Women patrons in Pauline churches.

Caroline Frances Whelan

University of Windsor
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WOMEN PATRONS IN PAULINE CHURCHES

by

Caroline Frances Whelan

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
Religious Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
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ABSTRACT

WOMEN PATRONS IN PAULINE CHURCHES

by

Caroline Frances Whelan

The role of women in the Pauline corpus and its social environment is largely misunderstood and underestimated.

A survey of pertinent literature shows, for example, that there is differential treatment regarding the translation of diakonos and prostatēs for Phoebe that robs her of her rightful place in the memory of the early church.

An examination of the legal evidence clearly demonstrates that women had in their power various means to acquire wealth, freely dispose of it, and hence, to act as patrons.

In the second chapter we examine the role and function of voluntary associations in the first century, (which are comparable to the earliest Pauline churches), and the epigraphical data pertaining to them. It is illustrated that there is strong evidence of the presence of women in certain clubs; strong evidence of women patrons to various kinds of clubs; and some evidence that they gained positions of leadership.

The evidence in three of Paul's letters, Romans, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians in conjunction with Acts 17, is re-examined against the background of the legal and social evidence of the first century, and interpreted in light of the overall epistolary structure of the letters. Viewed in this way, it is arguable that Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche, and the "leading women" of Acts 17 provide a good example of women's involvement in the voluntary associations, at various levels: members, patrons, even leaders.

Clearly, women have not been afforded their rightful place in the reconstruction of early Christianity. It is hoped that in some way this thesis will serve to redress the unbalance.
For My Parents
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project of this kind could not have been completed without the help and support of many people. To the following, I offer my sincere thanks.

First and foremost, to Dr. John S. Kloppenburg, exacting scholar and teacher, who has been the sole director of this thesis from its inception to its completion. Your high standards of scholarship challenged me to be my best; your patience and kindness let me be myself. Thank you. It’s been a privilege.

Thanks for various kindnesses go also to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Sean Kelly, department reader, and Professor Donna Foley, outside reader, and to Dr. Barry L. Whitney who kindly accepted the role of chair in Dr. Kloppenburg’s absence.

It is with much fondness that I thank my professors from Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Religious Studies, from whom I first learned the art of academia, Dr. T. M. Murphy, Dr. Hans Rollmann, and especially to Dr. M. F. Hodder and Dr. R. S. Mackenzie for their continued friendship and support. Your confidence in me has meant more than words can say.

Academic research is always a costly venture. In this regard I thank the University of Windsor, Assumption University, and the Sisters of St. Joseph for providing me with the necessary scholarship funds in the last two years that made it possible for me to further my academic career.
It was due to the efficiency of Donna Peltier and Janice Bell, and the staff of the Inter-Library Loans Office, Leddy Library, that I was able to gather many of the necessary resources for this study. Thanks for your patience during my endless requests and for your assistance many times above and beyond the normal call of duty.

Sincere thanks to the secretaries in the Department of Religious Studies, Mrs. Ethel Smith, and Mrs. Chris Charlebois; your kindness and countless ‘favours’ to me during my time in Windsor will long be remembered.

Good friends are a vital part of any endeavour. To my good friends, Norene E. Chevalier whose boundless courage had taught me much; and to Wendy Cotter who gave selflessly of her time and knowledge. I will cherish our friendship always.

Heartfelt thanks go to my family at home in Newfoundland, who were never very far away: your love and laughter have made all the difference in my life; and especially to my parents, Bob and Mary Whelan; your unconditional faith in me made me believe that I could succeed; your unconditional love for me made me know that it was alright if I didn’t. Everything I am is because of you.

Finally, to Brian, who patiently listened to every version of every draft of this work, and offered many helpful insights. Thanks, Brian. Without you this thesis could not have been started or finished.
LIST OF TABLES

The following tables are located in the Introduction:

Table 1

Table 2
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used in this thesis for journals and standard reference works are found in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly 46 (1984) 393-408 and the Journal of Biblical Literature 95 (1976) 331-46. In addition to these, the following abbreviations are used:

Aristotle, Rhet. ANRW
Cicero, De Orat.
CIL
Cod. Just.
Dig.
Gaius, Inst.
Gellius, NA
ILS
Moffatt
NJB
OCD
Orelli, ILC
Pliny, Ep.
Suetonius, Aug.
Tacitus, Ann.
Ulpian, Epit.
Ulpian, Reg.

Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric
Außerstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
Cicero, De Oratore
Corpus Inscriptionum Iudicarum
Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
Justinian, Codex
Justinian, Digesta
Gaius, Institutiones
Gellius, Noctes Atticae
Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
Moffatt Bible Translation
New Jerusalem Bible
Oxford Classical Dictionary
Inscriptionum latinarum electarum amplissima collection
Pliny the Younger, Epistulae
Suetonius, Augustus
Tacitus, Annales
Ulpian, Epitome
Ulpian, Regularum
INTRODUCTION

Part One

It is popularly thought that the role of women in the early Church was one of subordination and relative unimportance. This attitude is reflected in early Christian and non-Christian literature which define woman's role solely in terms of childbearing and work within the home. They are characterized as second class citizens in a patriarchal society with few individual freedoms, a limited social function, and relatively little direct influence in the political domain.†

With the recent surge of feminist hermeneutics and feminist theology, the representation of women in Christian literature, in particular Biblical texts, is being re-examined. Because the Bible stems mainly from a patriarchal culture and was transmitted in a patriarchal Church, feminist scholars argue that the androcentric selection of texts has, either deliberately or unconsciously, downplayed the role of women. For example, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza points out that because scholars

† Notable exceptions are Agrippina (15-59 C.E.) who received for herself the title Augusta, and who was almost co-regent with Nero (54 C.E.) in the first five years of his rule. See J. P. V. D. Balsdon, "Agrippina," OCD, 31; Cleopatra VII (69 B.C.E.-30 C.E.) who along with her son Ptolemy Caesar (47 C.E.) was hailed as ruler of Egypt and Cyprus, and as "Queen of Kings" and "King of Kings," which meant overlords of the empire. See Theodore John Cadoux, "Cleopatra VII," OCD, 251-52; and Livia (58 B.C.E.-29 C.E.) who, while married to Claudius Nero joined him on his flight after the Perusine War, and while married to Octavian Augustus ruled his household as consort of the monarch. She was later adopted into the Julian gens and renamed Julia Augusta. See G. W. Richardson and Theodore John Cadoux, "Livia," OCD, 613-14. All three of these women wielded a great deal of power.
understand early Christian communities to have consisted not only of men but of women as well, they translate grammatically masculine language such as "brothers," "elect," "saints," etc. in the generic sense as designating women and men. Yet when the same language is used in respect to leadership titles such as "apostle," "prophet," or "teacher," it is translated in a gender-specific way — in spite of the instances where the masculine title clearly applies to a woman (i.e., Rom 16:1 diakonos; Tit 2:3 kalodidaskalos). This, of course, makes doubly hard the task of recovering the original situation of primitive Christianity. It is important then to identify these androcentric frameworks, separate them from the rest of the text, and then systematically "deconstruct" the anti-feminine redactional traits so that we can attempt to "reconstruct" the original setting.

One important text that impinges heavily upon this issue is Rom 16:1-3. There is an exegetical difficulty in these verses and because of the way it has been translated, one that has gone largely unnoticed. According to Fiorenza, Rom 16:1-3 is a classic example of how androcentric interpretation can mask the reality. In this passage, Paul recommends Phoebe to the congregation at Rome and in doing so describes her in part as a "diakonos" of the Church in Cenchreae. Fiorenza argues that

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3 Ibid., 42.
exegetes tend to downplay the importance of the title because it is used here in reference to a woman, and concludes:

Whenever Paul calls himself, Apollos, Timothy or Tychicus diakonos scholars translate the term as deacon but because the expression here refers to a woman, exegetes translate it as servant, helper, or deaconess.¹

A closer examination, however, reveals that this blanket statement is not entirely correct. Of the twenty-two² times in which the word diakonos appears in the Pauline corpus, only eleven times is it used in reference to one of the four she specifies: 1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6, 6:4, 11:23; Eph 3:7, 6:21; Col 1:7, 1:23, 1:25, 4:7; 1 Thess 3:2. Table 1 surveys eight biblical translations, clearly illustrating that there is no common translation of diakonos as deacon when it refers to a specific male, and thus there is no grounds to her statement.

While Fiorenza is correct in pointing out the differential treatment of the same word, her generalization is somewhat misleading. Instead of deacon, the most common translation of diakonos in reference to Paul, Apollos, Timothy or Tychicus is "minister," or "servant" while diakonos for Phoebe is most often translated as "servant," or "deaconess." The only term used to describe the men that is never used of Phoebe is "minister." Since "deaconess" is the more official title while "minister" or "servant" might be used functionally, it appears that Phoebe is

¹ Ibid., 47.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romans 16:1 (Phoebe)</th>
<th>ESV</th>
<th>KJV</th>
<th>NEB</th>
<th>NASB</th>
<th>NJB</th>
<th>KOPPATT</th>
<th>NVV</th>
<th>Vulgate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἡ δικαιονομὸς τοῦ ἐκκλησίας της ἐν Καννησσαὶς</td>
<td>a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae</td>
<td>“which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchreae”</td>
<td>“a fellow Christian who holds office in the congregation at Cenchreae”</td>
<td>“a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae”</td>
<td>“a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae”</td>
<td>“a servant of the church in Cenchreae”</td>
<td>“qasive set in ministerio”</td>
<td>Eclesiast. qasse set in Cenchreae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 3:5 (Paul and Timothy)</td>
<td>“servants through whom you believed”</td>
<td>“ministers by whom ye believed”</td>
<td>“God’s agents in bringing you to the faith”</td>
<td>“simply ministers through whom you become believers”</td>
<td>“the servants through whom you came to believe”</td>
<td>“simply used by God to give you faith”</td>
<td>“only servants through whom you came to believe”</td>
<td>Ministeri suis, cui creditisti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians 3:6 (Paul)</td>
<td>“he has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant”</td>
<td>“who has made us able ministers of the new testament”</td>
<td>“it is he who has qualified us to dispense his new covenant”</td>
<td>“who has made us qualified ministers of a new covenant”</td>
<td>“He has given us the competence to be ministers of a new covenant”</td>
<td>“and He has further qualified us to become a minister of a new covenant”</td>
<td>“he has made us competent as ministers of a new testament”</td>
<td>qud et idoneus esse redit ministros novi testamenti</td>
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<td>2 Corinthians 6:4 (Paul)</td>
<td>“but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way”</td>
<td>“but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distress”</td>
<td>“as God’s servants we try to recommend ourselves in all circumstances”</td>
<td>“in all that we do we strive to present ourselves as ministers of God”</td>
<td>“but in everything we prove ourselves to be authentic servants of God”</td>
<td>“I prove myself at all points a true minister of God”</td>
<td>“as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way”</td>
<td>sed in omnibus ehihemus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 3:7 (Paul)</td>
<td>“of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace”</td>
<td>“such is the gospel of which I was made a minister, by God’s gift”</td>
<td>“through the gift God in his goodness bestowed on me, by the exercise of his power, I become a minister of the gospel”</td>
<td>“I prove myself of all points a true minister of God”</td>
<td>“such is the gospel which I was called to serve by the endowment of God’s grace”</td>
<td>“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace”</td>
<td>“utius estus sum minister secundum dominum gratias Dei”</td>
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<td>Ephesians 6:21 (Tychicus)</td>
<td>“the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”</td>
<td>“He is our dear brother and trustworthy helper in the Lord”</td>
<td>“my dear brother and faithful minister in the Lord”</td>
<td>“my dear friend Tychicus, my trustworthy helper in the Lord”</td>
<td>“our beloved brother Tychicus and faithful minister in the Lord”</td>
<td>“the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord”</td>
<td>“charissimae frater et fidelis minister in Domino”</td>
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<td>John 15:13 (Paul)</td>
<td>“greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”</td>
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<td>Romans 12:3</td>
<td>“I exhort you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good”</td>
<td>“I charge you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good”</td>
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<td>“I exhort you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good”</td>
<td>“I charge you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good”</td>
<td>“I exhort you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good”</td>
<td>I urge you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good</td>
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<td>John 13:13 (Paul)</td>
<td>“greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”</td>
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<td>“I exhort you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good”</td>
<td>I urge you to prove all things; hold fast that which is good</td>
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<td>REV</td>
<td>LIV</td>
<td>NEB</td>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>NIV</td>
<td>YLT</td>
<td>VULGATE</td>
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<td>Col 1:7  “Seize the day”</td>
<td>“He is a faithful minister of Christ in our behalf”</td>
<td>“our dear fellow servant who is for the special service of Christ in our behalf”</td>
<td>“our very dear Fellow-worker and a trustworthy deputy for us as a faithful minister of Christ”</td>
<td>“our beloved fellow-servant Epaphras, a minister of Christ who is faithful to your interest”</td>
<td>“our dear fellow-servant who is a faithful minister of Christ in our behalf”</td>
<td>“you got faith to make a minister Christ’s love”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Col 1:23  (Paul)</td>
<td>“in every prayer and petition”</td>
<td>“and of which I, Paul, am a minister”</td>
<td>“whom I, Paul, have become a minister”</td>
<td>“and I, Paul, have become a minister”</td>
<td>“and of which I, Paul, have been made a minister”</td>
<td>“and of which I, Paul, have become a minister”</td>
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<td>Col 1:25  (Paul)</td>
<td>“in the service of God”</td>
<td>“I became a minister according to the dispensation of God”</td>
<td>“I became a minister by the grace of God”</td>
<td>“I became a minister by the grace of God”</td>
<td>“I have become a minister by the grace of God”</td>
<td>“I have become a minister by the grace of God”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Col 4:7  (Tatianus)</td>
<td>“the adornment of God’s house”</td>
<td>“who is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord”</td>
<td>“our brother the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord”</td>
<td>“our dear brother, our faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord”</td>
<td>“he is a very dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord”</td>
<td>“he is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Thess 3:2  (Tatianus)</td>
<td>“an adornment of the house of God”</td>
<td>“our brother and God’s servant in the gospel of Christ”</td>
<td>“our brother and God’s servant in the gospel of Christ”</td>
<td>“he is our brother and God’s fellow-worker in the service of the gospel of Christ”</td>
<td>“our brother and God’s fellow-worker in the service of the gospel of Christ”</td>
<td>“who is our brother’s fellow worker in the service of the gospel of Christ”</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Although the authenticity of Colossians and Ephesians are in dispute, they are listed here for completeness.

** Most translations appear to presuppose “diakonon tou Theou” at 1 Thess 3:2. Exceptions are NEB, NAB, NIV which were likely working with the reading “sunergon tou Theou,” since they translate the passage as “God’s fellow-worker.”

In fact, “sunergon tou Theou” is the better reading. In his Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Bruce M. Metzger gives this version a “B” reading. Although the “diakonon tou Theou” reading receives strong Alexandrian and Western external support (N A P U 66 76 1739 it 81 629 1348 1566 vg syr co), as do varying forms of “sunergon tou Theou,” Metzger explains that the UBS committee’s decision was based primarily on the internal evidence of “Lectio difficilior,” (i.e., fellow worker of God in the more difficult reading) with strong Western attestation (D 33 48 Em Ambrosiaster P Slim Aquila Jerome). For a fuller discussion, see Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London: United Bible Societies, 1971) 631, and The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 240-42.
the one who emerges in the most favourable light and not Paul or his male coworkers.

Part of Fiorenza's criticism is apparently based on how she understands the word deaconess. She criticizes H. Lietzmann for comparing Phoebe's role to the later institution of deaconesses, but the basis of her objection is not immediately clear. In a later article entitled "Missionaries, Apostles, Coworkers: Romans 16 and the Reconstruction of Women's Early History," she develops and clarifies this point. When the Greek diakonos is translated into English as deaconess, it brings with it a preconceived image that is not present in the Greek. Phoebe's office is often understood, or rather misunderstood, by scholars as synonymous with the office of deaconess in the third and fourth centuries which, in comparison to the male diaconate, had a very limited function. For example, in his commentary on Romans, a conservative scholar such as William Shedd concludes:

> Owing to the rigid separation of the sexes, females in the early Church performed the duties of the diaconate in caring for the sick, poor and strangers of the female portion of the Church.\(^7\)


Introduction

Even the much more critical scholar like Frederick Grant notes that "the Christian mission had reached the suburbs and Phoebe like other women in this chapter was an appointed "helper" there," while Lietzmann characterizes Phoebe as an apparently well to do and charitable lady who because of her feminine virtues worked in the service of the poor and of the sick as well as assisting at the baptism of women. By assigning to Phoebe the function of the later institution of deaconesses, these characterizations are not only anachronistic but chauvinistic. Since the noun diakonos, though masculine in appearance, is actually both masculine and feminine, and since the term is applied to Paul's coworkers, it is difficult to justify a translation of diakonos which differentiates sharply between male coworkers and female coworkers, and implies that Phoebe's role was somehow less important or less official than male diakonos.

Fiorenza further defines Paul's use of diakonos in connection with his use of synergos and apostolos. She draws a parallel between the words and claims that Paul uses them interchangeably to describe the missionary work of God (1 Cor 3:5, 9) and concludes:

It can therefore be assumed that the diakonos title char-

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10 BAGD, 184.
acterizes Phoebe as official messenger and missionary
apostle of the Church at Cenchreae.\textsuperscript{11}

That the \textit{diakonoi} of the Pauline Church served in an
official capacity is attested to by the epistles as well as in
extrabiblical sources. That they were travelling missionaries is
not inherent in our understanding of \textit{diakonos}. Ellis recognizes
this point, as is clear from his discussion of the term:

In short the \textit{diakonoi} appear to be a special class of co-
workers, those who are active in preaching and teaching...
the essential factors seems to have been ministry not
movement, the charismatic function without any peripatetic
implications.\textsuperscript{12}

In a footnote to this he adds:

Georgi rightly calls attention to the "missionary" character
of many \textit{diakonoi} ... and this apparently is true of Phoebe.
But the function precedes and is not related to travel-
ling.\textsuperscript{13}

There is no evidence that allows us to attach the role of
missionary to the role of \textit{diakonos}, especially in Phoebe's case.
The purpose of her visit to Rome (or Ephesus) is uncertain.

There are two issues involved: (1) whether or not there is
an English translation appropriate for \textit{diakonos}, and, (2) whether

\textsuperscript{11} Fiorenza, "The Apostleship of Women in Early Christ-
ianity," \textit{Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican
Declaration} (eds. Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler; New York:
Paulist, 1977) 137. See also Fiorenza, "Women in the Pre-
Pauline Churches," \textit{USQR} 33 (1978) 156-57; "Women in the Early
Christian Movement," \textit{WomanSpirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in
Religion} (eds. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow; San Francisco:
Harper & Row, 1979) 92; \textit{In Memory of Her}, 171.

\textsuperscript{12} E. Earle Ellis, "Paul and His Co-Workers," \textit{NTS} 17 (1971)
442-43. See also Pheme Perkins, \textit{Ministering in the Pauline

\textsuperscript{13} Ellis, "Paul and His Co-Workers," 443, n.1.
diakonos in Rom 16 and elsewhere in Paul designates an ecclesiastical office or is still principally a functional term used in a non-technical sense.

The English translation of *diakonos* as deaconess is not only misleading in its connotations, but it also linguistically incorrect. In the first three centuries C.E., there was no Greek word for deaconess. It was not until the late third and early fourth centuries that the term *diakonissa* came into use. The same holds true for the derivation of the Latin *diaconissa* from *diaconus* around the same time. An interesting example of the Latin derivation of *diaconissa* and of differential treatment occurs in the Vulgate's translation of *diakonos*. When used of a man, it is translated as the noun "minister". However, in Rom 16:1 where the same word is used of a woman, the Vulgate translates it not as a noun but with the adverbial phrase "in ministerio Ecclesiae" (see table 1). The differentiation in this case likely occurs because by the time the Vulgate was translated there were separate meanings for *diaconissa* and *diaconos*.


Nevertheless, it apparently fails to recognize that such a distinction did not exist in the first century. H. J. Schroeder accurately observes that

[i]t is incorrect then to speak of deaconesses during the first three centuries and the many century old habit of seeing a deaconess every time we see a ministra has wrought more confusion in the subject of deaconesses in the early Church than all other factors put together.\footnote{H. J. Schroeder, Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils (St. Louis/London: Herder & Herder, 1937) 54. See also F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, "Deaconess" The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (2d ed.; ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone; London/New York/Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974) 380-81; J. Forget, "Deaconesses" DTC, 685-703; Mary Lawrence McKenna, Women of the Church (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1967) Ch. 4 "The Order of Deaconesses," 64-93.}

Diakonissa is a purely ecclesiastical term used to denote the office, rank and duties of the deaconess as that office became more clearly defined.\footnote{Schroeder, Disciplinary Decrees, 55.} However, it is crucial to note that by the time the feminine noun diakonissa did develop, it was for a specific purpose vastly different from the role of the first century diakonos. Perhaps therein lies the basis for confusion. Because there was no "word" for deaconess before the late third-early fourth century, many scholars assume that there was no "office" for deaconess before that time. For example, M. L. McKenna claims:

The deaconess, though they existed from Apostolic times became an order only in the third century. Before that their ministry had been strictly a private and unofficial one.\footnote{McKenna, Women of the Church, 64.}
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Exactly how far the office of deacon had developed at the time of the epistle is uncertain. From the evidence in the letter itself (and from the New Testament in general), we can be certain of one thing: Phoebe is as much a diakonos as any of Paul's male co-workers. Therefore, irrespective of how one translates diakonos, it must be translated equivalently for Phoebe and for the others.  

Starr, also, believes that diakonos should be translated as neither "servant" nor "deaconess," but as "minister," "even as Paul, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras and Apollos were ministers." See Lee Anna Starr, The Bible Status of Women (New York/London: Garland, 1987) 268.

C. K. Barrett raises a second important question of whether or not *diakonos* was ever used by Paul in the technical sense of men or of women. Although the evidence in Romans points to technical usage (i.e., Rom 16:1 “diakonos of the Church in Cenchreae” and Rom 12:7 “if it is to serve, we should serve”) we cannot be certain. According to Barrett, the main difficulty in tracing the development of the office of deacon is that

In the New Testament period the line between the ‘part-time helper’ and the minister set apart to the service of the Church was not so sharply drawn as it is today and it may therefore be that the question whether Phoebe was a ‘deaconess’ or a valued Church worker is wrongly put.\(^2\)

This second issue is two-fold: (1) Is there any evidence that *diakonos* was used by Paul in the technical sense; and, (2) can we see that evidence in Romans 16. The questions can be treated together. *Diakonos* occurs nineteen times in the Pauline corpus,\(^2\) but it is not always used in the same way. By far the most common usage is in the general sense of servant, minister,


\(^2\) Again, excluding the occurrence of the word in the Pastoral Epistles; 1 Tim 3:8; 3:12; 4:6.
or helper in which the term is part of a phrase such as "minister of Christ," "servant in the gospel of Christ," "ministers of a new covenant" etc.\textsuperscript{23} Clearly in these instances \textit{diakonos} is used very generally and the less technical or "functional" interpretation is favoured. There are at least two instances, however, in which \textit{diakonos} cannot be dismissed so easily. In Rom 16:1 and Phil 1:1, \textit{diakonos} is tied not to an abstract concept but to the specific Churches of Cenchreae and Philippi.\textsuperscript{24} Used in this way, \textit{diakonos} suggests a "terminus technicus" for two reasons. First, for a deacon to be directly affiliated with a specific Church in a specific place, speaks not only for his/her authority there, but also suggests a long term relationship with it. Second, this is especially true of Rom 16 where the Greek genitive of place plus a modifier ties \textit{diakonos} not to an

\textsuperscript{23} Seventeen of the nineteen times in which \textit{diakonos} occurs in the Pauline epistles, it is used in a general sense, as part of a phrase. They are as follows; Rom 13:4 Theou gar \textit{diakonos} estin \textit{eis} to agathon, ean de to kakan poies, phoubou ou gar eike ten machairan phorei Theou gar \textit{diakonos} estin \textit{ekdikos} \textit{eis} orgen to to kakan prassonti; 15:8 \textit{lego} gar Christon \textit{diakonon} gegenesthai peritomes; 1 Cor 3:5 \textit{diakonoi} di hon episteusan; 2 Cor 3:6 hos kai hikanosen hemas \textit{diakonous} kaines \textit{diathekes}; 6:4 sunistanontes heautous hos Theou \textit{diakonoi}; 11:15 \textit{ei} kai \textit{oi} \textit{diakonoi} autou metaschematicontai hos \textit{diakonoi} dikaiosynes; 11:23 \textit{diakonoi} Christou \textit{eisin}; Gal 2:17 ara Christos hamartias \textit{diakonos}; Eph 3:7 ou egenethen \textit{diakonos} kata ten dorean tes charitos tou Theou; 6:21 Tychikos o agapetos adelphos kai pistos \textit{diakonos} en Kurio; Col 1:7 hos \textit{estin} \textit{pistos} \textit{hyper} hemon \textit{diakonos} tou Christou; 1:23 ou egenomen ego Paulos \textit{diakonos}; 1:25 hes egenomen ego \textit{diakonos} kata ten oikonomian tou Theou; 4:7 Tychikos ho agapetos adelphos kai pistos \textit{diakonos}; 1 Thess 3:2 Timotheon ton adelphon hemon kai synergon/\textit{diakonon} tou Theou.

