to minister to such prisoners and to free them." See also Cavan W. Concannon, *Assembling Early Christianity: Trade, Networks, and the Letters of Dionysios of Corinth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 198 n. 64.

120. Osiek, "Ransom of Captives," 379–80; Concannon, *Assembling Early Christianity*, 198 n. 64.

1 Clem. 55.2.[121] Lampe calls attention, in particular, to Dio Chrysostom's discourse on slavery and freedom, in which the orator reports that "great numbers of freeborn persons sell themselves, so that they are enslaved by contract, sometimes on no moderate terms, but on the most difficult."[122] But as Lampe himself recognizes, in this case, and in others known from Roman law and letters,[123] the reason for selling oneself into slavery was either a desperate situation from which there was no other way out or the prospect of improving one's condition by the grant of Roman citizenship upon manumission.[124] By contrast, the Roman Christians who sold themselves into slavery did so on behalf of others.

Two crucial insights into the lives of Christians at Rome are afforded by the brief account of examples of self-sacrifice in 1 Clem. 55.2. First, the poverty of Roman Christians must have been dire at the time to which Clement looks back; indeed, the poverty must have been general, if the phrase πολλοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν is not a rhetorical exaggeration.[125] Evidently, funds for the purchase of freedom and foodstuffs did not exist in the Christian community, so that prisoners could only be ransomed by self-substitution and the hungry could only be fed by self-enslavement.[126] A glimpse of the desperation of impoverished Roman Christians is offered by the concluding exhortation of the Shepherd of Hermas: "But I say that everyone ought to be rescued from adversity. The one who is in need and suffers adversity in daily life is in great torment and deprivation.… The one who is troubled by this kind of adversity suffers the same torment as one who is tortured in chains. For many bring death on themselves [*mortem sibi adducunt*] because of these kinds of calamities when they are not able to bear them."[127] Osiek suggests that the phrase *mortem sibi adducunt* probably refers to suicide.[128]

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121. Henneke Gülzow, *Christentum und Sklaverei in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Bonn: Habelt, 1969), 89; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 85–86.

122. Dio Chrysostom, *Or*. 15.23; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 85–86.

123. E.g., Dig. 1.5.21; 1.5.5.1; 40.12.7; Petronius, *Satyr*. 57.4.

124. Gülzow, *Christentum und Sklaverei*, 76–85; Geza Alföldy, "Die Freilassung von Sklaven und die Struktur des Sklaverei in der römischen Kaiserzeit," in *Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. H. Schneider (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981), 336–71, at 366–67; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 85; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 155.

125. Rightly, Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 86.

126. Osiek, "Ransom of Captives," 370.

127. Herm. Sim. 10.4.2–3; trans. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 259.

128. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 261.

Second, the acts of self-sacrifice mentioned in 1 Clem. 55.2 testify to an extraordinary level of group solidarity among the Roman Christians.[129] It is important to recognize how little evidence of solidarity among the subelite survives from antiquity. Only the highest orders of Roman society (senators, equestrians, municipal councillors) exhibited class consciousness and presented themselves as socially integrated groups.[130] In literature contemporary with 1 Clement, only a single incident of solidarity among the lower classes of Rome is reported: the protest of the plebs against the execution of all the domestic slaves of Pedanius Secundus in 61 CE.[131] Tacitus relates: "the rapid assembly of the plebs, bent on protecting so many innocent lives, brought matters to the point of sedition, and the senate house was besieged."[132] But Nero suppressed the uprising by lining the whole length of the road along which the condemned were marched to their deaths with detachments of soldiers (*Ann*. 14.45). Evidently the poor Christians of Rome felt a solidarity with distressed coreligionists that expressed itself in sacrificial acts less dramatic but more effective than the short-lived uprising of the Roman plebs in 61 CE.

Elsewhere in the Roman epistle there are indications that not all the Christians of Rome were poor. In 1 Clem. 38.2 the author exhorts: "Let the strong [ὁ ἰσχυρός] care for the weak, and let the weak respect the strong. Let the rich [ὁ πλούσιος] provide support [ἐπιχορηγείτω] for the poor, and let the poor give thanks to God [εὐχαριστείτω τῷ θεῷ], because he has given him one through whom his want is supplied." The sentences are formulated as *isocola*, giving expression to mutual relationships.[133] The thought is traditional, echoing Pauline paraenesis.[134] But the rhetorical features of the text do not exclude the possibility that real social relations are reflected in Clement's counsel. Again, the Shepherd of Hermas reinforces Clem-

129. Osiek, "Ransom of Captives," 370; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 86.

130. Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 14–20; Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 107–23.

131. Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.42–45; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquest* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 372.

132. Tacitus, *Ann*. 14.42; trans. Jackson, *Tacitus*, 5:175.

133. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 116; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 417.

134. Rom 14:1; 15:1–2; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 66; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 117.

ent's picture of relations between rich and poor in the Roman *ekklēsia*: "The rich man [ὁ πλούσιος] therefore provides support [ἐπιχορηγεῖ] for the poor without hesitating. And the poor, being supported by the rich [ἐπιχορηγούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ πλουσίου], appeals to God, giving thanks to him [εὐχαριστῶν αὐτῷ] for the one who gave to him."[135]

It is clear, then, that the Christian community at Rome in the time of Clement was socially heterogeneous.[136] How is the evidence of different economic strata to be reconciled with the impression of endemic poverty given by 1 Clem. 55.2? Does Clement look back in the latter passage at incidents of self-sacrifice in the past,[137] whether during the reign of Nero or under the Flavians? Or were the poor more ready for extreme works of love than rich Christians, who needed to be exhorted? In any case, Clement voices no criticism of the social order[138] but merely counsels charity on the one side and deferential respect on the other.

4. The Roman Emissaries, Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito, and Fortunatus

At the end of the epistle, Clement provides a commendation for the emissaries who have accompanied his letter to Corinth: "We are sending trustworthy and judicious men [ἐπέμψαμεν δὲ ἄνδρας πιστοὺς καὶ σώφρονους] who from youth to old age have lived blamelessly among us [ἀπὸ νεότητος ἀναστραφένας ἕως γήρους ἀμέμπτως ἐν ἡμῖν]; they will be witnesses [μάρτυρες] between you and us" (63.3). The terms by which the envoys are described, πιστός and σώφρων, echo the virtues promoted throughout the epistle as the remedy to discord at Corinth.[139] The advanced age of the emissaries mirrors that of the older men whom the Corinthians once honored and to whom the rebels

135. Herm. Sim. 2.5–6; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 66; Carolyn Osiek, *Rich and Poor in the Shepherd of Hermas: An Exegetical-Social Investigation* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1983), 79–83; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 117.

136. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 86–87; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 117.

137. So Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 86.

138. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 117.

139. For πιστός, see 1 Clem. 9.4; 10.1; 17.5; 48.5; 62.3; for σώφρων, 1 Clem. 1.2; σωφρονέω, 1 Clem. 1.3; σωφροσύνη, 1 Clem. 62.2; 64.1. See the discussion in Peter Head, "'Witnesses between You and Us': The Role of the Letter-Carriers in 1 Clement," in *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity*, ed. D. M. Gurtner (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 477–93, here 487–88. Cf. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 633.

should now submit.[140] The term ἀμέμπτως is used earlier in the epistle to describe the way in which the deposed presbyters fulfilled their ministry.[141] In sum, the Roman emissaries exemplified for the Corinthians the rectitude, maturity, prudence, and faithfulness counseled by Clement.

But the commendation also provides insight into the kind of persons who were respected among Christians at Rome and who could be entrusted with a difficult mission. Evidently "the prerogative given to seniority," as Plutarch puts it,[142] was acknowledged by the Roman Christians, so that those who had reached "old age" (γῆρας) were thought worthy of public service. Clement's assurance that the envoys had lived "blamelessly" likens the agents of the Roman *ekklēsia* to model citizens: the adverb ἀμέμπτως is used in inscriptions lauding persons of extraordinary civic virtue.[143] As a group, the emissaries resemble the delegations sent by the Roman senate to mediate civic conflicts in the Greek East.[144] The author of a symbouleutic discourse in the form of a letter, entitled "On Behalf of the Argives," dated to the first century CE,[145] urges the Corinthians to place confidence in two philosopher-orators, Diogenes and Lamprias, who have been sent as an "embassy" (πρεσβεία) to assist in resolution of the conflict, commending their selflessness, zeal, generosity, and usefulness (Pseudo-Julian, *Ep.* 28, 410b–d). Thus the decision to send a delegation to Corinth and the qualities of the persons chosen for this service suggest that the *ekklēsia* of Christ-believers at Rome patterned itself in some respects on the order of the city, like other Roman voluntary associations.[146]

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140. 1 Clem. 1.3; 21.6; 57.1; cf. 3.3; Head, "Role of the Letter-Carriers," 488–89.

141. 1 Clem. 44:3, 4, 6; Head, "Role of the Letter-Carriers," 489.

142. Plutarch, *An seni* 7–8 (787d–788a).

143. Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982), 354–55.

144. Texts and commentary in Robert K. Sherk, *Roman Documents from the Greek East: Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969).

145. Pseudo-Julian, *Ep.* 28, 407b–411b; text and trans. in Wilmer Cave Wright, ed. and trans., *The Works of the Emperor Julian, Volume*, 3 vols., LCL (London: Heinemann, 1923), 3:84–97. On the authorship and date, see Bruno Keil, "Ein ΛΟΓΟΣ ΣΥΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΣ," *Nachrichten der Göttingen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Kl.* (1913): 1–41; supported by Antony J. S. Spawforth, "Corinth, Argos, and the Imperial Cult: Pseudo-Julian, Lettters 198," *Hesperia* 63 (1994): 211–32.

146. John S. Kloppenborg, "Associations, Christ Groups, and Their Place in the *Polis*," *ZNW* 108 (2017): 1–56; Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and*

In 1 Clem. 65.1 the author of the Roman epistle supplies the names of the envoys: Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito, and Fortunatus. The names reveal details about the social status of the bearers. The Greek *cognomina* Ἔφηβος and Βίτων may betray servile origins.[147] Ἔφηβος means "adolescent," "boy"[148] and is attested as a slave name at Rome.[149] Βίτων may also be indicative of a Greek freedman.[150] But the inference that Ephebus and Bito were themselves freedmen is not certain, since freeborn children were sometimes given Greek *cognomina*, especially in cases where the parents were first-generation *ingenui*.[151] Fortunatus, the name of the third envoy, is common as the name of a slave or freedman.[152]

In the case of the first two emissaries, the author of the Roman epistle displays the *gentilicium* before the *cognomen* of each man, in contrast to the onomastic practice of Paul's letters.[153] Long ago Lightfoot suggested that the Latin *gentilicia* of these men indicate that they were freedmen of the Claudian and Valerian tribes, thus members of the imperial household.[154] Lightfoot adduced a number of instances in which the names Claudius and

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Belonging in the Ancient City (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 287: "Associations became 'cities writ small.'"

147. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 184; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 180; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 637.

148. LSJ, 743, s.v. "ἔφηβος": Pollux, *Onom.* 8.105; Aristotle, *Ath. pol.* 42.2; *IG* 2.1156; *SIG* 3.959.12.

149. Heikki Solin, *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen: Ein Namenbuch* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), 474, s.v. "Ephebus." See also CIL 9.2666 (Aesernia): D. Publicius Ephebus as the descendant of a municipal freedman.

150. Solin, *Die stadtrömischen Sklanennamen*, 327, s.v. "Bito."

151. Henrik Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Freeborn in the Necropolis of Imperial Ostia," *ZPE* 150 (2004): 281–304, here 284–86; Michael Flexsenhar III, *Christians in Caesar's Household: The Emperors' Slaves in the Making of Christianity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 135–36.

152. See the examples in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:29 n. 3, citing CIL 5.4103; 6.15082; MM, 675, s.v. "Φορτουνᾶτος," citing *OGIS* 707. Iiro Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1965). Mouritsen, "Freedmen and Freeborn," 284 n. 19: "Statistical analysis of large bodies of epigraphic evidence have shown that some Latin *cognomina* were far more popular for slaves/freedmen than others. Many of them were 'happy' or 'good luck' names, e.g., Felix, Fortunatus, etc."

153. Paul never employs more than a single name in reference to any person: Paul uses *praenomina* in some cases, e.g., Titus (Gal 2:3) and Lucius (Rom 16:21), and *cognomina* in others, e.g., Aquila (1 Cor 16:19), Clement (Phil 4:3), and Rufus (Rom 16:13).

154. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:27–29, 2:187.

Valerius appear on the tombstones of freedmen of these tribes.[155] Lightfoot's argument that Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito were "retainers of the Caesars" has been widely accepted by scholars.[156] Lampe, in particular, has sought to strengthen Lightfoot's argument by adducing a first-century Roman inscription that names a freedwoman Maria of the Valerian *gens*.[157] Inferring that the cognomen Maria is a Semitic name, Lampe develops a speculative scenario in which this Valeria Maria was a Jewish or Jewish Christian freedwoman who was the mother or aunt of the Roman emissary of 1 Clem. 65.1, Valerius Bito![158] Unfortunately for subscribers to Lightfoot's hypothesis, inscriptions attest a number of Claudii and Valerii who cannot be shown to have any connection to the imperial house.[159]

If, after all, Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito were imperial freedmen, then their status would have been more elevated than that of the many poor Christians mentioned elsewhere in the Roman epistle (38.2; 55.2; 59.4). Among the staff in the emperor's service were many subclerical functionaries (e.g., *pedisequi*, *nomenclatores*, *tabellarii*) and others of junior and intermediate clerical rank (e.g., *audiutores*, *dispensatores*, *tabularii*).[160] Imperial freedmen were also engaged in private commercial enterprises not under the emperor's control but profiting from his patronage.[161] Some imperial freedmen became wealthy by exploiting

155. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:27–28: e.g., CIL 6.4923, 8943, 9151, 9152.

156. Knopf, *Die zwei Clemensbriefe*, 150; George Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (London: Longmans, 1913), 199; Lowther Clarke, *First Epistle of Clement*, 108; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 184–86; Chrys C. Caragounis, "From Obscurity to Prominence: The Development of the Roman Church between Romans and *1 Clement*," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 245–79, at 277; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 637; Head, "Role of the Letter-Carriers," 492.

157. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 184, referencing CIL 6.27948.

158. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 184–85.

159. Flexsenhar, *Christians in Caesar's Household*, 136, 168 n. 8, adducing as examples: *L'Année épigraphique* (1925), 114; (1931), 89; (1969/1970), 32; (1975), 48; (1976), 90; (1981), 145; (1998), 1613; (1999), 390. See already the verdict of Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 180: "Ob sie [Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito] aus dem kaiserlichen Hause stamen, wie Lightfoot und Knopf vermuten, lässt sich trotz der 'kaiserlichen' Namen kaum sagen."

160. See the comprehensive study by P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), esp. 227–43.

161. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris*, 7–8.

their position and influence.[162] It may count as an argument in favor of the elevated social status that Lampe posits for the Roman emissaries that Clement expects that the Corinthians will respond quickly (*ἐν τάχει … θᾶττον … εἰς τὸ τάχιον*) to their mission (65.1), acknowledging their authority (63.1–4).

5. Profile of the Author of the Roman Epistle

What can be known about the author of the Roman epistle, whose voice sounds clearly throughout the text that Eusebius later characterizes as "long and wonderful" (*μεγάλη τε καὶ θαυμασία*, *Hist. eccl.* 3.16)? Tradition unanimously ascribes the letter to a certain Clement,[163] yet the tradition is not free of ambiguity. In a fragment of a letter preserved in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, Dionysius, bishop of Corinth (ca. 170 CE),[164] acknowledges an epistle from his Roman counterpart, Soter, then mentions Clement as the person through whom the Corinthians had earlier received a letter from Rome: "Today, then, we celebrated the Lord's holy day, in which we read your letter, which, when reading it, we shall always receive an admonition, as also in the case of the former epistle written to us through Clement [*ὡς καὶ τὴν προτέραν ἡμῖν διὰ Κλήμεντος γραφεῖσαν*]."[165] Precisely what role Clement played in relation to the epistle depends upon interpretation of the preposition *διά*. Does Dionysius mean that Clement was the author, the copyist, or the sender of the letter?[166]

Even greater ambiguity characterizes the quotations of other second-century writers who mention the name of Clement in connection

162. Geza Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1991), 132. In evidence of freedmen who amassed wealth, Lampe (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 185) cites Martial 2.32; Suetonius *Nero* 48.1; *ILS* 7196.

163. Dionysius of Corinth in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.10–11; Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22.1; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.38; 4.105; 4.111.1; 6.65.3. The testimonies are assembled and discussed by Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:153–57, 358–61; see further Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 188–90; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 12–13; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 66–69.

164. Lightfoot (*Apostolic Fathers*, 1:155) gives 166–174 CE as the date range; similarly Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 101, 402.

165. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.11. See the insightful analysis of this letter fragment by Concannon, *Assembling Early Christianity*, 188–92.

166. So already Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:358–59; more recently, Concannon, *Assembling Early Christianity*, 190.

with the Roman epistle. Eusebius relates that Hegesippus passed through Corinth on his way to Rome and learned that "the affairs of Corinth were disturbed by a *στάσις*" in the time of Clement (*Hist. eccl.* 3.16), but the reference to Clement's authorship of the epistle to the Corinthians is found in Eusebius's preface to the quotation from Hegesippus, not in the words of Hegesippus himself.[167] Eusebius preserves the Greek text of the passage from Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* that speaks of the conflict at Corinth in which the Roman church intervened: "When in the time of this Clement no small *στάσις* arose among the brothers in Corinth, the church in Rome [*ἡ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐκκλησία*] sent a powerful writing to the Corinthians urging them to peace" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.6.3). One should not fail to notice that Irenaeus does not say that the letter to the Corinthians was sent by Clement but by "the Roman *ekklēsia*,"[168] despite the fact that Irenaeus claims that Clement was the third bishop of Rome and had associated with the apostles.[169]

The earliest explicit attribution of the Roman epistle to Clement is found in the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200 CE): on four occasions the catechist names Clement as the author of the letter to the Corinthians,[170] most notably at the beginning of a lengthy citation of passages taken to illustrate faithfulness, attributed to "the apostle Clement."[171] Yet in other instances Clement omits the name of the author and refers to "the epistle of the Romans to the Corinthians."[172] Even Eusebius, who repeatedly refers to "the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians" (*Hist. eccl.* 4.22.1; 4.23.11) and claims that the writing is "recognized by all" (3.38.1), speaks once of the letter that Clement "arranged as representative of the church of the Romans" (ἐκ προσώπου τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας διετυπώσατο).[173]

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167. Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 4.22; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:358.

168. Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.3.3: *scripsit quae est Romae ecclesia*.

169. Irenaeus in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.6.2; Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.3.3. The point is emphasized by Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 67.

170. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 1.38.5; 4.105.1; 4.111.1; 6.65.3; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:158–60; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 5–6; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 67.

171. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 4.105.1–113.5.

172. E.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*. 5.12.81; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:159, 359; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 5.

173. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.38.1, with the observation of Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 68 n. 1: "Die Wendung ἐκ προσώπου dürfte an dieser Stelle mehr bedeuten

Looking back over the statements of the earliest writers who connect the name of Clement with the Roman epistle, it is striking how little information is provided about the putative author. Apart from Irenaeus's claim that Clement was the third in episcopal succession from the apostles at Rome, Clement is nothing more than a name, and a very common one at that.[174] On the other hand, the Shepherd of Hermas mentions a Clement whose responsibility is to correspond with Christians in cities outside Rome. At the end of the second vision, the church, personified as an elderly woman, instructs Hermas: "You shall write two little books and send one to Clement and one to Grapte," explaining, "Clement then will send it to the cities outside, for to him this duty is entrusted" (πέμψει οὖν Κλήμης εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις, ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἐπιτέτραπται).[175] Is the Clement mentioned here the author of the Roman epistle? In favor of an identification of the two figures is the fact that the composition of the Shepherd of Hermas is nearly contemporaneous with that of 1 Clement—both products of the early second century.[176] In that case, one may see in the author of 1 Clement the secretary of the church at Rome, in charge of foreign correspondence.[177]

Beneath the ambiguity regarding the authorship of the epistle and the obscurity of the person and function of Clement lies the fact that the so-called First Epistle of Clement is anonymous or, more precisely, is the missive of a community. The prescript represents the epistle as a communication between *ekklēsiai*: "The assembly of God that sojourns in Rome

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al seine einfache Herkunftsangabe." Cf. 1 Clem. 3.16.1. AQ: The 1 Clement reference appears incorrect.

174. Merrill, "On 'Clement of Rome,'" in *Essays in Early Christian History*, 217–41, here 217–18, referencing the dissertation of Lindley Richard Dean, "A Study of the Cognomina of Soldiers in the Roman Legion" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1916).

175. Herm. Vis. 2.4.3.

176. Merrill, "On 'Clement of Rome,'" 224, 235–41; Welborn, "On the Date of First Clement," 37–38; Welborn, "Clement," 1060; Bowe, *Church in Crisis*, 2–3; Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 59.

177. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:359–60; Adolf von Harnack, *Einführung in die alte Kirchengeschichte: Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche an die korinthische aus der Zeit Domitians (I. Clemensbrief)* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), 11, 50; Philipp Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 539; Bowe, *Church in Crisis*, 2; Welborn, "Clement," 1059–60; Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 59; Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1:21, 23.

to the assembly of God that sojourns in Corinth" (Ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ παροικοῦσα Ῥώμην τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον).[178] In keeping with the conventions of collective authorship, the first-person plural is employed throughout the letter. Yet generations of interpreters have judged that the Roman epistle is the work of a single author because of the uniformity of style and consistency of argumentation.[179] One wonders how much the perception of a strong, authoritative personality behind the text may have contributed to the insertion of Clement into the list of Roman bishops,[180] the attribution of other early Christian writings to Clement (2 Clement, the Epistles to the Virgins),[181] and the choice of Clement as the protagonist of the early third-century novel that underlies the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions and Homilies.[182]

The legendary biography of Clement in the Pseudo-Clementine writings encouraged the attempt by modern scholars to bring the author of the Roman epistle into connection with the family of the Roman consul

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178. On the prescript, see esp. Erik Peterson, "Das Praescriptum des 1. Clemens-Briefes," in his *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis: Studien und Untersuchungen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1959), 129–36, here 133: "Die ἐκκλησία ist also der eigentliche Absender des Briefes"; see also Tassilo Schmitt, *Paroikie und Oikoumene: Sozial- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum 1. Clemensbrief* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 7–20, esp. 15.

179. E.g., Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:358–61; Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 50–52; Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 189; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 206; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 12; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 71–75.

180. Irenaeus in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.6.2; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.3; Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.36; AQ: Please confirm Comm. Jo. is meant here. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.15; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:63–64, 343–44; Merrill, "On 'Clement of Rome,'" 227–30.

181. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:100–101, 406–20; Berthold Altaner and Alfred Stuiber, *Patrologie: Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter* (Freiburg: Herder, 1966), 47; Welborn, "Clement," 1056.

182. Oscar von Gebhardt, Adolf von Harnack, and Theodore Zahn, eds., *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1876), 1.1:xxiv–xxvi; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:14–16, 99–100, 157–58. Cf. F. Stanley Jones, "Clement of Rome and the *Pseudo-Clementines*: History and/or Fiction," in his *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque inter Judaeochristiana: Collected Studies* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 172–93. Jones discounts the influence of 1 Clement upon the Pseudo-Clementine writings, crediting instead the author's knowledge "that a Clement was the successor of Peter as bishop of Rome" (184). Unfortunately, Jones does not distinguish with clarity between "biographical information" on Clement in the novel and "the historicity of the material" about Clement.

Titus Flavius Clemens.[183] In the account of Clement's origins and early life sketched in the Clementine romance, the protagonist relates that his father Faustus was a relative of Caesar and that his mother Mattidia was also of a noble Roman family.[184] Thus a number of modern scholars were led to embrace the hypothesis that Clement, the supposed author of the Roman epistle, was a freedman of Titus Flavius Clemens, cousin of the emperor Domitian, who took the name of his *patronus* upon manumission.[185] In fact, the hypothesis rests upon nothing more than the coincidence of names, supplemented by Eusebius's belief that Flavia Domitilla was a Christian. Moreover, the flaw in an appeal to the similarity of names was already pointed out by Richard Lipsius: a *libertus* ordinarily took the *nomen gentilicium* of his master, while retaining his former slave name as his *cognomen*.[186]

It has long been recognized that a more fruitful approach to a delineation of the personality of the author of 1 Clement is a close reading of the text of the epistle itself. Lightfoot already undertook an elementary analysis of this kind, identifying three characteristics of the writer: the "comprehensiveness" of his affirmation of apostolic tradition, the "sense of order" required to maintain communal harmony, and the "moderation" of his attitude and conduct.[187] Similarly, Adolf von Harnack summarized his impression of the character of Clement by emphasizing "der Sinn für Autorität, Ordnung, Gesetz und Gehorsam, der in seiner Viereinigkeit den ganzen Brief durchzieht."[188]

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183. Most clearly in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:16–21.

184. Pseudo-Clement, *Hom*. 12.8.2–3; *Recog*. 7.8.2. The names of Clement's father and mother vary in the sources: Faustus or Faustinus; Mattidia or Metradora. See the reconstruction of the "Basic Writing" on the basis of the Syriac by F. Stanley Jones, *The Syriac* Pseudo-Clementines: *An Early Version of the First Christian Novel* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

185. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:61; Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 51; Cyril C. Richardson, *The Letter of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 37; Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 189; D. W. F. Wong, "Natural and Divine Law in I Clem.," *VC* 31 (1977): 31–87, here 81–87; Hagner, *Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 4; Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 33, 48, 51–53, 88.

186. R. A. Lipsius, *Chronologie der römischen Bischöfe bis zur Mitte des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Kiel: Schwers, 1869), 161; similarly, Merrill, "On 'Clement of Rome,'" 217–18; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 206.

187. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:95–98.

188. Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 97.

In a study more attentive to intellectual milieu, Louis Sanders adduced numerous parallels between passages in 1 Clement and the writings of Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom, and Seneca, which locate the Roman epistle in proximity to the popular Stoicism of the early empire.[189] Werner Jaeger sought to illuminate the background of Clement's portrait of cosmic harmony in chapter 20 and detected an "echo" of lines from Greek tragedy, mediated by a Stoic source.[190] Surveying the cultural terrain more broadly, Jaeger argued that a number of topoi in the Roman epistle, such as the use of examples of ὁμόνοια and στάσις as means of persuasion, derive from the techniques taught in the rhetorical schools of Clement's time.[191] Building upon Jaeger's insights, Cilliers Breytenbach has recently investigated the sources of Clement's encomium of cosmic concord in chapter 20 as a model of the harmony he seeks to nurture in the Christian community.[192] Breytenbach finds the closest parallels to 1 Clem. 20 in the symbouleutic discourses of Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides and in Pseudo-Aristotle's *De mundo*, where Stoic cosmology is placed at the service of arguments for civic concord.[193]

How fully the author participated in the cultural milieu of the early empire is made clear by the deployment of specific rhetorical forms and motifs throughout the Roman epistle. Like the political orators, Clement makes frequent use of examples (ὑποδείγματα) to illustrate his admonitions on jealousy and envy (4.1–8.5), faith and hospitality (9.1–12.8), humility (16.1–18.17), repentance (51.1–53.5), and voluntary exile (55.1–6).[194] The agon motif in chapters 5–7 reflects the tradition of the Cynic-Stoic dia-

189. Louis Sanders, *L'Hellénisme de Saint Clément de Rome et le Paulinisme* (Leuven: Universitas Catholica Louvainiensis, 1943); preceded by Knopf, *Die zwei Clemensbriefe*, 75–76; Gustave Bardy, "Expressions stoïciennes dans la 1e Clementis," *RSR* 12 (1922): 73–85.

190. Werner Jaeger, "Echo eines unbekannten Tragikerfragmentes in Clemens' Brief an die Korinther," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 102 (1959): 330–40.

191. Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 12–26.

192. Cilliers Breytenbach, "Civic Concord and Cosmic Harmony: Sources of Metaphoric Mapping in 1 Clement 20:3," in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White, NovTSup 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 259–73.

193. Breytenbach, "Civic Concord and Cosmic Harmony," 263–70.

194. Breytenbach, "Historical Example in *1 Clement*," 22–33.

tribe.[195] The panegyric on love in chapter 49 employs rhetorical questions and hymnic rhythms, in an apparent attempt to outbid Paul.[196] The *prosopopoeia* of chapter 54 draws upon political rhetoric, with a striking parallel in the speech that Cicero places in the mouth of the agitator Milo.[197]

Interpreters debate whether the ideals of Greco-Roman political philosophy found in the pages of the Roman epistle reflect direct acquaintance with popular Stoicism and the deliberative discourses of philosopher-orators or have been mediated through the tradition of Hellenistic Judaism encountered by Jewish Christians in the Roman synagogue.[198] So, for example, Karlmann Beyschlag vigorously disputed the notion that the expression εἰρήνη βαθεῖα, by which Clement characterizes the tranquility once enjoyed by the Corinthian *ekklēsia* (2.2), echoes the language of Greek political thought.[199] Beyschlag's interlocutor in the debate, W. C. van Unnik, had assembled the texts, beginning with Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that illustrate the use of εἰρήνη βαθεῖα to describe the condition of a polis that is free from both external war and internal revolution.[200] Beyschlag countered with examples from Jewish martyr texts (e.g., 4 Macc 3:20) and argued that the expression was taken over by Christian writers for apologetic purposes.[201] Adjudicating the debate, Lampe concludes that it cannot be shown that Clement derived the expression εἰρήνη βαθεῖα directly from pagan sources; the phrase might be "second-hand from Jewish-Christian

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195. Dibelius, "Rom und die Christen," 192–99; Ziegler, *Neue Studien zum ersten Clemensbrief*, 24–37.

196. Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 117; Sanders, *L'Hellénisme de Saint Clément de Rome*, 94–95; Rothschild, *New Essays on the Apostolic Fathers*, 57; cf. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 142–47.

197. Cicero, *Mil.* 93; the parallel was noted long ago by John Fell, *S. Patris et Martyris Clementis ad Corinthios epistola* (Oxford: Lichfield, 1669), followed by many others. For further parallels from political history, see Sanders, *L'Hellénisme de Saint Clément de Rome*, 50–52; Ziegler, *Neue Studien zum ersten Klemensbrief*, 91, 94.

198. See already W. C. van Unnik, "Is 1 Clement 20 Purely Stoic?" *VC* 4 (1950): 181–89; more recently, Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 58–61.

199. Karlmann Beyschlag, "Zur ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΒΑΘΕΙΑ (I Clem. 2,2)," *VC* 26 (1972): 18–23.

200. W. C. van Unnik, "'Tiefer Friede' (I. Klemens 2,2)," *VC* 24 (1970): 261–79; then, in response to Beyschlag, Van Unnik, "Noch einmal 'Tiefer Friede,'" *VC* 26 (1972): 24–28.

201. Beyschlag, "Zur ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΒΑΘΕΙΑ," 18–23; Beyschlag, *Clemens Romanus und der Frühkatholizismus: Untersuchungen zu I Clemens 1–7*, BHT 35 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966), 150, 331, 350.

tradition."[202] Lampe renders the same verdict on many topoi in 1 Clement, such as the demonstration of the destructive power of jealousy and envy (ch. 4) and the portrayal of Christian martyrs as virtuous athletes (ch. 5), providing examples from both pagan philosophical and Jewish-Hellenistic tradition.[203] Horacio Lona, on the other hand, finds little influence of Hellenistic culture upon 1 Clement, asserting that only the story of the phoenix in chapter 25 is specifically Roman in origin.[204] Lona argues that Alexandrian Judaism, epitomized by Philo, provides the most relevant context for tracing the intellectual profile of Clement of Rome.[205]

For the purposes of this inquiry, it is not necessary to identify the sources of Clement's ideas or to posit relations of influence and dependency in the manner of the old history of religions school.[206] The similarities in thought and expression between Clement and members of the cultured class such as Philo, Dio Chrysostom, and Aelius Aristides sufficiently disclose the milieu in which the author of the Roman epistle moved, an intellectual environment that even Jaeger found "surprising" for an early Christian author.[207] Obviously, one cannot take Clement to be representative of the mass of Roman Christians, even if he writes in the name of the Roman assembly.[208] Indications of the poverty of some Christians at Rome (38.2; 55.2; 59.4) make it unlikely that many, if any, Christ-believers inhabited the intellectual niveau of the author of the Roman epistle. Nor should one assume that the theology of Clement was normative for Roman Christianity, given the "fractionation" and pluralism of the Roman house churches documented by Lampe.[209]

With respect to the educational level of the author of the Roman epistle, there is ample evidence of rhetorical training.[210] One repeatedly encoun-

202. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 211.

203. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 211–13.

204. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 61.

205. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 58–61.

206. Contra Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 60: "Für das Verständnis und für die Bestimmung des religionsgeschichtlichen Ort von I Clem ist nicht gleichgültig, auf welchem Weg diese Rezeption vollzogen wurde. Denn je nachdem, wie die Entscheidung in dieser Frage getroffen wird, bekommen der Verfasser und die Gemeinde, in der er angesiedelt ist, andere Konturen."

207. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, 14.

208. Rightly, Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 61–62.

209. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 381–96.

210. Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 195.

ters the figures of speech used by contemporary rhetoricians: alliteration, anaphora, antithesis, chiasmus, epanadiplosis, homoioteleuton, isocolon, parallelismus, paronomasia, and so on.[211] To be sure, Clement's use of these figures is constrained by his hortatory purpose. Only in the description of the harmony of the universe in chapter 20 does the diction rise to poetic heights, in phrases such as the "fruitful earth" (γῆ κυοφοροῦσα) and "ever-flowing streams" (ἀέναοι πηγαί), which offer to humans "their life-giving breasts" (τοὺς πρὸς ζωῆς μαζούς).[212] Lampe is of the opinion that Clement's use of grammatical and rhetorical figures gives evidence of a secondary education, in a curriculum consisting of reading and memorization of passages from the classics, under the direction of a *grammaticus*.[213] But given the abundance of rhetorical figures in the epistle and the skill with which they are employed,[214] it seems likely that Clement was the beneficiary of a tertiary education with a rhetor, from whom he would have learned the essentials of style and argumentation through compositional exercises.[215] Further studies of the style of 1 Clement would be necessary to make a more precise assessment of the author's educational level.[216]

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211. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 38–40.

212. See BDAG, 575 s.v. "κυοφορέω," "be pregnant," "be fruitful"; cf. Philo, *Opif.* 43; and BDAG, 609 s.v. "μαζός," 2; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 209–10.

213. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 217; cf. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 72–73. On secondary education, see H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 160–75, 274–83; Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 47–64; Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 152–89.

214. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 73.

215. On tertiary education, see Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 194–205; Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome*, 65–75, 250–76; Morgan, *Literate Education*, 190–239.

216. For example, based upon a comparison of the style of 1 Clement with that of the letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians, Stephan Lösch (*Epistula Claudiana: Der neuentdeckte Brief des Kaisers Claudius vom Jahre 41 n. Chr. und das Urchristentum; Eine exegetisch-historische Untersuchung* [Rottenburg: Bader, 1930], 38–44; Lösch, "Der Brief des Clemens Romanus," in *Studi dedicati alla memoria de Paolo Ubaldi* [Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1937], 177–88) made the intriguing suggestion that Clement served as *ab epistulis* in the imperial chancellery before he became a Christian. Further investigations of the style of imperial correspondence would be required to test Lösch's hypothesis; see Sanders, *L'Hellénisme de Saint Clément de Rome*, 139 n. 1; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 207; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 71.

Without doubt, the scriptures of Israel (in Greek translation) were the formative influence upon the thought of the author of the Roman epistle.[217] The importance of the Old Testament for Clement is evident, first of all, in the sheer bulk of the material: Harnack counted 120 quotations and allusions, with seven citations from the Apocrypha.[218] For the most part, the texts are introduced by an explicit citation formula, which Clement varies for rhetorical effect, such as *γέγραπται γάρ* (4.1; 14.4), *λέγει γάρ που τὸ γραφεῖον* (28.3), *λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή* (34.6; 35.7).[219] In a number of cases the citations are mixed;[220] in other cases passages from different texts are strung together with short introductory formulae.[221] The facility with which Clement handles the texts is an index of the depth and breadth of his knowledge of scripture.[222] But it is only when one looks beyond the explicit citations that one is able to form a true estimate of the degree to which the language of scripture saturates Clement's thought: not only are the allusions numerous, but there are passages, such as the liturgical prayer in 59.3–61.3, where virtually every phrase is based upon the Old Testament.[223]

It is to the Old Testament that Clement repeatedly turns for examples of conduct, both commendable and reprehensible: thus Enoch and Noah demonstrate obedience (9), Abraham and Rahab instance faith and hospitality (10, 12), double-mindedness is typified by Lot's wife (11:2), and so on. The Old Testament is the constant warrant for Clement's admonitions,

217. William Wrede, *Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1891), 59; Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 53; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 42.

218. Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 53 n. 21: "eine ungeheure Zahl!"; see also Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 10–13; Hagner, *Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 21–132; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 42: scriptural citations account for 2,750 of 1 Clement's 9,820 words.

219. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 17; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 43–44.

220. E.g., 14.4; 18.1; 23.5; 34.3, 6; 50.4; 52.2.

221. E.g., 14.5; 15.2–7; 17.3–6; 26.2–3; 27.5–6; 29.2–3; 36.3–5; 52.2–4; 53.2–4; 56.3–6.

222. Rightly, Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 45–46. Wrede (*Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbrief*, 64–67) argued that in such cases Clement was quoting from memory. Grant (Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 10–13) suggested that Clement may have had access to a florilegium.

223. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 2:173–78; Lake, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:110, 112, 144; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 93; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 47.

whether to repentance (8.1–3, citing Ezek 33; 8.4, citing Isa 1), or peace (15, citing the Psalms), or humility (16, citing Isa 53). Indeed, the climactic command to "submit to the presbyters, bending the knees of your heart" (57.1), is driven home by a warning from "the excellent wisdom" (Prov 1:23–33). Moreover, the scripture prophesies, typologically, the order of the church, the offices of bishop and deacon (42).[224] In sum, the Old Testament is for Clement the book of revelations through which the Master of the universe speaks (8.2; see also 13.1; 16.2; 22.1).

The exceptional importance of the scriptures of Israel for Clement clearly reveals the wellspring of his religiosity.[225] But does this insight also permit inferences about Clement's ethnic origin? Interpreters have answered the question differently. Regarding the letter as "the natural outpouring of one whose mind was saturated with the Old Testament," Lightfoot conjectured that Clement was a man "of Jewish or proselyte parentage, who from a child had been reared in the knowledge of this one book."[226] On the other hand, Stuiber pronounced apodictically: "Nichts spricht dafür, dass Clemens ein geborener Jude war."[227] Lampe identifies Clement as a "Gentile Christian," locating him within a historical process in which "Jewish cultural riches" were passed along in Christian circles at Rome.[228] Lindemann judges "dass der Verfasser kein Judenchrist gewesen ist," because his manner of interpreting scripture lacks the hallmarks of Jewish-Christian self-understanding.[229] According to Lona, the points of reference for a clear determination of Clement's origins are lacking in the text; the evidence is equally consistent with the profile of a Hellenistic Jew, a Godfearer, or a gentile Christian.[230]

With due respect for the diversity of opinion and the weight of various arguments, one may ask whether the extraordinary knowledge of the

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224. Wrede, *Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbrief*, 58–104; Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 53–58.

225. Wrede, *Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbrief*, 59; Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 53.

226. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:59, 60; similarly, Hartwig Thyen, *Der Stil der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Homilie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), 12.

227. Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 194, justifying it only with the observation: "er hätte zumindest zum geschichtlichen Israel eine andere Stellung einnehmen müssen."

228. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 78.

229. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 13, citing as indices the fact that Clement never refers to the scripture as νόμος or ἐντολή (18).

230. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 73–74.

scriptures of Israel reflected in 1 Clement is conceivable in the case of anyone other than a person of Jewish descent. As Arnaldo Momigliano observed, "the first sure quotation of a biblical passage" by a non-Jewish Greek author is "the reference to Genesis 1 contained in *On the Sublime* ascribed to Cassius Longinus" (ca. first century CE).[231] Scholars who question the Jewish identity of Clement, because they expect from him a different attitude toward the people of Israel[232] or a different understanding of the role of scripture, underestimate the diversity of Judaism at Rome[233] or, alternatively, overestimate the difference between the Christ-followers and the Jews of Rome in the early second century CE.[234]

A final, crucial aspect of the profile of Clement is his attitude toward the Roman state.[235] The orientation may be characterized as entirely positive.[236] This viewpoint is clearest in the solemn liturgical prayer at the close of the epistle.[237] The author petitions (60.4): "Grant concord and peace to us and to all who dwell upon earth, … becoming obedient to your

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231. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Jews and Greeks," in his *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 16, adding: "the author of *On the Sublime* reveals that he is very well acquainted with the ideas of the rhetorician Caecilius of Calactes, who was a Jew. It is therefore possible that Caecilius provided the quotation."

232. Recently, Joseph Verheyden, "Israel's Fate in the Apostolic Fathers: The Case of 1 Clement and the Epistle of Barnabas," in *The Separation between the Just and the Unjust in Early Judaism and in the Sayings Source*, ed. Mark Tiwald (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 237–62.

233. George La Piana, *Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 341–92; Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995).

234. Rudolf Brändle and Ekkehard W. Stegemann, "The Formation of the First 'Christian Congregations' in Rome in the Context of the Jewish Congregations," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 117–27. See esp. James Carleton Paget, "1 Clement, Judaism, and the Jews," *Early Christianity* 8 (2017): 218–50.

235. See the overview in Adolf W. Ziegler and G. Brunner, "Die Frage nach einer politischen Absicht des Ersten Klemensbriefes," *ANRW* 27.1:55–76.

236. Harnack, "Exkurs: "Die politische Haltung," in *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 87–88; Stuiber, "Clemens Romanus I," 197; Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 112–17; among many others. But cf. Schmitt, "Aussagen über das Reich," in *Paroikie und Oikoumene*, 21–60.

237. See esp. Paul Mikat, "Zur Fürbitte der Christen für Kaiser und Reich im Gebet des 1. Clemensbriefes," in *Festschrift für Ulrich Scheuner*, ed. Horts Ehmke (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973), 455–71.

almighty and glorious name and to our rulers and governors upon the earth [ὑπηκόους γινομένους τῷ παντοκράτορι καὶ ἐνδόξῳ ὀνόματι σου, τοῖς τε ἄρχουσιν καὶ ἡγουμένοις ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς]."[238] In the logic of the petition, "concord and peace"—the express goal of the epistle (63.2)—is realized by obedience, first to God but also to the earthly rulers, with whom, in the structure of the sentence, the power and glory of the παντοκράτωρ is coordinated.[239] The continuation of the prayer makes clear that God has given to the earthly rulers "the exercise of sovereignty" (ἡ ἐξουσία τῆς βασιλείας); recognition of their "glory" (δόξα) and "honor" (τιμή) requires "submission to them" (ὑποτάσσεσθαι αὐτοῖς); resistance to the temporal authorities is resistance to the will of God (61.1). Thus Christians are to pray for the "health, peace, concord, and stability" of the rulers, so that they may administer the "imperial government" (ἡγεμονία) given them by God (61.1).[240]

The loyalty on display in the liturgical prayer is surpassed in chapter 37, where the author expresses admiration for the order and discipline of the Roman army.[241] Exhorting the Corinthians to compliant service, Clement draws an image from military life:

> Let us then serve in the army [στρατευσώμεθα], brothers, with all devotion, in accordance with his blameless commands. Let us think about those who serve as soldiers under our generals, how orderly, how regularly, how submissively [ὑποτεταγμένως] they carry out what is commanded. Not all are prefects [ἔπαρχοι], nor tribunes [χιλίαρχοι], nor centurions [ἑκατόναρχαι], nor commanders of fifty [πεντηκόνταρχοι], and so forth, but each in his own rank executes what is ordered by the emperor [βασιλεύς] and the generals [οἱ ἡγούμενοι]. (37.1–3)

To be sure, the target of Clement's simile is the order of the Christian church,[242] but the source domain of the simile (the army) is not

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238. Various solutions have been proposed to the syntactical problem of this verse: Gebhardt suggests the emendation ὑπηκόοις γινομένοις, while Lightfoot inserts the words ὥστε σώζεσθαι ἡμᾶς before the participial phrase; Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, 68. Lindemann (*Die Clemensbriefe*, 173) posits a solecism.

239. Mikat, "Zur Fürbitte der Christen," 456; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 175.

240. BDAG, 433 s.v. "ἡγεμονία."

241. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, 19; Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 139–41; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 115.

242. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 115; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 410–11.

irrelevant.[243] Some scholars question whether 1 Clem. 37 refers to the Roman army, observing that for *πεντηκόνταρχος* there is no corresponding term in the Roman army.[244] Moreover, the list of officers in 1 Clem. 37, including the "captains of fifty," is close to that found in Exod 18:21, 25 and in Josephus's paraphrase of this text.[245] Without denying that the language of scripture has contributed to Clement's formulation, it is difficult to imagine that, in a letter sent from the capital of the empire to a provincial city,[246] the author is not referring to the Roman army.[247] The climactic reference to the "emperor" as the one to whom all ranks are subordinate makes clear that Clement intends to evoke the image of the Roman army: *βασιλεύς* is the common designation for the Roman emperor in a wide variety of sources.[248]

Beyond these explicit expressions of support for Roman rule, the ideal of "peace and concord" (*εἰρήνη καὶ ὁμόνοια*), urged upon the Corinthians throughout the epistle,[249] echoes the formulaic description of the well-being of the Roman state found in political speeches and on inscriptions and coins contemporary with 1 Clement. So, for example, Dio Chrysostom counsels "peace and concord" as the ideological palliative to conflicts between cities in Asia Minor, reinforcing the Roman order of society.[250]

243. Drawing upon the theory of metaphor articulated by George Lakoff, as applied to 1 Clement by Breytenbach, "Civic Concord and Cosmic Harmony," 183.

244. Annie Jaubert, "Les Sources de la Conception Militaire de l'Église en 1 Clément 37," *VC* 18 (1964): 74–84, here 80–83; Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 65; Otto Luschnat, "Griechisches Gemeinschaftsdenken bei Clemens Romanus," in *Antiquitas Graeco-Romana ac tempora nostra*, ed. J. Burian (Praha: Academia Prag, 1968), 125–31, here 130–31; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 207.

245. Josephus, *A.J.* 3.71. See further 1 Macc 3:55 and 1 QS II, 21–23.

246. R. van Cauwelaert, "L'intervention de l'Église de Rome à Corinthe vers l'an 96," *RHE* 31 (1935): 267–306, esp. 282–302.

247. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, 19, observing that "the Roman army and its hierarchic discipline was the object of much wonder and curiosity," citing the lengthy discussions of the "organization and invincible power of the Roman army" by Polybius and Josephus.

248. See Grant and Graham, *First and Second Clement*, 65; Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe*, 115. On the term, see BDAG, 170 s.v. "βασιλεύς," 1, and esp. 1 Pet 2:13.

249. For εἰρήνη καὶ ὁμόνοια, see 20.10, 11; 60.4; 62.2; 63.2; 65.1; ὁμόνοια alone occurs fourteen times, εἰρήνη twenty-one times.

250. E.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Or*. 39.2; 40.26; Giovanni Salmeri, "Dio, Rome, and the Civic Life of Asia Minor," in *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters and Philosophy*, ed. Simon Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 53–92, esp. 75–81. The relevance of

The formula also appears on coinage celebrating the end of strife between cities,[251] in keeping with the assumption that the well-being of communities is best served by maintaining the existing structure of Roman society.[252] At Rome, Vespasian sought to project the image that his victory in the civil war had restored peace to the world by issuing coinage with the legends PACIS EVENTVS and CONCORDIA.[253] Lauded by Pliny the Elder as the most wonderful building in Rome (*Nat*. 27.3), the Temple of Peace, begun by Vespasian and dedicated by Nerva in 97 CE, enshrined the message that Rome had given to its subjects the greatest gift of all: a harmonious world order.[254]

Given the ubiquity of imperial propaganda, it is tempting to assume that Clement's use of the ideology of "peace and concord" was an unconscious element in his worldview.[255] To be sure, ideologies in their operation may be more powerful when they are not entirely conscious.[256] But the passages in which Clement inserts the terms ὁμόνοια and στάσις into source material from the Septuagint and the Pauline epistles suggest that

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Dio's *homonoia* discourses to the ideals promulgated by 1 Clement was already recognized by Harald Fuchs, *Augustin und der antike Friedensgedanke* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1926), 98–105; further explored by Christian Eggenberger, *Die Quellen der politischen Ethik des 1. Klemensbrief* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951); Van Unnik, "Studies on the First Epistle of Clement," 146–51; more recently, Bakke,*"Concord and Peace,"* 63–204, treating a variety of political terms in 1 Clement related to ὁμόνοια and adducing relevant parallels in Dio Chrysostom, Aelius Aristides, and other political writers.

251. Dietmar Kienast, "Die Homoniaverträge in der römischen Kaiserzeit," *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 14 (1964): 51–64; Rossella Pera, *Homonoia sulle monete da Augusto agli Antonini* (Genoa: Il Melangolo, 1984); Jean Béranger, "Remarques sur la Concordia dans la propaganda monétaire impériale et la nature du principat," in *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben*, ed. R. Stiehl and H. E. Stier (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), 477–91; H. Alan Shapiro and Tonio Hölscher, "Homonoia/Concordia," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, 8 vols. (Zürich: Artemis, 1981–1999), 5.1:476–98.

252. A. R. R. Sheppard, "Homonoia in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire," *Ancient Society* 15–17 (1984–1986): 229–52, esp. 246.

253. *RIC* 2.1374–75, 1433; Barbara Levick, *Vespasian* (London: Routledge, 1999,) 65–66, 70, 228 n. 16.

254. Robin Haydon Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 1996), 55–67; Levick, *Vespasian*, 70, 126–27.

255. So Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 87–89.

256. Miriam Griffin, "*Urbs Roma, Plebs,* and *Princeps*," in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 19–46, at 23.

he is making conscious use of the vocabulary of Roman political ideology. For example, Clement adds to Paul's panegyric on love, from which he quotes in chapter 49, the phrases *ἀγάπη οὐ στασιάζει, ἀγάπη πάντα ποιεῖ ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ* (49.5).[257] Again, in 9.4 the author of the Roman epistle asserts that "the living creatures entered into the ark *ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ*"; in 11.2 the failing of Lot's wife is said to have consisted in the fact that she did not remain *ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ* with her husband.[258]

Interpreters have puzzled over the apparent incongruity between Clement's attitude toward the Roman state and his knowledge that Christians had suffered under Nero; some express admiration for Clement's forgiving spirit, while others express contempt for his subservience.[259] Commenting on the prayer for "our rulers and governors upon earth" in 60.4–61.2, Lightfoot observes: "When we remember that this prayer issued from the fiery furnace of persecution after the recent experience of a cruel and capricious tyrant, it will appear truly sublime—sublime in its utterances, and still more sublime in its silence."[260] By contrast, Christian Eggenberger argued that Clement's belief that the Roman Empire was the earthly counterpart of the heavenly kingdom was an instance of false consciousness that served to keep Christians in a position of powerlessness vis-à-vis the state, engendering an "Untertänigkeits-Ethik."[261]

Better grounded exegetically is an explanation of the incongruity that goes back to Harnack: Clement's attitude toward the Roman state was a defensive posture calculated to protect the Christian community: "that our Roman community-writing represents this attitude, despite the Neronian and Domitianic persecution, must have been of the greatest importance. Recognition of the right of the authorities and a passive posture were alone able to protect the political existence of the church."[262] As a concrete instance of the danger facing the Christian community, Harnack pointed to 47.6–7, where Clement alleges that the "report" (*ἀκοή*) that "the church of the Corinthians is in revolt [*στασιάζειν*] … has reached not only us but

257. Rothchild, *New Essays on the Apostolic Fathers*, 57–58.

258. For both see Van Unnik, "Studies on the First Epistle of Clement," 133–34.

259. For the former, see Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers*, 18: "reasonable, forgiving"; Lowther Clarke, *First Epistle of Clement*, 6: "marvelous." For the latter, Eggenberger, *Die Quellen der politischen Ethik*, 20–25; Wengst, *Pax Romana*, 112–17.

260. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:384.

261. Eggenberger, *Die Quellen der politischen Ethik*, 20–25.

262. Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 87.

also those who are of a different allegiance from us, so that you are creating danger [κίνδυνος] for yourselves." Harnack suggested that Clement raises here the specter of action by the Roman authorities, in response to the discord in the church at Corinth: "indeed, it seems that in Corinth an intervention by the police was at least threatened (a house-search in consequence of the conflicts?)."[263]

Paul Mikat built effectively upon Harnack's hypothesis in his investigation of the importance of the concepts στάσις and ἀπόνοια for an understanding of 1 Clement.[264] On the basis of a close reading of 47.7 and 54.2, Mikat concluded that Clement saw the Corinthian church threatened by a dangerous situation: the intervention of the Roman authorities in order to put an end to the conflict in the house churches. Mikat explained:

> The prayer for the rulers of this world in 1 Clem. arises from the concern that a persecution may occur; so long as the *stasis* continues, there is a risk that the temporal authorities will be provoked to intervene. If there are Christians whose conduct can be plausibly described as *aponoia*, the authorities may suspect that the movement is a *superstitio*, rather than a *religio* which affirms its support for the welfare of the empire through its cult.[265]

To avert suspicion, Christians should pray for the peace and security of the rulers.

6. A Comparison of Clement and Flavius Josephus

Peter Lampe has observed that, "despite the abundance of material in 1 Clem., the individual author remains remarkably in darkness."[266] Insofar as this is the case, it may be worthwhile to seek to comprehend the conditions of the anonymity of the Roman epistle and the obscurity of its author. To this end, we may make a brief comparison of Clement with a far better-known contemporary: Flavius Josephus.[267] The comparison

263. Harnack, *Das Schreiben der römischen Kirche*, 99.

264. Paul Mikat, *Die Bedeutung der Begriffe Stasis und Aponoia für das Verständnis des 1. Clemensbriefes* (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969).

265. Mikat, *Bedeutung der Begriffe Stasis und Aponoia*, 39.

266. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 217.

267. Richard Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus: Ein biographischer*

has an attractiveness rooted in time and place.[268] If our inferences about Clement's origins, education, and attitudes are valid, then the two had much in common.

As persons who shared a Jewish cultural heritage, Clement and Josephus would have experienced the effects of the propaganda against the Jews and their religion that followed the Jewish War and the destruction of the temple.[269] As they moved about Flavian Rome, Clement and Josephus would have encountered the monuments to Roman victory in the Jewish War:[270] the Temple of Peace, in which Vespasian displayed the vessels of gold from the Jerusalem temple (Josephus, *B.J.* 7.161); the arch of Titus in the Circus Maximus, whose inscription praised Titus for subduing the race of the Jews and destroying the city of Jerusalem;[271] a second arch to Titus, which still stands on the Velia, with its famous relief depicting the triumphal procession of 71 CE;[272] and the Colosseum itself, which bore an inscription announcing that its construction had been paid for *ex manubi*(*i*)*s*, "from the spoils of war," probably referring to the war against the Jews.[273]

Like Josephus, Clement would have known of the "extraordinary harshness" (*acerbissime*) with which Domitian levied the tax on the Jews (*fiscus Iudaicus*) and of the extreme measures taken to uncover those who sought to evade the tax by concealing their Jewish identity.[274] The trials

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Versuch (Giessen: Münchow, 1920); Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 2002).

268. See the observation of Christopher P. Jones, "Josephus and Greek Literature in Flavian Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 201–8, here 201: "Josephus is the only extant Greek writer who certainly wrote in Flavian Rome, as opposed to the Flavian period. In Christian literature, several works have a good claim to belong to this time, but only one is written in Rome, the *First Epistle of Clement*."

269. Jonathan Edmondson, "Introduction: Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 8–13.

270. Fergus Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 101–28.

271. CIL 6.944 = *ILS* 264.

272. Michael Pfanner, *Der Titusbogen* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1983), with the dedicatory inscription CIL 6.945 = *ILS* 265.

273. CIL 6.40454a, as brilliantly reconstructed by Geza Alföldy, "Eine Bauinscrift aus dem Colosseum," *ZPE* 109 (1995): 195–226.

274. Suetonius, *Dom.* 12.2, e.g., the examination of a ninety-year-old man who was stripped to see whether he was circumcised; Martin Goodman, "The *Fiscus Iudaicus*

and executions of those "who had drifted into Jewish ways" (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 67.14.1–3) at the end of Domitian's reign cannot have escaped notice by Clement or Josephus. Doubtless both men took heart at Nerva's "removal of the abuse of the Jewish treasury" (FISCI IUDAICI CALUMNIA SUBLATA), advertised on coins issued as soon as he came to power in 96 CE,[275] and at the new emperor's decision that "no persons would be permitted to accuse anybody of ἀσέβεια or of a Jewish mode of life" (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 68.1.2). But neither man can have been impervious to the disdain and derision expressed by contemporaries such as Juvenal (*Sat.* 14.96–104) and Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.4.1; 5.5.1–2), who ridiculed Jewish peculiarity: abstention from pork, Sabbath indolence, practice of circumcision, and so on. As we have seen, Tacitus felt no less contempt for that "pernicious superstition," the Christ cult, which originated in Judea but had found a home in Rome, "where all things horrible and shameful flow together and are celebrated" (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44).

Beyond a shared heritage in Judaism, features related to education and attitude are comparable. Josephus's voluminous writings reveal that, like Clement, he had some training in rhetoric,[276] even if he benefited from the help of certain "associates" (συνεργοί) when he composed the *Jewish War*.[277] Josephus's use of tropes and techniques, his ability in the construction of ethical arguments and pathetic appeals, and his strategic employment of vivid description (ἐνάργεια) demonstrate a level of rhetorical competence not unlike that of Clement.[278] Among several attitudinal similarities, Clement and Josephus identify a common culprit of the discord that destroyed the fabric of their respective societies: rebellious youth. In Clement's description of the troubles in the church at Corinth, he places the revolt of "the young against the old" at the climax of a series

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and Gentile Attitudes to Judaism in Flavian Rome," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 167–77.

275. Harold Mattingly, *Nerva to Hadrian*, vol. 3 of *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1936), 15 no. 88, 17 no. 98, 19 nos. 105–6; cf. Goodman, "The *Fiscus Iudaicus*," 175–76.

276. Jones, "Josephus and Greek Literature in Rome," 204, compares the rhetorical level of the speeches in Josephus's *Antiquities* with that of Arrian and Dio Cassius.

277. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.50; see also *A.J.* 20.263; Rajak, *Josephus*, 46–64, 233–36.

278. John M. G. Barclay, "Josephan Rhetoric in Flavian Rome," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 315–32, here 315–16; Honora Howell Chapman, "Spectacle in Josephus' *Jewish War*," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 289–313.

of shocking reversals that have resulted in the overthrow of the established order (3.3).[279] Similarly, in the *Jewish War* Josephus places the blame for the στάσεις that spread throughout the cities of Judea in 68 CE squarely upon "the youth" who were seduced into the service of the revolutionary leader John of Gishala.[280]

In what remains, we will focus our comparison upon the most conspicuous and significant common elements: the use of the scriptures of Israel and the attitude toward the Roman state. It is hardly surprising that Josephus and Clement should treat many of the same biblical passages. Since the express aim of Josephus's magnum opus, the *Jewish Antiquities*, was to place the whole "ancient history" (ἀρχαιολογία) of his people "before the Greeks" (*A.J.* 1.5), he takes the Bible as his principal source. Across the many passages that Josephus and Clement have in common, a clear pattern of usage emerges: Josephus recasts biblical history in a form calculated to appeal to his Greek and Roman readers, emphasizing characteristically Roman virtues and vices in biblical figures,[281] while Clement bends biblical narratives to the practical purpose of counseling concord in the church at Corinth, highlighting the evil effects of jealousy and envy and the positive consequences of humility and obedience.[282]

To take a few examples, Josephus interprets the meaning of the name Cain as "acquisition," as "he had an eye only to gain" (*A.J.* 1.52–53); for Clement, the lesson of Cain is that "jealousy and envy brought about fratricide" (4.7). Josephus's Abraham is "a man of quick intelligence, and not mistaken in his inferences; hence he began to have more lofty conceptions of virtue than the rest of humankind" (*A.J.* 1.154–155). Clement's Abraham "was found faithful in obedience" (10.1). According to Josephus, Lot's wife perished because of "curiosity" (*A.J.* 1.203); for Clement, she failed to "remain in concord" with her husband (11.2). Josephus attributes David's renown to his victories over all the nations with which he waged

279. L. L. Welborn, *The Young against the Old: Generational Conflict in First Clement* (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2018), 23–27 and passim.

280. Josephus, *B.J.* 4.128, 133; Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome, AD 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 211.

281. Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Steve Mason, "Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*," in *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, ed. L. H. Feldman (Leiden: Brill, 2000), ix–xxxvi.

282. Wrede, *Untersuchungen zum Ersten Klemensbrief*, 75; Fischer, *Die Apostolischen Väter*, 8; Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, 47–48.

war (*A.J.* 6.165); David possessed every virtue but especially bravery, prudence, clemency, and justice, "qualities which only the greatest kings are expected to have" (*A.J.* 7.390–391). Clement, by contrast, praises David for his "humility" (18). Further comparisons might be traced all the way down to the end of biblical history in the persons of Daniel and Esther.[283]

In all cases, the same hermeneutical contrast appears, determined by audience and aim. Josephus rewrites the biblical text for Greek and Roman readers in order to inform those who are interested in the history and culture of the Jewish people and to persuade them of the excellence of the constitution bequeathed by Moses.[284] Clement's audience is entirely intramural: the *ekklēsia* of Christ-believers at Corinth and especially the leaders of the uprising against the presbyters (51, 54, 57). The aim of putting an end to strife and restoring concord to the troubled community governs Clement's selection, redaction, and application of the scriptures.

As has often been remarked, "Josephus extols the Roman state throughout his writings."[285] The notorious passages are in the *Jewish War*. At the urging of Titus, Josephus walked around the walls of besieged Jerusalem, imploring the defenders to surrender, since "they knew that the might of the Romans was irresistible" (*B.J.* 5.364). Moreover, Josephus argued, "Fortune had from all quarters passed over to them, and God who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire, now rested over Italy."[286] Then, there is Josephus's description of the glittering triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus, victors over the Judeans (*B.J.* 7.123–157). The most conspicuous spoils were those captured in the temple at Jerusalem: the golden table of shewbread, the lampstand, and, last of all, a copy of the Jewish law (*B.J. 7*.148–152). In Josephus's fulsome

283. Daniel in Josephus, *A.J.* 10.186–213, 250–281; 1 Clem. 45; Esther in Josephus, *A.J.* 11.234–296; 1 Clem. 55.6.

284. Josephus, *A.J.* 1.5; 4.197; Steve Mason, "Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, ed. A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 559–89.

285. Martin Goodman, "Josephus as Roman Citizen," in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Fausto Parente (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 329–38, here 335; Menahem Stern, "Josephus and the Roman Empire as Reflected in 'The Jewish War,'" in *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity*, ed. L. H. Feldman and G. Hata (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 71–80; Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 71–73.

286. Josephus *B.J.* 5.367; trans. Thackeray.

account of the parade, there is no shadow of sadness, although the event must have been heartbreaking for the Jews of Rome.[287]

In a study of the rhetoric of *Against Apion*, John Barclay suggests that one can hear undertones of resistance in Josephus's discourse of loyalty to Rome.[288] Applying postcolonial theory to a passage in which Josephus answers the accusation that the Jews had always been subservient to other nations,[289] Barclay calls attention to a moment in the text when Josephus allows that "the perpetrators" might bear the blame for the destruction of great cities rather than "the victims."[290] In my view, an analogous moment of resistance to Roman hegemony is not to be found in 1 Clement. In Clement's recollection of the "great multitude of the elect who suffered many outrages and tortures" (6.1), the torturers remain invisible; "jealousy" (ζῆλος) is to blame for what Christians have suffered (6.1–2). When Clement warns of the danger of intervention by outsiders (47.7), it is not to censure the authorities but to deepen the sense of "shame" (*αἰσχρά, καὶ λίαν αἰσχρά*) of Christians who have shown themselves disloyal to their presbyters (47.6). Finally, the great liturgical prayer makes clear that Christians should submit unreservedly to their earthly rulers (60.4–61.1); anything less is resistance to the will of God (*μηδὲν ἐναντιουμένους τῷ θελήματί σου*).

In the end, the difference in audience and aim of the respective authors results in a disparity in our knowledge of Josephus and Clement as individuals that is almost absolute. Because Josephus himself was a controversial actor in the final chapter of the history of his people, we learn as much about his person as we know of any figure in antiquity: of his family, education and formation, of his part in an embassy to Rome, of his conduct as a general in the war in Galilee, of his career as an author in Rome under Flavian patronage; indeed, we even know something of his domestic affairs: the names of some of his children.[291]

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287. Edmondson, "Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome," 3.

288. John M. G. Barclay, "The Empire Writes Back: Josephan Rhetoric in Flavian Rome," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 315–32.

289. Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.125–134; Barclay, "Josephan Rhetoric in Flavian Rome," 322–32.

290. Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.131; Barclay, "Josephan Rhetoric in Flavian Rome," 330–32.

291. See the introduction to Steve Mason, trans., *Life of Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

Yet precisely because of the audience for whom Josephus wrote and his apologetic aim, "Josephus was in all likelihood extremely lonely and extremely isolated in Rome."[292] This is the conclusion drawn by Hannah Cotton and Werner Eck, after a thorough examination of the persons in Rome with whom Josephus is known to have had contact and who might have provided him with an audience. Cotton and Eck are able to identify only the *grammaticus* Epaphroditus, to whom Josephus dedicated the *Antiquities*, along with Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla, who had "drifted into Jewish ways," as candidates for the type of persons who would have been interested in Josephus's history of the Jewish people.[293] The authors ask: "For who amongst the Roman elite would be interested in this descendant of a priestly family, who belonged to the defeated Jewish people, much hated by most Romans in the Flavian period?"[294] By the mass of ordinary Jews living in Rome, it seems likely that Josephus, who had rendered service to the Flavian house, would have been regarded as a "political renegade."[295] In his brilliance and in his isolation, Josephus shines in the sky of Flavian Rome "like a star without atmosphere."[296]

Clement, by contrast, is so deeply immersed in the community of Roman Christ believers, for whom he speaks, that his individuality threatens to disappear almost completely. Like Saint Clement of posthumous legend, who was banished beyond the Pontus to the Chersonese, the author of the Roman epistle lies, so to speak, beneath a stone shrine in the deep sea, which becomes visible occasionally, when the waters recede.[297]

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292. Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, "Josephus' Roman Audience: Josephus and the Roman Elites," in Edmondson, Mason, and Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 37–52, at 52. For the same judgment, see already Zvi Yavetz, "Reflections on Titus and Josephus," *GRBS* 16 (1975): 411–32, at 432: "In spite of his efforts, Josephus must have been a very lonely man in his old age."

293. Cotton and Eck, "Josephus' Roman Audience," 44–45, 49–51.

294. Cotton and Eck, "Josephus' Roman Audience," 52.

295. Cotton and Eck, "Josephus' Roman Audience," 52. But cf. Goodman, "Josephus as Roman Citizen," 336–38, who suggests that the Jews of Rome may have been grateful for Josephus's efforts.

296. Walter Benjamin's characterization of another socially isolated writer, Charles Baudelaire, in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1979), 196.

297. Acts of Clement, cited in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1:85–86.

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Friends, Romans, Countrymen: Reflections on the Membership of the Church in Rome

Thomas A. Robinson

What was the complexion of the Christian movement in Rome? Was it a haven for a socially conscious but status-deprived "middling" class?[1] Was it pitifully poor? Did it, even in its urban setting, have a distinctive rural and rustic color? Did the migrant and the marginal find a home there? Was the weekly gathering the only moment some of the members had, literally, a roof over their heads? Did any or many of the great mass of slaves find freedom for a moment and equality for an hour there? Was it heavily Jewish? Did God-fearers do more than peek through the doors? And can any of these questions be answered by looking at Paul's Letter to the Romans—or any other early Christian document, for that matter?

Paul, writing to the Romans, gives some clues as to what he thought were at least some segments of the Christian assembly in Rome. Even though he had never visited the church, he probably had some second-hand familiarity with the church there.[2] He understands the congregation to be diverse,

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1. Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, "The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire," *JRS* 99 (2009): 61–91, use this term. The idea of there being a middle class in Roman society has been much debated. See Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*, 2nd ed. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 147–48; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 46–59. See also n. 20 below.

2. Paul seems to have known (or known of) a number of individuals residing in Rome when he wrote, assuming that Rom 16 was part of the original letter. Also, a few comments in Paul's letter seem to suggest prior contact or knowledge (1:8–10, 13; 14:22). For some of his comments, though, Paul might have simply assumed that the church in Rome did not differ significantly from the complexion of churches of which he had first-hand knowledge.

speaking about the many members of the one body, with each one different (12:4). Part of that diversity consists of the "lowly" (ταπεινοί)—or, broadly speaking, the marginal—those largely without status or substance (12:16).[3] The marginal do not make up the entire assembly, for Paul instructs other members of the church to associate with these marginal people, thus confirming that others of a different social or economic position were part of the membership, too, at least as Paul read the situation.[4] Can the complexion of the Roman church be determined with something more than these broad strokes? Can we say more than simply that there were both marginal people and people with some resources?

3. I use the term *marginal* to describe a range of people whose daily existence was precarious. Although Greek and Latin writers had various words for states of deprivation, I see no way to use a term more nuanced than *marginal* to describe such elements in the membership of the Christian movement. Longenecker (*Remember the Poor*, 37–40) cautions: "The ancient record shows a fundamental instability regarding the terminology and the conceptualization of poverty" (37), noting how "relative and imprecise" such terms were (39). For a detailed discussion of all aspects of poverty in the Roman Empire, see David J. Armitage, *Theories of Poverty in the World of the New Testament,* WUNT 2/423 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), particularly 14–38 for a review of various attempts to categorize poverty. See also W. V. Harris, *Rome's Imperial Economy: Twelve Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Walter Scheidel, "Stratification, Deprivation and Quality of Life," in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 40–59; and Robin Osborne, "Roman Poverty in Context," in Atkins and Osborne, *Poverty in the Roman World*, 1–20. In regard to the issue of poverty and early Christian communities, see the collection of essays in Thomas R. Blanton IV and Raymond Pickett, eds., *Paul and Economics. A Handbook* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017). In addition to poverty, people could be shifted to a more marginal state by illness. Saskia Hin, *The Demography of Roman Italy: Population Dynamics in an Ancient Conquest Society 201 BCE–CE 14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 267, estimates that the average individual spent about one-sixth of life "in a state of severe disability, mostly as a result of communicable disease."

4. Some within the Roman church may have had links to the civil authorities or sufficient resources to bribe officials. At least, that is how some scholars have tried to make sense of Ignatius's concern that the Roman church might be able to get him released, which is the dominant theme in almost every penstroke of Ignatius's letter to that church. But what exactly the church may have been able to do or what Ignatius "feared" they may have been able to do is not made clear by Ignatius. Even if Ignatius's concern might suggest that people of some weight were part of the Christian assembly (and it may not indicate even that), Ignatius's letter does not aid us in determining whether the marginal were part of the church there.

1. Were the First Roman Christians Urbane, or Were They Merely Urban?

One of the most problematic matters in the description of the complexion of the early Christian movement is the near-consensus assumption that the early church was overwhelmingly urban. I challenge that thesis in a recent book, *Who Were the First Christians? Dismantling the Urban Thesis*.[5] According to the reconstruction widely assumed (not just in popular-level books on early Christianity but in scholarly works as well), 10 percent of the empire was Christian at the time of Constantine, in an empire of sixty million with an urbanization rate of 10 percent.[6] But those numbers would require every urban inhabitant of the Roman Empire to have been Christian, in both the east and the west, leaving no room for Jews or pagans in the urban areas. No one would—or could—hold that view, yet that is where the widely touted numbers take us. Nor does mere tinkering with the numbers (raising or lowering the percentage of Christians or playing with the urbanization rates) fix the problem adequately to save the urban thesis.[7]

Further, the urban thesis has often overlooked just how rustic—and indeed even "rural"—urban populations could be, for urban populations often had a significant element of migrants who had left the countryside for whatever opportunities or dreams the city was thought to offer. Others, having lost their farms to creditors, had no other option but to move to the city in hope of some kind of employment or, in final desperation, to join the absolutely resourceless who had been reduced to begging.[8] A widely accepted though recently contested matter is the urban graveyard theory, which proposes that urban areas would have routinely confronted a popula-

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5. Thomas A. Robinson, *Who Were the First Christians? Dismantling the Urban Thesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

6. The clearest exposition of this position is in Keith Hopkins, "Christian Number and Its Implications," *JECS* 6 (1998): 185–226, though Hopkins is more skeptical than most who have adopted these numbers. See also Robinson, *Who Were the First Christians*, 24–27.