\textsuperscript{24} See Moulton and Geden, \textit{Concordance}, 203.

\textsuperscript{23} Rom 16:1 \textit{ousan} kai \textit{diakonon} tes \textit{ekklesias} ten \textit{en} kenkreais; Phil 1:1 \textit{sun episkopopois} kai \textit{diakonos}. BDF, 100.
abstract concept, but to the specific Church of Cenchreae. Both reasons indicate that by the time these epistles were written, *diakonos* was either a technical term or at least well on the way of becoming one.\(^{25}\)

The question of the technical use of *diakonos* in Romans and Philippians is closely related to the issue of chronological dating. It is hardly disputed that the letter to the Romans was written near the end of Paul's third missionary journey, shortly before he returned to Jerusalem.\(^{26}\) This would place the writing of the letter during the winter of 57-58 C.E.\(^{27}\) The dating of Philippians is not as clear. For centuries, it was virtually undisputed that the epistle to the Philippians (and the other imprisonment epistles — Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians) was written from Rome sometime between 60 and 64 C.E. In the nineteenth century, this view was challenged by those who, for various reasons, claimed that the epistles more likely originated from Cenchreae, a view still held by some in the twentieth

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\(^{26}\) While the date of Romans is seldom contested, the original composition of Rom 16 is a matter of dispute. More will be said on this issue in chapter 3.

century. In 1897, Adolf Deissman put forth the hypothesis that Philippians (and other imprisonment epistles) was written at Ephesus, which would place it at a date much before the traditionally accepted one and maybe even before Romans. His theory received a great deal of support and is now accepted by many scholars worldwide.28

The order of Romans and Philippians bears directly upon our discussion of diakonos. If the letter to the Romans was written before Philippians, then Barrett’s question becomes even more significant: Rom 16:1 would then be the first time diakonos was used in reference to a specific Church. This, of course, would not rule out the possibility of Phoebe’s official function, but the burden of proof would weigh all the more heavily upon the proponents of this argument. If the letter to the Philippians was written first, then clearly Paul had already used diakonos in an official sense; here it is virtually undisputed. If this is so, then the momentum of the argument has shifted and the case for Phoebe’s official ecclesiastical ministry is strengthened.29

One thing is certain: the meaning of diakonos is far more complicated than most commentaries and analyses suggest. It cannot be dismissed as insignificant any easier than it can be

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29 It is unclear as to which position Barrett takes on the issue of chronological dating.
smoothed over by unfair, if clever, translations that downplay its importance. Nor can it be off-handedly categorized as synonymous with the later office of "deaconess" which did not develop for centuries after Romans was written, and whose office was restricted in authority and function. The fact remains that Paul did call Phoebe "a diakonos of the Church at Cenchreae," a phrase that strongly implies her official capacity.

In sum, the likelihood of diakonos being used in a technical sense in Rom 16:1 is supported by Phil 1:1 ("with the bishops and deacons") which undoubtedly refers to the "office" of deacon. Furthermore, I accept Deissman's theory that the letter to the Philippians was composed at Ephesus, which places the letter at a date near the composition of 1 Corinthians (i.e. since Paul is in Ephesus for 1 Cor, but in Macedonia by 2 Cor

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30 Phil 1:1 supports the case for Phoebe's ecclesiastical ministry only if we accept its authenticity. Yet there are those who maintain that Phil 1:1 could not belong to the rest of the letter, and is therefore a later interpolation. F. B. Craddock points out the fact that the phrase "bishops and deacons" is attested nowhere else in the Pauline letters, "coupled with the common assumption that such offices were yet a generation or two from appearing in the Church, has convinced many scholars to regard the phrase as an editorial addition at the time Paul's letters were gathered and granted wide authority in the Church." See F. B. Craddock, *Philippians* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985) 13. However, it is a *petitus principiis* to exclude as an interpolation the first reference to bishops and deacons solely on the grounds that they did not exist in Paul's day - and I see no other evidence for interpolation. See also F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians* (2d. ed.; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969) 49-50; G. M. M. Pelsor, "Women and Ecclesiastical Ministries in Paul," *Neot* 10 (1976) 102-103.
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1-7, 8-9). That Philippians was written first of course lends support to the argument for Phoebe's ecclesiastical office because Rom 16:1 is no longer the first time that Paul used diakonos in a technical sense, and in reference to a particular Church. Therefore, it seems that the evidence in the New Testament itself points to the emerging ecclesial office of deacon of which Phoebe was very much a part, and one of which Paul was very much aware. The onus of proof that diakonos is not used in a technical sense lies with those who wish to prove otherwise.

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31 For me, there are two especially compelling arguments for the theory that the epistle to the Philippians was written at Ephesus: First, the considerations of distance. The letter accounts for four trips between Rome and Philippi. The distance between these two cities is approximately 800 miles. It is calculated that such a journey would take a minimum of seven weeks to complete, or ten months for all four trips. While this is not altogether impossible, given the time frame of the letter and of Paul's activity in Rome, it seems far more likely that the journeys were made from Ephesus to Philippi (about ten-twelve days in each direction). The second argument deals with the references to the praetorium (1:13) and to the "saints of the house of Caesar" (4:22). The phrase in Phil 1:13 which translates "among the Praetorian [guard]" or "in the Praetorium" is not necessarily a reference to Rome. Since Ephesus was the capital of Asia, there would be a praetorium (the governor's official residence) there, as well as in Philippi and in the other capitals. If the reference is to the praetorium guard itself, there is also evidence that it was stationed at Ephesus, at least for a while. The house of Caesar could be interpreted as referring to slaves and freedmen of the Imperial civil service who would be found not only in Rome, but in every part of the Empire.

Part Two

The importance of Phoebe's role in the early Church is reinforced by the second title Paul gives to her: prostatēs, a word that appears nowhere else in the whole of the New Testament. According to lexical evidence, the term is translated as "protectress," "patroness," or "helper," a fact which is made evident by most biblical translations. Table 2 illustrates how prostatēs has been rendered by eight biblical editions (i.e., the same editions in which we examined the translation of diakonos).

Prostatis is usually translated as "helper" or in the sense

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32 As with diakonos, (see n.20) a survey of the same commentaries was conducted to determine their interpretation of prostatēs. Interestingly, while some commentators offer protectress (Maly, Romans, 128), patroness (Clarke, Concise Bible Commentary, 835; Dodd, Romans, 234; Fitzmyer, "Romans," 330; Hunter, Romans, 130; Maly, Romans, 128) and even benefactor (Shedd, Romans, 423-24) as possible translations, not one closely identified prostatēs with its most natural context; the voluntary associations. Note especially Kasemann (Romans, 411) who concludes that prostatēs "cannot in the context have the juridical sense of the masculine form, i.e. the leader or representative of a fellowship.... There is no reference, then, to a 'patroness'.... Women could not take on legal functions, and according to Revelation only in heretical circles do prophetesses seem to have had official ecclesiastical powers of leadership.... The idea is that of personal care which Paul and others have received at the hand of the deaconess," and Barrett (Romans, 282-83) who maintains that although "[t]he Greek noun here (prostatēs) is often equivalent to the Latin patrona,...Phoebe cannot have stood in this relation to Paul (since he was born free, Acts 22:28), and the word must therefore have the more general sense given in the translation."

33 BAGD, 718; LSJ, 607.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rom 16:2</th>
<th>RSV</th>
<th>KJV</th>
<th>NEB</th>
<th>NAB</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;kai gar auto prostatis pollon agane the kai ean autou&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;For she has been a helper of many and of myself as well&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;For she hath been a succourer of many and of myself also&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;For she has herself been a good friend to many including myself&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;And she herself has been of help to many including myself&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<th>NJB</th>
<th>MOFFATT</th>
<th>NIV</th>
<th>VULGATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;she herself has come to the help of many people, including myself&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;She has been a help herself to many people, including myself&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;For she has been a great help to many people, including me&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;et assistatis ei in quocumque negotio vestri indiguerit: etenim ipsa quaque ostitit multis et mitri upel&quot;</td>
</tr>
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of helping. Immediately, one is perplexed as to why the third lexical term is continuously selected while their first two choices, either of which would grant Phoebe a more authoritative position, are ignored.

As we know, lexicons diverge from this pattern offering "protectress" and "patroness" as the translation of prostacki. Significantly, "helper" is offered as a third meaning only in those lexicons which justify the translation by including the text of Rom 16:2. This urges us to examine for ourselves the context in which the term prostacki is employed in the material of the first three centuries. Lexical evidence provides us with four sources. To re-examine the context of all terms, we will treat each one in order of date.

(1) Cornutus, De Natura Deorum 20, 37

kai poleos gar kai oikou kai tou biou pantos prostacki
poiean ten phronesin

A notable exception is NEB which translates prostacki as "a good friend."

Starr apparently recognizes the same problem with the translation of prostacki. See Starr, Bible Status of Women, 267-68.


For one must regard intelligence as the guardian (pro-tectress) of both city and household and of all life.\textsuperscript{39}

In this passage Lucius Annaeus Cornutus\textsuperscript{39} presents an allegorical interpretation of the goddess Athena as the intelligence of Zeus. Used in the metaphorical sense to describe the place of "intelligence," prostatēs is best translated here as the guardian or protector of city, household, and of all life. "Helper" cannot convey the authority of her role.

(2) Lucian, Bis Accusatus, 29

Fos oun ouk acharistos houtos kai enochos tois peri tes kakoseos nomoi, hos ten men nomo gameten par es tosauta eilephen kai di en endoxos estin outos atimos apelipen, kainon de orechthe pragmaton, kai tauta nun hopote monen e me thaumazousin kai epigraphontai hapantes prostatēs heauton.

Is he not, then, ungrateful and subject to punishment under the laws that concern desertion, inasmuch as he so disgracefully abandoned his lawful wife, from whom he received so much and through whom he is famous, and sought a new arrangement, now of all times, when I alone am admired and claimed as patroness by everyone?\textsuperscript{40}

This is a passage from a play entitled "The Double Indictment," composed by Lucian around 165 C.E. During a mock trial scene, Oratory (personified) makes a plea for her husband to be brought to justice. In an attempt to present herself as the more worthy and important party, she refers to herself as being "admired and claimed as prostatēs by everyone." The

\textsuperscript{39} English translation by John S. Kloppenborg.

\textsuperscript{39} b. ca 20 C.E.; d. 65 C.E. in Rome, a freedman of Seneca. Lang, Cornuti, 20.

\textsuperscript{40} English translation by A. M. Harmon (LCL 3:141).
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translator for the Loeb Classical Library, A. M. Harmon, appropriately translates \textit{prostatis} here as "patroness" which conveys the image of authority and responsibility with regard to others.

(3) Dio Cassius, \textit{Dio's Roman History} 42, 39

Touton de uto prattomenon Ganymedes tis eunouchos ten arsinoen ou panu phrouroumenon es tous aigyptious Hupexegage kai tauten ekeinoi basilida apodeixantes prothumoteron tou polemou, hos kai \textit{prostatin} tina ek tou ton Ptolemaion genous echontes, antelabonto.

While these events were taking place, one Ganymedes, a eunuch, secretly brought Arsinoe to the Egyptians, as she was not very well guarded. They declared her queen and proceeded to persecute the war more vigorously, inasmuch as they now had as leader a representative of the family of the Ptolemies.\footnote{Dio's \textit{Roman History} (9 vols.; trans. Ernest Gray; London: Heinemann, 1961) 4: 175, 177.}

Although the Loeb translator, Ernest Gray, translates \textit{prostatis} here as "leader," there is no indication that Arsinoe actually leads the troops. As a representative of the royal family, she is a necessary figurehead to engender a sense of security in the people. She neither gives orders nor actively participates, but stands as a sign of imminent peace and stability in the state, if the enemy are routed. Perhaps a more appropriate translation here would be protectress or patroness.

(4) Papyri Graecae Magicae 36:333-39

Agoge epi [z]murnes, lege ton logon [k]ai [bale epi ton/ plakan tou balaniou. estin de o logos outos/Zmurna, Zmurna, e para theios diakonousa, e potamous k[ai]ore anataraxasa, e kataphlexasa to helos tou Achalda,/he
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katakausasa ton atheon Tuhon< a >, he summachos/tou oros, he prostat is tou Anoubeos, he kathodegos ten/Isidos. 42

Love Spell of attraction over myrrh: Say this spell and [put it on the flat stone of the bath.]
The spell is this: Myrrh, Myrrh, who serve at the side of the gods, who stir up rivers and mountains, who burn up the marsh of Achalda, who consume with fire the godless Typhon, who are ally of Horos, the protection of Anubis, the guide of Isis. 43

This love spell invokes a series of epithets for myrrh, including "prostat is tou Anoubeos." As Hans-Dieter Betz' translation illustrates, the context here conveys the idea of protector or preserver.

Our examination has shown that in each of these examples, the context in which prostat is is used features a woman (or in the case of the PGM, the agent myrrh) who carries the aura of authority, power and wealth. It is precisely these characteristics that allow her to lend assistance. In other words, it is misleading to translate prostat is as helper in any of these examples because the term communicates only the servile and menial aspect of the assistance and not the authority and power that made it possible in the first place.

The question that immediately arises is why the writers of the lexicons would choose the term helper that clearly could not have been derived from either of the extant examples it sup-


There are two possible explanations. First, modern bible translators were in some way influenced by the Vulgate's translation of *prostatis* as *assistatis*. As we know, the earliest date for the Vulgate is Jerome's translation in 405 C.E. By this time, the Church already boasted a 350 year history that had witnessed the development of a well-defined ecclesial male hierarchy. Adopting the convention of Roman culture, the Church's male hierarchy had steadily reduced women's role to a minimum. Hence, it is hardly surprising that a Latin translator of the fifth century would project onto *prostatis* the servile mode of an *assistatis*. It is conceivable then that modern translators long familiar with the Vulgate tradition were, directly or indirectly, influenced by its depiction of Phoebe as an "assistant". Otherwise, it is difficult to reconcile how several translators working independently of one another arrived not only at the same translation, but one that is not in accordance with the more prominent rendering of "protector" and "patroness" in lexical evidence.

A second possibility (which is not necessarily exclusive of the first) is that the representation of Phoebe as a helper to Paul and the Pauline community fits nicely with the presupposition that women were restricted to servile, indeed inferior roles. As illustrated with the translation of *diakonos*, either title would stand in direct opposition to the image that cen-
turies of androcentric interpretation has indelibly etched in the minds of generations of scholars and scholastic production.

While biblical translators of Rom 16:2 have chosen "helper," modern scholars have veered in the opposite direction. For example, according to Fiorenza, "in the literature of the time it has the connotation of leading officer, president, governor or superintendent." Wayne Meeks rejects the "leader" and "president" translations since "it is difficult to imagine what Paul could have meant by describing Phoebe as 'also presiding over me.'" According to him:

The sensible solution is to follow E. A. Judge in taking prostasis in the sense that it often has where Roman influence is strong, as an equivalent of euergetes and the Latin patrona. Paul says that Phoebe has been the protector or patroness of many Christians including himself, and 'for that reason' (gar) he asks that the Roman Christians provide her with whatever she needs during her stay in Rome. We may then infer that Phoebe is an independent woman...who has some wealth and is one of the leaders of the Christian group in the harbour town of Cenchreae.

According to Russell C. Prohl, "An improved translation of the phrase in which prostasis appears would be, 'She was made a superintendent over me.'" David Scholer maintains that

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46 Russell C. Prohl, Woman in the Church: A Restudy of Woman's Place in Building the Kingdom (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 71.
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In the Greek of the New Testament period the term was a relatively strong term of leadership and was used in both Pagan and Jewish religious circles.\textsuperscript{47}

For Leonard Swidler "the word always means ruler, leader or protector in all Greek literature" (emphasis mine) although in Phoebe’s case it always means ruler.\textsuperscript{48}

We must ask how it is that such definitions came to be offered as a possible translation of \textit{prostatis} when such a translation is not supported by its use in late antiquity (300 B.C.E.-300 C.E.). For example, tested against the control criteria of our extant texts, it is clear that one definition, leader, does not fit the mold. In the passage from Lucian, it is difficult to justify that the speaker would refer to herself as the leader of everyone, since there is no indication that she was. Nor could this understanding be any more easily imposed on the FGM text (i.e. "the leader of Annubis?") of the Cornutus passage (i.e. intelligence as the "leader" of city and household). Admittedly, the translator of Dio Cassius favored this term here. Yet even in this case, the word "leader" can be contested since, as illustrated earlier, there is no indication that Arsinoe served as anything more than a figurehead.

Methodologically, the argument for leader is built on the grounds that the participial form of the cognate verb \textit{proistemi}.


\textsuperscript{48} Swidler, \textit{Biblical Affirmations}, 310.
in 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 3:4-5, 5:17; and Rom 12:8, refers to leadership in the Thessalonian community and leadership roles among the bishops, deacons and elders respectively.49

This reasoning is credible only if proistemi is an unusual verb used so infrequently in the ancient world that its presence in the Pauline letters indicates a logical connection between the title prostatis and the verb proistemi—a connection that would only be fully understood by "inside" members of the Church.

In actual fact, the evidence points to the contrary. B. Reicke describes proistemi not as uncommon verb but one that "in Greek literature...is copiously represented."50 Moulton and Milligan also argue against a technical connotation of proistemi

49 See Fiorenza, Meeks, Scholer, Swidler. Fiorenza ("Missionaries, Apostles, Coworkers; 426) does make the argument that the understanding of prostatis in the sense of leadership and as patron or founder are not necessarily exclusive of one another; "Such an understanding of the word in terms of leadership does not rule out its understanding in terms of the patronage system of antiquity, since patrons and benefactors also could take over leadership in the association and cultic groups supported by them."

Two points of refutation. First, while the "leader" and "patron" or "founder" translations are not necessarily exclusive of one another, they are not necessarily inclusive of one another either and so the translation as "leader" is inadequate. Second, although patrons and benefactors exercised a great deal of influence over voluntary associations, rarely was the patron or benefactor a member of the club, let alone an officer in it. See L. Wm. Countryman, "Patrons and Officers in Club and Church," SBLASP (1977) 136.

50 TDNT, 700. See also the lexical evidence which cites numerous examples in antiquity illustrating that the verb was widely used in everyday language: LSJ, 1482-83: Homer, Iliad 4. 156; Antiph. 3.2.4 (dub.1.), cf. Polyb. 1.33.7; Plato, Laws. 197d; Dio Chrysostom. 7.133; 6.74 etc.; BAGD, 707: Dig. 5:3; Diodorus Siculus, 40, 3, 4; etc.
in 1 Thess 5:12 because of the context, a fact which is "further borne out by the wide varied application of the verb in the ordinary language of the time."\textsuperscript{51} While participial forms of the verb can have something of a technical meaning,\textsuperscript{52} in general, it is dangerous to infer the meanings of words from their cognates.\textsuperscript{53}

In any case, the argument that defines prostatís from old etymological studies is simply untenable. We cannot appeal to the participial form of a verb in certain Pauline epistles to derive evidence of how a title in another letter long independent from the verb was understood in the first century. Nevertheless, the translation of prostatís by many authors relies precisely on this untenable argument instead of the actual examples of the title as presented in the lexical evidence.

Other suggested translations for prostatís range from president, governor, superintendent, to ruler, each of which suggests a specialized office.\textsuperscript{54} Again, tested against our

\textsuperscript{51} MM, 541.

\textsuperscript{52} See Franz Poland, Geschichte Des Griechischen Vereinswesens (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1909) 363.

\textsuperscript{53} For a criticism of etymological studies see James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961). In his critique of Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament he claims "[i]t is not accidental that we have a crop of interpretations the weakness of which is their failure to discover what was meant and their correspondingly heavy association of words" (p. 210).

\textsuperscript{54} In "Missionaries, Apostles, Coworkers," 426, Fiorenza does offer "patron" as a possible translation but only among other possible translations.
extant texts, it is immediately clear that the titles were not derived from the examples the world of late antiquity has provided for us. For example, in the passages from both Dio Cassius and Lucian, the women in question have positions of honour and prestige, but not the commanding role or the official function associated with terms such as superintendent, ruler, president, or governor. Nor do either of these translations correctly represent the love spell for myrrh or describe Athena. Again, the derivation of these words is most puzzling: how did such variant translations surface in the first place? The answer quite possibly lies in a misdirected attention to the masculine form of the title prostates which is commonly attested in ancient texts.

Bauer defines the term as "defender, guardian." However, it is extremely important that we draw attention here to his note that "[t]he masculine prostates took on a technical sense and is found with this meaning in Jewish as well as in pagan religious circles."^^

Moulton and Milligan, also, tell us that the masculine prostates "is common in various connotations" and supply us with numerous examples of its use from the first to sixth centuries C.E.^^ Evidently, the role of the male prostates grew and

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^^ BAGD, 718.

^^ See MM, 551.
developed as the need for it arose,\(^{37}\) while the role of the female *prostatis* was stagnant.\(^{38}\) Therefore, it is possible that some modern scholars have derived their meanings not from the female *prostatis* but from the male *prostastes* to whom the roles of governor, president etc. more likely became attached.

In sum, it is clear that the word *prostatis* has been largely misunderstood. A survey of eight biblical translations reveals that the title *prostatis* in Rom 16:2 is usually translated as helper, a term not in accordance with the lexical evidence. While the Vulgate's characterization of Phoebe as an *assistatis* may have influenced the translation of *prostatis* in many biblical texts, modern scholars have veered in the opposite direction. They tend to characterize Phoebe not as a helper, but attribute to her titles such as leader, governor, president, ruler etc., none of which correspond to the contexts of the passages extant from the Greco-Roman period.

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\(^{37}\) See Friedrich Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyruskunden* (4 vols.; Berlin: Hubert 1925-31; repr. Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1969) 3:150-51 (Officials); 3:218 (Military Titles); P. Tebtunis 30.3 (1 B.C.E.); 3:383 (Pagan Cults); 3:406 (Christian Cults); P. Oxyrhynchus 1150.1 (VI cent); Supplement 380 (Officials); Supplement 436 (Pagan Cults).

\(^{38}\) That the female title did not observe the degrees of variation found in the male title is perhaps because the proportion of women guild-patrons to men was considerably smaller. See Jean Waltzing, *Études historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romains* (4 vols.; Brussels: F. Hayez; Louvain: Charles Feeters, 1895-1900) 1:348-49; 4:254-57; Guido Clemente, "Il patronato nei collegia dell'impero romano," *Studi classici e orientali* 21 (1972) 142-229.