7. I have charted a number of scenarios in *Who Were the First Christians*, 35–40. None gives much basis for confidence that the urban thesis can be salvaged without massive overhaul.

8. John A. North, "Religion and Rusticity," in *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, ed. T. J. Cornell and Kathryn Lomas (London: UCL Press, 1995), 139, contends that a "high percent" of the urban poor would have consisted of immigrants from the countryside.

tion deficit had there not been an influx of migrants from the countryside.[9] Rodney Stark takes up this idea, describing cities as "peopled by strangers."[10] According to Stark, it is the disruption and loss of supportive networks experienced by newcomers to the city that creates the ideal environment for a new religious movement to expand its membership.[11] In addition to such newcomers from the countryside, there would have been those who were once rural but who have lived for years in the city (or whose family had moved to the city a generation or more before their birth). Further, most urban centers would have had a segment of their resident population (and perhaps a considerable segment) engaged in farming, who lived in the city, leaving during the day for their plots of land in the countryside and returning at the end of the day to their homes in the city.[12] Some of the urban residents may have had cultivated plots within the city itself.[13] All

9. In this view, cities are seen as less healthy than the countryside, being generally more unsanitary and thus more prone to epidemics and disease. See Walter Scheidel, "Progress and Problems in Ancient Demography," in *Debating Roman Demography*, ed. Walter Scheidel (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 118–80; Scheidel, "Demography," in *Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris, and Richard Saller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 74–85. But for qualifications of this view, see Saskia Hin, "Revisiting Urban Graveyard Theory: Migrant Flows in Hellenistic and Roman Athens," in *Migration and Mobility in the Early Roman Empire*, ed. Luuk de Ligt and Laurens E. Tacoma (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 234–63; Elio Lo Cascio, "The Impact of Migration on the Demographic Profile of the City of Rome: A Reassessment," in de Ligt and Tacoma, *Migration and Mobility*, 23–24. Lo Cascio calls into question the use of the urban graveyard effect particularly for the city of Rome, pointing to the amenities such as sewers, water supply, and the grain dole that the city offered that would have provided favorable living conditions.

10. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 156.

11. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 147–62; Stark, *Cities of God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 28–29; see also Magnus Zetterholm**,** *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation between Judaism and Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2003). I have critiqued Stark's method in *Who Were the First Christians*, 243–52.

12. North, "Religion and Rusticity," 144–45; Scheidel, "Demography," 77; Paul Erdkamp, "Urbanism," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy,* ed. Walter Scheidel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 241–65. For a different view, see Peter Garnsey, *Cities, Peasants and Food in Classical Antiquity: Essays in Social and Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 107–33.

13. North, "Religion and Rusticity," 144–45.

such people are urban in some way, but they are not urbane. They are rustic in their conduct and rural in their concerns.

The rabble, the rustic, and the resourceless would have been very much part of Rome's population. Even though Rome would have enticed elite from all corners of the empire, crowds of the more marginal would have been attracted to Rome, too.[14] For one thing, the potential for finding work may have been particularly promising in Rome, given that its labor needs were heavier than other cities of the empire. The massive building and refurbishing projects in Rome that swung into full force under Augustus would have required a range of skilled and unskilled labor.[15] In addition, the Roman grain dole and its vast supportive infrastructure would have required considerable labor: from the docks where the grain was unloaded to the transportation of the grain to warehouses and, finally, to the distribution of that grain.[16]

The question is not whether the marginal and the rustic made up a significant segment of the Roman population. That question has been settled.[17] The question is whether the Roman church had any interest in such people, and if they did whether the church had means to reach such people.[18] There are at least two general matters that point to the

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14. Often referred to as "pull" factors (what drew people to the cities) and "push" factors (what forced people from their former place of residence). See fig. 6.1 in Hin, *Demography of Roman Italy,* 212.

15. According to Suetonius (*Aug.* 28.3), Augustus is reported to have said that he had found a city made of brick but left it a city made of marble. For a different spin on the words, see Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom*. 56.30); Kathleen S. Lamp, "'A City of Brick': Visual Rhetoric in Roman Rhetorical Theory and Practice," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 44 (2011): 171–93.

16. Some think that the grain dole itself may have attracted or retained a certain slice of the population, since those who might claim a right to such a benefit would have a better chance of raising their economic situation at least to the upper levels of the marginal or above. To what extent such labor needs were filled by slaves rather than by a nonslave transient population is difficult to determine, though whatever the case the labor needs would have been considerable. For a recent work that discounts the grain dole as a factor attracting immigrants to the city, see Seth G. Bernard, "Food Distributions and Immigration in Imperial Rome," in de Ligt and Tacoma, *Migration and Mobility*, 50–71.

17. See section 2 below.

18. The current disinterest in the countryside and in the rustic and rural population has created a situation where hints of early Christian contact with the rural reality are easily overlooked. Consider, for example, a comment by Paul about charity when

probability of the marginal forming part of the early Christian movement. One is a matter of reputation, the other a matter of arithmetic. As to reputation, on the whole the outsider perception of Christianity was that it was largely a lower-class movement of rustics and the rabble, however exaggerated and polemical that perception may have been.[19] As to arithmetic, if rustics, rurals, the resourceless, and the rabble formed a considerable part of urban populations,[20] any signif-

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he was encouraging generosity for his Jerusalem collection (2 Cor 9:10). He speaks of those who supply bread, presumably for the hungry. But he says more, and here we may have a glimpse of a rural component in the early church. He speaks of those who supply seeds to the sower. Here the urban Paul latches onto a rural image that would have made sense to his hearers: someone supplies seed to the sower. Whether the church actually did that is another matter, but the image—rural as it is—does arise here in an early discussion of Christian charity. Given that 80 percent or more of the population of the Roman Empire was engaged in agriculture and a great number of these lived at a precarious level, even a slightly reduced yield in one harvest may have left many without seed for the next planting. The poorer the harvest, the higher the cost of food and of seed. See Paul Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire: A Social, Political and Economic Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 164–165, for a discussion of Cicero's explanation of the fluctuation of prices (*Verr.* 2.3.227).

19. For a summary, see Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them,* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). See also Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First* Two *Centuries* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 138–39. For a fairly informed critique from the latter part of the second century, see Celsus's arguments preserved in Origen's *Cels.* 1.27; 3.18, 44, 50, 55, 59, 74. Also see Justin, *2 Apol.* 10.8; Tatian, *Or. Graec.* 32; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 8.3–4; 36.6; Galen, *Puls.* 2.4; 3.3.

20. The economic level of segments of a city's population and the size of such groups provoke much debate and no consensus. See Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004), 323–61, here 347, who argues that 68 percent of urban populations would have been at mere subsistence level or below and another 22 percent at a stable but near-subsistence level. In another work, in which Friesen is coauthor, the middle class is set at one-eighth to one-quarter of the urban population (Scheidel and Friesen, "Size of the Economy," 84, 90). But see John Barclay, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 365–66. Longenecker (*Remember the Poor*, 44–53) criticizes Friesen and Scheidel for not sufficiently differencing the urban and rural situation, though Longenecker himself does not offer a scale for the rural empire. See also Timothy A. Brookins, "Economic Profiling of Early Christian Communities," in Blanton and Pickett, *Paul and Economics,* 57–88; Scheidel, "Stratification, Deprivation and Quality of Life," 40–59. Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations 50 BC to AD 284* (New

icant success of Christianity would seem to have required a sizeable contingent of these marginals.[21] If the Christian movement targeted or attracted mainly the urbane in a city's population—leaving rustics and rurals to frolic and fornicate freely 'til kingdom come[22]—there would have been a considerably reduced part of the urban population from which Christians could have drawn their members. That would force historians into a position where they would be hard pressed to speak of anything more than about a half-million Christians in the empire by the time of Constantine—not the six million commonly touted—if they want to maintain the urban thesis.[23]

Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 92–93, counts about one-third of the population of Rome as largely living from day to day. For a detailed portrait of the life of the urban poor, see L. L. Welborn, "The Polis and the Poor: Reconstructing Social Relations from Different Genres of Evidence," in *The First Urban Churches 1: Methodological Foundations*, ed. James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn, WGRWSup 7 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 189–243.

21. In recent years, a number of voices have called for more attention to the poor in the Roman world and in the complexion of early Christian membership. For an informed review of the debate, see Jinyu Liu, "Urban Poverty in the Roman Empire: Material Conditions," in Blanton and Pickett, *Paul and Economics*, 23–56. For a critique of Wayne Meeks's presentation of the poor in the complexion of the early church, see Bruce W. Longenecker, "Good News for the Poor: Jesus, Paul and Jerusalem," in *Jesus and Paul Reconnected*, ed. Todd D. Still (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 37–66.

22. There is disagreement regarding the social level of the Christian membership in Rome. Lampe (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 138–50) argues for a dominant segment of the poor, others for a more "middle class, upwardly mobile complexion" (see a review of the matter in A. B. du Toit, "'God's Beloved in Rome' (Rm 1:7): The Genesis and Socio-economic Situation of the First Generation Christian Community in Rome," *Neot* 32 (1998): 367–88. Often those who speak of some sort of middle-class element in the Christian community will say that Christianity reflected a cross-section of the population. But if so, then the Christian movement should be seen as dominated by the poor, since that is the largest element in the Roman world, in both urban and rural areas, as Origen pointed out (*Cels.* I.27).

23. It is impossible to put numbers to this, and I offer the following numbers not to show what the situation was but what the situation would have been had those numbers been roughly accurate. Other numbers might be proposed, with each effort an exercise of the imagination—and only that. Supposing that one-third of the urban population had adequate resources to give them some sense of security and comfort (which may be too high) and that the Christian movement won a quarter of these, the Christian population would be a half million, taking the oft-repeated numbers of a Roman population of sixty million and an urbanization of 10 percent, with Christianity being largely an urban movement and drawing from the supposed middle class.

What kind of evidence might lead us to conclude that the early church, particularly in Rome, included in its membership a sizeable contingent of the marginal? Nothing matches Peter Lampe's *From Paul to Valentinus* in providing a close examination of every conceivable kind of evidence that might address the question of the complexion of the Christian movement in Rome. Lampe concludes that the poor and the marginal constituted a significant part of the Christian movement from the beginning, with the only point for debate being how early a better-resourced component became part of the church's membership.[24] The value of Lampe's work is in its comprehensiveness, though some of the data does not so much confirm Lampe's conclusions as provide color for the portrait being presented.

Take, for example, the evidence that the first Christian communities were situated in the poorer areas of the city, in particular Trastevere, an area across the Tiber from the city proper, and in the area along the Appian Way south of the city.[25] Or take the evidence that most Jews in Rome were poor and that Christians had some success in drawing members from the synagogue.[26] Such matters of location and audience of the first Christian preaching might point to the likelihood that the poor were a significant part of the early Christian assemblies—except for one wrinkle. Even poorer sections of the city would have had a subset of their residents with a somewhat more ample level of resources and perhaps even different interests than the typical resident of the area. Thus one could imagine a Christian cell (or the movement in general) attracting perhaps a more literate, economically stable membership even though having its presence in the poorer sections of the city. Such a view would fit well with some of the reconstructions that peg the Christian movement at some kind of middle-class level. Thus, although being located in poorer areas of Rome and supposedly attracting many Jewish converts might lead us to expect that the early Christian movement consisted of a substantial number of marginal people, we must bring more concrete evidence to support that conclusion. The surviving early Christian literature associated with Rome is often judged to hold out more promise in this regard, though we must

24. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 65–66, 80. See also Du Toit, "God's Beloved in Rome," 367–88.

25. Also, some Jews settled in the areas of the Aventine Hill and the Campus Martius (Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 38–40). Philo (*Legat.* 155) mentions only the area across the Tiber as a location for Jewish residents of Rome.

26. See discussion of the evidence in Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 48–66.

always remember just how paltry the quantity of such literature is and how easy it is for interpretation of this literature to run off in all directions, as I illustrate below.

In addition to Paul's statement that the lowly form part of the Roman congregation, Clement and Hermas, both closely associated with Rome, address the situation of the poor within the Christian community. How the writings of Clement and Hermas have been unpacked to show the economic and social status of the early Christians in Rome is a lesson in overreading of texts.[27] For example, James Jeffers contends that the Roman church reflected two quite different attitudes to the poor, arguing that Clement's poor were those in temporary need rather than in permanent poverty (in contrast to Hermas's poor).[28] Jeffers states that "Clement showed a genuine concern for those in momentary need, but, like the upper classes, he had little to say about the perpetually poor."[29] Jeffers further claims that Clement "never refers to the chronically poor"[30] and that "Clement and his congregation, more isolated from the realities of chronic poverty, show little awareness of this dilemma."[31] But surely such poor were hardly an invisible element in Roman society, however one might have responded

27. By *overreading* I mean cases where nuanced reading is favored over the natural: where synonyms are mined for their difference rather than accepted for their sameness, where incidental or peripheral comments are interrogated for more than they can disclose, where single words are forced to carry the weight of paragraphs, where every word is treated as intentional and significant, and where paragraphs get their meaning from the collection of words they contain rather than from the document that contains them. I recognize that some will protest. I offer examples over the next few pages for consideration.

28. James S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome: Social Order and Hierarchy in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 104–5.

29. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 105.

30. Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome*, 118. Yet earlier (104) Jeffers lists several words that Clement used for those in some kind of distress (1 Clem. 59.4), noting only that "*most* of Clement's terms in this passage refer not to the chronically poor, but to those in temporary need" (emphasis added). Jeffers's intent is to show a difference between Clement and Hermas in their attention to the chronically poor, but this passage cannot be used in that way. Surely it is demanding too much to argue that these words carry such nuanced meaning that one can distinguish which levels of poverty concern Clement. See n. 3 above. Clement is simply listing a whole range of people in distress. There is no reason that everyone listed be chronically poor. Nothing in the passage would suggest that Clement is showing too little regard to the chronically poor.

31. Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome*, 119.

to that wretched reality.[32] Nothing suggests that Clement distinguished between the momentary poor and the perpetually poor.[33] Further, Jeffers claims that Clement may have blamed the poor who could not provide for their families.[34] But contrary to what Jeffers claims, Clement did not blame the poor who could not provide for their families. Clement blamed the lazy (νωθρός) who could not provide for their families; he simply does not address the poor who could not provide, except in his general concern for the poor.[35]

Clement does express concern for "the misery of the needy" (πτωχοί) and "the groaning of the poor"[36] (πένητες), and he instructs the rich to support the poor.[37] But Clement's comments on this topic are general, not specific, making it impossible to determine the boundaries of Clement's concern for the poor or his use of any term related to the poor. Jeffers tries to argue for more and fails.

To strengthen his thesis, Jeffers tries to show that Hermas, in contrast to Clement, has a more pronounced and more inclusive concern for the poor.[38] Here, too, Jeffers overstates his case. Jeffers points to Hermas's use

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32. Mik R. Larsen, "The Representation of Poverty in the Roman Empire" (PhD diss., University of California, 2015). See the various essays in Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne, eds., *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

33. Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome*, 103–5, examines eight words that Clement uses in one passage regarding the poor. The natural reading is that Clement includes every situation of poverty and disadvantage, not that he excludes some states.

34. Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome*, 104.

35. Clement does contrast the good laborer to the lazy laborer (34.1), but he does not blame the poor generally. He blames the idle poor.

36. 1 Clem. 15.6 (a quote of Ps 12:3).

37. 1 Clem. 38.2.

38. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome*, 117–20, wants to take the matter one step further: not only was Hermas more on the side of the poor than Clement was (119), but the assemblies that Clement and Hermas attended did not even meet together. It is possible and even probable that these two circles did not meet together, given that we are probably dealing with cells of restricted size of twenty to thirty members and that a considerable number of these small cells must have existed in Rome at the end of the first century. That being the case, even cells of similar outlook may not have been meeting together, simply by reason of space restrictions. Jeffers's comment seems to imply more than that: the groups intentionally did not meet together because they did not agree. That may assume too much. Lampe (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 140) points out that the more important element in the social stratification of Christians is that

of the word *στενάζω* (groan) to contrast that with Clement's description of the poor, but Jeffers overlooks Clement's own use of that word as well as a cognate (*στεναγμός*) to describe the poor.[39] It is probably better simply to say that both Hermas and Clement show concern for the poor than to attempt to contrast their views of the poor or to require a particular word choice to carry such nuance and significance.

Carolyn Osiek, too, attempts to show a difference between Clement and Hermas in their treatment of the poor, examining in particular the second Similitude and 1 Clem. 38.2. The second Similitude gains its importance to the discussion because it grants high status and a significant role to the poor. The piety of the poor and the charity of the rich give mutual and essential support to each other. Often the discussion of poverty and wealth in Christian discourse centered around the need for charity, but in the passage in question Hermas makes the poor not simply a recipient of charity but a provider of piety. Osiek claims for Hermas a "sharp difference in emphasis" and a "notably different theology" from Clement,[40] charging that Clement "*fails* to develop the reciprocal contribution of the poor to the rich and consequently *falls short* of the model of mutual service proposed in the second *Similitude.*"[41] But Osiek's attempt to show that Clement "fails" to grant such value to the poor demands too much from Clement's brief comment about the poor in a letter that has a pressing and quite different concern. There are no grounds for thinking that Clement's church failed the poor, though both Jeffers and Osiek appear to think so. Lampe, on the other hand, finds both Clement and Hermas taking the needs of the poor seriously: where Clement speaks about some who sell themselves into slavery to help the poor and where Hermas argues for a significant revision in theology in order to assist the poor.[42]

A further problem is that the deep reading of the Hermas material by Jeffers and Osiek leads to quite different depictions of the groups in

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different social strata were brought together in the Christian movement. For the most recent work on Hermas, see Mark Grundeken, *Community Building in the* Shepherd of Hermas*: A Critical Study of Some Key Aspects* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

39. Jeffers, *Conflict in Rome*, 118. But there is no nuance of difference between Clement's use of the word *στεναγμός* (15.6) and Hermas's use (Herm. Vis. 17.6)

40. Carolyn Osiek, *Rich and Poor in the Shepherd of Hermas* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 83.

41. Osiek, *Rich and Poor*, 89, emphasis added.

42. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, respectively, 85–87 and 90–99.

which these authors supposedly have their audience. Osiek claims that Hermas's works were addressed "predominantly to a large and influential freedman group" and that "there seems to be no large group of Christian 'poor' about whom [Hermas] is genuinely concerned. Perhaps the community in which Hermas writes is characterized by relative economic homogeneity and those who best fit the 'poor' are simply those who are less prosperous than most or the economically dependent who could benefit from a common community fund because of a temporary financial setback, widowhood, etc."[43] But Osiek's depiction of Hermas's situation fits well with what Jeffers presented as Clement's situation!

Such nuances of interpretation as offered by Jeffers and Osiek fail—and are bound to fail. Neither 1 Clement nor the work of Hermas was intended as a treatise on wealth or poverty, where a search for a more nuanced presentation might be more promising. Clement's primary (and perhaps only) concern is focused on a completely different matter, one prompted by a feud far away in a church where he calls for unity and proper order to be restored. Hermas has any number of themes, not always as lucidly expressed as one might have hoped. Any attempt to determine a comprehensive view of either author's attitude to or experience with the poor will be guesses. Further, given the general imprecision in the use of terms denoting poverty in the ancient record,[44] any deep exploration of the texts to show fundamentally different attitudes to the poor between Clement and Hermas (as both Jeffers and Osiek attempt) is more likely to bring glitter than gold to the surface.[45]

What we can say is that that both Clement and Hermas show concern for the poor, and such concern points to the likelihood of the poor forming part of the early Christian community in Rome, as well as to the likelihood that people with resources were members of the community, too, for such individuals contribute to the relief of the poor. But how substantial each element is within the congregational mix cannot be determined.

43. Osiek, *Rich and Poor*, respectively, 132 and 133.

44. See Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 37–40.

45. That is not to say that Jeffers and Osiek do not offer valuable insights in their detailed works. But at important points they demand the texts carry weight and nuance that such texts do not and cannot carry.

2. Were the First Roman Christians Roman?

We have just considered the significant element of the marginal in the population of the city of Rome, many of whom were migrants from the nearby countryside. But migrants also came from much farther afield, and we have fairly good evidence that points to a prominent non-Roman element in the membership of the Roman church from the start. The use of Greek in an area where Latin was the dominant language suggests as much,[46] as do the first individuals we can identify with the Roman church, who as acquaintances of Paul are likely eastern and Greek.[47] Some of these may have been part of the westward migration that took place in the 150-year period starting with the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when possibly twenty thousand people annually moved from the eastern part of the empire.[48] Many of these migrants would have made their way to Rome, for Rome enticed people like no other city of the empire—"the ultimate migrant city," according to Hin.[49] Probably much of that immigrant popu-

46. Paul's letter to the Roman church is in Greek, as are early writings composed in Rome, such as the writings of Hermas and the Roman church's correspondence with Christians in Corinth (1 Clement). Ignatius's letter to the Roman Christians also was written in Greek. On the dominance of Greek, note Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 143, who points to comments by Juvenal and Seneca about the Greek and immigrant character of the city of Rome. The Greek character of at least one element in the immigrant population is reflected in Jewish epitaphs around Rome, where 76 percent were in Greek, 23 percent in Latin, and 1 percent in a Semitic language (Eric M. Meyers and A. Thomas Kraabel, "Archaeology, Iconography, and Nonliterary Written Remains," in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Robert Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986], 175–210, here 200). With one-quarter of the Jewish epitaphs in Latin, some change in linguistic ability or preference among immigrant communities should be noted.

47. Exactly what kind of relationship Paul had with each is not clear: some are close friends; others may be known only by reputation. Putting aside what kind of evidence we might wrestle from Rom 16 (for which, see Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 153–83), we know that before the middle of the second century prominent names in the Roman Christian tradition are migrants of some kind: Paul, Justin, Tatian, and companions of Justin, as well as Valentius and Marcion.

48. Bruce Frier, "The Demography of the Early Roman Empire," in *The High Empire, a.d. 70–192*, ed. Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Dominic Rathbone, CAH 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 813.

49. Hin, *Demography of Roman Italy*, 218. For a negative view of this immigration, see Livy, *Urb. cond*. 39.9. See also Luk de Ligt and Tacoma, *Migration and Mobility*; and David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London: Duckworth, 2000).

lation was nonvoluntary, having been brought there as slaves when Rome expanded eastward into Greek-speaking territories.

Some investigators think they can give fairly concrete numbers to the immigrant or transient segment of the population of the city of Rome. In a recent dissertation, Kristina Killgrove estimates that one-third of the population of Rome were migrants, determined in part from the isotopic analysis of skeletal (in particular, dental) remains, which can distinguish which individuals lived their childhood years in Rome from those who had grown up elsewhere. Killgrove argues also that lower classes in both urban and suburban areas of Rome had "significant percentages of immigrants."[50] The limitation as well as the value of the technique used by Killgrove is that it is, by its nature, unable to provide more than a minimalist count, for it counts anyone born in Rome and living there as a child as nonimmigrant. Yet by giving a fairly precise *minimalist* count, a considerably larger *probable* count can be argued for the proportion of immigrants in Rome, for many who were born in Rome (and thus not distinguishable by analysis of skeletal remains) would have been members of immigrant families, some of which may have stretched back for several generations. Further, unmarried immigrants and even many married immigrants would have started their families after settling in Rome.[51] For the children of such immigrants, their functioning world would have been primarily that of the immigrant,

50. Kristina Killgrove, "Migration and Mobility in Imperial Rome" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010), 265, 270, 289. Killgrove thinks that, if all immigrants are considered (including those from the Italian peninsula), 40–50 percent of Rome's population were immigrants (29). Killgrove's dissertation is a rich exploration of numerous matters, especially issues of diet and disease. For a summary of Killgrove's method, see Kristina Killgrove and Janet Montgomery, "All Roads Lead to Rome: Exploring Human Migration to the Eternal City through Biochemistry of Skeletons from Two Imperial-Era Cemeteries (1st–3rd c AD)," *PLoS* One 11 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0147585. See also Laurens E. Tacoma, *Moving Romans: Migration to Rome in the Principate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 22–26, who offers higher figures for the foreign portion of Rome's population. So also Lo Cascio, "Impact of Migration," 31, who thinks that the immigrant population was "much higher" than a third.

51. Some immigrants moved with their families. Two graveyards showed 40 percent of those identified as immigrant were children, according to Killgrove, "Migration and Mobility," 285–87. She discusses the difficulties in determining what that number indicates in terms of immigrants moving as a family unit. See also Christer Bruun, "Tracing Familial Mobility: Female and Child Migrants in the Roman West," in de Ligt and Tacoma, *Migration and Mobility*, 176–204.

still associated with their immigrant community in language and life, though they would have been identified as Roman by Killgrove's analysis. Perhaps well over half of Rome's population was immigrant, using this broader and more useful definition of immigrant. In regard to the earliest Roman church, as a Greek-speaking movement the church would have been part of that large segment of Rome's population that was immigrant in character and sensibility.

Another kind of migrant was part of Rome's population: the temporary or seasonal migrant. Paul Erdkamp argues that, during the labor-intensive summer period, a large number of seasonal laborers came into the city from the countryside, returning to their rural homes when the need for workers in the city had lessened as the task in transporting and storing grain for the year was finished.[52] Although we cannot put numbers to this migrant element, any such movement back and forth from the countryside to the city may have provided the church at Rome links into the countryside, assuming that Christianity had some success in attracting people whose presence in Rome was somewhat temporary or seasonal *and* whose language was Latin.[53]

The Latin factor adds a wrinkle to the matter of the complexion of the Roman church. Given that the earliest Christian communities in Rome appear to have been Greek-speaking, can we determine anything about the extension of the Christian movement to Latin-speaking inhabitants of Rome and to Latin inhabitants of the countryside? Like much from this period (particularly so for the second century), we have little evidence, but we do know that the church in Rome, originally Greek in language and migrant in character, became Latin. Lampe notes that Latin was coming into use in churches in Rome sometime in the second century.[54] Gregory Dix and Henry Chadwick see not simply an introduction of Latin into a Greek-speaking Roman church but a switch in the Roman church from Greek to Latin, dating this process in the years from 230 to 330.[55] How

52. Paul Erdkamp, "Seasonal Labour and Rural-Urban Migration in Roman Italy," in de Ligt and Tacoma, *Migration and Mobility*, 57–74.

53. It is likely that most of the seasonal residents of Rome would have been Latin-speaking, being drawn from the nearby countryside.

54. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 144.

55. Gregory Dix and Henry Chadwick, ed., *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr,* 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1968), h. They

that came about and what happened to the Greek-speaking church remain questions to be explored.[56]

It is important to note how different the experience and perspective of most urban migrants would have been compared to the experience of migrants to Rome. Most urban centers were small, with populations under 5,000 and perhaps considerably smaller.[57] For Italy, Hin estimates the average city was between 2,000 and 3,500 inhabitants.[58] In such cases, the land needed to provide sufficient food for the urban population would have been within sight of the urban center, and many who farmed that land would have lived within the urban settlement or resided less than an hour's walk from the center. Thus the migrants of most urban areas of the empire would have not felt foreign in the way that large chunks of the population of the city of Rome may have.[59] The alienation that is supposedly a characteristic of urban space—a factor that Rodney Stark has proposed as a primary condition for the success of a new religious movement—simply does not come into play for most urban space in the empire. Stark admits

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note that, as the church became more fully Latin-speaking, not much of its Greek past was remembered.

56. Whether Christianity's early presence primarily in poorer sections of Rome and its environs provided contacts with the Latin migrants is the question. Lampe presents a wide-ranging sweep of evidence that indicates that Christians shared the same physical space with the city's migrant and marginal population (*From Paul to Valentinus*, ch. 3, "In Which Quarters of the City Did the Christian Population Concentrate?"; ch. 4, "Did Particular Strata of the Population Predominate in the Quarters under Investigation?"). Both Greek-speakers and Latin-speakers, most of them poor, would have lived in these areas. Lampe observes that the initial Latin element in the church's membership was drawn from the "common folk" (144). On Latin Christian literature, see Ronald E. Heine, "The Beginnings of Latin Christian Literature," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 131–33.

57. Often scholars have spoken of urbanization without specifying what size of settlement qualified, or they have offered a minimal number without engaging other scholars who have offered a different count for urban status. See Robinson, *Who Were the First Christians*, 72–73.

58. Hin, "Counting Romans," in *People, Land, and Politics: Demographic Developments and the Transformation of Roman Italy 300 BC–AD 14*, ed. Luuk de Ligt and Simon Nort (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 221

59. One qualification should be considered. If immigrants settled in areas where fellow compatriots had settled, some of the foreignness of Rome may have been muted. Individuals tend to live and function within neighborhoods, whatever the size of the city of which their neighborhood is a part.

that most cities were small and that his alienation theory would not work for much of Roman urban space.[60] While it is likely (or at least possible) that some people in large cities joined the Christian movement because the church could offer a replacement for the supportive network individuals had lost by moving to the city, we have evidence of Christian success in much smaller towns where the alienation factor would not have been sufficiently significant to make that factor a key to Christian growth.[61]

3. Were the First Roman Christians Jews, Proselytes, God-Fearers, or Untutored Gentiles?

The standard answer is that the first Christians in Rome were Jews. Rome's Jewish population was large, though concrete numbers cannot be determined.[62] That some Jews joined the Christian movement is a reasonable conclusion, even putting aside what might be wrung from the Chrestus episode.[63] But Jews may not have held "first-believer" status alone. God-fearers, too, could have been among the first in Rome to become believers, along with the early Jewish converts.[64] At least that is the image portrayed in Acts, our only source about God-fearers and the Christian movement, where some God-fearers and some Jews convert *at the same time*, when

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60. Stark, *Cities of God*, 29. Stark throws in a new factor for smaller urban areas: "small town 'claustrophobia.'" But he does not develop this, which leaves a gap and lethal hole in his theory of Christian success in the urban area.

61. For example, the small cities (or towns) involved in the Montanism dispute and in the Phrygian area generally and the small settlements in North Africa all witness to Christian success in relatively small "urban" space. See J. Patput Burns Jr. and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 3–6; Robinson, *Who Were the First Christians*, 152–56, 168–74.

62. Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome,* updated with new introduction by C. A. Osiek (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 135 n. 1, speaks of ranges between twenty thousand and sixty thousand.

63. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 11–16. The story is found in Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4. Many think that what Acts 18:2 calls the "edict of Claudius" is a reference to this event.

64. See, for example, James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* WBC 38A (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 359. For a careful and still useful analysis of the scholarship regarding proselytes and God-fearers, see James Carleton Paget, "Jewish Proselytism at the Time of Christian Origins: Chimera or Reality?" *JSNT* 62 (1996): 63–103. See also Thomas M. Finn, "The God-Fearers Reconsidered," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 75–84.

the message about Jesus is given its first hearing in the various synagogues of the diaspora.[65]

But what of gentiles who had little or no prior interest in Judaism? In this section, my main concern is to show that such untutored gentiles, particularly those from the more marginal elements of society, may have been part of the contingent of first believers in Rome, too. My concern to emphasize this element (as I have done in sections 1 and 2) is that often the rabble, the rustic, the resourceless, the illiterate, and the marginal are pushed to one side in describing the complexion of early Christian communities, even though such people made up a significant part of urban life. That neglect in scholarship often can be attributed to the considerable focus on God-fearers as the dominant component in the membership of early Christian assemblies, for generally such God-fearers are considered to be individuals with higher social or economic status, which would have separated them from the unwashed masses.[66] Further, though not often directly stated, scholars have identified God-fearers with the more literate element in society, given that there is often an assumption made that God-fearers had a fairly cultivated familiarity with the Septuagint.[67] In making God-fearers the prominent element in the early Christian membership, it is easier to paint a portrait of the early church as a somewhat intellectual, well resourced, and connected movement. But in doing so, the marginal have become as marginalized in modern scholarship as they

65. Some proselytes may have been part of that group of first believers, too. Acts does not offer those kinds of unambiguous specifics, though Nicolaus is described as a proselyte (6:5) and some converts are called "God-fearing proselytes" (13:43).

66. For example, Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress,1982), 103, with the further contention that proselytes (in contrast to God-fearers) tended to be from among the poorer of the population. See also David W. J. Gill, "Acts and the Urban Elites," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. David J. W. Gill and Conrad Gempf (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 105–18; Bradley Blue, "Acts and the House Church," in Gill and Gempf, *Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, 178–83. Compare Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 69–70.

67. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 70. Adam H. Becker, "Christian Society," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 572, expresses a majority view when he speaks of "the biblically literate audience assumed by Paul's letters" in reference to God-fearers. See also James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem: Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 561.

once were in ancient society—this in spite of the fact that the rustic, the resourceless, and other marginalized people would have been a necessary component in any substantial success of the Christian movement, in Rome or anywhere else.[68]

A further consideration is that the God-fearers as a factor in the growth of early Christian assemblies clashes with another prominent explanation for Christian growth. As we have seen, Rodney Stark has argued that the social and economic dislocation and loss of social networks experienced in urban environments, particularly by newcomers to the city, brought an influx of disadvantaged pagans to the securities offered by the church. But if the early Christian membership had a substantial element of the dispossessed and the marginal, these people do not seem to be drawn from the class of people normally associated with God-fearers. At least in our concrete evidence for the existence of God-fearers (in Acts and in inscriptions related to donations to a Jewish building in Aphrodisias), God-fearers generally seem well established, with networks in place and resources secure.[69] This is hardly the image of the typical convert, newly arrived in the city and without status or security, as proposed by Stark and others. The God-fearer hypothesis and the urban alienation hypothesis clash.[70] Their economic and social realities simply do not mesh.[71]

The main objection to the idea that untutored gentiles could have formed a significant component in the earliest Christian churches is that, supposedly, a *prior* knowledge of Judaism and the Jewish scriptures was a

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68. See nn. 18 and 20 above.

69. On Aphrodisias, see J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary*, Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Association Supplements 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987).

70. It is not clear that Stark recognized this clash. Stark is more interested in showing that diaspora hellenized Jews made up a substantial component of the early Christian membership; God-fearers slip to the background. In one place Stark (*The Rise of Christianity*, 58–59) flips the matter on its head by suggesting that hellenized Jews may have been attracted to the God-fearer adaptation of Judaism, a "Greek Judaism," as Stark calls it. Stark sometimes accepts the general view that God-fearers converted to Christianity (*The Rise of Christianity,* 57, 137; *Cities of God*, 7).

71. It might be argued that both groups added significant numbers to the Christian membership. Yet that is not the spin generally put on the debate by those who promote either the God-fearer or the newcomer hypothesis.

necessary condition for understanding the early Christian message.[72] The requirement of prior familiarity with Judaism not only tends to exclude the untutored gentile (rich or poor), but it opens the door wide and welcoming to the God-fearers, who supposedly would have had such familiarity. But the rush to make God-fearers play an essential role in the growth of the early Christian movement may give a lop-sided view of the matter, at least in regard to the Acts account, and it is only in the Acts account that we have any play with the concept of God-fearers in early Christian writings. Granted, Acts does have as one of its interests an amorphous group roughly labeled God-fearers,[73] but the Acts story is quite nuanced or muddled about the matter.[74] Some God-fearers joined the Christian movement, and some opposed it, with God-fearers *not* viewed in Acts as more open to the Christian message than are Jews themselves, contrary to what a host of modern scholars would lead us to believe.

An all-too-familiar pattern in modern scholarship is to exaggerate the importance of the God-fearer factor in the Acts of the Apostles. Thomas Finn, when describing how modern scholars have read the Acts material, points to the standard presentations of God-fearers becoming Christians "in droves."[75] He adds, "One may select at random almost any historical introduction to Christian origins and find the thesis in one form or other."[76] Here are a few examples from hundreds. Irina Levinskaya speaks

72. For a detailed treatment, see Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, vol. 5 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 51–126. For the most recent attempt to explain the God-fearers, see Anna Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman World: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 224–86.

73. Levinskaya (*Book of Acts*, 55) states that most scholars grant the term God-fearer a semitechnical status. It seems as likely that in the first century or so, that term and related words could be used for any pious or devout person: Jews, gentiles with some interest in Judaism, *and even a pious pagan with no interest in Judaism*.

74. Much has been written about God-fearers. The complications about the category are many. (1) Related terms are not consistently used in Acts. (2) The terms do not have prominence in any other Christian literature. (3) In the one other place where the term has prominence (a memorial pillar in Aphrodisias), God-worshipers are connected to Judaism, perhaps in a fairly loose way, not with Christianity. I have argued for more caution in regard to the appeal to God-fearers for explaining Christian growth in *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways: Early Jewish-Christian Relations* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 51–61.

75. Finn, "The God-Fearers Reconsidered," 76.

76. Finn, "The God-Fearers Reconsidered," 76 n. 4.

of the "prominent place … assigned to God-fearers" and concludes that "on the whole [God-fearers] showed themselves to be very receptive to [the Christian message]—but not always."[77] Lampe speaks of "the generally large influx of *sebomenoi* into the Hellenistic Christian congregations.[78] Judith Lieu states in regard to the God-fearer group, "in the context of Luke-Acts' own ideology this group plays a significant role as a bridge between Jews and Gentiles in the wider extension of Christianity.[79] Ben Witherington states, "on various occasions [God-fearers] are seen as the most likely of those who are within or associated with the synagogue to be converted to Christianity."[80]

These kinds of claims need to be softened—or dismissed—by a number of other elements in the Acts spin on the God-fearer phenomenon. (1) Most of the references in Acts have both Jews and God-fearers converting, without any distinction as to proportions.[81] (2) In several cities and

77. Levinskaya, *Book of Acts*, 51, 120.

78. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 72. He points to "Acts 17:4, 12; 18:7; 16:14f., et al."

79. Judith Lieu, "The Race of the God-Fearers," *JTS* NS 46 (1995): 483–501, here 483.

80. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 344. Witherington offers Acts 18:7–8 as an example, but that passage is not an example; it is an exception. See n. 81 following.

81. The full Acts evidence is as follows: God-fearers (φοβούμενοι) in Acts 10 (3x) and Acts 13 (2x); pious or God-worshiper (σεβομένοι) Acts 13 (2x); 16 (1x); 17 (2x); 18 (1x). The first seven occurrences of these terms are found in just two incidents (the Cornelius story and the visit to the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia). In Antioch in Pisidia, many Jews and "God-worshiping proselytes" (σεβομένων προσηλύτων) convert (13:43), but God-worshiping women (σεβομένας γυναῖκας) and leading men turn against Christians (13:50). Here "God-fearers" are featured in the opposition to the Christian movement, not a bridge to Christianity in this city, if we consider only Jews and proselytes as converts in this city—which is how Acts presents the situation here. As for the audience curious about the Christian message, the *whole city* turned out (13:44). In Philippi, two households join the movement: that of "God-worshiping" Lydia (16:14–15) and that of the city jailer (16:29–34). Nothing indicates that the jailer had any interest in Judaism; he seems as raw a gentile as is likely to be found. In Thessalonica, some Jews and many devout Greeks and leading women join (17:4). This is the most successful of the stories involving God-fearers. Opposition comes from Jews. In nearby Beroea, many Jews believed and not a few Greek women and men of high standing (17:12). That the Greeks are God-fearers is probable, although the author of Acts does not indicate that. In Athens, Paul engages the synagogue (with Jews and devout [σεβομέμοι]

towns where Paul preaches, neither synagogue nor God-fearers are mentioned, or they appear in a peripheral way.[82] (3) Paul's own writings do not feature—or even hint at—a prominent God-fearer factor in his missions. (4) Perhaps the most important qualifier is that the author of Acts presents another reason for the growth of the Christian movement, one that is more prominent in Acts than the God-fearer factor. Acts puts forward the case that miracles and displays of power played a key role in the growth of the Christian movement.[83] Such displays would have had an effect on

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people) and the marketplace (where a more general mix of the population is likely to have been encountered) (17:17). Nothing is mentioned of the response of the Jews or the devout; the author's primary interest is in gentiles, and there is no sense that those who joined the church in Athens were God-fearers—perhaps even the opposite is intended. In Corinth, the final episode in which God-fearers are mentioned, Paul finds accommodation with Titius Justus, a God-worshiper (18:7), after being rejected by the synagogue. Some Jews join, as do many Corinthians (18:8). That some of these Corinthians were God-fearers is likely. That many were not is also likely, given the kinds of matters that Paul needed to deal with in the Corinthian church and his description of the complexion of that church. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed. NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 4, argues that most of the converts in Corinth were poor. I would add that, if poor, these do not seem the most likely members of the God-fearer class, who are generally presented as economically established and socially connected. To these passages that mention God-fearers or God-worshipers specifically, one might add the comments about Iconium, where gentiles hear Paul in the environment of the synagogue (14:1), though miracles seem to be a key to conversions there (14:3).

82. For example, in Salamis (13:5) and perhaps all of Cyprus, since Paul and his entourage land in Salamis, on the eastern side of the island, and leave from Paphos, on the western side (13:13). The author does not take the opportunity to suggest that the one convert featured (the proconsul Sergius Paulus) was a God-fearer. In fact, it is a miracle that seems to make him a believer. Paul preaches in Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding region (14:6), but the author does not use the opportunity to bring synagogue or God-fearers into the story. He features a miracle winning the favor of the crowds, at which point Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium travel to Lystra and turn the city against Paul (14:19). In both Lystra and Derbe, churches are established (14:21–23). Paul then preaches in Perga (14:25), without indication of synagogues, God-fearers, or conversions, though the general sense is that churches were established in the various cities where Paul preached. When Paul revisits the churches in Lystra, Derbe, and surrounding area (16:1–5), the issue of gentiles and table-fellowship is addressed, but not with explicit reference to God-fearers.

83. Miracles and displays of power: Acts 2:22, 43; 3:1–16; 4:5–22, 30; 5:12–16; 6:8; 8:6–7, 13; 9:33–35, 36–43; 10:38; 13:6–12; 14:3, 8–11; 15:12; 16:16–18; 19:11–13; 20:7–12; 28:1–6, 7–10.

a range of individuals, whether previously acquainted with the synagogue and the biblical tradition or not.[84]

Acts leaves the impression that most Jews did not accept the Christian message. Acts does not leave the impression that most God-fearers, in contrast to the dismissive Jews, found Christianity a desirable option. The assumption that the Christian message would have been more attractive to God-fearers than Judaism had been is another of the wobbly elements of the God-fearer thesis. Most God-fearers may have been quite content with their flexible relationship with Judaism and with the larger society, having no desire to associate more fully in distinctive practices required of proselytes. The portrait of God-fearers hanging around synagogues, hoping upon hope that someone would reformulate Judaism into a circumcision-free and pork-permitting movement so that they could comfortably join, lacks credible evidence. God-fearers had the option to convert to Judaism, and some did. It does not follow that those who did not convert must have been religiously restless. They could have found the somewhat ambiguous and seemingly quite flexible association with Judaism perfectly satisfying. Further, God-fearers' association with the synagogue must have covered quite a range of familiarity, with some individuals nearly ready to transition further into Jewish life and ritual as proselytes and others quite loosely associated with the synagogue community. In such cases, those God-fearers most closely connected to the synagogue were unlikely to leave the synagogue for the Christian option, for it is with the synagogue that they had fostered meaningful relationships and appreciation of the Jewish traditions. On the other hand, God-fearers whose association with the synagogue was somewhat more loose or defined more by political or social concerns than by religious ones likely would have had a less substantial understanding of Judaism's biblical tradition, differing little from the majority in society who had no connection to a synagogue and little knowledge of Judaism.

Further, the Christian option did not simply remove the more offending obstacles that supposedly made God-fearers hesitant to adopt Judaism fully (such as circumcision and food taboos). The flipside was that the most distinctive feature of the Christian option was one of its less attractive features. Christians had a crucified god. Paul's sense is

84. See Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (AD 100–400)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 25–42.

that this smacked as nonsense to Greeks and an offense to Jews (1 Cor 1:23). Thus when presented with the Christian option, it would be surprising if most God-fearers did not prefer to remain in their ambiguous relationship with Judaism, particularly so after the Christian option was rejected by the synagogue, where God-fearers had their trusted links and friendships. Nor is it likely that God-fearers who had hesitated to fully join Judaism because of social stigma or cultural disruption would have been prepared to join the Christian movement, with its leader executed by the Romans, its message repudiated by the synagogue, and a convert's status within the larger society significantly diminished, especially in Rome after the attack on Christians by Nero. Thus, for Rome at least, the God-fearer factor in Christian expansion must have been, if not a minor factor, certainly a momentary one. The same conclusion might be reached for wider areas, based on the evidence in Pliny's investigation of Christians, for example.[85]

Acts presents the God-fearer engagement with the Christian movement as an *episode*, not an *epoch*, in the growth of the Christian movement. Routinely in Acts, the message about Jesus is quickly rejected by the synagogue, though some Jews and some God-fearers become believers. But once the venue of the synagogue is closed to Paul, the stage for contact with God-fearers is closed, too, for it is in the context of the synagogue that the God-fearer enters and exits the stage in Acts' presentation. Further, to imagine that Christian growth depended on God-fearer conversions for decades or a century or more is to overlook the unique dynamics of first encounter. There choices are made for or against, and choices made then would have set the tone for the future, with individuals—and perhaps in the majority of cases whole families and even whole communities—either opposed to or accepting of the Christian message, and having that decision made at first encounter shape religious loyalties for generations to follow.

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85. The evidence from Pliny speaks against there having been a large God-fearer element in the Christian movement in the area. (1) No hint of an association with Judaism is detected in the investigation of the Christian movement. (2) The impact on the economy stemmed from a worrisome downturn in sacrifices at the area's various temples. Although many God-fearers may have continued to offer sacrifices in pagan temples, it is unlikely they were the most zealous temple supporters. (3) The majority of Christian converts must have been from the pagan population for a significant disruption of the temple economy. (4) Christians are identified as being from all levels of society. This is a wider sweep than theories that associate God-fearers with higher-status citizens, though that theory itself may lack merit.

As presented by Acts, the God-fearer episode is just that—an episode. It is not an enduring environment. Thus even though gentiles would have continued to be attracted to Judaism and the synagogue after Paul was turned away from the synagogue, these new God-fearers would not have been potential converts for the Christian claims. At least according to the accounts in Acts, Christians lose that venue of contact with God-fearers when the synagogue decides against the Christian option. Of course, we might be selective in what features of God-fearers we choose to take from Acts' presentation, but the reality is that Acts gives no hint that God-fearers as a whole accepted the Christian message or that they were the primary and continuing source of gentile converts to Christianity.[86] Whether God-fearers were a major or minor factor in the growth of Christianity, at least according to the presentation in Acts it was a momentary one, and it is only in Acts that the God-fearer phenomenon gets any traction in Christian literature.

What, then, of the routine assertion in contemporary scholarship that converts to Christianity would have needed a background in Judaism in order to make sense of early Christian preaching and writing, an assertion that allows God-fearers to be a featured factor in the growth of the Christian movement? In this regard, Peter Lampe states that, when Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, "Gentile Christians (in a large measure probably formerly *sebomenoi*) predominated."[87] He draws this conclusion after challenging those who contended that the audience of Paul's letter must have been Jewish Christians, based on Paul's use of Jewish and biblical themes and references.[88] The telling matter, Lampe contends, are the numerous specific passages in Romans where Paul assumes an audience

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86. The Cornelius episode is a key part of the Acts narrative, lengthy and repetitive, controversial but conclusive: gentiles were not unclean; their access to membership in the Christian movement was not to be inhibited. The key point of the Acts presentation is that gentiles have access, not that God-fearers were a bridge by which gentiles came into the church. Indeed, Paul's own letters give no hint of the God-fearer phenomenon, and though pious gentiles may well have joined the Christian movement, clearly Paul's congregations (most clearly revealed in the Corinthian correspondence: 1 Cor 1:26; 6:9–11) reflect a larger sweep than just pious gentiles.

87. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 70. Lampe's use of the word "probably" shows a necessary caution that is often disregarded.

88. For a brief review of the various points in favor of either a Jewish or a gentile audience, see Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 76–78.

of former pagans.[89] Lampe then argues, like many others, that this group of former pagans were probably *sebomenoi* who either by self-study or by contact with the synagogue would have had sufficient background to understand Paul's language and argument.[90] It is at this stage that I find Lampe's reconstruction going a step too far.

The question is whether the recipients of early Christian writings or hearers of early Christian preaching really needed a background in Judaism or contact with the synagogue to make sense of the Christian message. Oscar Skarsaune has forcefully—but problematically—argued that position, pointing to "the amount of Bible knowledge Paul presupposes" in his letters and concluding from this that Paul's gentile converts must have had "some Bible grounding prior to their Christian belief."[91] Skarsaune is even more specific in another place; Paul's readers "are not only familiar with the Old Testament, but also with the rabbinic methods of arguing a point from a given text."[92]

But does Paul really assume a knowledge of the Jewish Bible and the Jewish tradition that only a Jew or a God-fearer would have understood? Let's consider the audience of Paul's letter *without first being influenced by the content of Paul's letter to determine that audience*, a departure from the general practice. The key consideration is that most of those in the Roman church at the time of Paul's writing would have already been part of the Christian assembly for a few years. Indeed, some members may have been adherents for fifteen years or more, going back to whenever a Christian group was first established there.[93] Some of the younger members would

89. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 70. See 70 n. 3 for the list.

90. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 70.

91. Oscar Skarsaune, "Conclusion and Outlook," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, ed. Oscar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 765.

92. Oscar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 174.

93. It is difficult to determine when Christianity first made its appearance in Rome. That it arrived late is unlikely, given Paul's comments that he had intended to visit the church for several years (Rom 1:13; 15:23–24). Paul also notes that the faith of the Roman church has been proclaimed through the whole world (1:8). Granted, there is some exaggeration here, but there has to be something to exaggerate unless Paul wants to discredit himself or mystify his readers from the start. The church's reputation must be notable. Paul's delay in visiting the Roman church must be a matter of years. Further, if the Chrestus episode is related to conflicts about Jesus, it is unlikely that this pinpoints the introduction of the Christian message, though

have been second-generation Christians by the time of Paul's letter.[94] We might even conclude that, when Paul wrote, almost all the members of the Roman church would have been associated with the Christian movement for at least a year, more likely for several years—unless a George Whitefield or Billy Graham–style revival crusade by an unknown preacher had broken out in Rome a month or two before Paul wrote his letter, bringing a throng of new and untaught converts into the movement. Apart from such an unlikely scenario, most of those addressed in Paul's letter to the Romans would have been familiar with Paul's references and allusions to Judaism simply from their exposure to the Jewish scriptures *within* the context of the Christian assembly. That would have been true for the most recent converts, too, who would not have needed more than a few months within the environment of the Christian community to understand a fairly full framework of the Christian (and borrowed Jewish) worldview. Indeed, since the Christian scriptures at this time were simply the Jewish scriptures interpreted from a Christian perspective, this material would have dominated much of early Christian twitter.[95] Thus, rather than seeing

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many hold that view. The Chrestus matter had become significant enough for state intervention. Either the Christian message was new and brought to Rome by a highly successful unknown teacher, provoking a crisis, or the message was brought earlier and became a matter of concern not just to the Jewish community but to the Roman authorities as well as Christianity gained a foothold. The latter strikes me as the more likely. Gerd Lüdemann, *Paul. The Founder of Christianity* (Amherst: Prometheus, 2002), 24, 59–60, argues for a date of 41 CE, pushing the beginning of Christianity in Rome short years after the beginning of the Christian movement. Levinskaya (*Book of Acts*, 181 n. 64) thinks such an early date is possible. For Levinskaya's review of the Chrestus matters, see 174–82.

94. Ten-year-olds in 40 CE would have been responsible and mature adults at the time of Paul's letter. Their knowledge of Jewish tradition and scripture would have come in the context of Christian assemblies.

95. It appears that Christians may have compiled collections of passages from the Jewish scriptures that were relevant to the Christian claims about Jesus. Such handbooks, already tailored by Christian selection and teaching, would have put a Christian spin on the whole of the Jewish scriptures, in so far as other parts of the Jewish scripture had any airing in Christian assemblies. How early such handbooks may have been in used is debated, but the passages collected into such handbooks would have been prominent ones in early Christian reflection even before any effort to place them in some kind of collection. See Greg Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 6–7.

Christian writings that incorporate elements from the Jewish scriptures as proof of the considerable familiarity that early Christian readers must have already had with Judaism *before* their conversion to Christianity, it might be closer to the truth to see such Christian writings as evidence of the kinds of ideas Christians generally would have been familiar with simply from being in Christian assemblies (whatever their background before joining the Christian movement). Christian writings and Christian preaching, as well as the use of Jewish scriptures (interpreted christologically) within the Christian assembly, would therefore serve as the principal effective means by which the Jewish concepts came to be introduced and transmitted to Christian converts. The assumption that a God-fearer, with occasional association with the synagogue, would have had a better knowledge of the Jewish tradition and scriptures than a fairly recent zealous Christian convert who lacked prior association with Judaism is, I suggest, another of those wobbly parts of our understanding of the early Christian movement that needs reconsideration. Really, how much familiarity with Jewish or biblical traditions did a gentile convert need in order to follow Paul's argument in Romans? Certainly not years of study. A few key stories would have been sufficient.[96] Regardless how familiar Paul may have been with rabbinic arguments (whatever that might mean for Paul's time), and

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96. Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 27 n. 12, offers two passages (Rom 7:1; 15:4) that he thinks would require that the audience have "a high degree of familiarity with the Septuagint." But it would be quite a stretch to think that 15:4 demands any such conclusion: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." The passage in 7:1 is a bit more problematic: "Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime?" (both NRSV). Given that most scholars assume a gentile audience for Paul's letter, the comment that Paul is writing to those who know the law has led too hastily to the conclusion that the gentile Christians must have been God-fearers. But if these God-fearers can be described as "those who know the law" at any deep level, they would be a small subset of the God-fearer group, which reflected a considerable range of familiarity with Jewish law, with most not having more familiarity than a Christian convert would gain from participating within a Christian assembly. It is too sweeping to say simply that "God-fearers and proselytes would certainly 'know the law' from their experience of Jewish socio-religious life," as many claim, such as Michael F. Bird, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), xiv. That may have been somewhat more true of proselytes, but any general statement about God-fearers' knowledge of the Jewish scriptures must be considerably more nuanced.

however much Paul may have used such arguments as a natural part of his writing, most of what Paul has to say requires no special decoding skills. The language and intent are generally clear enough for an audience or, if not clear, would not have been clearer to those familiar with the rhetorical or interpretative skills that Paul might have had in his tool chest.

In a particularly forced argument, Skarsaune appeals to 2 Pet 3:16 to show that, when gentiles who had not been God-fearers[97] came to join the church, Paul's letters were considered difficult to understand by such an audience because Paul wrote his letters for Jews and God-fearers, not for the typical untutored gentile.[98] But the source of the difficulty in Paul's letters does not come from Paul's use of the Jewish scriptures (as Skarsaune and many others assert). The comments of the author of 2 Peter about Paul's writings are set firmly in a discussion of the last days and the promised (but seemingly delayed) second coming (2 Pet 3) and the misconduct of some believers (2 Pet 2) who promise "freedom" (2:19). The misunderstandings in regard to Paul's letters mentioned by the author of 2 Peter are much more likely related to the prominent matters of concern in 2 Peter: the second coming and freedom from moral boundaries, both of which are addressed in Paul's writings. It is not a lack of knowledge of Jewish scriptures or lack of familiarity with the principles of rabbinic exegesis that cause readers of Paul's letters to be baffled at the time the writing of 2 Peter; it is Paul's own ambiguous or somewhat contradictory comments about matters of the second coming and freedom from the law that cause the confusion. These matters would have been as confusing to Paul's original readers as they were to those to whom 2 Peter is addressed, some fifty or more years after Paul's letters were written—and as confusing as Paul's comments are to readers two thousand years later. These matters may also have been a little confused for Paul himself as he refined his theology to meet new problems and possibilities.[99] Further, if the readers of 2 Peter were confused about Paul's letters because these readers lacked a sufficient knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, as Skarsaune claims, imagine how confused they

97. Skarsaune (*In the Shadow of the Temple*, 174, 226) calls these untutored gentiles "real Gentiles" or "raw Gentiles."

98. Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, 174.

99. For one attempt to make sense of Romans (and a review of other attempts), see William S. Campbell, "'All God's Beloved in Rome!' Jewish Roots and Christian Identity," in *Celebrating Romans: Template for Pauline Theology; Essays in Honor of Robert Jewett*, ed. Sheila E. McGinn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 67–82.

must have been reading 2 Peter itself, which requires a much wider range of knowledge of the Jewish scriptures than any of Paul's writings: angels cast down to hell, the flood, Noah and the seven others saved, Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot, Baalam (son of Bosor) and his talking donkey, angels that refused to slander the devil (from a story in 1 Enoch about the archangel Michael and the burial of the body of Moses), and the world created out of water and with water. Only the proverb about a dog returning to its own vomit would not have required special knowledge of Jewish scriptures.

4. Where Did the Roman Christians Meet?

A somewhat peripheral matter related to the complexion of the Christian movement is not only whether the first converts had associated with the synagogue prior to becoming Christian believers but whether they continued to associate with and worship within the synagogue after becoming believers. Such an assertion has been made, particularly for the situation in Rome,[100] with reasons of various merit given, ranging from the protective legal status afforded by the synagogue to the fact that Paul does not use the word *church* to describe Christians in Rome. I find this presentation of Roman Christianity unconvincing. For one thing, if there were a considerable number of Jewish cells (or "synagogues") in Rome—likely hundreds rather than the eleven routinely touted[101]—then the more likely that the

100. For example, Nanos (*Mystery of Romans*, 73) places Christians within the orbit of the synagogue for instruction and corporate assembly. Of the early Christian gentile converts, Nanos asks: "How would they learn the scriptures and the way God deals with his people apart from the involvement in the Jewish community, for the Scriptures were read and interpreted only in the synagogues, and primarily on the Sabbath at that?" Nanos follows that question with a series of similar questions, concluding that "there would have been an almost insurmountable learning curve of bringing gentiles to an understanding of faith in Christ and the practice of righteousness without association with the synagogue and the life of the Jewish community." But all these questions miss the point that Christians were hearing in their own assemblies the same scripture that members of synagogue assemblies were hearing, and the theological musings of early Christian writers were soaked in those scriptures. Indeed, given that the synagogue would not be promoting a Christ-centered reading of the scriptures, Christians would have needed *Christian* assemblies and *Christian* instruction to understand early Christian writers' use of the Jewish scriptures—starkly opposite to what Nanos proposes.

101. For the number of synagogues in Rome, the go-to answer is about a dozen. Longenecker (*Introducing Romans*, 64) counts "as many as eleven, twelve or even

Christian Jews and God-fearers could have and would have functioned in their own assemblies within or at the edge of the larger Jewish community rather than being scattered as individuals among synagogues that had little or no sympathy with Christ-centered sensibilities. This would be especially likely if the Jewish community already gathered in cells that were diverse from other cells and over which no central authority was recognized, as has been asserted as the situation in Rome.[102] Further, we know from numerous early Christian writings from elsewhere that Christian converts gathered on their own in small private accommodations from the start and that this served them well for a couple of centuries.[103] It would be strange if in Rome such distinctive gatherings did not develop early, too,

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thirteen" synagogues in Rome in the first century, based on inscriptions from the catacombs. But Leonard Victor Rutgers, "Archaeological Evidence for the Interaction of Jews and Non-Jews in Late Antiquity," *AJA* 96 (1992): 104 n. 13; and "Roman Policy Towards Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century CE," *ClAnt* 13 (1994): 63, contends that such inscriptions yield evidence for the third century and later. It would be far better to make no use of such inscriptions for determining the number of synagogues in Rome, for clearly a dozen synagogues could not have remotely accommodated the number of Jews in Rome. Diaspora synagogues were generally small. The average size of the twelve diaspora synagogues for which we have some knowledge has space for about 142 attendees. See Robinson, *Who Were the First Christians*, 237. Even these synagogues are from a later period than Paul's letter to the Romans. In Paul's time, physical diaspora synagogues were probably rare, and often when synagogues are spoken of perhaps nothing more is intended than simply private space that could be put to religious use when needed, accommodating twenty to thirty people, as we have with Christian house churches.

102. Longenecker (*Introducing Romans*, 66) states that the Jewish cells in Rome had no central authority and that links between individual cells were not as strong in Rome as in other places, such as Alexandria or Cyrene, both old Ptolemaic areas. He thinks the earliest Christian Jews could have functioned "both within and between" Jewish synagogues (72). See, too, Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed., ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 91–92, on whom Longenecker relies here.

103. According to Acts 18:2–4, Priscilla and Aquila went to Corinth due to Claudius's expulsion of Jews from Rome (ca. 49 CE), and it is in Corinth that Paul makes his acquaintance with the couple. They later appear in Rome as leaders of a Christian cell (Rom 16:3–5). Whatever we make of the Acts account, it seems clear from Paul's Corinthian correspondence that Christians met in their own cells and were not scattered among various synagogues, and they would have understood this to be the case elsewhere, too (1 Cor 5:3; 11:18–21; 14:23, 26–28; 16:19; 2 Cor 8:18–19).

particularly if there was a hostile attitude to Christians within the Jewish community well before Paul's letter (as the Chrestus incident suggests)—or which might be assumed even without such tension.

Some contend that Christians needed to identify or associate in some way with the synagogue to give Christians legal status,[104] but that view may be overplaying the legal jeopardy that Christians supposedly would have faced had they met as Christians on their own. Any Christian assembly that was largely a household unit may have been able to fly under the radar of the legislation regarding assemblies. Peter Lampe has noted that "synagogal and Christian congregations could sometimes define themselves within the limits of the *oikos* in which their members lived and worked as slaves or freedpersons. The primary scene of work and living and the place of religious activity were two concentric circles."[105] To this environment, one might add another circle: that of client and patron. This seems a more natural and unobtrusive way for early Christians to have met: the church in the household of some person or other. Unlike the Jewish community, which was more identifiable and which had interests in claiming special rights, early Christians did not have demands that would have required of them some legal recognition—other than the right to meet, which they could do without authorization if meeting primarily as a household, unless someone in the circle betrayed them, as sometimes happened.[106] Workshops may have been less private than some of the residential spaces used by Christians, though we know that,

104. Some have assumed that non-Jewish Christians, in so far as they participated in synagogal assemblies, would have gained legal protection that they could not otherwise have had; see, e.g., Mark Nanos, "The Jewish Context of the Gentile Audience Addressed in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *CBQ* 61 (1999): 283–304, here 283–84. Further, Nanos (*Mystery of Romans*, 74 n. 117) states that "Paul never speaks of the Christians in Rome as a church," which Nanos points out is contrary to Paul's custom. He contends that this may point to the possibility that Christians were meeting "under the auspices of a synagogue." See Zetterholm, *Formation of Christianity*, for a slightly different spin for the situation in Antioch, where early Christian gentile converts gained protection by presenting their cells as synagogues. I deal with Zetterholm's work in *Ignatius of Antioch*, 89–94.

105. Peter Lampe, "Paths of Early Christian Mission into Rome—Judaeo-Christians in the Households of Pagan Masters," in McGinn, *Celebrating Romans*, 143–48, here 148.

106. Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.7.15; Justin, *2 Apol.* 12.4. Contrast that to Athenagoras, *Leg.* 35. See discussion of these passages in J. Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 153–57.

not only did Christians meet in such settings, but that they seem to have been able to do so even when such meetings were not so clandestine as to escape the knowledge of the wider public.[107]

On a related matter, I find the attempt to establish how many Christians or Christian cells were in Rome when Paul wrote his letter to be misguided, simply because it is impossible to determine that—or to determine how many bars, brothels, or bakeries were in Rome at the time.[108] Rather than trying to count precisely the Christian cells, perhaps a better sense can be gained by trying to get an impression of how many Christians would have been necessary for Nero's scapegoating the Christian community short years after Paul's letter.[109] Consider, for example, that a

107. Origen, *Cels*. 3.55. Celsus claims—and Origen does not deny—that at least some Christians met in workshops for religious instruction. If Celsus had that knowledge, it is unlikely that the local authorities had no idea that Christians were present in their society and meeting in such places. There is no indication that such places were routinely shut down. Perhaps many workshops should be viewed as more or less residential space, given that the owner often had his or her home in rooms at the back of the shop.

108. The effort depends on wrestling something out of Rom 16, as though Paul's intention was to list prominent members (leaders) of every Christian cell. Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 699–704, reviews the various efforts to count the number of Christian cells, from three to eight (699 n. 3). Some mischief can make its way into the effort to determine the number of Christian cells. For example, Nanos (*Mystery of Romans*, 77 n. 124) contends that when Paul wrote it appears that there were seven or eight congregations where Christians met in Rome. Nanos then comments that this "corresponds roughly to the number of synagogues present." But in another place in that work Nanos states that there were "several (eleven, or perhaps many more) synagogues in Rome" (49), admitting that the assembly places could hold twenty to forty people, thus requiring "far in excess of the eleven" to accommodate a Jewish population between twenty thousand and fifty thousand (49 n. 32). In a slightly later work, Nanos ("Jewish Context of the Gentile Audience," 285) speaks of "perhaps even hundreds" of meeting places. The reality is that we simply do not know how many synagogues (or simply places for assembly) were in Rome, nor do we know how many Christian places of assembly were there, even assuming that Rom 16 helps with the count. It is misleading for Nanos to mention that the number of Christian meeting places "corresponds roughly" to the number of synagogues, implying a connection that is not remotely required by the evidence nor likely on any grounds—and, worse, disregarding his own count of "perhaps even hundreds" of synagogues in Rome.

109. Whether Christians were distinguished from Jews or merely as a subgroup of Jews, the significant point is that they have a distinct identity, as shown in the

hundred Christian cells would give a Christian population of only about 2,500, assuming cells of about two dozen members each.[110]

As with ancient numbers generally, attempts at precision on most of these matters related to Christians in Rome are likely to prove unsatisfying and unconvincing.

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fingering of Christians for the fire in Rome. Both Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44) and 1 Clement (6.1) speak of the great number of Christian victims under Nero (or if Clement's comment is not specifically about the persecution under Nero, it points to significant persecution of Christians in Rome before the second century). Lampe (*From Paul to* Valentinus, 82) reasons that it is unlikely that such comments can be put down to "rhetorical exaggeration of *both* authors." The persecution of Christians under Nero is widely accepted, though Brent D. Shaw, "The Myth of the Neronian Persecution," *JRS* 105 (2015): 73–100, has recently challenged that tradition.

110. I am not suggesting that there were a hundred Christian cells during Nero's action against Christians. Rather, I use this number to show how few Christians would be accommodated by even a hundred cells—a number that needs to be considered against a significant governmental action against Christians.

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Roman Imperial Coinage as the Background to Paul's Letter to the Romans

Michael P. Theophilos

1. Introduction

Archaic Greek and early Roman coinage is largely imprinted with mythic symbols and short, often cryptically abbreviated inscriptions.[1] By way of illustration, SNG Lockett 2917 (480–460 BCE)[2] depicts a nude winged male figure on the obverse who also wears winged sandals and is shown running to the right holding a herald's staff in his left hand, a figure that has evaded numismatic consensus (proposals include Hermes and Thanatos, among others). The reverse portrays a lion crouching to the left and head turned toward the right. Inscribed above the lion are three Carian letters BMZ, the decipherment of which was aided by the Egyptologist John Ray's study of Carian-Egyptian bilingual tomb inscriptions.[3] Fortunately, however, the iconography and inscriptional material attested on Roman imperial coinage is much more transparent in meaning in comparison with the archaic Greek and early Roman material.

1. For an extensive alphabetized compendium that can be used to decipher Greek inscriptional abbreviations on a broad range of ancient coinage see Séverin Icaard, *Identification des monnaies par la nouvelle méthode de lettres jalons et des légendes fragmentées: Application de la métode aux monnaies grecques etaux monnaies gauloises* (Paris: Ciani, 1928); A. Florance, *A Geographic Lexicon of Greek Coin Inscriptions* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1966). See also the following volume currently under review, Michael P. Theophilos, *Dictionary of Greek Numismatic Inscriptions for New Testament and Early Christian Studies*.

2. Edward S. G. Robinson, *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Great Britain 3: The Lockett Collection*, 5 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1938–1949).

3. John D. Ray, "The Carian Inscriptions from Egypt," *JEA* 68 (1982): 181–98.

Isidore of Seville (560–636 CE) notes in *Etym*. 16.18.12 that "in coinage three things are sought: metal, design, and weight. If something lacks any of these, it is not coinage."[4] While *figura* more plausibly refers to shape than artistic design per se, the quotation is helpful for highlighting the intentionality of coinage. That is, it is an entity that has been crafted for a particular economic and ideological purpose. Indeed, this ideological function is foundational in Plutarch's *Alex*. 4.5, where it is noted that Philip II of Macedon commemorated his victories in chariot races (at Olympia) by striking coins that advertised them.[5] Georges Le Rider dates these coins to 348 BCE, eight years after the Olympian victory in 356 BCE,[6] which in and of itself indicates that, even after almost a decade, "Philip still considered its propaganda value high enough to advertise on his coinage."[7] The phenomenon is no less employed in the Roman period.

Minted under state contracts, the silver coinage of the Roman imperial period was paid, first and foremost, to the soldiers, whose loyalty the reigning emperor was seeking to secure. As a result, the coins of the emperors are themselves valuable documents and distinctly contribute to our understanding of the ancient Roman world. In part this is due to their ubiquity, wide geographical distribution, and continuous use. J. Rufus Fears suggests that the numismatic material is preferable to any other evidence in the discernment of imperial ideology:

> The literary sources are secondary sources; at their best, they are idiosyncratic, and at their worst they consciously distort the deeds and

4. Wallace Martin Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi: Etymologiarum Sive Originum, Libri XX*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), 1:648: *in nomismate tria quaeruntur: metallum, figura et pondus. Si ex his aliquid defuerit, nomisma non erit*. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted. The principle sources of this portion of the *Etymologiae* are traced to to Pliny, Servius, and Solinus by Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 14–15.

5. See also Plato's *Resp*. 2.371b, where Socrates tells Adeimantus that the ideal city will have coinage, for how otherwise "will they exchange with one another what they make? It was, after all, for this purpose that we created a community and founded a city.… And from this there will come into being a market, and coinage as a token for the purpose of exchange."

6. Georges Le Rider, *Le monnayage d'argent et d'or de Philippe II frappe en Macedoine de 359 a 294* (Paris: Bourgey, 1977).

7. John Melville Jones, *Testimonia Numaria: Greek and Latin Texts concerning Ancient Greek Coinage*, 2 vols. (London: Spink, 2007), 2:222.

> intentions of individual emperors. Thus we will never know much of what "really" transpired under Trajan, and nothing at all of his actual intentions. Through the coinage, however, we know an inordinate amount about what the Roman government wanted its citizens and subjects to believe happened and how it wished the person and deeds of Trajan to be perceived by those citizens and subjects. The coinage was a medium of propaganda. Its purpose was the creation and propagation of a belie£ It is the medium by which we can best approach the ideology of the imperial system.[8]

Although literary sources may never reveal the historical intentions of the ruling elite, be they in Rome or in the provinces, coinage reveals, at a minimum, an objective perspective of how rulers wanted their subjects to perceive their political activity. E. A. Judge alludes to a similar phenomenon of the treatment of history by ancient writers: "in the case of Roman history, we typically mean by 'documents' the coins, inscriptions, and papyri that survive directly from the time, as distinct from the treatment of the history by ancient writers."[9] While ancient coins were (deliberately) not ideologically neutral, they do accurately depict how the emperor wanted to be perceived.[10] In this respect, the image and text in particular

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8. J. Rufus Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," *ANRW* 2.17.2:945. It is what Andrew Meadows refers to as a "a privileged place in the discourse between king and subjects" ("The Spread of Coins in the Hellenistic World," in *Explaining Money and Financial Innovation: A Historical Analysis*, ed. P. Bernholz and R. Vaubel [New York: Springer, 2014], 173).

9. E. A. Judge, "Setting the Record Straight: Alternative Documents of a Protest in the Roman Army of Egypt," in *The First Christians in the Roman World*: *Augustan and New Testament Essays*, ed. James R. Harrison (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 378.

10. Catherine M. Murphy notes that "coins are government-sponsored art, and coin iconography therefore usually reflects the official ideology by means of recognizable symbols. The wide circulation of these coins thus affords an opportunity for political propaganda" (*Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 316). Andrew Burnett (*Coins: Interpreting the Past* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 37) is in agreement when he observes that "self-representation in this way was never as systematically developed as the products of modern propaganda machines, but, as with the study of portraiture, it can be very revealing about the aspirations and claims of any regime, matters which are as interesting to the historian as the reality of what actually happened." Similarly, Mark A. Chancey ("The Epigraphic Habit of Hellenistic and Roman Galilee," in *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition*, ed. J. Zangenberg, H. W. Attridge and D. B. Martin [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 86) observes that "coins

(given its specificity) can be used to record accurately how, and potentially why, the imagery and language was used.[11]

For example, coins of some of the beleaguered emperors of 69 CE, the period of the civil wars, where imperial reign is reckoned in months rather than years, depict imagery designed to bolster confidence in the precarious grasp of power an emperor possessed. Vitellius (January–June 69 CE)[12] consistently used numismatic imagery of justice (e.g., 125, with Aequitas holding scales and scepter), the loyalty of the army (e.g., 47, with clasped hands and the inscription FIDES EXERCITVVM ["loyalty of the armies"]), concord (e.g., 19, with Concordia holding patera and cornucopia), peace (e.g., 149, with Pax setting weapons on fire and holding cornucopia), liberty (e.g., 128, with Libertas holding a pileus and scepter), and military victory (e.g., 130, with Roma helmeted in military dress, seated with right foot on helmet and holding victory in right hand with two shields behind) to reinforce his apparent control of such domains. Otho,[13] who reigned for twelve weeks, optimistically declares his VICTORIA ("victory"; cf. 13–17, which depict Victory advancing holding wreath and palm), reinforced in numbers 3–6 which have the reverse inscription PAX ORBIS TERRARIUM ("worldwide peace").

The focus of the current essay is an exploration of viable avenues for critical interpretive dialogue between the Roman imperial coinage of Nero and Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Particular emphasis will be devoted to the ways in which the numismatic material can provide contextual clues to the historical, linguistic, and political matrix in which Paul's Letter to the Romans was written. We will analyze the major developments in bust types, inscriptions, and thematic iconography on Neronian coinage and highlight several cogent exegetical implications for the epistle in light of this numismatic material. The study takes us beyond the (profitable but somewhat limited) approach of focusing exclusively on comparisons of

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provide a clear example of government-sponsored inscriptions, their designs chosen by and expressing the values of social elites."

11. Brennan, Turner, and Wright are accurate in stating that "they [coins] are a true reflection of their time—of a 'face of power's' perception of what he had done, what he was going to do, what he was going to get others to do, or what others were going to get him or her to do." See Peter Brennan, Michael Turner, and Nicholas L. Wright, *Faces of Power: Imperial Portraiture on Roman Coins* (Sydney: Nicholson Museum, 2007), 5.

12. For the following references to Vitellius, see *RIC* 1:268–77.

13. For references to Otho, see *RIC* 1:260–61.

titulature. The accent will be on the imperial mint at Rome, with some comparative material drawn from the imperial mints at Caesarea Cappadociae, Ephesus, Lugdunum, and Thracia.

2. Methodology

The incorporation of numismatic material into historical research presents several potential methodological difficulties.[14] One of the most evident is the rather crude and obvious phenomenon that items with such a strong ideological bias may not provide an accurate picture of the subjects under discussion (as noted above). Further to this, an additional conspicuous limitation is that we possess only a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of numismatic material that originally circulated in antiquity, which may cast some doubt on the breadth of perspective that such material might provide.[15] Indeed, coins are issued by the narrow, upper stratum of society, and forming a historical picture based only on numismatic evidence is not only methodologically suspicious but may in many circumstances be seriously misleading. However, rather than dismiss the numismatic material as relevant evidence for discerning the historical, linguistic, and sociopolitical matrix, a more plausible approach is to acknowledge that the

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14. For a discussion of methodological issues of applying visual phenomena in textual interpretation, see Annette Weissenrieder and Friederike Wendt, "Images as Communication: The Methods of Iconography," in *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder, Friederike Wendt, and P. von Gemünden, WUNT 2/193 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 3–49. I readily acknowledge that image and inscription on a coin are to be mutually interpreted, but, as Erika Manders notes, "on many coins the image either presents a visualization of the legend or the legend forms a textual rendering of the image. This cooperation between text and image facilitated not only illiterates' understanding of the messages present on coins, it also reduced the various possibilities of how Romans could interpret a message." See Erika Manders, *Coining Images of Power: Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, AD 193- 284* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 30.

15. Edwin Yamauchi astutely notes that numismatics (as all the ancient disciplines) suffers from a severely limited view that archaeological excavation affords: only a fraction of what is made or what is written survives; only a fraction of that material is preserved in archaeological sites that have been surveyed; only a fraction of the surveyed sites have been excavated; only a fraction of any excavated site is actually examined; and only a fraction of materials are actually published. See Edwin Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures* (New York: Holman, 1972), 146–54.

distillation of the evidence on coinage does not represent the full spectrum of the contemporary social world.

In favor of the relevance and broader noticeability of coinage in the ancient world are a modest yet significant number of examples of literary evidence demonstrating that inhabitants of the Roman world paid special attention to the images, symbols, and inscriptions on coinage. Three examples will suffice to demonstrate this phenomenon. First, the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, writing toward the end of the first century or beginning of the second century CE, notes that "the imprints which he brought with him in his mind, such as we look for also upon coins, and, if we find them, we accept the coins, but if we do not find them, we throw the coins away. 'Whose imprint does this sestertius bear? Trajan's? Give it to me. Nero's? Throw it out, it will not pass, it is rotten.'"[16] While the images and symbols on the coins were the most noticeable and prominent features,[17] coin inscriptions were used to explain and clarify the imagery, which was often complex and was further extended for a particular purpose.[18]

Second, on a different occasion the people of Antioch "broke out against the emperor [Julian, 331–363 CE) and shouted … that his coinage had a bull, and the world was subverted" (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.17). Despite Socrates's inaccurate description that follows, including reference to a nonexistent altar on the coinage of Julian, the incident is indicative of the attention to the imagery and inscriptions on coinage by a populace.

Third, the famous incident concerning Jesus in the temple when asked about paying taxes to Caesar also appeals to the hearers' knowledge of the imagery on a denarius,

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16. Epictetus, *Diatr*. 4.5.16–17: *τοὺς χαρακτῆρας, οὓς ἔχων ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐλήλυθεν, οἵους καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν νομισμάτων ζητοῦντες, ἂν μὲν εὕρωμεν, δοκιμάζομεν, ἂν δὲ μὴ εὕρωμεν, ῥιπτοῦμεν. τίνος ἔχει τὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦτο τὸ τετράσσαρον*; Τραιανοῦ; *φέρε*. Νέρωνος; *ῥῖψον ἔξω, ἀδόκιμόν ἐστιν, σαπρόν*; trans. W. A. Oldfather, *Epictetus: Discourses, Books 3–4; Fragments; The Encheiridion*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 336–37.

17. Michael H. Crawford, "Roman Imperial Coin Types and the Formation of Public Opinion," in *Studies in Numismatic Method Presented to Philip Grierson*, ed. C. Brooke, B. Steward, J. Pollard, and T. Volk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 54–57.

18. Christopher Howgego, *Ancient History from Coins* (London: Routledge, 1995), 75.

> "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's." (Matt 22:17b-21; cf. 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–26).

These and other incidents provide some literary evidence that the images and inscriptions on coinage were certainly noticed by the populace and often elicited a vivid response.[19]

Ignoring numismatic evidence based on the critique of the social origins of coins and consequent limited scope of the narrow upper stratum of society is not only methodologically suspicious, but it may in many circumstances itself skew the data of historical reconstruction (e.g., the opportunity for coins to be used in direct engagement with other historical sources). Thus we will analyze and discuss Roman imperial coinage that is geographically and chronologically relevant to the interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans. Needless to say, the present discussion seeks not to be exhaustive in noting relevant connections between the epistle and the full numismatic record (such a discussion would fill several volumes) but illustrative of the potential for the rich source of interdisciplinary illumination between biblical studies and numismatic research.

3. Coinage

The imperial coinage of Nero is vast and complex.[20] It was minted at five different locations (Caesarea Cappadociae, Ephesus, Lugdunum, Rome,

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19. For further evidence that imagery on coins was noticed, especially in the east Roman Empire, see Linda-Marie Hans, "Der Kaiser mit dem Schwert," *JNG* 33 (1983): 57–66, especially 63–64 and n. 21.

20. The provincial material is similarly complex and is attested in 853 types. This type count has been manually calculated based on the published holdings of the Staatliche Museen (Berlin), Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), Nationalmuseet (Copenhagen), Hunterian Museum (Glasgow), British Museum (London), Staatliche Münzsammlung (Munich), American Numismatic Society (New York), Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris), and Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna). See Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, and Ian Carradice, *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69)*, vol. 1 of *Roman Provincial Coinage*

and Thracia), consisted of at least twelve bust types (table 1), ninety-one obverse legend types (table 2), sixty-eight reverse legend types (table 3), and fifty-four iconographic themes (table 4), represented in several combinations across the entire spectrum of denominations, including examples of an AU Aureus, AU Quinarius, AR Tetradrachm, AR Didrachm, AR 1½ Drachm, AR Denarius, AR Drachm, AR ¾ Drachm, ½ Drachm, AE Sestertius, AE Dupondius, AE As, AE Semis, and AE Quadrans. The precise enumeration of reverse types is difficult to calculate. Typologies typically err at the extremes of the spectrum: either too few categories by minimizing distinctives or too many categories by exaggerating small differences. There is currently no consensus on what threshold of differentiation should be applied for distinguishing between similar iconographic elements and, consequently, what precisely constitutes a distinctive type or category. This complication is exacerbated by the difficulty of cataloging an exhaustive die study in which each die was handmade in antiquity. The tables below, nonetheless, seek to distill the relevant evidence in a manageable form.

Table 1. Bust types of Nero

1. Bare head left
2. Bare head right
3. Bare head right over Agrippina II draped bust right
4. Bare-headed, draped bust left
5. Bare-headed, draped bust right
6. Laureate head left
7. Laureate head right
8. Laureate, cuirassed bust right
9. Radiate head left
10. Radiate head right
11. Altar with owl atop
12. Cippus with helmet atop with shield and spear leaning against it

(London: British Museum, 1992); P. P. Ripollés Alegre, Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, Ian Carradice, and Marguerite Spoerri Butcher, *Roman Provincial Coinage: Consolidated Supplement I–III* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1992–2015); Michel Amandry, Andrew Burnett, Antony Hostein, Jerome Mairat, P. P. Ripollés Alegre, and Marguerite Spoerri Butcher, *Roman Provincial Coinage: Supplement 4* (London: British Museum Press, 2017); Michel Amandry, Andrew Burnett, Antony Hostein, Jerome Mairat, P. P. Ripollés Alegre, and Marguerite Spoerri Butcher, *Roman Provincial Coinage: Supplement 5* (London: British Museum Press, 2019).

Table 2. Obverse legend types of Nero

1. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG
2. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P PP
3. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GERM
4. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P PP
5. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P XIII PP
6. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P XIV PP
7. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GERMANIC
8. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS
9. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX
10. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR P P
11. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR P PP
12. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR POT PP
13. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TRIB POT PP
14. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PM TR P PP
15. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PM TR POT PP
16. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PONT
17. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PONT MAX TR P PP
18. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PONT MAX TR POT PP
19. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PONTIF
20. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PONTIF MAX TRIB POT PP
21. IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PP
22. IMP NERO CAESAR AVGVSTVS
23. IMP NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P PP
24. MP NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P PP
25. IMP NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P XIII PP
26. IMP NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P XIV PP
27. IMP NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P PP
28. NERO CAE AVG IMP
29. NERO CAES AVG IMP
30. NERO CAESAR
31. NERO CAESAR AVG GER IMP
32. NERO CAESAR AVG GERM IMP
33. NERO CAESAR AVG IMP NERO CAESAR AVG IMP TR POT PP
34. NERO CAESAR AVG IMP TR POT XI P PP
35. NERO CAESAR AVGVSTVS
36. NERO CL CAE AVG
37. NERO CL CAE AVG GER
38. NERO CL CAES AVG GER
39. NERO CL DIVI F CAES AVG PM TR P II
40. NERO CLA CA AVG GER
41. NERO CLA CAE AVG GER
42. NERO CLA CAE AVG GERM

43. NERO CLA CAES AVG GER
44. NERO CLA CAESAR AVG GER
45. NERO CLAD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP PP
46. NERO CLAV CAE AVG
47. NERO CLAV CAE AVG GER
48. NERO CLAV CAE AVG GER PM TR P IM
49. NERO CLAV CAES AVG GER
50. NERO CLAV CAESAR AVG
51. NERO CLAV CAESAR AVG GER
52. NERO CLAVD CAE AVG
53. NERO CLAVD CAE AVG GER
54. NERO CLAVD CAES AVG GER
55. NERO CLAVD CAES AVG GERM
56. NERO CLAVD CAES DRVSVS GERM PRINC IVVENT
57. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG
58. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GE
59. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER
60. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP
61. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP P
62. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP PP
63. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM
64. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM IMP PP
65. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P IMP
66. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P IMP P
67. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P IMP PP
68. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERMA
69. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERMAN
70. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERMANI
71. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERMANIC
72. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERMANICV
73. NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS
74. NERO CLAVD DIVI CLAVD F CAESAR AVG GERM
75. NERO CLAVD DIVI CLAVD F CAESAR AVG GERMA
76. NERO CLAVD DIVI CLAVD F CAESAR AVG GERMANI
77. NERO CLAVD DIVI F CAES AVG GERM IMP TR P COS
78. NERO CLAVDIVS CAES AVG GERM
79. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GER
80. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP P
81. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP PP
82. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERM
83. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P IMP P
84. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P IMP PP
85. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERMA

86. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERMA IMP
87. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERMAN
88. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERMANIC
89. NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS
90. NERONI CLAVD CAES DRVSO GERM
91. NERONI CLAVDIO DRVSO GERM COS

Table 3. Reverse legend types of Nero

1. AGRIPP AVG DIVI CLAVD NERONIS CAES MATER
2. AGRIPPINA AVGVSTA MATER AVGVSTI
3. AGRIPPINAE AVGVSTAE
4. ANNONA AVGVSTI CERES
5. AVGVSTI S POR OST C
6. AVGVSTVS AVGVSTA
7. AVGVSTVS GERMANICVS
8. AVGVSTVS GERMANICVSS
9. CER QVINC RMA CO
10. CER QVINC ROM CO
11. CER QVINC ROMAE CON
12. CER QVINC ROMAE CONS
13. CER QVINQ ROM CON
14. CERT QVINC ROM CO
15. CERT QVINC ROM CON
16. CERTA QVINC ROM CO
17. CERTA QVINC ROM CON
18. CERTAM QVINC ROM CO
19. CERTAMEN QVINC ROM CO
20. CONCORDIA AVGVSTA
21. CONG I DAT POP
22. CONG II DAT
23. CONG II DAT POP
24. CONG II DAT POP R
25. DIVOS CLAVD AVGVST GERMANIC PATER AVG
26. GENIO AVGVSTI
27. GER PM TR P IMP PP
28. GER PON MAX TR P IMP PP
29. IANVM CLVSIT PACE P R TERRA MARIQ PARTA
30. IVPPITER CVSTOS
31. IVPPITER LIBERATOR
32. MAC AVG
33. MAX TRIB POT PP
34. PACE P R TERRA MARIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT
35. PACE P R VBIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT

36. PM TR P IMP PP
37. PM TR P PP
38. PON M TR P IMP PP
39. PON MA TR P IMP PP
40. PON MAX TR P IMP PP
41. PONTIF MA TR P IMP PP
42. PONTIF MAX TR P II PP
43. PONTIF MAX TR P III COS II
44. PONTIF MAX TR P III PP
45. PONTIF MAX TR P IIII PP
46. PONTIF MAX TR P IMP PP
47. PONTIF MAX TR P PP
48. PONTIF MAX TR P V PP
49. PONTIF MAX TR P VI COS III PP
50. PONTIF MAX TR P VI COS IIII PP
51. PONTIF MAX TR P VI PP
52. PONTIF MAX TR P VII COS IIII PP
53. PONTIF MAX TR P VIII COS IIII PP
54. PONTIF MAX TR P VIIII COS IIII PP
55. PONTIF MAX TR P X COS IIII PP
56. PONTIF MAX TR POT IMP PP
57. PONTIF MAX TR POT PP
58. PONTIF MAX TR POTEST IMP PP
59. PORT AVG
60. SACERD COOPT IN OMN CONL SVPRA NVM
61. SECVRITAS AVGVSTI
62. TR PON PP
63. TR POT PP
64. TRIB POT PP
65. VESTA
66. VICT AVG
67. VICTORIA AVGVSTI
68. No legend

Table 4. Iconographic themes on coinage of Nero

1. Agrippina II draped bust right
2. Agrippina II veiled, diademed, draped bust right
3. Altar
4. Annona standing right on left, resting hand on hip and holding cornucopia, facing Ceres seated to right, holding grain ears over modius and torch; galley prow in background
5. Apollo advancing right, playing lyre
6. Branch

7. Ceres standing left, holding grain ears and torch
8. Cippus with helmet atop with shield and spear leaning against it
9. Claudius laureate head right
10. Concordia seated left, holding patera and cornucopia
11. Genius standing left, sacrificing over altar and holding patera
12. Jupiter seated left, holding thunderbolt and scepter
13. Macellum Magnum market; statue at entrance, holding scepter
14. Nero and soldier riding rearing horses left
15. Nero and soldier riding rearing horses right
16. Nero and soldier riding rearing horses right; soldier to right with vexillum
17. Nero seated left on platform to right, accompanied by Praetorian Prefect, facing official in center giving donative to citizen to left; Minerva in background, holding owl and scepter
18. Nero seated left on platform to right, accompanied by Praetorian Prefect, facing soldiers
19. Nero seated right on platform to left, official in center giving donative to citizen on ladder, holding baby and with child to lower right; Liberalitas and Minerva in background
20. Nero standing facing, holding branch and Victory on globe
21. Nero standing facing, holding patera and cornucopia
22. Nero standing left on left, holding patera and scepter, and Poppaea (or Messalina) standing left on right, holding patera and cornucopia.
23. Nero standing left on platform, raising hand, accompanied by Praetorian Prefect, facing three soldiers to left; temple in background
24. Port of Ostia viewed from above, ringed by harbor buildings and galleys within
25. Quadriga of elephants riding left, carrying Claudius and Augustus, each holding a scepter
26. Roma seated left, holding scepter and resting arm on shield
27. Roma seated left, holding Victory and parazonium
28. Roma seated left, holding Victory and resting arm on shield
29. Roma seated left, holding Victory and spear
30. Roma seated left, holding wreath and parazonium
31. Roma seated left, holding wreath and resting arm on shield
32. Roma seated left, holding wreath and spear
33. Roma seated right, resting arm on shield and holding spear
34. Roma standing right, stepping on helmet, holding shield
35. Sacrificial implements: simpulum over altar to left and lituus over patera to right
36. Salus seated left, holding patera
37. Securitas seated right, resting head on hand and holding scepter; altar to right
38. Shield reading EQVESTER / OR DO / PRINCIPI / IVVENT

39. Standards (3)
40. Table with urn and wreath atop
41. Temple of Janus (doors on left)
42. Temple of Janus (doors on right)
43. Temple of Janus (doors only)
44. Temple with (six) columns, Vesta seated within, holding patera and scepter
45. Triumphal arch with quadriga above and statue of Mars on left wing
46. Victory advancing left, holding shield reading SPQR
47. Victory advancing left, holding wreath and palm
48. Victory advancing right, holding Palladium
49. Victory advancing right, holding wreath and palm
50. Victory seated right on globe, holding opened wreath
51. Victory standing right, stepping on globe, holding shield
52. Virtus standing left, stepping on weapons, holding parazonium and spear
53. Wreath, COS DES / PRINC / IVVENT within
54. Wreath, EX SC within

4. Paul's Epistle to the Romans

The general consensus of Pauline scholarship holds that the Epistle to the Romans was composed in the mid 50s CE and was sent from Corinth with the letter carrier identified as the deaconess Phoebe (16:1).[21] The discernable purpose of Romans is far less conspicuous than any other epistles in the Pauline corpus. Writing in the late nineteenth century, Frédéric L. Godet suggested that Romans consisted of "the apostle's dogmatic and

21. Although other locations for composition are possible (Athens, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Macedonia), several manuscripts include a postscript, *πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐγράφη ἀπὸ Κορίνθου* (B03 [fourth century, Codex Vaticanus corrected reading], and D06 [sixth century, Codex Claromontanus corrected reading]) or variations thereof identifying Corinth as the place of composition (049 218 489 927 999 1243 1244 1245 1628 1720 1874 1876 1877 1881). In what is a relatively distinctive occurrence in the Pauline corpus, Romans is sent by Paul without any mention of a co-sender or a literary collaborator (e.g., "Sosthenes" in 1 Cor 1:1; "Timothy" in 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; Phlm 1; "all the brothers" in Gal 1:2; "Silvanus and Timothy" in 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). This scenario is perhaps even more notable given the mention of Timothy as *συνεργός* in Rom 16:21. It was specifically Paul's mission to the gentile world that he was attempting to justify and expound. See further L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation*, JSNTSup 55 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 158.

moral catechism."[22] Similarly, Günther Bornkamm concludes that Romans "summarizes and develops the most important themes and thoughts of the Pauline message … [and] elevates his theology above the moment of definite situations and conflicts into the sphere of the eternally and universally valid[.] This letter to the Romans is the last will and testament of the Apostle Paul."[23] Although the letter has some obvious lacunae (ecclesiology [1 Cor 12–14], Eucharist [see 1 Cor 11:17–34], resurrection and eschatology [see 1 Cor 15; 1 Thess 4:13–5:11]),[24] understanding Romans as a doctrinal encapsulation of Pauline theology was a common approach throughout the medieval and later periods, as demonstrated by the history of the epistle's interpretation.[25]

This dominant interpretive trajectory came under serious scrutiny and critique by Ferdinand Christian Baur, whose starting point was the ad hoc nature of epistolary correspondence.[26] Baur argued that the letter must be interpreted according to its concrete historical circumstances, not as a comprehensive theoretical theological treatise. It is commonly accepted that these circumstances, whatever their particularities, were firmly situated in Rome during the reign of Nero.

It is, of course, almost ubiquitous in discussions of the Roman imperial backgrounds to the New Testament to refer to the numismatic material as contributing to the manner in which an emperor and or city intentionally shaped its identity and matrix of relationships. However, reference to and legitimate incorporation of relevant numismatic material in relation to New Testament exegesis is in its academic infancy.[27] There have been some experimental numismatic studies or general observations related to

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22. Cited in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 74.

23. Günther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," *ABR* 11 (1963–1964): 14.

24. Kari Kuula, *Paul's Treatment of the Law and Israel in Romans*, vol. 2 of *The Law, the Covenant and God's Plan* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 37.

25. Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977); see further Jervis, *Purpose of Romans*, 11–28.

26. Ferdinand C. Baur, "Über Zweck und Veranlassung des Römerbriefs und der damit zusammenhängenden Verhältnisse der römischen Gemeinde," *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 3 (1836): 59–178.

27. For an analysis of the contribution of numismatics to New Testament studies, see Michael P. Theophilos, *Numismatics and Greek Lexicography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 3–18.

the book of Romans,[28] but as yet there has not been a full investigation into the relevance and relationship of Roman coinage to the book of Romans, let alone in relation to the New Testament *en toto*.

The current study also seeks to clarify the relationship between the *text* of the New Testament and the *context* of the New Testament. Traditionally commentators of the Epistle to the Romans, or indeed the New Testament, offer occasional insights into specific Roman backgrounds when an unambiguous aspect is attested in the text, such as Paul's exhortation to obey the emperor in Rom 13:1–7. However, after generally noting the political or historical dimension, the Roman lens through which the pericope was interpreted often plays a limited role in understating the text. It is hoped that the discussion below will amply demonstrate that the Roman world was no less background to the New Testament than water is for a fish. Without it, the subject (whether a fish or the historical interpretation of the New Testament) becomes extinct. In other words, the perceived background is actually the foreground and a lens through which (together with Hellenistic and Jewish influences) the linguistic formulas, historical details, social customs, political scenarios, and iconographic imagery of the New Testament should be considered. In this vein, Warren Carter's comment is apposite: "the Roman Empire comprises not the New Testament background but its foreground."[29] Consideration of the numismatic evidence enhances and highlights the cogency of this recognition.

5. Contribution to Reading Romans

5.1. Port at Ostia

In 42 CE the emperor Claudius began an ambitious project to build a port near Ostia. The port itself was 3.8 km northwest of Ostia and would eventually take more than twenty years to complete, mainly due to the

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28. For example, Christopher Wordsworth, *St. Paul's Epistles* (London: Gilbert & Rivington, 1872), 208–24; Larry J. Kreitzer, "Nero's Rome: Images of the City on Imperial Coinage," *EvQ* 61 (1989): 301–9; Frank Thielman, "God's Righteousness as God's Fairness in Romans 1:17: An Ancient Perspective on a Significant Phrase," *JETS* 54 (2011): 35–48; Mark Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance in Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28–32.

29. Warren Carter, "Matthew and Empire," in *Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 90.

specific challenges of engineering. It was an endeavor that, as Tacitus reminds us, "had been several times intended by Julius Caesar, but as often abandoned on account of the difficulty of its execution."[30] The initial phase of the project (executed by Claudius) involved deep excavation of the sandy basin and construction of two breakwaters and a lighthouse (modeled on that of Alexandria) surmounted by a statue of Neptune. Although the port was in use as early as 62 CE, it was officially dedicated under Nero in 64 CE. Over this period, Ostia's population grew to approximately fifty to seventy thousand inhabitants, which is not surprising, given that it Ostia was the port servicing a city (Rome) that had close to a million inhabitants. The port at Ostia was a major achievement that opened up new opportunities for inhabitants of the region. The engineering expertise not only represented superior skills of engineering but presented new opportunities for transportation, trade, grain supplies, and military mobilization. It is no surprise, then, that the port was celebrated when it was completed.

One way in which this achievement was celebrated was the minting of relevant thematic iconography on Nero's coinage.[31] *RIC* Nero 1.181 is a sestertius of Nero that commemorates the construction of precisely this, the first harbor of Rome. The obverse has the inscription NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GER P M TR P IMP PP, with a laureate head facing right with an aegis. The reverse reads AVGVSTI S POR OST C and depicts a bird's eye view of the harbor of Ostia. At the top is depicted a lighthouse surmounted by a statue of Neptune, holding a scepter. The lower portion of the reverse depicts a reclining figure of Tiber facing to the left and holding a rudder in his right hand and a dolphin in his left, well-suited imagery, given the overall thematic content. To the left is a crescent,shaped pier with portico. To the right is a crescent-shaped row of breakwaters. The number of ships shown in the harbor in this type varies, but the four most important ships (never omitted) illustrate the four successive stages in a ship's use of the harbor: (1) entering the harbor under full sail; (2) the ship being rowed into/out of the harbor; (3) a large ship in the center that has cast anchor and whose sails are being taken down; and (4) the ship alongside the quay whose cargo is being unloaded by two men on deck and a third crossing the gangplank to shore.

30. Suetonius, *Claud.* 20: *a Diuo Iulio saepius destinatum ac propter difficultatem omissum*.

31. For references to *RIC* Nero, see *RIC* 1:150–87.

The imperial iconography on *RIC* Nero 1.181 (and its subvarieties) sheds considerable light on the position of maritime travel in the Greco-Roman mind. Nero sought to enhance public perception of his identity as one who facilitated maritime travel, with all the economic, social, political, military, and other benefits that it brought. Similarly, Paul likely drew on the rhetorical role of travel in Romans (and elsewhere in the Pauline corpus; see 2 Cor 11:25–26) to bolster his claims to apostolic authority, linking travel experience to his presentation of the authority and territory of Christ. In Rom 15:18–20 Paul reminds the Roman community of the validity of his missionary commission and his preaching to the gentiles specifically not where Christ has already been named but in regions that had not yet heard the Christian message. Paul concludes by rehearsing his past travel plans (15:14–21) and announcing his future travel plans: to go to Spain via Jerusalem and Rome (15:22–29). This theme deeply resonates through the narratives of Paul and his associates and highlights the important position travel, particularly sea travel, held in the Greco-Roman world.

Confirmation of this is attested in a first-century inscription (*IG* 4.841) on the tomb of Flavius Zeuxis from Hierapolis: "Titus Flavius Zeuxis, merchant, having sailed off Cape Maleus to Italy on seventy-two voyages, built this monument for himself and for his sons Flavius Theodoros and Flavius Theudas and for any others they may wish to grant permission."[32] In light of seasonal and geographic restrictions, Tullia Ritti estimates that Zeuxis most probably embarked on two trips per year for thirty-six years to accomplish such an impressive lifetime travel itinerary.[33] The feat is even more impressive when one considers the sheer number of catastrophic shipwrecks attested on the identifiable route.[34] Furthermore, the famous Roman orator Aelius Aristides celebrates the accessibility (by

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32. Max Fraenkel, *Inscriptiones Graecae IV: Inscriptiones graecae Aeginae, Pityonesi, Cecryphaliae, Argolidis (Greek Inscriptions of Aegina, Pityonesus, Cecryphalia, the Argolid)* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902), 472: Τ[ίτο]ς Φλα]ούηος Ζευξις ἐργάτης πλ]εύσας ὑπὲρ Μαλέαν εἰς Ἰ[τα]λ̣ίαν πλόας ἐβδομήκοντα δύο κατεσκεύασεν τὸ μνημεῖον εαυτῷ καὶ τοῖς τεκνοῖς Φλαουίῳ Θεοδώρῳ καὶ Φλαουίῳ Θευδᾳ καὶ ᾧ ἂν ἐκεῖνοι συνχωρήσωσιν.

33. Tullia Ritti, *An Epigraphic Guide to Hierapolis (Pamukkale)* (Istanbul: Ege Yainlari, 2006), 28.

34. See Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 189–90. See also Benthos, an interactive digital tool for mapping ancient waters produced by Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/benthos/).

land and sea) of the empire when he asks rhetorically: "When were there so many cities on land or throughout the sea, or when have they been so thoroughly adorned? Who then ever made such a journey, numbering the cities by the days of his trip, or sometimes passing through two or three cities on the same day, as it were through avenues?" (*In Rom.* 93).[35] Of particular interest in the latter example is Janet Downie's analysis of the rhetoric of Aelius Aristides's words on maritime travel in light of the suffering of his body,[36] themes that illuminate a reading of Pauline appeal to similar phenomena.

5.2. The Temple of Janus and the Ara Pacis

The coins of Nero that display the temple of Janus on the reverse are attested in three varieties: (1) temple of Janus doors on left; (2) temple of Janus doors on right; (3) temple of Janus doors only.[37] One of two reverse inscriptions generally accompanied these reverse types: (1) PACE P R TERRA MARIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT; (2) PACE P R VBIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT.[38] This is generally accepted as referring to the peace following cessation of Corbulo's campaigns against the Parthians and the installation of Tiridates, Parthian nominee for the throne, as king of Armenia. The coin type was issued after Nero's assumption of "Imperator" as a praenomen

35. Charles A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 2:94. See also Wilhelm Dindorf, *Aristides* (Leipzig: Reimer, 1829), 362–63: *πότε γὰρ πόλεις τοσαῦται κατ' ἤπειρον καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν, ἢ πότε οὕτω διὰ πάντων ἐκοσμήθησαν; ἢ τίς πω οὕτω τῶν τότε διεξήλασεν, ἐπαριθμῶν ταῖς ἡμέραις τὰς πόλεις, ἔστι δ' ὅτε τῆς αὐτῆς διὰ δυοῖν καὶ τριῶν ἐξελαύνων ὥσπερ στενωπῶν.*

36. Janet Downie, *At the Limits of Art: A Literary Study of Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113–25.

37. *RIC* 1, Nero 50, 58, 263–71, 283–91, 300–311, 323–28, 337–42, 347–50, 353–55, 362, 366–67, 421, 438–39, 468–72, 510–12, 537–39, 583–85. On the varieties of the depiction of the temple of Janus, see D. W. MacDowall, "The Organisation of the Julio-Claudian Mint at Rome," in *Scripta Nummaria Rommana: Essays Presented to Humphrey Sutherland*, ed. R. A. G. Carson and C. M. Kraay (London: Spink & Son, 1978), 32–46.

38. PACE = peace; PR = Populus Romanum = People of Rome; TERRA = earth or land; MARIQ = sea; VBIQ (VBIQUE) = everywhere; PARTA = doors; IANVM = nominative case - place of Janus; CLVSIT = closed. Alternatively, *parta* could be understood not as "doors" but as the past participle of *pario* ("bring forth, produce, acquire"), i.e., "The Peace of the Roman People having been established on land and sea, he closed (the temple of) Janus."

(mid-66 CE) and was probably discontinued when the Jewish War broke out in November 66 CE, probably causing the doors of the temple of Janus to be opened once again. According to *Livy*, Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, sought to redefine the "new city" not "by force of arms" but rather "law, statutes, and observances" (*Urb. cond.* 1.19.1).[39] Livy records that Pompilius "thought it needful that his warlike people should be softened by the disuse of arms, and built the temple of Janus at the bottom of the Argiletum, as an index of peace and war, that when open it might signify that the nation was in arms, when closed that all the peoples round about were pacified" (1.19.2). Livy continues by noting that on only two occasions since Pompilius's reign had the doors been shut: "once in the consulship of Titus Manlius, after the conclusion of the First Punic War; the second time, which the gods permitted our own generation to witness, was after the battle of Actium, when the emperor Caesar Augustus had brought about peace on land and sea" (1.19.3). Similarly, the Res gestae divi Augusti, as Augustus's funerary inscription and own account of his life and accomplishments, notes in section 13;

> Janus Quirinus, which our ancestors ordered to be closed whenever there was peace, secured by victory, throughout the whole domain of the Roman people on land and sea, and which, before my birth is recorded to have been closed but twice in all since the foundation of the city, the senate ordered to be closed thrice while I was princeps.[40]

A corresponding view is found in Plutarch, *Num.* 20.1–2:

> He [Janus] also has a temple at Rome with double doors, which they call the gates of war; for the temple always stands open in time of war, but

39. All translations of Livy from B. O. Foster, *Livy, History of Rome 1: Books 1–2*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), 67.

40. Res gest. 13 in Frederick W. Shipley, trans., *Velleius Paterculus; Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 364–65: Latin: *(Ianum) Quirin(um, quem cl)aussum ess(e maiores nostri voluer)unt, | (cum p)er totum i(mperium po)puli Roma(ni terra marique es)set parta vic|(torii)s pax, cum pr(ius, quam) náscerer, (a condita) u(rb)e bis omnino clausum || (f)uisse prodátur m(emori)ae, ter me princi(pe senat)us claudendum esse censui(t)*; Greek: Πύλην Ἐνυάλιον, ἣν κεκλῖσθαι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἠθέ|λησαν εἰρηνευομένης τῆς ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις πάσης γῆς τε | καὶ θαλάσσης, πρὸ μὲν ἐμοῦ, ἐξ οὗ ἡ πόλις ἐκτίσθη, | τῶι παντὶ αἰῶνι δὶς μόνον κεκλεῖσθαι ὁμολογεῖ|ται, ἐπὶ δὲ ἐμοῦ ἡγεμόνος τρὶς ἡ σύνκλητος ἐψη|φίσατο κλεισθῆναι.

> is closed when peace has come. The latter was a difficult matter, and it rarely happened, since the realm was always engaged in some war, as its increasing size brought it into collision with the barbarous nations which encompassed it round about. But in the time of Augustus Caesar it was closed, after he had overthrown Antony; and before that, when Marcus Atilius and Titus Manlius were consuls, it was closed a short time; then war broke out again at once, and it was opened.[41]

The origin of the practice of opening and closing the doors of the temple of Janus has at least two versions.[42] First, the most ancient and common account presents Janus as the guardian of peace and is therefore required to be safeguarded.

> "But why hide in time of peace and open thy gates when men take arms?" Without delay he rendered me the reason that I sought. "My gate, unbarred, stands open wide, that when the people hath gone forth to war, the road for their return may be open too. I bar the doors in time of peace, lest peace depart, and under Caesar's star I shall be long shut up."[43]

The second version is related to Ovid's but envisages war locked up in the temple, under the supervision of the god, which is then released. Vergil expresses this view in *Aen*. 7.601–625, where the opening of the doors of Janus is the inception of the war between the Trojans and Latins:

> A custom there was in Hesperian Latium, which thenceforth the Alban cities held holy, as now does Rome, mistress of the world, when they first rouse the war god to battle … there are twin gates of War (so men

41. Trans. from Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives 1: Theseus and Romulus; Lycurgus and Numa; Solon and Publicola,* LCL 46 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 373. Macrobius's *Sat*. 1.17–18, fifth century CE, traces the imagery to the Sabine War. He records that during the war the Sabines entered through the Porta Janualis, only to be overwhelmed by a torrent of boiling water, which miraculously appeared from the temple of Janus. For this reason, it was decided that during the wars the doors of the Janus temple had to remain open, so that the god could come in aid the people at any time. A similar story is recorded in Ovid, *Fast*. 1.257–275.

42. In addition to the two outlined below, other possibilities include: the open doors permit sacrifices to be offered to forecast the outcome of the military engagement; and returning soldiers could process through the doors, allowing the return of the people on military duty.

43. Ovid, *Fast*. 1.276–282; trans. James G. Frazer, *Ovid's Fasti*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), 21.

> call them), hallowed by religious awe and the terrors of fierce Mars; a hundred brazen bolts close them, and the eternal strength of iron, and Janus their guardian never quits the threshold. Here, when the sentence of the Fathers is firmly fixed on war, the Consul, arrayed in Quirinal robe and Gabine cincture, with his own hand unbars the grating portals, with his own lips calls forth war; then the rest of the warriors take up the cry, and brazen horns blare out their hoarse accord. In this manner then, too, Latinus was bidden to proclaim war on the sons of Aeneas, and to unclose the grim gates … burst open the iron-bound gates of war.[44]

The way in which this background relates to our discussion of Nero is twofold. First, the reverse designs of Nero's Janus coins were specifically designed to commemorate the closure of the doors and make a statement about his own achievements of (apparently) establishing peace. It is significant to note that, as far as the extant numismatic record indicates, Nero was the sole emperor in the first century to use the temple of Janus as iconography on his coins. The imagery was intended to communicate in no uncertain terms that Nero was the superintendent of peace.

Second, Nero celebrates the apparent peace that his rule facilitated through another numismatic issue, that of the Ara Pacis bronze asses. *RIC* Nero 1.526 and at least thirteen other related types[45] depict the bare head of Nero with a globe at the point of the bust. The reverse depicts the Ara

44. Vergil, *Aen*. 7.601–622; trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, *Virgil, Aeneid VII–XII; The Minor Poems*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), 44–47.

45. *RIC* 1, Nero 418, 456–61, 526–31. All the thirteen distinct types of the Ara Pacis coins of Nero lack reverse inscriptions other than ARA PACIS in exergue. The types are as follows: (1) bare head left, IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR P PP [66 CE]; (2) bare head left, IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR POT PP [66 CE]; (3) bare head left, IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PONTIF MAX TRIB POT PP [66 CE]; (4) bare head left, NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP P [64–67 CE]; (5) bare head left, NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP PP [64–67 CE]; (6) bare head left, NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM [64–67 CE]; (7) bare head left, NERO CLAVD DIVI CLAVD F CAESAR AVG GERM [64–67 CE]; (8) bare head right, IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR P PP [66 CE]; (9) bare head right, IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P MAX TR POT PP [66 CE]; (10) bare head right, IMP NERO CAESAR AVG PM TR POT PP [66 CE]; (11) bare head right, NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP P [64–67 CE]; (12) bare head right, NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P IMP PP [64–67 CE]; (13) bare head right, NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM [64–67 CE].

Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) enclosure with ornamented top, decorated front panels, and central double doors, in exergue ARA PACIS, in field, SC. The Ara Pacis was awarded to Augustus by the senate after his successful pacification of Gaul and Spain. Res Gest. 12 records,

> On my return from Spain and Gaul, after successfully restoring law and order to these provinces, the Senate decided under the consulship of Tiberius Nero and Publius Quintilius to consecrate the Ara Pacis Augustae on the Campus Marius in honor of my return, at which officials, priests, and Vestal Virgins should offer an annual sacrifice.[46]

The altar was inaugurated on 4 July 13 BCE (dedicated on 30 January 9 BCE) in lieu of triumphal honors that Augustus had refused to accept since 29 BCE. In essence, it was a commemorative structure that promoted Augustan ideology, emphasizing the divine origins of Rome and asserting the peace ushered in by the Julio-Claudian dynasty. The theme that the structure promotes is that the Augustan peace has resulted in the prosperity and fertility of the empire. On Nero's coinage, it also served a further purpose: to attempt to solidify a typological connection between Nero and Augustus. This iconographic typology attempted to present Nero as a new Augustus, or, at the very least, Nero as operating within the same trajectory and therefore inheriting by default some of the reflected reputation of his predecessor. Noteworthy here is Suetonius, who notes that, "to make his good intentions still more evident, he declared that he would rule according to the principles of Augustus, and he let slip no opportunity for acts of generosity and mercy, or even for displaying his affability."[47]

The portrayal of Roman peace in the coinages of Nero (doors of Janus and Ara Pacis) provides a rich tapestry of comparative material in light of Paul's own use of the theme of peace in Romans. In the book of Romans, the noun εἰρήνη occurs ten times, and the verb εἰρηνεύω (as a participle in 12:18) occurs once (see table 5). For the purposes of our discussion, two passages are worthy of further consideration.

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46. Res gest. 12 in Shipley, *Velleius Paterculus; Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 364.

47. Suetonius, *Ner.* 10.1; trans. J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius*, 2 vols., LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 2:96–97: *Atque ut certiorem adhuc indolem ostenderet, ex Augusti praescripto imperaturum se professus, neque liberalitatis neque clementiae, ne comitatis quidem exhibendae ullam occasionem omisit.*

Table 5: Occurrences of εἰρήνη and εἰρηνεύω in Romans

1:7	χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
2:10	δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν
3:17	καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν
5:1	δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
8:6	τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη
12:18	εἰ δυνατὸν τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες
14:17	οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη
14:19	Ἄρα οὖν τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν καὶ τὰ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλους
15:13	Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν
15:33	Ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν
16:20	ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης συντρίψει τὸν σατανᾶν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας ὑμῶν ἐν τάχει.

Romans 5:1

If one reads ἔχω in Rom 5:1 as an indicative (ἔχομεν [ℵ^{a} B^{3} G^{gr} P Ψ 0220^{vid} 88 326 330 629 1241 1739 Byz Lect it^{61vid} syr^{h} cop^{sa}]) rather than a subjunctive (ἔχωμεν [א* A B* C D K L 33 81 it$^{d, g}$ vg syr$^{p, pal}$ cop^{bo} arm eth]), Paul is expounding the effects of justification. Romans 5:1–11 in general, and verse 1 in particular, expound the effects of justification as being peace: not merely peace in the sense of psychological comfort regarding sins forgiven (although this may indeed be one of the results),[48] nor only the absence of war (Deut 20:12; 1 Sam 7:14; 1 Kgs 2:5; 5:18), but in the fullest semantic sense of the terminology, akin perhaps to the Hebrew Bible's concept of *šālôm*, "the fullness of right relationship that is implied in justification itself and of all the other bounties that flow from it."[49] Paul extends the concept and efficacy of peace far beyond the Roman ideal. He defines it as being positively reconciled with God, "the objective state of being at peace instead of being enemies [with God]."[50] This understand-

48. Note, however, Robert H. Mounce's comment (*Romans* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995], 133): "It is not necessary, however, in the interests of literary precision to remove all psychological connotations from the term. Peace is also the joyful experience of those who live in harmony with God, other people, and themselves."

49. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 395.

50. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 257.

ing is made explicit in verses 10–11 in the parallel statements, ἐχθροὶ ὄντες κατηλλάγημεν τῷ θεῷ … καταλλαγέντες...τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν. These statements are particularly notable, given the noted Roman Neronian context where claims of peacemaking reached a zenith in the imperial propaganda. A recipient of Paul's letter could not have failed to be struck by the counterimperial claim being made.

Romans 16:20

In the concluding section of his letter to the Romans (15:14–16:27), Paul makes reference to both ministerial matters (past [15:14–21], present [15:22–29], and future [15:30–33]), and some personal matters (commendation [16:1–2], greetings to Christians in Rome [16:3–16], warning [16:17–20], greetings from companions [16:21–24], doxology [16:25–27]). The admonition in 16:17–20 is introduced as a strong exhortation, παρακαλῶ (see also 12:1; 15:30), warning the recipients about false teachers. There is no further indication who these false teachers were or what doctrine they promulgated. Paul could, of course, have had more than one group in mind or indeed as a future precaution. The reference in verse 20 that God will "soon crush Satan under your feet" has, of course produced many varying interpretations. Most commentators identify within the phrase an allusion to Gen 3:15, indicating that Paul identifies the serpent of Genesis as Satan, "the personification of all evil, disorder, dissension, and scandal in the community."[51] Alternatively, the identification plausibly refers to Nero as the personification of evil and disorder. That is, Paul offers a critique of the ideology of Neronian peace and juxtaposes it with the God of peace.[52] It is therefore not merely false teachers at whom Paul takes aim but the one who stands above and over the entire oppressive empire. This eschatological reading is echoed in Jub. 23.29: "And all their days they shall complete and live in peace and in joy, and there shall be no Satan nor any evil destroyer, for all their days shall be days of blessing and healing." It is noteworthy that "nothing in the context indicates that Paul is

51. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 746–47.

52. One might question this identification in light of Rom 13, but it should be recognized that civil obedience is to be differentiated from full allegiance or indeed that the concept cannot be divorced from a particularity.

looking to the parousia."[53] In Romans, God is the source, object, and definition of peace. Rather than accepting the Neronian definition of peace, Paul subverts the dominant narrative of the empire by suggesting that an alternative source and definition of peace is active.

5.3. Donatus

The theme of a Pauline visit in Rom 1:10, "I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you," reappears toward the end of the epistle (15:22, 25, 31–32) and is combined with a request from Paul for their prayerful support during his upcoming journey to Jerusalem, in effect inviting their participation in his apostolic duties. John Barclay's *Paul and the Gift* distinguishes six different nuances of the term gift: (1) superabundance (supreme scale, lavishness, or permanence of the gift); (2) singularity (gift giving is the sole more of interaction); (3) priority (gift given before the recipient's initiative); (4) incongruity (given without any regard to the worth of the recipient); (5) efficacy (produces the desired response, typically gratitude); and (6) noncircularity (given without interest in reciprocity).[54] Of note is that in all cases the gift effects the establishment of some kind of relationship, often one defined by obligation.

Precisely this phenomenon is a significant feature of the iconography on Neronian coinage. In a series of Sestertae minted at Rome, Nero celebrates his benevolence in gift giving. The obverse of *RIC* Nero 1.152 has NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER P M TR P IMP P P and laureate head of Nero facing left, and the reverse reads CONGI DAT POP, [S C] in exergue, with the emperor seated right on a curule chair upon a high platform on left. Before him is an official seated right on another lower platform handing congiarium (gift of money) to a togate citizen standing with one foot on a flight of steps with an extended hand. Accompanying is a small boy standing left behind him. In the background, Minerva stands facing, holding an owl in the right hand and a spear in the left. Liberalitas (generosity embodied) stands to the right facing, holding up tesserae (ticket or voucher).

53. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 541.

54. J. M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 70–75.

Variations on this theme are also found in imperial mints outside Rome, such as *RIC* Nero 1.394, minted at Lugdunum. Several examples of this type from the Lugdunum mint (e.g., 1.502) depict a right-facing portrait and a small globe at the base of the neck. Although minor iconographic variations are apparent (direction of facing on the obverse; cf. 1.503), occasionally more significant thematic variations of the same reverse type occur, as in 1.158, which reverses the direction of the scene on the obverse. Nonetheless, the practice of distributing donations to citizens of the empire, whether oil, grain, wine, or money, had an established precedent in imperial practice (although Nero is the first to depict the practice on coinage). Most interesting in this regard are the observations of Suetonius noted above regarding Nero, who apparently modeled his rule on that of Augustus (Suetonius, *Ner.* 10.1). Augustus as gift-giver is indeed one of the major tenets of the Res gestae divi Augusti.

The manner in which this illuminates the Roman numismatic context of Paul's epistle is that Paul seems to be drawing on a well-known path of appealing to his readers to participate with him in prayer (15:30) and making "a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem" (15:26), because "they owe it to them" (15:27a). Paul's rationale is based on an acknowledgement of moral responsibility gentile owed to Jew: "if the gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings" (15:28).

5.4. Son of God

Nero's predecessor, Claudius (41–54 CE), did not employ the title "son of…" (abbreviated F[ilius]) in any of the twenty-six varieties of obverse inscriptions on his imperial coinage (see table 6) that were so common on the coinage of Augustus, Tiberius, and others. Claudius was the son of Drusus, and various inscriptions identify him simply as *Δρούσου υἱος*, but he was acclaimed a god during his own lifetime in the East, "ΘΕΟΥ ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΥ" (P.Oxy. 31.2555), and declared a *divus* in Rome after his death – note the striking words "*τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ Κλαυδίου χάριτι*" (trans. "by the grace of the god Claudius" in IGRR 1.1263. His adopted son Nero could therefore legitimately refer to himself as the "son of god Claudius."

Table 6: Obverse Inscriptions on Claudian imperial Issues

1. TICLCAESARAVGPMTRPIMPPP
2. TI CLAVD CAES AVG

3. TI CLAVD CAES AVG AGRIPP AVGVSTA
4. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P
5. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TRIB POT
6. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM PM TRIB POT PP
7. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P
8. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P III
9. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P IIII
10. TICLAVDCAESARAVGPMTRPVIIMPX
11. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P VI IMP XI
12. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P VIII
13. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P VIIII IMP XVI
14. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P VIIII IMP XVIII
15. TICLAVDCAESARAVGPMTRPXIMPPP
16. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P X IMP XIIX
17. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P X PP IMP XVIII
18. TICLAVDCAESARAVGPMTRPXIIMPPPCOSV
19. TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG PM TR P XI PP IMP XVIII
20. TI CLAVDIVS CAES AVG PM TR P IMP PP
21. TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG
22. TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERM PM TR P
23. TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG PM TR P IMP
24. TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG PM TR P IMP PP
25. DIVVS CLAVDIVS
26. DIVVS CLAVDIVS AVGVSTVS

It is no surprise, then, that *RIC* Nero 1.6 (Gold aureus) takes advantage of this concept when it depicts Agrippina the Younger and Nero in jugate profile. Agrippina the Younger was the great-granddaughter of Emperor Augustus, great-niece and adoptive granddaughter of Emperor Tiberius, sister of Emperor Caligula, niece and fourth wife of Emperor Claudius, and the mother of Emperor Nero. The coin depicts the overlapping profiles of Nero and his mother on the obverse with the inscription NERO CLAVD DIVI F CAES AVG GERM IMP TR P COS, that is, "Nero, son of Divine Claudius Caesar, Augustus.…" On the reverse: in field, Divus Claudius, radiate, holding eagle-tipped scepter in right hand, and Divus Augustus, radiate, holding patera in right, scepter in left, driving quadriga of elephants left with: AGRIPP AVG DIVI CLAVD NERONIS CAES MATER, EX S C, or "Agrippina, wife [by implication] of the Divine Claudius, Mother of Nero Caesar, by a decree of the Senate."

Additionally, several inscriptions (dating to the early period of Nero's reign) have the formula θεου Σεβαστου υιος, which refers to Nero the son of the god Claudius. The two-word formula θεου υιος occurs in three Athenian inscriptions, including one that was prominently displayed on the east architrave of the Parthenon and on two issues of tetradrachmas struck in Antioch. The official attribution of divinity to the emperors, and indeed the implication of Claudius's son Nero, would have posed an enormous challenge for the first Christians. This challenge is highlighted in such expressions as those found in Rom 1:3–4: "concerning his Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν). Adolf Deissmann thus significantly understates that this formulation of divine sonship was a "silent protest" against Roman power.[55] Rather, John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed more aptly note that "to proclaim Jesus as Son of God was deliberately denying Caesar his highest title."[56]

5.5. Adoption

Adoption in the Roman world was characteristically attested between free adult males and was "undertaken for economic or political purposes rather than emotional or humanitarian considerations."[57] The legal instrument of adoption within this context provided the flexibility to restructure

55. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Greco-Roman World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), 355.

56. John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus's Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2004), 11. Contra Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9–10, 91–93; Denny Burk, "Is Paul's Gospel Counterimperial? Evaluating the Prospects of the 'Fresh Perspective' for Evangelical Theology," *JETS* 51 (2008): 309–37; Seyoon Kim, *The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Joel White, "Anti-imperial Subtexts in Paul: An Attempt at Building a Firmer Foundation," *Bib* 90 (2009): 305–33; John M. G. Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), chs. 18–19.

57. David D. Dry, "Adoption," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner, 12 vols. (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 1:100.

the family configuration,[58] most often to provide heirs for upper-class Romans but frequently with political motivation to secure family alliances or associations. One of the most famous adoptions in the Roman world was Claudius's adoption of Nero. This particular instance was so well-known and controversial because Claudius already had a legitimate heir. Following the adoption in 50 CE, Nero took precedence over Claudius's own younger child Britannicus, although this did not guarantee imperial succession.[59] Nero subsequently came to power in 54 CE, predominantly through the machinations of his mother Agrippina. For the initial years of his reign, Tacitus and other literary sources record that his mother exerted great and open influence over her emperor son but that her influence gradually declined as Nero asserted himself. This sequence of events is fully borne out in Neronian coinage. *RIC* Nero 1.1 (Aureus) and 1.2 (Denarius), both from 54 CE, depict Agrippina's profile sharing the obverse with Nero himself—mother and son set nose to nose. More tellingly, her name appears on the obverse, with Nero's name relegated to the reverse, the less prominent side. By the next year (January–November 55 CE) things had changed, and *RIC* Nero 1.6 (Aureus) and 1.7 (Denarius) now have Agrippina's profile set behind Nero's in jugate arrangement, with Nero's name and title on the obverse and Agrippina's titles and names on the reverse. From December 55 CE, most issues have Nero's bust on the obverse and Agrippina's on the reverse, while others omit Agrippina entirely.

Historically, the practice of adoption was far less common among Jews than Romans, although there is evidence for the practice in both the Hebrew Bible (Gen 15:2–3; 30:3; 48:5–6; Exod 2:10; 2 Sam 6:23; Esth 2:7, 15) and the Second Temple period.[60] Significantly, in regard to the former, Hos 1:9 is a negative example in which God "unadopts" or "disowns" the Israelites as *not* his people and that he is *not* their God. It is this passage that Paul develops in Rom 9:25–26, using the restoration described in Hos

58. Mireille Corbier, "Divorce and Adoption as Roman Familial Strategies," in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. B. Rawson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 47–78; Hugh Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 123–37.

59. Jane F. Gardner, "Status, Sentiment and Strategy in Roman Adoption," in *Adoption et Fosterage,* ed. M. Corbier (Paris: de Boccard, 1999), 63–80.

60. Brendan Byrne, *Sons of God, Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1979); Robert Brian Lewis, *Paul's 'Spirit of Adoption' in Its Roman Imperial Context* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 43–96.

(see 2:23) to illustrate the mercy displayed by God in his choosing to bring gentiles into his family. Paul mentions adoption twice in Rom 8. In verse 8 he states: "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' " (*οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον ἀλλ' ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν· αβ βα ὁ πατήρ*); in verse 23 he adds: "and not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (*οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες, ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν*).

The manner in which the above discussion of Nero's controversial adoption illuminates Pauline references to adoption in Rom 8–9 is twofold. First, within the political context of Agrippina's machinations of Nero's rise to power and struggle for influence, superbly illustrated and amply attested in the numismatic record, Paul's readers in Rome would naturally have thought of the well-known Claudius/Nero scandal when they heard Romans and presumably perceived the unambiguous rhetorical implication of the beneficial circumstances of the adoptee.

Second, there may well be further implications for the historical circumstances in Rome. A hypothesis proposed by Willi Marxsen in 1968 explored the implications of an edict issued by the emperor Claudius in 49 CE.[61] Writing in the third decade of the second century (ca. 120 CE), Suetonius records in *Claud.* 25.4 that Claudius expelled from Rome "Jews who were causing continual disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus" (Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis). Despite the ambiguity of the instigation and the reference to Chrestus, which one assumes was an iotacistic error for Χριστός, Claudius's solution to Jewish unrest is certainly in keeping with imperial precedence, as evidenced, for example, by Tiberius (Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.8.5; Suetonius, *Tib*. 36), and also echoes Claudius's own practice in resolving Jewish unrest in Alexandria in 41 CE (P.Lond. 6.1912).[62] With respect to *Claud.* 25.4 and the edict of 49 CE, Fitzmyer argues that Suetonius's statement refers to circumstances brought about by

61. Willi Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to Its Problems*, trans. George Buswell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 98–101.

62. Graeme W. Clarke, "The Origins and Spread of Christianity," in *The Augustan Empire 43 B.C.–A.D. 69*, ed. Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott, CAH 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 869.

overzealous intrusions of Christian elements in the Jewish congregations of Rome, or, as Marxsen notes, “the Gospel of Christ which had called forth the ferment among the Jews of Rome.”[63] It is indeed of interest that there is a historical glimpse of just this circumstance preserved in records of Paul’s interactions with Aquila and Priscilla, after traveling from Athens to Corinth. Acts 18:2 reports, “There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome.” Whether Claudius’s edict effected all Jews or only their leaders is unknown,[64] but with the death of Claudius in 54 CE the edict would almost certainly have been relaxed, if not completely disregarded by Nero, whose wife Poppea Sabina was known to display Jewish sympathies. The net result of this would have been a Jewish and Jewish Christian influx into Rome after 54 CE, returning to a Christian community that had evolved in a predominantly gentile environment. This scenario provides the historical framework for Paul’s emphasis on Israel’s story in Rom 9–11, that is, to address the question of Jewish rejection of the gospel if, in fact, it is the legitimate fulfillment of God’s *Heilsgeschichte*, and Paul’s guidelines on adherence to dietary and calendrical customs regarding the “weak” (those of Jewish background) and “strong” (those of fentile background) within the community (Rom 14–15). In other words, given that Claudius adopted Nero (an outsider) over Britannicus (rightful heir), Paul may be intentionally constructing a parallel between that idea and the gentiles being adopted “over” Jews—although the Jews are not displaced in the process. It seems evident that the metaphor of adoption in Rom 8–9 does evoke the political and historical realities in a Neronian context, details of which are aptly illustrated on contemporary coinage.

6. Conclusion

The words of Robert Grant are as valid today as when they were penned in 1968, when he advocates a tactile engagement with the material evidence rather than a continuing regurgitation of modern scholarly footnotes. Grant notes the tendency of his contemporaries, who, “neglecting the concrete actuality of the ancient historians, of papyri, inscriptions, coins,

63. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 77; Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 99.
64. Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959).

and other archaeological remains … seek to advance learning in their field by reading one another's books."[65] John Scheid more recently noted that study of the Roman Empire "cannot do without epigraphy any more than it can do without archaeology. No one neglects literary sources, obviously, but it is essential to recognize that without direct documentation … [it is] very fragmentary."[66] My own analysis suggests that this statement would apply a fortiori when a scholar of antiquity considers the numismatic contribution to illuminating the Roman world of the early church. However, such contributions are regularly overlooked by New Testament interpreters even though coins have the distinct advantage of bearing official status and conveying intentionality by the emperor who sanctioned their production and circulation.[67]

This essay has sought not merely to provide "an interesting numismatic illustration paralleling the Pauline letter"[68] but rather to demonstrate that attention to the numismatic background (i.e., foreground) to the epistle has significant exegetical implications, with the potential of opening new avenues of interpretation that are specifically grounded in the historical realities of first-century Rome. Although several further examples of Neronian numismatic illumination of Paul's letter to the Romans could be productively investigated,[69] it is hoped that the examples offered above

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65. Robert M. Grant, "American New Testament Study, 1926–1956," *JBL* 87 (1968): 48.

66. John Scheid, "Epigraphy and Roman Religion," in *Epigraphy and Historical Sciences*, ed. J. Davies and J. Wilkers, Proceedings of the British Academy 177 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37.

67. For an analysis of the representation of imperial family on provincial coins, see Marietta Horster, "Coinage and Images of the Imperial Family: Local Identity and Roman Rule," *JRA* 26 (2013), 258.

68. Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 123.

69. Other promising examples include: (1) the manner in which cultic veneration was expressed on the coinage and supported Roman concepts of piety and devotion; see further Bruce W. Winter, *Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians' Responses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); (2) Nero as high priest (Pontifex Maximus) and whose role it was to maintain a good relationship with the gods on behalf of the people, evidenced through several numismatic types, including Genius standing left, sacrificing over altar and holding patera; depiction of sacrificial implements: simpulum over altar to left and lituus over patera to right; and depiction of Salus seated left, holding patera and so on; this is particularly striking in light of Rom 8:34 (see also Heb 7:25; 9:24), where intercession is linked with the portrayal of Jesus' post-

are sufficient to highlight several specific contributions of the numismatic evidence to the interpretive task of the book of Romans and the viability of the method for its broader application to New Testament Studies.

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resurrection activities; and (3) the visual images on coinage as illustrative of Rom 1:23 (NRSV): "and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being [Neronian bare/laureate/radiate head depicted on obverse on over fifty types] or birds [see *RIC* 1, Nero 8, 9, 20) or four-footed animals (see *RIC* 1, Nero 14, 15, 16, 25] … or reptiles [see *RIC* 1, Nero 137, 170]."

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Seeing Pharaoh and His Obelisks in Rome (Rom 9:17)

Annelies Moeser

> For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." (Rom 9:17 NRSV)

In this brief study I use an audience-oriented approach to propose a potential reception of Rom 9:17 from the perspective of a predominantly gentile group of Christians hearing Paul's letter in the city of Rome. I will argue that the obelisks in first-century Rome are available as a visual intertext to the Pauline audience as a representation of "Pharaoh." Paul claims in 9:17 that G*d has "raised up" Pharaoh and then has shown divine power over Pharaoh, causing G*d's name to become known. The actual presence of these obelisks as captured Egyptian trophies in the imperial capital appear to the audience as proof of Paul's assertions at 9:6a that the word of G*d has not failed and that G*d indeed has power over Pharaoh, both in the distant past and the more recent victories over Egypt by Rome. The realization of divine intentions provide reason to trust Paul's larger argument in Rom 9–11 concerning G*d's future plans of mercy for all (Rom 11:30–32).

The reconstruction of Paul's audience that I present is shaped by three significant factors: their social location, their gentile identity, and their location in Rome. I argue that the audience could see in their urban environment that "Pharaoh" had been conquered by Caesar and that proclamations of this victory were evident in the art and architecture of the city, in particular through the presence of Egyptian obelisks. I will demonstrate that these artifacts from Pharaoh's Egypt were significant monuments within first-century Rome, easily encountered and visible to a large part of

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I would like to thank Warren Carter for his helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

the population. The artistic and symbolic contexts in which these obelisks had been appropriated and reframed within Rome lent themselves both to readings of Caesar's power over Egypt and to a destabilized questioning of imperial power.

There has been much debate in the history of scholarship concerning the intended audience of Paul's epistle and their social status. I agree with Peter Lampe's conclusion that Rom 16 is part of the original letter,[1] and therefore the preponderance of names of servile origin points to the social location of Paul's addressees within the lower strata of society.[2] I assume that there may have been multiple small communities within Rome, some of which may have been slave-led communities, as Oakes has suggested for "those who belong to Aristobulus" (Rom 16:10) or "those who belong to Narcissus who are in the Lord." [3] Those who were not slaves were likely to be low-status freed or free persons. Following Carolyn Osiek and Margaret MacDonald's important insight, I assume the centrality of the house church in worship, preaching, and evangelization, including the reading of letters.[4] Thus not only adult females and males heard Paul's missive but also children of varying ages and with different levels of comprehension and interest.[5]

A second key factor distinguishing the Pauline audience is their gentile identity. Reconstructions of Pauline audiences concerning the gentile and/or Jewish background of the participants often stems from a search for an authoritative interpretive key to Romans. The presumption of Jewish leadership in the community, for example, is assumed to provide some explanatory power to a scholarly interpretation reliant on a deeper appreciation and knowledge of Jewish scriptures. Thus while there is agreement that Paul clearly addresses gentiles (e.g., Rom 1:6, 13–15; 11:13), scholars have posited a wide variation in the Pauline audience's level of familiarity with Jewish traditions and the weight of Jewish membership in those communities. For example, Leander E. Keck assumes a "likelihood that

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1. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries,* trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 153–65.

2. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 170–83.

3. Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (Minneapolis: Fortress; London: SPCK, 2009), 79.

4. Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 9.

5. Osiek and MacDonald, *A Woman's Place*, 67, 68–94, 239–40.

many of the Christian Gentiles in Rome had been God-fearers who had become familiar with the Greek Bible while attending the synagogues before their conversion."[6] At the other end of the spectrum, Peter Oakes's reconstructed audience for Romans envisions some gentiles "whose cultural reference points are Graeco-Roman" rather than Jewish and who are even disdainful of Jews.[7]

For scholars, particularly those who posit a larger role for Jewish or God-fearing gentile members of the community, an audience's understanding of the reference to Pharaoh at Rom 9:17 is based on knowledge of the Septuagint. Contemporary predisposition to a textual approach to Pauline literature underscores this interpretive path. Robert Jewett, in his magisterial commentary on Romans, not only reads Rom 9:17 in terms of Paul's use of Exod 9:16 but also identifies Paul's alterations to the text of the Septuagint that "sharpen up the meaning that Paul intends to convey" and also tend in the direction of the MT text. [8] I cite this example to distinguish an interpretation that privileges authorial intention from the audience-oriented perspective that I employ. Whether Paul had sufficient knowledge of the LXX to cite Exodus and modify it intentionally as Jewett asserts, I argue that we do not have enough data to assume that a first-century, nonelite audience would have the requisite knowledge and access to texts to recognize the modifications and the significance thereof. It is worth considering that the reference to Pharaoh lacks even basic explanations of Pharaoh's role in history or the context in which the scripture was spoken to him.[9]

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6. Leander E. Keck, *Romans*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 38.

7. Oakes, *Reading Romans,* 74. Oakes draws on Wolfgang Wiefel's argument to note that Rom 11:13–24 (counseling gentiles not to assume a superior position over the Jews) is "undoubtedly addressed to gentiles who were not god-fearers, attracted to synagogues" (76).

8. Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 584.

9. The contrast with Paul's careful explanations in the near context of Rom 9:6–13 is striking. Here Paul explains *the purpose* of his references to Israel's forebears as elucidation of belonging to the "true" family of Israel. The reader is helped by numerous details within this account as to who sired or conceived each child—Abraham (9:7), Isaac (9:7, 10), Sarah (9:9), Rebecca (9:10), Jacob (9:13), and Esau (9:13)—so that the family history is clear. It is all the more striking that so much explanation is given when the audience has already heard Rom 4 explaining the role of Abraham and Sarah, the promise to Abraham's descendants coming through the righteousness of faith (4:13), and the significance of faith being reckoned as righteousness not only to Abraham but to the audience of Paul's letter, the "us" in 4:24.

Thus I suggest that for some gentiles hearing the Letter to the Romans, even if they knew the Exodus story of G*d showing power over Pharaoh, their primary reference point may have been the more immediate downfall of Pharaoh as represented by Cleopatra and her ally Antony, before Octavian at Actium in 31 BCE.

This third factor shaping the contours of the Pauline audience that I am (re)constructing is their location in the imperial city of Rome and the art, architecture, and symbolism of that environment. I suggest that a non-elite group of majority gentile/minority Jewish Christian auditors would not have followed a common academic tradition of looking to texts and textual variants, commentaries, or dictionaries to answer these questions. Rather, in the visual culture of first-century Rome, their understanding of Pharaoh was shaped by the art and architecture of Rome itself. This is not to argue that this audience was wholly unaware of the Exodus tradition or that it did not hold meaning for them, only that visual exegesis offers an additional resonance to the Pauline argument.

After Octavian's defeat of Antony and Cleopatra, a type of Egyptomania entered into Rome. Karl Galinsky has pointed to Egyptianizing motifs in wall paintings as Augustan appropriation of the culture of the vanquished as a sign of victory.[10] These Egyptianizing schemes of interior ornamentation include the Aula Isiaca on the Palatine, the Villa under the Farnesina, and Augustus' own study.[11]

More publicly, coin images were utilized to present the imperial message. I note briefly two coins of Augustus proclaiming victory over Egypt and using imagery to evoke that land. The first is a denarius from an Italian mint, approximately 28 BCE, showing Octavian on the obverse and on the reverse, a fierce-looking crocodile with the legend "Aegypto capta."[12] The second, a tetradrachm from a mint in Asia soon after 27 BCE, shows

10. Karl Galinsky, *Augustus: Introduction to the Life of an Emperor* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 56.

11. For the Aula Isiaca, Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 183; for the Villa under the Farnesina, 183–84; for Augustus's study, 189–90.

12. C. H. V. Sutherland, *Roman Coins* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), figs. 220, 221, at 23, 125. This coin is identified as BMCRE 650 (Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum). It has also been published in *RIC* Augustus 1.275a. There is a *lituus* behind his head and the legend "Caesar, consul for the sixth time."

Augustus bareheaded with the title Imperator Caesar and on the reverse a seated sphinx mysteriously placed under the legend "Augustus."[13]

In the mid-50s CE, when Paul's letter was received, some of the most visible symbols of Egypt in Rome were obelisks. At this time, there were at least nine, but very possibly eleven obelisks in Rome:

- Two major obelisks were brought by Augustus and placed at the Circus Maximus and at the Campus Martius.[14]
- A medium-sized pair of obelisks was placed by Augustus at the entrance of his Mausoleum. There is some debate about the timing of the placement of these obelisks.[15]
- One major obelisk was transported in 37 or 38 CE by Gaius (Caligula) from Egypt to Rome and placed in a new arena, the Circus Vaticanus.[16]
- Finally, six obelisks, were placed in pairs along a *dromos* (sacred pathway) leading to the entrance of the Iseum Campense, a chapel dedicated to Isis in the Campus Martius in the first century, possibly by Gaius.[17]

Due to the limits of space, I will discuss only a few key aspects of these extraordinary monuments: (1) the fact that they were artifacts of a foreign and conquered culture; (2) their size and transport to Rome; (3) their bases and the inscriptions thereupon; and (4) the potential meaning and significance of these obelisks placed in Rome at various locations of imperial construction. By no means do I imply that an audience would have gathered the same impressions of each of these obelisks. Rather, the meaning that a viewer might have made based on seeing the artifact is heavily dependent on the context in which the obelisk was placed. I also do not mean to imply that each member of the audience would engage and

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13. Sutherland, *Roman Coins*, figs 265, 266 at 143. Description is found on p. 145. This coin is identified as BMCRE 702.

14. Brian A. Curran, Anthony Grafton, Pamela O. Long, and Benjamin Weiss, *Obelisk: A History* (Cambridge: Burndy Library, 2009), 37.

15. Curran et al., *Obelisk*, 46. They note Erik Iverson's suggestion that Augustus was responsible for this move, imitating the pair he had erected at the Caesareum in Alexandria. I will discuss the question of timing below.

16. Curran et al., *Obelisk*, 44.

17. Anne Roullet, *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments of Imperial Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 29–30; Curran et al., *Obelisk*, 46.

interpret the obelisks and their contexts in the same way. For example, an adult spectator seated at the Circus Maximus would have had a different experience of the games and the obelisk at the center of the track than a child slave who had to run quickly (and perhaps fearfully?) between the chariots and pick up debris from the crashes.

1. Artifacts of a Foreign and Conquered Culture

Consideration of the relationship between the early Jesus-following communities and the imperial world has been enriched by engagement with the work of postcolonial scholars and anthropologists. James C. Scott has been a key contributor, and his monograph *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* has provided great impetus to biblical scholars.[18] Debate has raged as to which dynamics are at play in New Testament texts: Do the gospels, Acts, and Pauline and non-Pauline letters accommodate, imitate, or resist the empire? Or is there some combination of these dynamics at work?

Studying obelisks as a resource for audience-oriented interpretation allows us to consider one more dynamic: that of reframing genuine artifacts in a new setting. Unlike the wall paintings and coins that merely imitate Egyptian motifs in creating new artifacts of Roman origin, obelisks were brought to Rome as physical objects taken by conquerors. Their transportation involved a depatriation of a culture's religious and political capital at the will of the emperor, showing his dominance over the vanquished people whose sacred and symbolic objects were taken. At the design of the emperor, the obelisks were then placed into new contexts to give them new meaning and significance. For example, the obelisks were no longer Pharaoh's gift to the sun but became Augustus's gift to the Roman solar god Sol. The obelisks were *reframed*, a dynamic that I have not seen discussed previously and that I will suggest could have been identified by Paul's audience.