My thanks to Wendy Cotter for her translation of Clemente's article and for her many helpful insights into the discussion of *prostatis*. 
Introduction

In any case, it was argued that we can exclude the translation of prostatēs as helper—because nowhere in the context of the extant texts is the servile dimension brought to the fore; leader—because in addition to not fitting the textual context, the argument that derives the meaning of a title from a participial verb form is forced; and president, governor, superintendent, and ruler—because they were likely derived from the masculine title prostates.

We are left then with "protectress" and "patroness," both of which are supported by the examples from the Greco-Roman world. If this is what Paul had in mind when he called Phoebe a prostatēs of the Church in Cenchreae, then it necessarily warrants a re-evaluation not only of her role, but of the role of women in general in early Christianity.

Conclusion  The problems surrounding the most appropriate translation and understanding of the operative terms diakōnos and prostatēs expose both some of the hidden assumptions of Bible translators regarding the position of women in primitive Christianity and, more importantly, a basic lack of understanding of the position of women in the imperial period. More importantly, it reveals our presuppositions about the range of roles open to women in voluntary associations where such terms as diakōnos and prostatēs are particularly common. Women are popularly depicted not only as having little direct influence in the political sphere, but as having few legal rights, a fact which restricted
nearly every avenue of their lives. This characteristic is only appropriate to a limited degree. It is therefore necessary to understand the implications of Roman law as it applied to women and to map the sectors of society in which women might rise to social prominence and leadership roles.

The very fact that there has been so much confusion over the term *prostatis* suggests that the term has been rather poorly understood. This is especially true of women patrons and women in positions of honour. Perhaps the key to our understanding of Phoebe lies in the relationship between herself as financial patron of the Church in Cenchreae and Paul as the spiritual patron of the Church as a whole. An understanding of this relationship necessitates an examination of the patron-client structure of Roman society as it pertains to voluntary organizations; how and why it evolved; its effect on the economic and social structure; and perhaps most importantly, its influence (if any) on the young Christian Church still struggling to emerge.

To what extent Paul and his Churches were influenced by the cultural and economic realms of his time needs to be explored. The possibility that women played a much more authoritative position in their society than has traditionally been supposed would inevitably nuance our conception of women in the Pauline epistles and force a re-examination of all women in the early Church.
CHAPTER ONE

Women Under Roman Law

Introduction

The logical starting point for our investigation into women patrons in the early church is an examination of the rights and freedoms afforded women under Roman law, in particular the law of marriage. This examination is necessary for two reasons.

First, it is likely that at least four of the women in the Pauline corpus, through whom we are attempting to reconstruct the historical setting of women in early Christianity, were under the jurisdiction of Roman law.

As we know, Phoebe (Rom 16:1) came from Cenchreae, Corinth's eastern port. Corinth, the capital and proconsular seat of the Roman province of Achaia, was a Roman colony since its refoundation in 44 B.C.E., and as such, was under Roman jurisdiction.¹ Similarly, Paul addresses Euodia and Syntyche in Philippi, a town in the Roman province of Macedonia which, like Corinth, was a Roman colony.² In any case, they were residing in Philippi and as residents they would be subject to Roman law.

Moreover, the fact that all of these women have Greek names is perhaps significant. Horsley documents several cases of Greek


² Theodore J. Cadoux, "Philippi," OCD, 816. Meeks suggests that in view of their Greek names, Euodia and Syntyche may have been among the merchant groups who weremetics or foreigners in Philippi. See Meeks, First Urban Christians, 57.
women, not even residing in Roman colonies, to whom Roman law applies or is deemed to apply.³

Second, the ability of women to exercise any independent control over the disposition of their finances (e.g. to be patrons) is predicated upon their legal status. Since this legal status was in part defined by the Roman understandings of family and patria potestas, and in part by the prevailing laws regarding the position and rights of women in a marriage, it is necessary to expound these concepts and place women within the framework it provides.

The Roman theory of patria potestas is the foundation for their social stratification and legal system. Theoretically, the power and authority inherent in the patria potestas was extensive, especially in regard to women. While in potestate a woman's legal status was practically non-existent: she could own no property of her own, nor could she transact any sort of business independently of her pater. She could not even marry without his consent.⁴

This power extended over inheritance and property laws as well, especially in regard to women. While men, from an early age, had the right to make a will, it was a privilege that women


acquired through a more gradual process. Even then, her power of bequest was limited somewhat by her need for tutorial consent to make a will. As we shall see, however, this restriction could be, and quite often was, side-stepped as women gained more control over the disposal of their own property after death.

In contrast, from a relatively early period, women enjoyed considerable rights as heirs on intestacy. Under early civil law, wives in manu along with the other sui heredes ranked first in claim priority, followed by agnates, and then gentiles. If not in manu, a wife had no claim at all under civil law.

Even later, under the praetorian scheme of succession, a wife sine manu theoretically ranked very low. In actual practice, however, widows normally were well provided for by their husbands and were able to maintain their standard of living with ease. Freedwomen could have neither sui heredes nor agnates.

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5 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 163-65. The purpose of the restriction against the right for women to make a will was to protect the family's property and to ensure its return to the agnates when an heiress died.

6 Ibid., 167-69.

7 Ibid., 163.

8 Ibid., 190; W.W. Buckland, A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1932) 367-70.

9 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 163.

10 Ibid., 163, 192-94; Buckland, Text-Book, 370-72.

11 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 163.
and therefore their property went to their patron and his male heirs.\textsuperscript{12}

In any case, while women, and in particular daughters, fared well on intestacy, sons were still the chief heirs as the laws governing inheritance, bequest, and property remained primarily patriarchal during the classical period.\textsuperscript{13}

A recent study by Richard Saller calls into question the effect of \textit{patria potestas}. According to him, "inadequate consideration of family demography has led historians to overestimate [its] impact."\textsuperscript{14} In actuality, the law of family was far less determinative than the laws of marriage. (Saller's article will be discussed in greater depth later).

Either way, a proper understanding of the economic status of woman in Roman society necessitates a thorough examination of the law of marriage and how it worked, both in theory and in practice.

\textbf{Betrothal}

Under Roman law betrothal marked the point at which pre-marital negotiations were made. The parties, consisting of the groom or his \textit{pater} and the bride's \textit{pater} or tutor, made promises

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 191. Augustus' \textit{lex Papia} did much for the testamentary power of freedwomen with children. For a fuller discussion see pp. 194-96.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 163.

\textsuperscript{14} Richard F. Saller, "Men's Age At Marriage and Its Consequences In The Roman Family," \textit{CP} 82 (1987) 21-34.
(sponsa) which served as a verbal contract (stipulatio). Whether or not stipulatio was exchanged by both sides is a matter of some dispute. It appears that, in Latium, betrothal took the form of double stipulations actionable on either side, at least until the Lex Julia of 90 B.C.E. that granted Roman citizenship to the Latins. It follows then that in early Roman law, where manus marriage was still the norm, stipulatio was made by both sides. While the groom’s side promised to accept the girl in marriage, her side agreed to deliver her into the marriage, very likely with a dowry. By the first century B.C.E. as manus marriage was more common, the customary rules surrounding betrothal were relaxed and it became more a matter of simple consent. Stipulatio was therefore no longer necessary and arrangements for dowry developed their own set of rather stringent standards.

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15 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 45; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 109.


17 Proponents of the single stipulation argument look to Dig. 23.1.2 (Ulpian) and Varro. In their discussion of the practice of stipulatio, they say nothing of a promise to marry on behalf of the male. See Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 8-10.

18 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 45; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 109; Balsdon, Roman Women: Their History and Habits (London: The Bodley Head, 1962) 177. According to Jolowicz however, "whether by this time [the end of the republic] the old form of sponsio had already been replaced by an informal agreement (as in classical times) is unknown." See H. F. Jolowicz, Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965) 242.
Unlike marriage there was no minimum age for betrothal. Although Modestinus (Dig. 23.1.14) sets the minimum age at seven, this part of the Digest is now generally regarded as a later interpolation. Because there was no minimum age, the practice of betrothal was sometimes abused. Men began betrothing themselves to infants in order to escape prosecution under Augustus' Lex Julia which penalized bachelors (caelibes). As a result, Augustus issued another rule that once betrothed, a couple must be married within two years in order for it to be valid. This meant that only men betrothed to girls of ten years or more were exempt from the penalty.

It is hardly surprising that betrothals were frequently broken. Under the early law of the republic, the betrothal contract legally was enforceable and the party terminating the engagement could be held liable for damages. By the late

17 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 45; Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 2-4.

20 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 45-46; Jerome Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome (ed. Henry T. Rowell; New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1940) 97. Carcopino mentions bachelors making and breaking "a series of engagements" but he doesn't specify that they were made with female infants.

21 Tacitus, Ann. 3.28; Suetonius, Aug. 34; Dio Cassius 54.16.7; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 45-46, 77-78; Balsdon, Roman Women, 76-77. Bachelors between the ages 25 and 60, and unmarried women between 20 and 50 were penalized by not being able to receive inheritances outside their agnatic family. See Carter's commentary on "The Legislation of Augustus" in John M. Carter (ed.), Suetonius Divus Augustus (Bristol: Bristol Classic, 1982) 141-45.

22 Gellius, NA 4.4; Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 2; Jolowicz, Historical Introduction, 242. It is doubtful that the girl herself was legally able to sue for damages.
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republic, betrothal was made by simple consent and apparently broken with the same ease, without penalty. Sometimes a stipulation was made beforehand that if the engagement should end, a penalty would incur, but this practice was looked down upon by the jurists.\textsuperscript{23} Interestingly, when the concept of indissoluble marriage resurfaced with the rise of the Christian empire, penal laws governing the termination of betrothal were once again strictly enforced.\textsuperscript{24}

Although betrothal by consent was not legally binding it had at least three implications. First, under the rescript of Septimus Severus (145/146-211 C.E.) and Caracalla (188-217 C.E.) a man had the right to prosecute his unfaithful fiance for adultery, by a general third party right (i.e., because she was not his wife). His sexual freedom, however, was not curtailed by the betrothal as long as he refrained from a relationship with a married woman or an unmarried female citizen.\textsuperscript{25}

Second, a person who became engaged or married while betrothed to someone else was liable to praetorian infamia.\textsuperscript{26} Once declared infamia a person suffered certain disabilities in litigation. However, since women had few litigious rights

\begin{footnotes}
\item[23] Dig. 45.1.134 pr.; Cod. Just. 8.39.2; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 45.
\item[24] Codex Theodosianus 3.6.1; Cod. Just. 5.1.5, 5.3.15; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 63 n.57.
\item[25] Dig. 48.5.14 (13).8; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 46-47, 62 n.39, 63 n.61.
\item[26] Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 109.
\end{footnotes}
anyway, the chief result of *infamia* for them was that they were unable to appoint representatives (*cognitores*) in lawsuits.\(^{27}\)

Third, betrothed persons were regarded as part of the family. This distinction afforded them the right of exemption from limitations on gifts and legacies imposed by the *Lex Cincia* and the *Lex Furia Testamentaria*.\(^{28}\) In addition, a fiancé could not be compelled to testify against his future father-in-law in court and vice versa.\(^{29}\)

As a preface to our discussion of the Roman law of marriage certain generative concepts need to be explained briefly. Emphasis will be given to those aspects which are particularly relevant to women. All concepts will be discussed under the broader heading of guardianship.

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\(^{28}\) The *Lex Cincia* passed in 204 B.C.E. restricted gifts to a specific, unknown amount. Larger amounts were permitted for close relatives (i.e. betrothed persons) and *personae exceptae* or privileged persons. Advocates were prohibited from accepting gifts as payments for services rendered.

The *Lex Furia Testamentaria* passed sometime between 204 and 169 B.C.E. is the earliest known statute that limited legacies. It set the maximum at 1000 asses except for legacies bequeathed to one’s closest relatives, spouse or bride.


\(^{29}\) Conversely, if he murdered or was murdered by the bride’s father or siblings, the charge was *parricide*. The same is true for the woman. See Gardner, *Women in Roman Law*, 47; Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction*, 242 n.3.
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Guardianship

Under classical law, women were, for the most part, subject to male guardianship for their entire lives. There were three main kinds of power: potestas, manus, and tutelage.

Patria potestas: The pater was the head of the familia, the fundamental social and property-owning unit in Roman society. As head, he was legally responsible for the legal actions of the family and represented the family in any dealings with the state.

Every legitimate child (i.e., conceived in a matrimonium iustum or a legally valid marriage) was, from birth, subject to the control of the pater or was under his potestas. He exercised potestas over his wife, if in manu; his children, regardless of whether they lived with him; his son’s children; and, of course, his slaves. In other words, there were no free agents in Roman society who were not under a pater or a pater themselves. When a woman’s pater died she was, at least in principle, assigned a guardian.

The power and authority of patria potestas was extensive. A pater could betroth a child without his/her consent, or compel a

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Gardner, Women In Roman Law, 5

Jolowicz, Historical Introduction, 129.

Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 5; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 142-43.

Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 117.
child to marry a person of his (the pater's) choice; 34 prevent a marriage from taking place, or apparently dissolve it if it was carried out without his consent; 35 sell a child into slavery; 36 refuse to rear a newborn child and let it die by exposure, even if the mother objected; 37 and under the law of the Twelve Tables he could punish his child by death (potestas vitae necisque). 38

Patria potestas ended in five ways: (1) by the death or capitis diminutio of the pater or the child, (2) the daughter became a Vestal Virgin or the son became a Flamen Dialus, a priest of high office, (3) the daughter entered into manus mariti, (4) the daughter was sold into causem mancipi or the son was sold three times, or (5) adoptio of the child into another

34 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 41; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 152.

35 Julius Paulus, Sententiae 2.19.2, 5.6.15; Plutarch, Cato Minor 30; Pompeius 44. Dissolving a marriage was not encouraged and it is difficult to ascertain how often this occurred. However, it must have occurred at some point since Paulus found it necessary to comment on it.

36 Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 151-52. The sale of a child into slavery was discontinued quite early. Even in the post-classical period, however, the sale of children for other purposes was not uncommon.

37 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 6. Child exposure was legal until 374 C. E.

38 XII Tables 4.2.; Gellius, NA 5.19.9; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 6-7. For examples of fathers punishing their daughters by death in early Rome (or, in one case, Livy 1.26, condoning the fact that his son murdered his daughter), see Valerius Maximus 6.1.3, 6; Livy 1.26, 3.44-58; Dionysius Halicarnassensis, Antiquitates Romanae 11.28-49; Diodorus, Epigrammatics 12.24. This right was abrogated under Valentinian and Valens.
familia. By late republican times, the most common way was through the death of the pater. At his death, his children were no longer under his control (alieni iuris) but were independent or sui iuris. Adult sons now became capable of independent legal action. Not only did they acquire the power of a pater-familias, but they were given the right to dispose of their own property. Women never became the head of the family, and technically, at least until the time of Augustus their legal capacity was restricted by the necessity of having a tutor.

Patricia potestas also ended for a daughter when she entered manus maritii.

Manus Mariti: Originally all Roman marriages were manus marriages although there is evidence as early as the Twelve Tables of free marriage of some sort. By the second century B.C.E., however, it was already losing ground to free marriage, at least

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39 Gaius, Inst. 1.127, 130, 132, 134, 136; 4.49; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 157-58. Apart from the natural power given to the paterfamilias, there was only one legal act by which patria potestas could be created; adoptio. Adoptio could either be of homo sui iuris (adrogatio) or homo alien iuris (adoptio, in the usual narrower sense). See Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 143-50.

40 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 6; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 157-58.

41 Dig. 50.16.195.5; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 11; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 142.

42 Gaius, Inst. 1.111; Corbett, The Roman Law of Marriage 90-91; Buckland, Text Book, 118.
among the aristocracy, and disappeared altogether by Gaius’ time (2nd century C.E.).

A manus marriage placed the wife under the control of her husband. As such she was described (by the jurists) as being loco filiae mariti est. This meant that in terms of property rights a woman stood in the same relation to her husband as one of her children, and she was considered as a heres legitima sharing the same rights of succession as a daughter. In terms of control, however, there was a fundamental difference in a man’s relationship to his wife in manu and to his children: for one thing, he could not sell his wife into slavery.

A wife in manu possessed no property of her own: everything she owned or would come to own during the marriage was absorbed into the husband’s estate or the estate of the father if the latter was still living.

Manus marriage ended by (1) death or, (2) divorce. If the husband died, the wife would become sui iuris and would not

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Gaius, Inst. 1.114.136; 2.96, 139; Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio 16.2.3; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 117; Buckland, Text-Book, 118.

Cicero, Topica 4.23; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 11, 71; Buckland, Text-Book, 118. If sui iuris at the time of marrying, anything she owned was considered as dowry and probably returned at the end of the marriage.
return to her father's *potestas*. Although there is little
evidence for divorce in *manus* marriage, it seems that in the
eyear republic only the husband could initiate a divorce, and
only in very special circumstances. By early classical times,
a wife or her *pater* had the right to begin divorce proceedings
from a *manus* marriage.

**Tutelage:** Under classical law, all children who had not yet
reached the age of puberty (*impuberes*) and who were not under
*potestas* or *manus*, required the guardianship of a tutor. The
guardian of a lunatic (*furiosus*) or a spendthrift (*prodigus*) was
called a *curator*.

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47 Manigk, "Dogmatisches," RE 14.1 (1956) 1385-99; Gardner,
*Women in Roman Law*, 83.

48 Plutarch, *Romulus* 22; XII Tables 4.2; Cicero, *Orationes
Philippicae* 2.28.69; Gardner, *Women in Roman Law*, 83.

49 Gaius, *Inst.* 1.137a; Manigk, "Dogmatisches," 1392-3;

50 How one defined puberty varied from time to time. Under
the earliest law it entailed an actual physical examination.
This practice was later discontinued for girls, but boys con-
tinued to be examined. By the time of Augustus, the age of
puberty was set at twelve for girls and fourteen for boys. Against
this see Corbett, *Roman Law of Marriage*, 52. In any case, age
criterion was particularly important in the case of impotency so
that the *spado* (one naturally impotent) would not be unfairly
penalized from political and legal rights or marriage. Interes-
tingly, while impotency did not disqualify one from marriage,
castration did. (Dig. 23.3.39.1). See also Gardner, *Women in

28; Schulz, *Classical Roman Law*, 164.

52 Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction*, 120.
There were three kinds of tutelage for children or *tutela impuberum*: (1) *tutela testamentaria* in which the child's guardian was appointed in the father's will; (2) *tutela legitima* in which, according to the law of the Twelve Tables, the closest male relative of the ward was awarded tutela; (3) In the absence of *tutor testamentaria* or *tutor legitima*, a guardian was appointed by magisterial decree or *tutela decretalis*.

Tutelage ended when children reached the age of puberty (*puberes*). For boys, the age of puberty was set at fourteen at which time they became legally independent. *Tutela impuberium* ended for girls at age twelve at which time *tutela mulieris* or adult tutelage began. Like *tutela impuberium*, *tutela mulieris* was acquired either by the father's will (*tutela mulieris testamentaria*), the Twelve Tables (*tutela mulieris legitima*), or by official appointment (*tutela mulieris decretalis*).

**Dowry and Divorce**

A dowry was a contribution to the husband, from the wife or her familia, toward the expenses of the marriage.\(^{55}\) It was, in a

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\(^{53}\) Schulz, *Classical Roman Law*, 165-68.


\(^{55}\) The institution of dowry is as old as the institution of civilized marriage. It is detailed in the Code of Hammurabi (circa 2084 B.C.E.); referred to in the Old Testament, Judges 1:15, Joshua 15:19; expounded in the Law of Gortyn and in Athenian legislation; and discussed by Cato and Plautus. See Corbett, *Roman Law Of Marriage*, 147.
sense, a measure of one’s social status and therefore, although it was not compulsory by law, social norms dictated its necessity.\textsuperscript{56}

As free marriage developed, so did "free" or easy divorce.\textsuperscript{57} Quite often marriage ended much the same way it began: by the consent of the couple.\textsuperscript{58} A simple declaration made by either the husband or the wife (or the wife’s \textit{pater} if \textit{in potestate}) clearly expressing the desire to end the marriage constituted a valid divorce.\textsuperscript{59}

The procedure was regularized somewhat under Augustus whereby the wish of a couple to dissolve a marriage must be expressed in public, usually by a freedman of the divorcing

\textsuperscript{56} Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 97.

\textsuperscript{57} The date at which the first Roman divorce took place is uncertain. Gardner places it at the divorce of Spurius Carvilius Ruga in approximately 230 B.C.E.; Jolowicz says 234 B.C.E.; Corbett suggests it may have taken place as early as the sixth century B.C.E.; Balsdon believes that Carvilius’ divorce may have taken place in the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. For a fuller explanation see Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 83; Jolowicz, \textit{Historical Introduction}, 246; Corbett, \textit{Roman Law of Marriage}, 226-28; Balsdon, \textit{Roman Women}, 210, 216.

\textsuperscript{58} One restriction imposed by Augustus’ \textit{Lex Julia et Papia: in the marriage of a freedwoman to her patron, she could not divorce him without his consent. (Dig. 24.2.11 pr.; Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 82-83, 86; Corbett, \textit{Roman Law of Marriage}, 231; Schulz, \textit{Classical Roman Law}, 134; Buckland, \textit{Text-Book}, 117.}

\textsuperscript{59} Just as living together did not constitute a valid marriage, mere separation did not constitute a divorce. The intention to end the marriage must be made clear by the spouse intending to divorce, and made clear to the other. A written notice (\textit{nuntium remisit}) may or may not be sent. See Jolowicz, \textit{Historical Introduction}, 245; Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 81, 86; Schulz, \textit{Classical Roman Law}, 132, 134; Buckland, \textit{Text-Book}, 116-17.
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party, in the presence of seven adult Roman citizens. Typical causes of divorce by consent were sterility and adultery, while among the upper classes the causes were more political and financial. However, unjustified divorce or divorce without fault was probably just as common. It is hardly surprising then that the financial welfare of the woman at the end of the marriage became a growing concern.

Originally, and in the strictest sense of the law, throughout most of the classical period, the dowry became part of the husband’s property (or the property of his pater). During the republic, the way to ensure the return of the dowry at the end of the marriage was by means of an actio ex stipulatio, a set of instructions that accompanied the dowry and governed what was to become of it should the marriage for some reason dissolve. However, even in manus marriage where the dowry was technically

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\( ^{\text{a0}} \) Suetonius, Aug. 34.; Dig. 24.2.9; 38.11.1.1; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 85, 89; Carcopino, Daily Life, 97; Balsdon, Roman Women, 217. Divorce by simple consent was abolished by Justinian.

\( ^{\text{a1}} \) Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 81-82, 88-90.

\( ^{\text{a2}} \) Ibid., 97.

\( ^{\text{a3}} \) In this case, where arrangements were made beforehand concerning the fate of the dowry, it was known as dos recepticia. A dowry could also be dos profecticia, in which case it was given by the bride’s pater or some paternal ascendant, or dos adventicia which came from the bride, some other person, or even from the pater indirectly (i.e. by waiving a legacy or succession so that it became a dowry, of part of the dowry for his son-in-law, or in lieu of a debt yet to be collected). As Buckland notes; "The ultimate destiny of the dos depended on the way in which the marriage ended, and on the nature of the dos." See Buckland, Text-Book, 107-12; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 105; Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 182-84.
irrecoverable, the wife was entitled to one half of her husband's property if she was unjustly divorced.**

In the absence of an actio ex stipulatio made beforehand, the actio rei uxoriae*** made it possible for the wife (or her pater) to recover her dowry, again, if she was unjustly divorced.** By classical times the penal character of the actio rei uxoriae had waned, and it could be, and quite often was, invoked by women who had themselves, for various reasons, occasioned a divorce.** If suis iuris, the woman could invoke the actio rei uxoriae on her own accord. If filiafamilias, however, her pater acting as a co-plaintiff, joined her in the claim for restitution.**

** Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 83.

*** The actio rei uxoriae was introduced by the praetor during the republic and reformed under Augustus. Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 126.

** The husband was required by law to return all of the dos and anything that had accrued to him as a direct result of it. He could, however, keep the "fruits" of the dos. Dig. (23.3) 7 pr.; (23.3) 4; 10.1.2, 32, 65; Shulz, Classical Roman Law, 124-25, 127.

Interestingly, while the husband was entitled to the fruits of the dos, he was prohibited by the Lex Julia de Adulteris from administering or alienating his wife's land in Italy or mortgaging it anywhere without her consent. On this see Carcopino, Daily Life 98; Buckland, Text-Book, 108.

Money and other fungibles must be restored by the husband in three annual installments—everything else immediately. Ulpian, Epit. 6.8; Buckland, Text-Book, 110; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 127-28.

** Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 182-83.

** Ulpian, Reg. 6.6; Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 184. Recalling the arguments of Saller and Shaw, it is unlikely that the latter would have occurred very often.
When the marriage ended by the death of the husband, the full dowry was recoverable by the wife in one of two ways: (1) she could claim it under the actio rei uxoriae (i.e., because it was the husband's property, it did not automatically revert) or, (2) it might be left to her as a legacy in her husband's will. She had the right to choose between accepting the legacy and invoking the actio rei uxoriae, but she could not do both. At any rate, she was legally entitled to reclaim the dowry. Heirs were permitted retentions only in special circumstances.

Apart from divorce or death, marriage could also end by either party losing connubium (i.e., men marrying women of undesirable categories, or men joining the service) or civitas (i.e., certain sentences on convicted criminals). In addition, captivity or absence for a certain period of time may also constitute dissolution of marriage. If a woman was condemned of a criminal offence, the dowry remained with the husband, or if she was in potestate it could be claimed by her pater. If she had been convicted of a statutory offence, the dowry was confisc-

\[\text{\textsuperscript{\textdegree} For an example of a wife recovering dowry upon the death of her husband see Cod. Just. 5.18.10.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{70} Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 107.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{71} A praetorian edict known as de alterutro (date unknown) prohibited her from doing both. Dig. 31.53 pr.; Codex Theodosianus 4.4.7. pr.; Cod. Just. 5.13.1.3a; Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 189-90; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 107.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{72} For example, if a wife was claiming on the basis of a will, an heir could claim on the grounds of expenses or propter impensa. If the wife was invoking the actio rei uxoriae, the heir could claim set-offs for gifts as well as for property taken by the wife. See Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 107.}\]
cated by the state. Presumably, when the husband had lost
connubium or civitas, or if he was in captivity (or absent), the
dowry was recoverable by the wife, by means of the actio rei
uxoriae.

The purpose of both the actio ex stipulatio and the actio
rei uxoriae was two-fold: (1) to ensure that a divorced woman was
financially secure, which in turn increased her prospects of
contracting another marriage; and (2) to maintain her in the
meantime. Of course, the wife was not the only one to benefit
from the recovery of her dowry: it was also in the interest of
the state, in particular the Augustan marital legislation, that
she remarry and produce children.

Apart from her right to reclaim the dowry upon dissolution
of the marriage, a wife (or her pater) retained the right of
restitution during marriage if she could demonstrate sufficient
cause that her dowry was in danger. For example, if the husband
became insolvent (or was nearing insolvency); if he was dis-
herited; or if the wife or her family urgently required the
money, she could demand immediate restitution without dissolving

73 Gaius Inst. 128; Ulpian, Reg. 10.3; Institutionum
Fragmenta Vindobonensia 1.12.1; Dig. 24.3.56; 48.19.2; Gardner,
Women in Roman Law, 87-88. For a complete discussion see also
Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 211-17.

74 Dig. 3.3.2; 24.3.1; 45.5.17.1, 18; Gardner, Women in
Roman Law, 112; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 127.
the marriage.\textsuperscript{75} This meant that at no time was a married or divorced woman financially dependent upon her husband.

The husband was not without some rights and under various pleas he was entitled to retain a portion of the dowry. For example, \textit{propter liberis} entitled him to one-sixth of the dowry for each child\textsuperscript{76} (although never exceeding one-half); \textit{propter mores uxoris} one-eighth or one-sixth of the dowry for moral offenses of the wife, depending on the seriousness of the case; \textit{propter impensos} entitled him to compensation for expenditure on the \textit{dos}; under the \textit{propter res donatas} he could claim restitution on gifts he made to his wife, even though such gifts were invalid; and \textit{propter res amatas} which entitled him to compensation for movables belonging to him taken from the house by the wife.\textsuperscript{77}

While the \textit{actio rei uxoriarum} clearly had strong repercussions across the lower economic strata, it was perhaps more vividly

\textsuperscript{75} Dig. 24.3.24, pr.1; Cod. Just. 5.12.30.2; Corbett, \textit{Roman Law of Marriage}, 198; Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 108-09.

Consider the case of Cicero and Terentia. While it is doubtful that Terentia actually demanded restitution during their marriage, at one point she did refuse Cicero financial help for fear of losing her dowry to his rather dubious political fortune. See Guglielmo Ferrero, \textit{The Women of the Caesars} (New York: The Century Co., 1911) 29.


\textsuperscript{77} Ulpian, \textit{Epit.} 4.9.10.12.14-17; \textit{Reg.} 6.8; Dig. (25.2) 1; Schulz, \textit{Classical Roman Law}, 128; Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Society}, 112-14.
realized among the upper classes where divorce was perhaps most frequent.\textsuperscript{78}

Because the size of a wealthy woman’s dowry was substantial, it became the criteria by which she was judged a worthy wife. There developed a competition of sorts for the largest dowry—a competition not at all discouraged, indeed encouraged, among the wealthy.\textsuperscript{79} Members of the political aristocracy, for example, frequently married wealthy women in order to maintain the distinction of their rank and more easily attain their political and social goals.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, it was considered a great honour for a wealthy woman to marry a man of prominence. While such a woman was expected to have lead a respectable life befitting her position, if she had not, as long as she was wealthy, they tended to “shut one eye.”\textsuperscript{81}

While Augustus’ marital reform intended to encourage remarriage and increase the birth rate, it quite often aided in the joining of unhappy couples drawn together by the need for the

\textsuperscript{78} Seneca, \textit{De Beneficiis} 3.16.2; Jolowicz, \textit{Historical Introduction}, 245; Ferrero, \textit{Women of the Caesars}, 33-34.

\textsuperscript{79} Carcopino, \textit{Daily Life}, 97-99.

\textsuperscript{80} Consider, for example, the case of Cicero whose marriage to Terentia enabled him to live in Rome, and pursue and maintain a political career. Not long after their divorce in 46 B.C.E., Cicero, at sixty-three, married Publilia, his seventeen year old ward whose possessions rehabilitated him. For a fuller explanation see Ferrero, \textit{Women of the Caesars}, 26-30.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 26.
dowry and held together for fear of losing it; a situation for which the Augustan legislation must bear part of the blame.\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}2

Marriage cum manu and sine manu

It is imperative to clarify at the outset the difference between manu mariti and marriage sine manu.

As stated above, in manu mariti the wife was under the control of the husband and could own no property of her own. Manus could be acquired in three ways.

Confarreatio: Confarreatio was a religious ceremony held before the Pontifex Maximus and the Flamen_Dialis, restricted to the highly conservative patrician class. In the presence of qualified witnesses, certain rituals were performed such as the consumption of a cake of spelt (far) as a sacrifice to Jupiter. Its principal function seems to have been in respect to certain priesthoods, which required that its candidates come from a marriage with confarreatio. From 87 B.C.E. to 12 B.C.E., however, the post of Flamen_Dialis was vacant for lack of eligible candidates. This forced a senatusconsultum in 12 B.C.E. to alter the rules governing the confarreatio ceremony, in particular the Flamen_Dialis, so that the wife was in manu only

\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}2 Carcopino, Daily Life, 97-100; against this see Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 133.
in regard to sacred law, not civil law. This rule was reinforced in 23 C.E. under Tiberius.  

**Coemptio:** This was a modified form of the sale of a woman for matrimonial purposes. She was not sold as such but agreed to sell herself with the consent of her father. If *sui iuris*, consent of her tutor was necessary since her possessions were part of the sale. Debts, however, remained the woman’s responsibility. We cannot say with any degree of certainty exactly when *coemptio* ceased but it seems that by the second century C.E. it was already rare.  

**Usus:** Unlike *confarreatio* and *coemptio*, *usus* did not take effect at the time of marrying. Rather, after one year of marriage the wife automatically came under the husband’s *manus*: no ceremony was necessary. Again, as early as the Twelve Tables a woman could avoid this by exercising *trinoctium abesse* or removing herself from her husband’s house for three consecutive nights.

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83 Gaius, Inst. 1.112, 136; Ulpian, Epit. 9.1; Tacitus, Ann. 4.16; Schulz, Roman Law, 115-16; Buckland, Text-Book, 118-19; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 12.  

84 Buckland, Text-Book, 119-20. In very early Rome, women may have actually been sold.  

once a year, every year. According to Watson, *trinocitium abesse* is last known to have been practiced around the end of the first century B.C.E.

In a marriage *sine manu* or free marriage, the wife was not only free from her husband's control, but she did not even become a member of his family: she remained in her father's *potestas*. In *potestate patria*, she could not, of course, own or dispose of property by sale or through testamentary means. If the marriage ended in divorce, the dowry did not become the property of the wife as long as her *pater* was still living. Only if her pater had died did she have a right to claim it.

A recent study by Richard Saller concerning the age of Roman men at marriage has significant implications for our understanding of *patria potestas* especially in regard to women's rights. Drawing his data from funerary inscriptions for men that include both the age at death as well as the relationship of the commemorator to the deceased, Saller concludes that the average

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**Gaius Inst. 1.111; Gellius, NA 3.2.13 ff.; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 13; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 116-17; Buckland, Text-Book, 121.**


**Ulpian, Reg. 6.3-4; Dig. 23.3.5; Fragmenta Quae Dicuntur Vaticana, 116; cited in Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 105.**

**Richard P. Saller, "Men's Age At Marriage and its Consequences in the Roman Family," CP 82 (1987) 21-34.**

**Saller's survey includes epigraphical evidence primarily from the second and third centuries C.E. Because of the large number of funerary inscriptions collected, certain groups have been excluded from the study. For example, soldiers and slaves**
age for men was in their late twenties, not in their teens as had traditionally been thought.²¹

Saller’s findings are corroborated by B. Shaw’s research into the age of Roman girls at marriage.²² Whereas old studies based on fewer epitaphs placed girls’ age at marriage at a relatively young age (early to mid-teens, depending on religion, social status, etc.),²³ Shaw’s survey illustrates that Roman girls typically married in their late teens or early twenties.²⁴

Therefore, assuming that men did marry in their late twenties, and women in their late teens, then by the time a man had a daughter of marriageable age he would be nearing fifty. Moreover, he must live at least sixty years to see a son marry and produce a legitimate child.²⁵ Given that the mortality rate are excluded because army service and slavery were more likely disruptive factors than indications of normal family life. Christian epitaphs are not included because Christian doctrine influenced their customs.

According to Saller, it is difficult to determine, with any degree of certainty, the social class of the deceased. However, he argues for the exclusion of the elite classes because the majority of epitaphs contain no indication of rank that would be expected if the deceased had been among the elite, and of the poor because they could not afford to erect a commemorative monument. See Saller, "Men’s Age," 22-24.

²¹ Saller, "Men’s Age," 30.


²⁴ Shaw used the same method as outlined in Saller’s survey.

²⁵ Saller, "Men’s Age," 30.
in early Rome sharply increased for those over fifty,\textsuperscript{94} the proportion of adult children who were still in potestate at the time of marriage is severely undercut.\textsuperscript{97}

Saller's finding leads him to three very important conclusions: (1) The impact of patria potestas on the Roman family, and on the whole of Roman society has been overestimated by historians, due to the lack of consideration of demographic studies. Theoretically, the pater had considerable legal power over his adult children in potestate. In actuality, only a fraction of children had a pater still living. (2) The legal disability of not being able to own property while in potestas therefore did not apply to the majority of Roman adults male and female. (3) Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, Saller's observations speak for the legal and economic freedom of women. In free marriage they were on equal par with their husbands in terms of ownership and disposal of property by the system of separation of goods. In fact, given the typical ten year age gap between husband and wife, it is conceivable that surviving him, she had access to control not only her own resources but any left her by her husband as well. This, combined with the fact that at the time of marriage, or shortly thereafter, they were free from


\textsuperscript{97} Saller, "Men’s Age."
their father’s potestas (i.e., because of his death), women spent most of their adult lives sui iuris and enjoyed the rights and privileges that went with it including ownership of property, the right to dispose of it, the right to make a will, the ability to inherit etc.

Effects of Marriage

Whether manus or free, marriage brought with it a series of changes in a woman’s life.

Social: While no change of status ensued for men upon marriage, a woman immediately took on the social rank of her husband. Because of the class stratification in Roman society, one’s status was of great importance in legal as well as social spheres. For example, members of the senatorial class were prohibited from marrying those deemed as probosi, or morally

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Whether or not women in free marriage were assigned a tutor or guardian upon the death of their father is uncertain. While Balsdon (Roman Women, 276), Gardner (Women in Roman Law, 14) and Schulz (Classical Roman Law, 180) answer affirmatively (unless, of course, after Augustus, she had borne the requisite number of children to exempt her from the necessity of having a tutor), Saller, in his argument here, makes no mention of it.

In any case, since it is unclear whether what appears to be demanded by law was, in fact, observed throughout the Empire, the requirement of having a guardian, as the next section will illustrate, likely resulted in a legal fiction anyway, because there were ways devised to evade it.

Saller, "Men’s Age," 32.

It is possible that in some cases a heightening of position may have taken place for men. See Corbett, Roman Law of Marriage, 107.
reprehensible. Similar restrictions applied to a senator's daughter who kept her status only as long as she married someone of the same rank.

Class differentiation was not without consequence in legal matters. It seems the gravity of the crime was at times determined by the status of the victim. For example, a sexual indiscretion involving a woman of senatorial rank was a serious offence, while the same offence against a slave or prostitute did not even constitute a crime.

If a woman married above her class, it was expected that she bring herself up to par with her husband. Pliny once contributed 50,000 sesterces to the dowry of a poor friend's daughter who was about to marry a man of wealth and position. He explained that "she ought to be provided with clothes and attendants in keeping with her husband's position," adding that "these things cannot increase her worth, but can give it the proper setting it needs." Conversely, if a woman married below her class, it

101 According to Gardner, this included "actors and actresses and their children, prostitutes, procurers and procuresses and their ex-slaves, convicted adulterers and persons convicted in a public prosecution." See Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 33-38, especially 32.

102 With special permission the former wife of a senator could retain her rank in a second marriage to someone of a lower class. See Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 67.

103 It has been said that in Rome, adultery did not constitute a crime until Augustus' Lex Julia of 18 B.C.E., although there is some doubt as to the date. See Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 118-19.

104 Pliny, Ep. 6.32.
was the responsibility of her husband to keep her in the lifestyle to which she was accustomed, especially if she had contributed a large dowry.\footnote{105}

**Maintenance**: In marriage of either kind a wife had no legal claim to maintenance by her husband. Even if she brought a dowry to the union, he was not legally obliged to use it for her well being.\footnote{106}

In free marriage of course the wife had the prerogative of divorce which by classical times could be exercised fairly routinely.\footnote{107} Ulpian speaks of an interesting case where the wife had "gone mad" and the husband, presumably for fear of losing her dowry, did not want a divorce. In such a case the woman's curator or relatives have the right to intervene on her behalf (i.e., being insane she cannot initiate a divorce herself) to ensure that the neglectful husband is held legally responsible for her maintenance.

Cases like these however are surely the exception rather than the rule. There is every indication that wives were well cared for by their husbands. On certain occasions, such as the


\footnote{107} E. Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Baltimore, MD/London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987) 137; Gardner, *Women in Roman Law*, 68. More will be said on the topic of divorce later.
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festival of Matronalia (March), wives were presented with a gift from their husbands. Quite often, the gifts would consist of a sum of money to be spent on luxuries like perfume and delicacies such as gourmet food. Some wives were provided with a monthly or yearly allowance for personal needs, or were permitted to use their own dowry for personal maintenance. The wives, of course, wife had at their disposal the run of the household and everything contained therein.

Although there was no legal obligation for the husband to maintain his wife and children, it was customary for the wife or her parents to present a gift of money (dos) to her husband at the beginning of the marriage. The purpose of this dos was twofold: (1) it was a contribution to the expenses of the marriage, and (2) it served as a security for the wife should the marriage end, since the husband was required to return the money (or land). In later and post-classical periods the security of the dos seemed inadequate and the practice of donatio ante nuptias developed. Before the marriage the man presented his...

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108 Plautus, Miles Gloriosus 691; Tibullus 3.1.2; Tertullian, De Idolatria 14; Dig. 24.1.31.8; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 68-70.

109 Dig. 17.1.60.3; 24.1.15; 24.1.21.1; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 69. This allowance should be in proportion to the size of her dowry.

110 Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 70-71.

111 Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 120.
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bride-to-be with a gift which was later returned as part of the dowry.¹¹²

Property: As we know, a wife in manu (or a daughter in potestas) could own no property of her own. Her possessions were automatically absorbed by her husband who was the sole owner and as such could dispose of the property at his will inter vivos and mortis causa.¹¹³ While the marital property was at her disposal for the length of the marriage, she did not have the right to dispose of it or offer it as security for a debt.¹¹⁴

By the classical period, women in free marriage were not subject to the same restrictions. In fact, free marriage had few, if any, direct effects regarding the ownership of property. Both husband and wife retained the ownership of property they possessed before marriage and that which they gained individually during marriage. Such property was theirs to dispose of as they pleased. As Schulz points out, this system was somewhat unfair to the wife. She had no claim to property acquired by her husband during the marriage although it was often through her help that it was acquired.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid., 120.

¹¹³ Gaius, Inst. 2.90; Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 118; Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 76.

¹¹⁴ Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 76.

¹¹⁵ Schulz, Classical Roman Law, 118-19.
This system of separation of goods was very much a part of classical law and great pains were taken to preserve it. For example, the transfer of gifts between husband and wife was banned as a means of keeping the property of each familiae in tact.\textsuperscript{114} Similarly, from the end of the republic, wives were forbidden to stand surety for a debt of their husband, and later were forbidden to intervene on anyone's behalf. This law was designed primarily to protect the interests of the wife (and her family or patron) so that she would not be coerced into jeopardizing her own property for the sake of her husband.\textsuperscript{117}

\textit{Economic Freedom Of Women}

So far we have been examining the theory of Roman law—its ideal design as recorded in the Twelve Tables and Justinian's Digest. In any society, the ideal design of the law and its practical application do not always coincide. Rome was no exception. If, for example, we based our understanding of Roman women solely in terms of the Digest, our perception would be a

\textsuperscript{114} Dig. 24.1.1.2.3. The ban was extended to in-laws except for the mother-in-law and sister-in-law because neither were part of the husband's family. Also, gifts were permitted in certain circumstances. See Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 74-75; Corbett, \textit{Roman Law of Marriage}, 114-57.


\textsuperscript{117} Dig. 16.1; Julius Paulus, \textit{Sententiae} 2.11; Gardner, \textit{Women in Roman Law}, 75; Corbett, \textit{Roman Law of Marriage}, 114. The law forbidding women to stand surety for their husbands was first passed under the edicts of Augustus and Claudius. It was extended by the \textit{senatusconsultum Vellianum} and later recast by Justinian.
distorted picture of suppressed women trapped in an intensely patriarchal culture with no input, indeed no interest, in society. Sarah B. Pomeroy notes in this regard:

Obviously, if women were actually conducting themselves in accordance with the ideal, there would have been no need to urge them continually by such means as the Augustan marriage legislation and the remainders on imperial coinage.\textsuperscript{110}

Thankfully our sources about the women of late antiquity are not confined to the Digest or legal tractates. Epigraphical evidence provides us with a much more accurate recreation of what everyday life was like for women in Roman society.

By way of illustration, consider the issue of the requirement for women, even women married sine manu, to have a guardian upon the death of their father. Two important papyri from the first and third centuries, respectively, figure prominently in this discussion.

The first is a contract of habitation, dated 13 April 71 C.E., in which three women, Tauris, Didyme, and Soueris, who have received a loan from a man named Maron, agree to let him occupy for five years their share of a house in lieu of interests payments on the loan.

\begin{flushright}
P. Michigan. 12.635: Tauris, about fifty years old...; and Didyme, about forty-five years old, with a scar on her forehead on the right; and Soueris, about...years old... (who are, all three of them, daughters of Petsiris, Persian women, and a mutual sureties for recovery, and for whom the guardians are: for Taurus and Didyme the husband of Didyme, Herakleides, the son of Chairenon, about...years old, with a scar on his left...; for Soueris her own husband Onnophris, the son of Onnophris about, about...years old, with a scar...), acknowledge to Maron, the son of Hermas, about 41\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{110} Pomeroy, Goddesses, 185.
years old, with a scar in the middle of his forehead below the hair, that they have received from him a loan of two hundred silver drachmas in coined money forthwith from hand to hand out of the house, and that instead of the interest thereon, the parties of the first part have agreed that Maron, his representatives, and whomever he wishes shall reside for five years from the aforesaid time in the property which belongs to the parties of the first part themselves, in the aforesaid village of Bacchias, viz., a ninth share of a house and courtyard with all the appurtenances in the so-called street of Bor...; of which a third share belongs to the same Maron.

Accordingly let the parties of the first part and their representatives guarantee the provisions of this contract of habitation to Maron and his representatives with full guarantee both for the duration of the loan established by the contract and for as long as additional lodging is necessary. And they will deliver the designated ninth share of the house and courtyard unencumbered, unpledged, not offered as collateral, and free from all debts, both public and private, and they will see that no one hinders Maron or his representatives from living in this property, lodging others therein, collecting the rents, and using all the appurtenances of the house and courtyard in common.

And at the expiration of the period let the parties of the first part repay the two hundred silver drachmas to Maron, and until they repay they agree that Maron shall reside as stated above. And if it appears that Maron has undergone expense in repairing or also in building or for any other purpose in the aforesaid ninth share of the house and courtyard, it is necessary that the parties of the first part repay Maron himself without any delay or subterfuge.

Signatory: for Didyme and Tauris Herakleides, their aforesaid guardian and husband of Didyme; for Soueris and her guardian and husband Eubios, son of Isidoris, about 25 years old, with a scar in the middle of his nose. 117

In contrast, Horsley supplies us with an example of a woman who not only wishes to conduct her business "without a kyrios," but states the law by which she is entitled to do so.

P. Oxyrhynchus 1467 (There exist laws), most eminent prefect, which give to women who are endowed with the right of three children/to be independent and to negotiate without a kyrios in transactions which they undertake, and partic-

ularly to women who know how to read and write. And I myself, then, being fortunate by being endowed with plenty of children, and being literate and able to write with especial fluency, by my abundant security through this application of mine, I address your highness to be able to perform without hindrance the transactions which I undertake from now on. I request you to hold it (my application) without prejudice to my rights in the office of your eminence, so that I may receive help and acknowledge my eternal thanks. Farewell. I Aurelia Thaisous, also called Lolliane, have sent it for presentation. Year 10, Epeiph 21. 120

A number of observations can be made. First, by the ages of the women in the first inscription (i.e., Tauris 50 yrs. old; Didyme 45 yrs. old) we can conclude that their fathers were no longer living. Second, we can assume that they have not borne three children and therefore do not qualify for exemption under the *jus trium liberorum* or surely they too would have invoked their rights to transact business independently (i.e., as did Aurelia Thaisous). 121 Third, while these women are not especially wealthy (i.e., they own one ninth of a house), they do have enough money of their own to conduct a business deal (i.e., borrowing money; arranging repayment; etc.) apparently requiring their husband’s/guardian’s signature only as a formality. Finally, and most importantly, these inscriptions strongly suggest that adult and independent women, who were not exempt


under the three children law, did indeed require a guardian, especially in business transactions.