The act of physical appropriation of the obelisks required their deracination from their native soil. But, as I will show in the detailed discussions of each installation of these pieces, they were introduced into

18. The volume edited by Richard A. Horsley, *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul*, SemeiaSt 48 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), provides a useful introduction to and examples of interaction with Scott's work.

the imperial community by a master who renamed or rededicated them, reframed them on new bases and placed them in diverse contexts for different purposes.

It is possible that some persons in Paul's audience may have been able to recognize the claims and exercise of power at work in the reframing of obelisks based on their own experiences. Some may have undergone similar processes of uprooting and reframing through enslavement and forcible migration. This might have been the experience of Ampliatus, whose name is linked to enslaved status and is known to us as part of the Roman community through Paul's salutation to him (Rom 16:8).[19]

2. Size, Transport, and Erection in Rome

The enormous cost and the high level of engineering skill required to transport the obelisks also demonstrated the emperor's power to command resources. Like captives and spoils paraded in the triumph of the *princeps*, such as the triumph celebrated in 44 CE for Claudius and perhaps witnessed by some of Paul's addressees,[20] the importation of these giant monuments showed the emperor's ability to appropriate important cultural objects from a subjected land and place them in Rome. The distance to be traveled and the giant size of the obelisks posed significant technical challenges and received proportionate admiration. Pliny records:

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19. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 173, states that this name was created for slaves in the Augustan period and that, due to its class origins, did not become adopted by higher levels of society. Orlando Patterson called natal alienation one of the "constituent elements" of slavery. As part of the enslavement process, in becoming dead persons socially, slaves lost all connection to their natal families, their ancestors, and their history. Patterson described the process as having several phases: "The slave is violently uprooted from his [*sic*] milieu.…This process of social negation constitutes the first, essentially external, phase of enslavement. The next phase involves the introduction of the slave into the community of his master, but it involves the paradox of introducing him as a nonbeing" (Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982], 5).

20. Suetonius, *Claud.* 17.3. The description of the triumph is quite brief. Josephus's description of the triumph given for Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (*B.J.* 7.5.3–7 [116–162]) is much more replete. Josephus describes the captives and the variety and fine textures of their garments, but his most detailed description is of the goods carried in procession and especially the three- and four-story structures depicting scenes of the war.

> Above all, there came also the difficult task of transporting obelisks to Rome by sea. The ships used attracted much attention from sightseers. That which carried the first of two obelisks was solemnly laid up by Augustus of Revered Memory in a permanent dock at Pozzuoli to celebrate the remarkable achievement; but later it was destroyed by fire. The ship used by the Emperor Gaius for bringing up a third was carefully preserved for years by Claudius of Revered Memory, for it was the most amazing thing that had ever been seen at sea.…Then there is another problem, that of providing ships that can carry obelisks up the Tiber; and the successful experiment shows that the river has just as deep a channel as the Nile.[21]

Pliny does not say what happened to the river barges after they transported their cargo into Rome. Nor does he describe the labor and process used to erect the obelisks in Rome. However, in the 50s there will still have been slave and freed bargemen, construction workers, and managers who would have participated in these impressive feats of engineering in the transport and erection of Gaius's large obelisk in 37 or 38 CE. In addition, spectators of all social levels could have seen the work done, either in passing through the city or visiting the preserved ships.

3. The Stone of the Obelisks, Their Bases, and Their Inscriptions

Classicist Molly Swetnam-Burland draws attention to the bases of the obelisks positioned by Augustus in the Campus Martius and the Circus Maximus. Both the obelisks and their bases were made of Aswan red granite. She argues that the bases were not reused but cut specifically for their use in Rome. The use of the Campus Martius obelisk as the *gnomon* in a meridian means that the height of the base had to figure into the calculations and thus was more likely to be a new construction.[22] This points to Augustus's control of quarries in Egypt as another sign of his domination of far-off parts of the empire.[23]

The bases of both of these obelisks were inscribed with the same text, which reads:

21. Pliny, *Nat*. 36.70 (Eichholz, LCL).

22. Molly Swetnam-Burland, "'Aegyptus Redacta': The Egyptian Obelisk in the Augustan Campus Martius," *The Art Bulletin*, 92.3 (2010): 135–53, here 146.

23. Swetnam-Burland, "Aegyptus Redacta," 146. See her note 92 for other examples and the reference to Pliny, *Nat*. 36.55.

> Victorious General Caesar, son of god,
> Augustus,
> Pontifex Maximus,
> When imperator for the twelfth time, consul for the fourteenth, and tribune of the people for the fourteenth,
> Egypt having been brought into the power of the people,
> he gave this (obelisk) as a gift to the sun.[24]

The text links the object to the conquest of Egypt. The language is similar to Res gest. 27, where Augustus maintains the fiction that he brought Egypt into the rule of the Roman people. While the obelisk is clearly an Egyptian artifact, whom some may know represented the sun's rays (Pliny, *Nat*. 36.64), it has come into Roman possession through violent appropriation. Through a new base and inscription Augustus *now reframes* it as a *Roman* gift to the sun.

4. Significance and Meaning Related to the Obelisks' Location

Obelisks, like other major monuments, are interpreted by viewers within the context in which they are placed. In what follows we will see that diverse settings (the Campus Martius, circuses, Mausoleum, and Iseum) offer different possibilities for interpretation in ways that support or subvert imperial propaganda.

Campus Martius, the Meridian of Augustus

I touch only lightly on the significance of the obelisk at the Campus Martius, as other essays in this collection devote more attention to it. I will summarize only the primary point for my own work: Augustus's claim to master time was subverted by the faulty performance of the meridian in which he placed an obelisk at the time Paul's letter was read in Rome.

In 10 BCE Augustus had two obelisks moved from Egypt to Rome. One obelisk 21.79 m tall was placed in the Campus Martius (commonly referred to as the Montecitorio obelisk); this obelisk was originally a com-

24. IMP CAESAR DIVI F / AVGVSTVS / PONTIFEX MAXIMUS / IMP XII COS XI TRIB POP XIV / AEGVPTO IN POTESTATEM / POPVLI ROMANI REDACTA / SOLI DONUM DEDIT. Inscription published in numerous places, including Curran et al., *Obelisk*, 37; my translation.

mission of King Psametik II (reigned 594–589 BCE).[25] Pliny described the use of this obelisk in the Campus Martius as the pointer or gnomon of a remarkable structure that has been interpreted as either a meridian (indicating noon each day) or a horologium (telling the hour of the day).[26] Some have posited that the shadow of the gnomon on Augustus's birthday would point to the center of the altar of the Ara Pacis or that the sundial was centered on Augustus's conception during the winter solstice in the constellation of Capricorn.[27] Swetnam-Burland argues that a newer consensus has formed that the meridian "helped explain and justify" Augustus's calendrical reforms "by making empirical information about the movement of the heavens visible to all."[28] Both theories draw from material remains to make claims about Augustus's role as master of time and of the cosmos.

However, the unstable, marshy ground under the obelisk/gnomon literally undercut Augustus's claims. Pliny, writing in the mid-70s states that the "readings thus given have for about thirty years past failed to correspond to the calendar."[29] This means it had begun to fail in the mid-40s. When Paul's audience in the mid-50s heard his letter read aloud, they could have observed the instrument's faulty performance for themselves. The imperfection and instability in imperial claims to control time are highlighted by specific data points along the meridian. Bronze lettering set into the pavement marking seasons, signs of the zodiac, the beginning of summer, and the point at which the Etesian winds cease indicates specific times and the prevalent winds in Latin and Greek, allowing those who are literate to see multiple, specific points of failure.[30]

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25. Swetnam-Burland, "Aegyptus Redacta," 135–36.

26. Pliny, *Nat*. 36.72. I would like to thank Laura S. Nasrallah for sharing a prepublication version of chapter 6 from her *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). She presents a persuasive argument for viewing Augustus's creation of a meridian and produces a rich discussion of time in Paul's letter.

27. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 146.

28. Molly Swetnam-Burland, *Egypt in Italy: Visions of Egypt in Roman Imperial Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 100.

29. Pliny, *Nat*. 36.72 (Eichholz, LCL).

30. Peter Heslin ("Augustus, Domitian, and the So-Called Horologium Augusti," *JRS* 97 [2007]: 1–20, here 6–8, 16–17) notes that the travertine pavement and bronze lettering described above were uncovered by the excavations of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI) beginning in 1979. Although this set of inscriptions has been dated to the reign of Domitian, I think it is a fair assumption that the earlier

The central location of this obelisk in the Campus Martius means that many people of all social classes, as members of the elite or the lower classes or slaves, women and men, would have been able to see and pass by this monument. When the visual imagery of imperial claims to order the cosmos are shown to be faulty, I suggest that an audience might perceive these claims to have been disrupted or destabilized. Pliny posits several different reasons for the failure of the horologium, but divine correction of human hubris apparently did not come to mind. Paul's audience might have seen some irony at play or might have remembered Paul's claims for G*d's control of time, a mastery that is greater than that of emperors. They may see this, for example, where Paul points to "the day when, according to my gospel, G*d, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all" (Rom 2:16) or again in 13:11–14, when in G*d's timing, not the world's, "the night is far gone, the day is near" (13:12).

Circus Maximus

The Circus Maximus had ancient roots (Livy, *Urb. cond*. 1.35, traces it back to the fifth king of Rome, Tarquinius Priscus) and was dedicated to the sun (Tertullian, *Spect*. 8). Augustus embellished it by setting up an obelisk on the *euripus* (the center island that acts as a barrier between the two sides of the track) of the Circus in 10 BCE. The obelisk itself had a height of 24.53m and had been quarried under Sethi I (1290–1279 BCE), then completed under his son Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE).[31] The inscription on the base of the obelisk (discussed above) was on both the north and south sides, facing the people in the stands.[32] At the Circus Maximus men and women sat together, offering an opportunity for discreet touching and leg-gazing as Ovid counseled the enamored (*Ars* 1.135–170). While senators had a reserved section, the *equites* did not until 63 CE.[33] Thus in

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Augustan meridian line and descriptions were similar and utilized the same reference points. While it would appear evident that the new installation was intended to correct the faultiness of the Augustan meridian, Heslin argues that Domitian's primary concern in undertaking this work was to express Flavian continuity with the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Domitian further expressed a symbolic claim to mastery over the seasons and time by renaming two months after himself.

31. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 269, 271.

32. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses,* 270.

33. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 102.

the mid-50s CE, *equites* and *plebs* may have been seated near each other, allowing for the possibility that a more literate member of the crowd might translate the text of the base of the obelisk or explain the significance of the obelisk to those close by.

There are many threads of association that space does not allow me to unravel here. I briefly note that in the iconography of the Roman god of the sun, Apollo driving his chariot was quite popular in the Augustan period. Augustus fostered an association of his reign with Apollo, for example, in Horace's *Carmen saeculare*, where Apollo is praised as "Life-giving Sun, who with your shining car bring forth the day and hide it away, who are born anew and yet the same, may you never be able to behold anything greater than the city of Rome!"[34] This hymn was composed for and sung as part of Augustus's renewal of the Secular Games in 17 BCE. The games were also celebrated by his dynastic successor, Claudius, in 47 CE, rather closer to the time of Paul's letter and thus bringing us back on track.

The circus as a whole was dedicated to the solar god. Within the circus, Romans viewed the counterclockwise movement of a race (and perhaps also the opening procession of divine images that preceded the games) around a solar symbol, such as the obelisk, as a metaphor for the order of the cosmos.[35] Here again Augustus has placed himself at the center of that cosmos by setting up an obelisk reframed by his inscription, his dedication to the god Sol.

How many people in Rome might have seen the obelisk in the Circus Maximus? In the first century, the Circus had a seating capacity of approximately 150,000 persons and held many types of events, with chariot racing being the most popular.[36] Pliny the Elder (*Nat*. 36.24.102) describes

34. Horace, *Saec*. 9–12 (Rudd, LCL).

35. Curran et al., *Obelisk*, 37, 40. Roullet indicates that this is drawn from Tertullian's *Spect*. 7, which appears to be a typo for 8. Marie Turcan indicates in her notes to her translation of 8.1 that she has argued that the *aedes Solis* in Tertullian's description "circus Soli principaliter consecrator, cuius aedes medio spatio et effigies de fastigio aedis emicat" ("le cirque est consacré principalement au Soleil dont brillent, au milieu de la carrière, le monument et l'effigie au sommet de ce monument") is the obelisk on the *euripus* (which she calls the *spina*) of the circus. See Marie Turcan, *Tertullien (De spectaculis): Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction et Commentaire* (Paris: Cerf: 1986), 156. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate the article in which she makes this argument in "'AedesSolis' au Grand Cirque," *Revue des* études *latines* 36 (1958): 255–62.

36. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 1, 100–102.

the Circus as accommodating 250,000 spectators, but this seems to be an inflated number.

Fik Meijer has estimated that, based on a seating capacity of 150,000 and a population of one million at the start of the imperial era, approximately one-seventh of the city's inhabitants were in attendance at the Circus Maximus on a single day of chariot racing.[37] He further calculates that, based on a minimum of twenty race days in the early prinicipate, about three million watched the races annually.[38] What Meijer does not count, and this is important from the viewpoint of the Pauline audience, are the numerous personnel who *worked* at the games, many of whom were slaves and low-status freed persons. There were judges and officials, those engaged in training or stabling horses, opening the gates, clearing the debris from crashes, the charioteers (often slaves), and other slaves, including perhaps children, who were responsible for sprinkling the track with selenite to make it glisten.[39]

Nor was it necessary to visit the Circus to see an obelisk in a context of chariot racing. While sports fans come home from the stadia of our times bearing jerseys and caps to display loyalty to their teams, Romans in the first century could purchase glass cups and oil lamps with images of chariot racing and its circuses.[40] Vendors were conveniently located just outside the Circus (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 3.68).

Kimberly Cassibry's phenomenological approach to investigating glass cups with sports scenes offers an exciting new possibility for understanding the sensory experiences of viewers.[41] She discusses five mold-blown glass cups from 50–80 CE bearing images of chariot racing in the circus,

37. Fik Meijer, *Chariot Racing in the Roman Empire,* trans. Liz Waters (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 96.

38. Meijer, *Chariot Racing*, 96.

39. Sinclair Bell, "Roman Chariot Racing: Charioteers, Factions, Spectators," in *Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity,* ed. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 492–504. See 494 regarding selenite, which Bell describes as a "transparent form of gypsum." Given the size of the circus and the churn of the dirt caused by the horses' hooves, which would have required repeated applications of selenite, this small detail is but one indication of the magnitude of labor (much of it unpaid) that was required to put on the games. It may also have been a task given to children.

40. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 271.

41. Kimberly Cassibry, "Spectacular Translucence: The Games in Glass," *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 1 (2018): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.359.

likely modeled upon the Circus Maximus. Cassibry notes that the victor is always shown near the obelisk close to the finishing line. In addition to the association with the sun and cosmos, Cassibry's observation underlines a visual connection between the obelisk and victory.

However, her innovative analysis with respect to sound adds a rich layer to methods of visual exegesis. The five cups each bear some text, generally the names of charioteers and an abbreviated form of a verb. Cassibry highlights the reader's engagement with the cup by choosing whether to read an abbreviation of *Va*[…] as *vade* (go!) or *vade age* (go on!) or even *valere* (encouragement to be strong).[42] Drawing on the work of Jocelyne Nelis-Clément that these could be phrases shouted in the Circus stands, Cassibry insightfully considers that reading the text aloud "partly recreates the choral and aural experience of spectatorship.… the words portray the race acoustically, as it would have been experienced in the stands."[43] Thus even a member of Paul's audience who had not been to the Circus may have experienced some aspects of the event.[44]

Clay lamps offered a perhaps less expensive option for a view of the games. The British Museum has digitized part of their catalog, allowing us to access one exemplar from the Museum's collection dated to circa 30–70 CE. [45] Behind the victorious charioteer, in the middle of the picture,

42. Cassibry, "Spectacular Translucence," 7.

43. Cassibry, "Spectacular Translucence," 7.

44. Cassibry also considers the depicted scene and text in motion. She notes that the viewer must rotate the cup to the right to see the figures appear realistically; that is, the horses come into view, followed by the charioteer. But to read the text and the sequence of the race, the person holding the cup must turn it leftward, which "has the effect of rewinding the action and causing the horses to gallop backwards … perhaps as amusing in antiquity as it is today" (14). She helpfully gives the reference to the Corning Museum of Glass's website, which allows the user to scroll through photographs to mimic turning the Mainz cup (14): https://www.cmog.org/content/chariot-cup.

45. The lamp is also illustrated in Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 187, fig 89. The reference is drawn from Donald M. Bailey, *Roman Lamps Made in Italy*, vol. 2 of *A Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1980): 56–69. https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220d1. Described as "a mould-made pottery lamp" on which a "charioteer holds a palm branch and wreath. Behind the team is a stand of lap-counting dolphins supported by fluted columns, a statue of Victoria (?), an Egyptian obelisk, and a small polygonal building supported by columns. Within the base-ring is the impressed letter K. covered with a finger-marked orange-brown slip" (Italy, ca. 30–70 CE).

stands an obelisk carved with some care, as it shows carved hieroglyphics, the pyramidion, and crowned with what appears to be a flame. One can imagine a proud spectator explaining what he or she had seen by referring to this small but detailed image, thus increasing the number of people who might have known these obelisks and various associated meanings.

Circus Vaticanus

In 37 CE, Gaius Caligula brought an uninscribed obelisk from Egypt and set it on the *euripus* of a new circus, today most commonly called the Circus Vaticanus (also known as the Circus Gai et Neronis).[46] At first this stadium seems to have functioned as a practice track for Gaius. Suetonius notes that Claudius "frequently gave games there" (*Claud*. 21.2) and also recounts, rather sneeringly, that Nero raced in exhibition games at the Circus Vaticanus "before his slaves and the dregs of the populace,"[47] or, as scholars of early Christianity might say, "our kind of people."

This vibrant image of the circus with its exciting movement coursing around an obelisk, a symbol of Pharaoh taken over and rededicated to the sun by the Roman emperor, a symbol of an ordered cosmos, is appealing. However, the races also included considerable risk and danger. Bell concludes that, not only were chariots frequently overturned and had to be cleared quickly before the other racers came through in the next lap, but that these "shipwrecks" (*naufragia*) were of great interest to the fans.[48] For those who have not been sitting safely in the stands, those slaves and freed persons working at the games, threatened by the dangers of the race, the chariot races might have represented not order but chaos. Children in Paul's audience who worked at the circus might have admired the charioteers but also have been aware of the dangers to these drivers

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46. Humphrey sees two indications that Gaius intended for the Vatican Circus to become a monumental circus: Gaius's move of the obelisk and the large dimensions of the arena, which Gaius copied from the Circus Maximus (*Roman Circuses*, 550, 552). By observing this imitation of Augustan symbolism, workers and spectators at the Vatican Circus may have interpreted that obelisk to have similar meaning(s).

47. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses*, 550–51. Humphrey cites Suetonius, *Ner*. 22.2. Per Humphrey, after these exhibition races, Nero then had the confidence to race in the Circus Maximus.

48. Bell, "Roman Chariot Racing," 495. Bell cites visual representations of chariot racing, observing the prevalence of "shipwrecks" in these depictions as ground for his assumption about spectator appeal.

as well as to themselves. The other side to the fame and fortune won by a tiny minority of athletes was the risk of death, even for a child such as Sextus Vistilius Helenus, an *auriga* (driver of a two-horse team), who died at the age of thirteen.[49]

I suggest that the audience hearing Romans read might have understood Paul to reframe what they knew and experienced: suffering in the present time but also their hope for a better life, for glory even (Rom 8:18). Paul's gospel, read in the context of the world in which those whose bodies were forced to work at great risk in such venues, promised the freedom of the glory of the children of G*d (8:21). In the midst of "shipwrecks" and chaos, Paul assured them of the safety and redemption of their bodies (8:23) in a cosmos of G*d's, not Caesar's, ordering. Reframing the world of the circus and its symbolic obelisk within the Pauline gospel undercuts the imperial claim to offering order, peace, and security.

Mausoleum of Augustus

I have discussed the obelisks in Augustus's meridian and in the circuses with reference to metaphors of time and the center of the cosmos, to the dedication to the sun, and to claims for Roman victory and power over a conquered state. The obelisks at the mausoleum of Augustus can be read as a part of the multivalent symbolism of the monument, in terms of the superiority of *Romanitas*, victory, and dynastic succession.

The mausoleum was an impressive building, the tallest in Rome, topped by a statue of Augustus that Galinsky waggishly remarks "put him closer to the gods than anyone else."[50] Konrad Kraft argued persuasively that the reason the relatively young Octavian (thirty-five years old at its completion in 28 BCE) built an enormous tomb for himself, located on public land, was as a salvo in a propaganda war against his opposition, for whom Antony remained a rallying point even after Actium.[51] Octavian illegally obtained and made public Antony's will in 32 BCE, that is,

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49. Bell, "Roman Chariot Racing," 496–97.

50. Galinsky, *Augustus*, 156.

51. Konrad Kraft, "Der Sinn des Mausoleums des Augustus," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 16 (1967): 189–206. For dating the completion of the building (but not yet the ornamentation of it) to 28 BCE, see 190–93. Kraft claims that "M. Anton's Schatten ist also als politischer Faktor weit über Actium hinaus also Sammelpunkt der Opposition gegen Augustus lebendig" (201).

during Antony's lifetime. This document contained an explosive revelation: that Antony asked to be buried in Alexandria. Kraft supposes that Antony envisaged a split between east and west of Rome's empire and that Alexandria would be the nexus of only half of the empire.[52] But Octavian immediately grasped the possibility of understanding Antony's will as expressing a desire to move the center of the Roman Empire to Alexandria and that, should he die first, Cleopatra would inherit power.[53] In order to present a contrast between himself and Mark Antony, Octavian thus created his own heroic tomb of colossal dimensions in Rome, presenting a clear example of loyalty to and the superiority of Rome.

The historical reconstruction proposed by Kraft had better explanatory power than its predecessors for the cost and effort of this monumental construction, and his general argument has been accepted widely by others, such as Paul Zanker, Karl Galinsky, and Penelope J. E. Davies (who interprets the edifice as both tomb and war trophy).[54]

While Kraft argued that the building itself was completed in 28 BCE, he argued that Augustus completed the ornamentation, including the inscription of the Res gestae divi Augusti and the two obelisks placed in front of the mausoleum, at a later time although still within his own lifetime.[55] Zanker saw in the mausoleum "the impression of a triumphal monument," an idea that is underscored by the addition of the two obelisks, which he understands to have been placed there "soon after the conquest of Egypt."[56] It has been argued that the placement of the obelisks at the entrance must be from late in the first century CE, since neither Strabo nor Pliny describe these two obelisks in Rome and because Ammianus Marcellus in the fourth century CE recounts that these obelisks were brought to Rome by

52. Kraft, "Sinn des Mausoleums," 197.

53. Kraft, "Sinn des Mausoleums," 196–97, 200. The will also contained the recognition of Caesarion as a true heir of Julius Caesar, co-regency in the Roman sphere of influence, and a promise of gifts to Cleopatra's children. Although Caesarion had been previously acknowledged (196), the combination of these facts in the will with the desire for burial in Egypt could only have strengthened the impression that Antony had a preference for Egypt as a center for power.

54. Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 72–73; Galinsky, *Augustus*, 155–56; Penelope J. E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor: Roman Imperial Funerary Monuments from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 50–51, 172.

55. Kraft, "Sinn des Mausoleums," 192–93.

56. Zanker, *Power of Images,* 76.

"subsequent generations" (*Rer. gest*. 17.4.16). However, Penelope Davies cites Dietrich Boschung's counterarguments: Ammianus Marcellinus is not completely reliable, and Pliny did not offer a complete inventory of obelisks, "only the outstanding examples in which these small uninscribed obelisks had no place."[57] While I find it reasonable to see the placement of the obelisks as part of Augustus's completion of his artistic program, I note that even without the obelisks there were other indicators of Egyptian influence. Davies provides additional support for the theory that Augustus's plan for his tomb was inspired by the mausoleum of Alexander (the Sema) as well as by the lighthouse of Alexandria (the Pharos) as a trophy in the form of a significant attribute of a conquered city.[58] Egypt is thus brought to Rome in the form of trophies rather than a shameful relocation of Roman power to Egypt.

Kraft is surely right that Octavian was not thinking about building a dynastic tomb in 32–28 BCE, when his political situation was not secured and he had not yet become the *princeps*. However, at the time that Paul's audience would have seen the monument, it had, in fact, acquired that significance. It held the ashes of Augustus, his grandsons Lucius Caesar and Gaius Caesar, his successors, Tiberius, possibly Claudius, and numerous female relatives, including Livia. To a Pauline audience in the mid-50s, the mausoleum could be understood as representing aspects of dynastic rule. The presence of Egyptian obelisks might remind the viewer not just of victory and power over Egypt but of the family dynasty's dependence on Egypt's grain to hold power. Suetonius gives a vivid impression of Claudius's panic when a mob attacked him in the Forum and "pelted [him] with abuse and pieces of bread … and after this experience he resorted to every possible means to bring grain to Rome, even in the winter season," when sailing was dangerous and difficult.[59] This grain shortage had been caused by drought, an instance in which it became clear that the emperor did not actually control the earth and its seas. While the mausoleum and its obelisks represented the power of the Julio-Claudian family, that symbol also pointed to the tenuous nature of that power when the emperor's ability to provide bread was threatened by nature in the form of drought.

57. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, 15, 183 n. 11. She is relying here on Dietrich Boschung, "Tumulus Iuliorum—Mausoleum Augusti," *Hefte des Berner Archaeologisches Seminars* 6 (1980): 38–41, a work to which I did not have access.

58. Davies, *Death and the Emperor*, 52–67.

59. Suetonius, *Claud*. 18.2 (Rolfe, LCL).

Iseum Campense

Rome contained several temples of Isis in the first century.[60] It is beyond the scope of this essay to review these multiple edifices or even to discuss the religious complex of the temples of Isis and Serapis in the Campus Martius in its entirety. However, I draw attention to the fact that it is the site of an additional set of obelisks in Rome. The complex included a *dromos* flanked with six smaller obelisks, along with sphinxes and lions. This area also included images of sacred baboons, the Apis bull, and other zoomorphic statuary. Anne Roullet states that, after its destruction during the reign of Tiberius, the Iseum Campense was rebuilt by Gaius between 37 and 41 CE.[61] The obelisks may have been added as part of the reconstruction.[62]

If the mausoleum and its captured obelisks showed the superiority of *Romanitas*, it would seem that the Iseum indicated that the victory was not complete, as foreign deities claimed a visible place next to Augustus's Campus Martius complex and within the city of Rome. The temples of Isis and of Serapis contest and disrupt claims of *Romanitas* by exposing the spiritual needs and desires for which traditional Roman religion has not sufficed.

Paul's audience might think of walking along that obelisk-lined path, seeing the hieroglyphics of ibises and crocodiles, viewing the zoomorphic statuary, and think that the Romans, "claiming to be wise, … became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal G*d for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles" (Rom 1:22–23).

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60. Anne Roullet lists several sites dedicated to Isis within Rome in addition to the Iseum Campense (the temple in the area near the Campus Martius): an Iseum on the Capitoline hill with its beginnings in the republican period (*Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments*, 37); an Iseum in Regio III on the Oppian hill (temple undated, enlarged in second century CE, built either in the second century CE or earlier, 35–36); a first-century CE Iseum on the Aventine hill, which she notes was "used mainly by members of the lower class of society, particularly Greek and slaves" (38); a shrine to Isis on the Caelian hill (37–38); an altar to Isis on the Esquiline hill (38). Of course, the port of Rome at Ostia, like other harbor cities, also had sites where homage to Isis was expressed (38).

61. Roullet, *Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments*, 22. She cites Ernst Köberlein, *Caligula und die* ägyptischen *Kulte* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1962) for this.

62. Curran et al., *Obelisk*, 46.

Summary of Visual Evidence

I have shown how the resources required to appropriate, transport, and reframe the obelisks were meant to excite the admiration of viewers, as Pliny's marveling words illustrate. I have noted a strong visual imagery of the obelisks proclaiming Pharaoh's defeat and Caesar's victory. However, the viewer's experience of the obelisk in the Circus Maximus or Circus Vaticanus is ambiguous, dependent on that person's relationship to the games. The sight of the obelisk in the circus might be associated with excitement and pleasure or with danger and fear. I have also identified potential disruptions to that narrative generated by the faultiness of Augustus's meridian in the mid-50s, the dependence of the emperor on Egypt to provide grain (and thus, his continued political power), and the counternarrative of the insertion of Egyptian deities into Roman religious space as seen in the Iseum Campense.

I have argued that inserting the obelisks into new contexts with written or architectural indicators constituted an act of reframing the artifact and constructing new meaning. I suggest that Paul employs a similar method of reframing in Rom 13:1–7. Paul describes the authorities as having been "instituted" by G*d (13:1). Three times within this short passage Paul describes the one in authority as G*d's servant (*διάκονος* twice in 13:4) and the authorities as ministers (*λειτουργοί*, 13:6). Certainly the authorities, including the emperor, would not have seen themselves in this light. But within Paul's larger narrative, all are reframed within G*d's purpose.

5. Romans 9:17 Seen within the Frame of Romans 9–11

The traditional approach to Rom 9–11 is to understand it as Paul's argument that G*d's promise of salvation to the Jewish people has not been abrogated by the current rejection of Jesus by the majority of Jews. G*d has a long-term plan for the people whom G*d knew beforehand (11:2) and to whom G*d will show mercy (11:31–32). Paul's argument has been dissected in terms of his theology and his use of rhetorical methods, and especially great care has been given to understanding the ways in which his citations and allusions to the LXX support his argument.

I have proposed that an audience of nonelite Christians in Rome might understand the reference to Pharaoh in Rom 9:17 by visually exegeting Egyptian artifacts in their midst. They would have seen evidence that this once-mighty empire of Egypt had been conquered by Rome. In the beginning of Rom 9, after an emotional rhetorical move aligning himself with Israel, Paul's argument begins with the assertion that "it is not as though the word of G*d had failed" (9:6a). I argue that the downfall of Pharaoh, as indicated by the fact that his obelisks have been captured, transported, and reframed by Rome, is a heretofore unappreciated piece of evidence that G*d's word has been accomplished. In this case, it has been through the medium of Roman imperial authorities (whom Paul describes as servants of G*d; 13:1–7). As these captive objects bear witness to the destruction of the one whose heart had been hardened by G*d (9:18), Paul's audience may have been encouraged to have confidence that G*d indeed has the ability to bring into being the divine plan. It is possible to read the presence of these Egyptian monuments in Rome as witnesses that G*d has made known the divine power to "show his wrath" and that these "objects of wrath that are made for destruction" (9:22) have indeed been destroyed. If this is so, then Paul's listeners may be encouraged that they (the "us" of 9:24) have been called and are to be "objects of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory" (9:23). G*d's plan, fulfilled in Pharaoh's downfall, will also be accomplished at that future time, when both gentiles and Jews will receive G*d's mercy (11:30–32).

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Romans 16 and the Sergii Paulli

Richard Last

1. Romans 16 and the Domestic Setting of the First Urban Churches

Out of the twenty-six people whom Paul names in Rom 16:3–15, two stand out for their especially tentative connections to Rome's network of Christ-followers: Aristoboulus and Narcissus. They are the only two individuals in this section whom Paul does not greet, so it is speculated that they may not have been Christ-followers themselves.[1] That would be an interesting possibility since Paul greets (some of) the slaves and freedmen in their households: οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου (16:10) and οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ναρκίσσου τοὺς ὄντας ἐν κυρίῳ (16:11).[2] Their two *domus* are typically understood as "mixed households": the *patres familiarum* did not worship Christ, while some members of their households did.

The phenomenon of slave collectives forming around cults foreign (*externa sacra*) to the *domini* is known by 61 CE in Rome (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.44). It most likely occurred earlier,[3] but it is not commonly attest-

1. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 164–65.

2. Paul's description of these individuals closely resembles epigraphic references to associations of staff and dependents of households, including CIL 6.26032 = *ILS* 126 (Rome, Latium, Italy; first century BCE/first century CE): *Ex domo Scriboniae Caesar*(*is*) *libertorum libertar*(*um*) *et qui in hoc monument*(*um*) *contulerunt*; CIL 6.21415 = *ILS* 117 (Rome, Latium, Italy; 27 BCE–14 CE): *Ex domo / Caesarum et / Liviae / libertorum et servorum*; CIL 6.10271 (Rome, Latium, Italy; undated): *C*(*aius*) *Iulius Honoratus et Corn*(*elia*) *Sab*(*ina*) */ co*[*m*]*paravit sibi et fili*(*i*)*s / filiabusque suis et lib*(*ertis*) */ libertabusq*(*ue*) *p*(*osterisque*) *eorum / Eventiorum.*

3. For slave involvement in the Bacchanalia (ca. 186 BCE), see Jean-Marie Pailler, *Bacchanalia: La répression de 186 av. J.-C. à Rome et en Italie; Vestiges, images, tradition*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 270 (Rome: École française

ed.[4] Perhaps Paul provides rare attestations to this phenomenon in Rom 16:10–11, but it is nonetheless appropriate to inquire about the level of Aristoboulus's and Narcissus's participation in the groups whom Paul greeted in these verses. Did these masters simply approve the formation of these groups in order to generate good behavior (akin to toleration of *contubernia* and provision of *peculia*)? Did the *domini* know much at all about the Christ who was apparently worshiped by members of these collectives? Were these heads of household actively involved in the groups' activities, as were some other masters in domestic associations?

What about the collectives themselves? One unfortunate outcome of describing these groupings as house churches, as is often done, is the simplification and even prevention of questions concerning their practices and identities.[5] The house-church descriptor is historically quite narrow, without much room for difference, and undertheorized: it comes equipped with answers that should rather be sought.[6]

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de Rome, 1988), 275–329; John A. North, "The Ritual Activity of Roman Slaves," in *Slaves and Religions in Graeco-Roman Antiquity and Modern Brazil*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson and Dick Geary (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 69–70.

4. Though see North, "Ritual Activity," 67–95, for the proposal that slave autonomy in deciding worship practices would have been common. For slave and freedperson associations, see now Sophia Zoumbaki, "The Collective Definition of Slaves and the Limits to Their Activities," in *Esclavage antique et discriminations socio-culturelles: Actes due XXVIIIe colloque international du Groupement international de recherche sur l'esclavage antique (Mytilène, 5–7 décembre 2003)*, ed. Vasilis I. Anastasiadis and Panagiotis N. Doukellis (New York: Lang, 2005), 217–31.

5. Although Peter Lampe characterizes these collectives as "house churches," he studies them in light of domestic associations (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 378–79). Characterizing these groups as house churches is common, and I cite here only one recent instance: David G. Peterson, *Commentary on Romans*, Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2017), 541.

6. Roger Gehring's definition is an aggregate of previous descriptions: "Most scholars would agree that the following elements constitute a house church. (a) A group exists that has developed its own religious life, including regular gatherings for worship. (b) The content of these regular gatherings for worship includes evangelistic and instructional proclamation, the celebration of baptism and communion, prayer, and fellowship. (c) Elements such as (unclearly defined) organizational structures can be considered further indications of a house church in the full sense." See Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 27.

Any epigraphic records produced by these two groupings no longer survives, so our ability to research adequately the collectives in the households of Aristoboulus and Narcissus is severely limited. Approximately thirty years after Paul sent this letter, however, there appears a series of epitaphs from Rome commemorating members from a *collegium quod est in domo Sergiae Paullinae*.[7] This *collegium* was identified as a house church in 1971 by Marta Sordi and Maria Luisa Cavigiolo, who suspected that it comprised the Christ-followers among Sergia Paullina's slaves and dependents and even that Sergia Paullina herself was a Christ-follower. Their arguments were rebutted in responses appearing in 1971–1972 and 1972–1973 by Maria Bonfioli and Silvio Panciera, who identified the *collegium* as non-Christian. Most subsequent scholarship has endorsed Bonfioli and Panciera's interpretation of the relevant twenty-three inscriptions produced by the Sergii Paulli in Rome and Vetissus (Galatia, Asia Minor), but Sordi has defended the original position, and other researchers, including Ilaria Ramelli, have found Sordi's model the more convincing of the two.[8]

The present study explores anew the merits of Sordi and Cavigiolo's characterization of the *collegium* as a house church, as well as scrutinizes the Lukan narrative in Acts 13:7–12 that forms the basis for the family's supposed connections to the practice of Christ worship. Whether or not the *collegium* really did include Christ-followers, its contested self-representation and the inconclusive connection between the Sergii Paulli and Christ worship exemplify how the most adaptable or situational of Christ-followers and their groups in Rome might have functioned and appeared to their neighbors.[9] It is to the historiography of the Sergii Paulli and the

7. Dating the epitaphs depends on individual assessments of Sergia Paullina's relation to Lucius Sergius Paullus, proconsul of Cyprus sometime in the 40s CE (see below).

8. Ilaria Ramelli, "Cristiani e vita politica: Il crypto-cristianesimo nelle classi dirigenti romane nel II secolo," *Aevum* 77 (2003): 39, 50–51.

9. By "situational" I refer to the usage of identity-management strategies that are tailored to different settings (e.g., the household, the forum, the neighborhood, the warehouse). Social-identity studies have recently applied this concept to the study of stigmatized identity, which may characterize Christ-followers in Rome in the years leading up to the great fire. In summary of one strategy of stigmatized identity management, "If that identity is very new and the identity standard [e.g., a person's self-identity as a Christ-follower] is not that strong, strategies like 'passing' as part of the dominant group may make sense. Alternatively, the identity may not be relevant to the situation" (Joanne M. Kaufman and Cathryn Johnson, "Stigmatized Individuals and the Process of Identity," *Sociological Quarterly* 45 [2004]: 814).

collegium in the house of Sergia Paullina that I turn next. At the outset it should be highlighted that, when reviewing literature, I often adopt terminology used by an author (e.g., Christian, convert, Christ-sympathizer) that is otherwise avoided here when discussing first-century evidence.

2. Two Theories on the *Collegium*'s Cult Identity

Sordi and Cavigiolo's 1971 article proposed that the late first-century *collegium* in the house of Sergia Paullina was "in reality" a "house church" (*chiesa domestica*) organized as a so-called "funerary association" for legal purposes.[10] Accepting Theodor Mommsen's and Giovanni Battista de Rossi's models on the legal status of *collegia* and Christ-groups, Sordi and Cavigiolo supposed that the *collegium* had adopted the organizational structure of a *collegium funeraticium* in order to present itself as a permissible organization (i.e., a *collegium licitum*; see Marcianus in Dig. 47.22.1).[11]

The researchers characterized Sergia Paullina herself as a worshippr of Christ but left open the possibility that she was a Christ-sympathizer, a term used to indicate, seemingly, that her lifestyle differed in some respects from Christians. Most recent overviews of their article misconstrue Sordi and Cavigiolo to say that Sergia Paullina was a Christian, and object to that characterization.[12]

10. Marta Sordi and Maria Luisa Cavigiolo, "Un'antica 'chiesa domestica' di Roma? (*Il collegium quod est in domo Sergiae L. F. Paullinae*)," *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 25 (1971): 374; see also Marta Sordi, "Sergia Paulina e il suo *collegium*," *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo, Scienze e Lettere* 113 (1979): 14.

11. For the category *collegium tenuiorum*, see Marcianus in Dig. 47.22.3 (218–235 CE). For the notion that *collegia tenuiorum* were legal associations and strictly burial clubs, see Theodor Mommsen, *De collegiis et sodaliciis Romanorum, accredit inscription lanuvina* (Keil: Schwers, 1843), 78–97; Giovanni Battista de Rossi, "Dei sepolcreti cristiani non sotterranei," *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 2 (1864): 25–32; Battista de Rossi, *La Roma sotterranea cristiana*, 3 vols. (Rome: Cromo-litografia pontificia, 1864–1877), 1:101–8; Mommsen, "Die Katakomben Roms," *Im Neuen Reich* 1 (1871): 113–28. For the modern historiography of the legal context of associations, see now Andreas Bendlin, "Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law: The Collegium of Diana and Antinous in Lanuvium (CIL 14.2112) Reconsidered," in *Aposteldekret und antikes Vereinswesen: Gemeinschaft und ihre Ordnung*, ed. Markus Öhler, WUNT 280 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 223–57.

12. Sordi and Cavigiolo, "Un'antica," 370. In Sordi's later work, Paullina's affiliation to Christ worship is more firmly stated. See Marta Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 185.

According to Sordi and Cavigiolo, the *collegium* consisted entirely or mostly of freedpersons and slaves from the host's *familia*—but only the Christian ones.[13] Sordi and Cavigiolo proposed that the *collegium* was originally founded by Sergia Paullina's father, Lucius Sergius Paullus (*AE* 1973 no. 24 = *ILS* 8950; Rome, Latium, Italy; 51–130 CE), the son of the Cyprian proconsul whom Paul encountered in Acts 13:7–12.[14] The staff and dependents in this *collegium* were possibly given to Sergia Paullina in dowry (Dig. 40.5.19 [Scaevola]) or inheritance. Alternatively, she could have acquired some of her staff independently later in life. Whatever the circumstance, the group assembled in a room in her house and identified under her name because she was their *domina* or *patrona*. Livia's six-hundred personal servants, known from the columbarium of Augustus's household (a structure holding over six thousand urns) shows the range of occupations that these *collegium* members might have held (e.g., goldsmiths, perfumers, jewelry-keepers). But for Sordi and Cavigiolo, this analogy should not be taken as far as Kinuko Hasegawa pressed it recently. Hasegawa analyzes *collegia* inscriptions in the Roman columbaria, noting that these *collegia domestica* were "organised and run by slaves and freedmen … primarily for funeral matters, and the extent of their activities would have been largely limited to that area.[15] Hasegawa includes Sergia Paullina's *collegium* as a "clear example" of this type of association.[16] Sordi, in later publications, proposes that the *collegium* in Sergia Paullina's house did not function as a "common funerary collegium"; it was, rather, a house church.[17]

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13. Mostly: Sordi and Cavigiolo, "Un'antica," 373; exclusively and only Christians from the *familia*: Sordi, "Sergia Paulina," 16.

14. For epigraphic attestation to this Lucius Sergius Paullus, see William M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discoveries on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 151 = *AE* 2002 no. 1458 (Antioch, Pisidia, Asia Minor; first century CE). For this Lucius as the original founder of the *collegium*, see Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 17; and Sordi, *Christians and the Roman Empire*, 185; Maria Bonfioli and Silvio Panciera, "*In domo Sergiae Paullinae*. Nota Aggiuntiva," *Atti della Pontificia Academia Romana di Archeologia, Rendiconti* 45 (1972–1973): 137–38, offer other possibilities.

15. Kinuko Hasegawa, *The* Familia Urbana *during the Early Empire: A Study of Columbaria Inscriptions*, BAR International Series 1440 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 88.

16. Hasegawa, *The* Familia Urbana *during the Early Empire*, 81.

17. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 16.

The association's hierarchy included a *magister*, an *arcarius*, and a still unclear distinction between *maiores* and *minores*.[18] Sordi contended that the group's purpose extended beyond funerary activities; it was a cult group that provided admission only to individuals interested in worshiping Christ. Presumably, then, some individuals with rights to the senatorial family's *sepulchrum familiaris* or *columbarium* could *not* join.[19] Sordi highlighted that the Sergii Paulli buried individuals in the same burial ground used by the *collegium* but without the *collegium* listed as a commemorator.[20] Sordi contended that these members of the *familia* had rights to the Sergii Paulli burial space but were not admitted into the *collegium* because they were not Christians.[21] A similar phenomenon is observable from the columbaria inscriptions, namely, freedpersons and slaves choosing to be buried outside arrangements made by aristocratic masters.[22] Hasegawa correctly highlights that the choice of where—and, I might add, by whom—to be buried "depended upon individual preferences in terms of where they wished to belong and which circle of people to be associated with."[23] Sordi's suggestion aligns with known burial practices in Rome but is not the only possible explanation.

Some later interpreters proposed that, since this domestic association consisted of slaves and dependents, it would not have included also kin

18. For the *magister*, see Via Imperiale 70 = *AE* 1973 no. 24 = Bonfioli and Panciera, "*In domo Sergiae Paullinae*," no. 20. For the *arcarius*, CIL 6.9148 = *ILS* 7333 (Rome, Latium, Italy; first/second century CE). On the *maiores* and *minores*, CIL 6.10264 = *ILS* 7334. Maria Bonfioli and Silvio Panciera, "Della cristianità del *collegium quod est in domo Sergiae Paullinae*," *Atti della Pontificia Academia Romana di Archeologia, Rendiconti* 44 (1971–1972): 196, suggest that the distinctions refer to positions in the household, not in the *collegium*. Sordi and Cavigiolo ("Un'antica," 372; see also Sordi, *Christians*, 186) highlight Christian usages of the pair of terms to distinguish clergy from laity (Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.7; *Bapt.* 17). Bonfioli and Panciera ("Della cristianità," 196) highlight usages of this language in civic and association contexts.

19. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 16.

20. Bonfioli and Panciera, ""Della cristianità," no. 16; Bonfioli and Panciera, "*In domo Sergiae Paullinae*," nos. 21–23.

21. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 16.

22. For the many epitaphs appearing outside the columbarium of the Statilii, see Maria Letizia Caldelli and Cecilia Ricci, *Monumentum familiae Statiliorum: Un riesame*, Libitina 1 (Rome: Quasar, 1999), 135–40.

23. Hasegawa, *The* Familia Urbana *during the Early Empire*, 85.

members of the family.[24] However, on the basis of some analogous domestic associations, which invited both families' kin members, dependents, and staff to join, the *collegium* in Sergia Paullina's house need not have consisted exclusively of nonkin members.[25]

Maria Bonfioli and Silvio Panciera offered rebuttals to Sordi and Cavigiolo's hypothesis in two articles that collected and interpreted twenty-three inscriptions, with eleven accompanying photographs, produced by the Sergii Paulli family in Rome and Asia Minor. They determined that the *collegium* should be identified as pagan, a conclusion that shaped a near consensus in scholarship ever since.[26]

Fascinatingly, Bonfioli and Panciera conceded that Paul probably persuaded Sergia Paullina's grandfather, Sergius Paullus, to become a "Christ-sympathizer" or even a "convert."[27] Many recent researchers who ultimately favor Bonfioli and Panciera's interpretation of the *collegium* as pagan have also adopted the notion that Sergius Paullus "converted" or practiced Christ worship to some extent.[28] The striking but rarely emphasized result is that the

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24. Hasegawa suggests that the group was "organised and run by slaves and freedmen" and not joined by any Sergii Paulli kin, like the other associations that she categorizes as *collegia domestica* (*The* Familia Urbana *during the Early Empire*, 81–88).

25. See, for example, the list of kin and nonkin members in the famous domestic association of the senator, consul, and Asia Minor proconsul, Marcus Gaius Squilla Gallicanus in Rome (*IGUR* 160 = AGRW 330; Torre Nova, Sicily, Italy; 160–170 CE). For commentary, see Bradley H. McLean, "The Agrippinilla Inscription: Religious Associations and Early Church Formation," in *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd*, ed. Bradley H. McLean, JSNTSup 86 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 239–70.

26. L. Michael White, *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ASOR Library of Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 43; Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 373; Éric Rebillard, *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity*, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 42–43; Michel Christol and Thomas Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli et Antioche," in *Actes du Ier congrès international sur Antioche de Piside*. ed. Thomas Drew-Bear, Mehmet Tashalan, and Christine M. Thomas, Collection Archeologie et Histoire de l'antiquité; Université-Lumière-Lyon 2, vol. 5 (Paris: de Boccard, 2002), 188–89; Alexander Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum: Studien zu ordo-Angehörigen unter den frühen Christen*, Millennium-Studien 52 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 70, 75–80.

27. Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 197.

28. For example, Rebillard, *Care of the Dead*, 43; Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 189; Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum,* 75–79.

Sergii Paulli were brought into the orbit of Christ worship by their patriarch, (Lucius) Sergius Paullus (Acts 13:7–12), but the *collegium* in the name of Sergia Paullina, from two generations later, is not even notionally connected to Christ worship. A critical reading of the Sergius Paullus narrative in Acts 13:7–12 has been missing in discussions of the cult practices of the Sergia Paullina *collegium*, and this lacuna will be addressed in section 4 below.

3. Evidence for Identifying the Collegium

To my knowledge, Ilaria Ramelli is the only researcher who has followed Sordi and Cavigiolo's interpretation of the inscriptions in question.[29] Other researchers who have remarked on the *collegium* tend to treat the discussion of its connection to Christ worship as already settled and do not engage thoroughly with Sordi and Cavigiolo's evidence. In this section I will survey the strongest features of Sordi and Cavigiolo's case and also present Bonfioli and Panciera's responses. In addition, new evidence and observations are supplied when possible to help resolve minor disputes.

3.1. External Evidence

It is no surprise that Sordi and Cavigiolo's 1971 article devoted much space to external evidence of worship practices among the Sergii Paulli; most of the details in the family's inscriptions do not assist in limiting the possibilities for characterizing the *collegium*'s reverence of specific deities. Sordi and Cavigiolo framed their discussion of the *collegium* inscriptions with two pieces of external evidence suggestive to them that some Sergii Paulli were attracted to Christ worship in the first and second centuries.

First, Sordi and Cavigiolo took for granted the reliability of Acts 13:7–12 (see §4). Tradition about the Cyprian proconsul, Sergius Paullus, explicitly places him in connection with Paul. On prosopographic grounds, Sergia Paullina, the *collegium*'s host, is usually identified as the granddaughter of Luke's Sergius Paullus, who heard Paul's teaching and responded favorably (Acts 13:1–12).[30] Both Sordi and Cavigiolo and also

29. See Ramelli, "Cristiani e vita politica," 39, 50–51.

30. Bonfioli and Panciera ("Della cristianità," 197) remark that she is "unquestionably" Luke's Sergius Paullus's granddaughter.

Bonfioli and Panciera accepted Sergius Paullus as a "Christ-sympathizer" or even a "convert."[31]

Second, Sordi and Cavigiolo interpreted a passage in Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom.* 67.14.3) to indicate that Manius Acilius Glabrio, consul of 91 CE, practiced Christ worship. In Dio's account, Domitian executed Acilius Glabrio in 95 CE for atheism (ἀθεότης), by which Dio meant turning toward Judean customs (ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, 67.14.2). A separate charge against the senator related to his participation in gladiatorial spectacles (67.14.3). Some interpreters continue to find it likely that this passage might suggest that Acilius was attracted to some of the teachings about Christ.[32] However, in an account of the execution of Acilius a century prior to Dio, Suetonius identified him as a political revolutionary (*molitor rerum novarum*) without any word about Acilius's worship practices that might have led to his execution (Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.2; cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* 4.94). The evidence of Glabrio's connection to Christ worship, then, is rather minimal.

The relevance of the Acilii's supposed connection to Christ worship for Sordi and Cavigiolo is that one of Sergia Paullina's daughters married the son of the suspected Christ-follower, Manius Acilius Glabrio. The son (who went by the same name as his father), became consul in 124 CE.[33] With this marriage, Sordi and Cavigiolo proposed, two Christian senatorial families became united. Some material evidence suggests that the family later included Christians: the Acilii's *hypogeum* was found in Rome on the Via Salaria Nuova from which two Christians from the family appear in the third or fourth century.[34]

While it would be preferable to have evidence about the individual's worship practices from the *collegium*'s inscriptions, external evidence does occasionally confirm the presence of Christians in associations. For example, in early fourth-century Oxyrhynchus there was a guild of flax merchants that is known from a price declaration and a few other

31. See Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 197, for their discussion of Acts 13:7–12.

32. See Alessandro Galimberti, "The Emperor Domitian," in *A Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome*, ed. Andrew Zissos, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 101.

33. Sordi and Cavigiolo, "Un'antica," 369–70; cf. Sordi, *Christians*, 185.

34. Pasquale Testini, *Archeologia Cristiana: Nozioni generali dalle origini alla fine del sec. VI.* (Bari, Italy: Edipuglia, 1980), 70–71.

documents that simply attest to the guild's existence and little else.[35] The Christian population of the town at the time may have been upwards of 50 percent, but there is no evidence from the guild's papyri that any member was Christian. It was only upon AnnMarie Luijendijk's discovery that a Christian writing exercise was attached to an archive of a certain Aurelius Leonides, one of the guild's recurring monthly officers, that the cult affiliation of one of the guilds members became apparent as Christian.[36]

3.2. Internal Evidence

Sordi and Cavigiolo also built their case on evidence internal to the *collegium*'s inscriptions. In this section I survey the main arguments from the epigraphy and also Bonfioli and Panciera's responses.

3.2.1. The *Collegium*'s Self-Designator

Sordi and Cavigiolo's identification of the *collegium* as Christian relied heavily on a fascinating interpretation of the *collegium*'s self-description, which they believe pointed to the group's connection to Christ worship. They interpreted the association's occasional self-identification, *collegium quod est in domo Sergiae Paullinae*, as the Latinization of Paul's house-church formula: *ἡ κατ' οἶκον αὐτόν/αὐτῆς ἐκκλησία* (Phlm 2; 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5).[37] One of the inscriptions that employs this designation is as follows:

> *D*(*is*) *M*(*anibus*). / *Hermeroti,* / *arcario, v*(*ixit*) *a*(*nnos*) *XXXIV,* / *collegium* / *quod est in domu* / *Sergiae Paullinae.* / *Fecerunt* / *Agathemer et Chreste Arescon* / *fratri piissimo b*(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*).[38]
> To the divine spirits. For Hermerotus, treasurer. He lived thirty-four years. The association that is in the house of Sergia Paullina, Agather-

35. P.Oxy. 54.3753 (319 CE).

36. AnnMarie Luijendijk, "A New Testament Papyrus and Its Documentary Context: An Early Christian Writing Exercise from the Archive of Leonides ('P.Oxy.' II 209/$\mathfrak{p}^{10}$)," *JBL* 129 (2010): 575–96. For the writing exercise, see P.Oxy. 2.209 (early fourth century CE). For Aurelius Leonides as an officer, see P.Oxy. 45.3261 (324 CE); P.Oxy. 45.3262 (328 CE).

37. Sordi and Cavigiolo ("Un'antica," 371) also cite Paul's various other ways to refer to social formations made up of Christ worshipers (Rom 16:11; Phil 4:22) and compare these to the *collegium*'s alternate formulae in CIL 6.10260 and 10263.

38. CIL 6.9148 = *ILS* 7333 (Rome, Latium, Italy; first/second century CE).

merus, and Chreste Arescon set this up for their most pious brother. Well deserving![39]

Bonfioli and Panciera responded to this argument by providing analogies from a non-Christian context that undermined the force of Sordi and Cavigiolo's presentation of the data. They highlighted, in particular, the domestic *collegium Larum in domo Iuliana* ("association of the Lares in the house of Juliana") and the professional/domestic association of imperial cooks that called itself *collegium cocorum Aug*(*usti*) *n*(*ostri*) *quod consistit in Palatio* ("association of imperial cooks that stands on the Palatine").[40] The implication is that the formula, *collegium quod est in domo,* does not require deference to Paul's language.

Paul obviously did not create the formula he used for his groups, so it is no surprise to find other associations using identifiers that look like *ἡ κατ' οἶκον αὐτοῦ/αὐτῆς ἐκκλησία*. In support of Bonfioli and Panciera's interpretation of the data, one might ask, how else could an association that meets in a house describe itself? But an examination of domestic associations in the Roman West surprisingly does not resolve the issue. Jean-Pierre Waltzing listed approximately 250 domestic associations along with their self-designators.[41] It is from this list that Bonfioli and Panciera worked. Several formulae show up in Waltzing's catalogue of domestic associations, including:

Libertorum et familiae Afraniae Popilianae[42]
Collegium Antonianum[43]
Cultores Larum Sexti Antoni Mansueti et Luci Valeri Rufini[44]

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39. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

40. For the former, see CIL 13.1747 (Lugdunum, Gaul). For the latter, CIL 6.7458 (Rome, Latium Italy); Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 196. The inscription is from CIL 13.1747 (Lugdunum, Gaul).

41. Waltzing lists 265, from which I subtracted the seven from the Sergia Paullina association, amounting to 258. I then rounded it off to 250 to account for occasional overlap (e.g., numbers 61 and 120 are the same association). See Jean-Pierre Waltzing, *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les romains depuis les origines jusqu'à la chute de l'empire d'occident*, 4 vols., Mémoire couronne par l'Academie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1895–1900), 4:153–76.

42. CIL 10.3995.

43. CIL 6.1920.

44. CIL 12.2677.

Ex collegio salutari familiae Valerianae[45]

Some of these appear with high frequency. Strikingly, the designator employed by the Sergia Paullina *collegium*, on the other hand, accounts for very few. Seven inscriptions were more or less parallels, including one that was nearly entirely reconstructed by Waltzing. I have added a few others to the following list because Waltzing's list is no longer comprehensive:

Collegium cocorum Augusti nostri quod consistit in Palatio[46]
Collegium salutare familiae tabellariorum Caesaris nostri quae sunt Narbone in domu[47]
Ex domo Caesarum libertorum et servorum quod est collegium tabernaculariorum[48]
Collegium Numinis dominorum quod est sub templo divi Claudi[49]
Collegium salutare [*quod consistit in praediis Galbanis*?][50]
Collegium Larum in domo Juliana[51]
Collegium sanctissimum quod consistit in praedis Larci Macedonis in curia[52]
Familiae Tiberi Caesaris quae est in me[*ta*]*llis*[53]

Approximately 2.8 percent of Latin domestic associations used the designator that the Sergia Paullina association preferred.

It remains unlikely that the Sergia Paullina *collegium* conscientiously mirrored Pauline language. Indeed, about 2.8 percent of other Latin associations in Waltzing's database employed the Latin equivalent of Paul's phrase, so there is no reason to think any differently about the Sergia Paullina *collegium*.

However, *collegium quod est in domo Sergiae Paullinae* was not one of the more obvious or typical ways for this domestic association to self-

45. CIL 10.1588.
46. CIL 6.7458.
47. CIL 12.4449 = *ILS* 3840.
48. CIL 6.9053; cf. CIL 6.9053[a].
49. CIL 6.10251[a]. Peculiarly, Sordi and Cavigiolo ("Un'antica," 271 n. 12) were aware of CIL 6.10251 and provided it in a footnote of domestic *collegia* whose inscriptions attest to patron deities.
50. CIL 6.30983.
51. CIL 13.1747.
52. CIL 6.404.
53. CIL 13.1550

identify, so Sordi and Cavigiolo's interpretation should not be ruled out entirely. Since such a small proportion of Latin *collegia* employed this formula, Sordi and Cavigiolo's insight that the phrase might be a relevant piece to the puzzle of the group's worship practices remains tenable even after Bonfioli and Panciera's scrutiny, if only because other circumstantial indications of the *collegium*'s or family's connections to Christ worship exist.

3.2.2. Silences in the *Collegium*'s Inscriptions and Images on their Monuments

Finally, in a later article from 1979, Sordi replied to Bonfioli and Panciera's responses by emphasizing "the absence in the [*collegium*'s] inscriptions of pagan gods and symbols."[54] She conceded to Bonfioli and Panciera that one of the family's monuments was decorated with two possible pictorial indications of paganism (*AE* 1973, no. 25)[55] but observed that the epitaph on this marble stela that did not mention the *collegium*. Sordi interpreted this stone as a "significant clue" that only some of the family had joined the *collegium* ("house church" for Sordi) while others continued to worship other gods.[56]

I am less sure the symbols on *AE* 1973 number 25 tell us much about the worship practices of the individuals commemorated there (Tiridates, Primus, and Onesimus). There are two images at the top of the stela. The picture on the left depicts birds pecking at grapes, a common scene in Roman funerary monuments, but this image is found time and again on Christian funerary monuments and church mosaics.[57] The image on the right depicts two hands raised upward in prayer. Bonfioli and Panciera noted its rare occurrence in Judean epigraphy and found it to represent a "small difficulty [in attributing] a Christian character to this domestic collegium."[58] In Greek and Roman contexts, the image invokes the sun deity or another high god to exact revenge on the perpetrator of some

54. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 14.

55. Bonfioli and Panciera, "*In domo Sergiae Paullinae*," no. 21.

56. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 16.

57. Bonfioli and Panciera, "*In domo Sergiae Paullinae*," 138. See the many images in Johann Peter Kirsch, "Colombe," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 15 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1920–1953), 3.2:2198–2231.

58. Bonfioli and Panciera, "*In domo Sergiae Paullinae*," 138.

injustice.[59] The same image is found on a Judean monument from Rheneia.[60] In fact, raising hands was a common prayer position for both Judeans and Christ-followers, as attested by the literary records.[61]

The only other indication of pagan worship practices from the epigraphy of the Sergii Paulli is a dedication to the god Mēn by the freedman Lucius Sergius Corinthus in Sinanli (Galatia, Asia Minor), far removed from the Roman *collegium*.[62]

3.3. Additional Challenges to Sordi and Cavigiolo 1971

Bonfioli and Panciera offered additional challenges to Sordi and Cavigiolo's hypothesis, some of which Sordi addressed in independently -published replies. First, Bonfioli and Panciera suggested that the monuments on which the *collegium*'s inscriptions were engraved tended to be used as cremation tombs. This is significant because "it is well known that Christians, like Jews, had an aversion to this kind of burial."[63] Sordi observed that the *collegium* simply used funerary stelae, which many Christians also purchased, so "it is doubtful that incineration is inevitable on the basis of a stele."[64] In addition, it might be noted that, although some Christian writers advocated for inhumation, our only pre-Constantine evidence of a rejection of the practice comes from a letter by Cyprian of Carthage (251 CE), which informs us of a Spanish bishop, Martialis, and his sons "being buried in profane tombs with strangers" (*Ep.* 67.6).[65] This source attests to

59. Henk S. Versnel, "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. C. A. Farone and D. Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 70–72.

60. *IJO* 1.Ach70 = *CIJ* 725 (Rheneia, Aegean; second–first century BCE).

61. See the attestations in 3 Macc 5:25; Philo, *Flacc.* 121; 1 Kgs 8:22. For conformity with the practice among worshipers of Christ, see 1 Tim 2:8; 1 Clem. 29.1; Tertullian, *Or.* 14, 17.

62. MAMA 7.486 = Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," no. 19 (86 CE).

63. Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 200.

64. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 15.

65. On the diversity of early Christian burial practices, see John Bodel, "From *Columbaria* to Catacombs: Collective Burial in Pagan and Christian Rome," in *Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context; Studies of Roman, Jewish, and Christian Burials*, ed. Laurie Brink and Deborah Green (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 181–82.

Christians taking part in the very burial practice that Bonfioli and Panciera assumed that Christians avoided.

Bonfioli and Panciera also voiced skepticism that a Christian group would use "the traditional names of pagan associations," such as *collegium*.[66] While this point was left unaddressed at the time, it can now be noted that several Christ associations used names common among other associations—and also that *ἐκκλησία* itself fits well within the naming practices of associations.[67] For instance, two Christian associations from Aquileia did indeed identify as *collegia*,[68] the members of another Christ association presented themselves as *cultores*,[69] and yet another Christ group used the common association designator, *κοινόν*, to name only a few examples.[70]

3.4. Summary of Position on the *Collegium* in Sergia Paullina's House

In the reception of the 1970s exchange between these researchers, Sordi and Cavigiolo's original article tends to be portrayed as highly speculative and Bonfioli and Panciera's response as a more natural handling of the data. Michel Christol and Thomas Drew-Bear observed that "it is impossible to show that the members of the collegium in the Roman house of Sergia Paullina exhibited a Christian faith."[71] Alexander Weiss characterizes Sordi and Cavigiolo's theory as "based on questionable interpretations" of the *collegium*'s inscriptions.[72] Éric Rebellard goes further: "Given the weakness of the case, the identification proposed by Marta Sordi can be rejected definitively."[73] This statement from Rebellard's fine book comes in the same paragraph that Rebellard accepts Sergius Paullus as a convert of Paul's and in which he affirms Sergius Paullus as Sergia Paullina's grandfather. While I also find some of Sordi and Cavigiolo's

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66. Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 197.

67. Richard Last, "*Ekklēsia* outside the Septuagint and the Dēmos: The Titles of Greco-Roman Associations and Christ-Followers' Groups," *JBL* 137 (2018): 950–80.

68. CIL 5.1628 = IAquileia 3.2907 = *ILCV* 4236 (Aquileia, Venetia and Histria, Italy; late antiquity); and CIL 5.1658 = IAquileia 3.2908 = I*LCV* 284 (Aquileia, Venetia and Histria, Italy; late antiquity).

69. CIL 8.9585 (Caesarea, North Africa; before 257 or 304 CE).

70. PSI 12.1265 (Oxyrhynchus, Egypt; 426 CE).

71. Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 188.

72. Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 188; and Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 70.

73. Rebelliard, *Care of the Dead*, 43.

interpretations unpersuasive, it seems unfair to characterize all of their readings this way. In fact, Sordi and Cavigiolo's interpretation of the *collegium* members' Christian identity is actually based in large measure on evidence about the Sergii Paulli apart from the epitaphs.

Although it is not always stated explicitly, the guiding assumption driving the negative evaluation of Sordi and Cavigiolo's interpretation seems to be that, unless a group's or individual's worship practice is clearly inscribed, we should assume a non-Christian context, since the Christian population in Rome by the late first and early second centuries CE was so small.[74] Against this line of reasoning, Sordi and Cavigiolo's circumstantial evidence of the *collegium*'s self-designator (and hierarchical organization into *maiores* and *minores*[75]) might be offered. But more interesting (to me) is Luke's account of Paul's encounter with Sergius Paullus in Cyprus. Sordi and Cavigiolo's case for a Christian interpretation of the *collegium*'s inscriptions is framed by the initial pages of their 1971 article that are devoted entirely to indications that the Sergii Paulli maintained connections to Christ worship. Moreover, Bonfioli and Panciera happened to agree with their interpretation of Acts 13:7–12—as have modern interpreters who otherwise disagree with Sordi and Cavigiolo's model.

4. The Testimony in Acts 13:6–12

If Luke's account of a favorable meeting between Paul and Sergius Paullus can be maintained, then the *collegium* from his granddaughter's house in Rome is at least notionally connected to Christ worshipers.[76] Previous

74. Robert M. Grant (*Early Christianity and Society: Seven Studies* [New York: Harper & Row, 1977], 6) suspected that the Christian population in Rome was seven thousand by 200 CE. See also Gerd Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums in Rome," *ZNW* 70 (1979): 86–114 (102 n.44).

75. See n. 18.

76. For the possibility that Sergia Paullina is the great-granddaughter rather than the granddaughter of the proconsul, Lucius Sergius Paullus, see Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 184. For defense of the standard identification, see Helmut Halfmann, "Die Senatoren aus den kleinasiatischen Provinzen des römischen Reiches vom 1.–3. Jahrhundert (Asia, Pontus-Bithynia, Lycia-Pamphylia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Cilicia)," in *Atti del Colloquio internazionale AIEGL su epigrafia e ordine senatorio, Roma, 14–20 maggio 1981*, 2 vols. (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1982), 2:605; and Halfmann, "Italische Ursprünge bei Rittern und Senatoren aus Kleinasien," in *Tra Oriente e Occidente: Indigeni, Greci e Romani in Asia Minore; Atti del convegno inter-*

assessments employ a variety of labels to describe Paul's impact on Sergius Paullus in Cyprus—ranging from transformative to trivial—but, fascinatingly, most attribute some plausibility to an encounter between the two. Luke's account of the meeting is as follows:

> *διελθόντες δὲ ὅλην τὴν νῆσον ἄχρι πάφου εὗρον ἄνδρα τινὰ μάγον ψευδοπροφήτην ἰουδαῖον ᾧ ὄνομα βαριησοῦ, ὃς ἦν σὺν τῷ ἀνθυπάτῳ σεργίῳ παύλῳ, ἀνδρὶ συνετῷ. οὗτος προσκαλεσάμενος βαρναβᾶν καὶ σαῦλον ἐπεζήτησεν ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ· ἀνθίστατο δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐλύμας ὁ μάγος, οὕτως γὰρ μεθερμηνεύεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ζητῶν διαστρέψαι τὸν ἀνθύπατον ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως. σαῦλος δέ, ὁ καὶ παῦλος, πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀτενίσας εἰς αὐτὸν εἶπεν, ὦ πλήρης παντὸς δόλου καὶ πάσης ῥᾳδιουργίας, υἱὲ διαβόλου, ἐχθρὲ πάσης δικαιοσύνης, οὐ παύσῃ διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς [τοῦ] κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας; καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ χεὶρ κυρίου ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ ἔσῃ τυφλὸς μὴ βλέπων τὸν ἥλιον ἄχρι καιροῦ. παραχρῆμά τε ἔπεσεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀχλὺς καὶ σκότος, καὶ περιάγων ἐζήτει χειραγωγούς. τότε ἰδὼν ὁ ἀνθύπατος τὸ γεγονὸς ἐπίστευσεν ἐκπλησσόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ κυρίου.*
> When they passed through the whole island until Paphos, they found a man, a certain astrologer pseudo-prophet Judean with the name Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul [*ἀνθύπατος*] Sergius Paulus, an intelligent [*συνετός*] man. This one summoned Barnabas and Saul. He wanted to hear the word of God. But the magi Elymas, for his name is translated in this way, stood against them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from trust [in what Barnabas and Saul would say upon being summoned]. But Saul, who was also called Paul, being filled of the Holy Spirit, looked intently toward him. He said, "O, one who is full of all guile and every self-indulgence, son of the devil, hater of justice, will you not stop distorting the straight ways of the lord? And now, behold, the hand of God that is upon you, and you will become blind, not seeing the sun for a time." A mist and darkness immediately fell over his eyes, and he walked around seeking guides. After the proconsul [*ἀνθύπατος*] saw what happened, he trusted in the teaching of the lord, being amazed.

In determining the reliability of this passage, Luke's identification of a Cyprian proconsul sometime during the 40s CE with a nomen-cognomen combination of a Sergius Paullus marks a reasonable starting point. Since

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nazionale, Cividale del Friuli, 28–30, September 2006, ed. Gianpaolo Urso (Pisa: ETS, 2007), 181. Weiss (*Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 70) is uncommitted. That possibility was considered originally by Edmond Groag, "Sergius (Paullus)," PW 2A.2:1717–18, and rejected by Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 2:6 n. 40.

the Roman senate appointed senators to serve one year terms as ἀνθύπατοι on Cyprus,[77] it is significant that an inscription from 41–47 CE attests to a senator from the Sergii Paulli in the 40s CE: a certain Lucius Sergius Paullus, who at the time was on the board of five curators of the Tiber (*curator riparum et alvei Tiberis*).[78] He is the only known senator from the family at the time. Given the rarity of the Sergius Paullus name and the first-century lifetime and senatorial status of this individual, he very well could be the Sergius Paullus whom Luke records in Acts 13:7–12. From this same family, a Lucius Sergius Paullus *filius* shows up later in an inscription from Pisidian Antioch.[79] This individual seems to have been the son of the senator and curator of the Tiber. A third inscription mentioning a Lucius Sergius Paullus, this one the father again, later appears during the reign of Vespasian (69–79 CE). He is here consul *suffectus*.[80] Two other first-century senatorial families went by the Paullus cognomen, the Vettenii Paulli and the Aemilii Paulli, but they need not concern us here.[81]

The principal basis for suggesting that Lucius Sergius Paullus, the curator of the Tiber in 41–47 CE, served as Cyprus's proconsul is that we know of no other individuals with the rare Sergius Paullus name who would qualify for the role at the time. Some doubt necessarily remains. Cyprian epigraphy has yielded attestations to only 20 percent of the island's proconsuls between the years 22 BCE and 235 CE.[82] Strikingly, one known

77. See now Giorgos Papantoniou, *Religion and Social Transformations in Cyprus: From the Cypriot Basileis to the Hellenistic Strategos*, Mnemosyne Supplements 347 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 370. Cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 54.5.

78. CIL 6.31545 = *ILS* 2.5926. For the *curatores* of the Tiber, see Gregory S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 199.

79. Ramsay, *Bearing of Recent Discoveries*, 151 = *AE* 2002 no. 1458.

80. CIL 6.253 (Rome, Latium, Italy). Christol and Drew-Bear ("Les Sergii Pauli," 184) raise the possibility that this is the son. See n. 79.