However, as we will illustrate, this requirement is not nearly as restrictive to women as it would first appear because numerous ways were devised to evade it.

We know of only one law that specifically allowed women to act without a guardian. The jus trium liberorum, or the three children law, was a provision of Augustus' Lex Papia Poppaea of 9 C.E. and the Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus of 18 B.C.E. that exempted freeborn women with three children or freedwomen with four children from the necessity of having a tutor to transact business.\textsuperscript{122} Among other things, this meant that she was free to dispose of her own property as she saw fit.

But there were other ways around the restriction of having a tutor. As early as the end of the republic, women were opposed to the idea of perennial tutelage and effective, if subtle, means were devised to accommodate their objection. Instead of a father appointing his daughter's guardian in his will, the tutor optivus enabled her to choose her own guardian (or several guardians). Moreover, if her chosen guardian was not acting in accordance to her needs, she retained the right to change them as often as she wished. If this right was not provided for a woman by her father's will, the tutor cessicius allowed her the same rights of transmission of legal guardians.\textsuperscript{p.123}

\textsuperscript{122} Gardner, Women in Roman Law, 20.

\textsuperscript{123} Gaius Inst. 192; Ferrero, Women of the Caesars, 6.
It seems the decisive break with tutelage came when a method of fictitious marriage or tutor fiduciarius was devised that enabled women not only to pick her own tutor and change tutors as she pleased, but it gave her the one thing that tutor optivus and tutor cessicius did not: the right to make a will. This method was carried out by means of a coemptio (to be distinguished from the coemptio entered into in manus marriage). A woman gave herself by means of a coemptio (purchase) into the manus of a person of her choice with the understanding that he would mancipate her to the tutor of her choice. To complete the process, she was manumitted by her new tutor and was thereby free to manage her own affairs.\(^{124}\) Clearly, Jolowicz is correct in observing that "although the lifelong guardianship of women remained, it was only a burdensome technicality left over from an earlier stage of civilization."\(^{125}\)

In addition to the changes in the laws regarding tutors, there is evidence of the legal and social advance of women in the early principate. For example:

(1) As early as 12 B.C.E. women were unwilling to submit to manus mariti. So strong was their objection that they pressured the senate (12 B.C.E.), and later Tiberius (23 C.E.) to alter the

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\(^{124}\) Cicero, *Oratio pro Murena* xii.27; Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction*, 250, esp. n.5. The use of coemptio by a woman in order to select her own tutor is actually first attested to in Gaius (Gaius, *Inst.* I.115) but there is evidence that the practice was already in existence in Cicero’s time.

For a slightly different version of the coemptio process see Ferrero, *Women of the Caesars*, 9.

\(^{125}\) Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction*, 250.
rules governing the confarreatio ceremony, in particular the post of flamen Dialus, so that the wife was in manu only in regard to sacred law, not civil law. 126

(2) Suetonius (Claudius 19) states that in an effort to win the loyalty and support of the grain fleet, Claudius granted certain privileges to the owners: if Roman citizens, they were exempt from the provisions of the Lex Papia Poppaea which required them to marry; if enfranchised Latins, they were given the freedom of Roman citizenship; if women, they were granted the freedom and benefits of those who had four children. 127 The significance of Claudius' ruling is the inference that there were enough women involved in the grain trade that Claudius thought it necessary to secure their support, and frames the law with them in view.

(3) Cicero's wife, Terentia, wealthy in her own right, administered her property quite independently of her husband with the help of her personal staff of freedmen. 128

(4) According to Tacitus (55-120 C.E.), it was the practice for wives to accompany their husbands on gubernatorial campaigns - an important observation in itself. He notes the dismay of Severus

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126 See n.48.


128 Cicero, Epistulae ad Atticum 7.1; 7.26; 10.4; 11.11; 11.24; 13.46; 16.6; 16.15.
Caecina over the influence the wives exercised: "They had the centurions at beck and call."\(^{127}\)

(5) Throughout the republic agnatic rights of female succession were restricted to sisters of the deceased. Under praetorian law, the rules were relaxed somewhat to include the rights and claims of cognates in intestate succession. By classical times, the praetor permitted a wife in a free marriage to receive bonorum possessio of her deceased husband, marking a significant step in women's independence.\(^{128}\)

What can we conclude about the economic freedom of women in early Rome? Clearly, women were not nearly as disadvantaged as the Digest and many modern historians of Roman law would lead us to believe. They conducted business affairs independently of any outside influence; they were able to receive and leave legacies and inheritances; they were influential in business, etc. In short, in terms of practical authority, women had already, by classical times, acquired the legal and economic freedom necessary to lead a life of independence.


\(^{128}\) Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction*, 260-61. There were 4 classes to whom the praetor offered bonorum possessio ab intestato: (1) children who were sui; (2) those who had a civil law claim; (3) blood relations to the sixth degree, male or female; (4) In the absence of someone from the first three classes, a wife could receive bonorum possessio of her deceased husband and vice versa.
Women Under Roman Law

Roman Law Outside Rome

Before concluding our discussion of marriage, the extent to which Roman law applied to persons outside Rome, (but whose citizenship is uncertain) and the possibility of competition among legal systems, needs to be examined. Partly due to the lack of available evidence, this question has not yet been solved by historians.

We do know that Roman law applied to those in Roman colonies such as Corinth, Cenchreae and Philippi. Horsley’s data on the New Testament’s Lydia illustrates this. Relatively little is known about Lydia. However, the fact that she is involved in the purple-dye trade suggests that she is of freed status, a fact not only indicated by her occupation but by her name (i.e., Lydia suggests a servile status). She is apparently a woman of some means as she has a house large enough in which to invite Paul and his companions.

A woman, in Phoebe’s day, who could act with such independence and economic freedom likely was in one of two situations: (1) Either she was married sine manu, or widowed and preceded by her father, in which case she could achieve economic independence and conduct her own affairs; or (2) in view of the papyrological evidence of women acting "without a lord," we must consider the possibility that she was a freed woman having borne the required number of children to entitle her to act "without a lord" under

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131 Horsley, New Documents, 2:26-27.
the *ius trium liberorum*.\textsuperscript{132} In either case, as a resident of Philippi she belonged to a Roman colony and could avail herself of the privileges of Roman law.

But what about women outside Rome and her colonies? Wealthy women are featured prominently in Luke's description of Paul's activities in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-15). Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia, was not a colony but an autonomous Greek city and therefore not necessarily under Roman law.\textsuperscript{133} However, as we will indicate, there is some evidence that non-Romans living outside Rome and her colonies also claimed the privileges of Roman law. Consider, for example, Roman rule over the autonomous Greek cities after the fall of the Ptolemaic dynasty and the division of Egypt by Rome. While the cities were permitted to retain formal autonomy, clearly Rome kept a firm grip on political (and other) occurrences.\textsuperscript{134}

Also, G. H. R. Horsley's data from Egyptian papyri provides us with numerous illustrations of women who conducted business affairs "without a lord." While we cannot be certain, the repetition of the *choris kyriou* formula, strongly suggests that these women of non-Roman origin were claiming the advantages of

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 2:32.

\textsuperscript{133} William D. Ross, "Thessalonica," *OCD*, 1062. Thessalonica became a Roman colony around 250 C.E.

See also Holland Hendrix, "Thessalonics Honour Romans," Diss. (Th.D), Harvard Univ., 1984, which, as the title indicates, argues that Thessalonica was at least friendly to Rome.

Roman law by invoking the *ius trium liberorum* in order to gain a greater measure of economic freedom.

As Horsley cautions "under Roman law what may be relevant for well to do female Roman citizens in Egypt may not apply to a freedwoman in Macedonia." However the content of the papyrological data suggests that many of these were not especially wealthy or Roman citizens. (After all it is hardly conceivable that not one of the papyri found in Egypt belonged to an Egyptian woman). By way of illustration consider the following examples.

P. Wisconsin 2.58 (Potemais Euergetis, Philadelphia, 5/4/298), sale of a small building to a woman named Aurelia Tapaesis.

P. Michigan 13.663 (Aphrodite, VI), sale of parts of a house to several people by a woman named Aurelia Maria, who is apparently acting independently i.e. without a lord.

This kind of moderate monetary transaction involving small buildings or small pieces of land, indicate that these women were not of the elite class. Rather, they appear to be ordinary citizens who were able to use Roman law to their advantage.

Moreover, we know that Claudius extended to any women involved in the grain trade, whether they had children or not, the same privileges as a Roman freedwoman with four children.

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enjoyed: an other clear example of women outside Rome influenced by Roman law.

While it is difficult to decide with any degree of certainty, the indications from Egypt suggest that Roman law did indeed apply to those outside Rome.

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138 Pliny, Ep. 10.94; Martial, Epigrams 2.91.5; Balsdon, Roman Women, 202. The Rights of Three Children was sometimes awarded by Emperors to childless couples, honoris causa. Domitian awarded the right to Martial who was unmarried.
CHAPTER TWO

Women in First Century Voluntary Associations

Background

Definition: A first century club or voluntary association was an alliance of persons bound together in pursuit of common needs and goals otherwise unfulfilled in their society. While there are references to associations, collegia, etc. in the Justinian Digest; Dion, Tacitus, and Suetonius, and some papyri, our main source of information concerning them is inscriptions. That we know of associations through inscriptions is not in itself surprising since associations normally showed their gratitude for benefactions in the form of dedicatory inscriptions. It is somewhat surprising that, given their popularity, they are not mentioned more in the literary sources. Their absence, however, likely can be explained by the fact that clubs were a phenomenon of the lower ranks and literature generally was produced by and for the elites. Hence, there is a class issue here.¹ Fortunately, the extant inscriptions provide us with enough information that a relatively accurate reconstruction is possible.

A vital part of the social structure of late antiquity, clubs, or hetairia or thiasos were known to the Greek world as

early as the time of Solon, although it is not until the Hellenistic age that we witness their rapid development and spread. In the pre-Hellenistic period their function was chiefly religious, often centering on the worship of a particular god deemed illegal by the state. With the rise of Greek clubs throughout the Greco-Roman world, the purely cultic aspect diminished as the economic and social aspects came into more prominent play.

It has been said that voluntary clubs, or in Latin, collegia existed in Rome almost from its very foundation, but the 2nd century B.C.E. is probably more accurate. That these early associations, like their Greek counterparts, were fundamentally religious, is evidenced by the names they bore (e.g., Diana et Antinous, Aesculpius et Hygia). Moreover, even those collegia

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2 Dig. 47.22.4; Meek, *First Urban Christians*, 31; Tod, "Clubs, Greek," 254; *Sidelights*, 72. Thucydides (3.82; 8.54; 65) speaks of political clubs or groups in Athens, 5th century B.C.E.

3 Tod, *Sidelights*, 73.

4 For example, the votaries of Amyinus, Asclepius, Dexion etc. See Tod, "Clubs, Greek," 254.

5 Tod, "Clubs, Greek," 254. The focus of this discussion is on Roman clubs. For a fuller discussion of Greek clubs see Tod, "Clubs, Greek," 254-55; and especially Tod, *Sidelights*, Lecture 3, 71-96.


8 *ILS* 7212; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 255.
not affiliated with any particular deity often conducted their meetings in temples.\textsuperscript{10}

**Legal Aspects:** It was precisely this privacy or secrecy that aroused the suspicion of the government. Rome was basically tolerant, even apathetic, toward cult and religious worship.\textsuperscript{11} But its religious tolerance was not as strong as its political sensitivity. Any gathering of people, especially secret gatherings, were perceived as a potential political threat and thus closely monitored.\textsuperscript{12} This uneasiness is reflected in Trajan's guarded response to Pliny's request to form a 'fire department' (collegium fabrorum) at Nicomedia, around the end of the first century.

You may very well have had the idea that it should be possible to form a company of firemen at Nicomedia on the model of those existing elsewhere, but we must remember that it is societies like these which have been responsible for the political disturbances in your provinces, particularly in its towns. If people assemble for a common purpose, whatever name we give them and for whatever reason, they soon turn into a political club....\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{9} ILS 7213; CIL VI 10234; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 255.

\textsuperscript{10} Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 255.


\textsuperscript{12} MacMullen, Enemies, 125.

\textsuperscript{13} Pliny, Ep. 10.34.
The period following the appearance of voluntary clubs in Rome was relatively problem free in terms of government intervention.\footnote{14} One exception was the suppression of the Bacchanalian cult in 186 B.C.E.\footnote{15} a clear reminder to other clubs that objectionable behaviour of any sort would not be tolerated.

By the end of the Republic, some collegia ventured onto the political arena and were again, immediately suppressed.\footnote{16} Yet, by this time, the suspicion and fear had escalated into a need for government legislation that would keep the clubs in check.

Under Julius Caesar and Augustus (27 B.C.E.- 14 C.E.), the right of free association was, for the most part, abolished.\footnote{17} New collegia could not be formed without special permission.\footnote{18} Even the existing ones had to be sanctioned by the Senate for

\footnote{14} Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 255.


\footnote{16} Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 255-56.


\footnote{18} Dill, \textit{Roman Society}, 254.
Women in First Century Voluntary Associations

fear of political adversity and social unrest. The fear was not altogether unfounded. Instances of "bloody contests" and organized riots engineered by 'illegal' clubs are recorded. Yet in spite of government legislation, voluntary associations continued to flourish both in and outside Rome. According to Samuel Dill:

In the blank wilderness, created by a universal despotism, the craving for sympathy and mutual succour inspired a great social movement, which legislation was powerless to check. Just as in the reigns of Theodosius and Homerus, imperial edicts and rescriptions were paralysed by the impalpable, quietly irresistible force of a universal social need or sentiment.

In the middle of the second century, the reins were once again tightened when rules governing not only the formation of clubs, but their meetings and treasuries as well, were imposed. Associations (e.g. funeral societies) were permitted to meet only once a month for the collection of fees; meetings were to be held during the day; club treasuries were not to exceed a designated amount; and when possible a city official would be present.

Function and Purpose: The social function served by voluntary associations was vital, and for many, their primary reason for

19 Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256.
20 Tacitus, Ann. 14,17.
21 Dill, Roman Society, 255.
22 Mommsen, De Collegis, 98; Dill, Roman Society, 255; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Shelton, As The Romans Did, 100, n.102.
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joining. They provided for people an opportunity for interaction. Club meetings enabled them to escape the monotony of their daily routine, if only for a while, and get in touch with the larger "universal" centre. Perhaps more importantly, membership in clubs transcended social barriers. Because of the social stratification in Roman society, many people, in particular those in the lower classes, were captives of their rank. Prosopographical studies, however, illustrate that members of various classes often mingled in the same clubs: an opportunity scarcely afforded them anywhere else.  

The meeting itself would typically consist of members sharing a meal and wine, the latter supplied by club members by turn;  the celebration of special occasions, such as the birthday of a patron or religious festivals (i.e. feast of Isis, Poseidon);  the worship of a particular god or hero; and of course the collection of dues and contributions from members,  

23 Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136. Greek clubs were usually more exclusive, but gradually followed the Roman pattern.  

24 CIL 14.2112; ILS 7212; Meeks, First Urban Christians, 32; Shelton, As The Romans Did, 100; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136. 


25 Meeks, First Urban Christians, 32; Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136; Mommsen, De Collegiis, 98-99; Poland, Geschichte, 271-73.  

26 Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 255.
mainly to ensure each member a proper burial. In the case of burial societies, specific rules regarding one's burial were drawn up at the meeting.

Archeological evidence confirms this agenda. Ancient ruins illustrate that the average club house had three rooms: a meeting room or a type of reception/social area; a chapel, or a room set aside especially for worship and finally a banquet hall for afternoon meals and celebrations.

In all collegia, even the little ones, a hierarchy emerged. Interestingly, associations in which members were largely comprised of the lower classes, used as a model for their internal government the constitution of the Old Republic from whose aristocracy most of them were far removed.

Types of Collegia: By far the most common type of collegium in Rome was the funeral club. Their enormous popularity can be attributed to two factors. First, is the Roman obsession with being remembered after death, hence, the importance of a proper funeral, burial place, and of course, tombstone. This was agreeable to the Roman government because it relieved them of the

27 Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Shelton, *As The Romans Did*, 100.


30 Ibid., 269-70. More will be said on the role of club officers later.
responsibility of having to arrange for the burial of deceased citizens especially poor citizens, who, without the security of a funerary society, would inevitably find themselves in great pecuniary difficulty in terms of burial expenses.\textsuperscript{31}

Second, because funerals clubs were legal, a great many \textit{collegia} that were only partly or not at all confined to funeral arrangements, called themselves funeral clubs in order to receive sanction by the Senate.\textsuperscript{32} In the privacy of the clubs, however, their actual purpose was quite different.

Consider the following examples of both a funerary and a non-funerary or cultic \textit{collegium}.

The first contains excerpts from the by-laws of the funeral club of Diana and Antinous dated 133 C.E. that has been preserved on a marble tablet:

\begin{quote}
... In the consulship of Marcus Antonius Hiberus and Publius Mummius Sisenna, January 1, the Benevolent Society of Diana... and Antinous was founded, Lucius Caesennius Rufus son of Lucius, of the Quirine tribe, being for the third time sole magistrate and likewise patron.
\end{quote}

\textbf{Clause from the Decree of the Senate of the Roman People}

These are permitted to assemble, convene, and maintain a society: those who desire to make monthly contributions for funerals may assemble in such a society, but they may not assemble in the name of such society except once a month for the sake of making contributions to provide burial for the dead....

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 258-59.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 259-60; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Stephen Benko and John J. O'Rourke, (eds.), \textit{The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity} (Valley Forge: Judson, 1971) 281.
By-Laws of the Society

It was voted unanimously that whoever desires to enter this society shall pay an initiation fee of 100 sesterces and an amphora of good wine, and shall pay monthly dues of 5 asses. It was voted further that if anyone has not paid his dues for six consecutive months and the common lot of mankind befalls him, his claim to burial shall not be considered, even if he has provided for it in his will. It was voted further that upon the decease of a paid-up member of our body there will be due him from the treasury 300 sesterces, from which sum will be deducted a funeral fee of 50 sesterces to be distributed at the pyre [among those attending]; the obsequies, furthermore, will be performed on foot.

It was voted further that if a member dies farther than twenty miles from town and the society is notified, three men chosen from our body will be required to go there to arrange for his funeral....And let no patron or patroness, master or mistress, or creditor have any right of claim against this society unless he has been named heir in a will. If a member dies intestate, the details of his burial will be decided by the quinquennalis and the membership.

It was voted further that if a slave member of this society dies, and his master or mistress unreasonably refuses to relinquish his body for burial, and he has not left written instructions, a token funeral ceremony will be held.

It was voted further that if any member takes his own life for any reason whatever, his claim to burial [by the society] shall not be considered.

It was voted further that if any slave member of this society becomes free, he is required to donate an amphora of good wine.

It was voted further that if any master, in the year when it is his turn in the membership list to provide a dinner, he shall pay 30 sesterces into the treasury; the man following him on the list shall be required to give the dinner, and he [the delinquent] shall be required to reciprocate when it is the latter's turn.

Calendar of dinners: March 8, birthday of Caesennius...his father; November 27, birthday of Antinous; August 13, birthday of Diana and of the society; August 20, birthday of Caesennius Silvanus, his brother;...birthday of Cornelia Procula, his mother; December 14, birthday of Caesennius Rufus, patron of the municipality.
Masters of the dinners in order of the membership list, appointed four at a time in turn, shall be required to provide an amphora of good wine each, and for as many members as the society has a bread costing 2 asses, sardines to the number of four, a setting, and warm water with service.

It was voted further that any member who become *quinquennalis* in this society shall be exempt from such obligations [?] for the term when he is *quinquennalis* ...the secretary and the messenger shall be exempt from such obligations [?].

It was voted further that if any member desires to make any complaint of bringing up any business, he is to bring it up at a business meeting, so that we may banquet in peace and good cheer on festive days.

It was voted further that any member who moves from one place to another so as to cause a disturbance shall be fined 4 sesterces. Any members moreover, who speaks abusively of another or causes an uproar shall be fined 12 sesterces. Any member who uses any abusive or insolent language to a *quinquennalis* at a banquet shall be fined 20 sesterces.

It was voted further that on the festive days of his term of office each quinquennalis is to conduct worship with incense and wine and is to perform his other functions clothed in white, and that on the birthdays of Diana and Antinous he is to provide oil for the society in the public bath before they banquet.  

A number of salient features can be derived from this inscription. Immediately evident are the restrictions imposed by the senatconsultum: meetings are to take place not more than once a month, for the purpose of collecting fees for the burial fund.

It was by a general concession from the Senate that *collegia* were

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permitted to convene, providing, of course, they abided by Senate regulations. Individual club approval was not necessary.\(^3^4\)

Clearly defined rules and regulations marked the constitution of the *Collegium*. Members knew precisely what was expected of them in terms of financial obligations, attending funerals, arranging dinners, etc., as well as what they could expect in return continued membership, proper burial etc., provided they held fast to the club constitution.

Six celebratory dinners in honour of club patrons are mentioned, presumably in addition to the monthly ones. This may be an indication that the social aspect of the club was as important as, or perhaps more important, than the purpose of securing funeral arrangements.

Of particular importance are the patrons and/or people of importance for whom these dinners were held. In addition to Caessennius Rufus, patron of the club and the municipality, homage is paid to Caessennius... his father, Caessennius Silvanus, his brother, and Cornelia Procula, his mother; none of whom we know much about. There are three possible situations. First, all four are individual patrons of the club. Considering the earlier reference to women patrons, this possibility cannot be discounted. Second, patronage to the club was given by the whole family (as opposed to an individual member) in which case the

\(^{34}\) John S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia," (Unpublished paper. Cited in typescript) 8. For a discussion of the more complicated issue of the dating of this senatusconsultum, see pp. 8-11.
woman mentioned, Cornelia Procula, was important enough to be singled out and have a dinner held in her honour. Third, only Caesennius Rufus was patron to the club and because of his status as civic patron and wealthy citizen, the club was honoring not only him but his entire family. Either way, Cornelia Procula was likely wealthy and influential in her own right.

Chairmen for the meals are selected not by any sort of electoral process, but by turn, in accordance with the membership list. This sort of rotation may suggest a kind of egalitarianism among members.

Interestingly, a strict table etiquette was enforced, violation of which was punishable by a fine. "Obstreperous" behaviour and abusive language was not tolerated, especially if it was directed against the club president.

One final feature that deserves attention is the cultic function of the president. The white clothing, the offering of incense and wine, and the distribution of oil to members, certainly exceed the purpose of collecting funds for which the senate had given approval.35

The second example contains excerpts from the prescriptions of a private club, dated around the end of the second century or the early first century B.C.E.

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35 An English translation of this text also appears in Shelton, As The Romans Did, 100-101. Interestingly, in her translation the family connection between those honored (i.e. father, brother, mother) is not made.
May Good Fortune Prevail. For health and common salvation and the finest reputation the ordinances given to Dionysius in his sleep were written up, giving access into his oikos to men and women, free people and slaves.

For in this place have been set up altars of Zeus Eumenes, and of Hestia his coadjutor, and of the other saviour gods, and Eudaimonia, Plutus, Arete, Hygieia, Agathe Tyche, Agathos Daimon, Mneme, the Charitae and Nike.

To this man Zeus has given ordinances for the performance of the purifications, the cleansings and the mysteries, in accordance with ancestral custom and as has now been written.

When coming into this oikos let men and women, free people and slaves, swear by all the gods neither to know nor make use wittingly of any deceit against a man or a woman, neither poison harmful to men nor harmful spells. They are not themselves to make use of a love potion, abortifacient, contraceptive, or any other thing fatal to children; nor are they to recommend it to, nor connive at it with, another. They are not to refrain in any respect from being well-intentioned towards this oikos. If anyone performs or plots any of these things, they are neither to put up with it nor keep silent, but expose it and defend themselves.

Apart from his own wife, a man is not to have sexual relations with another married woman, whether free or slave, nor with a boy nor a virgin girl... A free woman is to be chaste and shall not know the bed of, nor have sexual intercourse with, another man except her own husband. But if she does have such knowledge, such a woman is not chaste, but defiled and full of endemic pollution, and unworthy to reverence this god whose holy things these are that have been set up. She is not to be present at the sacrifices, nor to strike against (?) the purifications and cleansings (?), nor to see the mysteries being performed...

At the monthly and annual sacrifices may those men and women who have confidence in themselves touch this inscription on which the ordinances of the god have been written, in order that those who obey these ordinances and those who do not may be manifest...

Again, a number of important features are evident. Authorization or approval for the functioning and maintenance of the club is given by means of a divine mandate from Zeus conveyed to

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Dionysius in his sleep; not an uncommon phenomenon in antiquity.\textsuperscript{37}

Certain cultic celebrations can be observed. The text speaks of purification, cleansing and mysteries (lines 9-13, 35-36) as well as the ritualistic touching of the stele (lines 38-39). These functions apparently were carried out by Dionysius to whom Zeus had given ordinances.

The inscription bears witness to an explicit moral code that required members to swear as oath upon entering renouncing deceit, harmful magical aids or practices, and anything harmful or fatal to children (lines 14-20). In addition to this oath, strict regulations governing sexual behaviour are enforced, particularly against women for fear of sexual defilement of the rest of the group.\textsuperscript{38}

As in the first example, an egalitarianism among members is intimated. All members, not just a selected few, are required to report any known transgressions of their colleagues against the club constitution (lines 21-24). Moreover, there is no indication of an official hierarchy. While it was Dionysius to whom the divine ordinances were revealed, and he likely holds some honored position within the group, we cannot say with any degree of certainty that he is the "leader", "president," or "priest." Interestingly, the strongest hint of official ter-

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 11.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 19-22.
minology, i.e., "the very holy guardian and mistress of this oikos" is used in reference to Agdistas, a woman.

The analysis of the salient features of both the funerary and non-funerary clubs warrants some comparison with the early Pauline Churches. As Countryman points out, this is by no means a new phenomenon. Scholars (i.e., J. P. Waltzing, F. Poland, E. G. Hardy) frequently have called attention to the social likenesses of voluntary clubs and the early Christian Church. More recently the two have been compared (i.e., W. A. Meeks, Countryman) to illustrate the possibility that outsiders would have perceived the early church as a voluntary association. At any rate, a number of valuable observations can be made.

First, like the voluntary associations, the early Pauline church was a relatively small group of people who gathered together for a common purpose. While their gatherings began as daily morning meetings open to members and strangers alike, they developed into weekly services held at night, exclusively for members who had been baptized in Christ. Second, like the clubs, a primary feature of the meetings was the sharing of a meal or an occasional celebration in honour of departed members.

The absence of official terminology can likely be explained by the fact that the club is in a very early stage of development. This, however, does not explain away the mention of Agdistas who, like Dionysius, is likely a member of some prominence. See Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 22.

Pliny, Ep. 10.96; Justin, Apology 1.65. Hardy attributes the change to a weakening in the immediate expectation of the Second Advent. See E. G. Hardy, Studies in Roman History (1906) 142.
persons of prominence, patron saints, etc. Third, these meals and celebrations were paid for by individual contributions from members or by means of a common fund. Fourth, members were expected to adhere to a certain mode of behaviour in accordance with the moral restrictions imposed by the group. Fifth, as illustrated in the previous examples, cultic or ritualistic activity played an important role in all three groups, whether it be the offering of incense and wine, the touching of the stele, of the celebration of the risen Christ. Sixth, almost invariably, voluntary associations of any sort (i.e., funerary, cults, or religious) were financially dependent upon the generosity of wealthy persons who served as patrons.\textsuperscript{41}

It is likely then that the emergence of the new Pauline Church into a society long familiar with the pattern and behaviour of club life, would have been perceived by outsiders and by the Roman government, as similar to, if not synonymous with, a voluntary association.\textsuperscript{42}

Also important and numerous in Rome were trade and professional associations.\textsuperscript{43} Consisting of people who worked in the same trade, they represented nearly every industry and social

\textsuperscript{41} For a discussion of the likenesses of the Pauline Churches to voluntary associations, see Meeks, First Urban Christians, 78-80; Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136-37; Hardy, Studies in Roman History, 140-49, esp. 142.

\textsuperscript{42} On how the rulings of the Roman government affected the early Christian groups and vice versa, see Hardy, Studies in Roman History, 140-49.

\textsuperscript{43} Meeks, First Urban Christians, 31.
service: i.e., the bakers, the cloth-makers, the fishermen, the farmers, the grape pickers, the fruit sellers etc. The work was menial, the wages low, but they took pride in their crafts as exemplified by the images of the tools and instruments they used, blazoned on their tombs. These trade associations, or guilds as they were commonly called, were, like other collegia, primarily for social purposes. There is no evidence that they organized with the intent to improve economic or working conditions or to ban against the establishment and therefore should not be confused with the purpose of medieval guilds or modern trade unions.

Role of the Patron

So far we have been describing primarily the social function of voluntary associations. But their establishment and maintenance could not survive merely on social need. Realistically, they needed funding to exist. For this purpose, clubs enlisted the help of wealthy citizens or patrons (patronae). However, an understanding of the relationship of the patron to the club

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44 Dill, Roman Society, 265-66; Shelton, As The Romans Did, 132; Meeks, First Urban Christians, 31-32. For examples of inscriptions see CIL 4.206, 113, 710, 960, 826, 864, 336, 677, 743, 497, 7164, 7273, 373, 7473, 490, 6672; ILS 6411c, 6412c, 6419c, 6419d, 6423, 6425, 6426, 6428a, 6428b, 6429.

45 Dill, Roman Society, 253.

46 Meeks, First Urban Christians, 31; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Dill, Roman Society, 266-67. For a discussion of how Greek clubs differ from modern trade unions see Tod, Side-lights, 81-83.
necessitates an examination of the patron-client structure of Greco-Roman society.

In the early Roman world, the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary, or patron and client, represented a fundamental societal bond underlying all personal, political, and economic realms. The whole system was contingent upon the principle of reciprocity, the nature of which triggered a chain of mutual obligation. The benefactor gave of his/her wealth to a beneficiary who, in turn, responded with a gift of a different nature, the gift of gratitude (i.e., the patron would give again in response to the gratitude, etc.). The importance of this principle should not be underestimated. One's social status was not determined by an accumulation of wealth, rather by the honour he/she was able to acquire both during and after life. Money was merely the channel through which one gained access to honour, and in turn, power.

This is a foreign concept in the twentieth century world. In a society where a display of wealth is the "end" goal or the measure of one's success, and indebtedness produces frustration

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48 Seneca, Beneficiis 1.43; Diodorus Siculus 1.70.6.

49 Cicero, Officiis 1.47; Mott, "Reciprocity," 60, 68. A dowry is an example of a reciprocal gift.
and loss of self-esteem, the concept of reciprocity is a somewhat difficult one to grasp.  

Voluntary associations, then, functioned under the patron-client structure. Financial gifts to the club would be reciprocated in a variety of ways, all of which bestowed honour upon the patron. Quite often, the patron received honorary titles, decrees, crowns, wreaths, etc. as a symbol of the club's gratitude and respect. Encomiastic inscriptions and statues were sometimes erected in a prominent place in the city, but these likely came from the more affluent clubs. In addition to the material dedications, honour and praise could be given by word of mouth. Clients gathered outside their patron's house to give the morning salutatio for all to hear.

The patron normally was a wealthy citizen, often of senatorial rank, but cases of Seviri and Augustales serving as patrons were not uncommon. In a 1980 study by John Nicols, thirty Tabulae Patronatus were examined in order to shed some

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50 Mott, "Reciprocity," 60; M. Greenberg and S. Shapiro, "Indebtedness: An Adverse Aspect of Asking for and Receiving Help," Sociometry 34 (1971) 290-301.

51 Meeks, First Urban Christians 78; Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136; Poland, Geschichte, 250-51, 280-81, 423-31, 437-41.

52 This was especially true of political clients or ex-clients trying to maintain a relationship once their campaign duties were filled. See Shelton, As The Romans Did, 14-15. For examples of clients praising patrons, see Seneca the Younger, Letters 19.4; An Essay about the Brevity of Life, 14.4; Martial, Epigrams 6.88, 5.22.

53 Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Dill, Roman Society, 275.
light on the agreement between patron and client community. Of the nineteen inscriptions in which the status of the patron is apparent, eleven were of senatorial rank, five were of equestrian status, and three were likely senatorial governors or legati.54

Rarely would the patron be an officer35 or even a member of the club, although he/she clearly wielded a great deal of influence over it.56 For example, a patron retained the right to impose certain restrictions on the club which he/she was patronizing. One inscription reveals that Salvia Marcellina, patron to the club of Aesculapius and Hygia, around the mid second century C.E. stipulated that the club membership not exceed sixty members, and upon the death of a member, the seat is to be co-opted by the son of the deceased.57

The selection of a patron was, particularly in the more humble collegia, an event of some momentum. Although it is often referred to as an electoral process, the formal procedure actually was more of a request on the part of the clubs for a

54 John Nicols, "Tabulae Patronatus: A Study of the Agreement Between Patron and Client-Community," ANRW 2, 13 (1980) 544-45. It was probable that in these cases patronage was in response to administrative accomplishment.

35 In fact, the authority of the club officers paled in comparison to the patron. Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136; Meeks, First Urban Christians, 78.

36 Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136; Meeks, First Urban Christians, 78; Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256. For a detailed description of a benefactor drawn from Greco-Roman inscriptions see Danker, Benefactor, 317-392.

37 For a fuller explanation see CIL VI 10234; Dill, Roman Society, 262; Mommsen, De Collegiis, 93.
designated person to accept the distinction of patron, probably accompanied by a gift of some sort (i.e., inscription, plate).  

It was not unusual for one person to serve as a patron to more than one collegium. Epigraphical evidence reveals that in 75 C.E., Sentius Caecilianus of Mauretania became patron of Banasa and of Volubilis; Silius Aviola served as patron to four small communities in 28 C.E. Whether serving as patron to more than one club was the exception rather than the rule, is unclear. While Nicols infers "that most communities had several patrons and vice versa," Dill implies that one would have to be "very wealthy" and "very generous...to accept the patronage of so many societies." On the other hand, clubs usually had more than one patron; Cicero is honored to be selected the sole patron of Capua which seems to indicate that being the sole patron to a club was not the norm.

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Membership and the Role of Women

As we have seen, membership in voluntary associations was not determined on the grounds of social status. Nor did they

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For an example, see the description of the "election" of one Tutillus Julianus, by the college of smiths in Cisalpine Gaul, 190 C.E. CIL XI 970; Dill, Roman Society, 274-75.

Nicols, "Tabulae Patronatus," 547; Dill, Roman Society, 275.

Nicols, "Tabulae Patronatus," 547; Cicero, Oratio pro Sestio 9.
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discriminate on the basis of age, occupation, civic status etc.\(^1\) One entrance requirement may have been that members were local residents, since the clubs were strictly local in nature. The focus tended to lie with how well one observed the rules, protocol, and disciplinary measures inside the group, rather than disparate factors outside the group.\(^2\)

The majority of sources that examine the reality of voluntary associations and membership therein, treat them largely as a male preserve. Even those sources which acknowledge the presence of women do so in passing, devoting little attention to their precise nature and role. As a result, one is left with the impression that clubs were primarily a male phenomenon in which women played only a minimal part.\(^3\) There is enough epigraphical evidence to the contrary, however, to warrant an investigation of the nature of women's membership in voluntary clubs.

\(^1\) Of course not all clubs were so indiscriminate. See Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 16, n.45.
There is evidence, however, that foreigners were allowed to join some voluntary associations but were charged higher fees. Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 17, n.46.
On the exclusion of foreigners, slaves, women and men, see T. Wachter, Reinheitsvorschriften im griechischen Kult (Greissen, 1910) 118-23. On access to thiasoi and eranoi for foreigners, slaves, and women, see P. Foucart, Des associations religieuses chez les Grecs (Paris, 1873) 5-7.

\(^2\) Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 16-17.

\(^3\) In the case of professional associations, membership was for the most part restricted to the men as few, if any, women would have been employed in professional trades. Similarly, there were associations exclusively for women. The membership of women in religious and domestic collegia is clearly attested. These topics will treated in greater detail later.
In the following pages, we will examine the evidence as to whether or not women were members; in what types of associations; and more importantly, their roles in positions of honour.

**Women as Members:** Epigraphical data indicates that at least in some *collegia*, women could be members. The kinds of associations in which we find them, vary.

Certain religious cults accepted women not only as members, but as equal members. The following excerpt from the constitution of a private religious association in the first or second century B.C.E., attests to this equality:

...These ordinances were placed with Agdistas, the very holy guardian and mistress of this *pikos*. May she create good thoughts in men and women, free people and slaves, in order that they may obey the things written here.

At the monthly and annual sacrifices may those men and women who have confidence in themselves touch this inscription on which the ordinances of the god have been written, in order that those who obey these ordinances and those who do not may be manifest...**

Clearly, women were an integral part of this religious cult. They were invited to take part in the sacrificial touching of the stele (on which the inscription was written) provided they have observed the club's regulations.**

No less significant was their role in the funerary *collegia*. In his study of Corporations Professionelles, J. P. Waltzing provides us with numerous inscriptions that bear witness to the

**Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 9-10.**

**For other examples of women in religious cults see CIL III 870; III 7437; VI 261; VI 377.**
presence of women in the *funeraria*. Consider for example, one Greek inscription from Tiburtina that contains the names of twenty-three members (and six fragmentary names). Six of those listed are freedwomen and one female slave. There is no evidence that women's membership in the *funeraria* was in any way restricted or that they were to remain subordinate to male members.

In fact, associations exclusively for women, although rare, were in existence and were mostly religious in nature.\(^7\)

Trade and professional associations appear to be the exception: there is no evidence of women's presence in the majority of them. Trade guilds were organized along gender lines, apparently, an amicable division in the first century. Certain *collegia* were formed by and for women of the same trade,\(^8\) and certain ones for men.\(^9\) The absence of women from

\(^{**}\) CIL VI 13402; Waltzing, *Études*, 3: 302. For other examples of women in the funeral *collegia*, see CIL VI 8117, 21418, No. 1341 (Waltzing, *Études*, 4:255); VI 8639, 10309, 4497, 9044, 10331, 10350, 21383, 2288, 5744, 4019, 4056, 4059, 4075, 4079, 4083, 4223, 4459, 4484, 4970, 5362, 5771, 6447, 9044, 3951, 4087, 4265, 10363, 7459, 10415, 1-331, 10332, 10358, 10378, No. 1342 (Waltzing, *Études*, 4:255); 10306, 10329, 10340, 10351, 10353, 10354, 10356, 10359, 10387, 10394, 10401, 10401, 10402, 10404; V 2590; X 8110; XII 6310. See Waltzing, *Études*, 1:348-49; 4:245-55.

See also Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 200-201, who confirms that women could belong to both religious and burial clubs.

\(^7\) For example, the Pythaistrides. See Horsley, *New Documents* 4:12-13, 15; CIL X 5907; No. 2334, 3 (Waltzing, *Études* 4:256-57).

\(^8\) For example, the *sociae mimae* in Rome (CIL VI 10109) and the *collegium cannoforarum* in Saepinum (CIL IX 2480).
most professional guilds, therefore, was not so much a conscious exclusion as a reflection of guild divisions within the trades.

Women as Patrons: We have already demonstrated in Chapter One that women had at their disposal the financial means to be economically independent. One way they employed this wealth was to serve as a civic patron, or one who donated material gifts to their city in return for honour and recognition. While dedicatory plaques and/or monuments were often erected by the city, municipal patrons often erected monuments to themselves. Women serving as municipal patrons is attested in numerous inscriptions. Consider the following example from Corinth, around 43 C.E.:

The deme of Patareis has decreed: Whereas Junia Theodora, a Roman resident in Corinth, a woman held in highest honour...who copiously supplied from her own means many of our citizens with generosity, and received them in her home and in particular never ceased acting on behalf of our citizens in regard to any favour asked the majority of citizens have gathered in assembly to offer testimony on her behalf. Our people in gratitude agreed to vote: to commend Junia and to offer testimony of her generosity to our native city and of her good will, to testify that she increased her good will toward the city, because she knew that our people also would not cease in their good will and gratitude to her and would do everything for the excellence and the glory that she deserved. For this reason (with good fortune), it was decreed to commend her for all that she had done.  

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*For example, the fuller's guild, carpenter's guild.*

Notice that the terms of Theodora’s patronage are clearly reflected in the inscription: she gave of her wealth in exchange for good will, gratitude and glory.\textsuperscript{71}

Relatively often, a person who served as a municipal patron simultaneously served as a club patron. Therefore, while we lack the direct evidence, the possibility that some of these women served as club patrons as well, must remain open.\textsuperscript{72} The advantages of such an arrangement were two-fold: not only did it evoke more honour and praise for the patron by having more than one group in his/her debt, but it also had the effect of drawing the club into the political arena, putting it in a good position to secure more benefactions and funds. It also tended to make the clubs less of a threat to the city: this was a means of social control.


\textsuperscript{72} It is clear, for example, that Caesennius Rufus (CIL XIV 2112) was both a civic and club patron.
That women served as patrons to voluntary associations (mater collegii) is attested in epigraphical data. Their help was enlisted on numerous occasions to bestow benefactions upon certain collegia, especially the more humble ones. The club’s gratitude was manifested in the form of a dedicatory plaque or inscription of some kind honouring the patron and often recalling specific deeds. It is such extant inscriptions that enable us to reconstruct with some degree of certainty, the function of women patrons in first century collegia.

Consider the following inscription to Eumachia, patroness to the fuller’s guild (i.e. dyers, cleaners, clothes makers, etc.) in first century Pompeii.

Eumachia, daughter of Lucius (Eumachius), public priestess, in her own name and that of her son, Marcus Numistrius Fronto, built with her own funds the porch, covered passage, and colonnade and dedicated them to Concordia Augusta and to Pietas.\(^3\)

Women patrons then, were not restricted to women’s clubs: Here we see Eumachia funding a society in which women were never likely members.\(^4\) Of course, it would be unthinkable for a lady like Eumachia to be a member of a trade association, not only because she was a woman, but because she was rich. Manual labour was

\(^3\) CIL X 810. Also CIL X 811, 813. Because the wool industry was a vital part of Pompeii’s economy, the fuller’s guild wielded a great deal of influence. See Lefkowitz and Fant, Women in Greece and Rome, 193.

\(^4\) On this see Waltzing’s observation that although “[o]n rencontre plus d’une fois des femmes a qui un college rend des derniers devoirs ou eleve un monument commemoratif; mais cela ne prouve pas qu’elles en sont membres.” Waltzing, Études, 1:348-49.
frowned upon by the upper classes and while it was not unusual for a wealthy patron to support the trade associations in exchange for recognition, membership in one was unheard of.\textsuperscript{75}

The discussion of women patrons, of course, inevitably brings us once again to Paul's designation of Phoebe as a prostatēs (Rom 16:2).\textsuperscript{76} A recent study by G. H. R. Horsley has shed new light on our understanding of Phoebe and her role in the early Church. Two points are of special importance.

First, new epigraphical data pertaining to the use of prostatēs illustrates that the Greek prostatēs is used to denote the office of a patron. One inscription for Cn. Claudius Severus clearly illustrates that prostatēs is the abstract noun used to denote the office or position held by the prostatēs.\textsuperscript{77} Moreover, the same word, prostatēs, appears in an inscription for a woman who gives of "her wealth on every matter bountifully," i.e., a woman patron.\textsuperscript{78} These discoveries, of course, lend much support to the theory that Phoebe was indeed a patron in the "collegial" understanding of the word.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} For other examples of women patrons to collegia see CIL IV 10234, Salvia Marcellina; V 5869; V 5272; XIV 3677; XII 2024. See also the reference to patronā in CIL XIV 2112.

\textsuperscript{76} Since prostatēs has been discussed at some length in the introduction, a full examination of the word here in not necessary.


\textsuperscript{78} I. Eph. IV 1063 as cited in Horsley, New Documents, 4:242.

\textsuperscript{79} Horsley, New Documents, 4:242.
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Second, and perhaps even more interesting, is a fourth century inscription to Sophia, published in Horsley's *New Documents:*

Here lies the slave and bride of Christ, Sophia, deacon, the second Phoebe, who fell asleep/in peace on the 21st of the month of March the 11th indiction...in Lord God...

She is described as a "deacon, the second Phoebe." That this is an allusion to Rom 16:2 is evident. The connection between the two women, however, is not likely the position of *diakonos;* there were numerous women who held this position between the time of Phoebe (first century) and the time of this inscription (fourth century).

That leaves us with only one alternative. The connection must lie in the second title Paul gives to Phoebe, *prostatis,* and the fact that both women were patrons to particular Church groups. We inevitably follow Horsley then in his conclusion that:

At a far remove from the time of the New Testament the epitaph for Sophia provides some small confirmatory evidence of the reading at Rom 16:2, since it is hard to conceive why the wording 'the second Phoebe' would have occurred to anyone unless *prostatis* were the word known at Rom 16:2.  

And in an area such as this where proofs are for the most part unattainable, and details are often, at best, scanty, even the smallest "confirmatory evidence" must be taken seriously.

So far we have seen that women could be and indeed were members in religious and burial clubs. Moreover, they often

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served as patrons, municipal and club, to some of the most influential collegia in the municipality.

One question remains unanswered: could women serve as officials within these associations? Admittedly, here the evidence is not so clear, especially since relatively little is known about club offices and officials. At any rate, their ability to participate and to be honoured as patrons, suggests enhanced (official?) status and warrants a more thorough investigation.

Women Officials

Before we can begin to examine the inscriptionsal evidence as to whether or not women served as officials, it is essential to first establish the precise terms used of officials. In the following pages, we will examine these words in two ways: (1) how they were used in collegial settings, and, where possible, how they would have been perceived in first century society; and, (2) to determine if such terms were ever used of women.

As we know, when collegia organized their own internal government or hierarchy, they used as a model the municipal Roman government. The co-optation of the existing political structure was hardly surprising: they imitated the only model they knew. Moreover, since under Roman law, only those of noble birth

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§1 Collegia sometimes applied names such as respublica collegii to themselves.
and of wealth could attain higher political office,\textsuperscript{82} it provided for people from humble backgrounds the chance to achieve a kind of titular or official importance that they could not hope to attain in the municipal government.

So apparent was this political structuring that many of terms used for political offices - \textit{magistri}, \textit{curatores}, \textit{quinquennales}, \textit{quaestor}, \textit{decurion} - were adopted for use on a smaller scale within the societies. A brief discussion of these terms is befitting.

\textbf{Magistri:} Roman \textit{collegia} were headed not by a single person but by a group of presidents usually known as \textit{magistri},\textsuperscript{83} but variously named \textit{curatores} or \textit{quinquennales}\textsuperscript{84} (the division of office itself, a reflection of Roman city government). Elected annually, (or in the case of quinquennales, every five years),\textsuperscript{85} their functions included performing certain cultic rituals, and generally overseeing the monthly meetings.

That \textit{magistri} was adopted from the political sphere is, of course, clear. The main governing body in Rome, the Senate, was

\textsuperscript{82} Dill, \textit{Roman Society}, 209-18.

\textsuperscript{83} Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256.