81. See Adrian Nicholas Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 153–54.

82. For Cyprian proconsuls, see Terence B. Mitford, *The Inscriptions of Kourion* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1971), 169–70. For the identification of Luke's Cyprian proconsul with Lucius Sergius Paullus, see Alanna Nobbs, "Cyprus," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 287; Barbara Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 112; Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6–7; Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 57–66. The identification of this curator of the Tiber as Luke's proconsul in

proconsul on the island during this time frame was indeed a Paullus. The following grave inscription attests to a certain Paullus who was a Cyprian procurator.[83] The epitaph reads as follows:

> Ἀπολλώνιος τῷ πατ[ρὶ τῷ δεῖνι τοῦ δεῖνος] | καὶ τῇ μητρὶ Ἀρ̣ι̣[στ]ο̣κ̣[λεία̣(?)] Ἀ̣π̣[ολλωνίου(?) ἔκτισεν(?)] | τὸν περίβολον καὶ τὴν κ̣α̣τ̣’ [αὐτοῦ καμάραν(?) κατὰ] τ̣ὰ̣ς̣ | ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἐντολάς, ἑαυ[τῷ τε καὶ] τοῖς π̣α̣ι̣[σὶν] || ἑαυτοῦ, τῆς Σολίων πόλεως [ἀρχιερα]σ̣[άμενος(?), ἱπ]|παρχήσας, γραμματεύσας δεκαπρωτε[ύ]σ[ας, ἐπὶ τοῦ] | βυβλιοφυλακίου γενόμενος· (ἔτους) ι̣γ′(?) Δ̣η̣μ̣[αρχε]|ξουσίου κε. τιμητεύσας, τὴν βουλὴν̣ [κατα]λέξας, τῷ ι′ (ἔτει) || ἐπὶ Παύλου̣ [ἀνθυ]πάτου.
>
> Apollonios sets up for his father … and his mother, Aristokleia, daughter of Apollonios, the enclosed area and vaulted tomb on his property in accordance with your own instructions. It is also for himself and his entire household. High priest of the city of Soli, commander of the police force, secretary, and member of the *dekaproteia* after becoming appointed to the local Records Office. Year 13 of the Demarchos. Chosen for the Council to be censor in the tenth regnal year when Paulus was proconsul.

Unfortunately, difficulties in dating this epitaph have prevented a sure identification. Line 10 puts Paullus's office to the tenth year of an unidentified emperor's reign,[84] and Terence Mitford claimed in 1980 that the restored reference to a tax-collecting institution (δεκαπρωτεία, line 6) betrayed a second-century date for the inscription, as this committee was apparently instituted no earlier than Hadrian's reign.[85] This committee actually first appears in the first century CE all throughout the Eastern Mediterranean: 66/67 CE in Gerasa (Syria), 73/74 CE in Macedonia, possibly the first century in Philadelphia (Lydia), and possibly in the late first century in Tlos (Lycia).[86] Christoph Samitz recently argued for a date in

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Cyprus coheres with what is known about the career trajectories of Roman senators. He could have been proconsul either before or after his curator position.

83. *IGRR* 3.930 = *PIR*² 4.377 (Soli, Cyprus).

84. Recently, Campbell expressed doubts about this reading. See Douglas A. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation to Sergius Paul[l]us (Acts 13:6–12), and the Implications for Pauline Chronology," *JTS* 56 (2005): 2 n. 3.

85. Terence B. Mitford, "Roman Cyprus," *ANRW* 2.7.2:1302–3 n. 62.

86. For Gerasa, see *IGRR* 3.1376 (Gerasa, Syria). For the possibility of an earlier origin, see Arnold Hugh Martin Jones and Antony Spawforth, "*decaproti*," *OCD*, 434. For Macedonia, Christoph Samitz, "Die Einführung der Dekaproten und der Eikosaproten in

the reign of Septimus Severus (145–211 CE). He asserted that the inscription's square letters appeared exclusively during this period on Cyprus.[87] Mitford, however, pointed out that the script is found in Cyprus as early as the late Augustan period and again during Gaius's reign.[88] Some recent interpreters have reexplored the possibility of a mid-first century CE date and have experimented with the idea that this Paullus, who was certainly the proconsul of Cyprus, represents the one whom Luke records Paul to have met.[89]

The details provided by Luke, filtered through epigraphic controls, lead to Lucius Sergius Paullus as the proconsul whom Luke most likely identified as having met Paul. There remain two current alternatives to identifying the proconsul in question as Lucius Sergius Paullus. The first entails the complete dismissal of the epigraphic record due to its relative scarcity. This seems severe and also an underestimation of the value of the extant sources. The second alternative demands more attention and will be considered now.

4.1. Quintus Ser[…]: Did Paul Meet a Different Sergius Paullus in Cyprus?

Douglas Campbell recently identified Luke's Cyprian proconsul as Quintus Sergius Paullus, not Lucius Sergius Paullus. He offered a new, earlier dating of an inscription containing cult regulations from Chytri (Cyprus) and a fresh interpretation of its relevance for understanding Pauline biography and chronology.[90] The debate over the inscription's date—Campbell's Tiberian era (14–37 CE) or Mitford's dating to the reign of Gaius (37–41 CE)—is based on how to restore properly the emperor's name in line 9 (Tiberius, Gaius, or, in earlier scholarship, Claudius) but is mostly irrelevant for the present purpose of identifying the praenomen

den Städten Kleinasiens und Griechenlands," *Chiron* 43 (2013): no. 23; Jones and Spawforth, "*decaproti*," 434. For Philadelphia, *TAM* 5.3.1455 = Samitz, "Die Einführung der Dekaproten," no. 47. For Tlos, SEG 54.1443 = Samitz, "Die Einführung der Dekaproten," no. 85.

87. Samitz, "Die Einführung der Dekaproten," 56.

88. Terence B. Mitford, "Notes on Some Published Inscriptions from Roman Cyprus," *BSA* 42 (1947): 215 n.19.

89. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 2 n. 3; Ramelli ("Cristiani e vita politica," 50) makes the identification but does not discuss any resolution for the former dating problem.

90. *IGRR* 3.935 = SEG 20.302 (first century CE).

of Luke's Sergius Paullus. Campbell's renewed suggestion that this inscription likely names a certain Quintus Ser[gius Paullus] and that this Quintus was the proconsul whom Paul met in Cyprus, to be sure, would affect Sergia Paullina's kin relationship to the senator whom Paul encountered two generations prior. According to Campbell, Quintus was a brother or other relative of the Lucius from whose household the Sergia Paullina *collegium* later emerged.[91]

The inscription at the center of Campbell's study mentions a certain, Κοίντος Σερ[…]. Prior to Mitford's revised dating (to 37–41 CE) in 1980, it was thought that this Quintus could date to Claudius's reign (41–54 CE). This led some researchers to identify the inscription's Quintus Ser- with the Sergius Paullus whom Paul met because Luke seems to place this event during Claudius's reign in the late 40s CE. Once Mitford revised the dating to 37–41 CE, researchers rejected an identification with Luke's Cyprian proconsul.[92] Campbell correctly highlighted that the rejection was often (but not always) based on the conviction that Paul could not possibly have visited Cyprus as early as 37–41 CE, given Acts' internal chronology.[93] As Campbell advises, Pauline chronology should not be anchored on Acts' own internal timeline.[94] In light of Campbell's work on the stone, a Claudian dating can now be ruled out, and Campbell's reconstruction of Tiberius's name in line 9 presents the best interpretation of the data.[95]

However, Campbell neither adequately supports his proposal to restore line 10 with Quintus Ser[gius Paullus, proconsul] nor addresses legitimate reasons for rejecting this restoration. In 1984, Stephen Mitchell reexamined the inscription at the Metropolitan Museum and concluded, "it does not appear likely that the name in the [tenth] line can be restored as Sergius; a form beginning Sera…, Serd…, or Serl… can be more readily accommodated with what can still be seen."[96] Oddly, Campbell himself is also "unable

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91. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 18.

92. For the revised dating, see Mitford, "Roman Cyprus," 1330 n. 195.

93. In particular, the arguments by Mitchell (*Anatolia*, 7) and Christol and Drew-Bear ("Les Sergii Pauli," 177–92) reflect no anxiety to uphold Acts' internal chronology.

94. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 20–21.

95. See especially the discussion of the scribe's *rho*s and *alpha*s and the importance of this for restoring either Gaius or Tiberius in line 9 (Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 14).

96. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 7. Based on Campbell's own review of the stone ("Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 16 n. 40), he suggests the following possible alternatives to Sergius: Serennius, Sermulius, Serreni, and Serenni.

to see sufficient evidence on the stone here to suggest a gamma" after the *rho* in Σερ[…].[97] Campbell observes that Ser- nomina are rare and seems to offer this as an argument for restoring Quintus's nomen as Sergius.[98] But in Cyprus, we only know 17 percent of names of Roman magistrates, including proconsuls, from 22 BCE through the third century CE, and even in this very small sample size another Ser- nomen (Servenius) emerges.[99]

In addition to Campbell's problematic restoration of the nomen as Sergius, he also peculiarly adds Paullus as the figure's cognomen. On this decision, Alexander Weiss assessed, "there is no compelling reason to add the cognomen, Paullus, in line 11."[100] The only basis for Campbell's addition was that Luke mentioned a proconsul with the Paullus cognomen, which, as Weiss highlights, is the same methodology that Campbell rejected in his discussion of the historiography of reconstructing the emperor's name in line 9.[101]

After taking the liberty of restoring Quintus with the Sergius Paullus nomen-cognomen combination, Campbell then argues that this figure was a proconsul on the island.[102] The inscription itself does not equip Quintus Ser- with the title, and it should not be taken for granted that Quintus was the island's proconsul. The inscription, which lists sanctuary regulations, is so fragmentary that we do not know why it mentions Quintus Ser-.

On the whole, it would be unusual to prefer this Quintus Ser- over the curator of the Tiber, Lucius Sergius Paullus, who was certainly a senator, a Sergii Paulli, and a landowner in Pisidian Antioch, which will become important later (see Acts 13:13–14).[103] The Quintus Ser- in the Chytri inscription was, as far as we know, none of the things Luke said about the person whom Paul met in Cyprus.

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97. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 15.

98. Campbell, "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 16.

99. *PIR*[1] 3404. See Mitford, "Roman Cyprus," 1306.

100. Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 61.

101. For Campbell's critique of previous scholars who restored a reference to Claudius in line 9 based on the Acts testimony and internal Pauline chronology, see "Possible Inscriptional Attestation," 20 (cf. Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 61).

102. For this reconstruction, see also Halfmann, "Italische Ursprünge," 180; and Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 188.

103. Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 61. For the same conclusion, see Cilliers Breytenbach and Christiane Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia and Adjacent Areas: From Paul to Amphilochius of Iconium*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 101; Early Christianity in Asia Minor 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 59–62.

4.2. Christ Worship by an Imperial Elite

Even if Sergia Paullina's grandfather, Lucius Sergius Paullus, has emerged as a plausible Cyprian proconsul, there are legitimate doubts over the likelihood that this governor met with Paul. Moreover, if Sergius Paullus happened to summon Paul, would a senator in the 40s CE actually come to trust (πιστεύειν, Acts 13:8) what Paul told him about Christ? The meeting and the trusting can be treated together, but before assessing the reliability of those details in Luke's account, it is necessary to eliminate from consideration three implausible events that tend to be added to Luke's account in some secondary literature but are not there: (1) the conversion or baptism of the proconsul;[104] (2) the baptisms of the proconsul's family; and (3) the establishment of an ἐκκλησία in Sergius Paullus' residence in Paphos. In light of these silences, Wayne Meeks omits Sergius Paullus from his consideration of "Pauline Christians."[105] Likewise, Ekkehard Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann observe that the proconsul never joined "in the sense of *social membership* in the Christ-confessing community."[106]

Excursus: The Supposed Conversion of Sergius Paullus

Weiss recently defended the notion of Sergius Paullus as a convert.[107] His definition of conversion is, unfortunately, unclear throughout the discussion. A Roman senator such as Sergius Paullus would need to honor

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104. For recent portrayals of Sergius Paullus as a convert, see Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 75–80; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 77; Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6–7; Rebilliard, *Care of the Dead*, 43; Sordi, *Christians and the Roman Empire*, 185. Some Acts commentators demonstrate greater reservations: Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–2015), 2:2024–6; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 504; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 318–27.

105. Meeks does so due to the lack of a baptism narrative. He thus leaves open the possibility that Sergius Paullus worshiped Christ without cutting loose his traditional religious affiliations. See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 62.

106. Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 308, emphasis original.

107. Weiss asserts that conversion is "historically plausible" in light of Acts' testimony (*Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 78–79).

Roman gods at least publicly while serving as proconsul and, later, consul *suffectus*.[108] Weiss does not outright deny the proconsul's civic responsibilities, so he seems either to understand Sergius Paullus's affiliation to Christ worship as belief-based, divorced somewhat or at least differentiated from worship practices, or as harmonious with worship of Roman gods.[109]

Luke asserts that that Sergius Paullus came to πιστεύειν what Paul taught about Christ (Acts 13:12). William Ramsay, Ernst Haenchen, Werner Eck, and others illustrated a wide semantic range for πιστεύειν in Greek and Roman literature. They correctly preferred to take Luke's usage of the word in this passage as denoting the proconsul's newfound "trust" in the wonder-working authority of Paul rather than a conversion in the modern sense.[110] Weiss, on the other hand, suggested that Luke's readers would have understood the word in the sense that Luke apparently used it throughout his works: conversion. This is an oft-repeated conclusion,[111] but, in fact, the word does not always indicate a permanent transfer of loyalties from Roman gods to Christ in Luke (e.g., Luke 8:12–13). Moreover, it is often used without specification of what πίστις in Christ actually entailed, as in the Sergius Paullus passage (e.g., Acts 4:4; 5:14; 9:42; 14:1).

Weiss evaluates other doubts concerning Luke's report of Sergius Paullus's conversion as "easy to refute."[112] These doubts are threefold: (1) Luke does not mention the proconsul's baptism;[113] (2) Luke remains silent

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108. Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer. *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien: Die unbekannten Jahre des Apostels*, WUNT 108 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 115.

109. Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 77. For practices as part of the "belief in gods", see Manuela Giordano-Zecharya, "As Socrates Shows, the Athenians Did Not Believe in Gods," *Numen* 52 (2005): 325–55. For the sacrifices and pagan cult practices required of Sergius Paullus, see Werner Eck, "Das Eindringen des Christentums in den Senatorenstand bis zu Konstantin d. Gr," *Chiron* 1 (1971): 381–406. For the expected range of religiosity among senators, see Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, *The Religion of Senators in the Roman Empire: Power and the Beyond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

110. Ramsay, *Bearing of Recent Discoveries*, 165; Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 3 (Götingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 238; Eck, "Das Eindringen des Christentums," 391; Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith:* Pistis *and* Fides *in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 383.

111. See also Keener, *Acts*, 2025.

112. Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 77.

113. Ramsay, *Bearing of Recent Discoveries*, 166.

on the formation of a house church in the consul's residence in Paphos;[114] and (3) a senator would not worship Christ exclusively due to his social and political rank, responsibilities, and expectations placed upon him by society.[115] The first two of these objections have little relevance. As Weiss observes, there are zero baptisms and house churches in the entire first missionary journey narrative, so if these requirements for conversion should be applied to Acts 13–15 as a whole, the result would be that Paul's initial teaching was a complete failure, which contradicts Luke's characterization of the events (Acts 13:43, 48; 14:1, 4, 27).[116] Weiss does not address the fact that baptisms commonly appear in Luke's description of recruits outside of Acts 13–15.[117]

The most difficult problem with the reliability of the narrative is the centrality of the fictive battle between Elymas and Paul that frames the entire narrative. From a literary perspective, Weiss suggests, Sergius Paullus's *πίστις* is affirmed only after Paul defeats the attempt of the astrologer (*μάγος*) Elymas (13:8) to prevent the proconsul's *πίστις*. Likewise, Arthur Darby Nock characterized Acts 13:7–12 as a Greco-Roman story type consisting of conflict between rival religious experts and a miracle that causes the conviction of some who witness it. This might call into question the historicity of the entire narrative. As Nock argues, "The proconsul's conversion, which would have been an event of the first importance, is just stated.… It has no consequences. 'No Church is said to have been founded at Paphos.' "[118] In other words, the narrative reads like a story type rather than a historical record of a senator beginning to worship Christ.[119] Weiss

114. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 388; Arthur Darby Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 1:187.

115. Hengel and Schwemer, *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien*, 115.

116. Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 77.

117. I thank John Kloppenborg for this point. See Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12–13, 36–38; 9:18; 10:47–48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16.

118. Nock, *Essays on Religion*, 329. Nock's quotations mark the words of Burkitt from a private conversation.

119. Nock also noticed some departures in the Sergius Paullus story from the typical form of the trope and ultimately proposed that Luke haphazardly added the narrative to his book from an older tradition. It remains possible that, since the narrative contains no baptism, no "house church", and no information about the fortunes of the proconsul, a dull account of Paul's meeting with the proconsul was perhaps enlivened by the stock character, Elymas, and by the story type identified by Nock.

himself counters that historiographers regularly inserted supernatural events into their narratives and that it is neither necessary nor prudent to call these entire narratives into question as a result.

A second problem with using Luke's story in Acts 13:7–12 for a historical reconstruction of the Sergii Paulli's connection to Christ worship is that it coheres rather well with Luke's distinctive portrayal of Christ worship as attractive to affluent sections of ancient society.[120] Only Luke records Sergius Paullus—or, for that matter, any member of the senatorial *ordo*—as a worshiper of Christ. Traditionally, evidence for senators and their families practicing Christ worship is thought to emerge no earlier than the late second century, though a few texts might indicate otherwise.[121]

In several passages Luke narrates the earliest history of Christ worship in environments frequented by the affluent or as inclusive of the wealthy (e.g., Luke 8:1–3; 12:16–34; 14:7–11; 19:1–10; Acts 8:27–39; 10:1–48; 13:1, 7–12; 16:14–40; 17:4, 12, 34). At a general level, these passages assert a certain thematic cohesiveness. However, this catalog brings together the story of a senator, Sergius Paullus, receiving Paul's teaching favorably, on the one hand, and stories such as those of Zacchaeus the rich tax collector (Luke 19:1–10) and Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10:1–48), on the other hand. These figures represent neither a singular economic stratum of Roman provincial society nor any subgroup of society.

Luke's biases in the story of Sergius Paullus might become most discernable by studying the passage in light of Luke's other stories about Roman governors. Joshua Yoder recently produced a study on this very topic and found that Luke was not anxious to include Roman governors in the ranks of χριστιανοί. Luke's depiction of governors coheres with other historiographers' treatment of provincial rulers in that he was willing to critique them on the matter of their abilities to be impartial

120. For an overview of this theme, see Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 304–5, 307–9. The motif deserves more attention than it is given by many commentators and social historians. For instance, Weiss (*Soziale Elite und Christentum*, 29–50) provides only a general overview of different perspectives on the historicity of Acts but does not provide a sustained analysis of Acts 13:7–14 from a literary perspective.

121. For early recruits from within senatorial families, see Tertullian, *Apol.* 37.4; *Scap.* 4.7; Hippolytus, *Comm Dan.* 4.18. For the traditional perspective, see Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 309. For an alternative model, see Weiss, *Soziale Elite und Christentum*.

and fair.[122] Yoder problematically characterizes Sergius Paullus as a convert but observes that, on the whole, governors in Luke-Acts "are more often indifferent to and uncomprehending of Jesus and his followers … [and do] little to encourage thoughts of cooperation between Rome and the church."[123]

Luke's usage of Roman governors simply "establish[es] that Christians have done nothing wrong, not that they are respectable."[124] In developing this theme, he had no need to portray provincial rulers as receptive to the teachers of Christ worship. In fact, Luke did not suggest that the Achaean governor, Gallio, or the Judean governors, Felix and Festus, trusted (πιστεύειν) Paul's teaching (Acts 18:12–16; 24:10–26:32).

Sergius Paullus would not have been alone. Roman historiographers name with some frequency elites who showed interest in the teachings of a Judeans and Christ-followers. Luke himself names as a Christ-follower a certain Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, a governing body made up of members who were within the very highest social order of Athenian society (Acts 17:34).[125] Dio Cassius records charges in 95 CE related to atheism, or shifting to Judean customs, against various Romans of the senatorial stratum. He names in particular the consuls Flavius Clemens and Manius Acilius Glabrio but also Flavia Domitilla (*Hist. rom.* 67.14.1–3).[126] The legate of Syria, Publius Petronius, studied Judean philosophy (Philo, *Legat.* 245). Lucius Vitellius, another legate of Syria, offered a sacrifice to the Judean God in participation of a Judean festival date (Josephus, *A.J.* 18.120–124; see also 18.88–95). Several women from the senatorial *ordo* exhibited ties to Judeans or worshipers of Christ. For instance, Julia Severa, whose spouse was a Roman senator, funded the construction of a synagogue in Akmoneia.[127] She held the high priest-

122. Joshua Yoder, *Representatives of Roman Rule: Roman Provincial Governors in Luke-Acts* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 355.

123. Yoder, *Representatives of Roman Rule*, 252–53, quote from 355.

124. Yoder, *Representatives of Roman Rule*, 335–56.

125. For the status of the Areopagus in the imperial period, see Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.29.74; *Att.* 1.14.5, 5.11.6; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 1.367.

126. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 67.14.1–3; cf. Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.2, 15.1. For discussion of the Dio passage, see Margaret Williams, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman Environment*, WUNT 312 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). For more examples, see Terence Donaldson, "Royal Sympathizers in Jewish Narrative," *JSP* 16 (2006): 41–59.

127. *MAMA* 6.262 = *IJO* 2.168 = *CIJ* 2.766 (Akmoneia, Phrygia, Asia Minor; 150–200 CE).

hood (ἀρχιέρεια) of the Akmoneian imperial cult, which might suggest that her donation was motivated by the symbolic capital that would be provided to her rather than an interest in Judean religion.[128] However, her unusually generous donation to the Judean community exemplifies one way for an elite with civic religious duties to express piety toward the Judean deity.[129] Pomponia Graecina, the spouse of consul *suffectus*, Aulus Plautius, was accused and acquitted of adherence to a *superstitio externa*—an ambiguous charge but a phrase Tacitus employed elsewhere in describing the Jesus cult (*Ann.* 13.32; see also 15.44). On her fourteen years of mourning prior to trial by the family tribunal, Peter Lampe offers instructive commentary: "when someone as a Christian no longer partakes in the amusements and invitations of upper society … this behavior resembles mourning. The gossip of 'society' explains Pomponia's behavior by the death of Iulia. But could it last 40 years? Iulia was not even her sister."[130]

The story of Sergius Paullus certainly functions to further Luke's presentation of Christian origins in language, events, and concepts acceptable to the socially elevated. However, most of Luke's stories about affluent persons who exhibited interests in Christ worship involve *nonelites*. Stories about wealthy nonelites gravitating toward Christ worship abound in early Christian literature; Luke's own presentation of it is not particularly distinctive (e.g., Mark 15:40–1; Matt 8:5–13; Rom 16:23 [Erastus]; Col 4:14; Tit 3:13; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.9).[131] The phenomenon of a proconsul who wished to hear about the Judean deity is not out of the ordinary in Greco-Roman literature.

5. From Cyprus to Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14)

If Paul met with the Cyprian proconsul, Sergius Paullus, at his official residence in Paphos, is it plausible that Paul would have persuaded the

128. William M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897), 638–39.

129. For the striking magnitude of the donation in comparison to other benefactions to Judean communities, see Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue. The First Thousand Years*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 119–20.

130. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 197.

131. For the relation of Pliny to these other texts, see Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 309–10.

governor to trust (πιστεύειν) what he taught about Christ (Acts 13:12)? Some external evidence provides clues about the outcome of the meeting, on the theory that the two really did come face to face.

In the Acts narrative, Paul, Barnabas, and John depart from Sergius Paullus's estate in Paphos for Pisidian Antioch, with an undetailed stopover in Perge (Acts 13:13–14). Stephen Mitchell finds it striking that they do not spend any time in the "thriving communities" of Pampylia, including Perge.[132] Antioch is a very odd destination from Perge, located in the highlands of Anatolia.[133] But it is a city where, unknown to Luke, the Sergii Paulli held property. John left the others in Perge and went to Jerusalem instead of inland to Pisidia. Mitchell wonders if the "adventurousness, or controversial nature" of the journey into the Pisidian mountains may have caused the break.[134]

Since Luke provides no rationale for why Antioch would seem a fit destination to Paul and Barnabas, Robin Lane Fox speculates that the gospel writer probably interpreted Paul's peculiar journey from Cyprus to Pisidian Antioch to be "the impulse of the Holy Spirit."[135] Lane Fox then observes that, having just come from Sergius Paullus's estate in Cyprus, the proconsul might have "directed them to the area where his family had land, power and influence."[136] Likewise, Mitchell suggests that "the move from Paphos to Pisidian Antioch was determined in large measure by the fact that Antioch was Sergius Paullus' *patria*. We can hardly avoid the conclusion that the proconsul himself had suggested to Paul that he make it his next port of call, no doubt providing him with letters of introduction to aid his passage and his stay."[137] This theory continues to hold sway.[138]

The Sergii Paulli owned property in various regions throughout Anatolia, including northern Lyconia and Galatia. There are attestations to freedmen and other dependents in Anatolian towns such as Sinanli, Emir-

132. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6.

133. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6; for a topographical map of Anatolia, see Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:11.

134. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6.

135. Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 293–94. Ramsay suggested that Paul went to the highlands to treat an illness. See William M. Ramsay, *St. Paul: The Traveler and the Roman Citizen* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 92–93.

136. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 404.

137. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7.

138. For recent support of this theory, see Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 189.

ler, and elsewhere. These dependents likely served as staff on the family's estate.[139] Most relevant for present purposes is the Anatolian household of Sergia Paullina's father, Lucius Sergius Paullus, located in Pisidian Antioch. William Ramsay published an inscription that he discovered in a domestic building in 1912 during his excavations of this city, which, he argued, names the Cyprian proconsul's son:

> L. Sergio, L(uci) f(ilio), Paullo
> filio, quattuovir(o) v(iarum) c(uran-
> darum), tri[b(uno)]
> mil(itum) leg(ionis) vi Ferr(atae),
> quaest(ori) …[140]
> For L(ucius) Sergius Paullus *filius*, son of L(ucius), one of the four men governing the streets, tribune of the soldiers of the sixth legion called Iron-Clad [*ferrata*], quaestor …

Based on the stone's lettering, Ramsay dated it to the middle or late first-century CE. The inclusion of *filius* in line 2 perhaps indicates that Lucius's father was alive at the time.[141] Contemporary researchers typically, though not universally, follow Ramsay in identifying this Lucius Sergius Paullus as the son of the Cyprian proconsul of the same name.[142]

Although Luke asserted plainly that the governor trusted Paul (Acts 13:12), this travel detail—Paul's nearly direct move from Paphos (Cyprus) through the mountains in Pisidia to Antioch—provides the most compelling evidence that the suspected meeting between Paul and Sergius Paullus resulted in a positive outcome. The silence of Luke, a writer eager to cast affluent members of society as sympathetic to Christ worship, on the Sergii Paulli in Pisidian Antioch could indicate that Luke was unaware that the

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139. See *MAMA* 7.321 and 486. See Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:151. For the Galatian properties specifically, see William M. Calder, "A Galatian Estate of the Sergii Paulli," *Kilo* 24 (1930–1931): 59–62.

140. For the text, see Ramsay, *Bearing of Recent Discoveries*, 151 = *AE* 2002 no. 1458.

141. William M. Ramsay, "Studies in the Roman Province Galatia," *JRS* 16 (1926): 204.

142. See, for example, Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:6–7; and Nobbs, "Cyprus," 287. For disagreement, see Bastian van Elderen, "Some Archaeological Observations on Paul's First Missionary Journey," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 150–61; and the revisionist perspective in Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," which adds a fourth generation to the family in the first century CE.

Sergii Paulli connected the two cities to which Paul visited nearly back to back. Two seemingly Christian gravestones on the family's Sinanli property in the third and fourth centuries might attest to the family's continued connection to early Christianity in Anatolia; however, it remains unclear if the Sergii Paulli still occupied the estate in these centuries.[143]

In light of the Acts narrative, which the 1970s articles on the *collegium* in the house of Sergia Paullina considered only very lightly, Bonfioli and Panciera's assessment that Sergia Paullina was "unquestionably" Lucius Sergius Paullus's granddaughter becomes especially interesting, as it would seem to confirm, despite Bonfioli and Panciera's conclusion otherwise, the *collegium*'s connection to a network of Christ worshipers by means of the Cyprian proconsul, whom Bonfioli and Panciera also considered to be a "convert" or "Christ sympathizer."[144] The family had built their estate in Pisidian Antioch by the time that Paul and Barnabas entered the city. The family's Anatolian properties outside of Pisidian Antioch predate 86 CE and were acquired likely during the time of the Julio-Claudians, "when the more enterprising colonists of Antioch were looking outside the city territory for ways of adding to their original allotments."[145] Mitchell does not speculate on the date of family's roots in Pisidian Antioch other than to note that they "were native to Pisidian Antioch"; this was their *patria*.[146] If the family *expanded beyond* their Antioch holdings sometime in the first half of the first century CE when other elite families in the region did so, then their Antiochian property was presumably acquired by the 40s CE when Paul visited.

In the end, the case for the story's reliability must be weighed against the peculiarities in the narrative, such as the recruitment of a Roman senator "narrated as if it were of no consequence,"[147] the reality that its peculiarities seem rather Lukan (see Acts 17:34), and the overall lack of

143. *MAMA* 7.360–361; Cilliers Breytenbach, *Paulus und Barnabas in der Provinz Galatien: Studien zu Apostelgeschichte 13f.; 16,6; 18,23 und den Adressaten des Galaterbriefes*, AGJU 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 43–44; cf. Calder, "Galatian Estate."

144. Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 197.

145. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1:152. See also mention of the family's Anatolian holding in *MAMA* 7.486 (Sinanli, Galatia, Anatolia; 86 CE).

146. Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 2:7. For other inscriptional attestation to the family's presence in the city, see *IGRR* 3.300 = *AE* 2002 no. 1456; Christol and Drew-Bear, "Les Sergii Pauli," 184–86 = *AE* 2002 no. 1458.

147. John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 188.

clear evidence pointing to other senatorial elites connected to Christ worship in the first century.

6. Conclusion

The debate over the *collegium* in the house of Sergia Paullina has centered on Sordi and Cavigiolo's precise description of the *collegium* as a house church (*chiesa domestica*). This descriptor necessarily generates binaries that cannot frame a discussion of the first Roman Christ-followers, dichotomies including monotheism/polytheism, church/*collegium*, Christian/pagan, convert/Roman. If the earliest Christ-followers are permitted a little more flexibility in their self-representations and practices, then Sordi's position that the epitaphs of this *collegium* represent the "most ancient Christian Latin documents" would require from the inscriptions less-explicit signs of Christ worship than have been sought so far.[148] As summarized here, Bonfioli and Panciera, and most later critics of the Christian interpretation, already accept Sordi and Cavigiolo's arguments that Sergius Paullus was receptive to Paul's teaching[149] and also that Sergia Paullina was "unquestionably" his granddaughter.[150]

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148. Sordi, "Sergia Paullina," 20. The earliest might otherwise be a Roman family and cult group whose members identified as *synadelphoi* (NCE 156; Rome, Latium, Italy; 138–192 CE). See H. Gregory Snyder, "A Second-Century Christian Inscription from the Via Latina," *JECS* 19 (2011): 157–95.

149. Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 197; cf. Acts 13:6–12.

150. Bonfioli and Panciera, "Della cristianità," 197.

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How Old Is the Synagogue at Ostia?

Mary Jane Cuyler

Introduction

Ancient authors and historians wrote surprisingly little about Ostia. Neither early Christian writers nor any other surviving historian mention a synagogue at Ostia.[1] Almost everything we know about the city we have learned from archaeological discoveries and epigraphic studies. Our knowledge of the synagogue, like our knowledge of nearly all Ostian buildings, comes from the physical remains themselves and the contextual data collected during their excavation. Although studies of many of the buildings and monuments of the site are presented in the *Scavi di Ostia* volumes, the synagogue is not among the structures treated in that series.[2] Indeed,

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Acknowledgments: The excavations and archival study of the Ostia synagogue have been carried out with the kind permission of the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma and the directorship of the Parco Archeologico di Ostia Antica. The project was made possible by support from the Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Christian Origins at the University of Texas at Austin, under the direction of L. Michael White. I am grateful to L. Michael White for making me a part of this truly monumental project, and I owe a debt of gratitude to all of the archaeologists, specialists and students with whom I have had the opportunity to work over the years. Many thanks to Brent Nongbri, who read and commented on a draft of this essay and who provided the photographs. Any errors in fact or argumentation are, of course, my own.

1. It is possible that knowledge of the Ostian synagogue may be preserved in at least one medieval source. See Joshua Ezra Burns, "The Synagogue of Severus: Commemorating the God of the Jews in Classical Rome," *Henoch* 37 (2015): 101–18.

2. The first volume of the series appeared in 1953: Guido Calza et al., eds., *Scavi di Ostia I: Topografia Generale.* (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato). On the series, which now contains seventeen volumes, see Harrison's introduction to Ostia in this volume, pages 67–136.

the excavations of the synagogue at Ostia were never formally published. Although the building was discovered and extensively excavated in the 1960s, only a few short articles by the excavator document the excavation.

In what follows I will discuss the history of excavations at the synagogue, with a special focus on the archaeological investigations carried out at the complex in the past twenty years and the evidence for the date of the earliest phase of the structure. In addition to providing a brief introduction to Ostia's synagogue, I hope this contribution will help nonspecialists to understand both how archaeologists assign dates to buildings and some of the overall limitations of dealing with archaeological remains.

Discovery and Early Excavations

The synagogue at Ostia was discovered by chance in 1961, during the construction of a new road to the Leonardo Da Vinci airport (fig. 1). It was excavated and reconstructed between 1961 and 1963 and underwent minor excavations again in 1977.[3] The identification of the building as a synagogue was swift and certain. The archaeologists who excavated the monumental structure found a large hall (room 14) containing a Torah shrine, which featured corbels carved with menorahs (fig. 2). Furthermore, terracotta oil lamps with menorah symbols were found embedded in the packed earth covering the mosaic floor in the big kitchen (room 10, fig. 3). The complex also included a courtyard (rooms 3–6) and entrance hall (rooms 7–9, fig. 4), a smaller food preparation area (rooms 15–16), and dining room (room 18) fitted with benches for reclining during meals. The discovery made headlines around the world: on 20 October 1962, a *New York Times* headline declared "Synagogue Is Found in Rome; May Be West Europe's Oldest."[4] The article explained that, beneath a fourth-century synagogue (so dated because of a coin of Maxentius [306–312 CE]

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3. For an overview of the excavations and archival material relating to the synagogue, see Brent Nongbri, "Archival Research on the Excavation of the Synagogue at Ostia: A Preliminary Report," *JSJ* 46 (2015): 366–402. For the fullest discussion of the original excavator's publications, see Anders Runesson, "The Synagogue at Ancient Ostia: The Building and Its History from the First to the Fifth Century," in *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary Studies*, ed. Birger Olsson, Dieter Mitternacht, and Olof Brandt (Stockholm: Åströms, 2001), 29–99.

4. Arnaldo Cortesi, "Synagogue Is Found Near Rome, May Be West Europe's Oldest," *New York Times* (20 October 1962): 7.

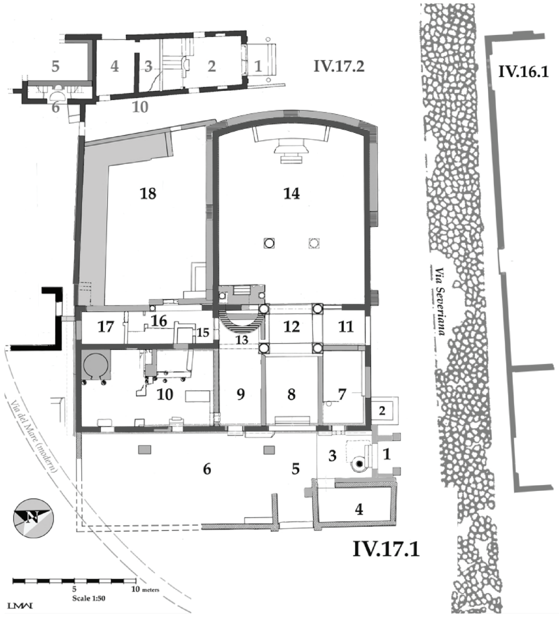

Figure 1: Plan of synagogue and surrounding structures (current state) by L. Michael White. Source: https://ostiasynagogue.wordpress.com/2010/04/20/top_plan/.

Figure 2: One of a pair of corbels from the Torah shrine of the synagogue. Photograph by Brent Nongbri.

Figure 3: View of room 10 of the synagogue, facing south. An oven sits in the southwest corner. Photograph by Brent Nongbri.

Figure 4: View into the synagogue from the eastern entrance, facing west. The back of the Torah shrine can be seen to the left of the four columns. Photograph by Brent Nongbri.

found in the mortar of a wall), a first-century CE synagogue was uncovered. Proof for this early date? “Some frescoed decorations, the materials used and the technique of construction have proved to archaeologists in charge that it dates to the first century of the Christian era.”[5]

Indeed, the synagogue is a multiphased complex, with centuries of renovations and additions. But the article’s emphasis on the first century synagogue *beneath* a fourth century synagogue is misleading: the walls of the earliest phases of the structure are, in fact, integral to the building and can still be seen today (fig. 5). The archaeological term used for the construction style of the earliest walls is *opus mixtum* (mixed work); in the synagogue, this mixed technique consists of sections of *opus reticulatum* (tufo blocks set into a net pattern) leveled by lateral courses of bricks (*opus latericium*).[6]

When renovations and additions were carried out in the complex, these earliest walls were not torn down or built over: there is no synagogue

Figure 5: Section of an *opus reticulatum mixtum* wall in room 10. Photograph by Brent Nongbri.

5. Cortesi, “Synagogue,” 7.

6. For Roman wall construction techniques and terminology, see Carmelo G. Malacrino, *Constructing the Ancient World, Architectural Techniques of the Greeks and Romans*, trans. J. Hyams (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 123–31.

"beneath" another synagogue. In fact, later additions to the structure were effected with various other masonry techniques, and thus it is possible to "read" the story of the additions and renovations by close observation of these different building techniques.

Yet even where it is possible to tease out a *relative* chronology of the building in terms of phases (this wall was here before that wall, what was once an open doorway was later filled in, etc.), it is extremely difficult to intuit an *absolute* chronology from building techniques alone. When the *New York Times* cited construction technique as a reason for the first-century date of the earliest structure in 1962, however, they did so on good authority. Many Roman archaeologists of the mid-twentieth century believed strongly in the ability to date a structure based on its masonry typology, although some scholars expressed reservations about the accuracy of the practice.[7]

The second season of excavation yielded some promise of an absolute date with the discovery of a dedicatory inscription, but its pieces were found in secondary use embedded face down as paving stones in the floor of the synagogue.[8] The inscription has not as yet revealed incontrovertible evidence for a firm date for any specific phase of the structure.[9] Thus the construction date for the complex has continued to rely on the stylistic analysis of its earliest walls. The *opus reticulatum mixtum* technique was once thought to have died out just after the Julio-Claudian period, but we now know that this technique was employed as late as

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7. Influential studies that remain extremely important sources of knowledge about Roman building techniques include Marion E. Blake, *Ancient Roman Construction in Italy from the Prehistoric Period to Augustus* (Richmond, VA: William Byrd, 1947); Giuseppe Lugli, *La tecnica edilizia romana, con particolare riguardo a Roma e Lazio* (Rome: Bardi, 1957). Reservations were expressed by, e.g., I. A. Richmond, review of *La tecnica edilizia romana*, by Giuseppe Lugli, *JRS* 49 (1959): 182; Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 535.

8. This is the so-called Mindi[u]s Faustus inscription. For the fullest discussion of the inscription, see Runesson, "Synagogue at Ancient Ostia," 85–88, supplemented by Nongbri, "Archival Research," 386–90.

9. Prosopographical studies do have the potential to produce intriguing results, especially when new evidence comes to light. See, for example, Fausto Zevi's study of the Fabii family of Ostia and his tentative proposal of their possible connection to the construction or renovation of the synagogue: Fausto Zevi, "I *Fabii* ostiensi e gli Ebrei di Ostia," *MÉFRA* 126 (2014): https://doi.org/10.4000/mefra.2019.

the fourth century CE.[10] As a result, dates for the synagogue complex—not just the foundation date, but the dates and sequencing of subsequent renovations—have become the source of strong disagreement.[11] These arguments have been impossible to resolve definitively, because, as mentioned at the outset, the complete results of the original excavations were never published.[12] More information is needed.

The University of Texas OSMAP Project[13]

With the consent of the Ostian authorities, the synagogue again became the subject of archaeological investigation at the beginning of the 2000s. A team from the University of Texas at Austin, led by L. Michael White (project director) and Susan Gelb Rosenberg (field director), accompanied by archaeologists, students, and a GIS specialist, began the process of measuring, drawing, digitally mapping, and analyzing the masonry techniques used in the construction, renovation, and repair of the synagogue.[14] They

10. J. H. van Dalen, "The Late Use of Opus Reticulatum in Ostia," *Papers of the Netherlands Institute in Rome* 50 (1991): 236–80. More recently, Camilla Panzieri's ("Le murature," in *La Basilica Portuense*, *Scavi 1991–2007*, ed. M. Maiorano and L. Paroli [Borgo San Lorenzo: Giglio, 2013], 253–95) has produced a detailed study of the different masonry techniques employed over the centuries of renovations at the Christian basilica of Portus has also highlighted complexity of this issue; each wall of the structure has been dated by a thorough process of stratigraphic excavation and study of materials. Panzieri worked with the synagogue excavation team in 2015. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to tour Portus and its Christian basilica with her during that season, and her knowledge of Roman building techniques was invaluable for understanding and contextualizing the construction of the synagogue structure.

11. For a summary of these debates, see Runesson, "Synagogue at Ancient Ostia."

12. The director of the early excavations, Maria Floriani Squarcipino, did publish short summaries and discussions in both Italian and English, but a comprehensive report was not produced before her death in 2003. For a listing of her publications about the synagogue, see Anders Runesson, "A Monumental Synagogue from the First Century: The Case of Ostia," *JSJ* 33 (2002): 172 n. 3, supplemented by Nongbri, "Archival Research," 368 n. 8.

13. OSMAP originally served as the acronym for Ostia Synagogue Masonry Analysis Project; since the scope of the project subsequently expanded to include excavation and archival research, the acronym now more aptly stands for Ostia Synagogue Mapping, Archaeology, and Preservation Project.

14. L. Michael White and Susan Gelb, "Sinagoga 2001," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f1.

also carried out a GIS survey and created digital maps of the synagogue complex and nearby structures and produced the definitive numbering system for the rooms of the complex. Over the course of two, month-long seasons, the team produced a complete record of the ten masonry styles employed at the complex and worked to refine the relative chronology of the phases of the complex.[15] The team was no closer to defining an absolute chronology; the masonry style of the earliest walls of the structure, which White referred to as the *opus mixtum* A "shell," was already known from other contexts at Ostia dating into the mid- to late second century, with some examples extending into the third.[16] Lacking further information, then, the earliest phase of the structure could only be ascribed broadly to the Imperial period (ca. first to third centuries CE).

With the masonry analysis phase of the project complete, it became necessary to consider other approaches to studying the structure. The archaeologists devoted one season to cleaning, drawing, and photographing previously excavated trenches that were still accessible through grates and metal coverings in certain areas of the building.[17] Permission was then granted to locate—and begin the process of organizing—the thousands of fragments of pottery, metal, glass, fresco, and numerous other materials excavated in the 1960s and 1970s but never published.[18] The excavation records held in Ostia's archives, the Giornali degli Scavi, were consulted in order to learn additional information about the original excavations.

The Giornali degli Scavi and records associated with some of the finds provided some tantalizing chronological clues, but the notes were not extensive. To establish a sound chronology of the structure, it was necessary to undertake new excavations in order to understand the stratigraphy of the site: the layers of soil, fill, floors, preparation layers, and so on that can help us to determine the construction sequence. Materials found within a single stratum, once cleaned and studied, often provide data that help us to estimate an approximate date, or date range, for the construc-

15. Douglas Boin, Susan Gelb, Brent Nongbri, and L. Michael White, "Sinagoga 2002," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f2.

16. E.g., Caupona del Pavone (Regio IV, Insula II, 6) probably dated to the Severan period (van Dalen, "Late Use of Opus Reticulatum," 263–64 and fig. 26).

17. Douglas Boin, Susan Gelb, and L. Michael White, "Sinagoga 2003," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f3.

18. Douglas Boin, Susan Gelb, and L. Michael White, "Sinagoga 2004," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f4.

tion of a given stratum. Archaeologists also determine the dates of walls and other elements of the overall structure by studying the relationship between the strata and other building elements such as foundations. These steps needed to be carried out in order to begin to address the issue of absolute dates for the structure.

I joined the team of Texas archaeologists for my first season at the Ostia synagogue in 2006; in 2011 I was made field director and oversaw the 2011, 2012, and 2015 excavations.[19] In most intervening "study seasons," in which the bulk of the analysis takes place, I have also worked with White and our team of specialists who are studying our excavation material as well as the material excavated in the 1960s and 1970s. The process is considerably more complicated than the analysis of materials from a typical excavation because we must not only study our own material and reconstruct the stratigraphy of the synagogue but also compare our finds with those from the original 1960s excavations and understand the relationship between the two.

As this volume goes to print, the analysis of the archival materials has just been completed, and the project is now poised to present a complete publication of the original synagogue excavations a full sixty years after the building was first discovered. The publication of these materials will present a rich reconstruction of the decorative schemes of parts of the buildings and will reveal the fragments of vessels, furniture, and other items found in the rubble of the collapsed structure.

In addition to their inherent value as items found within the synagogue, the materials also occasionally help to provide dates for the contexts in which they were found. For example, entries on the synagogue excavations in the Giornali degli Scavi mentioned a hoard of coins found just beneath the mosaic floor in the room with the oven (Room 10, in the new nomenclature) during the 1962 excavations. Although the coins were not to be found among the stored materials, the project's numismatist, Daniela Williams, located detailed records of them. She discovered that the hoard contained at least fifty-one coins, the latest of which dated to the year 340 CE.[20] This date provides a *terminus post quem* (that is, the earliest possible

19. Susan Gelb Rosenberg served as field director during the 2005, 2007, and 2009 excavations, in addition to the previous seasons of recording and drawing. L. Michael White has been the project director throughout.

20. Daniela Williams, "Digging in the Archives: A Late Roman Coin Assemblage from the Synagogue at Ancient Ostia (Italy)," *American Journal of Numismatics* 26 (2014): 245–73.

date) for the installation of this mosaic. The mosaic was laid on top of the coin hoard and must therefore postdate it. This was a surprising discovery, since this mosaic floor had previously been associated with "a second- or third-century restoration."[21] Materials from other areas and strata of the synagogue can similarly assist in dating the building's phases, ideally resulting in a more confident absolute chronology for the structure's many renovations. As it turned out, the approximate date of the construction of the earliest phase of the building could be determined through the same method, but only after new excavations to depths beyond those reached in the 1960s excavations.

The Ground-Raising Fill

Perhaps the most significant discovery of the Texas excavations was a uniform layer of soil running throughout the area of the synagogue building. In all trenches of sufficient depth, both those inside the synagogue and outside the building, excavators reached a thick layer of sandy soil. At first glance, this hardly qualifies as a surprising discovery, as it has long been known that the synagogue building sits in the neighbourhood of the ancient coastline and thus sandy soil characterizes the area. But the finding is significant for two reasons. First, this layer of sandy soil contained a variety of discarded materials such as broken pottery, shells, animal bones, and old building material that is basically uniform in content throughout the area. Second, although annual fluctuations in the water table prevented us from exposing the base of this layer in every trench, when it was reached, compact surfaces were found near the lowest levels of the synagogue's foundations, beneath this layer of sand.[22] Thus, this sandy subsoil apparently represents a major ground-raising fill deposited in this area of Ostia sometime before the construction of the synagogue building. The materials found in this fill can therefore help us to pin down the date of the earliest phase of the building.

The fact that the earliest foundations of the building were poured directly into trenches that had been dug into the soil means that all the soil surrounding the foundations necessarily predates the pouring of the

21. See Runesson, "Synagogue at Ancient Ostia," 32.

22. Douglas Boin, Susan Gelb, Brent Nongbri, and L. Michael White, "Sinagoga 2005," https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f5.

foundations.[23] Consequently, the material found within any undisturbed matrix of that soil must have been deposited there prior to the pouring of the foundations. "Undisturbed" areas of soil are the areas that had never been excavated since the pouring of the foundations in antiquity. They are clearly identifiable because they lie beneath solid and unbroken ancient surfaces, what archaeologists refer to as a sealed context. Although some of the ancient surfaces of the synagogue had been destroyed by previous excavations or by the installation of drains (or the like) in antiquity, several of the areas where the Texas excavations encountered the ground-raising fill were completely sealed contexts.

When determining a date for a context, it is the latest material found within the context that assists us. Analysis of finds from nineteen trenches containing sealed contexts revealed that the latest material from the ground-raising fill dates to the mid-second century CE. This provides a *terminus post quem* for the first foundations of the structure: the earliest phase of the building can date no earlier than the middle of the second century and, pending final analysis of the material, might even date to the early third century or later.[24] Thus, the *opus reticulatum* walls confidently

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23. All of the foundations of the synagogue were made of poured cement, or *opus caementicium*, sometimes reinforced with the addition of old building materials such as fragmentary bricks and rocks. The semifluid nature of the cement allowed it to be poured into a form. In the case of the synagogue, this form consisted of trenches (Latin *fossa*) that were excavated into the soil and sand. The cement was then poured directly into the trenches. In some sections of the eastern side of the building, the uppermost parts of the foundations were completed by pouring the cement into wooden forms, presumably to compensate for a slight west-to-east downward slope of the earth. The foundations of the structure immediately to the west of the synagogue were poured into reinforced trenches. An overview of foundation construction techniques in *opus caementicium*, including a description of both trench-poured foundations and reinforced trench foundations (as well as slope compensation), can be found in Malacrino, *Constructing the Ancient World,* 119–20.

24. The *terminus post quem* of the earliest foundations of the synagogue has been widely discussed and presented in numerous venues and professional conferences and associated abstracts, such as L. Michael White, "Water Installations in Diaspora Synagogues in Light of the Ostia Excavations" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, 25 November 2019); Mary Jane Cuyler and Jaimie Gunderson, "A New Date for the Foundations of the Ostia Synagogue," *Archaeological Institute of America 117th Annual Meeting Abstracts* 40 (2017): 156. We must await the final publication of this study for confirmation of a more precise date, if a more precise date is possible.

dated by the original excavator on stylistic grounds to the Julio-Claudian period must have been built significantly later. The function of the building in its earliest phase is unclear. It is possible that it was constructed as a purpose-built synagogue, but this is not certain.[25]

Conclusions

Most scholars of ancient history will engage with, or rely upon, archaeological data over the course of their research. This is certainly the case with the present volume, focusing as it does on the first urban Christians of Rome and Ostia. One does not have to be an archaeologist, or even have archaeological experience, to engage with archaeological data. Yet it is crucial to understand that the interpretation of archaeological data is at least as difficult and ambiguous as the interpretation of the historical record. The constant development of innovative technologies and the discovery of new data from other excavations can present opportunities for reconsiderations and revisions. In this essay I have employed the example of the "Julio-Claudian" walls of the synagogue to illustrate how typologies can be problematic when they serve as the sole indicator of date. In this case, data from other excavations revealed that the reticulate *opus reticulatum mixtum* masonry could date as late as the third century—but this did not exclude the possibility that the earliest phase of the synagogue structure belonged to the first century CE. It was only by employing a strict stratigraphic excavation procedure and by carefully studying the materials from sealed contexts that the first-century date for the synagogue building was eliminated as a possibility.

But multiple other possibilities still remain. The synagogue building may have been built immediately after the deposit of the ground-raising fill in the late second century, or it may have been built much later. Here we run up against the limits of our knowledge. We would, of course, like to speak with greater precision about the earliest phase of this building, but, even with access to the archival materials and new excavations, some questions still remain unanswered. We hope that further study will reveal new data or allow us to view old data in new ways to gain a more precise date for the construction of the building. In the meantime, we keep working toward

25. This is a contentious issue. The archaeological remains provide no conclusive evidence either way, and until further evidence comes to light the function of the structure in its earliest phases remains an open question.

full publication of both the legacy excavations and the more recent work at the synagogue, with the ultimate goal of presenting the scholarly community with the fullest possible body of evidence so that we can all deliberate together about the history of this fascinating structure.

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Romans 1:2–4 and Imperial "Adoption" Ideology: Paul's Alternative Narrative to Julio-Claudian Sonship and Apotheosis

James R. Harrison

The engagement of the New Testament with Greco-Roman adoption practices has been widely studied.[1] Recently the intersection of the

1. On adoption in the Greco-Roman world there only exist a few monographs; see Marcel-Henri Prévost, *Les adoptions politiques à Rome sous la République et le Principat*, Publications de l'institut de droit romain de l'Université de Paris 5 (Paris: Rec Sirey, 1949); Christiane Kunst, *Römische Adoption: Zur Strategie einer Familienorganisation* (Hennef: Clauss, 2005), not seen by me; Kunst, "Adoption und Testamentsadoption in der Späten Republik," *Klio* 78 (1996): 87–106; Hugh Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Additionally, see Jack Goody, "Adoption in Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969): 55–78; Marek Kuryłowicz, "Adoption on the Evidence of the Papyri," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 19 (1983): 61–75; Jane F. Gardner, "The Adoption of Roman Freedmen," *Phoenix* 43 (1989): 236–57; Olli Salomies, *Adoptive and Polyonymous Nomenclature in the Roman Empire*, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 97 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1992); Andries van Aarde, "Side-Notes from the Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Semitic Literature to the Notion 'Adopted as God's Child' (*ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ*)," *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 8 (1997): 150–72; Mireille Corbier, "Divorce and Adoption as Roman Familial Strategies (Le Divorce et l'adoption 'en plus')," in *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 47–78; Jane F. Gardner, *Family and* Familia *in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 114–208; Hugh Lindsay, "Adoption and Succession in Roman Law," *Newcastle Law Review* 3 (1998): 58–81; Lindsay, "Adoption in Greek Law: Some Comparisons with the Roman World," *Newcastle Law Review* 3 (1999): 91–110; Hanne Sigismund Nie, "Quasi-Kin, Quasi-Adoption and the Roman Family," in *Adoption et Fosterage*, ed. Mireille Corbier, De l'archéologie à l'histoire (Paris: de Boccard, 1999), 249–62; Werner Eck, "An Emperor Is Made: Senatorial Politics and Trajan's Adoption of Nerva in 97," in *Philosophy and Power in the*

Epistle to the Romans with adoption in antiquity has also been explored in excellent monographs by Robert Lewis and Erin M. Heim.[2] However, the pericope of Rom 1:2–4 has escaped the notice of many scholars in this regard, undoubtedly because the New Testament language of adoption is not present there (υἱοθεσία: Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5).[3] The issue

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Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin, ed. Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 211–26; S. E. Hoffer, "Divine Comedy? Accession Propaganda in Pliny, 'Epistles' 10.1–2, and the 'Panegyric,' " *JRS* 96 (2006): 73–87; Neil W. Berstein, "Adoptees and Exposed Children in Roman Declamation: Commodification, Luxury, and the Threat of Violence," *CP* 104 (2009): 331–53; Hugh Lindsay, "Adoption and Heirship in Greece and Rome," in *Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman World*, ed. Beryl Rawson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 346–60; Sabine R. Huebner, "Adoption and Fosterage in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Judith Evans Grubb, Tim Parkin, and Roslynne Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 510–31; Olivier Hekster, "Son of Two Fathers? Trajan and the Adoption of Emperorship in the Roman Empire," *History of the Family* 19 (2014): 380–92, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2014.915865.

2. Robert Brian Lewis, *Paul's "Spirit of Adoption" in Its Roman Imperial Context*, LNTS 545 (London: T&T Clark, 2016); Erin M. Heim, *Adoption in Galatians and Romans: Contemporary Metaphor Theories and the Pauline* huiosthesia *Metaphors* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). For earlier works, see Brendan Byrne, *"Sons of God"—"Seed of Abraham": A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 79–84; Francis Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 67–99; James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus*, WUNT 2/48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, NSBT 22 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Kyu Seop Kim, "Another Look at Adoption on Romans 8:15 in Light of Roman Social Practices and Legal Rules," *BTB* 44 (2014): 133–43; James C. Walters, "Paul, Adoption, and Inheritance," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, 2nd ed., ed. J. Paul Sampley, 2 vols. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 1:33–67. The motif of adoption has also been explored in relation to the gospels: Yigal Levin, "Jesus, 'Son of God' and 'Son of David': The 'Adoption' of Jesus into the Davidic Line," *JSNT* 28 (2006): 415–42; Michael Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship," *CBQ* 73 (2011): 92–110; Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); see "adoption in Roman Society" and "adoption metaphor" in the subject index; W. R. Glass, "Paul's Use and Meaning of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ" (PhD diss., Clarks Summit University, 2017), 55–68.

3. For recent discussions of the Rom 1:2–4, see J. R. Daniel Kirk, "Appointed Son(s): An Exegetical Note on Romans 1:4 and 8:29," *Bulletin of Biblical Research* 14

is further complicated by the fact that the pericope is considered to be an example of pre-Pauline credal tradition,[4] inserted by the apostle into its present context and adorned with his own redactional additions. This creative tension between inherited Christian tradition and Pauline innovation poses the acute question about whether naïve adoptive formulas may have been implicit in the pre-Pauline creed and to what degree Paul’s redactional activity either reconfigures or affirms these adoptive traditions, if they are actually present.[5] The debate between James M. Scott and Trevor J. Burke over the possibility of an adoptive meaning for ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 1:4a) is a case in point.[6] However, the Jewish adoptive background dominates discussion, even in the imperially oriented Romans commentary of Robert Jewett.[7]

(2004): 241–42; S. Kim, “Jesus the Son of God as the Gospel (1 Thess 1:9–10 and Rom 1:3–4),” in *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature and Theology*, ed. M. F. Bird and J. Maston, WUNT 2/320 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 117–41; Nathan C. Johnson, “Romans 1:3–4: Beyond Antithetical Parallelism,” *JBL* 136 (2017): 469–90; Michael F. Bird, *Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 11–23. N. T. Wright (“Paul and Caesar: A New Reading of Romans,” in *A Royal Priesthood? A Dialogue with Oliver O’Donovan*, ed. Craig Bartholomew et al., Scripture and Hermeneutics 3 [Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002], 176) claims that Rom 1:1–17 represents “a parody of the imperial cult.”

4. See A. M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors*, rev. ed. (London: SCM, 1961), 24–27; Robert Jewett, *Romans,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 104–6. For Jewett’s two proposed Pauline additions to the original confession, see 106–8. By contrast, Scott (*Adoption as Sons*, 227–36) argues “that it is in no way certain that Rom 1:3b-4a contains a pre-Pauline creed” (236).

5. C. K. Barrett (*From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology* [London: Black, 1962], 71) claims that the “naïve adoptionism” of the pre-Pauline formula in Rom 1:4a (“having been appointed Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness”) conflicted with Paul’s personal belief in the incarnation of a preexistent Son of God (see Rom 5:15–17; 8:3; Gal 4:4–5; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:6–8). Thus Barret claims (*From First Adam to Last*, 71), Paul adds ἐν δυνάμει (Rom 1:4a) as a counterblast to this pre-Pauline adoptionist theology, contrasting the weakness of the incarnate Son of God with the power of the resurrected and ascended Son of God. For convincing arguments against the proposition that an adoptionist Christology characterized the pre-Pauline creedal tradition, see Bird, *Jesus the Eternal Son*, 14–23. Bird (18) pointedly asks: “if the original form of the hymn was discordant with Paul’s own Christology of pre-existence, then we hasten to wonder why he used it at all.”

6. See Scott, *Adoption as Sons*, 100–104; and Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 102–7.

7. Jewett, *Romans*, 103–8. For the evidence adduced for adoption in a Jewish context, see Scott, *Adoption as Sons*, 63–117; and Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 47–58.

That Paul transmitted traditional creedal traditions, which he understood in light of the "shift in the ages" effected by Christ's resurrection, with a view to challenging imperial assumptions about whose ancestral house inherited eternal rule, is insufficiently considered by Romans commentators.[8] Nor is the possibility aired that at the outset of Romans the apostle may have wanted his auditors in the capital of the Roman Empire to appreciate better the superiority of Jesus's sonship to the counterfeit ruler ideology of the Julio-Claudian son of God, the savior and benefactor of the empire.[9] Indeed, the issue of the sonship of the Roman ruler and his heirs, human and divine, was a crucial ideological strut for the stability of Julian rule, as the protracted succession crisis of Augustus well illustrated. The divine adoption of several of the Julio-Claudian rulers because of the apotheosis of their predecessors (Julius Caesar, Augustus) grabbed the attention of everyday Romans, so much so that the apotheosis of Claudius was mocked by Seneca in *The Pumpkinification of the Divine Claudius*.[10] Even at the beginning of the second century CE, the accession of the

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The proposed Jewish messianic background (2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:17; 89:19–37; Pss. Sol. 14.4, 21; 4Q174 3.7–14; 4Q246 2.1–3; 4Q369 frag. 1, 2.6–7) speaks of royal enthronement rather than adoption. Alleged Old Testament examples of adoption (e.g., Exod 2:1–10; Gen 15:1–4), instances of leverite law (Deut 25:5–10), and adoption under foreign customs or in foreign lands (e.g., 1 Kgs 11:14–22; Esth 2:5–7) do not approximate the New Testament understanding of adoption and are not supported by LXX uses of υἱοθέσια in any of the evidence cited. For full discussion, see Glass, "Paul's Use and Meaning," 55–68; also, helpfully, Bird, *Jesus the Eternal Son*, 15–17.

8. *Pace* Bird (*Jesus the Eternal Son*, 21), who writes: "We know of no one from antiquity who became a Son of God by resurrection. A more likely scenario is that while the resurrection did not mark the beginning of Jesus's divine sonship, it instead signified a change in the ages with a consequent change in the mode and function of divine sonship for Jesus." Additionally, N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), 243. On the language of "eternity" in relation to imperial rule, see James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 317–19.

9. Exceptions to the scholarly neglect of the Roman background are Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 60–70; and Lewis, *Paul's "Spirit of Adoption,"* passim.

10. For discussion, see H. Mac L. Currie, "The Purpose of the *Apocolocyntosis*," *L'Antiquité Classique* 31 (1962): 91–97; David C. Braund, "The Aedui, Troy, and the *Apocolocyntosis*," *CQ* 30 (1980): 420–25; Michael Paschalis, "The Afterlife of Emperor Claudius in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*," *Numen* 56 (2009): 198–216; Kirk Freudenberg, "Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca*, ed. Shadi Bartsch and Allesandro Schiesaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 93–106.

"new lord Hadrian" to power (117 CE) was preceded by the apotheosis of Trajan, recounted in an Egyptian proclamation to the villagers at Thebais upon Trajan's death.[11] Moreover, the adopted status of the Roman ruler is reinforced by the imperial doctrine of his election by the gods.[12]

But dare we assume that these imperial comparisons would have been as obvious in the earlier Julio-Claudian period, especially among the (largely) nonelite audience of the early believers living at Rome?[13] It is easy to assert that Roman auditors of Paul's epistle would have assessed Jesus's sonship against this backdrop, but how do we actually demonstrate this? Furthermore, discerning the intention of any historical figure in antiquity, whether Augustus or Paul, for example,[14] is not easily achievable, being subject to different perspectives because of the biases of our elitist literature, the fragmentary nature of our documentary and material culture in reconstructing the past, and the difficulty of reconstructing with precision the profile of the original audience of any text. This essay will discuss human adoption practices in the Julian period with regard to the imperial heir from Caesar's death to the accession of Tiberius. It provides us the most concentrated case study of the operation of imperial adoption practices and its paradoxes. How does that relate to Roman apotheosis traditions within the Julio-Claudian dynasty, embracing in its coverage

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11. E. Kornemann, "Papyrus Gissenis No. 20," *Klio* 7 (1907): 278–88. Translated in Ramsay MacMullen and Eugene N. Lane, eds., *Paganism and Christianity 100–425 CE: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), §6.3.

12. See J. Rufus Fears, Princeps a Diis Electus: *The Divine* Election *of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome 26 (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1977).

13. On the social constituency of the Roman house and tenement churches, see Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); E. A. Judge, "The Roman Base of Paul's Mission," in Judge, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays,* ed. James R. Harrison, WUNT 229 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 553–67; Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010); James R. Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes: Studies on the Social Perspective of Paul*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2020), ch. 3.

14. For a comparison between Paul, the ideology of Augustus, and their respective intentions, see James R. Harrison, "Augustan Rome and the Body of Christ: A Comparison of the Social Vision of the *Res Gestae* and Paul's Letter to the Romans," *HTR* 106 (2013): 1–36; Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit: The Cross and Moral Transformation*, WUNT 430 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 79–107.

the inscriptional, papyrological, iconographic, and gem evidence?[15] The late first-century to early second-century adoptive Roman rulers (Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninius Pius, Marcus Aurelius), a remarkable phenomenon later than the New Testament, will be bypassed.[16]

Where does Paul's bold statement about the "sonship in power" of the risen Jesus in Rom 1:2–4 sit in the spectrum of imperial adoption ideology? Is the apostle intentionally engaging imperial adoption traditions from the outset in his epistle to believers living in the Roman capital as much as articulating Jewish messianic and eschatological perspectives in a manner that has been transformed by the shift of the ages that had occurred through Christ's resurrection? And if so, why would this have been an important pastoral and theological issue for the apostle to pursue with believers of nonelite status who were living in the capital? Or is it methodologically more cautious to apply a reader-reception approach to the text in this instance, where the original audience may have perceived such contrasts as they applied Paul's gospel to their own religious and political context but in the process drew implications that the apostle may not have originally intended?

Last, we need to differentiate carefully the Pauline understanding of the risen and divinely vindicated Son of God "in power" from the apotheosized Julio-Claudian son of God. Recently John Granger Cook has argued that the imperial apotheosis traditions bear close similarities to the Lukan ascension of Jesus traditions (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9).[17] Nevertheless, as Cook concedes, Jesus was Son of God before he died, whereas the Julio-Claudian rulers were only deified after their death by senatorial decree. Notwithstanding this distinctive in early Christian belief, "in Luke Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God *only after* his ascension, and this corresponds closely with the emperor's deification after death."[18] Cook's nuanced discussion of the Lukan literature poses important methodological questions regarding Rom 1:2–4. Does Paul interact rhetorically with imperial honorific conventions in our pericope? If he does, with what theological purpose? To what extent does he critique imperial

15. For full coverage of the literary evidence regarding Julio-Claudian apotheosis, see John Granger Cook, *Empty Tomb, Resurrection, Apotheosis*, WUNT 410 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 428–45.

16. See Prévost, *Les adoptions politiques*, 44–59.

17. Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 454.

18. Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 622, emphasis added.

adoption and apotheosis traditions, and from what perspective and with what intent?

This essay will argue that Paul's depiction of the sonship of Christ in Rom 1:2–4 not only avoids any implication of adoptionist theology in a Jewish context but also undermines the Augustan succession narrative. This dynastic saga was played out before an adoring but anxious Roman public in the early empire, finding its culmination in Augustus's preference for a "worthy" heir to rule over the Julian house, as opposed to the vagaries of bloodline politics. Increasingly, however, senatorially apotheosized forebears (Julius, Augustus, Claudius) became the key to accession to Julio-Claudian rule, supplemented by the automatic inheritance of all magistracies and imperium from the time of Caligula onward. Paul, however, subjected this self-centered and self-serving construct, spanning the entire Julio-Claudian age, to soteriological, eschatological, honorific, prophetic, and cosmological critique through his gospel of the crucified, risen, and ascended Christ. We turn now to imperial adoption practices spanning the period from Caesar's death to the accession of Tiberius.

1. Julian Adoption Practices from the Death of Caesar to the Accession of Tiberius

In contrast to the lack of uniformity characterizing the Greek system of adoption,[19] the Roman legal system, while not acknowledging any difference between those naturally born into a family and adopted children, nevertheless exhibited "a clear preference to adopt persons who were already related by either blood or marriage."[20] The vast difference between ancient Roman adoption and the modern adoption of nonrelatives is thereby highlighted. Whatever differences existed between the two Roman

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19. Glass ("Paul's Use and Meaning," 75) writes regarding Greek adoption: "It varied from city-state to city-state; although there was some overlap. The main concerns and interests in Greek adoption were not for the adoptee, but for the state and preservation of the family." For discussion, see Lindsay, "Adoption and Heirship," 348–51; Lindsay, "Adoption in Greek Law."

20. Olivier Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 24. This is not to suggest that imperial adoption in some cases was not fictive: "Claims of lineage without formal adoption, such as Vespasian's appropriation of the name Caesar, clearly count as fictive kinship" (25).

legal procedures of adoption, *adoptio* and *adrogatio*,[21] the net result was the same: the adopted person acquired the same legal status as any natural child would have had under the power of the adopter.[22] Thus, well before the time of Julius Caesar and Augustus, the leading men of republican Rome who had failed to produce sons were forced to adopt male heirs instead.[23] A famous example from the early republic was when the childless heirs of two famous families of the Punic War (the Fabii and Scipios) "adopted brothers, the sons of L. Aemilius Paulus by his first wife Papira, whom he had divorced."[24]

However, in the late republic and early empire, testamentary adoptions also became popular (Cicero, *Brut.* 58; *Att.* 3.20),[25] perhaps because the relational complexities of dealing with the adoptee during the lifetime of the adopter were conveniently bypassed, but with the distinct advantage that the family name was nevertheless continued postmortem rather than extinguished because there was no natural heir.[26] The legal transaction was clear enough at one level: the beneficiary received the deceased's estate and, reciprocally, honored the deceased as his remaining child and heir by assuming some of the nomenclature of the deceased. The most striking example of this is the testamentary adoption of Octavian by Julius Caesar, though this testament, as we will see, had its unique features and intricacies.

1.1. Caesar's Will, Adoption, and the Establishment of the Augustan Principate

In the case of the testament of Julius Caesar, Octavian (the later Augustus) was made heir of Caesar's will on 13 September 45 BCE (Suetonius,

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21. For the ancient sources relating to *adoptio* and *adrogatio*, see Gellius, *Noct. att.* 5.19; Gaius, *Inst.* 1.97–107; Inst. Iust. 1.11; Dig. 1.7. For a succinct statement on the differences between each institution, see J. A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 111. For full discussion, see Lindsay, "Adoption and Succession."

22. Mark Golden, Adolf Berger, Barry Nicholas, and Susan M. Treggiari, "Adoption," *OCD*, 13.

23. Prévost (*Les adoptions politiques*, 18–29) discusses the practice of adoption in seventeen noble families during the last two centuries of the Roman republic.

24. Goody, "Adoption in Cross-Cultural Perspective," 59.

25. For epigraphic evidence for testamentary arrangements, see Salomies, *Adoptive and Polyonymous Nomenclature*, 1–14.

26. Lindsay, "Adoption and Heirship," 355.

Jul. 83.1). This entitled him to three-quarters of Caesar's estate (contra, incorrectly, Livy, *Per.* 116, who claims only half)[27] and the acquisition of his name by adoption (Nicolaus, *Aug.* 17.48; Appian, *Bell. civ*. 2.143; Dio Cassius, *Rom. hist*. 44.35.2.3).[28] Remarkably, Caesar did not inform Octavian of the contents of his will.[29] In terms of blood relations, Octavian was his grand-nephew by virtue of the fact that he was the grandson of Caesar's younger sister, Iulia. But significantly, prior to the testamentary inclusion, Caesar had already been sponsoring Octavian's career from a young age,[30] presumably all the more so as it became increasingly obvious that there would be no natural male heir.

Upon Caesar's assassination on the Ideas of March of 44 BCE, Octavian crossed from Apollonia and received an official copy of the will at Brundisium (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.11; Dio Cassius, *Rom. hist*. 45.3.1). Nevertheless, several issues of tension had to be resolved for this testamentary adoption to be truly effective. First, Caesar's tribe was Fabia, whereas Octavian's was Scaptia (Suetonius, *Aug.* 40.2). If it was to be a true adoption and not just a legally weak testamentary adoption, then Octavian needed to belong to Caesar's tribe.[31] Further, the plebian Octavian had to be a patrician, as

27. On the coheirs who received one quarter of Caesar's will (Q. Pedius and L. Pinarius), each descendants of different husbands of Caesar's elder sister, see Cicero, *Att.* 14.10.3; Pliny the Elder, *Nat*. 35.21; Suetonius, *Jul.* 83.2; Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World*, 184.

28. For discussion of the issue, see Prévost, *Les adoptions politiques*, 29–34; Walter Schmitthenner, *Oktavian und das Testament Cäsars: Eine Untersuchung zu den Politischen Anfängen des Augustus* (Munich: Beck, 1973), 39–64; Kunst, "Adoption und Testamentsadoption," 98–104; E. A. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," in Judge, *The First Christians*, 90–110; Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World*, 79–86, 182–89.

29. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss Caesar's motivations in adopting Octavian. Prévost (*Les adoptions politiques*, 31–34) dismisses the proposal that Caesar was only acting as a private individual who sought to continue his family name through an adopted son (32); rather, Caesar was intending "une adoption dynastique" (33).

30. For example, Octavian's designation as *magister equitum* before the Parthian campaign (Pliny, the Elder, *Nat*. 7.147; Appian, *Bell. civ* 3.9; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 43.51.7–8), as well as the ceremonial appointment of the young Octavian as prefect of the city and *pontifex*. See Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 91.

31. Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World*, 186. See also Kunst, "Adoption und Testamentsadoption," who also argues that republican testamentary adoptions were not real adoptions because of the legal issues created by the process.

Caesar was by birth, if the legal status of heir was to transfer to him without any hindrance.[32] Second, there were the personal doubts of his stepfather, Philippus, and his mother, Atia, about whether Octavian should accept the will at all or simply remain a private citizen at Rome (Nicolaus, *Aug.* 18.52–54; Suetonius, *Aug.* 8), whereas his friends gave him diverse advice on the issue (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.10).[33] Undoubtedly a considerable part of his parents' concern was that, as head of his own house, Octavian should rightly decline the name of Caesar and therefore avoid the grave political risks, recently demonstrated in tragic manner on the Ideas of March, associated with it.[34] Conversely, Octavian was first accorded the name Caesar by the dictator's legions after the Ides of March. The potency of the name of Julius Caesar for Octavian's future career as a general was thus revealed in a startling manner. The personal advantages were considerable for his future career. Third, as Cicero reveals (*Att.* 14.21.2–3 [11 May 44 BCE]), some were still of the opinion two months after the Ides of March that Antony, not Octavian, was the real heir to Caesar's will and that it should be so confirmed.[35]

In sum, it is highly questionable whether a testamentary adoption would have conveyed to Octavian the substantial legal benefits in the late republic that a *adoptio* or *adrogatio* would have offered. Thus Octavian astutely added to his testamentary adoption, with its inherent legal ambiguities, all the advantages that a legal adoption, conveyed by the *adrogatio*, would bring to its beneficiary (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.94). Consequently, in a striking exception to late republican testamentary adoption, Octavian acquired a new filiation that was confirmed by the *curiae* (Imperator Caesar, son of the divine Julius; son of a god) and, in addition, gained the membership of Caesar's tribe (Fabia). Each was acquired through the adoptive father as opposed to the natural father.[36] Kunst correctly concludes from this that

32. Lindsay, "Adoption and Succession," 79.

33. Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World*, 185–86.

34. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 86. Augustus's parents counseled Octavian to be prudent regarding an unreflecting acceptance of Caesar's offer of adoption (Suetonius, *Aug.* 8.6).

35. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 92–93.

36. The nomenclature is found respectively in DocsAug §17 (29 BCE) and DocsAug §22 (27 BCE). By contrast, in a later case of testamentary adoption, "Pliny after adoption by his uncle C. Plinius Secundus still referred to his original father Lucius in his filiation" (Lindsay, "Adoption and Succession," 79).

Octavian "stage-managed his role as *divus filius* on political rather than legal grounds."[37]

Octavian's careful stage-managing can be seen in a series of ten Julio-Claudian dedications, nine of which were erected to male family members, along with an additional one to Livia.[38] The dedications are now believed to have originated from imperial Rome, as opposed to coming from what scholars previously postulated was an arch at Pavia (Ticenum).[39] With the exception of the final Claudian dedication, the nine other dedications are datable to the Augustan period (7–8 CE). What is striking is how the filiation of each male Julian heir is either related to the apotheosized founder of the house, Julius Caesar, or to his currently ruling adopted son, Augustus. In each case the adoptive relation is set out with precision. The key phrases of the male honorands, repeated twice in the cases of brothers, form the sequence "son of god … son of Augustus, grandson of a god … son of Tiberius, grandson of Augustus, great-grandson of a god … son of Germanicus, great-grandson of Augustus."[40] Thus from the very beginning of the Augustan principate imperial adoption was inextricably linked to Caesar's apotheosis, precisely because of the testamentary establishment of the Julian house under Augustus and subsequently confirmed by the *adrogatio*.

How, then, did Augustus handle his own succession crisis, also caused by his inability to produce a male heir?

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37. Kunst, "Adoption und Testamentsadoption," 104.

38. Livia, the third wife of Augustus, was adopted into the Julian *gens* by the testament of Augustus (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.8).

39. Charles Brian Rose, "The Supposed Augustan Arch at Pavia (Ticinum) and the Einsieldeln 326 Manuscript," *JRA* 3 (1990): 163–68.

40. DocsAug §61. For full translation, see David C. Braund, *Augustus to Nero: A Sourcebook on Roman History 31 BC–AD 68* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1985), §28; see also §142. Other individual dedications reflect the same adoptive phenomenon, but, intriguingly, Julius Caesar, the apotheosized founder of the Julian house, is progressively eclipsed by the apotheosized Augustus. Tiberius Caesar: "Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of a god … Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus, grandson of the divine Julius" (Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §87; cf. §§92, 105, 106, 142). Drusus Caesar: "To Drusus Caesar, son of Tiberius Augustus, grandson of the divine Augustus, great-grandson of the divine Julius" (§109). Nero Caesar: "To Nero Caesar, son of Germanicus Caesar, grandson of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, great-grandson of the divine Augustus" (§118). Gaius Caesar Germanicus: "To Gaius Caesar Germanicus, grandson of Tiberius Augustus, great-grandson of the divine Augustus" (§120).

1.2. Adoption and the Continuance of the Augustan Principate

Although the principate of Augustus was a long and fruitful one (31 BCE–14 CE), its longevity was periodically threatened by the personal sickness of the princeps and, equally disconcertingly, was regularly punctuated by the deaths of almost all of his projected heirs. As noted, the need for adoption was necessitated by Augustus's failure to produce any male progeny of his own. The attempted resolutions to this dilemma mostly involved the marriages of Julia, the daughter of Augustus, to prospective heirs.[41] In each case this republican tendency toward endogamy was the means of perpetuating the Julian household, though, as Olivier Hekster observes, it was also a means of creating a wider and stronger power base for the *domus Augusta*.[42] We will examine each case individually, concentrating on the literary, inscriptional, and numismatic evidence.

1.2.1. Marcus Claudius Marcellus (42–23 BCE) and Marcus Vispanius Agrippa (45–12 BCE)

In 26 BCE, northern Spain was to be annexed by Rome for its precious metals, and Augustus had decided to lead its campaign, until he became gravely ill at Tarraco,[43] necessitating his legates to continue the campaign. The failure of Livia Drusilla, Augustus's third wife, to produce a male heir, notwithstanding her accompaniment of her husband everywhere during his campaigns and at home, loomed as a serious problem in the face of the ruler's intractable illness. Precarious health continued well into 24–23 BCE, after Augustus's return to Rome in 25.[44] The problem was temporarily resolved by the marriage of his only two blood relations to each other: in 23 BCE the fourteen-year-old Julia, Augustus's daughter with his second wife, Scribonia, was married to her seventeen-year-old cousin

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41. For discussion, see Elaine Fantham, *Julia Augusti: The Emperor's Daughter* (London: Routledge, 2006).

42. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors*, 5–6.

43. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 53.25; Velleius, *Hist. rom.* 2.90; Suetonius, *Aug.* 81; Florus, *Epit. rom.* 2.33; Orosius, *Hist. pag.* 6.21.

44. 24 BCE: CIL 14.2240: EID IVN [IMPEDITVS IMP] CAESAR VALETVD. The inscription bears the crucial phrase: "imperator Caesar hindered by ill-health" [*impeditus imp(erator)*] *Caesar valetud(ine)*. 23 BCE: Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 53.30; Suetonius, *Aug.* 81.

Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus and the son of his sister Octavia.[45] Before this match was made, Marcellus was admitted into the senate as a praetor in 24 BCE (Propertius, *El.* 3.18.13), and in the next year he was made aedile, with Augustus lavishly financing his games (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 53.28.2).[46] Marcellus was strategically placed ahead in magistracy of Tiberius Claudius, the son of Livia Drusilla, who was given the lower post of quaestor. It is clear that at this time Augustus was driven by a "strictly 'genetic' concept of succession: it was the blood of his family that was to prevail over all."[47]

In sum, Marcellus's Augustan-sponsored magistracies in the traditional *cursus honorum* established the political momentum for his possible assumption of the rule of Rome, should Augustus have prematurely died in the crisis year of 23 BCE. Moreover, popular perception, according to Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 7.167), saw Marcellus and Marcus Vispanius Agrippa, the general of Augustus, as equally potential heirs of the Julian empire, but Marcellus was considered by many to be overly ambitious.[48] Whether Marcellus's overweening political ambition and unfriendliness toward his rival

45. The glory of the family ancestors of the Metelli and the importance of their recent inclusion by marriage into the house of Caesar is emphasized by Horace (*Odes* 1.12): "Tree-like and imperceptible as age, the glory grows of the Marcelli; conspicuous among them all the star of Julius shines, like moon's light among heaven's lesser fires."

46. For a discussion of the career of Marcus Claudius Marcellus, see J. A. Crook, "Political History, 30 BC to AD 14," in *The Augustan Empire 43 BC–AD 69*, ed. Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott, CAH 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 81–87.

47. Crook, "Political History," 83.

48. On Marcus Claudius Marcellus, see Rudolf Daniel, *M. Vipsanius* Agrippa: *Eine Monographie* (Breslau: Marcus, 1933), not seen by me; Meyer Reinhold, *Marcus Agrippa: A Biography* (Geneva: Humphrey, 1933); Jean-Michel Roddaz, *Marcus Agrippa*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 253 (Paris: de Boccard, 1987); Lindsay Powell, *Marcus Agrippa: Right-Hand Man of Caesar Augustus* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2015). Velleius Paterculus (*Hist. rom.* 2.93) seems to indicate that Marcellus was overly ambitious: "After his [i.e., Marcellus's] death Agrippa, who had withdrawn himself in the meantime, having gone to Asia ostensibly on government business but according to the rumor on account of his unstated grievance against Marcellus, returned and married Julia the daughter of Caesar." Note, however, that Paterculus is careful to state that this was only "rumor," but was it political reality? Paterculus does not speculate about or endorse the popular gossip.

forced Agrippa to absent himself from Rome in 23 BCE and ultimately sojourn in Mitylene in the East (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 53.31) cannot to be proven, due to the presence of other equally compelling explanations for Agrippa's hasty departure, let alone the fact that the commission was the prerogative of Augustus. In this time of crisis, it could be argued, as Augustus edged ever closer to death, the Roman Empire needed to be held militarily in the East and West by Agrippa and Marcellus, respectively, while Augustus convalesced. Meanwhile, an outbreak of plague at Rome also made residence in the city increasingly dangerous.[49] The reasons for Agrippa's departure to the East, therefore, remains impenetrably complex, perhaps fueled by leadership tensions but also occasioned by contemporary exigencies.[50] But crucially, Augustus never went so far as to adopt Marcellus into his family, as his will made clear (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 53.31.1).[51]

Was Augustus acting here as a traditional republican noble would, letting Marcellus, his nephew, establish himself as the legitimate heir in open competition with his political rivals, Agrippa and Tiberius, each of whom had also been sponsored by Augustus? This is the implication of our closest contemporary source, Velleius Paterculus, who says:

> Marcus Marcellus, son of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, whom people considered would be the successor to Caesar's power [*successorem potentiae*] if anything happened to him, except they did not think it was possible for this to occur unchallenged on account of Marcus Agrippa, after giving a magnificent display of games during his aedileship, died while still in his youth, certainly as they say a person of true virtue, pleasant disposition, and intelligence and adequate to the fortune for which he was being prepared. (*Hist. rom*. 2.93)

E. A. Judge highlights the value of the perspective brought by our closest source to the events, even though strongly pro-Julio-Claudian: "Velleius also preserves the traditional atmosphere of personal competition (between

49. Crook, "Political History," 85.

50. Roddaz, *Marcus Agrippa*, 319–29.

51. Contra Servius, *Verg. Aen.* 6.861 (trans. M. G. L. Cooley, *The Age of Augustus*, LACTOR 17 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], §J31), claims there was an adoption: "Virgil refers to Marcellus, the son of Augustus' sister, Octavia, whom Augustus adopted."

Marcellus and Agrippa), and of the need to make one's own name (by the aedilician display)."[52]

In sum, the political career of blood-line heirs was promoted by the noble *paterfamilias*, but, as the Scipionic epitaphs and a letter of Augustus to Gaius make plain,[53] each new generation had to replenish their ancestral glory by outstripping their peers in the public quest for magistracies and military victory.[54] Moreover, Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom*. 53.31) makes it quite plain that Augustus brought his will into the senate to show that "he had left no successor to his government" and, indeed, "had preferred Agrippa before him." So, as noted, unlike the will of Caesar, there was no codicil in Augustus's will nominating his heir.[55] Nevertheless, it seems highly unlikely that, if Marcellus and Julia had produced a child, Agrippa would have gained leadership of the Roman Empire: genetics counted for everything. Nor should we read too much into Augustus giving Agrippa his ring (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 53.30.1, 2): the seal contained therein was for the administrative signing of official documents, both routinely and in a time of crisis, as this definitely was given Augustus's sickness.[56] The issue, of course, came to nothing with the death of Marcellus in 23 BCE and no son had issued from the marriage with Julia.[57] Consequently, in the writings of the imperial poets, the death of Marcellus and his burial in Augustus's mausoleum is noted in Vergil (*Aen*. 8.874–886) and lamented by Propertius (*El*. 33.18), a fact confirmed by his inscription there.[58]

In the case of Agrippa, it has been argued by scholars that Agrippa had been sent to the East with proconsular imperium for five years in 23 BCE,

52. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 96.

53. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 97.

54. Vergil's pageant of heroes (*Aen.* 6.855–859) effusively depicts Marcellus thus: "See how Marcellus advances, conspicuous with his rich spoils, a victor towering over all other men. Riding into battle, he shall restore Roman fortunes, quelling a great uprising, shall lay low Carthaginians and rebel Gauls, and shall be the third to hang up captured arms for father Quirinus."

55. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 97.

56. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 97.

57. Servius, *Verg. Aen.* 6.861, Cooley, *Age of Augustus*, §J31.

58. Propertius, *El*. 3.18.11–12: "Futile his pedigree; useless his virtues; wasted his mother's goodness, and his close kinship with the house of Caesar." For the inscriptions of Marcellus and Octavia in Augustus's mausoleum, see Cooley, *Age of Augustus*, §J32.

making him effectively Augustus's coruler in comparison to Marcellus.[59] However, Dio Cassius does not mention this, nor does any other source.[60] The argument is inferential, based on the renewal of Agrippa's proconsular imperium, along with Augustus, in 18 BCE (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 54.12.4) and 13 BCE (54.18.1), coupled at that time with the addition of tribunician powers (54.12.4). Our clearest documentary evidence for the conferral of such collegial proconsular imperium with that of Augustus comes later, precisely dated by the consular year to 12 BCE.[61]

But as we have already seen, a genetic conception of succession dominated at this time in the Julian principate. Maecenas in 19 BCE advised Augustus to make Agrippa a close ally by marrying him to Julia the Elder (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 54.6.5), the widow of Marcellus. Furthermore, Agrippa was not a Julian, so marriage to Julia resolved another problem. The stepson, Tiberius, was not offered Julia's hand, bypassing him entirely for the more charismatic Agrippa. Consequently, Agrippa was induced to divorce his wife Marcella, even though she was Augustus's niece,[62] and to marry the widowed Julia (Suetonius, *Aug.* 63; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 54.6.5).[63] The new status that accrued to Agrippa by virtue of his marriage into the Julian family is conveyed later in the 13 BC aureus from the Roman mint showing Augustus on the obverse with the legend CAESAR AUGUSTUS.[64] On the reverse the toga-clad Augustus and Agrippa are seated side by side, holding a staff or spear, on honorary seats placed on a platform, adorned with three rostra (bronze warship rams). As Hekster observes, the positioning of both men "emphasized their closeness."[65] The

59. Reinhold, *Marcus Agrippa*, 167–68.

60. Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 337 n. 1, says: "That Agrippa at this early date possessed *imperium maius* over senatorial provinces in the East has been argued, but cannot be proved."

61. Note the funeral oration of Augustus over Marcus Agrippa (DocsAug §366, trans. Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §73), of which only papyrus fragments survive: "For tribunician power was given you by decree of the senate, when the Lentuli were consuls." For a new fragment, see M. Gronewald, "Ein neues Fragment der Laudatio Funebris des Augustus auf Agrippa," *ZPE* 52 (1983): 61–62. See Roddaz, *Marcus Agrippa*, 335–51.

62. Octavia, Augustus's sister, was not a Julian, being the daughter of Gaius Octavius.

63. Reinhold, *Marcus Agrippa*, 86–87.

64. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors*, 7 fig. 6.

65. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors*, 7.

aura of Agrippa as Augustus’s right-hand general is superbly captured by Horace in his adulatory “refusal” (*recusatio*) poem, where Horace resists any attempt at capturing the military prowess of Augustus and Agrippa in an epic poem, given their stratospheric achievements, while implicitly comparing them to the Homeric heroes throughout the ode (Horace, *Odes* 1.6).[66] While pronconsular and tribumician powers, along with the honorific accolades, established Agrippa as an honored son-in-law in the Julian family, the birth of Gaius (20 BC) and Lucius (17 BCE) again ensured heirs though the Julian bloodline. However, they would be legitimized only by adoption.

1.2.2. Gaius (20 BCE–4 CE) and Lucius Caesar (17 BCE–2 CE)

The adoption of Gaius and Lucius occurred in 17 BCE, when Gaius was three years old and Lucius was an infant. Suetonius (*Aug.* 64.1; cf. Velleius, *Hist. rom.* 2.96; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 54.18.1; Zonaras, *Hist. rom.* 10.34) sets out the procedure thus:

> He adopted Gaius and Lucius into his family, buying them from their father Agrippa through [the ceremony of] an ass and scales [*per assem et libram*], and he introduced them while still at a tender age to the business of public life, and he sent them out as consuls designate around the provinces and the armies.

The purchase occurred privately at home. Augustus bought the boys in a symbolic sale in which he touched a balance (*libra*) three times with a penny (*as*) before a presiding *praetor*.[67] It is beyond the scope and purpose of this essay to explore how both boys were accorded extraordinary honors early on and how they were rapidly advanced by Augustus in their political careers.[68] Suffice it to say that the visual evidence (coins, gems, and statues) of the grandsons demonstrates that their facial features imitated the

66. For brief discussion and a translation, see Cooley, *Age of Augustus*, §G22.

67. Elena Caliri, “Εὐχαί ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων: Augustus and Some Honors for Gaius and Lucius in the Roman East,” *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 55 (2015): 433–42, here 433 n. 3, https://doi.org/10.1556/068.2015.55.1–4.29.

68. See Caliri, “Εὐχαί ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων,” passim; Frédéric Hurlet, *Les collègues du prince sous Auguste et Tibère: De la légalité républicaine à la légitimité dynastique*, Collection de l’École Française de Rome 227 (Rome: l’École Française de Rome,1997), 79–141.

features of Augustus.[69] While there are perhaps physiognomic reasons for this resemblance, there is also a political purpose in the shared likeness:

> Wherever the images of Gaius and Lucius were seen, people were reminded that the sons of Augustus were like their adoptive father in appearance, character, and personal charisma, and that under their guidance the peace and prosperity that Augustus had brought to the civilized world could be expected to continue.[70]

Furthermore, the special status of the adoptive sons of Augustus—each of whom had been accorded extraordinary honors (Res gest. 14; see also Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.9), military commands, and advancement in the *cursus honorum* (consuls designate)—is well illustrated by an aureus from Lyons (2 BCE–4 CE). The obverse shows laureate Augustus Caesar, carrying the legend CAESAR AVGVSTVS DIVI F(ILIUS) PATER ("Caesar Augustus, son of god, father"). The reverse displays Augustus's grandsons Gaius and Lucius, each togate and holding shields. Behind the shields stand spears; a libation ladle (*simpulum*) and an augural staff (*lituus*) are placed in the space between the heads of the grandsons. The familial status of the boys, acquired through their adoption, is boldly encapsulated in the legend below their feet: CAESARES. That the Roman gods endorse this new status is also implied by the symbols of the *lituus* and *simpulum*. To be sure, these images primarily point to the religious posts assumed by the young men, with Gaius acting as a *pontifex* (DocsAug §§63a, 69; CIL 11.314; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.9.4, ca. 7/6 BCE), and Lucius as an *augur* (DocsAug §§65, 68). Nevertheless, the wider blessing of the gods upon Rome is assumed in this instance because of the strong attachment of Augustus's grandsons to traditional Roman *religio* in the same manner as Augustus reveals in the Res gestae. The legend around the circumference of the coin spotlights the fact that Gaius and Lucius are the designated heirs: AVGVSTI F(ILIVS) CO(N)SVL DESIG(NATVS) PRINC(EPS) IVVEN(TVS) ("son of Augustus, consul designate and princeps of youth"). The parallelism between the grandsons being "*princeps* of youth" (*princeps iuventutis* [Res gest. 14]) and the title of Augustus as *princeps* of the Roman state (*princeps* [Res gest. 13.1]; *princeps senatus* [7.1]) presages their future.

69. See John Pollini, *The Portraiture of Gaius and Lucius Caesar* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 93.

70. Pollini, *Portraiture of Gaius*, 94.

Last, in a highly revealing and affectionate letter of Augustus to Gaius when he was in the East, quoted by Aulus Gellius (*Noct. att.* 15.7.3, 23 September, 1 CE), we read the following:

> Greetings my dear Gaius, my favorite little donkey. By heaven, I always miss you when you're away from me! But I need to see my Gaius all the more on days like today. Wherever you are I trust that you're in good spirits and well enough to celebrate my sixty-fourth birthday. As you see, I have climbed above the sixty-third year on the ladder of life, the critical point for all old men. And I pray to the gods that you and I may pass the time remaining in good health with the state flourishing, while you exercise your virtue [*virtus*] and succeed to my position [*statio*].

Although Gaius has been adopted into the Julian family, Augustus expects that his heirs, in the tradition of the sons from the republican noble houses, should live up to and, if possible, surpass the glory of his ancestors. Gaius, in the words of Augustus, would only succeed to the Roman ruler's "position" (*statio*) of influence by demonstrating his own military "manliness" (*virtus*) on the battlefield.[71] Sonship and, accordingly, heirship, is strictly envisaged in the traditional republican paradigm of "meritocracy."[72] Most importantly in this regard, Suetonius tells us that Augustus "never recommended the election of his sons to the people without adding the words: 'if they deserve it' " (*Aug.* 56.2).

But, despite the hopes of Augustus regarding the coregency of Gaius and Lucius, Lucius died when he was eighteen in 2 BCE and, similarly, Gaius in 4 CE when he was twenty-three. The numbing shock of Gaius's death (and Lucius's recent death) is graphically registered in the striking cenotaph of Gaius Caesar at Pisa (4 CE). Moreover, in almost word-for-word phraseology, key phrases are partially duplicated in the Res gest. 14.1. The cenotaph sets out the two reasons why mourning rites for Gaius Caesar should be held at Pisa:

> Since on April 2nd word was brought that Gaius Caesar, son of Augustus, father of his country, pontifex maximus, guardian of the Roman empire and protector of the whole world, grandson of a god, after the consulship which he held with good fortune, waging war beyond the

71. Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," 100; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 140–41.

72. See the nuanced discussion by Caliri, "Εὐχαί ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων," 435.

> farthest borders of the Roman people, when the state was successful and the greatest and most warlike peoples were conquered or received into good faith, had himself been snatched by cruel fate from the Roman people through wounds received in service of the state, having already been designated a princeps most just and most in accord with the virtues of his father and the single defence of our colony. And that loss, at a time when mourning at the death of Lucius Caesar, his brother, consul designate, augur, our patron, princeps of the youth, undertaken by the whole colony, had not yet subsided, renewed and redoubled the sorrow of each and every one.[73]

Although Gaius Caesar replicates the ancestral virtue and justice of his father, Augustus, and his apotheosized grandfather, Julius Caesar, by means of fortune-blessed military conquest in service of the Roman state in the East, the cruel fickleness of the fates intervenes despite his adoption into the Julian family. The nonapotheosized Julian family members stand exposed in total weakness and without any hope before the fates and the inevitability of death, no matter how impressive their service of the Roman state might be. How did Paul's gospel of divine adoption, grounded in covenantal mercy and extended to the helpless through his messianic Son, engage the postmortem ideology of the Julian house? Was it even in the purview of Paul's gospel, and what difference, if any, would it have made to auditors imbued with Julio-Claudian adoption ideology anyway?

1.2.3. Tiberius Claudius Nero (42 BCE–37 CE) and Agrippa Postumus (12 BCE–14 CE)

Three sons (Gaius Caesar, Lucius Caesar, Agrippa Postumus) and two daughters (Julia the Younger, Agrippina the Elder) had issued from the marriage of Julia the Elder to Marcus Vispanius Agrippa. The two young adopted Julian male heirs, Gaius and Lucius, had been born before the death of Agrippa, and, as we have seen, their careers flourished under the patronage of Augustus. Agrippa Postumus, by contrast, was born a few weeks after his father's death in 12 BCE. The two stepsons of Livia, Tiberius and his bother Drusus, were not given the accelerated careers as the two designated heirs precisely because of their Claudian bloodline. Seemingly, the issue of a Julian heir was resolved in the long term with

73. DocsAug §69, trans. Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §63.

the establishment of the coregency of Gaius and Lucius. Nevertheless, Tiberius and Drusus were kept in the wings in case they might ultimately prove useful, though Drusus would subsequently die in 9 BCE.

Consequently, Augustus forced his stepson Tiberius Claudius Nero—the son of Livia from her previous marriage to a Claudian luminary— to divorce his much-loved wife Vispania (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 54.35; Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.96.1; Suetonius, *Tib.* 7.2) in order that he might marry the recently widowed Julia the Elder in 11 BCE (Suetonius, *Tib.* 8; *Aug.* 65; Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.100). So why did Augustus instigate this marriage? Four reasons can be postulated. It prevented Julia, as a new widow, inadvertently attracting suiters from outside the Julio-Claudian family. It also integrated Tiberius, somewhat of a Claudian "free agent" within the household, more fully into the Julian fold. Further, Tiberius would become a mentor for Lucius and Gaius, the heirs designate, because he would be their stepfather. Finally, the military expertise of Agrippa as the right-hand man of Augustus, lost due to his death, would again be replaced by the skilled militarism and administration of Tiberius. Thus the reluctance that Augustus initially had in selecting Tiberius, noted by Dio Cassius (*Hist. rom*. 54.31), was able to be overcome. Consequently, Tiberius acquiesced dutifully to the will of Augustus (Suetonius, *Aug.* 63.2; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 54.31).

But why did Tiberius withdraw from politics in the capital to Rhodes in 6 BCE? Our sources provide several cogent reasons for Tiberius's exile, among others of varying worth.[74] First, the promiscuity of Julia with several lovers over a period of time was a decisive factor (Suetonius, *Tib.* 10; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.9; Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.53.1–2; cf. Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.100). Indeed, Augustus eventually banished her to the island of Pandateria in 2 BCE for her adulteries, after having issued her a divorce from Tiberius (Suetonius, *Tib.* 25.2; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 57.5.1; Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.125.2). The issue had already been earlier complicated by the fact that the sole son issuing from his unhappy marriage with Julia suddenly died in 10 BCE, barely a year after their union (Suetonius, *Tib.* 7.3). Thus Tiberius's hopes of being the *paterfamilias* of the Julian house in the undefined future through the provision of a new heir, rather than merely being the regent for the two heirs designate,

74. Judith Ann Weller, "Tacitus and Tiberius' Rhodian Exile," *Phoenix* 12 (1958): 31–35. However, the reasons for the Rhodian exile provided by Tacitus are rightly deemed by Weller to reflect the historian's typical jaundice toward Tiberius.

were stymied early on. Second, was Tiberius's retirement to Rhodes a gambit on his part designed to show his political and military indispensability, as Suetonius suggests (*Tib.* 10)? Certainly the renewal of his tribunician power and a share in Augustus's *maius imperium* for another five years in 6 BCE provided him a "firewall" against those who might want to attack him. Third, some of our sources also claim that Tiberius withdrew to Rhodes in order to diffuse rivalries between himself and Gaius and Lucius at Rome (Suetonius, *Tib.* 10; Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.99; cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.9).

But increasingly Tiberius's self-imposed exile at Rhodes left him politically exposed. His connection with Augustus as son-in-law and regent was severed upon his divorce; after the dissolution of his tribunician power and imperium in 2 BCE, he could return to Rome only as a private citizen, chastened by the experience (Suetonius, *Tib.* 11–12; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.9.5–9); the political supporters of Gaius, such as Marcus Lollius, attacked him politically (Suetonius, *Tib*. 12.2; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.10.19); and, finally, he was forced in humiliating fashion to pay court to Gaius on his trip to the East. The issue came to an end, as noted above, only with the deaths of Lucius and Gaius. Abandoning his previous practice of securing heirs through the bloodline of his daughter Julia (i.e., via family and direct lineage), Augustus adopted Tiberius this time from the outset, along with his last grandson by Agrippa and Julia, Agrippa Postumus.[75] The political reason for the adoption of Agrippa Postumus was probably to ensure "a 'reserve' of possible successors," given the tortuous twists in the succession drama witnessed so far.[76] However, Agrippa Postumus was banished by Augustus in 7 CE, only to be killed by his guard at Planasia before the formal accession of Tiberius to power in 14 CE. Tiberius also adopted his nephew Germanicus (Suetonius, *Tib.* 15), the son of Nero Claudius Drusus and Antonia Minor. However, the (then) unpromising figure

75. On the adoption of Tiberius, see Tacitus, *Ann*. 1.3; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.13; Suetonius, *Aug.* 65; *Tib.* 23; Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.103. On that of Agrippa Postumus, Suetonius, *Aug*. 65.1; *Tib*. 15.2; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 55.13.2; Velleius, *Hist. rom*. 2.103.2.

76. Robert Detweiler, "Historical Perspectives on the Death of Agrippa Posthumus," *CJ* 65 (1970): 289. See also Shelagh Jameson, "Augustus and Agrippa Postumus," *Historia* 24 (1975): 287–314; Andrew Pettinger, *The Republic in Danger: Drusus Libo and the Succession of Tiberius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 47–60.

of Claudius, the future Roman ruler and brother of Germanicus, was entirely excluded, and Tiberius's own son Drusus was left in an ambiguous position.[77]

Barbara Levick captures well the significance of the 4 CE adoption, notwithstanding its "ragged edges" as far as incorporation of all family members noted above:

> Romans took adoption seriously; it was a device important both in private and public life as securing the survival of a *gens* and its political power. It was not to be undertaken lightly, because in one of its forms (that used in the adoption of Tiberius) it involved the extinction of a family and its *sacra*; and the *paterfamilias* became *filiusfamilias* and lost his own property to his new father. No wonder then that in AD 4 when he adopted Tiberius, Augustus had to swear that his action was undertaken "in the interests of the state" (Suetonius, *Tib.* 3.1).[78]

Finally, the will of Augustus, known to us through our Roman literary sources and dated to 3 April 13 CE, when Augustus was seventy-four,[79] nominates two heirs: Tiberius receives two thirds of Augustus's estate, whereas Livia, Tiberius's mother and Augustus's wife, receives the final third; inexplicably, the adopted Agrippa Postumus is omitted. What the significance of this omission represents is hard to say.[80] Once again we are confronted by the ragged edges of the imperial adoption system. More intriguingly, Augustus's will begins with the (slightly adapted) wording that we saw in the Pisa cenotaph in honor of Drusus: "Since cruel fate has snatched me way from Gaius and Lucius, be Tiberius Caesar my heir to two-thirds of my estate" (Suetonius, *Tib.* 23). While intense regret over the death of the coregents is understandable here, Augustus's emotional distance from his adopted son Tiberius is, in my opinion, unmistakable, though the expression of malice was not unprecedented in Roman wills.[81] The reluctance of Augustus in adopting Tiberius, which, as we have seen,

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77. See Barbara Levick, "Drusus Caesar and the Adoptions of AD 4," *Latomus* 25 (1966): 228.

78. Barbara Levick, "Julians and Claudians," *Greece & Rome* 22 (1975): 30.

79. See Suetonius, *Aug.* 101; *Tib.* 23; Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.8; Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 56.32.

80. For discussion of Augustus's will, see Edward Champlin, "The Testament of Augustus," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 132.2 (1989): 154–65.

81. Champlin, "Testament of Augustus," 158.

Dio Cassius said characterized the ruler's attitude toward Tiberius in 11 BCE, seemingly remained until the end of his reign.

1.2.4. Conclusion

From the beginning of the Julian reign, we see that ambiguities in imperial adoption practices pointed to a certain untidiness in its implementation. The adoption of Augustus by Caesar in his will had to be supplemented with the *adrogatio* to resolve the legal ambiguities of Augustus's position. Furthermore, in the succession crisis caused by Augustus's illness at various junctures, the issue was resolved via family and direct lineage through the marriages of Julia to prospective heirs (Marcellus, Agrippa). It was only with the adoption of Gaius and Lucius as designated coregents in 17 BCE, Tiberius having been appointed their regent upon the death of Agrippa in 12 BCE, that normal adoption procedures began to be implemented. This was again implemented in Augustus's adoption of Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus in 4 CE, though we noted ragged edges throughout the implementation. Germanicus, Tiberius's nephew, is adopted by him, but Claudius, the brother of Germanicus, is bypassed entirely. Drusus, Tiberius's own son is left in a legally ambiguous situation. Finally, the adopted Agrippa Postumus is left out of Augustus's will, and Tiberius is once again given the emotional cold shoulder in Augustus's will.

Greater paradoxes emerge when we remember the sincere attachment of Augustus to republican forms, the evidence for which, including a new fragment of the Res gestae, undermines Ronald Syme's famous contention that Augustan republicanism is only a hypocitical façade adopted by the ruler in order to establish more fully his power. Rather, we have seen that, notwithstanding his adoption, Augustus expected Gaius to transition to his position of influence (*statio*) only by the achievement of military virtus on the battlefield, enhancing and surpassing Julian ancestral glory. A republicam meritocracy shaped Augustus's thought in this regard, with his heirs having to derserve their adoption to future rule. Moreover, as E. A. Judge and I have argued elsewhere,[82] on the basis of contemporary documents and the literary evidence, both Augustus and Tiberius expected

82. See Judge, "Caesar's Son and Heir," passim; James R. Harrison, "Diplomacy over Tiberius' Succession," *New Docs* 10.12, at 70–71.

a plurality of leadership would steer the imperial state. The combination of republican and Julian luminaries in the statue program of the *forum Augustum* underscores this precise point.[83] In an edict (2 BCE) Augustus states that his intention in building the *forum Augustum* was to leave a paradigm of leadership for future leaders of the state that maintained the iconic leadership of the republican leaders (Suetonius, *Aug.* 31.5; cf. Res gest. 8.5): "I have contrived this to lead the citizens to require me, while I live, and *the rulers of later times* as well, to attain the standard [*ad exemplar*] set by *those worthies of old*." There is no sense in this edict that the Julian house was somehow privileged in maintaining its dominance in public life by strategic adoption processes other than by the traditional mode of open competition with the other noble houses. The contemporary evidence of Velleius Paterculus presents Tiberius as living in accord with the Augustan ideal of leadership: "for the best *princeps* teaches his citizens to do right by doing it, and though he is the greatest among us in authority, he is still greater in the example which he sets" (*Hist. rom.* 2.126.4). In sum, adoption was only a means for the Julian heir to establish his primacy in competition with his peers rather than being an automatic route to autocratic rule. The republicanism of both Augustus and Tiberius exposed here in the contemporary documents in particular stands over against the jaundiced picture of Tacitus written against the backdrop of Domitian's tyranny.

2. Apotheosis and Its Relationship to Imperial Adoption

2.1. Julio-Claudian Apotheosis from Caesar to Nero

In this section we will not discuss Julio-Claudian apotheosis traditions in general but only those that include reference to the adopted Julio-Claudian heirs.[84] Our sole excpetion will be a papyrus document that, datable

83. See E. A. Judge, "The Eulogistic Inscriptions of the Augustan Forum: Augustus on Roman History," in Judge, *The First Christians*, 165–81; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 170–77.

84. See Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 221 fig. 177. For discussion of apotheosis, see Elias Bickerman, "Die Römische Kaiserapotheose," *AR* 27 (1929): 1–34; Bickerman, "Consecratio," in *Le culte des souverains dans l'empire Romain*, ed. W. den Boer (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1973): 3–37; C. Habicht, "Die augusteische Zeit und das erste Jahrhun-

to Nero's accession in 54 CE, affords us an Egypian provincial perspective into the ideology of Julio-Claudian transition of rule contemporary with the writing of Romans. This documentary and visual evidence confirms the epigraphic picture, discussed above, of the dependence of Julio-Cludian adopted heirs upon their apotheosized forebears. But striking new elements in the visual evidence help us to see even more the priority of the adopted heirs over against the biological heirs.

2.1.1. The Adopted Coregents, Gaius and Lucius, and Their Apotheosized Forebear

The Augustan altar of the Lares (ca. 7 BC) depicts the deified Caesar ascending to heaven in a chariot drawn by winged horses.[85] To the right, Venus Genetrix protects the two young adopted princes (Gaius and Lucius Caesar). Another togate figure—probably Augustus—stands behind the chariot and observes the spectacle with his right hand raised in prayer. Both the current ruler and his two coregent adoptive princes owe their inheritance, present and future, to the apotheosized Augustus. This was certainly the personal expectation of Augustus, if the interconnection between the two most prominent significant sacred spaces and their structures on the Campus Martius is indicative. The Res gestae, which was inscribed on large bronze pilllars outside the entrance to the mausoleum of Augustus, was designed, Bosworth argues, to establish Augustus's claim

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dert nach Christi Geburt," in den Boer, *Le culte des souverains*, 41–99; H. P. L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture* (New York: Caratzas, 1982); S. R. F. Price, "From Noble Funerals to Divine Cult: The Consecration of Roman Emperors," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. D. Cannadine and S. Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56–105; Larry J. Kreitzer, "The Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," in Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World*, LNTS 134 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 69–98; Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 250–330; Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 322–454.

85. For a different identification of the charioteer (Nero Claudius Drusus), see Bridget A. Buxton, "A New Reading of the Belvedere Altar," *AJA* 118 (2014): 91–111. See also Timothy P. Wiseman, *The House of Augustus: A Historical Detective Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 152, fig, 69c, who argues that the scene represents "the apotheosis of Romulus, witnessed by the Sun-god (top left) and by mortal figures probably representing the Roman People."

to apotheosis, among other purposes.[86] This was symbolically emphasized by the careful placement of Augustus's mausoleum in the Campus Martius in relation to the site of Agrippa's Pantheon. The mausoleum faced the vestible of the Pantheon in which were placed statues of the gods and the apotheosized Caesar: the epectation of the same postmortem destiny on the part of Caesar's adopted son could not be clearer. While postmortem ratification by the senate was required for official apotheois in the Roman state, Augustus, the son of *divus Iulius*, had already made his claim implicitly well in advance of his death.

Additionally, a temple in Italy to the adopted heirs of Augustus, Gaius and Lucius Caesar, has this verse dedication to Augustus. The joint rule of Gaius and Lucius continues the rule of the apotheosized Augustus over the world from heaven. The correct cult, that is, the performance of sacrifices and ritual prayers in the temple, will ensure that the intercession of Gaius and Lucius on behalf of provincial Italy is heard by their adoptive father, Augustus, who resides in heaven and solictously attends to their prayers:

> When time summons you, Caesar, to be a god,
> And you return to your place in heaven from which you can rule the world,
> Let these be the people who in your stead govern the earth
> And rule us, having their prayers to you heard.[87]

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86. Brian Bosworth, "Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic Theories of Apotheosis," *JRS* 89 (1999): 1–18. See the plan of the Campus Martius showing the sightline from the Pantheon to the Mausoleum of Augustus in Penelope J. E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor: Roman Funerary Monuments from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 141 fig. 94.

87. *ILS* 137, trans Price, "From Noble Funerals," in Cannadine and Price, *Rituals of Royalty*, 80–81. On prayer to the emperor, see Price, "Gods and Emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult," *JHS* 104 (1984): 90–93. Also see Bickerman's judicious comments ("Consecratio," 3–4) regarding the Paris cameo. He observes that, while the cameo depicts Germanicus (?) and Drusus Junior (?) as heavenly beings, they were never posthumously deified by the Roman senate. For additional discussion, see Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," 78–79 §5; on the Paris cameo of (arguably) the apotheosised Germanicus, see 79–80 §6. Notwithstanding the senate's decision not to deify posthumously all members of the the imperial household, the Paris cameos seem to accord that status to Germanicus and Drusus. Both cameos are discussed below.

2.1.2. The Apotheosis of the Adopted Germanicus: The Cabinet des Antiques Cameo

A cameo from the Cabinet des Antiques (Paris) shows (arguably) the adopted Germanicus ascending to heaven on the back of an eagle.[88] In his right hand he holds the curved augural staff, the *lituus*; in his left hand he cradles the horn of plenty, the cornucopia. The link betweeen traditional religion and the divine blessing of Rome through the military victories of the charismatic general Germanicus is emphasized. To Germanicus's left this is further highlighted by the appearance of a victory figure offering him a triumphal wreath. Although Germanicus was not apotheosized by the Roman senate, this gem was created for the private consumption of the Julio-Claudian family members and perhaps their intimate clients and thus affords us intriguing insight into privately held Julio-Claudian beliefs regarding the link between apotheosis and famous adopted family members.

88. Cook (*Empty Tomb*, 442) argues that the cameo represents the apotheosized Claudius, dating the cameo to 48 or 50 CE. In my opinion, the cameo more likely represents the charismatic general Germanicus than Claudius, whose apotheosis was savagely mocked in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. However, this is not to deny that Claudius's apotheosis was respectfully portrayed elsewhere: the reverse of an aureus of Nero (*RIC* 1 Nero §§6–7: 55 CE) shows a quadriga of elephants bearing two chairs, seated with Divus Claudius and Divus Augustus. See also the statue of the deified Claudius found near Bovillae on the Appian way (Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 442–43). Furthermore, Edward Champlin (*Nero* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003], 32–34) claims that the cameo represents a posthumous portrait of the apotheosized Nero. It might be replied that the so-called *damnatio memoriae* of Nero makes this unlikely. But the recarving of the portraits of previous emperors may simply be an economic decision made by sculptors, who recycled their precious stock upon an unexpected change of imperial regime, as opposed to being a political erasure of memory (Champlin, *Nero*, 29–30, here 30). Moreover, if we allow that the nonapotheosized Germanicus might be the figure depicted here, then we must extend the same possibility to Nero. In sum, a certain interpretive latitude in the identification of the figure depicted in this cameo should be granted. However, the erasure of Nero's name on inscriptions is unequivocally clear (n. 100 *infra*). On the erasure of honor and the New Testament, see James R. Harrison, "The Erasure of Honour: Paul and the Politics of Dishonour," *TynBull* 66 (2016): 161–84.

2.1.3. The Apotheosis of the Adopted Germanicus and Drusus: The Paris Cameo

In the cameo from the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) we see in the upper register of the gem the deified Augustus in the heavens.[89] Before him reclines Alexander the Great in Greco-Roman address, holding the globe, a convenient symbol of the extent of Julian rule.[90] Tiberius's biological son, Drusus, is placed to the exteme left holding a shield, accompanied by other family members to the right, even though he had not yet died (d. 14 September 23 CE), considering that the gem in its central register celebrates Germanicus's Rhine victory in 16 CE. If the gem was produced post-23 CE, as Ludwig Curtius and Han Jucker argue,[91] then this argument does not hold: Why would the living Germanicus and his heir still hold central attention in the scene if that were the case? The apotheosized figures are differentiated in the upper register from the living personnages in the middle register. Crucially, Tiberius is still depicted as seated on the throne. Clearly the gem originates from the reign of Tivberius as opposed to the later Caligulan and Claudian periods.

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89. For modern discussion, see Ludwig Curtius, "Ikonographische Beiträge zum Porträt der römischen Republik und der julisch-claudischen Familie, VI. Neue Erklärung der großen Pariser Cameo mit der Familie des Tiberius," *MDAIR* 49 (1934): 119–56; Ernst Hohl, "Der grosse Pariser Kameo und Kaiser Claudius," *Klio* 35 (1942): 227–45; H. Jucker, "Der Grosse Pariser Kameo: Eine Huldigung an Agrippina, Claudius und Nero," *JdI* 91 (1976): 211–50; Christine Elisabeth Heinlein, "Kaiser und Kosmokrator: Der Große Kameo von Frankreich als astrale Allegorie" (PhD diss., Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, 2011), not seen by me. Ludwig Curtius ("Ikonographische Beiträge zum Porträt"), in a meticulous comparison of contemporary iconographic evidence (coins, statues) with the Paris cameo, has overturned the pioneering identifications of the antiquarian and collector of gems, Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc, made in a letter dated 23 September 1620 to his friend, Giralamo Aleandro, in Rome.

90. Whereas Peiresc identified the shield-carrying figure on the left in the upper register as Julius Caesar and the figure to the right on the winged horse as Marcellus, Curtius (Curtius, "Ikonographische Beiträge zum Porträt") has decisively shown on the basis of the numismatic evidence that the "Julius Caesar" figure was in reality Drusus Julius Caesar. Similarly, Hohl, "Der grosse Pariser Kameo," 245.

91. Curtius ("Ikonographische Beiträge zum Porträt") argues that the gem belongs to the period of Caligula when Tiberius was no longer on the throne, having been produced just after the death of Tiberius in 37 CE, whereas Jucker ("Der Grosse Pariser Kameo") proposes that it was commissioned in 49 CE.

As in the cameo discussed above, some members of the Julio-Claudian family were not dependent upon senatorial ratification for apotheosis in private depictions of Julian postmortem ideology, the status being able to be invoked prospectively before their death. In the middle register of the gem, the Zeus-like Tiberius, seated next to his mother Livia, faces Germanicus, his adoptive son. Germanicus is rendered in military address and is accompanied by his wife Agrippina and their small son, Gaius, the future Roman ruler. There is little doubt that Tiberius's adoptive son Germanicus is the figure most prominently honored here, reinforced by the subdued captives in the lower register, recalling Germinicus's recent victories in the Rhine, for which the general had received a triumph on 26 May 17 CE. In sum, this cameo is intrigiung for the way that the natural-born and militarily successful son, Drusus, is diminished in importance in the scene, curiously apotheosized before he had even died. The charismatic and highly successful adoptive son, Germanicus, along with his wife Agrippina and child heir, receive all the attention and plaudits. Undoubtedly, the gem also carries significant allegorical and astrological elements, highlighted most effectively by Christine Elisabeth Heinlein,[92] but for our purposes its political emphases are clear enough. The adopted heirs have priority over the biological heirs.

2.1.4. The Apotheosis of Claudius and the Accession of Nero to Cosmic Rule: The Outbreak of Agricultural Prosperity

In a draft of a proclamation of Nero's accession found in Egypt, dated 17 November 54 CE, the apotheosis of Claudius to his divine ancestors (Julius Caesar, Augustus) is announced, and the accession of his *adopted* successor, Nero Caesar, to the throne is celebrated effusively in quasi-prophetic strains.[93] Again, adoption is the bedrock of succession, and

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92. Heinlein, "Kaiser und Kosmokrator," 99–190.

93. Note, too, how Nero dresses his hair in a traditional Claudian way on his coins before 64 CE (L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture*, 55 fig. 30a–b), whereas from 64 to 68 CE Nero's coinage adopts the un-Roman "big wreath of locks, rising from the rest of the hair in an effective frame around the face" (58; see also 55 fig. 30, c, d, f, g; 57 fig. 32 [a bust of Nero]). These are modeled on the coiffure of royal Alexander and the Hellenistic Diadochi, whose hair style of a wreath of locks Nero adopted in his tour through Greece (58; see Suetonius, *Ner.* 51; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 63.9). When combined with the epigraphic and literary presentations of Nero as Helios (DocsGaius §146: Νέωι Ἡλίωι) and Apollo Citharoedus (DocsGaius §145: *νέῳ*

apotheosis provides the seamless transition to political power, occasioning thankfulness to the Egyptian gods. This *provincial* perspective is a valuable indication of the Julio-Claudian understanding of accession at the time of Paul's writing of Romans:

> Fulfilling the debt to his ancestors [Ὁ μὲν ὀφειλὀμενος τοῖς προγόνοις], the manifest god Caesar [ἐνφανὴς θεὸς Καῖσαρ] has departed to them, and the expected and hoped-for [ἐλπισθείς] imperator of the world [τῆς οἰκουμένης] has been proclaimed [ἀποδέδεικται]: the good spirit of the world [ἀγαθὸς δαίμων δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης], the origin [(ἀρ)χὴ ὤν] of [the greatest of] all good things, Nero has been proclaimed [ἀποδέδεικται] Caesar. For this reason, all of us ought wear wreaths and sacrifice oxen, to show to all the gods our gratitude [χάριτος]. Year 1 of Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, on the twenty-first of the month New Augustus [Νέ(ου) Σεβα(στοῦ)].[94]

There are several important features of this *provincial* decree that are especially worth highlighting, given the proximity of its date (54/55 CE) to the composition of the Epistle to the Romans (57–58 CE).[95] First, Claudius, as the head of the Julio-Claudian household, had demonstrated his personal indebtedness to his prestigious ancestors by replicating their glory in his rule. Here we see that the traditional republican quest for glory continued unabated in the early imperial period to some extent, but with the crucial qualification that it was now radically redefined: it was concentrated in the Julio-Claudian family. In 19 BCE the traditional triumphal honors were replaced with honors of inferior status (i.e., the *ovatio*) if the *triumphator* did not belong to the imperial family.[96] Futher, the Julio-Claudian *cursus honorum* sponsored an entirely new set of clients (the army, imperial bureacracy, and provincial elites) in open competition with the old

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Ἀπόλλονι), "the very form of the portraiture proclaims the divine power of the person represented" (L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture*, 62). This stands in sharp contrast to Nero's earlier refusal of divine honors at his accession to power in 54 CE (P.Med. inv. 70.01 verso: Robert K. Sherk, ed. and trans., *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian*, Translated Documents of Greece and Rome 6 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], §62).

94. Trans. Sherk, *The Roman Empire*, §61 (P.Oxy. 1021 = DocsGaius §47).

95. For a succinct summary of all the dating options, see Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 48–50.

96. Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit*, 260–61.

nobility. The luminaries of the old noble families, vastly depleted by the civil wars, could no longer compete against the triumphant Julian family, heirs, and sponsored clients, given the vast wealth that Augustus had to dispose as the world benefactor. Consequently, the senate had recognized Claudius's preeminent merit as a ruler by apotheosizing him upon his death, with the result that his newly acquired divinity, now enjoyed postmortem in the presence of his apotheosized forebears (Caesar, Augustus, Livia), had become manifest to all.[97]

Second, precisely because of Nero's dynastic ties to his apotheosized forebears, having been adopted by his great-grand-uncle Claudius (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.25; Suetonius, *Ner.* 7.1; *ILS* 224; BMC 1 Claudius, §79) on 25 February 50 CE,[98] Nero had become heir and successor to Claudius. Significantly, however, Nero's accession to rule is now secured by the apotheosis of Claudius as much as by his earlier adoption into the Julio-Cladian household: the expected and hoped-for imperator of the world has now been so proclaimed with the divinization of Claudius.

Third, as the vice-regent of the gods and his apotheosized Julio-Claudian forebears, a quasi-divine status now accrues to the living Nero as the

97. Augustus (*EA* 9 [1987]: 73–75: 14 CE, Apollonia Salbake), Trajan (*IG* 12.3.324: 102–116 CE, Thera), and Hadrian (SEG 32.692: 136–138 CE, Istros-Histria) are eulogized as "most manifest" (ἐνφανεστάτος).

98. For inscriptions of the Arval Brethren offering sacrifices to deities "for the reason of the adoption of Nero Claudius Caessr Augustus Gernanicus," see John Scheid, *Commentarii Fratrum Arvalium qui Supersunt: Les copies épigraphiques des protocols annuels de la confrérie arvale (21 AV.–304 AP. J.-C.)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1998), §§2, 34. The city of Pompeii voted a statue to the future Roman ruler, Nero, upon his adoption by Claudius: "To Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, son of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, father of the fatherland. By decree of the town councillors" (*ILS* 224); trans. Alison E. Cooley and M. G. L. Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Source Book*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), §F141. A Claudian aureus from the mint of Rome shows on the obverse the bust of the bareheaded and draped young Nero. The obverse has the legend: NERO • CLAVD • CAES • DRVSVS • GERM • PRINC • IVVENT. Fully expanded, this reads as *Nero Claudius Caes*(*ar) Drusus Germ*(*anicus*) *Princ*(*eps*) *Iuvent*(*us*): "Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus, *princeps* of the youth [or 'young prince']." On how the pro-Neronian propaganda, in comparison to the anti-Neronian senatorial writers, presented Nero as a Roman ruler who used youth to his advantage, see Richard M. Stanley, "Literary Constructions of Youth in the Early Empire: The Case of Nero" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2003), esp. 87–129. See Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §222a.

publicly proclaimed Caesar: he is the good spirit of the inhabited world,[99] the beginning of all good things (cf. Col 1:18: ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή), and, by implication, the source of all cosmic blessing. The civic rituals of the imperial cult—expressed by Nero's Egyptian subjects wearing wreaths and offering sacrifices of thanks for his overflowing beneficence—honor not only the Roman ruler but also the traditional gods, Egyptian and Roman. The imperial cult invisibly blends with indigenous piety.

Fourth, the accession of the adopted Nero to power has also ushered in an age of cyclical renewal in the Julio-Claudian principate, a reality to which, as we will see, Calpurnius Siculus and the Einsiedeln Eclogues also testify. As the "new Augustus," Nero has reconfigured Egyptian calendrical time under his rule, with a month now being named after him.

Fifth, notwithstanding these exalted strains in the papyrus proclamation—whose status is uncertain (discarded rough draft? official version?)—Nero's political enemies in Egypt had excised from the text the reference to the "greatest of" ([μεγισ]τε). What were the precise circumstances for this excision in the papyrus and when it occurred and by whom are unknown to us: but it belongs to the wider phenomenon of the erasure of Nero's name from his public honorific inscriptions.[100]

Last, the effusive quasi-cosmic portrait of Nero's accession to rule in our proclamation papyrus finds (qualified) literary and epigraphic confirmation (cf. n. 102 *infra*). The first of the two Einsiedeln Eclogues, written in praise of Nero (?) Caesar (Ecl. 1.15–16),[101] eulogizes the emperor's

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99. In a votive inscription the inhabitants of the island of Cos hail Nero as the "good god" (ὁ ἀγαθὸς θεός). See Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R.M. Strachan (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 345.

100. See Sherk, *The Roman Empire*, §§63, 71, with the multiple excisions of Nero's and Messalina's names on the two stones indicated editorially by the convention of double brackets [[ ]].

101. It is a matter of scholarly debate whether Ecl. 1 and 2 were written by the same author. For the argument that Einsiedeln Ecl. 2 was written in late 64–65 CE, see Dietmar Korzeniewski, *Hirtengedichte aus neronischer Zeit: Titus Calpurnius Siculus und di Einsiedler Gedichte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 4–5, not seen by me; J. P. Sullivan, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nero* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 57. Contra, see Justin Stover, "Olybrius and the *Einsiedeln Eclogues*," *JRS* 105 (2015): 288–321, who argues for composition at the end of the fourth century CE

divinely inspired ministrelry, which, in a sycophantic comparison,[102] is said to surpass that of Vergil and his fabled birthplace (1.45–49). The return of the golden age under Nero is, at first blush, rapturously described in this manner in the second Einsiedeln Eclogue:

> The days of Saturn have returned with Justice the Maid: the age has returned in safety to the olden ways. With hope unruffled does the harvester garner all his corn ears; the wine-god betrays the languor of old age; the herd wanders on the lea; we reap with no sword, nor do towns in fast-closed walls prepare unutterable war; there is no woman who, dangerous in her motherhood, gives birth to an enemy. Unarmed our youth can dig the fields, and the boy, trained to the slow-moving plow, marvels at the sword hanging in the abode of his fathers. Far from us the luckless glory of Sulla and the threefold crisis when dying Rome despaired of her final resources and sold her martial arms. Now does earth untilled yield fresh produce from the rich soil; now are the wild waves no longer angry with the unmenaced ship; tigers gnaw their cubs, lions endure the cruel yoke; be gracious, chaste Lucina: your own Apollo now is king. (Ecl. 2.23–38)

Despite the positive portrait of the young Nero's golden age above, the wider context of the passage is one of anxiety. The description of Nero's golden age is prefaced by the unspecified but general disquiet of the shepherd Mystes. Incessant worries disturb his happiness, meals, and joys because, as he complains, "satiety troubles my happiness" (Ecl. 2.1–3, 9). Both Sullivan and Nani argue that behind the unease of Mystes lies the truism that moral lethargy in an age of prosperity can lead inexorably

102. Sullivan (*Literature and Politics*, 56–57) argues that the praise of Nero in the first Einsiedeln Eclogue must be sarcastic because of its effusive praise of Nero. This, however, overlooks the exuberant praise of Nero in our papyrus under discussion. Furthermore, the same tone animates other Neronic inscriptions (e.g., Sherk, *The Roman Empire*, §71 [*IG* 7.2713: 67 CE]). This extends even to Nero's governor of Egypt, Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, who is honored in quasi-cosmic terms (§63 [*OGIS* 666: 68 CE): "because of this man's favors and benefactions [χάριτας καὶ εὐεργεσίας] Egypt is full of all good things [πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς], sees the gifts of the Nile growing greater year by year, and now enjoys even more the well-balanced rising of the god [i.e., the Nile]." The praise of the godlike favors of Nero and his appointed personnel is genuine, not cynical. For full discussion, see Mark Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance in Romans*, SNTSMS 148 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 37–42.

to moral decadence.[103] Moreover, the last line ("chaste Lucina: your own Apollo now is king") derives from Vergil, *Ecl.* 4.10, which highlights the advent of the golden age under Octavian, the later Augustus. Now, in its new Einsiedeln Eclogue context, it speaks of its reappearance under Nero. Notwithstanding, the anxiety of Mystes still remains: the golden age under Nero will also enter its inevitable cycle of decline, just as it had after the passing of the reign of the iconic Augustus.[104]

A less-ambiguous portrait of the untroubled golden age of Nero is rendered by the Neronian poet Calpurnius Siculus.[105] There the Neonian peace being ushered is graphically described:

> Amid untroubled peace, the golden age [*aetas aurea*] springs to a second birth; at last kindly Themis, throwing off the gathered dust of her mourning, returns to the earth; blissful ages [*beata saecula*] attend the youthful prince who pleaded a successful case for the Iulii of the mother town (of Troy). While he, a very god, shall rule the nations, the unholy war god-

103. Sullivan, *Literature and Politics*, Peter John Nani, "Traces of Dissent: Persius and the Satire of Nero's Golden Age" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2001), 119–20.

104. Nani, "Traces of Dissent," 121.

105. The long-held consensus of an early Neronian dating for the Eclogues of Calpurnius Siculus has been recently challenged by several scholars, relegating the work either to the late first century CE, the reign of Alexander Severus, or an indeterminately late date. See Edward Champlin, "The Life and Times of Calpurnius Siculus," *JRS* 68 (1978): 95–110; Champlin, "Nero, Apollo and the Poets," *Phoenix* 57 (2003): 276–83; Edward Courtney, "Imitation, chronologie litteraire et Calpurnius Siculus," *REL* 65 (1987): 148–57; Barry Baldwin, "Better Late Than Early: Reflections on the Date of Calpurnius Siculus," *Illinois Classical Studies* 20 (1995): 157–67; N. M. Horsfall, "Criteria for the Dating of Calpurnius Siculus," *RFIC* 125 (1997): 166–96. For brief rebuttals of these arguments, see Roland Meyer, "Latin Pastoral after Virgil," in *Brill's Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral*, ed. Marco Fantuzzi and Theodore D. Papanghelis (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 454–55; Meyer, "Calpurnius Siculus: Technique and Date," *JRS* 70 (1980): 175–76; John Garthwaite and Beatrice Martin, "Visions of Gold: Hopes for the New Age in Calpurnius Siculus' *Eclogues*," in *Writing Politics in Imperial Rome*, ed. William J. Dominik et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 307–8. Generally, see Beatrice Martin, "Calpurnius Siculus: The Ultimate Imperial 'Toady'?," in *Literature, Art, History: Studies on Classical Antiquity and Tradition in Honour of W. J. Henderson*, ed. A. F. Basson and W. J. Dominik (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2003), 73–90; J. Henderson, "The *Carmina Einsidlensia* and Calpurnius Siculus's *Eclogues*," in *A Companion to the Neronian Age*, ed. E. Buckley and M. Dinter (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 170–87; Evangelos Karakasis, *T. Calpurnius Siculus: A Pastoral Poet in Neronian Rome* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016).

> dess shall yield and have her vanquished hands bound behind her back and, stripped of weapons, turn her furious teeth into her own entrails.[106]

Finally, one must ask whether this cosmic portait of the so-called golden age of Nero depicted in our provincial papyrus and in the Roman literature had any historical reality *at the capital*, as opposed to being merely the rhetorical flourishes of eastern Mediterranean client-states keen to acquire and maintain the favor of the newly installed Roman ruler. Here an appreciation of the importance of the agricultural myth in the Roman imperial cult is pertinent, reflected in the second Einsiedeln Eclogue above. The Augustan literature, inscriptions, and iconography is replete with the agricultural motif, including the *Eclogues* and *Aeneid* of Virgil (*Ecl.* 4.21–22, 38–40; *Aen*. 6.913–916), the poems of Horace (*Carm*. 4.15), Augustus's provision of public grain for Rome (Res gest. 5, 15), and the frieze of fecund mother earth Ceres (goddess of cereal grains) on the *ara Pacis* in the Campus Martius.[107] Dea Dia (the goddess of growth) is worshiped during the early imperial period, and the Arval Brethren offer her the appropriate sacrifices throughout the Julio-Claudian period.[108] The intention, partially, was to forestall grain shortages, including those that appeared during the Claudian era (Acts 11:28),[109] by petitioning and placating the unpredictable gods in times of economic fragility. Consequently,

106. Horace (*Carm.* 1.12.49–52) speaks of Augustus thus: "O Father and Guardian of the human race, son of Saturn, to you by fate has been entrusted the charge of mighty Caesar; may you be lord of all, with Caesar next in power!" An inscription from Narbo (*ILS* 112: translated in Sherk, *The Roman Empire*, §7C) speaks of the birthday of Augustus (23 September) in this way: "on which day an age of happiness [*saeculi felicitas*] produced him as the whole world's ruler."

107. For full discussion, see Presian R. Burroughs, "Liberation in the Midst of Desolation: Romans 8:19–22 and the Christian Vocation of Nourishing Life" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2014), 148–87. Regarding the *ara Pacis*, Gail E. Armstrong, ("Sacrificial Iconography: Creating History, Making Myth, and Negotiating Ideology on the Ara Pacis Augustae," *Religion & Theology* 15 [2008]: 351) argues that the portrait of fecund mother earth is a composite figure of Venus, Ceres, Tellus (goddess of earth), and Pax.

108. For the many sacrifices, recorded on inscriptions, that were offered to Dea Dia by the Arval Brethren at Rome, see Scheid, *Commentarii Fratrum Arvalium*, s.v. "Dia (Dea-)," 375.

109. In the early imperial period, famines occurred at Rome in 41 CE (Seneca, *Brev. vit.* 18.5; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 4.3), in 42 CE (Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 60.11), and in 51 CE (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.43; Suetonius, *Claud.* 18.2; Orosius, *Hist.* 7.6.17). I

Nero, with a view to enhancing the grain supplies of Rome, (arguably) confiscated the Egyptian landholdings of Seneca and appropriated the estates of six landowners in North Africa, which, according to Pliny the Elder, represented half the province.[110]

Nero's decision to stabilize Rome's grain supply is further illustrated by his additions to the harbor at Rome's port of Ostia.[111] The port is graphically and variously represented upon the sestertii from the Rome and Lugdumum issues (*RIC* 1 Nero §§178–83). The iconographic details of the coins are rich and varied. Sufficient harbor space for the grain fleet was now assured, indicated by the many trade and supply ships coming into, anchoring in, and leaving the harbor, ranging from six to eleven (or seven to thirteen), depending on the coin.[112] We will confine our analysis

am indebted for these references to Kenneth S. Gapp, "The Universal Famine under Claudius," *HTR* 28 (1935): 258 n. 1.

110. Africa: see Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 61.5.3–6; 62.18.5; 63.11–12.; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 18.7.35. Asia: Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.22.5; 14.60. For the Egyptian estates of Seneca, see *Ep.* 77.3. For a papyrus of 25 October 62 CE, P.Oxy. 3B36/G(3–4), arguably pointing to the confiscation of Seneca's estates by Nero, see G. M. Browne, "Withdrawal from Lease," *BASP* 5 (1968): 17; J. P. Sullivan, "Petronius, Seneca, and Lucan: A Neronian Literary Feud," *TAPA* 99 (1968): 457 n. 10. Care, however, needs to be taken here. Alan K. Bowman ("Papyri and Roman Imperial History, 1960–1975," *JRS* 66 [1976]: 155) notes that "there is evidence of later interests in Egypt on Seneca's part." Nor does the administration of Seneca's estate by a μισθωτής (tenant) necessarily imply that the estate was confiscated by Nero at this time. To be sure, the greeting of P.Oxy. 3B36/G(3–4), lines 5–8, clearly states: "to Tiberius Claudius Cleon, lessee [μισθωτῇ] of the estate of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, greetings." But as Barry Baldwin argues ("Seneca and Petronius," *Acta Classica* 24 [1981]: 134), "the μισθωτής attested as being in charge could have been Seneca's agent, not the emperor's."

111. Generally, see D. J. Mattingly and G. S. Aldrete, "The Feeding of Imperial Rome: The Mechanics of the Food Supply System," in *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*, ed. J. Coulston and H. Dodge (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000), 142–65. On the grain fleet at Puteoli (Acts 28:13), see Seneca, *Ep.* 77.1–3.

112. Six to eleven: Mary Jane Cuyler, "*Portus Augusti*: The Claudian Harbour on Sestertii of Nero," in *Art in the Round: New Approaches to Coin Iconography*, ed. N. T. Elkins and S. Krmnicek (Tübingen: Tübinger Archäologische Forschungen, 2014), 122. Seven to thirteen: Naomi A. Weiss, "The Visual Language of Nero's Harbor Sestertii," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 58 (2013): 65–81, here 65. Cuyler ("*Portus Augusti*," 122) comments: "Three specific vessels always appear in the same position on every die, and additional boats are added at the die engraver's discretion." For precise identification, see Cuyler, "*Portus Augusti*," 127.

to the *RIC* 1 Nero §178 sestertius issue minted at Rome.[113] The coin legend is AUGUSTI S. PORT(us) OST(iae) C. At the top of the coin we see the lighthouse at the harbor's entrance, with its surmounting statue—conjectured to be either Neptune, Claudius, or Nero—holding a staff.[114] Its importance can be gauged by the fact that the prefect of the corn supply, as an honorific inscription reveals, was "charged with the surveillance of the lighthouse and the maintenance of the port of Portus."[115] Returning to the iconography of the sestertius, a merchant ship with fully expanded sails enters the harbor at the top left, while an oared war galley, protector of the grain fleet,[116] leaves top right. The arched moles, which function as the harbor's breakwater, are visible descending into the sea on the right of the coin. At the seaward end of the moles, a figure sacrifices at an altar, ensuring divine blessing upon the ships leaving the harbor and their safe return with grain for Rome.[117] Opposite, to the left, a crescent-shaped pier with colonnaded warehouses for the storage of the grain supply and various other goods can be seen. A reclining water god at the bottom of the sestertius leaning against a dolphin and holding a rudder in his right hand has been variously identified (Poseidon? Tiber River?), but the recent consensus is that the presiding god of the harbor is depicted.[118]

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113. For a photo of *RIC* 1 Nero §178, see Weiss, "Visual Language," 66 fig. 1 (obverse: portrait of Nero), fig. 2 (reverse: portrait of the Claudian harbor). For later numismatic images of the harbor, see Raymond Chevallier, "Les Portes d'Ostie: Pour une relecture des sources," in *Ostia port et porte de la Rome antique*, ed. J.-P. Descoeudres (Geneva: Musée Rath, 2001), 24–26; coinage of Trajan, with legend PORTUS [Trai]ANI S.C. (24 fig. 2); coinage of Antoninus Pius (24 fig. 3; coinage of Commodus (24 fig. 4); mosaic of Claudian port, showing lighthouse and two ships (25 fig. 6; Square of Guilds, *statio* 46); Septimus Severus and Julia Domna: relief (25 fig. 7) showing (a) the harbor, (b) the lighthouse with its flame lit, (c) the imperial family's boat for their voyage to Africa (204 CE), and (d) a small boy attendant to a priest offering a sacrifice on a flaming altar; Hadrian: funerary relief in Tomb 90 Isola Sacra (Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1991], pl. XXVIb) with two panels of an arrival scene; to the left, a ship with furled sails approaching the Claudian lighthouse; to the right, the enjoyment of refreshments by the arrivées at an Ostian inn. On the riff-raff allegedly found at Ostian bars, note Juvenal, *Sat.* 8.171–176.

114. Weiss, "Visual Language," 78; Cuyler, "*Portus Augusti*," passim.

115. Hilding Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 2 vols. (Lund: Gleerup, 1952), 1.B336.

116. Weiss, "Visual Language," 75.

117. Weiss, "Visual Language," 76.

118. Weiss, "Visual Language," 76–78; Cuyler, "*Portus Augusti*," 125–26.

The large round-bellied merchant ship in the center of the coin,[119] with sails neatly furled after having delivered its cargo of grain, experiences the blessing of a safe harbor because of the god's beneficent oversight.

Building an artificial harbor at Ostia capable of receiving the grain supplies was undoubtedly part of Claudius's wider policy of carefully superintending the grain supply at Rome (Suetonius, *Claud.* 18–19). Indeed, before Claudius built the artificial harbor, the three-hundred-ton grain transport ships had to anchor in the unsafe open water due to the silt problems posed by the Tiber River, the smallness of the river for accommodating such large ships (Strabo, *Geogr.* 5.3.50; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 60.2), and the notorious currents at the river mouth. But Rome's need for grain from Egypt and Africa overrode such dangers. Consequently, the new Claudian harbor replaced the old river harbor, facilitating the better loading and unloading of wares by virtue of its superior shelter.[120] Moreover, Claudius "stationed at Ostia an urban cohort from Rome to provide a fire service for the granaries and warehouses."[121] However, despite the laudable efforts of Claudius to ensure the secure delivery of grain and other goods via Ostia to Rome, "the basin was (still) subject to the uncertainties of tide and storm."[122]

119. Cuyler, "*Portus Augusti*," 127.

120. Genevieve S. Gessert, "Urban Spaces, Public Decoration, and Civic Identity in Ancient Ostia" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001), 216. On the Claudian harbor, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 54–58.

121. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 63, citing Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.2. Cf. Nero's alternative (but unfulfilled) plan of extending the walls of Rome to Ostia and of conducting the sea by canal from Ostia to the capital (Suetonius, *Ner.* 16.1). The plan, although highly ambitious, given the Tiber's winding course and strong current, "would have considerably eased the shipment of cargoes from the coast, and had a precedent in the canal dug in Narbonese Gaul by Marius' army to avoid the difficulties of the lower Rhone" (Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 63–64).

122. Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 216. She writes: "The loss of 200 ships inside the moles of the harbour in AD 62, when the new harbour was probably barely finished, was a clear indication of its inadequacy. For these reasons, Puteoli had remained the main port for Alexandrian grain, requiring expensive land transport to Rome." Meiggs (*Roman Ostia*, 57) also argues that, because the speed of travel between Puteoli and Rome was important, "Claudius was not intending to divert shipping from Puteoli." On the amphitheater at Puteoli glittering with gold and the city being the site for the welcome by Nero of King Tiridates of Armenia, see Antonia Arnoldus-Huyzendveld et al., "Background to Portus," in *Portus: An Archaeological Survey of the Port of Impe-*

Nero's involvement in the expansion of the harbor facilities, however, has been disputed by scholars. Claudius had begun the work on an artificial harbor in 46 CE in order to free Rome from inundations.[123] Naomi A. Weiss has argued that all the literary evidence (Suetonius, *Claud.* 21.1.3; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.18) points to the completion of the harbor by the death of Claudius in 54 CE. Furthermore, Nero's ambitious plan of building a canal from Ostia to Rome never saw the light of day (Suetonius, *Ner.* 16.1). This was "intended to avoid the dangers and delays of a sea voyage on the stretch between Pozzuoli and Rome."[124] But recent archaeological work has demonstrated that the literary sources overlooked Nero's completion of important aspects of the original Claudian plan of the harbor, even if the exact dates are elusive, namely, the Darsena, a small inner basin in which the cargoes of ships could be immediately unloaded for transportation up the Tiber River circa 64 CE.[125] Another specifically Neronian component

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rial Rome, ed. S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli and K. Strutt (London: British School at Rome, 2005), 38.

123. Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B310 (= CIL 14.85). Claudius "freed the city from the danger of inundations [VRBEM INVNDATIONIS PERICYLO LIBERAVIT] thanks to the canal constructed for the needs of the port between the Tiber and the sea." For a full translation, see D. R. Dudley, *Urbs Roma: A Source Book of Classical Texts on the City and Its Monuments* (Aberdeen: Phaidon, 1967), 44. On the basis of Mommen's restoration of a fragmentary inscription—the restitution of which Thylander admits "n'est pas sûre" (Thylander, *Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1:381)—it is argued that Trajan reinforced the canal with more stable materials than those Claudius had used, saving the city from further inundations from the Tiber (*Inscriptions du port d'Ostie*, 1.B312: 102–109 CE). The scholiast on Juvenal, *Sat.* 12.75 ("the breakwaters built out through the water they enclose"), writes: "Trajan restored and improved the harbour of Claudius and built another safer one in his name" (Gessert, "Urban Spaces," 368). Notably, the archaeology is more conclusive than the epigraphy. Gessert writes: "Trajan's harbour consisted of a hexagonal land-locked basin excavated behind the Claudian one, measuring 358 meters on each side with a total area of 322 square meters" (217). The harbor could accommodate larger boats and had expanded storage facilities. On the Trajanic harbor, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 58–62.

124. Arnoldus-Huyzendveld et al, "Background to Portus," 38.

125. For the archaeological evidence for Nero's additions to the harbor, see S. Keay and M. Millett, "Integration and Discussion," in Keay et al., *Portus*, 275–77, esp. 276–77. A papyrus (BGU 1.27, second–third century CE) states that, upon the arrival of ships from Egypt at Ostia on 30 June, they could not be unloaded until 12 July, such was the difficulty of making the arrival of the cargo coincide with its unloading and subsequent reshipment from Ostia to Rome. Thus the construction of *horrea* (warehouses) was essential to accommodate the inevitable delays. Cited in Nicolas

of the harbor plan was the construction of an aqueduct so that the port might have fresh water.[126] Thus Nero played an important role in further developing and completing the Claudian harbor in his own right, further ensuring the ready access of grain for the Roman populace. The inscriptions also point to the centrality of grain importation at Ostia. The port had its own officials for the grain supply, established a guild of grain measurers, developed an "office of the guild of the grain traders," and erected a statue of Annonia for the continuance of the grain supply.[127] Interestingly, by the time of 385–August 389 CE (CIL 10.4716), we hear of an important Ostian Christian official, "Ragonius Vincentius Celsus, a very renowned man, prefect of the grain supply of the city of Rome."[128]

Several important questions emerge regarding Nero's minting of such an iconic coin. Is Nero merely commemorating Claudius's work in developing the harbor and its port facilities? Is this coin issue a tacit admission on Nero's part that his own plan of building a canal from Ostia to Rome would not come to fruition, with Nero as the adoptive son giving an honorific nod to Claudius,[129] allowing himself to bask in the deflected glory of his forebear? If the statue surmounting the lighthouse is indeed Claudius,

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Tran, "The Work Statuses of Slaves and Freedmen in the Great Ports of the Roman World (First Century BCE–Second Century CE)," *Annales Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 68 (2013–2014): 666, doi.org/10.1017/S2398568200000133.

126. Keay and Millett, "Integration and Discussion," 278. Note the construction inscription found on a lead water pipe found at Ponte Galeria; it was connected with the aqueduct that supplied the Portus of Ostia, mentioning a Neronian freedman procurator named Gnesius and Sotas the *dispensator* ("steward"): *sub Gnesio* [*Aug*(*usti*) *Liberto*] / *Proc*(*uratore*) / *Neronis Claudi Caes*(*aris*) / *Aug*(*usti*) [—?] / *Sotas dis*[*p*(*ensator*) *fec*(*it*) —?] (*AE* 1995, no. 249). Cited in Jesper Carlsen, *Land and Labour: Studies in Roman Social and Economic History* (Rome: Bretschneider, 2013), 65.

127. Grain supply officials: L. Bouke van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks: Inscriptions, Buildings and Spaces in Rome's Main Port* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), §16, 54 (CIL 14.4208): "under the care of Publius Attius Clementinus, a very renowned man, chief of the grain supply" (also §21, 66); patrons of the guild of grain measurers: "statue for the patron of the Guild of the (Grain) Measurers, Laurentius, a very perfect man" (§70, 71); mosaic from the House of the Grain Measurers showing the officials (*mensores*) who measured the grain (§71 fig. 29). Guild: Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §§7.34 and 7.35. Statue: "Sacred altar near (the statue of) Annona to the Genius of the Emperor […]" (Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §8, 42).

128. Van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks*, §6, 29.

129. This runs against the literary evidence that depicts Nero as entirely dismissive of Claudius's memory (Suetonius, *Ner*. 33.1; Tacitus, *Ann*. 13.4).

then both the apotheosized Roman ruler and the god of the Ostian harbor jointly bless its grain trade. Alternatively, is Nero indicating that, precisely because of his recent additions, the Claudian harbor project has come to its glorious culmination in him, implying that he, as the new Augustus and Apollo, now outshines his apotheosized great-grand-uncle?

Does Nero's expansion of the harbor justify such a grandiose claim and act of commemoration? Perhaps, as Weiss proposes,[130] Nero was simply highlighting in traditional manner the role of the Roman ruler in securing the grain supply for the citizens of Rome: nothing else about his status is intended. Here we face the very real difficulty of discerning the complex intentions of the Roman ruler solely from the evidence of his numismatic iconography. At the very least, Mary Jane Cuyler justifiably concludes regarding the literary and archaeological evidence, "Nero's role in the construction of the Claudian harbor was not insignificant, and must have been a factor in his decision to depict the harbor on one of his *sestertii*."

In sum, the Neronian golden age, while belonging to the ruler's accession rhetoric, had genuine substance for residents of Rome facing potential grain shortages.[131] To revert to the words of our provincial accession papyrus, for Romans living in the capital Nero would indeed show himself to be "the good spirit of the world, the origin of [the greatest of] all good things."

2.1.5. Conclusion

The inscriptional and visual evidence consistently links the adopted heirs (Gaius and Lucius; Germanicus) with their apotheosized forebears and, in one instance of the epigraphic evidence, mediate their continued blessings in heaven to the Roman people on earth. Moreover, as we have

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130. Weiss, "Visual Language," 79. In the case of Nero, note the 64 CE series of sestertii (e.g., *RIC* 1.161 no. 138) highlighting the public provision of grain to Rome through the images of the personified Annona and Ceres and the legend ANNONA AVGVSTI CERES (SC) on the reverse. For discussion, see Weiss, "Visual Language," 68–69.

131. Burroughs ("Liberation in the Midst," 184–85) claims that Nero's provision of grain surpassed the famine-ridden reign of Claudius and Caligula's utter neglect of the grain supply in comparison to Augustus's unrelenting grain benefactions (Res gest. 5, 15). Moreover, in 62 CE the port harbored hundreds of ships (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.18.3).

seen from the accession papyrus, the apotheosis of the forebear ensures the smooth transition from the deceased ruler to the next Roman ruler. Moreover, figures who did not receive the senatorial decree of apotheosis are nevertheless apotheosized (Germanicus, Drusus), some even ahead of death (Drusus). But intriguingly, as we have seen from the Paris cameo, the living adopted heir (Germanicus) is exalted over the living biological heir (Drusus), who is removed from the scene by virtue of his apotheosis to witness the future of the Julio-Claudian dynasty on earth, as it were. Here we see that, in contrast to the republican sentiments of the historical Augustus discussed above, according to the visual evidence the adopted heirs do not have to demonstrate their worth over against their contemporaries in open political competition. Rather, the adopted son is either exalted over the biological son or is himself apotheosized without the necessity of senatorial decree. To be sure, these perspectives are strictly for the private consumption of the Julio-Claudian family, given the restricted distribution of this gem evidence, but it probably reveals the internal postmortem and adoption ideology of the Julio-Claudian family, as opposed to being just another conceit of the elites. Finally, Nero became the source of all cosmic good, as the Oxyrhynchus accession papyrus and imperial poets testify, by ensuring the continuous supply of grain at Rome through the confiscation of large African and Egyptian estates and by his expansion of port facilities at the harbor at Ostia.

3. Paul's Dialogue with the Imperial Narrative of the Adopted and Apotheosised Son: Hearing Romans 1:3–4 in the Context of Mid-50s Neronian Rome

At the outset we should ask what meaningful access Paul would have had to the city of Rome, its inhabitants, and imperial culture in writing to believers living in the capital, given that the apostle had not founded the Roman house and tenement churches (Rom 1:10, 15; 15:23–24) and had not entered the city prior to his house arrest (Acts 28:11–31). Even information about how the house and tenement churches were faring in the city would not have been immediate or even forthcoming at times, so how could Paul write perceptively in such a situation? Did Paul just write Romans blind, as it were, composing a general theological treatise, hoping that somehow its message might resonate pastorally and culturally with auditors living in a city largely unfamiliar to him?

First, Paul could speak authoritatively at a general level about the ethos of social relations at Rome because he had seen its "mirror images" in operation at the Roman colonies of Pisidian Antioch, Philippi, and Corinth.[132] Second, Paul would have occasionally acquired some new information about Rome because his coworkers at Corinth and Ephesus, Prisca and Aquila, had returned to Rome and had established their craftworker house church there (Rom 16:3–4). Third, if E. A. Judge's arguments about Paul's exposure to a Latin base in his choice of coworkers are correct,[133] then it is likely that Roman businessmen coming from Rome and returning to Rome may have passed on information about the social and political conditions of the city. Fourth, the slave networks of the *familia Caesaris* in Rome (Phil 4:22) and Ephesus, as well as those in the households of imperial freedmen (Rom 16:11b) and Herodian family members (16:11a), would have ensured the passage of further information as slaves moved throughout the eastern Mediterranean in service of the Caesars.

Finally, in the context of our discussion, the late first-century BCE and first-century CE crisis attending Augustus's declining health and near-death experiences, the death of potential heirs, and his final nomination of Tiberius as heir was played out on the historical stage with great fanfare to a riveted audience fearful of a return to the social chaos of the civil wars, should Augustus have unexpectedly or prematurely died. The tortured story became foundational to Julio-Claudian legitimation. Moreover, the apotheosis of Julius and Augustus was rendered numismatically empire-wide by DIVVS IVLIVS and DIVVS AVGVSTVS, along with appropriate accompanying symbolism (e.g., the *sidus Iulium*).[134] Paul could not have missed the imperial counternarrative of the adopted and apotheosized "Son of God" or its equivalent nomenclature in the Greek inscriptions honoring the Roman ruler throughout the Greek East and Asia Minor. What, then, are the theological and social contours of Paul's alternate narrative to the adoption and apotheosis of the Roman ruler, the Son of God?

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132. This paragraph draws upon James R. Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes*, ch. 1.

133. E. A. Judge, "Roman Base of Paul's Mission," 553–67.

134. For a picture of the *sidus Iulium*, see Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," 85 fig. 13.

3.1. Romans 1:3–4 in Augustan and Neronian Context: Exegetical Perspectives

In an important christological text, Paul compares the humble estate of the Son of God, the preexistent one who was descended in his human nature from the house of David (Rom 1:3b: *κατὰ σάρκα*),[135] with his divine exaltation as the victorious Son of God through the Holy Spirit (1:4a: *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης*). By virtue of his resurrection (1:4a: *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως*), Paul asserts, Jesus was “appointed Son of God *in power*” (τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει).[136] Two lexical decisions guide my interpretation here. First, I take ὁρίζειν more in the sense of appointment to royal power, that is, literally an enthronement, as opposed the more lame translation of mere declaration. In other words, Jesus was appointed to his messianic kingship heralded in the writings of the Old Testament and reflected upon in various ways in the Dead Sea Scrolls literature of Second Temple Judaism (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; cf. 1QSa II, 11–12; 4Q521).[137] Second, I also take the phrase *ἐν δυνάμει* (“in power”) to qualify the title υἱοῦ θεοῦ (“Son of God in power”), as opposed to modifying the participial phrase τοῦ ὁρισθέντος (“who was appointed in power Son of God”).[138]

Several exegetical consequences emerge here that stand in contrast to the Julian and Neronian understanding of succession to power in the early imperial age.

135. C. E. B. Cranfield (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–1979], 1:58) and Thomas R. Schreiner (*Romans*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 38) observe that the placement of the words *τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ* (Rom 1:3a) before the two participles (1:3a: *τοῦ γενομένου*; 1:4a: τοῦ ὁρισθέντος) suggests that Jesus existed as the preexistent Son before his incarnation as the seed of David and prior to his appointment as the risen messianic king.

136. James D. G. Dunn (*Romans 1–8*, WBC 38A [Waco, TX: Word, 1988], 14): “Jesus did not become God’s Son at the resurrection: but he entered upon a still higher rank of sonship at the resurrection.”

137. For this understanding of τοῦ ὁρισθέντος (Rom 1:4a), see Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:61–62; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 41–42.

138. Either position is grammatically and contextually possible. As will be argued later, the imperial context of Rom 1:3–4 makes the adjectival usage of ἐν δυνάμει, modifying υἱοῦ θεοῦ, more likely.

Exegetical Consequence 1: A messianic son by Davidic descent as opposed to an adopted Son by Julian legal decision

We saw above that Augustus attempted to establish the succession through his bloodline via the marriages of potential heirs to Julia. However, circumstances forced him to adopt: initially Gaius and Lucius and ultimately Tiberius. This is confirmed by the fact that even Augustus himself had to resolve the legal uncertainties of his own *testamentary* adoption by an *adrogatio* adoption, securing thereby the longevity of his rule from the outset. Moreover, Tiberius also had adopted Germanicus as his heir, bypassing his biological son Drusus. In the case of Paul, he eschews any sugestion of adoptionism because Christ is not only the messianic Son but also the eternal Son (Rom 8:3) sent by his Father in the likeness of sinful flesh into the world to redeem sinful humanity. Furthermore, bloodlines are reinforced by the fact that Jesus, as Messiah, comes from the house of David by physical descent, as opposed to by adoption. We also saw that the visual gem evidence gave much more prominence to Tiberius's adopted son Germanicus over agaist the biological son Drusus, even if apotheosized in advance; Paul, by comparison, avoids any such implication in his portrait of the messianic and eternal Son of God in power. Significantly, there is no recurring succession crisis caused by unexpected events in the case of the messianic Son of God, as there was periodically in the Augustan principate; rather, Christ's advent had already been promised through his prophets in the sacred scriptures (Rom 1:2b), that is, an inscripturated mystery, now revealed by the eternal God in the odedience of the gentiles to the risen Son of God in power (15:25–27; see also 1:5; 15:12).

Exegetical Consequence 2: A risen Son as opposed to an apotheosized son

Irrespective of how one interprets the Neronian background proposed for the text, upon which I will soon comment, at the very least it is probable that Rom 1:3–4 is providing a different paradigm of rulership to its imperial counterpart. Paul's addition of the phrase ἐν δυνάμει to the messianic title υἱος θεοῦ (Rom 1:4; cf. 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7) elevates dramatically the status of Jesus, vindicating him as the risen and ruling Son of God in heaven over his imperial rivals on earth.[139] This strategy sidelines both

139. Jewett (*Romans*, 107; also William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC [Edinburgh:

Augustus and Nero, sons of the apotheosized gods Caesar and Claudius.[140] As the vindicated and risen Son of God, Christ had returned to heaven, his original domain, in order to rule over all the nations through the obedience of faith (Rom 1:5: εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν).

By contrast, in the imperial propaganda, apotheosis was only ever extended to three rulers of the Julio-Claudian house (Caesar, Augustus, Claudius), along with two other family members (Livia Augusta, the wife of Augustus; Poppaea, the wife of Nero).[141] We have noted, however, the extension of apotheosis to other members of the imperial household

T&T Clark, 1902], 9) agues that ἐν δυνάμει ("in power") should be linked with τοῦ ὁρισθέντος ("appointed") as opposed to υἱὸς θεοῦ (Rom 1:4). Thus ἐν δυνάμει would be understood instrumentally, referring to Jesus's appointment through divine power. Contra, see Cranfield, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:63; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 45; Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SP 6 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996], 45; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black, 1971), 20; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 48–49; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 235; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 14. N. T. Wright ("The Letter to the Romans," *NIB* 10:418–19) understands ἐν δυνάμει ambiguously thus: "The phrase seems to refer both to the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead … and that thereby declared his identity as Messiah, and to the powerful nature of his sonship, through which he confronts all the powers of the world, up to and including death itself, with the news of a different and more effective type of power altogether." Finally, Richard N. Longenecker (*The Epistle to the Romans*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016], 69) argues that ἐν δυνάμει belonged to the pre-Pauline confessional material.

140. On Augustus as son of God, see Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown, CT: American Philological Association, 1931), 142–80. On Nero as son of God, see Miriam T. Griffin, *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (London: Batsford, 1984), 98.

141. For the Suetonian evidence for the apotheosis of Caesar, Augustus, and Claudius, see Suetonius, *Jul.* 88.1; *Aug.* 100.4 (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.10; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 41.9); *Claud.* 45 (cf. Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 61.35.1–4; Seneca, *Apolocyntosis*). On the apotheosis of Livia Augusta and Poppaea, see Suetonius, *Claud.* 11; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom*. 40.5; Tacitus, *Ann.* 16.21. For the numismatic and gem evidence of apotheosis, see Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," 69–98. Other members of the Julio-Claudian household were presented as apotheosized in the private gem evidence (e.g., Germanicus in Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," 79, 80 fig. 6), though this does not constitute official recognition of apotheosis. Nevertheless, the Greek East had no such compunctions. See the inscription of Mytilene (Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §117: DocsAug, §95) referring to Nero Julius Caesar (6–30 CE) as the "son of new god [παῖδα θέω νέω] Germanicus Caesar."

(Germanicus, Drusus), though they were without senatorial ratification, designed solely for the internal consumption of Julio-Claudian family members. Christ's resurrection, however, was more inclusive in its scope in that he was the "firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29: *πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς*). In the present, as the divinely appointed benefactor of his siblings (8:31–35a), Christ provides access to his Father though the gift of the Spirit (8:14–16) and, in the future, seals their adoption as sons through the resurrection of the dead to eschatological glory (8:11, 17, 23).

It is *precisely because* he is the messianic son of the house of David and the eternal Son of the Father that he can adopt gentiles into the covenantal family of Israel: this adoption occurs through the work of the cross, culminating in his resurrection, and it is now experienced through the newness of the Spirit working in the lives of believers as heirs of eternal life (Rom 7:6b; 8:13–17). Further, Augustus and Nero only *became* sons of god because of the apotheosis of their fathers. Jesus had *always possessed* the status of the eternal Son of God, but his power and glory had been immeasurably magnified through his death and resurrection (Acts 2:36).

Exegetical Consequence 3: A humiliated and divinely vindicated heir as opposed to the Augustan paradigm of the deserving heir

I pointed out above the surprising phenomenon that accompanied the Augustan principate, that his republicanism, contrary to Ronald Syme,[142] was genuine and that, despite the adoption of his heirs, they had to demonstrate their worth by maintaining and surpassing their ancestral glory in open competition with their contemporaries. In sharp contrast, Paul highlights the deep humiliation of Christ and articulates its relation to his subequent exaltation. He was the seed of David "according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3b): not only is physical descent is intimated here, but also Christ's assumption of all the inherited weakness associated with fallen human flesh (8:3; see also 1 Tim 3:16). Christ's flawless obedience (Rom 5:18b, 19b) had to continually contend against sin and death as the reigning powers of the old age (5:12–21), paradoxically embracing the

142. See E. A. Judge, "The Second Thoughts of Syme on Augustus," in Judge, *The First Christians*, 314–45; Harrison, "Diplomacy over Tiberius' Succession," 70–71; Harrison, *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit*, 72–76.

foolishness and shame of the cross in order to free his dependents (1:14, 16a). Everyone, including the Julio-Claudian elites, fell short of the divine glory, blinded by the self-righteousness that characterized their relentless quest for ancestral glory at Rome (3:23; see also 2:7, 10). The death of Augustus’s adopted son Gaius was, therefore, not an expression of the capricousness of cruel fate but was rather the inevitable result of the reign of death over humanity (5:12–21).

The old age of humiliation and weakness, however, is reversed by the divine exaltation of the Son of God in power through the Spirit of holiness. Moreover, the δύναμις of the Davidic Son of God was demonstrated in God’s gospel of justification (Rom 1:16: δύναμις θεοῦ) and in the Spirit’s signs and wonders (15:13, 19: ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος), with the purpose of bringing about the obedience of the gentiles (1:5–6; 15:9–12, 18). This life-transforming δύναμις stands in contrast to the “manly virtue” (ἀνδραγαθία) or military *virtus* that the Roman ruler displays on the battlefield toward the humiliated enemy nations (Pseudo-Seneca, *Oct.* 440–444, 504–532). The latter display of *virtus*, as noted, was graphically rendered on the lower register of the Paris cameo, consonant with the many other iconographic renderings of defeated barbarian nations throughout the Roman Empire.[143] Moreover, during the reign of Nero (ca. 56–77 CE), the Roman governor of Moesia subjugated the Samartians, restored the hostage sons to the Bastarnians and Rhoxolanian kings and the hostage brother to the Dacian king, and removed the seige of the Scythian king. Rome had to monitor the threat of the unruly barbarians at the edges of their empire, crushing them where necessary or enforcing their compliance through the capture of royal family hostages.[144] But for Paul, in this new age of overflowing grace, the apostle owed the debt of love to Greek and barbarian, wise and foolish, in the gospel of Christ crucified (Rom 1:14; 13:8–10).[145] The difference in stategy toward the “outsider” could not be more stark.

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143. See Jewett, *Romans*, 130–33; Davina C. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul’s Mission*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Brigitte Kahl, *Galatians Re-imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010); James R. Harrison “ ‘More Than Conquerors’ (Rom 8:37): Paul’s Gospel and the Augustan Triumphal Arches of the Greek East and Latin West,” *Buried History* 47 (2011): 3–21.

144. Sherk, *The Roman Empire*, §71 (CIL 14.3608).

145. See James R. Harrison, “Paul’s ‘Indebtedness’ to the Barbarian (Rom 1:14) in Latin West Perspective,” *NovT* 55 (2013): 311–48.

Exegetical Consequence 4: Romans 1:3–4 in a Neronian adoptionist and apotheosized context

We turn now to the Neronian context of Rom 1:3–4. Several scholars have unpacked insightfully many of the imperial implications of Paul's Christology in verses 2–4 with special focus on the reign of Nero. Ian E. Rock, for example, has argued that "Romans 1:3–4 presents Jesus as the authentic Son of God, and as the one who has been given authority to exercise power on behalf of God, and as the one human being who through the imparting of God's Spirit of holiness can claim the title 'Lord' which is synonymous with God."[146] Rock proposes that the resurrection is "positive evidence that Rome's power was not final,"[147] dismantling Nero's special relationship with the gods, as well as his claim to be "the arbiter of life and death for the nations" (Seneca, *Clem.* 1.19.8).[148] N. T. Wright proposes that Rom 1:3–4 "was a royal proclamation aimed at challenging other royal proclamations."[149] Alternatively, Dieter Georgi argues that Paul's use of a traditional christological formula in Rom 1:3–4 was a satirical counter to the recent assumption and apotheosis of Claudius upon his violent death in 54 CE.[150] This elevation to divine status on Claudius's part had been mocked in Seneca's *The Pumpkinification of Claudius.* Further, Paul had announced a new pattern of rulership that would challenge the "social utopia of Caesarism" enunciated in the Einsiedeln Eclogues belonging to the reign of Nero.[151] Finally, Neil Elliott examines Rom 1:3–4 against the backdrop of Nero's succession as adumbrated in Calpurnius Siculus, *Ecl.*

146. Ian E. Rock, *Paul's Letter to the Romans and Roman Imperialism: An Ideological Analysis of the Exordium (Romans 1:1–17)* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 125.

147. Rock, *Implications of Roman Imperial Ideology*, 128.

148. Rock, *Implications of Roman Imperial Ideology*. Rock (175) also claims that Paul's use of πρωτότοκος ("firstborn") in Rom 8:29 was "a possible allusion to the emperor as first citizen" (Res gest. 30).

149. N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics:* Ekklesia, *Israel,* Imperium, *Interpretation; Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 168.

150. For a summary of the debate whether Rom 1:2–4 is a pre-Pauline christological tradition, with ἐν δυνάμει (1:4) as a Pauline addition, or is a composition of his own hand, see Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 5–6.

151. Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*, trans. David E. Green (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 86–87. See also Seneca, *Apoc.* 2.15–32, cited by Champlin, "Nero, Apollo, and the Poets," 278.

1.84–88 and Seneca, *Apoc.* 1.[152] There is merit in these suggestions. As we have seen from the Egyptian proclamation of Nero's accession in 54 CE, the apotheosis of Claudius ensured the accession of adopted Nero to the rule of the empire.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Paul in Rom 1:4 brings the language of sonship to a dramatic culmination with his final honorific accolade: Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. The honorific κύριος ("lord") was especially appropriate in the Neronian context of Romans. Joseph D. Fantin documents the explosion of κύριος language under Nero in comparison to its rare use under the previous Julio-Claudian rulers, citing at least 109 cases of Νέρωνος τοῦ κυρίου ("Of Nero the lord") in the business transactions of the papyri and ostraca, as well as six cases of Νέρωνος Καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου ("Of Nero Caesar the lord").[153] Also, an inscription eulogizes Nero as "the lord of the entire world" (*SIG* 814, lines 30–31, 67 CE: ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμοῦ κύριος Νέρων; see also line 55: εἰς τὸν τοῦ κύριου Σεβαστοῦ [Νέρωνος οἶκον]: "to the house of lord Augustus Caesar").[154] Thus there is reason to believe that the phrase Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κύριου ἡμῶν in Rom 1:5 might have Neronian reference in this context. But as Fantin notes, it was not really until after 60 CE that the use of κύριος as a title for the ruler began to increase exponentially.[155] Nevertheless, such significant linguistic developments do not occur in a historical vacuum; it is possible that in the mid- to late 50s the title already had informal currency in various circles (e.g., diplomatic, business, military). Paul's addition of the pronoun ἡμῶν ("our") emphasizes the personal commitment of believers to their risen Lord, as well as their community in Christ over against Nero's body politic.

A final observation: the rapid accumulation of christological titles (Son, seed of David, Son of God, Jesus/Yeshua, Christ, and Lord) in Rom 1:2–4, noted by Douglas Moo,[156] is probably Paul's counterblast to the plethora of honorific titles credited to the Roman ruler, as much as a rich unveiling of

152. Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 61–72.

153. See Joseph D. Fantin, *The Lord of the Entire World: Lord Jesus, a Challenge to Lord Caesar?* New Testament Monographs 31 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2011), 196–202.

154. Fantin, *Lord of the Entire World*, 183.

155. Fantin, *Lord of the Entire World*, 211.

156. Moo, *Romans*, 50–51.

how the Jewish prophetic heritage was fulfilled in Christ.[157] In this regard, a significant change occurs in the reigns of Caligula and Claudius. As Hekster writes, "Caligula (and Claudius) were given all the titles and offices that Augustus and Tiberius had held before them in their entirety, *simply because they were members of the family*."[158] There was by that time no necessity to outshine one's Julio-Claudian peers in the quest for ancestral glory in the manner that Augustus had expected of his appointed heirs: Nero, as the adopted son of the apotheosized Claudius, simply inherited this vast cavalcade of honor and magistacies.[159] Paul's polemic is therefore all the more pointed in asserting, over against the Julio-Claudian adoptees, that there is only one divinely enthroned and risen Son of God reigning in power. Thus the Pauline addition of ἐν δυνάμει (Rom 1:4a) functions as the defining reason why the risen and ascended Son of God must be honored over and above the apotheosized imperial pretenders, who, like the rest of humanity, remain enslaved to sin and death.

Exegetical Consequence 5: The heraldic role of Jesus's resurrection (Rom 1:4) for Paul's new-creation perspectives in a Neronian cosmic context

Initially there seems little to connect the resurrection of Jesus with the new creation in Rom 1:4. There is no trace of the "new creation" terminology that Paul uses in his other epistles (2 Cor 5:17: *καινὴ κτίσις*; Gal 6:15: *καινὴ κτίσις*) or his language of "newness" in Romans (7:6b: *ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος*). Paul seems to be more intent, in view of the Jewish doctrine of the two ages (or aeons) (1 En. 71.15; 4 Ezra 4.27; 7.12, 31, 50, 112–114; 8.1; 2 Bar. 44.9, 12), in highlighting how the "age to come" had advanced into the "present age" of sin and death, conquering its enslaving power by means of the atoning death and resurrection of the Son of God, who is now ascended and enthroned in power at God's right hand, interceding for the saints (Rom 4:24–25; 5:12–21; 6:5–8; 8:33–34). Furthermore, in the most explicit resurrection text of the Old Testament (Dan 12:1–4 [LXX

157. See Taylor, *Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 267–83.

158. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors*, 9, emphasis added.

159. One Neronian epigraphic example will suffice: "Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, imperator, pontifex maximus, in his 11th year of tribunician power, consul 4 times, imperator 9 times, father of his country…" (Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §245 [Armenia: 64–65 CE]). For Neronian numismatic examples, see Braund, *Augustus to Nero*, §§242–43, 246–49, 252, 258.

2 Macc 7:9]; less explicitly, Job 19:25–26; Pss 49:15; 73:23–28; Isa 25:7; 26:19; Ezek 37:1–14; Hos 13:14),[160] no connection is made with the new-creation motifs that are present elsewhere in the Old Testament and in Second Temple Judaism more generally.[161] Seemingly for Paul, any cosmic significance given Jesus's death is postponed until the apocalyptic unfolding of the corruption and redemption of creation in Rom 8:19–25.[162] Thus it could be legitimately concluded that there exists no implicit critique of Nero and the Julio-Claudian house as the source of all good things in the cosmos in our pericope.

However, when believers living in the capital first heard Paul's epistle read to them, the announcement of the resurrection of Christ, the reigning "second Adam" in power (Rom 5:12–21; see also 1 Cor 15:44–49), would have impacted upon them in ever-widening concentric circles, moving inexorably from the liberation offered from the present reign of sin and death to the apocalyptic unveiling of the eschatological hope for the entire groaning creation. On reflection, surely, the original auditors would have viewed our pericope as Paul's first heralding of the new-creation and cosmic perpectives that come later in the epistle. Christ's resurrection is the ground of the future cosmological advent. How, then, does Paul light the fuse in Rom 1:4 for the cosmic explosions to come later in the epistle?

First, some of the Old Testament traditions that Paul inherited spoke obliquely but forcefully about the link of the resurrection with the new creation. N. T. Wright draws attention to Ezek 37:1–14 in this regard, notwithstanding the highly allegorical nature of the passage. The prophecy is directed to the "dry bones" in the valley, that is, the Israelite exiles who were now living in exile as covenant-breakers in Babylon after Nebuchad-

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160. For discussion of the glimmerings of the resurrection hope in the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism, see Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 85–206.

161. See Isa 65:17–25; 66:22–23; 1 En. 45.4–6; 91.14–16; Jub. 1.29; 4.26; 4 Ezra 7.75; 2 Bar. 32.6; 44.12; 57.2; Apoc. Ab. 17.14; 1QH^{a} V, 13–18; XIII, 11–12; 1QS IV, 23–25; 4Q285 frag. 1. For discussion, see Ulrich Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*: *Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie zu einem soteriologischen Grundsatz paulinischer Theologie*, BZNW 56 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 47–257; T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*, WUNT 2/272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 33–59.

162. See Harry A. Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8:19–22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, LNTS 336 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), passim. Additionally, Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 150–72; Harrison, *Reading Romans with Roman Eyes*, 219–57.

nezzar's destruction of Jerusalem (586 BCE). God's promised restoration of Israel to its land (Ezek 37:12, 14a), described by Wright as "a powerful and covenant-renewing act of new creation,"[163] alludes to the *rûaḥ* (breath, spirit, wind) of Gen 1–2. In Ezekiel's vision, the Spirit of God (37:14) acts as a prophetic breath (37:5, 6, 8, 10) and wind (37:19) that revivifies the dead Israelites in the valley of bones, preparing them for their imminent restoration. But as Wright observes, this is not a mere resusitation performed by an Elijah or Elisha; rather, "the fleshless bones can only be brought to life by a new and unprecedented act of the creator god," a literal resurrection, as the textual marginalia of the scribes testify.[164] Little wonder that the seven Maccabean martyrs later appealed to the resurrection in the face of Antiochus Epiphanes's threats of death (2 Macc 7:9). It is reasonable to assume that the advent of the new resurrection age in Christ would have been understood by Jewish readers equally from an eschatological and cosmological perspective.

Second, an Adam Christology may implictly underlie Rom 1:4 as much as the explicit messianic identification found in 1:3–4. Again, Jewish auditors would have been alert to the creation nuances. The psalmist portrays humans as insignificant in comparison to the immensity of God's creation (Ps 8:3–4), having been made lower than the angels (8:5a). Nevertheless, they are crowned with honor and glory (8:5b), divinely appointed to be ruler over all God's works (8:6a), and creation is placed under their feet (8:6b–7). Other Christian writers (Heb 2:5–8) saw in this psalm a paradigm of the cruciform humiliation and exaltation of the resurrected Christ. It is likely that in Rom 1:2–4 Paul thought of Christ's incarnation, *cursus pudorum* ("course of shame") and *cursus honorum* ("course of honor"), in creation categories similar to the psalmist. Moreover, elsewhere in Romans Christ, the second and superior Adam (5:12–21), became God's soteriological benefactor who dispensed overflowing grace (5:15, 17, 20) to his unworthy dependents (5:6–8) through his cruciform obedience (5:18b, 19b), reducing the so-called unparalleled beneficence of Augustus to total insignificance (cf. Res gest. 15–24). Furthermore, as T. Ryan Jackson observes, Rom 8 also exhibits an Adam Christology. There, as Rom 8:28–30 demonstates, "Christ has fulfilled God's original purpose in creation to have human-

163. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 120.
164. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 120–21.

ity reflect his glory."[165] In Romans, therefore, the death and resurrection of Jesus is writ large in terms recalling the Genesis creation narrative as much as the story of Israel.

Third, J. R. Daniel Kirk has observed regarding Rom 8:12–17 that "the Spirit's work in the believer is parallel to the work ascribed to the Spirit with reference to Christ's resurrection in 1:4."[166] The Spirit, who was present at the beginning of the creation of the universe (Gen 1:2), now delivers Christ and believers from their fallen earthly existence by means of the resurrection (Rom 1:4; 8:12–13)—although in each case their existence is characterized by *σάρξ* (1:3; 8:12–13), it is differently understood and experienced.[167] Thus the Spirit, present at the original creation, expresses the dynamic presence and activity of God in the new creation.

Last, in contrast to the new creation associated with the advent of the Augustan and Neronian golden age, Paul postpones the arrival of the new creation in Romans until the eschaton. Elements of fulfilled eschatology may be in the process (*νῦν*: Rom 8:18, 22; *τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος*: 8:23; see also 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), but an eschatological reserve still characterizes Paul's thought in this instance (Rom 8:18–25). Try as the Julio-Claudian house might, the unfolding of human history and the arrival of the new age cannot be manipulated. Thus the rapturous praise of the imperial poets and their provincial clients for the cosmic advent of Nero to the rule of the empire, his staged events of ostentatious wastefulness to demonstrate that even catastrophic storm damage to the grain fleet

165. Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 180.

166. J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 134.

167. In Rom 1:3b, *σάρξ* refers to Christ's physical lineage though which his Davidic ancestry was traced; however, unlike humanity, Christ does not succumb to the temptations of the fallen human nature that he had assumed (2 Cor 5:21: *μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν*). By contrast, in the case of believers (Rom 8:12–13), *σάρξ* refers to the fallen state of humanity, enslaved by sin and death (5:12–21), but because of their baptism in the crucified and risen Christ (6:5–11), believers are now called to put sin to death through the newness of the indwelling Spirit (6:11–20; 7:6b; 8:13b-17). Sui F. Wu (*Suffering in Romans* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015], 85) writes: "Along with many scholars, I think [Rom] 8:3 speaks of Christ's sharing of humanity, but without sinning. The cosmic power of sin would try to reign over him just as it would over Adamic humanity." Only Christ as the eternal Son, Davidic son, and the sinless new Adam could triumph over the cosmic reign of sin and death and extend that victory to his adopted sons as the Lord of all (Rom 8:12–17).

could not halt the grain supply's arrival at Rome,[168] and his securing of the grain supply through the expansion of Ostian port facilities were events of no significance in the universal history of creation. Rather, God had subjected creation in the hope (ἐφ' ἐλπίδι) that it would be freed from the bondage of decay and experience the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:20–21).[169] God's unrelenting goodness to his elect household (8:35–39) and to the creation more generally (8:21) totally outshone the hollow boastfulness of the imperial rulers and their fawning clients.

4. Conclusion

The pre-Pauline formulas of Rom 1:2–4 were not corrected by Paul for their deficient "adoptionist" theology. Rather, this very early creed, belonging to the substratum of the apostolic church's earliest preaching (Acts 1:21–22; 2:22–36; 3:13–16; 4:8–10; 5:29–32; 10:39–43; 13:28–31; 17:1–3; 17:30–31) and its Christology (e.g., Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 8:6; 11:23; Phil 2:6–11),[170] cohered with the apostle's understanding of the preexistence of Christ, his divinely commissioned incarnation in cruciform weakness, and his enthronement as the Jewish Messiah in power through his resurrection by the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly Paul, a converted Pharisee, was strategically locating his gospel proclamation within the wider messianic and afterlife debates of Second Temple Judaism.

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168. Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.18) writes: "Nero had the grain for the populace, which had been spoiled by age, thrown into the Tiber, as proof that the corn supply was not a matter for anxiety. The price was not raised, though some two hundred vessels actually in port had been destroyed by a raging tempest and a hundred more that had made their way up the Tiber by a chance outbreak of fire."

169. The majority of Romans commentators take *τὸν ὑποτάξαντα* ("the one who subjected [it]," Rom 8:20) as referring to God: Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 47; Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 515–16; Schreiner, *Romans*, 435; Jewett, *Romans*, 513; Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 323. Contra, Hahne (*Corruption and Redemption*, 187–89), who opts for Adam's sin being the cause of the subjection. Regarding ἐφ' ἐλπίδι (Rom 8:20), Fitzmyer (*Romans*, 508) states: "Paul is actually the first biblical writer to introduce the note of hope apropos of the story in Genesis 3."

170. The classic studies of the last century still remain authoritative: C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980); Oscar Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, trans. J. K. S. Reid (London: Lutterworth, 1943); Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors*.

But in writing to Roman believers, living in the capital where the Julio-Claudian son of god and world benefactor lived,[171] Paul had to grapple with the various succession narratives popularly available to enthusiastic Roman audiences: the health-imperiled Augustus and the death of his adoptive heirs; Augustus’s quest for heirs who would demonstrate their public worthiness for rule; the epigraphic link of Julio-Claudian succession to apotheosized forebears; and the automatic inheritance of honorific office and imperium by the Roman ruler from Caligula onward. This complex succession ideology, changing over the generations, defined notions of Julio-Claudian adoption and sonship in the Roman mind during the early empire. This essay has argued that the apostle Paul vigorously combatted the imperial ideology of adoption and apotheosis in our pericope.

In Rom 1:3–4 the apostle set forth a humiliated and divinely vindicated heir as opposed to the Augustan paradigm of the deserving heir, a messianic Son by Davidic descent as opposed to an adopted Son by Julian legal decision, and a risen Son as opposed to an apotheosized son. With these broad theological and historical brushstrokes, Paul addressed the slowly changing panorama of succession ideology from Augustus to Nero, elevating the crucified Christ, dismissed by Roman auditors as a malefactor, to his rightful position of the risen and ascended Lord of all. The prophetic scriptures of Israel had announced the reign of this powerful messianic ruler centuries beforehand (Rom 1:2b; 11:26; 15:25–27; see also 1:3b; 11:26; 15:12), a powerful argument to Romans impressed by the antiquity of ancestral tradition, puncturing the periodic prophetic utterances of the imperial poets eulogizing the advent of Augustus and Nero.

However, this essay has also focused on the social and political features of the early Neronian period, the time when Paul composed Romans. Paul’s prescient emphasis upon κύριος terminology, inherited from his creedal tradition, addressed the informal currency of the epithet among various circles of Rome in the 50s, only to explode in the papyri and inscriptions after 60 CE. The dense accumulation of christological titles (Son, seed of David, Son of God, Jesus/Yeshua, Christ, Lord) in Rom 1:2–4 matched the proliferation of honorific epithets and offices accorded to Nero.[172] Like-

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171. See E. A. Judge, “Thanksgiving to the Benefactor of the World, Tiberius Caesar,” *NewDocs* 9:22.

172. Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.15) tells us that the Nero was followed everywhere by five thousand equestrians who continually acclaimed him: “Then it was that Roman knights were enrolled under the title of *Augustiani*, men in their prime and remarkable

wise, the cosmic accolades of provincial clients and the imperial poets at Rome eulogizing the cosmic advent of Nero in 54 CE were countered by Paul's creation motifs implicit in Rom 1:4. These were grounded in the resurrection of Christ as the second Adam and were explicitly elaborated upon later in the epistle (5:12–21; 8:19–23). The so-called cosmic Nero who had ensured as an expression of his divine goodness the continuing grain supply of the capital was now reduced to being a "bit player" on the historical stage of beneficence because of the unsurpassed soteriological grace of the creator God, Christ (Rom 9:5).[173] Above all, the apostle wrenched adoption from the preserve of the Roman elites, republican and imperial, extending it unexpectedly to the new and reigning household of God: the elect in Christ who, like their Lord, were destined for resurrection and glorification through many sufferings (υἱοθεσία: Rom 8:15, 23; see also 9:4). Divine grace had radically inverted the prized status rituals of the imperial world.

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for their strength.… Day and night they kept up a thunder of applause and applied to the emperor's person the voice and epithet of deities."

173. On the referent of θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας (Rom 9:5b) as Christ, see Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of* Theos *in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 143–72.

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A Traditional Response to Peter Lampe's Picture of Christians in Rome

Mark Reasoner

Myths of origin are precious. They are so precious that they must be closely read and guarded. Their impact is never merely academic. Their antecedent rivals can seldom be completely erased, for the reverse imprint that a later myth makes when responding to an earlier one ensures that the earlier myth will continue to reverberate in readers' consciousness. For example, I would not know and respect Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation story on seven tablets, if I had not read and studied the Priestly seven-day creation story. The earlier myth continues to resonate, as a karmic vengeance that the anxiety of influence plays on later authors. Any myth of origins of an organism is also precious for its influence on how an organism is known. Like the arterial circulation system in any organism, a myth of origins informs every part of our understanding of an organism, whether the organism is physical, such as a single mammal, or social, such as a church.

Myth, used here in the sense of a deeply seated and identity-forming account of beginnings, is inescapable in our attempts to understand organisms and our own past. To escape a myth is to grasp another. Any account of the origins of Christianity in Rome is mythic in character, since its proponents will find ways to account or discount the far-reaching effects of the Roman church to its beginnings. Although Peter Lampe's account of this church's origins emphasizes the fragmentation, or "fractionation," of Roman Christianity and late development of the bishopric there, I find that it does not account for some compelling evidence in support of a more traditional myth of origins. This evidence points to an earlier centrality that Rome held among the churches of the Mediterranean world and an earlier emergence of the Roman bishop than Lampe presents, while

Roman Christianity developed epigenetically in response to the variety of stimuli that Lampe so completely surveys.

Peter Lampe and all reviewers seem to agree that the preferable myth of origins for Christianity in Rome is that which best explains the literary and material evidence arising out of Roman Christianity in the first two centuries CE. I, also a child of modernity, completely agree. The difference in our approaches is the field from which we find our evidence. Lampe takes all archaeological, epigraphical, literary, and material evidence with a Roman provenance from the first two centuries CE. I agree that all these sources of data are valuable and valid fields of evidence. But in addition, it is also useful to consider records of ecclesiastical embassies to Rome and early testimony to the function of the Roman church.

I am interested in the historical portrait that Lampe offers because I study Paul's Letter to the Romans and want to leave no cultural or historical stone unturned while studying the letter. And as a Roman Catholic, I have a reflex to compare whatever the historians say about the first two centuries of Christians in Rome with some version of the myth of Rome as the birthplace and early center of the Catholic Church. You may already object that Lampe does not seek to offer a new myth of beginnings for Roman Christianity. Yet his stated goals in his study are "to learn about the daily lives of the urban Roman Christians of the first two centuries" and to find out if and where he can discover "interrelations between situation and theology," with the ultimate goal of contributing "to a multidimensional interpretation of texts and faith expressions of early Christianity."[1] After summarizing my own encounter with Lampe's work, I will summarize his plot and respond to it, with evidence for the centrality of the Roman churches and influence of the Roman bishop that Lampe does not mention, before offering an alternative to Lampe's fractionation model. My hope is that I and those reading this essay can follow Peter Lampe's lead and continue to live up to Henry Chadwick's vision for discourse on questions of the genesis of the Roman church's authority:

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1. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser, ed. Marshall D. Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 2; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd ed., WUNT 2/18 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), xi–xii.

> It ought to be possible for historical theology to cut across the confessional differences and to examine the question on the one hand *sine ira et studio*, on the other hand without the sceptical detachment which says in effect, A plague on both your houses![2]

A Graduate Student's Encounter with Lampe's *Die stadtrömischen Christen*

I encountered Peter Lampe's study in the fall of 1988. It was then, shortly after the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library had acquired *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten*, when I drove from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Chicago, Illinois, to photocopy a large section of the book. Lampe's word was a godsend for me as I worked on my dissertation. I wish to thank Peter Lampe for all the labor he invested in *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten* and for allowing it to be translated. This work has greatly spurred my understanding of Christians in Rome during the first two centuries CE. Lampe's emphasis on the parallel development of the Christ-cult with the synagogues was especially helpful in my attempt to trace a Jewish profile to the "weak" who are described in Romans, as well as differences in social class within the implied audience of the letter.[3]

This essay, my return to Lampe three decades after first encountering his study, is based mostly on the translated and revised volume, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*. This is the place to say that, despite the publisher's description of "revising and updating" that occurred before the publication of *From Paul to Valentinus* in 2003, I find little difference between the second edition of *Die stadtrömischen Christen* and *From Paul to Valentinus* and no updating past 1989 in the bibliography.[4]

The value of Lampe's work on the first two centuries of Roman Christianity is its comprehensive consideration of Rom 16 and all literary materials originating within Rome in the first two centuries CE that give

2. Henry Chadwick, "The Circle and the Ellipse: Rival Concepts of Authority in the Early Church," in Chadwick, *History and Thought of the Early Church* (London: Variorum, 1982), 3.

3. Mark Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14:1–15:13 in Context*, SNTSMS 103 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10–11, 202, 206–8.

4. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, xvii.

evidence of Christians there. Lampe's comprehensive study shines light on oft-ignored economic and social factors affecting Christians in Rome. A look at the plot of *From Paul to Valentinus* is our next step in this engagement with Peter Lampe's broad-ranging work.

The Plot of *From Paul to Valentinus*

If there is a plot in this book, it can be accessed through Lampe's description of a pattern discernible in how groups that came to be known as heretical were treated in Rome. Lampe emphasizes how the gnostic Valentinians and other marginalized groups were in fellowship for much longer than we would expect with the group that won out. His plot thus traces the fractionation of Roman Christianity into groups represented on a continuum from the apostle Paul to the heretic Valentinus, as well as the social and spiritual contiguity (or fellowship) that makes the phenomenon of early Christianity in Rome so remarkable for Lampe.

The following assertions by Lampe seem oriented toward supporting this plot. The Quartodecimans were tolerated until the time of Victor.[5] Hermas knows of several teachers in Rome who are false but does not distinguish between those remaining in fellowship with the authorities and those who were excommunicated.[6] The Valentinians and perhaps the Carpocratians were tolerated and allowed to fellowship with Christians into the second half of the second century.[7] Marcion would have been tolerated if he had limited his teaching to his own house church. Marcion's initiative toward dialogue resulted in his excommunication.[8] Lampe mentions the movements of Cerdo and the Jewish Christians as exceptions to his scenario of an accommodating Christianity in Rome but softens this with his clarification that Cerdo stopped fellowshipping with other, more orthodox Christians before any excommunication happened.[9] It is beyond the scope of this response to evaluate how comprehensive these specific snapshots

5. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 387; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 325.

6. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 387; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 325.

7. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 387–91 (Valentinians), 392 (Carpocratians); Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 325–29, 329–30.

8. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 393; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 331.

9. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 394, 396; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 331–32 (for Cerdo, Torah-observant Jewish Christians not listed as an exception in 2nd German edition).

of the second century are, but they do provide an indication of the plot of Lampe's book. The way that the tolerance was achieved, according to Lampe's hypothetical explanation, is that different Christian communities gathered in relative isolation from each other in Rome. To celebrate their common identity, messengers from each community carried samples of the eucharistic elements to other communities.[10]

Lampe's plot emphasizes that Christianity in Rome was not a monolithic institution that was united under the bishop of Rome. It was socioeconomically and theologically diverse. He supports this claim when discussing the tomb of Peter, which shows at the lowest stratum that poor people prayed there and that it did not receive attention from wealthy believers in other areas of Rome.[11] In this context we can observe some concern to disassociate himself from a more traditional myth of origins: "The idea that urban Roman Christianity as a unified whole (with one bishop at its head) around 160 C.E. set up on the Vatican a monument to Peter, is untenable."[12] Lampe suggests instead that the monarchical episcopate was developed in Rome in the 180s, drawing the evidence from the *Traditio apostolica*. The names of early bishops in Rome were adopted from traditions about leaders in particular areas of Rome. Before this, the first century of Roman Christianity can be described as presbyterian, that is, governed by elders. A significant number of poor within the city, as well as Roman Christianity's growing tendency to send financial aid to other cities, were factors that led to the development of a single bishop to oversee the collection of food and money in aid for the poor.[13] In the same decades in which the single episcopate developed in Rome, the Roman church was also fractionating, Lampe's term for breaking apart into disparate groups.

The enduring value of Lampe's study is its comprehensive examination of all literary evidence that is currently available for those paying cult to Christ in Rome and its deliberate use of both socioeconomic and theological lenses when examining these Romans. These strengths will keep Lampe's book in print for at least another twenty-five years. Still, I think

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10. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 385–86; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 324–25.

11. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 115–16; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 93–94.

12. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 115; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 93.

13. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 406–8; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 343–45.

Lampe's method can be intensified to provide more results. For example, Lampe's reconstruction of the socioeconomic reasons behind the idea of repentance in the Shepherd of Hermas is exemplary for its integration of the material and theological dimensions of the Christian communities in Rome.[14] The fact that Ignatius is especially concerned that the church in Rome not intervene to prevent his martyrdom implies that there were Roman Christians who had the rank or status to change the sentence he had received (Ign. *Rom.* 4; 7). Lampe's integration of the socioeconomic and theological factors could be applied in other moments of the Roman communities' history that we can recover, including Eusebius's testimony (*Hist. eccl.* 5.21.1) that in the time of Commodus there were some high-placed families known as Christian. The holistic approach to evidence, whereby all theological and socioeconomic factors are in play, is exemplary and must be continued in historical investigations of early Christianity, since these factors cannot be compartmentalized in human experience. But Lampe's focus on materials originating within Rome comes with concomitant inattention to the flow of people and ideas into Rome from elsewhere in the empire and an uncritical assumption of what unity among Christians meant in second-century Rome. As Oakes has observed, the focus on materials of definitely Roman provenance leads to the lacunae of comparisons with settlement patterns in other cities and in-depth comparisons between cult practices and sites for Jesus-invoking cult communities and other groups, such as *collegia*, that are in Rome.[15] The centripetal pull that Rome exercised on communities throughout the empire and the looser model of church unity in second-century Rome prompts a reconsideration of Lampe's ideas of fractionation, diversity and tolerance within Roman Christianity, and leadership of the Roman church.

There is another plot that comes into focus when one considers evidence not mentioned by Lampe. In the alternate plot I propose, Rome, with a recognized office of bishop in one of the congregations in the city, becomes a center for those paying cult to Christ at an earlier date than Lampe suggests. It is easy for Lampe to reject the picture quoted

14. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 92–99; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 74–78.

15. Peter S. Oakes, review of *From Paul to Valentinus*, by Peter Lampe, *JSNT* 27 (2005): 95–96. Lampe raises the possible similarity of a Roman house church to a collegium in *From Paul to Valentinus*, 98, 372; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 78, 313–14.

in the paragraph above: the phrase "as a unified whole" and the idea of a monument set up by 160 CE seem to render Kirschbaum's account of second-century Rome as a straw man, easily dismissed by Lampe.[16] But as I will argue below, the Roman church emerges into the rank of leading churches well before 180 CE, and the tradition of the mono-episcopate in Rome antedating Victor is not as easily dismissed as Lampe indicates.

The Centrality of Rome

Lampe's reconstruction of the emergence of a bishop of Rome is tied to his understanding of Rome's place as an influential church among Mediterranean cities. He dates this to the bishopric of Victor, who served as pope from 189 to 199 CE. Lampe's neglect to mention other pieces of evidence for the centrality and influence of the Roman church allows him to give a unified portrait of a late second-century emergence of Rome's significance. But to be even-handed with the evidence, the texts and events that locate such centrality and influence earlier must be mentioned.

Lampe's prosopographical work on Rom 16 is valuable. However, there are other pieces of evidence from within the letter that relate to Lampe's plot. Paul writes that the Romans' faith is announced throughout the whole world (1:8b). Yes, this can be viewed as simply part of Paul's careful attempt to write a winsome letter of self-introduction. But he does not write this to any other church, and he says other things in the letter that confirm the image of Rome's central role in Mediterranean Christianity. Paul has been wanting to visit the believers in Rome and has even attempted to visit them previously (1:8–13; 15:22). Paul wants to be sent on by the believers in Rome to Spain (15:24). And in confirmation of Paul's early statement that the faith of the Romans is announced throughout the world, Paul gives evidence of knowing the character of the teaching that the Romans originally received (6:17; 16:17). These pieces of evidence do not prove that Rome was the center of Christianity by the mid- to late 50s, when Paul wrote this letter. But they do provide positive evidence that, within the ellipse of the Pauline churches, Rome was a western focal point.[17]

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16. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 115; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 93, citing Engelbert Kirschbaum, *Die Gräber der Apostelfürsten*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt: Societäts Verlag, 1974), 120, 136.

17. For the idea of the Christ movement as an ellipse with the two foci of Jerusa-

There is also the Gospel of Mark. Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2) passes on the tradition that this gospel was written in Rome, citing Clement's *Hypotyposes* and testimony from Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, as confirmation of his record. The identification of the provenance of this gospel is stronger than what we have for any other gospel, canonical or extracanonical. This could form part of the portrait for Rome as an early center of the Christ-cult. Lampe says in his introduction that he relegates Mark to footnotes. He does mention that Hengel links Mark 13:12–13 to Rome under Nero but that is the only place where the possibility of the Roman provenance of Mark figures in the book.[18]

Another New Testament book that possibly offers evidence for the central position of Rome within Mediterranean Christianity of the first century is 1 Peter. Eusebius identifies the letter's Roman provenance, ambiguously citing either Clement or Papias (*Hist. eccl.* 2.15.2). The greeting from someone in Babylon quite possibly refers to a church in Rome, whether or not the letter was written from Rome (5:13). The letter's references to fire may be incidental and unconnected to the fire of 64 CE, but the text itself shows clear dependence on Paul's letter to the Romans.[19] My point in mentioning Mark and 1 Peter is that these are first-century texts with possible associations to Rome. Their canonization in the New Testament does not prove the first-century centrality of the Roman see, but it does provide possible evidence that Christians around the Mediterranean read and kept texts emerging out of the Christ-cult in Rome.

Then there is the book of Acts. If, as Pervo argues, Acts was composed around 115 CE, its conclusion shows that by this date one would-be

lem and Rome, I am indebted to Chadwick, "Circle and the Ellipse" 10, who offers this as the model that churches in the East held in the second century, when the Roman church considered itself to be the center of the circle of Christendom.

18. *From Paul to Valentinus*, 84 n. 13; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 67 n. 195.

19. See *πίστ[ις] πολυτιμότερον χρυσίου τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου* (1:7) and *μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένῃ* (4:12). Troy Martin thinks these references to fire allude to the eruption of Vesuvius and fires that burned temples in Rome, all during the short reign of Titus (personal correspondence, 16 December 2019). Dependence on Romans is evident in the selection of scriptural quotations in 1 Pet 2 (1 Pet 2:6, 8 quote Isa 8:14 and 28:16, as does Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:10 quotes Hos 1:6, 9; 2:25, as does Rom 9:25). Other intertextuality between Romans and 1 Peter can be seen in similarities in diction between Rom 12:1 and 1 Pet 2:5; Rom 13:1–7 and 1 Pet 2:13–17.

chronicler—the author of Luke and Acts—viewed Rome as a city worth spotlighting.[20] Lampe elsewhere is moderately positive toward the Roman provenance for Luke-Acts.[21] The narrative's end in Rome not only achieves closure with the goal as stated in Acts 19:21; it also represents the "end of the earth" (1:8). And in light of the attraction Rome held for teachers and other leaders, it represents a terminus that fits with the educational and social mindset of the first two centuries CE.[22]

Readers here may understandably object that I am mistakenly transposing the political and socioeconomic influence of the imperial capital onto the traditional myth of Rome as a late first-century or early second-century center of Christianity. But my evidence in this section all centers on texts originating from within the Christ-movement. Yes, the secular world inevitably affects theological developments, whether that be Josiah's reform in preexilic Judah, the ecumenical church councils in the fourth through eighth centuries CE, or developments in sixteenth-century Saxony. But I think that the connections to Rome of first-century texts such as Mark, 1 Peter, and 1–2 Clement are best explained by an early prominence of the churches in Rome.

The Bishop of Rome

Lampe suggests that the monarchical episcopate was developed in Rome in the 180s, drawing on evidence from the *Traditio apostolica*, which gives more information about the office of bishop than earlier writings from Rome. Lampe regards the lists of early bishops in Rome such as those found in Irenaeus and Eusebius to be adopted from traditions about leaders in particular areas of Rome. Lampe labels Roman Christianity before the 180s decade as presbyterian, that is, governed by elders. He suggests that the office of a single bishop in Rome grew out a need to organize the aid offered by the Roman Christians to the poor within their city, as well as

20. Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), 346.

21. Peter Lampe and Ulrich Luz, "Nachpaulinisches Christentum und pagane Gesellschaft," in *Die Anfänge des Christentum: Alte Welt und neue Hoffnung*, ed. Jürgen Becker (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), 186.

22. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 677.

the financial aid sent to other cities.[23] It should be noted that Lampe presents the single episcopate as developing in Rome in the same part of the second century in which he describes the Roman church to be fractionating, Lampe's term for breaking apart into disparate groups.

In essence, therefore, Lampe relies on an argument from silence for late dating of the Roman bishopric. Castelli seems to take a position similar to Lampe, for she observes that the Roman sources of the first and early second centuries avoid naming bishops and presbyters together. She takes this as evidence that the two offices were not both in place during this time period. She goes on to assert that it is only when Hippolytus's *Elenchos* uses the terms together in 9.12, 22 that the church government of Rome had evolved to the point that the bishop was considered the primary authority, over the presbyters and deacons, since the term *bishops* for the first time is used alongside *presbyters*.[24]

Let us reconsider the silence of Ignatius regarding the bishop of Rome. It is conspicuous, given the way he calls attention to the bishops of three of the other churches he addresses. But the lack of a bishop's name is not proof that there was no bishop there. Since execution was a real possibility for any bishop of Rome, as evidenced by the martyrdom of Telesphorus, it is possible that Ignatius does not mention a Roman bishop's name in order to delay the bishop's arrest (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.10.1). A second explanation for Ignatius's failure to address a bishop of Rome is that he did not want to make any kind of personal connection that would lead people in Rome to ask for his acquittal. This is evident from the rest of the letter, where Ignatius begs the Roman church members not to work for his release. Ignatius does say that the church in Rome "presides," a term he does not use for a central church in Asia to which he also writes, the church of Ephesus.[25]

Lampe's decision to label the church of Rome as presbyterial before the bishop's rise to prominence in the 180s represents a false dichotomy that is too influenced by our current ecclesiological models. Already

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23. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 406–8; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 343–45.

24. Castelli in Alberto D'Anna and Emanuele Castelli, "Considerazioni a margine del libro di P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus. Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*," *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 23 (2006): 514–15.

25. Trevor Gervase Jelland, *The Church and the Papacy: A Historical Study*, 1942 Bampton Lectures (London: SPCK, 1944), 103–5.

in the early second century, presbyters and a single bishop co-existed within several churches in the Mediterranean world (Ign. *Eph*. 4.1; *Magn*. 2.1; 3.1; 6.1; 7.1; *Trall.* 3.1; 12.2). Lampe does not mention how 1 Clem. 42:1–4 describes how the apostles ordained bishops and deacons, yet 1 Clement also mentions presbyters. Simonetti takes this as evidence that in Rome two taxonomies for church leadership were operative: the bishops and deacons terminology of Paul and the elder language from the eastern part of the Mediterranean.[26] He interprets the language of 1 Clement to indicate that some of the deacons were functioning as bishops. The diction in Eusebius's record of Irenaeus's letter to Victor on harmony regarding the date of Easter is also worth considering. He describes how the leaders in Rome did not keep the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan as Easter but allowed those from other areas to do so when they visited Rome.

> *ἐν οἷς καὶ οἱ πρὸ Σωτῆρος πρεσβύτεροι, οἱ προστάντες τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἧς σὺ νῦν ἀφηγῇ, Ἀνίκητον λέγομεν καὶ Πίον Ὑγῖνόν τε καὶ Τελεσφόρον καὶ Ξύστον, οὔτε αὐτοὶ ἐτήρησαν οὔτε τοῖς μετ᾽αὐτῶν ἐπέτρεπον, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔλαττον αὐτοὶ μὴ τηροῦντες εἰρήνευον τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν παροικιῶν ἐν αἷς ἐτηρεῖτο, ἐρχομένοις πρὸς αὐτούς.*
> Amid those who were presbyters before Soter, those who were presiding over the church that you now lead, whom we name Anicetus, both Hyginus and Telesphorus, and Xystus—they did not observe it nor command those with them to do so; yet while not observing it, they related in peace with those from outlying areas who did observe it, when they came to them. (*Hist. eccl.* 5.24.14, my transl.)

Note how the term for "presbyters" or "elders" is used in the context of leaders who ruled over the Roman church. The *τε καί* in the middle of the list is also remarkable, perhaps marking an overlap in the tenure of Hyginus and Telesphorus. The use of πρεσβύτερος cannot by itself exclude the possibility of a single leader presiding over the church.

As for the lists of bishops in Rome, Lampe dismisses the one compiled by Hegesippus around 160 CE as only concerned with the succession of correct doctrine in Rome. Lampe marginalizes the next one compiled, the list of Irenaeus, by asserting that the succession list of twelve bishops is prob-

26. Manlio Simonetti, "Presbiteri e vescovi nella Chiesa del I e II secolo," *Vetera Christianorum* 33 (1996): 120.

ably modeled after the twelve apostles and therefore unreliable.[27] Although Lampe is in an “all or nothing” mode here, historical evidence cannot be evaluated as in a zero-sum game. With Frend, I think that Lampe needs to address the tradition of the succession of Roman bishops and explain why it does not matter for his account of early Christians in Rome.[28]

The letter 1 Clement is quite positive toward the office of bishop, presenting it as apostolic in origin. This portrait may be partially due to opposition by the letter’s authors to the way that the church in Corinth deposed a bishop, but the descriptions of the office’s origin seems to reflect a respect for the office in its own right (1 Clem. 42.4–5; 44.1–4). Since 1 Clem. 42.4 and 54.2 use the same verb for “appoint,” Lampe takes “bishops” in the letter to be equivalent to “elders” and categorically rejects the letter as evidence for a single bishop in Rome, viewed as the apostles’ successor. It is true that 1 Clement does not explicitly describe a single bishop who serves in the place of the apostles, but the letter does refer to the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in Rome to support its credibility (1 Clem. 5.1–7), so it would be expected that the letter’s authors had an idea about who succeeded these apostles in leadership of the Roman church.

Polycarp consulted with Anicetus of Rome about the date of Easter.[29] Marcion came to Rome when expelled from Pontus. The fact that he gave a large gift to the church of Rome is strong evidence for the regard—with a self-interested edge, to be sure—that he had for Rome.[30]

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27. *Lampe*, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 404–5; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 342–43, discussing Hegesippus as found in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22.1–3; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.3.

28. In both his reviews of the German edition and the English translation, Frend remarks on the absence of any consideration of the Petrine succession: W. H. C. Frend, review of, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, by Peter Lampe, *JEH* 41 (1990): 279; Frend, review of *From Paul to Valentinus*, by Peter Lampe, *Theology* 107 (2004): 372.

29. The references from Polycarp’s visit to Rome through Victor’s threat of excommunication and Tertullian’s taunt are inspired by the list offered in John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 6th ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 157. On Polycarp’s discussion with Anicetus in Rome about the date of Easter, see the testimony of Irenaeus, preserved in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.16–17. They agreed to disagree, and Anicetus allowed Polycarp to preside at the Eucharist.

30. Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30. See also Adolf Harnack, *Marcion: Der moderne Gläubige des 2. Jahrhunderts, der erste Reformator; Die Dorpater Preisschrift (1870)*, ed. Friedemann Steck, TU 149 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 115 (156 in Harnack’s original).

He needed the approval of an authority at Rome. Lampe and I probably disagree on whether this authority was already seated in a bishop there. Soter the Roman bishop increased the material support that Rome sent to other churches in the Mediterranean and spoke with those visiting Rome as a father, according to the letter of Dionysius of Corinth preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.23.9–10). Gift-giving is seldom without strings, and this may imply that Rome sought some influence over its beneficiaries. Churches in Gaul sent letters about the Montanists to churches in Asia and specifically to Eleutherius, bishop of Rome (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4: καὶ Ἐλευθέρῳ τῷ τότε Ῥωμαίων ἐπισκόπῳ), yet against a Rome-centered reading of the trajectory of the Montanists it must be recognized that Apollinarius credits their condemnation to a decision by the churches of Asia (*Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10). Praxeas visited Rome to clear his name and to persuade Victor against continuing to accept the Montanists (Tertullian, *Prax.* 1.1).

Lampe discounts Irenaeus's list of Roman bishops, suspecting its count of twelve to be concocted in order to mirror the apostles and of relatively late composition, dating it to at least the beginning of Eleutherius's bishopric (175 CE).[31] There may have been some creative composition by Irenaeus in this list, but still there is likely some basis—including an episcopal foundation—for bishops in Rome in the first half of the second century CE, for Irenaeus dates the debut of heresies in Rome according to the bishop presiding there, beginning with the death of Telesphorus, in the first year of the reign of Antoninus Pius (138 CE; *Hist. eccl.* 4.10.1–4.11.2).

The plural "successions of bishops" implies that Irenaeus assumes there was a plurality of bishops before the time when he was writing *Adversus haereses*.[32] Of course, a succession of bishops in Rome does not prove that the Roman bishop had complete authority over the Christ-cult in Rome. The fact that Irenaeus sent letters to gnostics in Rome indicates that he did not think the Roman bishop was satisfactorily silencing them (*Hist. eccl.* 5.20.1).

From this point on my survey joins Lampe, who names Victor as the first pope. But Lampe does not mention how Victor holds excommunication

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31. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.6.1–5. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 405; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 342. The list is not as polished as Lampe presents it. Peter is not mentioned. The church's founding is ascribed simply to "the apostles," who gave the bishopric of it first to Linus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.6.1). Details in the tradition of the line of bishops that emerge elsewhere, such as the martyrdom of Eleutherius, seem to point to a basic reliability to the tradition (*Hist. eccl.* 4.10.1).

32. See discussion in Jelland, *Church and the Papacy*, 111–12.

over churches in Asia as a potent threat. It is possible but unlikely that Victor would have threatened excommunication if he had been effectively the first Roman bishop.

Tertullian's description of the bishop of Rome is possible if the office effectively began in his lifetime, but its sarcastic edge would be dulled if it did not have a basis preceding Victor. Similar evidence from criticism can be cited from Hippolytus's description of Roman Christianity as a vile parody of God's kingdom.[33]

Epigenesis, Not Fractionation

Fractionation is not the best term for a study of Christians in Rome, since it implies that a unified body has gone through a process in which its parts become separated. But as Lampe correctly observes, Christianity did not have a monolithic identity or singular persona when it first reached Rome. Lampe helpfully suggests that the separate Jewish communities within Puteoli, Rome, and Aquileia form a model for the communities that practiced the Christ-cult in Rome.[34] Of course, it is not the case that all the early house churches of Christ-followers in Rome were Jewish in ethnic background. Paul's Letter to the Romans gives evidence of a gentile-oriented Christianity, for why else would Paul need to warn some in his implied audience of proud thoughts and behavior in relation to Jews (Rom 11:13a, 18–24)? The letter is oriented around the question of Jews' and gentiles' standing before God and includes many references to persons and ideas from the Jewish Scriptures. As Peter Oakes remarks, a gentile reading this letter would receive the impression that Paul's gospel was very Jewish in character.[35] While gentiles remain the primary audience of the letter, Paul's discourse regarding Jews in this letter—unique among the Pauline letters—indicates that this letter has a secondary audience, or *Nebenaddressat*, of

33. Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.7. See discussion in Jelland, *Church and the Papacy*, 105–6.

34. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 7, 9–10; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 1, 3–4 (Jewish communities provide a conduit for the Christ-cult to enter Rome), 364 ("The Christian fractionation stands against the background of *a Jewish community in the city of Rome that was broken up into a number of independent synagogue communities*" [emphasis original]; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 306).

35. *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (London: SPCK, 2009), 150–61.

Jews.[36] In addition to the gentile versus Jew distinction in the letter, there is also evidence that members of the Roman house churches were not accepting one another due to questions of food consumption and the observance of days (Rom 14:1–15:6), behaviors that may simply reflect the gentile *versus* Jew division or may have arisen from other differences in worldviews.

Since it is probable that the Roman Christians were already ensconced in separate groups when they received Paul's letter, this is evidence of diversity already in the first generation of the church. *Fractionation* implies an originally unified group of Christians that breaks apart due to internal strife or outside influence. It would be more accurate to say that Christianity in Rome was diverse, or contained separate communities, from the beginning.

A second weakness with the fractionation model is that the components into which Lampe sees Roman Christianity fractionating in the second century were actually varieties of Christianity that were brought in from outside Rome.[37] The centripetal force that Rome exerted on the empire confirms Daniélou's observation, which we consider in the next paragraph, that the leaders of groups in Roman Christianity that were ultimately excluded were predominantly outsiders. The variety within Lampe's portrait of Roman Christianity largely arises from the foreigners who migrated to Rome in hopes of spreading their gospels there. Lampe acknowledges the centripetal pull of Rome, which he emphasizes was the biggest city of the empire, with the greatest ethnic diversity, because of immigration to it. But his model founders when he writes, "The fractionation of Roman Christianity … is related to this size of the city; and a greater theological pluralism is, in turn, connected with this fractionation."[38] This is an imprecise way of speaking of the growth of

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36. Unique diction in Romans that indicates Paul expected some Jews to be reading the letter can be seen in 3:1–2; 7:1, 12, 14; 9:1–5; 10:1. On *Nebenadressat*, see Charlotte Hartwig and Gerd Theißen, "Die korinthische Gemeinde als Nebenadressat des Römerbriefs: Eigentextreferenzen des Paulus und kommunkativer Kontext des längsten Paulus briefes," *NovT* 46 (2004): 229–52. Hartwig and Theißen argue in terms of cities addressed that the church in Corinth is the *Nebenadressat* of the letter to the Romans. By way of analogy, I suggest that, when considering the ethnicities of those addressed in the letter, it is primarily addressed to gentiles, and its *Nebenadressat* is Jews.

37. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 385–96; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 323–34.

38. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 410; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 347.

the Christ-cult in Rome. It is not exactly fractionating, breaking apart, if its diversity is largely due to foreign teachers who came to Rome with their teaching. If we choose to accept fractionation for the beginnings of the Christ-cult in Rome in the first century, then we should not use it for the differences in Christianity that Lampe chronicles, beginning with the anti-Jewish version propagated by Cerdo and Marcion. The second-century version of Lampe's fractionation represents foreign infusions into the Christ-cult embedded in Rome for nearly a century. It is therefore qualitatively different from what Lampe calls fractionation when describing the beginnings of Christ-worship in Rome.[39]

Jean Daniélou traces the foreign influences on Roman Christianity in the second century. The leaders of these various forms of Christianity were foreigners who moved to Rome from elsewhere. Marcion came to Rome circa 136–140 from the province of Pontus. It is true that Marcion is not the originator of Marcionism, but Cerdo, whom Eusebius identifies as its founder, also immigrated to Rome. Eusebius credits Marcion with significantly multiplying this teaching's followers.[40] The gnostic Valentinus came to Rome from Egypt. He was in Rome by 140, when he sought to gain the bishop's chair there.[41] Though his disciple Ptolemy wrote his *Letter to Flora* probably from Rome, Frend labels the gnostic teachers Basilides, Valentinus, and Ptolemy all under the heading "Alexandrian Gnostic Teachers."[42] Tatian, who was considered heretical by Irenaeus, came from Mesopotamia, probably from Adiabene. The Montanist movement, originating in Phrygia, reached Rome in 177, when leaders in Lyons asked Pope Eleutherius to rule on the validity of the movement. The adoptionist Christology previously espoused by the Ebionites Cerinthus and Carpocrates reached Rome by the agency of Theodorus shortly before 200 CE. Victor excommunicated Theodorus around 198 CE, but his disciples continued teaching this Christology there. Monarchian theology, which endorses monotheism as understood by Judaism, treating the Son and

39. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 359–60 (the first-century beginnings), 360–65, 381–96 (second century); Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 301–2 (first-century beginnings), 302–7, 320–34 (second century).

40. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.2, following Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.1–2.

41. Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, *The First Six Hundred Years*, vol. 1 of *The Christian Centuries*, trans. Vincent Cronin (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 97–100, 107–8.

42. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 205–10.

Spirit as emanations or powers of God rather than persons within the Trinity, came to Rome through the agency of Epigonus, a disciple of Noetus. Victor and Zephyrinus welcomed Epigonus because of the Monarchians' opposition to Montanism. The Asian conflict between Montanism and Monarchianism thus shifted its point of engagement or battleground to Rome. The church's encounter with Monarchianism would continue into the third century. Daniélou regards the flow of foreign teachers into Rome a result of the cosmopolitan character of Antonine Rome.[43] We must thus conclude that the foreign provenance of these varied teachings in Rome make questionable the description of fractionation in Roman Christianity. The teachers were not native to Rome; they brought their teachings to Rome to gain followers and validation from the Roman see. Their presence and activities in Rome no doubt affected the Christ-cult practiced in Rome, but it is not a case of a pristine Roman Christianity breaking apart. The variety in Christian teachings and practices that emerges in the second century in Rome is a result of movement of foreign teachers to Rome. This centripetalism is due to Rome's cosmopolitan magnetism and the respect in which Christians in Europe, North Africa, Greece, and Asia held the Roman see.

Because these teachers sought acceptance for their teachings in Rome and because Christians in locations besides the teachings' places of origin looked to the bishop of Rome to rule on the teachings' legitimacy, it is probable that the centripetal movement to Rome was also due to a de facto preeminence of Rome by the first half of the second century.

Some readers will object that my criticism of Lampe misses the mark because these teachers stayed in Rome a relatively long time. Though the founders of these teachings were not native to Rome, they stayed and taught in Rome long enough for their teachings to be considered part of the family of Christian practices associated with Rome. This objection prompts a refinement of my criticism: if the Christ-cult in Rome changed and became more pluriform due to outside influences, a model of organic growth in response to outside stimuli would be better than a model of fractionation.

German and English dictionaries describe *fractionation* as a term used in chemistry in which the components of a substance are isolated and the substance is therefore broken down. Even when not used in the context of

43. Daniélou, *First Six Hundred Years*, 100–108.

chemistry, the word is used when any entity is broken into its component parts. This metaphor does not fit, since the elements into which Lampe's Roman Christianity fractionates are those teachings that were brought into Rome by outsiders such as Marcion, Valentinus, and Montanists. But instead of Marcionism, Valentinaism, and Montanism remaining in Rome as viable forms of Christianity, by the end of the second century we are left with a Roman church that interacts at least as an equal with other churches of the Mediterranean, and the teachings just named no longer a significant presence.[44] A better model would be epigenesis, the genetic process in which the environment and a body's genes interact, with resulting changes in the body's transcription of DNA to RNA. This model is more appropriate because it describes the growth of a living organism, and it is open to the possibilities of environmental influence on genetic transcription, such as we see in Hoffmann's argument for the permanent influence of Marcionism on Christianity.[45]

The reasons why the purportedly long period of tolerance Lampe describes is not remarkable is that Lampe ignores the character of Roman cult and the foreign provenance of some of Rome's Christian groups. The cult that Romans paid to the transcendent was oriented around practice rather than belief. Scholars of various forms of Roman cult during the republic and under the empire have now focused that description to say that Roman cult practices exhibited a resilience in rituals that were given new interpretations as time progressed.[46] When we apply this insight to Christian cult practiced in second-century Rome, we can see that, if a given group of believers continued to share samples of their eucharistic meal with other groups and showed respect toward the bishop, these were probably sufficient actions for other groups to keep the group in question in full communion. This can account for Anicetus's allowance of Polycarp's Quartodeciman position on the celebration of Easter and

44. Of course, some of the movements considered here continued to be followed well into the third century.

45. R. Joseph Hoffmann, *Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity; An Essay on the Development of Radical Paulinist Theology in the Second Century* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984).

46. Jörg Rüpke, *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 98, depending on Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *A History*, vol. 1 of *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7.

other second-century bishops' apparent oversight of the gnostics in Rome. Because Roman practices of worship could remain the same while different interpretations were employed to describe them, the second-century Christ-cult in Rome operated with a different model of unity than a model predicated on sameness.

The tolerance Lampe finds in Roman Christianity is also due to the necessary time for an outsider to be integrated or become an insider. Once that happens, the foreign teacher of heterodoxy can be banned. This explanation helps us understand why it was only after Valentinus's disciples Ptolmaeus and Florinus had established schools in Rome that they and their followers were excluded from the community in fellowship with the city's bishop.

Lampe is surely right that Florinus's high status in Roman administration may also have made Victor and other church leaders hesitate before excommunicating him.[47] It takes significant consideration before one will dismiss a friend in high places. In addition, the reputation that the gnostics had for being intellectuals may have retarded the process of ostracizing them.[48] This general consideration of the influence of a given teacher in Rome should also prompt us to consider Marcion's generous gift to Roman Christians. Such a gift probably made it difficult for some among the Roman house churches to cut ties with him.

The relative unity of the Roman church is a significant criterion of analysis for Lampe. His remarks on tolerance illustrate this, as well as his long, final section on fractionation. Here we should beware of evaluating first- and second-century Roman Christians on the basis of our standards of unity. Because Romans viewed religion as a matter of what one does, not what one believes, the relative unity of the Roman church should be evaluated based on indicators of social intercourse, not by propositions of belief.

Finally, the tolerance that Lampe describes shrinks in scope when he lists the exceptions to his portrait: "Marcion, Cerdo, a circle of Jewish Christians faithful to the Torah and, at most, possibly the Carpocratians."[49]

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47. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 390 n. 13; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 328 n. 83.

48. For a consideration of the Gnostics as "intellectuals," see Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 293–98; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 253–57.

49. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 396; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 334 (lacks reference to Jewish Christians).

Lampe claims that Cerdo and the torah-observing Jewish Christians initiated their separations from the other Christ-following communities who never excommunicated them. This is worth considering, but it does not exactly prove tolerance. There is no need to excommunicate those outside of a communion. So we are left with a tolerance among the second-century Christ-worshiping communities in Rome for the Valentinians, Montanists, and modalists such as Praxeas, who came to Rome from Asia.[50] And if we accept Bauer's judgment that Marcion presented the biggest threat to the established Christ-cult in Rome, the exception of Marcion that Lampe acknowledges also significantly weakens his description of second-century tolerance.[51]

In the end, fractionation versus tolerance does not seem to capture all that is occurring in Roman Christianity. Lampe would no doubt agree. My response is mainly that this should not be the primary lenses through which to view Roman Christianity. A model that takes account of the foreign provenance for some of the groups and resultant changes in other Christian communities seems to be a better model. That is why I advocate that an epigenetic framework is a more apt model than fractionation for an explanation of the founding of Roman Christianity.

Conclusion: Next Steps in Reconstructing the First Two Centuries of Christians in Rome

As the conversation regarding a myth of origins for Roman Christianity continues, how can we capitalize on Lampe's enduring work? My engagement with Lampe's work prompts me to be more conscious of how one's research intersects with a given myth of origins for Christianity in Rome. We need to disclose how our research on the early Christian communities in Rome confirms or questions a given myth of origins. Once this is done, there are some specific steps that Lampe has pioneered on which we can continue to build.

First, from now on we should embrace Lampe's principle of integrating theological and socioeconomic metrics when assessing the community.

50. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 389–95; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 327–33.

51. Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 128, 132.

Lampe rightly considers the neighborhoods of Rome, the members of the Roman churches, and the relative unity of the Christians there. In the category of neighborhoods, we need to monitor the archaeological developments for first- and second-century Rome. In the category of church members, Lampe examines the gender, places of origin (immigrants and autochthons), and class (slave, freedmen/women, freeborn) of those greeted in Rom 16.[52] He considers the relative wealth in other places in the book. He also considers the educational levels of Roman Christians when considering Justin. All these markers for those in the Roman church need to be kept and employed to trace the contours of the community there. We should stay open to new applications of demographic and political evidence of the first two centuries CE to our picture of the first Christians in Rome.

Second, we can build off of Lampe's work to keep all the primary texts he considers in our thesaurus of evidence. To this thesaurus, we should add other texts that may have a connection to Rome, whether in provenance or destination. Of course, the potential evidence any primary text provides must be weighted according to our certainty of its Roman connection.

Third, besides actual texts, we should take account of embassies to the Roman church, such as we see in the second century. These embassies give positive evidence of the relationships of those engaging in the Christ-cult in Rome with the churches of the Mediterranean world, including other churches' perceptions of their kindred worshipers in Rome.

The Letter to the Romans itself, concluding with its down-to-earth presentation of travel plans, desperate plea for prayer for Paul's safety, and ardently constructed greetings for those in Rome will not let us forget Paul's first addressees and those who followed them in the Roman Christ-following communities of the second century. The letter itself evokes a hunger for a myth, a founding story, for the communities to which it is addressed. And any gains we as Christ followers today make in understanding the early Christians in Rome will deepen our understanding of Paul's letter and help us find ourselves within an illuminating myth of Christian beginnings.

52. *From Paul to Valentinus*, 164–83; Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 135–53.

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Response to Peter Lampe's *Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*: The Archaeology of *Die stadtrömischen Christen* in 2016

Jutta Dresken-Weiland

What do we learn about the appearance of Christians in the historical record from the evidence of the material and visual culture of Rome? The question is a crucial one and has been comprehensively covered by Peter Lampe in his magnum opus, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, first published in German in 1989, then republished in English in 2003.[1] But have there been any new archaeological, epigraphic or iconographic findings or acquisitions since the publication of Lampe's book that might throw further light on the historical record of early believers at Rome?

Before the second century CE, there are still no testimonies. Apparently the first landmark in the mist is always the place venerated as the tomb of Peter, dated circa 160 CE. For five years now we have known of the tomb of Paul, a reused undecorated marble sarcophagus, in its late fourth-century situation in the church at the Via Ostiense named after him.[2] The first preserved martyr inscription in Rome is dated because

1. Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd ed., WUNT 2/18 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989); Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

2. Winfried Weber, "Die Verehrung der Apostel Petrus und Paulus in Rom und die Stätten ihrer Memoria in Rom," in *Nero: Kaiser, Künstler, Tyrann*, ed. Jürgen Merten (Darmstadt: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2016), 257–63. For the place venerated as the tomb of Paul, see Giorgio Filippi, "La tomba dell'apostolo Paolo: Nuovi dati dai recenti scavi; Note storiche e archeologiche," in *Paulo apostolo martyri: L'apostolo San Paolo nella storia, nell'arte e nell'archeologia; Atti della giornata di studi, Pontificia Università Gre-*

of the topographical situation in which it was found in to the early third century.[3] It belongs to the Pretestato catacomb at the Via Appia. On the fragment, we read *–us martys*, which may be complemented, according to the rich list of martyrs buried in this catacomb, probably as Januarius. This *–us* would also be one of Rome's Christians of the second century (fig. 1).

The late second and early third century is the time when different material testimonies appear that may be interpreted as Christian. I will discuss two monuments that should now be added to Peter Lampe's list.

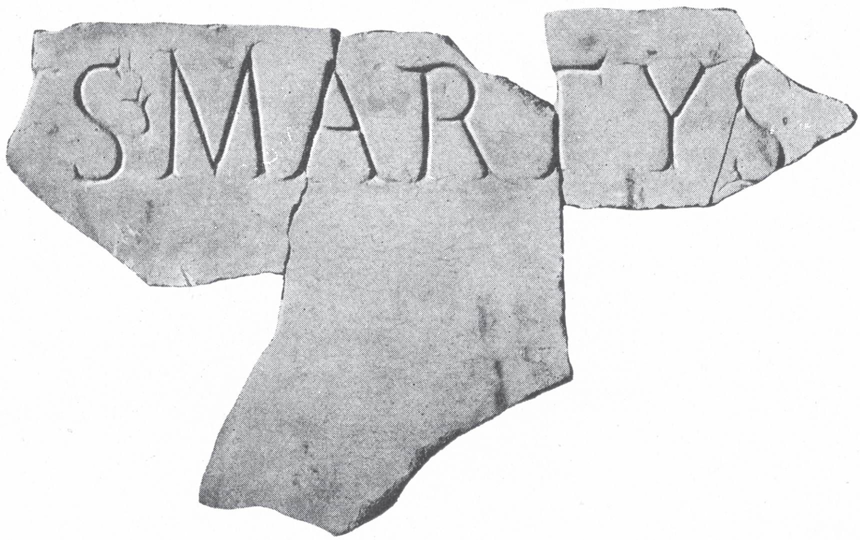

Figure 1. Catacomb of Praetextatus, fragment of an inscription. From Enrico Josi, *RACr* 4 (1927): 240 fig.13.

goriana, il 19 gennaio 2009, ed. Ottavio Bucarelli and Martin M. Morales (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011), 97–117. See also Fabizio Bisconti and Giovanna Ferri, *La strada di Paolo: La via Ostiense dalle origini alla cristianizzazione* (Padova: Esedra, 2018), 109–10.

3. On the inscription, see Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Afrikanische Märtyrerinschriften," in *Frühchristliche Grabinschriften im Westen des Römischen Reiches: Beiträge zur Internationalen Konferenz "Frühchristliche Grabinschriften im Westen des Römischen Reiches", Trier, 13.–15. Juni 2013,* ed. Lukas Clemens, Hiltrud Merten, and Christoph Schäfer (Trier: Kliomedia, 2015), 217 fig. 1. On its dating, see Lucrezia Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla via Appi: Storia topografica e monumentale di un insediamento funerario paleocristiano nel suburbio di Roma* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2004), 75, 190 n. 1241.

The Stela for Licinia Amias

The sepulchral stela for Licinia Amias (fig. 2) was found in the Vatican necropolis in Rome and is one of its earliest Christian testimonies; besides, it is one of the rare examples of Christian use of stelae in the West.

Figure 2. Museo Nazionale Romano, Stele of Licinia Amias, Inv. 67646. Photograph by Marie-Lan Nguyen.

Under a wreath and *D*(*is*) *M*(*anibus*), the dedication to the gods of the netherworld, both known from pagan grave monuments and also adopted in Christian use, ΙΧΘΥΣ ΖΩΝΤΩΝ, "the fish of the living," is written. Two fish are depicted below, turned toward an anchor, and below *Liciniae Amiati be/nemerenti vixit*: "for Licinia Amias, the well-deserving, lived." The Italian epigraphist Giorgio Filippi has noticed the lowering of the writing level below the fish where the name of the deceased is sculpted.

Although the surface has been smoothened with care, a few horizontal rests of letters and apices can still be noted. The difference between the form of the letters of the first two lines and the third and the fourth excludes a sculptor's error and shows clearly that these lines come from a reuse of the stela.[4] The stela marked a burial *sub divo* (under the open sky); it is dated because of its letter types and because of its content to the late second century;[5] the reuse by Licinia Amias took place probably two or three generations later, when the members of the family of the original commissioner of the stela had died. Their names are unknown—as only one third of the stela is conserved,[6] but there were certainly several persons. They should be added to Peter Lampe's list of Christians of the second century at Rome.[7]

1.1. The Fish

The text and the decoration of the stela are most interesting. The acrostic ΙΧΘΥΣ marks the first use of the fish as a symbol of Christ; that is, a Christian meaning is attributed to an earlier pagan image. The letters ΙΧΘΥΣ are, in fact, a confession of faith, with the advantage of being short and thus easily recalled: Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς, Θεοῦ Υἱὸς, Σωτὴρ: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." It is highly probable that Greek-speaking Christians "invented" this acrostic in the second half of the second century. The

4. Giorgio Filippi, "Calco in gesso dell'epitaffio di Licinia Amias," in *Le iscrizioni dei cristiani in Vaticano: Materiali per una mostra epigrafica*, ed. Ivan di Stefano Manzella (Vatican City: Monumenti, Musei e Gallerie Pontificie, 1997), 218–20.

5. Filippi, "Calco in gesso," 220; Claudio Noviello, "Stele con simboli cristiani," in *Terme di Diocleziano: La collezione epigrafica*, ed. Rosanna Friggeri, Maria Grazia Grannino Cecere, and Gian Luca Gregori (Milan: Electa, 2012), 569; Giuseppe Cascioli, *Epigrafi cristiane nell'area vaticana III–IV secolo*, Trascrizione delle epigrafi a cura di Luigi Marsili, sistemazione redazionale del commento a cura di Dario Rezza, apparato critico di Fabio Paolucci (Vatican City: Capitolo Vaticano 2013), 46–47; Rosanna Barbera, "Le prime iscrizioni sepolcrali cristiane di Roma," in Clemens, Merten, and Schäfer, *Frühchristliche Grabinschriften*, 181–82 fig. 12.

6. Filippi, "Calco in gesso," 220.

7. For the gnostic inscriptions from the Via Latina, already mentioned by Lampe, see recently Carlo Carletti, "Origin of Christians' Epigraphy: An Interaction between Different Sources," in *Texts, Practices, and Groups: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the History of Jesus' Followers in the First Two Centuries,* ed. Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 698–702.

terminus ante quem of this short confession of faith is the inscription of Abercius, dated to the last third of the second century, and Tertullian, *Bapt. 1* (198–200 CE), where Christ and the Christians are denoted as fish. The acrostic ΙΧΘΥΣ also appears in Sib. Or. 8.217–250, the book in question being datable to the end of the second or third century.[8] The acrostic can be found until the sixth century.[9]

About 200 CE, the fish as a symbol had four different meanings: (1) the message of the acrostic ΙΧΘΥΣ (Tertullian, *Bapt.* 1) itself; (2) the fish as an image of the faithful, being connected with baptism symbolism in which the fish, representing the faithful, remain in the water of baptism (Tertullian, *Bapt.* 1) and are also saved by extraction from the sea of malice (Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.52.2; 3.59.2; 3.101.3); (3) the fish as a symbol of Christ, in comparison to the faithful, who are addressed as small fish (Tertullian, *Bapt.* 1); and (4) the fish as a symbol of the Eucharist (see the inscription of Abercius).

These different aspects converge in the interpretation of the fish as a symbol of Christ.[10] The phrase "fish of the living" is unique in epigraphy. *Living* obviously refers to all who live and believe in God, as in Matt 22:32 and Mark 12:27, where Jesus states that God is not God of the dead but of the living. It also alludes to John 11:26, where Jesus says that everyone who lives and believes in him will never die. Giorgio Filippi points to the Christian concept of ζάω in the New Testament, which implies also the participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Although there may be several layers of meaning, it is clear that in this context the emphasis is on life after death.

This inscription is thus the first expression of Christian hope in afterlife. It antedates references to afterlife in pre-Constantinian inscriptions in the catacombs for nearly two generations: in the catacombs, *Pax* or the frequent *in pace* take up the common greeting of the Christian community, which goes back

8. Klaus Giradet, ed., *Konstantin, Oratio ad sanctorum coetum: Rede an die Versammlung der Heiligen* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 101–03.

9. Carlo Carletti, *Epigrafia dei cristiani in occidente dal III al VII secolo: Ideologia e prassi* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2008), 180–81 no. 62; see also the inscription in the apse mosaic of San Apollinare in Classe, dedicated in 549 CE: Jutta Dresken-Weiland, *Mosaics of Ravenna* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2017), 267.

10. Jutta Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort: Untersuchungen zu Jenseitsvorstellungen von Christen des 3. und 4. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2010), 26–28.

to the Hebrew shalom and to the greeting of peace passed down in the New Testament. These salutations may be understood as greetings of the bereaved to their deceased.[11] They presuppose that the dead are now in a pleasant and positive condition but do not refer explicitly to afterlife. More similar in content is *in deo* or *in C*(*h*)*risto*," which we find only from the second half of the third century on in the Roman catacomb inscriptions.[12] So the uniqueness of content of the inscription later used by Licinia Amias must be stressed.

1.2. The Anchor

The inscription of Licinia Amias is apparently the most ancient example not only of the use of ΙΧΘΥΣ in a nonabbreviated form and as an expression of belief in afterlife but also of the anchor in a Christian context. The anchor is taken from pagan art, where seafaring was considered an image for life; moreover, the anchor, which holds the ship in the port or on open sea, was interpreted as an image indicating hope, security, and wellbeing. Interestingly, the anchor never has a Christian interpretation in theological texts,[13] with the exception of the Hebr 6:18–20, which mentions hope as the anchor of the soul. In the catacomb inscriptions, the anchor is predominantly represented in the third century in the primitive parts of the catacomb of Priscilla: the anchor is the most frequent image or symbol, but it appears only rarely later.[14] It seems likely that the anchor as an isolated image was abandoned because it could not establish itself without a Christian interpretation as a symbol or an image.

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11. Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Tod und Jenseits in antiken christlichen Grabinschriften," in *Himmel, Paradies, Schalom: Tod und Jenseits in antiken christlichen und jüdischen Grabinschrifte*, ed. Jutta Dresken-Weiland, A. Angerstorfer, and A. Merkt (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2012), 77.

12. Inscriptions from ICUR dated within the third century: 4.10284; 8.22381, 22633; 9.25126 (second half of the third century), 10.26329 (last third of the third century); 7.20424, 20547, 23332 (third century, without specification). It becomes more frequent in the late third and early fourth century CE.

13. Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort*, 23–24; Emanuele Castelli, "The Symbols of Anchor and Fish in the Most Ancient Parts of the Catacomb of Priscilla: Evidence and Questions," in *Early Christian Iconographies*, ed. by Markus Vinzent, StPatr 49 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 16–17.

14. Marco Bonino, "Barche, navi e simboli nel cimitero di Priscilla," *RACr* 59 (1983): 277–311; see the statistics on 279; Castelli, "The Symbols of Anchor and Fish," 11–19. On its later rareness, see Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort*, 23.

Nevertheless, here it occurs together with the fish. In early Christian art, as in Roman art, symmetry plays an important role, and the duplication of the fish with a central image in between allows an adequate filling of a rectangular space. It was, of course, not a Christian invention. The motif had probably already been created in the Hellenistic period and appears on lamps of the late first century CE before it occurs on gravestones and gems from the third century onward.[15] The emergence of fish and anchor in the third century both in epigraphy and on gems, often together with Christian inscriptions, suggests that the motif was given a new Christian meaning.

2. Gems as Testimonies for Christians of the Second and Third Centuries CE

Gems have been underestimated as testimonies for Christians of the second and third centuries CE. A gold ring with a gem found in the catacomb of Domitilla in 1911 probably dates to the late second century, based on the style of the gem and the form of the ring (fig. 3).[16] It shows a shepherd standing beside a tree, leaning on a pedum and watching his sheep; to the left is a dolphin curled around an anchor. Jeffrey Spier, to whom we are indebted for an extensive study on late antique and early Christian gems, considers this composition to be unique. Taken separately, the shepherd and the dolphin are common on pagan gems and are not typical for Christian ones. Gems with the shepherd mostly belong to the second half of the third century, which means that the motif here, in the late second century, has been chosen intentionally. The two motifs of the shepherd and the dolphin with the anchor combined, however, suggest that both may have a special Christian significance.[17] It is possible that the gem cutter chose two motifs from his traditional repertoire and combined them to create a

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15. Jeffrey Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), 45–46.

16. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 62 no. 409. For the form of the rings, see Martin Henig, *A Corpus of Roman Engraved Gemstones from British Sites* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1974), 41–54. See also briefly Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Zwei Tonlampen mit der Darstellung eines Schafträgers," in *Die Päpste und die Einheit der lateinischen Welt: Antike–Mittelalter–Renaissance*, ed. Alfried Wieczorek and Stefan Weinfurter (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2017), 129.

17. Martin Henig, review of *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, by Jeffrey Spier, *JRS* 21 (2008): 742, shares this interpretation; see Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 62 no. 409, 41–42 nos. 190–97.

Figure 3. Rome, Vatican Museums, ring probably of a second-century Christian. © Musei Vaticani.

scene with a special Christian meaning,[18] or, at the very least, a scene that could be interpreted in a Christian sense.

This gem from Domitilla is a unique creation and earlier than other specimens. Its character becomes more distinct when we look at the later use of fish and anchor on gems: they show (1) a single fish or a pair of fish without anchor, two fish flanking an anchor (2a) with or (2b) without Christian inscription, (3) two fish flanking a cross; among the fish is also (4) the dolphin.[19] Most of them are attributed to the third century.[20] These gems are reported to come from a number of find sites; most are said to be from Asia Minor or the Eastern Mediterranean,[21] but they were goods that traveled everywhere and likely were worn also by the Christians at Rome.

18. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, l.c.

19. Examples may be found in Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*: (1) 41–42 nos. 190–97; (2a) 42 nos. 198–210; (2b) 42–45 nos. 211–58; (3) 46–48 nos. 265–98; (4) 49 nos. 302–3.

20. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 41–49. See Christian Schmidt, "Frühchristliche Symbole und Bilder auf Fingerringen des 3. bis 5. Jahrhunderts," in *Credo: Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*, ed. Christoph Stiegemann, Martin Kroker, and Wolfgang Walter, 2 vols. (Petersberg: Imhof, 2013), 2:42–43.

21. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 46.

Looking at these third-century gems that did not come *ex nihilo*, the unknown owner of the gold ring of Domitilla, who had to create an image with a Christian interpretation, should be added to Peter Lampe's list. These motifs are not limited to gems but are also found on gold rings, for example on a specimen in a private collection dated shortly after 250,[22] with anchor, fish, and ΙΧΘΥΣ. They were obviously present in different social strata.

What other symbols and images should we imagine on the fingers of the Roman Christians? A group of third-century rings is decorated with the name of Jesus Christ and represents a public confession of faith.[23] A visual element that should be mentioned in the context is the Christogram and the staurogram. Both were known by the Roman Christians early on. The staurogram in the form of the *tau-rho* appears in manuscripts dated as early as 175–225 CE, where it functions as part of the abbreviation of the Greek words for "cross" (σταύρος) and "crucify" (σταυρόω), written in abbreviated form as *nomina sacra*.[24] It forms a pictogram that may refer to the cross of Jesus's crucifixion.[25] The staurogram appears rarely on gems, whereas the Christogram in the form *chi-rho* is more frequent.[26] Maybe the explicit reference to the shameful death of Christ on the cross was better referred to in manuscripts and not on everyday objects or on jewel elements. The preserved rings mostly belong to the third century.

There is, however, a so-called magic gem preserved in the British Museum in London,[27] dated about 200 CE, with the earliest known

22. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 184 no. R1 pl. 142.

23. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 29–30 nos. 86–107.

24. Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2006), 136.

25. Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 151–52, with reference to Robin M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (London: Routledge, 2000), 24, 138.

26. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 30–32.

27. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, 73 no. 443, 74–75; Felicity Harley and Jeffrey Spier, "Magical Amulet with the Crucifixion," in *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, ed. Jeffrey Spier (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 2007), 228–29 no. 55; Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Passionsdarstellungen in der frühchristlichen Kunst," in *Gelitten, gestorben, auferstanden: Passions- und Ostertraditionen im antiken Christentum*, ed. Tobias Nicklas, Andreas Merkt, and Joseph Verheyden, WUNT 2/273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 31; see 33–36 figs. 1–2; Josef Engemann, "The Argument from Silence: Iconographic Statements of 1981 on Faked Gems Reconsidered," in "*Gems of Heaven*": *Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in*

representation of the crucifixion of Christ: *magic* here generally refers to incised images and inscriptions that made the gems into amulets. These images and inscriptions reflect beliefs and conceptions that are expressed in magic texts and papyri; here they are conferred on amulets. These magic gems originated in Roman Egypt and were popular and widespread throughout the Roman Empire in the second and third centuries, so they also were known to contemporary Roman Christians. The authenticity of this gem cannot be doubted because it corresponds in size, material, and workmanship to the standards found in this group of objects. Moreover, other Christian images and symbols are also to be found on these gems. The London gem can be compared to other gems dated about 200 CE, according to the style, material, and inscriptions characteristic of magic gems of the late second and early third centuries. The interest of the image is in the atrocity and barbarity of crucifixion. We do not know who wore this amulet, if he or she was pagan or Christian with a penchant for magic. The gem was probably worn below the clothing so that it could not be readily seen. Obviously, Jesus Christ and his death on the cross were widely known in the ancient world, so people could get the idea of referring to it in a magical image.

3. An Isolated Example of Christian "Art" about 200 CE: The Berlin Lamp

Another object to be mentioned in the context of singular appearances of Christian images is a lamp found in Rome, today preserved in the Bode-Museum in Berlin. The lamp was, according to the inscription on its bottom, produced in the workshop of Florentius, which was active in the late second and early third centuries. It is the only lamp with Christian scenes, more exactly, mostly with scenes from the Old Testament, which were more popular than those from the New Testament in early Christian art. In the middle it shows the *criophoros* with seven sheep, above him the busts of Sol und Luna with seven stars, on the left Noah's ark, represented in the form of a box, without Noah, but with the dove or the raven; below is Jonah, ejected by the fish, lying beneath the gourd, with a tree on the right. The seven stars, Sol, and Luna refer to the cosmic order and to the beginning of a golden age,[28] and the *criophoros*

Late Antiquity, c. AD 200–600, ed. Chris Entwistle (London: British Museum 2011), 208–9.

28. See recently Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Transformation and Transition in the

in pagan art represents a condition of quiet and untroubled happiness.[29] When the shepherd is represented together with images from the Old and the New Testaments, he may be interpreted as the good shepherd Jesus. Images of Jonah are regarded as the expression of the Christian hope of resurrection and salvation from death, whereas representations of Noah convey more general ideas of salvation.[30] The Berlin lamp shows that about 200 CE there were individuals interested in Christian images. Only centuries later did Christian themes appear regularly on lamps, namely, on lamps from the main producer, Africa, after the second third of the fifth century.[31]

For me, this isolated presence of a Christian lamp is extremely interesting. Were there already so many Christians at Rome that a business-minded person had the idea to offer lamps with Christian images, or at least to try it? The quantity of catacomb burials in the first third of the third century,[32] representing the idea of collective burial, could favor such a hypothesis. After looking at objects commissioned by singular (or small groups of) Christians, I will now focus on the Roman catacombs as objects belonging to larger groups of Christians at Rome and then come to a summation of the state of research.

Art of Late Antiquity," in *Late Antiquity in Contemporary Debate*, ed. Rita Lizzi Testa (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2017), 42–43.

29. For the state of the research concerning the shepherd, see Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort*, 77–79.

30. For the interpretation of Jonah images, see Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort*, 96–100; recently Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Schlafende und Träumende in der frühchristlichen Kunst," *RQ* 111 (2016): 204–15. For Noah, see Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort*, 287–88.

31. Dresken-Weiland, "Transformation and Transition," 43.

32. Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai, "Gli spazi delle sepolture cristiane tra il III e il V secolo: Genesi e dinamica di una scelta insediativa," in *La communità cristiana di Roma: La sua vita e la sua cultura dalle origini all'alto medio evo*, ed. Letizia Pani Ermini and Paolo Siniscalco (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001), gives these numbers: Callisto, Area I, around 230–240 CE: ca. 1,500 burials (p. 342); catacomb later named Calepodio (burial place of Callisto), around 250: 350 burials; Priscilla, region of the arenar and region of Eliodoro and Tyche, around 250: 1,200 burials; Domitilla, region of the Good Shepherd and of the Flavi Aureli "A": 250 burials; Pretestato, regions of the "scala maggiore" and of the "scala minore": around 600 burials (p. 344).

4. Origin, Organization, and Particularities of the Catacombs at Rome

It is well known that various factors contributed to the desire of Christians to be buried together: (1) the numeral growth of the movement and the improved organization of the communities who could afford an organized cemetery; (2) the awareness of being a solitary and united group, with the result that the group granted poorer fellow Christians a dignified sculpture and thus stayed together even after death; and (3) the importance of having proper rooms for the commemoration of the dead.[33] It has been emphasized in recent research that the interest in a common burial place came from the believers themselves[34] and that this choice was an option that was not imposed upon them.[35] Christians were also free to choose their place in any cemetery; the division in ecclesiastical regions did not yet exist in the third century, and even in the fourth century their freedom of choice was not limited.[36] Personal contacts and preferences certainly played the decisive role.

It is uncontested that about 200 CE the clergy initiated the creation of Area I in the catacombs of Callisto (Via Appia).[37] Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai and Jean Guyon have shown how it had been a laboratory to find out the best and most effective layout for a subterranean cemetery. In their study

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33. See, for instance, Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai, "Katakombe," *RAC* 20:381; Bernard Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome: The First Three Centuries* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 168–95.

34. Raffaella Giuliani and Jean Guyon, "La gestion du 'regroupement des morts' dans les cimetières communautaires de l'Antiquité: L'exemple des catacombes romaines," in *Le regroupement des morts: Genèse et diversité archéologique*, ed. Dominique Castex et al. (Bordeaux: MSHA, 2012), 98.

35. Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai and Jean Guyon, "Relire Styger: Les origines de l'Area I du cimetière de Calliste et la crypte des papes," in *Origine delle catacombe romane: Atti della giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia Cristiana*, ed. Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai and Jean Guyon (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2006), 158, 160.

36. Lucrezia Spera, "'*Regiones divisit diaconibus*': Il ruolo dei diaconi negli apparati amministrativi della Chiesa di Roma e la questione delle regioni ecclesiastiche," in *Diakonia, diaconiae, diaconato: Semantica e storia nei padri della chiesa* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2010), 468–69.

37. Raffaella Giuliani and Alessandra Cerrito, "Recenti indagini nell'area prima e nella regio III delle catacombe di S. Callisto," *RACr* 85 (2009): 125–234; Barbara Mazzei, "Storia di un travaglio conservativo: A proposito delle pitture dei cubicoli dei Sacramenti e delle cripte di Lucina," *RACr* 85 (2009): 55–75.

they calculated that Area I accommodated about 1,130 graves between 200 and 230 CE; this means that there were an average of thirty-eight burials every year and nearly three funerals every month. The interest in burial in collective cemeteries increased rapidly: from nine hundred persons who wanted to be buried with their family members in Area I about 200 CE,[38] it went up to approximately nine thousand persons at the end of the third century who were interested in a grave in the catacomb *Ad duas lauros* (Saints Marcellino e Pietro, Via Labicana).[39]

Other early subterranean cemeteries in the first half of the third century were probably founded and organized by the laity.[40] This is suggested by the personal names given to them, which probably indicate the donors or owners of the property.[41] These early *hypogea* cemeteries consist of several early nuclei that were later connected to each other. No catacomb is like the other. They show the presence of different groups of persons, such as families in the originally pagan *hypogeum* of the Flavi in the (later) Domitilla catacomb of (Via Ardeatina)[42] or the *hypogeum* of the good shepherd in the same catacomb,[43] or groups that shared the same or a similar profession. In the Priscilla catacomb (Via Salaria), for example, the vast area hewn out of an abandoned pozzolana quarry was used by people who won the pozzolana and sold bricks.[44] We find also people who show that they are satisfied with a simple sepulcher in the region of the *scala minore* in the Pretestato catacomb or in the "big stair of 1897" in Domitilla.[45] Probably the orga-

38. Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, "Relire Styger," 158.

39. Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, "Relire Styger," 157.

40. For the number of inhumations, see Fiocchi Nicolai, "Gli spazi delle sepolture cristiane," 344–45.

41. Fiocchi Nicolai, "Gli spazi," 346–47.

42. Letizia Pani Ermini, "L'ipogeo dei Flavi in Domitilla," *RACr* 48 (1972): 254, 268; Philippe Pergola, "Gli ipogei all'origine della catacomba di Domitilla: Una rilettura," in Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, *Origine delle catacombe romane*, 183; Barbara Borg, *Crisis and Ambition: Tombs and Burial-Customs in Third-Century Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 215–18.

43. Philippe Pergola, "La région dite du Bon Pasteur dans le cimetière de Domitilla sur l'Ardeatina," *RACr* 51 (1975): 65–96; Pergola, "Il Praedium Domitillae: Testimonianze pagane," *RACr* 55 (1979): 332–33; Pergola, "Gli ipogei," 184.

44. Giuliani and Guyon, "Gestion," 115.

45. For the former, Lucrezia Spera, "All'origine del cimitero di Pretestato," in Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, *Origine delle catacombe romane*, 190; for the latter, Pergola, "Gli ipogei," 183–84.

nization of the cemeteries was taken over by clerics from the early fourth century CE onward.

The list of differences between the single Roman catacombs can be further expanded. Epigraphy also shows a considerable number of diverse Christian behaviors in terms of burial rituals. In the Priscilla catacomb, more than three hundred inscriptions, belonging to the earliest texts, give only the name of the deceased; the prevalence of the *cognomina singula* has led to the conclusion that these mark the presence of slaves, freedmen, and persons of humble origin.[46] The eschewal of personal dates has been interpreted as a sign of unity and equality, in contrast to a society that was rigidly structured and organized hierarchically in strata that did not communicate with each other.[47] Even in this kind of "reduced" inscription, it is the diversity and not the uniformity that is worthy of note: in Priscilla and in the catacomb of Novatian, these inscriptions are painted in red or cut in the stone,[48] whereas in the *coemeterium Maius* and in Sant'Agnese (both on the Via Nomentana) they are carved with great care on marble slabs.[49] Such a marble slab must have been affordable, even if the Traditio Apostolica mentions only tiles for closing the graves.[50] Obviously, on the Via Nomentana someone or a group of persons were active and managed to communicate how they wanted things to look. The *coemeterium Maius* and the Agnes catacomb originate about 250 CE,[51] but they use older epigraphic formulary. This means that there were different possibilities how to write an epitaph at the same time; the possibility of using certain expressions to indicate the Christian faith already existed. Furthermore, examples of pagan formulary are not rare: the people buried in the catacombs did not feel the need to refer to the Christian faith; pagans also found a final resting place here.[52] No one wanted to sever family ties in death and complicate a difficult emotional situation.

46. Carletti, *Epigrafia dei cristiani*, 34.

47. Carletti, *Epigrafia dei cristiani*, 32.

48. For Priscilla, see Fabrizio Bisconti, Raffaella Giuliani, and Barbara Mazzei, *La catacomba di Priscilla: Il complesso, i restauri, il museo* (Todi: Tau, 2013), 9 fig. 9; 15 fig. 11; for Novatian, see A. Rocco, "La più antica regione della catacomba di Novaziano," in Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, *Origine delle catacombe romane*, 227 fig. 8, 232 fig. 12.

49. Carletti, *Epigrafia dei cristiani*, 38, 152–53 no. 27.

50. The English text in Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome*, 182.

51. Fiocchi Nicolai, "Gli spazi," 350.

52. For pagan formulary, see, for instance, the inscriptions dated between 255 and 270 CE in Novatian, ICUR 7.20335–39. For pagan burials, see Eric Rebillard, *Religion*

5. Christians and Pagan Society in the Second Third of the Third Century

The relationship between Christians and pagans was relaxed in the sepulchral realm. Above all, cemeteries were private and, with regard to decoration, more or less free of restriction. Important results for understanding the beginning of catacomb painting with Christian scenes come from the recent restorations of the decoration in Area I of Callisto. They show that the earliest pictorial decorations of the catacombs do not belong to the first, but to the middle of the third century.[53] The cubicula A1 to A6 show traditional imagery but also scenes from the Old and New Testaments; the commissioners of the paintings are the *fossores*, the persons charged with the layout of the catacombs. They present themselves in various images in these cubicula. Unfortunately, we do not know if and how far they were integrated in ecclesiastical structures, which may have influences their choice of imagery. In the so-called Papal Crypt, where most bishops of Rome from Anteros to Eutychianus were buried in the third century, no remains of Christian images were found, only widespread ornamental motifs.[54] The Cubiculum of Orpheus over the way of the Papal Crypt, which was used by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, shows the Thracian singer in the center of the ceiling together with hippocamps and floral and other decorative elements. Obviously, the ecclesiastical elite preferred the traditional iconography.[55] Even later examples for this attitude may be cited, for instance, the double cubiculum of the deacon Severus, laid out before 304 CE also in Callisto.[56] It is decorated with wine branches (fig. 4).

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et sépulture: L'église, les vivants et les morts dans l'Antiquité tardive (Paris : Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2003), 46.

53. Fabrizio Bisconti, "L1–L2, A1–A6, x–y, c–e: Relitti iconografici e nuovi tracciati figurativi alle origini della pittura catacombale romana," *RACr* 85 (2009): 7–53.

54. In general, see Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, "Relire Styger," 152–56; for ornamental motifs, see 135 fig. 6 and the hypothetical reconstruction on 145 fig. 15.

55. Bisconti, "Relitti iconografici," 13–14; Fabrizio Bisconti, "Le catacombe di San Callisto: Il contesto, le scoperte e un diario di bordo," in *Le catacombe di San Callisto: Storia, contesti, scavi, restauri, scoperte; A proposito del cubiculo di Orfeo e del Museo della Torretta*, ed. Fabrizio Bisconti and Marco Braconi (Todi: Tau, 2015), 51, a color photo on 77 pl. 5.

56. For the localization of the cubiculum, see Lucrezia Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma dall'antichità al medioevo* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1999), 123;

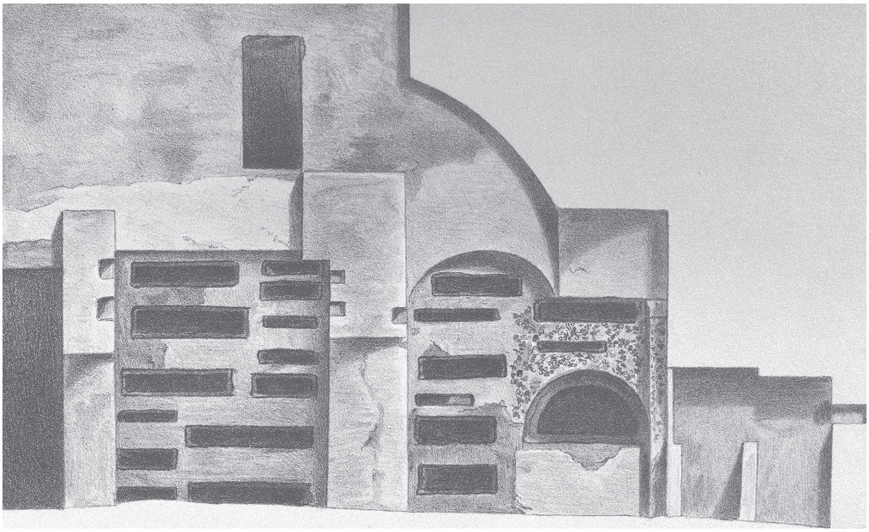

Figure 4. Catacomb of Callixtus, double cubiculum constructed by the deacon Severus. From Giovanni Battista De Rossi, *La Roma sotteranea cristiana III* (Rome: Cromo lithografia Pontificia, 1877), 44–49 pl. IV.

Christian images are a minority choice in the third-century catacombs. Among the catacomb paintings of the third century, in the second third of the century there are nine rooms in four catacombs and in the last third of the century six rooms in three catacombs that are decorated with various images from the Old and the New Testament.[57]

The interest in Christian images is minimal, which means that the choice of pagan motifs does not indicate a religious belief; the choice of pagan or traditional decoration is a question of cultural affiliation or personal taste and not of faith. This is also shown in the production of marble sarcophagi, where Christian themes appear only in the late third century; before this, those who could afford it were buried in a sarcophagus with

for the description of the grave, see Giovanni Battista De Rossi, *La Roma sotteranea cristiana III* (Rome: Cromo lithografia Pontificia, 1877), 44–49 and pl. IV, 48 about the painting.

57. See Jutta Dresken-Weiland, "Bilder im Grab und ihre Bedeutung im Kontext der Christianisierung der frühchristlichen Welt," *Antiquité tardive* 19 (2011): 65–66. The catacombs with Christian images from the second third of the third century are Calixtus, Domitilla, Priscilla, and Pretestatus; from the last third of the third century: anonymous catacomb at the Via Anapo, Priscilla, Petrus, and Marcellinus.

traditional iconography. Among them, some were provided with a Christian inscription.[58]

To sum up, the commissioners of the epitaph later used by Licinia Amias and of the gold ring found in Domitilla should be added to Peter Lampe's list. In regard to current research on Roman catacombs, the free choice of the burial place, the activity of the laity, and the clerics' predilection for pagan imagery should be stressed as defining issues. The years from 200 CE onward are a turning point to a better material visibility of Christians at Rome.

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From Individual Inscriptions and Images to Conceptual Issues: Response to Jutta Dresken-Weiland and Mark Reasoner

Peter Lampe

Archaeology continuously adds to our source material, producing new evidence from excavations and reassessment of old findings, their dating and interpretation. Jutta Dresken-Weiland, expertly looking at gems as long-underestimated Christian testimonies, adds a late second-century gold ring from the Domitilla catacomb and an early third-century martyr inscription (*–us martys*) from the Pretestato catacomb to our evidence of Roman Christians of the first two centuries, documenting two Christ believers of the second century. She convincingly also adds anonymous members of a family who in the late second century commissioned a stela in the Vatican necropolis. Among the stela's Christian symbols, "the acrostic ΙΧΘΥΣ," according to Dresken-Weiland, "marks the first use of the fish as a symbol of Christ." However, an ΙΧΘΥΣ graffito at the Via Appia under San Sebastiano possibly is as old. At the Via Appia, around the middle of the second century, three pagan mausoleums were constructed in a pit of tuff. They were used until the middle of the third century, when they were given up and their entrances blocked up with amphorae. The whole place was filled in, and above it a new site, the Memoria Apostolorum of San Sebastiano, was built. Descending the stairs in the middle mausoleum to the lower and less-decorated region of the vault, a Christian scratched the acrostic ΙΧΘΥΣ into the still-fresh plaster of a pillar, adding the letter *tau* (T), a depiction of a cross, to ΙΧΘΥΣ by inserting it between the *iota* and the *chi*.[1]

1. See further Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003; repr., London: T&T Clark, 2010), 28–29 and the figure on v.

The plaster would not have been applied shortly before the hypogeum was abandoned. There also did not seem to have been a continuity between the Christian of the acrostic and the Christian builders of the Memoria Apostolorum who filled in the pit of tuff and thus abandoned at least one Christian loculus, if not more. Perhaps around 200 CE or earlier, therefore, the acrostic was put on. With its T cross, it finds its closest parallel in the acrostic poem of the Sibylline Oracles (8.218–250). Written already under Marcus Aurelius,[2] thus earlier than Dresken-Weiland suggests, the acrostic poem displays the initials ΙΧΘΥΣΣ, with the second sigma representing *σταυρός* and the poem's ending pointing at Jesus's saving suffering on the cross, "the wood among the faithful … the scandal of the world" (Sib. Or. 8.245–246, 250; see also 1 Cor 1:17–25; Rom 9:33).

Apart from the second-century Christian persons discussed by Dresken-Weiland, a Roman marble inscription from the Via Appia, previously always thought pagan, in my opinion adds to the list of known *Jewish* persons in Rome in the first century BCE.[3] It shows a *C*(*aius*) *Ateilius Serrani l*(*ibertus*) *Euhodus margaritarius de Sacra Via*. Euhodus sold pearls at the Via Sacra and in his will allowed other freedpersons, most probably his own, to be buried in his tomb. In the metric inscription the remains of Euhodus are called *ossa hominis boni misericordis amantis pauperis.* For the first time in the west of the Roman Empire, this epigraph shows the combination of *misericordia* and *amor pauperis*,[4] that is, the idea of giving to economically weaker persons on the basis of empathy and affection. This is paralleled in Jewish sources such as T. Benj. 4, where the entire word field of "good man," "compassion," "merciful," "good," "love," and "mercy to the poor" reoccurs (4.1: *τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀνδρὸς τὸ τέλος, μιμήσασθε οὖν ἐν ἀγαθῇ διανοίᾳ τὴν εὐσπλαγχνίαν αὐτοῦ*; 4.2: *ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος … ἐλεᾷ γὰρ πάντας*; 4.3: *οὗτος ἀγαθοποιῶν … ἀγαπᾷ*; 4.4: *τὸν πένητα ἐλεεῖ, τῷ ἀσθενεῖ συμπαθεῖ*; 4.5: *ἀγαπᾷ*). Even the singular of the abstract "the poor" is paralleled (*pauper*/*πένης* do not denote persons living under the subsistence minimum but people not having some capital to sustain themselves and therefore having to work). The combination of "love for the poor" and

2. Sib. Or. 8.65–74 wrongly prophesies Nero's return during Marc Aurelius's reign.

3. CIL 6.9545; CIL 1.1212; *ILS* 7602; *ILLRP* 797.

4. The nominative needs to be *homo bonus misericors amans pauperis*, not *pauper*, because a pearl trader at the Via Sacra with his own freedpersons and a tomb at the Via Appia, built by him for others and himself and decorated with a metric inscription on a marble slab, hardly could be considered *pauper*.

"mercy/merciful acts" also surfaces in the Christian Pseudo-Clementine *Epistulae de virginitate* (1.2.3: ὁ γὰρ ὄντως φιλόπτωχος ἀκούει τοῦ λέγοντος· Ἐλεημοσύναι), as well as in other Christian or Byzantine writings, but *not* in pagan ones found in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.[5] If not Euhodus himself, at least the persons who commissioned the inscription, most likely his freedpersons mentioned in his will, appear to have been Jews or Sebomenoi at the fringes of a synagogue. Dealing in pearls was well documented for Jewish merchants.[6]

Looking at the unique Christian lamp from Rome in the Bode Museum, which was produced in the pagan workshop of Florentius around 200 CE, Jutta Dresken-Weiland rightly hypothesizes that there already seems to have been a small Christian market for such a lamp production, with Christian subterranean burials picking up at that time.

How big were the groups that buried their members in various Roman hypogea of the early third century? For future potential research, I suggest extrapolating Christian group sizes from the extant graves, such as in the Callisto Area I at the Via Appia, to provide one example. Between 200 and 230 CE, on average 38 burials per year took place in this area, altogether about 1,130.[7] For lack of reliable data from the Roman

5. It is true that moralists such as Democritus (Frag. 96; 282), Aristotle (*Eth. nic.* 1162b; 1167b; *Rhet.* 1385a17) and some Stoics (Seneca, *Ben.* 2.31.1, 3) advocated doing good without expecting a reward and sometimes even mentioned mercy and compassion as motivations for generous giving (Democritus, Frag. 255; Demosthenes, *Or.* 53.7–8; Lysias, *Phil.* 19). But these were rare voices and focused mainly, if at all, on compassion for persons in need who were *equals* as friends (Demosthenes) or citizens (Democritus) capable of reciprocating, which Democritus (Frag. 255) even mentions explicitly. Moreover, Epictetus considered it a vital goal to be free from caring feelings and pity. These emotions, in accordance with the Stoic ἀπάθεια ideal, were expected to be superficial, not touching one's inner self (Epictetus, *Ench.* 16 as well as 11–12; *Diss.* 2.1.21, 24; 4.1.82–84). See further Peter Lampe, "Social Welfare in the Greco-Roman World as a Background for Early Christian Practice," in *Perspectives on the Socially Disadvantaged in Early Christianity*, ed. D. F. Tolmie, Acta Theologica Supplementum 23 (Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2016), 1–28, https://doi.org/10.11588/heidok.00025646.

6. See Sigrid Lampe-Densky, "Gottesreich und antike Arbeitswelten: Sozialgeschichtliche Auslegung neutestamentlicher Gleichnisse" (PhD diss., University of Hannover, 2011), 222 n. 50.

7. Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai and Jean Guyon, "Relire Styger: Les origines de l'Area I du cimetière de Calliste et la crypte des papes," in *Origine delle catacombe romane: Atti della giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia Cristiana*, Vincenzo Fiocchi

Empire, the annual mortality rate of a modern-day population in a traditional agrarian country is around 1–2 percent, the 2 percent reflecting the rate from fifty years ago.[8] This suggests a group of about 1,900 (to 3,800) people behind the annual 38 deaths. From other early third-century Roman catacomb areas analogous numbers would emerge. Added up, they would produce a rough minimum[9] estimate of the Christian population in Rome of that time. Bishop Cornelius in the middle of the third century already counts 1,500 recipients of ecclesiastical relief and 155 clerics in the city (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.43). It would be interesting to subtract these 1,500 from an estimated total of the Roman Christian population in the middle of the third century to realize how many Christians in the city lived above the subsistence minimum, that is, how many fed these 1,500 with their donations.

Dresken-Weiland rightly points at the coexistence of pagan and Christian burials in close proximity,[10] at the gusto for traditional pagan imagery of even clerics, and at the many marble sarcophagi on which pagan and Christian elements mingle.[11] We may want to add that ordinary Christians often gladly maintained pagan customs particularly in the funerary domain, continuing libation and celebrating meals for the deceased at their tombs.[12] A freedman of mediocre education such as Hermas comfortably mixed pagan motifs into his Christian writing,[13] and Christian philosophers such as Justin took over numerous elements particularly of Middle Platonism.[14] The manifold osmotic processes on several levels—burial space, art, customs, writings—show little fear of contact. Many

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Nicolai and Jean Guyon (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2006), 121–61.

8. See, e.g., the country of Burundi: in 1970, 2.08 percent; in 2019, 0.78 percent. See https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f7.

9. We only know a fraction of the actual Christian burials of that time period, many Christian graves, especially *sub divo*, remaining unknown to us.

10. See also Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 29–32, 112, 333, 353; see also 61, and, e.g., the pagan mausoleum under S. Sebastiano with its Christian acrostic, above. Even Jews did not have scruples about burying their dead beside pagans, as the Jewish funerary inscriptions of Ostia show (Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 30 n. 35).

11. For one of the earliest examples, see Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 330–34.

12. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 112–13 with n. 32, as well as Augustine, *Conf.* 6.2.

13. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 227–31 and 218–19.

14. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 417–25.

ordinary Roman Christians lived peacefully side by side with their pagan neighbors, as Christ-believers in other regions of the empire did as well, also in rural areas.[15] Only church officials such as Cyprian got upset about osmotic processes between Christ-followers and pagans.[16] However, with regard to the cemeteries, a methodological problem remains unsolved. Dresken-Weiland claims that "the choice of pagan motifs does not indicate a religious belief; the choice of pagan … decoration is a question of cultural affiliation or personal taste." But where does that leave us when interpreting the close proximity of two cubicula decorated with pagan and Christian motifs, respectively? Does such a finding mean that the area of these cubicula is Christian, with the cubiculum decorated in pagan fashion having been commissioned by Christians following their personal taste?[17] Or do we have before us a close proximity of cubicula of both Christian and pagan persons connected by *familia* ties, for example? The only option we have is carefully to look at each find context individually while avoiding generalizations. Dresken-Weiland makes an excellent point regarding the Callisto Cubiculum of Orpheus used by clerics. Yet things seem different, for example, in the anonymous private hypogeum on the Via Latina, dating from the fourth century. It exhibits gorgeous frescoes of both Christian and pagan contents in close proximity. In Room 11, sol-

15. For Phrygia, e.g., see Peter Lampe, "Methods of the Archaeological Surface Survey," in *Pepouza and Tymion: The Discovery and Archaeological Exploration of a Lost Ancient City and an Imperial Estate*, by William Tabbernee and Peter Lampe (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 144.

16. Cyprian, *Ep*. 67.6. Ordinary Christians had more than one reason to absorb or maintain pagan elements. It was not only naiveté or lack of fear of coming into contact with other religious cultures. Tertullian adds another aspect. According to him, Christian women defended their elegant attire and their ornaments by arguing that this was a sort of camouflage (*Cult. fem*. 2.11). If they did not wear it, everyone would find out that they were Christians. Interestingly enough, the Christians' personal names usually were pagan until the middle of the third century. Specifically Christian or biblical names were usually avoided, which was also true of the Jews in both Rome and the diaspora (see Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 141–42). One did not want to invite denunciations or molestations by constantly publicizing one's faith in daily life. This may even be true for Christian frescoes and reliefs of the third century that place biblical figures—Daniel among the lions, the resting Jonah, and others—within traditional idyllic scenes known from pagan art, with the pagan motifs dominating the biblical ones, almost camouflaging the latter (see further Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 142).

17. And how does "cultural affiliation" differ from "religious" affiliation in antiquity?

diers gamble for Jesus's tunic and Jonah plunges into the ocean, while in Room 12 Hercules steals apples from the Hesperides, kills a hydra, and offers Athena his hand. The finding seems to reflect a symbiosis of pagans and Christians within the same *familia*.

Finally, Dresken-Weiland rightly describes the impressive diversity of the early catacombs and the diverse burial rituals reflected in the inscriptions. I am tempted to correlate this subterranean finding with what I called the "fractionation of Roman Christianity," showing the large heterogeneity of Roman Christians,[18] particularly in second-century Rome, where we encounter not a monolithic Christianity but Christianities. The capital city at that time was an experimental laboratory in which a multiplicity of Christian identity formations was tried out,[19] based on ethnic, educational/socioeconomic, and theological differences.

It is the *fractionation* term that Mark Reasoner calls into question, not the diversity within Roman Christianity itself, although the latter also was contested by a German Catholic theologian, without my recent refutation needing to be reiterated.[20] Fractionation, translated from the German Fraktionierung, may lead to misunderstandings for English readers, needing further clarification. The term simply attempts to denote the many Christ-believing factions and separate groups in the city of Rome that the sources present. It does not imply an originally unified community that broke apart later. Just the contrary. Roman Christianity was diverse ab initio, and most of its variety was imported into the capital city, especially in the second century. Pace Reasoner, he and I in this respect do not have different social models in mind; the dissent simply regards the choice and definition of the fractionation term, from which Reasoner deduces associations that I never championed. For instance, like Reasoner and Jean Daniélou, I also emphasized that most leaders of the various Christ-groups had immigrated into Rome. But contrary to Reasoner, I do not see any evidence that in the first two centuries the centripetalism of the capital city had anything to do with "the Roman see" of a (monarchical) bishop

18. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 359–412.

19. See Peter Lampe, "Vielfalt als intrinsisches Merkmal frühen Christentums (1./2. Jh.)," in *Christliches Europa? Religiöser Pluralismus als theologische Herausforderung,* ed. Klaus Viertbauer and Florian Wegscheider (Freiburg: Herder, 2017), 47–65, https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f8.

20. Peter Lampe, "Zugereiste aus dem Osten: Die ersten christlichen Gemeinden Roms," *Welt und Umwelt der Bibel* 25 (2020): 8–15, esp. 14.

for which the Christians of the Mediterranean held "respect" and from which these "foreign" teachers tried to gain "validation." Even later, this was not the case (see below).

Mark Reasoner wants to replace *fractionation* with epigenesis because Roman Christianity, ab initio diverse, "became [even][21] more pluriform due to outside influences, a model of organic growth in response to outside stimuli." While this is true, the outside stimuli also existed at the very beginning of Roman Christianity; in fact, the nascent Christian groups in Rome in the middle of the first century were immigrant groups themselves importing "outside stimuli." Alternative terms for fractionation simply would be diversity, pluriformity, and heterogeneity. I concur with Reasoner that "unity" of the various groups, paralleled by relatively long-lasting tolerance among the groups,[22] was predominantly based on common praxeis, rituals such as baptism and eucharistic meals. Within this practice-oriented unity, the rituals could be interpreted differently and paired with various belief systems.

What pushes my highly regarded Catholic colleague Reasoner and me into an agreement to disagree are the origins of the monarchical bishop in Rome, "the Roman see." Reasoner, backed by the tradition of the Church, wants to date these origins much earlier. However, there is still no evidence of the office of a monarchical Roman bishop before the *second* half of the second century, at which time this office gradually developed.[23] With regard to persons before the middle of the second century, who only later were considered bishops of Rome (Linus, Clement, Sixtus, etc.), there is no evidence contemporary to them that an office of a monarchical Roman bishop existed in their lifetime.

Reasoner therefore moves to speculative likelihood assumptions. He observes, for example, that at the end of the second century, "Victor holds excommunication over churches in Asia as a potent threat." Reasoner

21. My addition.

22. Also here my text (Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 381–96) is not always rendered accurately. For example, one of my points was that Cerdo's group was not excommunicated by the other Christ-groups in town but actively separated *itself* from them, showing that these other groups tolerated the Cerdo group until it withdrew from existing fellowship itself (see Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.4.3). Reasoner's twist sounds like this: that the Cerdo-Christians separated themselves from fellowship "does not exactly prove tolerance. There is no need to excommunicate those outside of a communion." So true, but this isn't the point.

23. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 397–408.

continues, “It is possible but unlikely that Victor would have threatened excommunication if he had been effectively the first Roman bishop.” Reasoner does not mention that this threatening writing by Victor met harsh rejection by bishops of other cites (αἱ τούτων φωναὶ πληκτικώτερον καθαπτομένων τοῦ Βίκτορος), including Irenaeus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.10). This precludes that Victor, as Roman bishop, had authority over other bishops.

In fact, this authority of the Roman bishop was shaky for a long time, which Reasoner ignores. To give just one example, still in the fourth century the Roman bishop struggled rather unsuccessfully for supremacy in the Mediterranean East. The San Sebastiano inscription by Damasus (366–384 CE) pushed the local cult of Peter and Paul, whom he glorified like emperors to underpin a supremacy of the Roman bishop. He makes them citizens of the city of Rome (*cives*) because of their Roman martyrdom, attempting to usurp their authority and move it from the East to Rome. He does this in the context of attempts of the West to influence Eastern affairs, for example, in the Antioch church, where Rome backed Paulinus against Meletius in their power struggle—yet Meletius prevailed. In 382, the West convened a general council in Rome, presided over by Damasus. But Eastern bishops did not bother to show up, not being interested in Western meddling. They only sent three emissaries.[24]

To give another example of speculative argumentation, Reasoner claims, “Tertullian’s description of the bishop of Rome is possible if the office effectively began in his lifetime, but its sarcastic edge would be dulled if it did not have a basis preceding Victor.” How this can be inferred from *Nat*. 1.7 remains elusive. But I do not even deny a “basis preceding Victor” because I assume a gradual development in the second half of the second century from a presbyter in charge of the foreign affairs of the Roman Christians to the office of a single bishop, which was fully developed with Victor.[25]

Lastly, Reasoner argues, “Details in the tradition of the line of bishops that emerge elsewhere, such as the martyrdom of Eleutherius, seem to point to a basic reliability to the tradition” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.10.1). True, but this reasoning can as well be turned upside down. The list appears

24. See further Peter Lampe, “Traces of Peter Veneration in Roman Archaeology,” in *Peter in Early Christianity,* ed. Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 273–317, esp. 287, 304–5, https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220f9.

25. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 397–408.

to incorporate historical persons who filled leadership functions in the past and from whom details such as martyrdom were handed down. But these details do not contain any old information claiming that these persons had a (monarchical) Roman bishopric, that is, no information older than the second half of the second century.

Future research faces a host of challenges, including a thorough contextual reading of the Gospel of Mark, which I now locate in Rome after especially Martin Hengel accumulated convincing evidence.[26] Another challenge also should be mentioned briefly. The traditional urban-versus-rural concept needs critical scrutiny.[27] It hardly can be conceptualized any longer as strict dichotomy, because there was a significant transient zone connecting both spaces. As far as the Roman Christ-believers were concerned, they used the famous suburban zones of Rome not only for burials but also for worship meetings and social banquets, for example, a Valentinian group meeting for their rituals and banquets in a suburban villa at the Via Latina in the second century[28] or another group celebrating social refrigeria banquets in a cult for the apostles Peter and Paul in the Memoria Apostolorum at the Via Appia (San Sebastiano) from the late 250s to about 325 CE.[29] Furthermore, city inhabitants did farming in the countryside. The Roman Christian Hermas, a freed slave and businessman in the first half of the second century, had gained some fortune by engaging in different business ventures until his businesses suffered losses. Thus, his upward social mobility from slave to a freed and successful businessman was reversed to some extent. After this crisis, he withdrew from the buzzling business activities in the city because he realized that one often needs to be dishonest to be successful in business life. Instead, although living and writing in Rome, he turned to more simple work and cultivated a field

26. For the Gospel of Mark as a source illuminating Roman Christians, see Peter Lampe, “Roman Christians under Nero (54–68 C.E.),” in *The Last Years of Paul: Essays from the Tarragona Conference, June 2013,* ed. Armand Puig i Tàrrech, John M. G. Barclay, and Jörg Frey, WUNT 352 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 111–29, https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress4220g1.

27. With regard to Corinth, see David K. Pettegrew, “The Changing Rural Horizons of Corinth’s First Urban Christians,” in *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth,* ed. James R. Harrison and Larry L. Welborn, WGRWSup 8 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 153–84.

28. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 298–312.

29. See Lampe, “Traces of Peter Veneration,” 286–90.

outside the city on the Via Campana, growing spelt, thus combining urban and rural life in the hope of gaining more moral integrity in this way.[30]

Not only ordinary people combined city and country life but also aristocrats in particular (e.g., Pliny, *Ep*. 1.3, 9, 12; 3.11; Martial, *Epigr*. 7.17). In the crisis of the third century, the upper classes generally shifted their orientation from the cities to the country,[31] although the senators also had a residence in Rome, among them Christian members of senatorial families.[32] The interplay between urban and rural spaces needs further scrutiny, looking at the Christians in particular. A lot still remains to be done.

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30. See further Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 218–24.

31. See, e.g., Geza Alföldy, *Römische Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979), 157–58.

32. See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 117–19.

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Contributors

Mary Jane Cuyler is an archaeologist and Latinist and has carried out research and field work at Ostia since 2006. She holds a BA in Classical Philology from Western Washington University (Bellingham), an MA in Classics from The University of Texas at Austin, and a PhD in Classics and Ancient History from The University of Sydney. Cuyler is the Director of Field Operations for the Ostia Synagogue Project, and her publications span an array of topics related to Roman archaeology, archival research, and material culture. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher in Classics and Archaeology at the MF vitenskapelig høyskole in Oslo.

Jutta Dresken-Weiland gained her PhD in 1990 in Classical Archaeology and then a Travel Scholarship of the German Archaeological Institute from 1991 to 1992. From 1990 to 1996 she worked as a researcher in the area of Christian Archaeology at the German Archaeological Institute in Rome. Having gained in 2002 her postdoctoral authorization to teach in Christian Archaeology and Byzantine Art History at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, she was appointed Extracurricular Professor in 2008. Her recent monographs are dedicated to Christian iconography: *Bild, Wort und Grab: Untersuchungen zu Jenseitsvorstellungen von Christen des 3.–4. Jahrhunderts* (2010; Italian, 2012) and *Immagine e parole: Sulle origini dell'iconografia Cristiana* (2012). Another work on the mosaics of Ravenna (*Die frühchristlichen Mosaiken von Ravenna*) appeared in 2016 (Italian and English, 2017). Among her special interests is the origin of Christian art.

James R. Harrison studied Ancient History at Macquarie University and graduated from the doctoral program in 1997. Harrison is the Research Director at the Sydney College of Divinity. His recent monographs include *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome* (2011), *Paul and the Ancient Celebrity Circuit* (2019), and *Read-*

ing Romans with Roman Eyes (2020). He is the chief editor of *New Documents Illustrating the History of Early Christianity* (vols. 11–16) and is editor of E. A. Judge, *The Conflict of Cultures: The Legacy of Paul's Thought Today* (2020).

Peter Lampe studied theology, philosophy, and archaeology at Bielefeld, Göttingen, and Rome. He received his PhD in theology and his Dr. habil. at the University of Berne in Switzerland, where he also taught as junior faculty. He held chairs of New Testament Studies and History and Archaeology of Early Christianity and Its Environment at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia/USA (1987–1992), at the University in Kiel, Germany (1992–1999), where he also served as dean, and at the University of Heidelberg (since 1999). He led the Heidelberg Archaeological Surface Survey in Phrygia (2001–), was awarded the German Ecumenical Preaching Award (2003), and received an Honorary Professorship from the University of the Free State in South Africa (2008). Among his about 350 publications, the books include, for example, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (2003; also in German and Spanish), *New Testament Theology in a Secular World: A Constructivist Work in Philosophical Epistemology and Christian Apologetics* (2012; also in German), *Pepouza and Tymion: The Discovery and Archaeological Exploration of a Lost Ancient City and an Imperial Estate* (2008; in English, German, Turkish), and *Ad ecclesiae unitatem: Eine exegetisch-theologische und sozialpsychologische Paulusstudie (*2019).

Richard Last is Assistant Professor in the Ancient Greek and Roman Studies program at Trent University (Peterborough, Canada). He has published widely on Pauline epistles, *collegia*, and Greek and Latin epigraphy. His monographs include *Group Survival in the Ancient Mediterranean: Rethinking Material Conditions in the Landscape of Jews and Christians*, (coauthored with Philip Harland, 2020) and *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia* (2016).

Annelies Moeser did her doctoral work at Brite Divinity School (Texas Christian University). She has previously published a chapter on Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in *Key Theological Thinkers: From Modern to Postmodern* and contributed to an Oxford Bibliography in Biblical Studies on Pontius Pilate. She is an independent scholar currently working on a book imaginatively reading Mark from Roman Egypt.

Mark Reasoner earned his PhD in New Testament and Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago. He is Professor of Theology at Marian University. His publications include *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14:1–15:13 in Context* (1999); *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (2005); *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul* (with Neil Elliott, 2011); *Roman Imperial Texts* (2013); *The Letters of Paul* (2nd ed., with Charles Puskas, 2013) and *The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible* (with Joel Kaminsky and Joel Lohr, 2014).

Thomas A. Robinson studied Judaism and Christianity in the Greco-Roman World at McMaster University, completing his PhD in 1985. Until retiring in 2018, he was a professor in the Religious Studies Department of the University of Lethbridge (Alberta, Canada), where he taught courses in Christianity, Greek, and world religions. His works include *Who Were the First Christians? Dismantling the Urban Thesis* (2017); *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways: Early Jewish-Christian Relations* (2009); *World Religions: A Guide to the Essentials* (3rd ed., with Hillary Rodrigues, forthcoming). He is currently working on a manuscript provisionally titled *Wrinkles in Jewish–Christian Dialogue: Post-Holocaust Readings of Ancient Christian Texts on Judaism.*

Michael P. Theophilos completed his doctoral work in New Testament at Oxford University in 2007 and is currently Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Ancient Languages at the Australian Catholic University. His recent and current projects include *Numismatics and Greek Lexicography* (2020) and a forthcoming papyrological commentary on the *Sondergut of Matthean and Luke* and *Dictionary of Greek Numismatic Inscriptions for New Testament and Early Christian Studies*. He serves on the editorial board of New Testament Studies, curator of papyri at the Australian Institute of Archaeology, and cochair of the Program Unit in Numismatics and Biblical Interpretation within the Society of Biblical Literature.

L. L. Welborn is Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Fordham University. He is a graduate of Yale Divinity School (MAR) and Vanderbilt University (PhD). His publications include *An End to Enmity* (2011), *Paul's Summons to Messianic Life* (2015), and *The Young against the Old* (2018). He serves as editor for the book series Paul in Critical Contexts (Fortress Academic).

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