\textsuperscript{84} Stevenson, "Clubs, Roman," 256; Dill, \textit{Roman Society}, 269; Orelli, \textit{ILC} 6217, 7181, 7182, 3217, 4138, 4071.

comprised of an assembly of magistrates and ex-magistrates, who
were themselves, members of the elite class.86

The collegial use of magister is attested in epigraphical
data. One inscription from Rome records the names of club
presidents of the college of Antinous for the years 47-51 C.E.
and 65-69 C.E. Of the six presidents or magistri who served in
65 C.E., two (Claudia and Artoria) were women.87

Quaesator: Club finances were managed by quaestors88 (or tamais)
who acted as treasurer responsible for investing and admin-
istering club funds to ensure that all expenses (i.e., food for
festival celebrations, burial costs, etc.) were met.89 Although
the club treasury would likely yield no great amount of money,
the quaestor was an entrusted position and evoked some measure of
respect among members.

86 P. Treves, "Magistracy, Roman," OCD 639; John Boardman,
Jasper Griffin, Oswyn Murray, eds., The Oxford History of the
Countryman, "Patrons and Officers," 136; Dill, Roman Society,
269; H. J. Rose, "Magistri," OCD, 639. See also A. H. M. Jones,
"Magister Memoriae," OCD, 638; "Magister Officiorum," OCD, 638;
H. M. D. Parker, and G. R. Watson, "Magister Militum," OCD, 638;

87 CIL VI 8639. See also CIL X 6511; XI 1863; Waltzing,
Etudes 3:244-46; 4:224, 254-55.

See also Danker, Benefactor, 154-55, no. 21. Here a woman,
Nikippe, is identified as a priestess and chief officer (pro-
eranistria) of an association of Sarapis worshippers.

88 Dill, Roman Society, 269-70.

89 Meeks, First Urban Christians, 31; Dill, Roman Society,
269-70.
Again, the collegial hierarchy mirrors civic administration. In political life, the quaestors were the lowest class of Roman magistrates. Their chief purpose was to guard the pecuniary affairs of the State, and while the majority of their duties were absorbed by the imperial offices, they were retained in the senatorial provinces throughout the Principate for that purpose. That the club treasury was entrusted to women is attested in at least one extant inscription from the mid second century C.E.\footnote{CIL VI 10234, the collegia of Aesculapius and Hygia.}

In this inscription, we see the patron of the college of Aesculapius and Hygia entrusting a sizeable donation to the president, "patri collegi," and the "matri collegi." There are two possibilities here. First, the role of the "matri collegi" (and pater collegii) here is a separate club office or function of some sort (comparable to the mater synagoque?) about which we know relatively little. Second, the more obvious deduction is that the matri (and pater) is, in fact, a club treasurer (quaestor). Either way she clearly enjoys enhanced status of some sort in that she was entrusted with the distribution of club benefactions.\footnote{See also Dill, Roman Society, 262, 278-79.}

Decuriones: Another administrative office of the collegia was occupied by the decurione. Little is known of their precise duties; it appears to have been similar to that of the magistri.
The political counterpart, the government *decuriones* is the name for civic officials in cities outside Rome. Ex-magistrates chosen to serve as local councilors in the municipality, their duties included sending deputations and petitions, the voting of honorary decrees and statues, collecting taxes, local administration etc.

Again, there is evidence that women held this office in numerous societies.\(^2\) Clearly, the multiplicity of inscriptions recording women *decuriones* indicates that women serving as officials in *collegia* was by no means uncommon.

In addition to political terminology used to denote the hierarchical offices of the club, there were other titles or terms used to describe the status of some members that set them apart from ordinary members. For example, "*Honorata,*" "*Imunas,*" and "*Sacerdos*" all describe positions of honour within the clubs, and all are attested of women.\(^3\) *Honorata* and *Imunas* are probably honorific, the latter implying that the person was free from certain levies or duties. *Sacerdos* refers to a priest or priestess, probably performing some cultic functions within the club.

\(^2\) CIL VI 4019, 4056, 4059, 4075, 4079, 4083, 4223, 4459, 4484, 4970, 5362, 5771, 6447, 9044, 10350, 10351, 10353, 10354, 10356, 10359, 10387; Waltzing, *Études*, 4:255.

\(^3\) "*Honorata,*" CIL VI 2288, 6744; "*Sacerdos,*" CIL VI 4497, 9044; "*Imunas,*" CIL VI 3951, 4087, 4265, 10363; Waltzing, *Études*, 4:255.
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Women Leaders in the Synagogues

Before concluding our discussion of women officials in first century voluntary associations, there is another area worthy of mention in which women played a significant role — in the ancient synagogues.

Many scholars traditionally have held that leadership within the Jewish synagogues was entirely a male preserve. As a result, any inscriptional evidence pointing to women leaders was dismissed as purely "honorific." 94

A recent study by Bernadette Brooten calls into question the idea that women could not have assumed positions of leadership. 95 A summary of her work at this point will be helpful to our own discussion.


95 Bernadette J. Brooten, Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogues: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues (Chico, California: Scholars, 1982). See also S. Cohen, "Women in the Synagogues of Antiquity" who covers much of the same material and reaches basically the same conclusions.
As Brooten points out, before we can deem a title "honorific," we must define what an honorific title is, and then determine whether or not such a title was ever actually employed in the synagogal setting.

Scholars who use the term honorific of women leaders in the ancient synagogues usually intend to denote a non-functional position or one that carries no authority or duties. In the standard use of the term, however, it is something very different. Honorific titles are normally used in one of two ways: (1) as a superlative adjective (e.g. clarissimus, laamprotates); and, (2) as a noun corresponding to a titular adjective (e.g. spectabilitas, laamrote). Interestingly, neither usage reflects the derogatory sense in which it is often applied to women.96

Moreover, that honorific titles even existed in ancient Judaism rests primarily on two facts: (1) that children were sometimes office-holders in the synagogue (hence, an honorary title) and, (2) that women sometimes received a title because of their husband’s position. Both points can be refuted.

First, inscriptions recording child office-holders more accurately illustrate the hereditary nature of the office than the assumption that such an office was non-functional.97

Second, there is no evidence that women inherited their husbands’ titles. In all inscriptions found containing women

96 Brooten, Women Leaders, 7-8.

97 Ibid., 9.
title-holders, only two contain the names of their husbands.** The vast majority of inscriptions contain no mention of a husband at all, hence, we do not know these women were even married. Even if it were the case that in these (and other) instances women were given titles because of their husbands, we cannot assume that all women acquired titles in the same way (After all, it was possible in both Greek and Latin to express the relationship "wife of," or "daughter of" if that was what was meant).** Nor can we assume that such titles would necessarily be non-functional; the wife of a flamen dialus was called a flaminica but several cultic duties were attached to this role.**

Clearly then, it is unsatisfactory to deal with inscriptions that bear the names of women office-holders by categorizing them as honorific. The term itself in no way implies non-function nor is there any evidence that honorific titles were even awarded in ancient Judaism.

If the arguments of Brooten and Cohen are accepted, inscriptional evidence ranging in date from 27 B.C.E. to the sixth century C.E. attests to various leadership roles within the synagogue held by women. Let us briefly examine the nature of each role.***

** CIL 166, 619a, cited in Brooten, Women Leaders, 9.

** See Brooten, Women Leaders, 97.

*** Ibid., 8-10.

*** Inscriptions found cover a wide area, from Italy to Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt. Brooten, Women Leaders, 1.
Head of the Synagogue (archisynagogos/archisynagogissa): The head of the synagogue was the highest office in the ancient synagogue. It is distinct from the role of the archon (a synagogal office similar to the head of the synagogue), although in some cases both offices could be held by one person. The functions of the head of the synagogue included spiritual direction, teaching, exhortation, collection of funds, selection of preachers, etc. New Testament evidence indicates that several heads could serve in a synagogue at one time.

That women held this office is attested in three separate inscriptions from the second, fourth and fifth centuries C.E. The inscriptions reveal that at least one of these women, Rufina (CII 741, and possibly Theopempte, CII 756) was clearly a woman of some wealth.

Leader (archissa/archegos): The term archegissa is rare. Taken as the feminine equivalent of archegos, it is attested in only

1. Brooten, Women Leaders, 16, 24; CII 265 and CII 553.
2. The head apparently did not read if someone else was available. Brooten, Women Leaders, 28.
4. CII 741, 2nd century; CII 731c 4th/5th century C.E.; CII 756 4th/5th century C.E. Brooten, Women Leaders, 5-7, 11-12, 15-14.
one Jewish inscription. Archegos occurs in only one Jewish inscription as well, but its Latin equivalent, principalis, is found.

A survey of literary sources and inscriptions reveals that there are three possible translations for archegos: (1) ancestral hero/heroine, or founder; (2) originator; and, (3) leader, chief. According to Brooten, leader is the most accurate translation of archegos/archeqissa in the Jewish inscriptions. Given the proselytizing activity of Jewish Christian women (i.e., Priscilla, Junia) however, the possibility of "founder" as a translation cannot be ruled out entirely.

At any rate, inscription CII 696b which reads "Tomb of Peristeria, leader" (archeqissa) attests to the presence of at least one woman leader in an ancient synagogue.

Elders (presbytera/presbyteresa/presbyterissa): The office of elder is one of the most difficult to define. Literary sources reveal that the word was used in a variety of contexts denoting, for example, a political, judicial, and/or religious function. While a full investigation of its precise meaning is outside the parameters of this discussion, a number of common features

104 CII 696b cited in Brooten, Women Leaders, 35.
107 CII 731g cited in Brooten, Women Leaders, 35.
108 CII 681 cited in Brooten, Women Leaders, 36.
derived from inscriptive and literary references to the word provide us with some outline.

Elders worked as members of a council. Their primary function was a religious one including overseeing the worship services, collection of funds for the patriarch, judicial duties within the Church, scholarly activity within the Church, etc.

Six Jewish inscriptions ranging in date from the third to sixth centuries C.E. have been found which name women as elders (Sophia of Gortyn, Rebeka, Beronikene, Mannine, Faustina, Makaria Mazauzala) as elders. One inscription is particularly interesting:

Tomb of Mannine, elder, daughter of Longinus, father, granddaughter of Faustina, father (aged) 38 years.

Not only is this the only inscription where the woman's age at death is given, but it also illustrates that the title of Mannine's father and grandfather (pater) was not automatically inherited. Her title is, of course, different.

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110 Sophia is called both an elder and the head of the synagogue.

111 Sophia of Gortyn, CII 731c, 4th/5th century C.E.; Rebeka, CII 692, 4th/5th century C.E.; Beronikene, CII 581/CIL IX 6226; Mannine, CII 590/CIL IX 6230; Faustina, CII 597/CIL IX 6209; Makaria Mazauzala, SEG 27 (1927) no. 1201, 4th/5th century C.E. In addition, one Greek inscription, CII 400, dating somewhere between the 1st century B.C.E. to the 3rd century C.E., calls a woman, Sara Ura, a presbytes. It is likely that presbyte was intended. See Brooten, Women Leaders, 41-46.

112 CII 590; CIL IX 6230, cited in Brooten, Women Leaders, 43.
Mothers of the Synagogue (mater synagogae): The office of mother of the synagogue (or similar titles) is attested in six inscriptions from Italy from the second to the sixth centuries C.E. Again, the scholarly consensus has been that this title was either honorific or reserved for women who perform charitable functions, because many scholars cannot accommodate (or refuse to accommodate) the idea of women in leading synagogal roles.

Admittedly, relatively little is known about this office. Literary\textsuperscript{113} and epigraphical evidence suggests that the mother of the synagogue, as well as the masculine parallel, father of the synagogue, were among the most important synagogal offices. They were likely involved in the administration of the synagogue, more specifically, controlling the common treasury.\textsuperscript{114} At any rate, the office provides further attestation that women occupied positions of leadership in the ancient synagogues.

\textsuperscript{113} Among the literary evidence, is a reference to mothers of the synagogues in De Altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae, a 5th century Christian anti-Jewish polemic. From the argumentation of the document we can infer that at this time in history, mothers of the synagogues were esteemed members of the Jewish community. See Brooten, Women Leaders, 63, 72.


\textsuperscript{114} Brooten, Women Leaders, 70, 72.
Interestingly, a similar title, mater collegii, is attested in connection with professional clubs,\(^{115}\) which has presented some difficulty for scholars. Waltzing, for example, believes that the titles are honorific,\(^{116}\) while Liebenam equates the titles mater and pater with patronus and patrona.\(^{117}\) However, given their role in the collegium of Aesculpius and Hygiae, the possibility that mater collegii is an indication of the presence of women as members and officials in the professional guilds, remains open.\(^{118}\)

Priest (hieriea/hierissa): The title of priest has turned up in numerous Jewish inscriptions ranging in date from the second century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E. The precise understanding of hieriea/hierissa in these inscriptions is complex. According to Brooten, there are three possibilities; (1) hieriea/hierissa is the Greek equivalent of the rabbinic kohenet. Such an interpretation fits well with the theory that women could not hold office in ancient Judaism since neither congregational leadership, nor cultic function of any sort are inherent in the term kohenet; (2) hieriea/hierissa implies priest in the cultic

\(^{115}\) CIL 9:2687; 3:7505; 14:69; 14:256. See also Waltzing, Etudes, 4:369-70; Kloppenborg, "Collegia," 17.

\(^{116}\) Waltzing, Etudes, 1:448.

\(^{117}\) W. Liebenam, Zur Geschichste und Organisation des romischen Vereinswesens (Leipzig, 1890) 218.

\(^{118}\) See Kloppenborg, "Collegia," 17.
sense, which in the case of women, would inevitably alter our understanding of ancient Judaism; (3) hiereia/hie.issa is a term used to denote a separate synagogue (priestly) function—a function that existed long after the destruction of the temple.\textsuperscript{119}

Unfortunately, there is not enough evidence in the inscriptions themselves to decide exactly what was meant. However, while neither possibility can be definitively proven, neither can be definitively disproven either, and so we must remain open to all three.\textsuperscript{120}

Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, the title priest is attested of women in three inscriptions from the 1st century B.C.E. to the 4th century C.E.\textsuperscript{121} Except that in these cases the title is used in reference to a woman, there is no difference in these inscriptions and the ones pertaining to male priests. No restrictions are inherent in either, and there is no reason to assume that the former (or the latter) is honorific.\textsuperscript{122}

Summary: In our examination of women under Roman law in Chapter One, and of women in first century voluntary collegia in Chapter

\textsuperscript{119} For a fuller discussion of all three possibilities, see Brooten, Women Leaders, 77-99.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 98-99.

\textsuperscript{121} CII 1514; CII 315; CII 1007 cited in Brooten, Women Leaders, 73-77. The evidence in CII 1085 is, according to Brooten, uncertain. See Brooten, Women Leaders, 77.

\textsuperscript{122} Brooten, Women Leaders, 98-99.
Two, a number of factors became evident: (1) women, in particular wealthy women, were in a legal position to patronize clubs; (2) the social dynamics of an honour-shame culture made their involvement with voluntary clubs advantageous to both patrons and club members; (3) there is good evidence of women patrons of clubs; (4) there is good evidence of the presence of women (mostly non-elite) in associations, especially religious ones; and, (5) there is some evidence that they gained positions of leadership.

With the legal intricacies and social dynamics firmly in place, we now turn to the women in the Pauline corpus.
CHAPTER THREE

Women in the Pauline Epistles: A Re-examination

Part I

The objective of this chapter is to re-examine and redefine the roles of women in the Pauline corpus in light of the evidence unveiled in the preceding chapters. Rather than simply commenting on the specific pericopae in Romans and Philippians in which women appear, I will begin with a brief rhetorical analysis of the letters. The value of such an analysis is two-fold: (1) it enables us to determine the problems Paul encountered in each community, and how he set about to address these problems; (2) this in turn allows us to evaluate critically the more technical features associated with the treatments or mentions of the women, e.g., why a particular person(s) is named (e.g. "I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord") rather than a more general admonition (e.g. "I entreat you to agree in the Lord").

The Art of Rhetoric

Rhetorical Training: Rhetoric, according to Quintilian, is defined as "scientia bene dicendi" or "the knowledge of how to speak well."¹ But for the ancients, the art of rhetoric far exceeded the ability to speak well or to communicate effectively.

¹ Quintilian 2.15.38. For other definitions of rhetoric, see Quintilian 2.15.
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One of the two forms of advanced education, it distinguished the "truly cultivated" from the "learned."²

Not unlike modern times, education in Roman society was conducted in stages³: primary school, which consisted mainly of reading, writing, and arithmetic⁴; grammar school, where students studied the classical poets, prose writers and historians⁵; and finally, rhetorical training. Here, teaching consisted of three parts: theory, study of models, and a rigid series of applied rhetorical exercises. At the same time, students were versed in the classification, definitions and styles of rhetoric which they

² H. I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956) 194. The other form of advanced education was philosophy. See Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 206-16.

The art of rhetoric was, of course, adopted from the Greeks. According to Carcopino, Hellenistic type schools were initiated in Rome by the Conscription Fathers (second century B.C.E.) who would not allow their own sons to be less 'cultivated' than those whom they governed. They encouraged the building of schools in Rome parallel to the ones in the East; Athens, Pergamum, and Rhodes. See Carcopino, Daily Life, 107-108.

³ Basic reading and writing was taught in the home, sometimes under the instruction of a pedagogue, a slave who acted as a guardian or tutor to the child. See Quintilian 1.1.8; Carcopino, Daily Life, 104.

⁴ Carcopino, Daily Life, 104; Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 160-61. For a fuller discussion of the problems with elementary school, see Carcopino, Daily Life, 104-107. For a discussion of the importance of having a good teacher, see Quintilian 2.3.

⁵ Quintilian 1.10; Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 160-64, 176-85; Carcopino, Daily Life, 107-109.

The first teachers of grammar and rhetoric in Rome were Asian and Egyptian refugees who sought, and were granted, sanctuary there. See Carcopino, Daily Life, 108; Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 252.
were expected to commit to memory.\* The study of rhetoric was an
enormously complicated endeavour that took as long as eight years
to complete.\* In a sense, the study of rhetoric never ended:
even some of the more famous orators continued to practice
elementary rhetorical exercises all their lives.\*  

Whether or not Paul was ever a student of rhetoric in the
formal sense is irrelevant;\* he would certainly have been
familiar enough with the rhetorical form to employ it in his
letter writing. After all, one could hardly live in a first
century Greek-speaking society without some awareness of the
rhetorical form, as it influenced every form of communication,
both written and oral, i.e., public and private letters; judicial

\* Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 197-205. For an critical
analysis of grammatical and rhetorical training see Carcopino,
Daily Life, 114-21. According to him, because of the "laborious
eccentricities" and "mental malnutrition" of impractical rhet-
orical teaching, Roman youth were forced to substitute "memory
for thought, affectation for sincerity, grimaces and contortions
for natural expression, and for a natural voice forced outbursts
and calculated roars practiced in advance." (p.121).

\* Libanius, Orationes 1.26. St. Basil of Caesarea took four
years (351-55 C.E.) to complete his rhetorical studies; St
Gregory Nazianzen took five years (351-56 C.E.) or perhaps even
eight (351-59 C.E.). See Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 204
esp. n.33.

\* For example, Lucian, Dionysius of Prusa, Favorinus, etc.
See Marrou, Education in Antiquity, 204.

\* For a discussion of whether or not Paul formally studied
Greek rhetoric, see George A. Kennedy, New Testament Inter-
pretation Through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill/London:
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documents; public speeches (festivals, games etc.); funeral addresses, literary composition, etc.  

*Types of Rhetoric*

The study of rhetoric itself is divided and subdivided into a series of parts and techniques, all of which contribute to the whole effect. Because an understanding of these divisions is pivotal to our understanding of the rhetorical structure of Paul's letters, a brief discussion of each will be helpful here.

**Rhetorical Parts:** Rhetoric, as explained in most rhetorical handbooks, consists of five parts: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Invention deals with the planning and argumentation to be employed in the speech. It rests primarily on two types of proofs; (1) external - or an appeal to witness or documents to prove a point (i.e. not invented by the author), (2) internal - or artistic proofs invented by the author to enhance or strengthen the case.

In the New Testament, three kinds of external proofs commonly are employed to lend credibility to a particular story or exhortation. New Testament authors, including Paul, appeal to Scriptural evidence, the wonder of miracles, and the naming of reputable witnesses such as John the Baptist, the disciples, or...

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11 Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 13-30. On the parts or "duties" of rhetoric, see also Quintilian 1. Preface 22; 3.3.
Jesus himself. While external proofs are not invented by the author, the task of selecting a source and using it to support a particular point, does lie entirely with him.\footnote{12}

Aristotle defines three types of internal or artistic proof: ethos, pathos, and logos all of which are devices of the author to gain credence.\footnote{13} Ethos or character refers to the credibility the author is able to establish, in order to win the audience's trust. Pathos focuses more on the audience and the emotional reaction the speaker is able to evoke from them. In the New Testament, it commonly takes the form of the promise of the parousia or the threat of eternal damnation. Logos refers to the logical argument within the speech.\footnote{14} Interestingly, audiences are often more moved and more convinced by ethos and pathos, rather than by plain logic.\footnote{15}

The second division of rhetoric is arrangement. Here, the author determines those parts of the speech that will attain the maximum response, and then arranges the discourse accordingly. Material was also arranged for memory ensuring that the audience would retain at least the most important points.\footnote{14}

\footnote{12} Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 14-15.

\footnote{13} Aristotle, *Rhet. 1.2.3-7*.

\footnote{14} Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 15-16.

\footnote{15} Logic can be further divided into two forms of logical argument; inductive and deductive. See Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 16.

\footnote{14} Ibid, 23-25.
Style is the third part of rhetoric. Simply put, it refers to the author's choice of vocabulary to convey the message. According to Aristotle, while all aspects of style were important, the fundamental quality was clarity.\textsuperscript{17}

The theory of style consisted of two divisions: (1) lexis - which refers to the speaker's choice of words or perhaps more correctly, the use of words,\textsuperscript{18} and (2) synthesis - which refers not just to the choice of words, but to the composition of words.\textsuperscript{19}

The fourth part of rhetoric is memory, which refers to the speaker's mental preparation before delivering a discourse. The fifth is the delivery itself, which deals with voice control, intonation, inflection, facial expression, hand gestures, and other techniques employed in the actual delivery. Because these techniques relate primarily to oral presentation about which little is known, a discussion of them is omitted from most rhetorical handbooks. For that reason, they will not be discussed in any detail here either.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} Aristotle, \textit{Rhet.} 3.2.1.

\textsuperscript{18} For example, the speaker may introduce rare or foreign words for effectiveness, or even coin new words. The coinage of words is relatively easy to do in Greek by compounding simple words. See Kennedy, \textit{Rhetorical Criticism}, 25.

\textsuperscript{19} For example, the use of figures. See Kennedy, \textit{Rhetorical Criticism}, 27-30.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 13-14.
Species of Rhetoric and Conventional Structure: Aristotle defines three species of rhetoric: judicial, deliberative, and epideictic, each with its own purpose and argumentation.\(^{21}\) Rarely, however, would any discourse employ the elements of only one species: there is considerable overlap. Yet one species can usually be discerned that best defines the author’s purpose. It is important to ascertain the rhetorical species of a particular discourse because it can reveal the author’s intent which in turn sheds some light on the rhetorical situation behind the speech, which may otherwise remain hidden.\(^{22}\)

The Judicial or Forensic kind of rhetoric is either accusatory or defensive. It focuses primarily on the past since only in reference to deeds performed can one accuse or defend. The end, or that to which the author directs his views, is the just of the unjust. The basic argument involves the question of the justice, although other arguments may be utilized.\(^{23}\)

The Judicial speech employs a definite conventional structure, although some variations can occur from discourse to discourse. It begins with a proem or exordium which seeks to gain the attention of the audience and to ensure that the audience is favorably disposed toward the speaker. This is normally accomplished by the speaker pointing to his own merits


\(^{22}\) Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 19-20.

\(^{23}\) Quintilian 3.9; Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 19-20.
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(ethos). Quite often in the proem the contents of the rest of the speech are introduced; a foreshadowing of things to come. The proem is followed by the narration, a statement of the facts or background information. It is not necessary to include in the narration all the facts, if they detract from the author's purpose. While the narration need not flow continuously, it is better for the sake of clarity if it continues without digressions and follows a logical sequence of events. Next, the proposition which the author wishes to prove is stated, often partitioned into several headings. The speaker proceeds to present his major argument (probatio), supported by a series of proofs. In the judicial oration, proofs are required to ascertain whether or not an offence has been committed; whether it has been harmful; whether it was of significance; and whether it was just. The argument further is supported by a refutation of opposing viewpoints. In the refutation, the speaker may employ a digression or an examination of the opponents' motives. The discourse ends with the epilogue or peroration. Not unlike the closing arguments presented to a jury, the peroration should do

24 The ethos can appear in the narration as well, i.e., 1 Thess 2:1.

25 Cicero, De Orat. 2.80.326-30.

26 Aristotle, Rhet. 3.16.1-2.

27 Cicero, De Orat. 2.80.326-30; Quintilian 10.7.6.

28 Aristotle, Rhet. 3.15.2.

29 Cicero, De Orat. 2.81.330-33; Aristotle, Rhet. 3.17.14-15.
at least one of the following: (1) disposition of the audience favorably to you and unfavorably toward the opponents; (2) amplification or diminution of argumentation; (3) excitement of emotion among the audience; (4) repetition or summary of what has been said.\textsuperscript{30}

The use of the rhetorical form in the Pauline corpus has long been demonstrated. In his commentary of Galatians, for example, Hans-Dieter Betz classifies Paul’s letters to the Galatians as an apologetic letter, hence an example of judicial rhetoric.\textsuperscript{31}

The second species of rhetoric is the deliberative. It is either hortatory or persuasive and as such is focused on the future, advising about things to come. The end is, of course, the expedient\textsuperscript{32} or the harmful for by the nature of the deliberative discourse one necessarily exhorts a particular course of action, or dissuades against it. The basic argumentation takes the form of self interests and future benefits of the speaker.\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{31} Hans-Dieter Betz, \textit{Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians} (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 14. According to Betz, the letter, resembling courtroom procedure, serves as a self-apology of Paul, the defendant, before the Galatians, the jury, in view of his opponents, the accusers. (p.24).

\textsuperscript{32} According to Quintilian 3.8.1-3 and Cicero, \textit{De Orat.} 2.82.334, if the deliberative oratory has an end, it is more appropriately honour or dignity, than expediency.

\textsuperscript{33} Quintilian 3.8; Kennedy, \textit{Rhetorical Criticism}, 20.
Again, a conventional structure is employed, albeit in a somewhat more simplified form than in the judicial, i.e., proem-proposition-proof-epilogue. At times, the deliberative speaker delivers a narration, although in this case it occurs after the proposition, not before.34

According to Frank Witt Hughes, Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians is "an intentionally worked-out document of deliberative rhetoric."35

Finally, the third rhetorical species according to Aristotle is the epideictic, having for its subject either praise or blame. It is centered primarily in the present, for it is in the present state of affairs that we praise or blame, but the epideictic speaker may sometimes recall past events or anticipate future ones. Praise or blame is directed at the honorable or the disgraceful, respectively. Often delivered on the occasion of a funeral or at a festival,36 the basic argument attempts to change an attitude or deeper values. (In the Christian context, the argumentation takes the form of belief and faith).37

The structure of the epideictic discourse is the most difficult to define. "In a sense," observes Kennedy, "epideictic

34 Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 24.


36 Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 73.

37 Quintilian 3.7; Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 20.
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is...everything that does not fall clearly into the category of judicial and deliberative." In fact, epideictic elements of praise or blame commonly occur in each of the other two species, especially in the proem and epilogue. In any case, the epideictic begins with a proem and ends with an epilogue. The body of speech in between is a careful arrangement of topics dealing with the main subject (i.e., amplifying events in the life of the deceased during a funeral oratory), making use of any or all parts of the conventional structure when the need arises.

An example of a Christian epideictic document, according to Robert Jewett, is 1 Thessalonians "because it concentrates on praise and blame with a prominent traditional subject being thanksgiving to the gods."

Rhetorical Devices: There are a number of devices at work in any rhetorical discourse that make it possible for the speaker to achieve the main purpose. Some common rhetorical devices are as

30 Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 73.

39 Ibid., 74.

40 Ibid., 24. For an example of epideictic rhetoric, see Kennedy’s treatment of John 13-17 in chapter three.


Against this, see Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 142-44 who holds that 1 Thessalonians is "basically deliberative, an exhortation to stand fast in the Lord (3:8) with specific advice for the Christian life, given in chapters 4-5."
follows: enthymeme - a statement followed by a supporting reason as to why the statement should be accepted, often signalled by the Greek *gar* of *hoti*, the English equivalent of "for";⁴² maxim—a statement of truth, often supporting an enthymeme;⁴³ figure of speech—play on words or sound; figure of thought—sudden change in syntax; tropes—in which one word is used in place of another;⁴⁴ chiasmus—or crossing, which refers to the reversal of order of corresponding words or phrases usually in the A-B-C/C-B-A sequence;⁴⁵ envelope figure (or inclusio)—the repetition of the same phrase or sentence at the beginning and end of a rhetorical unit;⁴⁶ ellipsis—the deliberate omission of a word or group of words within a unit where its presence is implied by the structure of the unit;⁴⁷ asyndeton—the deliberate omission of connections or conjunctions between coordinate sentence parts,⁴⁸ etc.

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⁴² Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 7, 16-17.

⁴³ Ibid., 17.


⁴⁷ Ibid., 48, 303-304.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 67. On rhetorical devices, see also Demetrius, *On Style* 4-5.
Steps in Rhetorical Criticism: The final task in our discussion of the types of rhetoric and the rhetorical form, is to outline the stages in rhetorical criticism. There are seven.\footnote{All seven steps are found in Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 33-37.}

First, is the determination of the rhetorical unit, consisting of a beginning, middle and end. At times the rhetorical unit will be clear, as for example in the case of a speech or, for the most part, the Pauline epistles. It is most difficult when the unit to be studied is part of a longer composition. In such cases we look for openings and closure, hence the proem and epilogue. Fortunately, New Testament writers (and Old Testament writers as well) usually make use of closures that signal the end of the unit. Chapter divisions cannot be used as guidelines of course, since they were introduced not by the original authors, but later editors.

Second, behind every rhetorical unit stands a rhetorical situation which we must attempt to determine. The rhetorical situation refers to the shared knowledge between the speaker and the audience that occasioned the writing of the discourse in the first place and which may or may not be immediately evident to us. In fact, even in the more "informal" discourse where the author was not formally appealing to the rules of rhetoric, there is a rhetorical situation present (i.e., there is some relationship between the speaker and the audience). Such was probably the case with Paul.
Third, there frequently is a rhetorical problem that the speaker initially must overcome. The problem can range from credibility, complicated subject material, audience prejudice, etc. Ordinarily, the problem is dealt with early in the discourse and thus flavours the content of the poem, even the proofs.

Fourth, we must attempt to identify the specific issue being argued. While there may be several preliminary and peripheral issues, there is one major topic for which purpose the discourse was written. The issue is sometimes introduced in the poem, but generally not treated in full until the proof.

As previously discussed, determination of the rhetorical species (or at least the main species) is important because it helps to uncover the speaker's intent.

Sixth, the way in which the author has arranged the material says much about the expediency of each topic and thus needs to be examined. Important here are divisions and sub-divisions; the order in which the topics are treated; which received the most emphasis etc. - all of which are intended to work together to create a certain effect.

Finally, we must examine the style of the discourse: how the speaker seeks to convey the message. Here an analysis of the stylistic devices (i.e., enthymemes, maxims, etc.) chosen and employed by the author is necessary in order to understand the underlying rhetorical situation. The sixth and seventh points will not concern us since we are not engaged in a full analysis
of the entire letter, or its style, but only a discussion of the sections relating to women and how these relate to the rhetorical situation, problem, and species of the letter.

Having examined the stages individually, we should re-examine the text in its entirety, in order to evaluate how well each of the stages worked together in achieving the author's overall rhetorical exigence. ⁵⁰

With this in mind, let us turn now to a practical application of the preceding theory in those Pauline passages in which women are mentioned.

Part II: The Pauline Letters

The Pauline letters vary a great deal from other early Christian letters and even among themselves. According to Stanley Stowers:

They resemble neither the common papyri from the very lowest levels of culture and education nor the works of those with the highest levels of rhetorical training. They fall somewhere in between and have the cast of a Jewish sub-culture. ⁵¹

The value of this sort of comparative analysis, however, lies in its ability to make sense out of rhetorical peculiarities that can only be fully understood in light of Greco-Roman epistolography.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 38.

The Letter to the Romans

Background: The letter to the Romans, in particular Rom 16, presents a unique rhetorical situation fraught with rhetorical inconsistencies and textual problems. The final chapter, for example, is composed primarily of a series of greetings to (and from) Paul's coworkers in the Lord and as such represents the only instance in the whole of the Pauline corpus where such a list occurs. So significant are those textual critical difficulties that a number of alternate theories as to the original content and structure of the letter have emerged.\textsuperscript{22}

In the early nineteenth century, D. Schulz hypothesized that Rom 16 was not a part of the original letter to the Romans, rather a fragment of another Pauline letter intended for Ephesus.\textsuperscript{23} Even today, his theory receives a great deal of scholarly support. The hypothesis rests on five major arguments. First, the long list of friendly greetings in Rom 16:3-16 presupposes that Paul knew a great number of people in a community which he has never visited. While it is possible that some of these people migrated to Rome from the eastern provinces, that all of them did is unlikely. Moreover, given the theological content and implications of the letter, a list of "friendly" greetings is inappropriate. Second, "the first converts of Asia" mentioned in 16:5 would more likely be found in


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 318.
Ephesus, not Rome. We know from Acts 18:2, 18, 26 and 1 Cor 16:19 that Prisca and Aquila, for example, whom Paul commends in 16:5-5, were driven out of Rome and eventually settled in Ephesus. Third, the sharp warning against "those who create dissensions and difficulties" does not fit well with the rest of the letter, either in tone or content. Fourth, 15:33 exhibits an epistolary ending characteristic of Paul, as does 16:20. The repetition of the concluding formula is superfluous and unlike Paul. Finally, as we have said, nowhere else does Paul greet so many individuals at the end of a letter.54

Adolf Deissmann, a proponent of the Ephesus theory, carries it a step further, offering a solution as to how the letter became attached to Romans in the first place. For him, the answer lies in the use of letter books, and possibly copy books, which contained copies of letters sent and received. We know that Paul’s letters were not written in his own handwriting, but dictated to another person; in the case of Rom 16, Tertius. We also know that the letter to the Romans and the letter to Ephesus (i.e., Rom 16) were composed around the same time, which indicates two things: (1) Rom 16 was likely in the handwriting of the same amanuensis, Tertius; and, (2) they likely would be next to each other in a letter book. It is conceivable then, that the

two were mistakenly run together. Moreover, even if Paul’s letters were copied from the originals and not from copy books, the same handwriting might warrant some confusion as to where one letter ended and the other began. At any rate, the last chapter of Romans will be treated here as a letter in its own right, intended for Ephesus rather than Rome.

Although Rom 16 does not involve a fully developed rhetorical argument that could be classified as deliberative, judicial, or epideictic, it does employ rhetorical devices and is susceptible to a rhetorical analysis. From a formal point of view, it conforms to a well known form of Greco-Roman epistolography. In his epistolary handbook, Demetrius defines one type of letter known as the commending type or systatikos. Its essential elements are as follows:

1. Two people separated
2. One person attempting to converse with the other
3. An established positive social relationship between the two (e.g. friendship, family, patron-client)
4. The writer interceding on behalf of a third party in order to initiate a positive social relationship between the recipient and the third party.

The structure of the recommendation letter was defined further by Chan-Hie Kim. In 1972, Kim conducted a study of a series of Egyptian papyrus letters of introduction, also known as letters of recommendation. Egyptian letters tend to be somewhat formulaic, owing to the influence of professional letter-

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Deissman, Ancient East, 235-36.

Cited in Stowers, Letter Writing, 53-54.
Nevertheless, a number of important features can be derived. Kim identifies the following parts as representative of the typical papyrus letters of recommendation.

1. Opening
   A. Salutation. e.g., "Musonius to Nilus, greeting."
   B. Wish for well-being, e.g., "If you are well, we also are well."

2. Background
   A. Identification of the one recommended.
   B. Background proper, e.g., reason for the writer recommending the person.

3. Request period
   A. Request clause, e.g., "you would do well"; "you will be doing me a favour."
   B. Circumstantial clause, e.g., "if he has need of anything."
   C. Purpose and causal clauses, e.g., "so that you might introduce him to Tyrannus"; "for he is a trusted friend."

4. Appreciation e.g., "by doing this you will have my gratitude."

5. Closing
   A. Wish for well-being, e.g., "take care of yourself so that you might be in good health."
   B. Salutation, e.g., "farewell," "good luck."*

That Paul was familiar with letters of recommendation or introduction is attested numerous times in the Pauline corpus—hardly surprising given the importance of travel and hospitality to primitive Christianity. Throughout the Pauline corpus, for example, we find distinct references to letters of introduction (1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 3:1-2); passages of commendation within other letter genres or "mixed letters." (1 Cor 16:15-1, 17-18; 1 Thess

*Ibid., 153.

* Cited in Stowers, Letter Writing, 153-54.
5:12-13; Phil 2:25-30); even introductory or intercessory letters in their entirety (Rom 16; Philemon).  

According to Kim, the typical Pauline commendation contains three parts: (1) an introduction, which includes a petition and often the phrase "concerning my child," (2) the credentials, where Paul either praises and presents the credentials of the recommendee, or describes the person's relationship to himself, (3) the desired action, where Paul reveals to the recipients what it is that he wants them to do.  

When tested against the description of letters of introduction or recommendation in antiquity, there can be little doubt that Romans 16 complies to the pattern. For the purposes of this study then, Romans 16 will be classified among the commending type.  

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Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical Unit: The rhetorical unit consists of chapter 16 in its entirety (apart from the doxology 16:25-28), framed by the recommendation of Phoebe (16:1-2) and the epistolary closing (16:20-23). This provides a rounded unit.

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Ibid., 155-56.

Ibid., 156.

One unique feature of Rom 16 is its list of greetings. Again, this letter writing technique is attested in numerous papyrus letters that, like Rom 16, consist largely of a list of greetings. For example, Berliner Griechische Urkunden 601 (2d century B.C.E.); Paris Papyri 18 (1st-2d century C.E.). See Deissman, Ancient East, 234-35.
Rhetorical Situation: Even though I have argued that Rom 16 does not have the same destination as the other chapters of Romans, Rom 1-15 does provide important indications as to the general situation in which Paul finds himself.

We learn in Rom 15 that Paul considers his mission in the East to be complete in the sense that "there is no longer any room for me to work" (15:23). The phrase bears inspection. In what sense is there "no longer any room" for him? The clue is in 15:20, "lest I build on another man's foundation." Paul has encountered serious, perhaps insurmountable competition, in his own domain: in Galatia, where the Judaizers have perhaps effectively taken the Galatian church out of the Pauline orbit; in Corinth, where the "superlative apostles" (2 Cor 12:11) have criticized his conduct and bearing; in or near Philippi, where he fears the appearance of false teachers; and perhaps in Ephesus as well. If there is anything historically reliable in Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders, in Acts, then Paul's warning against "fierce wolves" (20:29) might be understood as a reference to competitors there. By Rom 15, Paul is on his way to Jerusalem, and again fears for his reception ("the unbelievers in Judea" 15:31) and even expresses doubts as to how the church will receive him ("that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints" 15:31). Yet even in the face of competition, Paul does not concede defeat, rather, he makes it known that he is
"satisfied" with his mission in the East, knowing that he has "fully preached the gospel of Christ" (15:19).

As we have already observed, Rom 16:3-16 is comprised largely of a long list of greetings to Paul's friends and co-workers in the Lord. This high degree of philopronesis is effective in emphasizing the strength of his bonds with the recipients, i.e., his indebtedness to them ("they risked their necks for me"); his work with them ("who has worked hard among you"); their common struggles and suffering ("my fellow prisoners"); material support ("the church in their house"), etc.

The unusually long list of greetings in Rom 16 suggests that Paul had a distinct purpose in doing so, namely, that he feels it important at this point to reinforce his connections with Ephesus. Paul apparently had used Ephesus as a base of operations for some time: 1 Cor was written from there and probably Philippians; 2 Cor 1:8 indicates that he was imprisoned there. He is now changing his home base from Ephesus, perhaps to Rome. But before he heads West, he wants to secure Ephesus so as to protect his interests in the East.

There is one final note about Rom 16. Interestingly, verses 17-20 indicate that Paul still sees himself as a guide and an authority to the Ephesians, offering his final commands ("avoid them"); "I would have you wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil," and making promises "the God of Peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."
Rhetorical Problem: Apart from Paul's concern to secure his interests in the East, there is no special problem. Paul does not imply that his credibility is at stake or that he is conscious of any immediate threat or rivals in Ephesus. He writes as if he expects his advice to be taken.

The Issue and its Rhetorical Solution: Here, the issue is the recommendation of Phoebe. This is accomplished quickly and in a way which indicates that Paul anticipates no difficulties in the Ephesians accepting Phoebe. His description of her, however, bears examination.

First, he identifies her as "a prostatis of many," an obvious pathetical appeal. By this phrase, he not only tells his recipients that she is a patron, but raises their expectations that Phoebe will also display her largess toward them.

Second, he places her squarely within the Christian family by identifying her as a "diakonos of the church in Cenchreae." Third, his appeal to receive and help Phoebe in a way "as befits the saints" may be an indication to the recipients of her status and honour. We will recall that wealthy women were often patrons to professional associations, but rarely, if ever, were they members. Paul may be reminding them that Phoebe is an exceptional case: not only is she a patron to the church, but she is one of them, "their sister," as well.

Finally, by according to her such distinctions, he aligns her with himself and with his missionary endeavours.
Hence, he proposes for Phoebe a complex set of actual and expected relationships:

1) The Lord
   ↓
   The Saints (including Phoebe)
   ↓
   Bishops and Deacons (including Phoebe)

2) Paul ←--------→ Phoebe (mutual patronage)
   ↓
   The Church at Ephesus (patronage to church)
   ↓
   Paul ←--------→ Phoebe (honour due to patrons)

A comparison of Paul's recommendation with several typical letters of recommendation will point to the complicated social relationship between Paul and Phoebe.

Recommendees are normally identified in one of two ways. First, as an inferior of the letter writer. Correspondence between superiors on behalf of an inferior party represents the most common type of recommendation letter. Here, the recommendee is a client of the writer, hence, the relationship is one of unequals. As such, the recommendee is normally identified only in terms of the relationship to the writer. Personal data, social status, etc., are not included. Two examples from the first and sixth centuries C.E., respectively, are representative of this type.

The first letter is somewhat unusual in that it is written on behalf of not one person, but three. Pliny requests Roman
citizenship for Harpocras, a physician and freedman, as well as for Hedia and Antonia Harmeris, on behalf of their patroness, Antonia Maximilla.

Having been advised last year by a severe and dangerous illness, I employed a physician whose care and diligence, Sir, I cannot sufficiently reward, but by your gracious assistance. I entreat you therefore to make him a citizen of Rome; for he is the freedman of one who is not a citizen. His name is Harpocras; his patroness (who has been dead a considerable time) was Thermuthis, the daughter of Theon. I further entreat you to bestow the full privileges of a Roman citizen upon Hedia and Antonia Harmeris, the freedwomen of Antonia Maximilla, a lady of high rank. It is at her desire that I make this request.\footnote{2}

In the second letter, the person being recommended, Isidorus, is a member of the household of the writer, Apollonius. The recipient of the letter, Sarapion, is clearly a man of some authority as he holds two important offices; strategus and gymnasiarch.

Apollonius to Sarapion the strategus and gymnasiarch, many greetings and good health always. Isidorus, the one who is delivering this letter, is from my household. I ask you to consider him as introduced to you, and if he comes to you for anything do it for him for my sake. I you do this, I will be indebted to you. Whatever you wish to signify I will do without delay. Take care of yourself so that you will be in good health. Farewell.\footnote{3}

Second, the writer and the recommendee are more or less social equals, perhaps friends, business associates, social peers, etc. Yet even in this case, the very fact that the recommendee obtains a recommendation makes him/her a client of the writer, i.e., the writer has temporarily assumed the role of

\footnote{2} Pliny, Ep. 10.5; Italy, 98/99 C.E. Stowers, Letter Writing, 161.

\footnote{3} Egypt, P. Merton 62; Stowers, Letter Writing, 157.
"broker" or mediator introducing the "client" to a new sector of friends. In the following letters, this sort of equality is demonstrated.

The first letter, from the second century B.C.E., is a letter of introduction on behalf of Damas who is being sent by the writer on a business matter. Due to the fragmentary nature of the letter, we know neither the name of the writer, nor of the recipient.

I you and the...of Caesar to read this (?), for you must assist him because of our friendship even though I have had trouble with others. For I am worn down completely by the fact that Helenos lost the money, because when Damas arrived at Alexandria we came to Epaphroditos and it was learned that he had neither received nor paid anything. Consequently, I want you to know this that I have given instructions to him that he proceed to Takona on account of the rents and now have given him authority over the whole matter. Whatever he may stand in need of from you, assist him in that, as he will be as agreeable for you as he is for me. Because I was distracted by my (aforesaid) situation, I was unable to meet Apollonius the Libyan in order to tell him these same things. And you write to me about whatever you want and I will willingly do it, for Damas has agreed (to do) all things for me. It is well that he arrive as quickly as possible, for he will instruct you. Take care of yourself to stay well. Look after all your folks. (Year) 29 of Caesar, Phaophi 6.\*\*\*

The second letter is from the first century C.E. The friendship between Heracles, the writer and Dioscorus, the recommendee, is evident.

Heracles to his dearest Musaeus, greetings. I request you to regard as introduced to you Dioscorus, who will deliver this letter to you; he is a very close friend of mine. Farewell. Pharmuthi 13(?).\*\*\*


\*\* Stowers, Letter Writing, 156.
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Rarely, if ever, would the recommendee be a superior of the writer. To my knowledge, no letters revealing such a relationship exist.⁴⁴

These findings have significant implications for Romans 16. Given the fact that the recommendee normally is identified as a client or inferior of the writer, it is striking that Phoebe is not identified by Paul in this way. Yet no language that might imply inferiority, or even equality in the simplest sense, is employed. On the contrary, Paul underlines her social prominence by according to her two distinct titles. The first, diakonos, depicts Phoebe as a local leader in the Church in Cenchreae.⁴⁷

More importantly, Paul calls Phoebe a prostaticis not only of many, but of himself as well. This presumably means that although Phoebe was a person of wealth and connections in certain spheres,⁴⁸ she must rely on Paul for his connections in other spheres. Thus there is a complicated reciprocal relationship between the two.

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⁴⁴ There are no such letters in the collections of Stowens or White.

⁴⁷ On the use of diakonos, see Robert Jewett, “Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission,” The Social World of Formative Christianity (eds. Jacob Neusner, Feder Borgen, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Richard Horsley; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 149. According to him, "That diakonos was an official title of church leadership has been shown by Ulrich Brockhaus and Bent Holmberg."

⁴⁸ We do not know for certain why Phoebe is going to Ephesus (or Rome) but it is likely on some sort of business. Women were after all, shipowners on occasion.
Socio-Historical Analysis: The key to our understanding of the relationship between Paul and Phoebe is to discern exactly what kind of patron she was. As we have seen, the patron-client structure was at the root of all societal bonds: economic, social, even political relationships were channelled through it. Any discussion, therefore, of relationships of any nature in the first century must be viewed through the optic of this structure, keeping in mind the principles of reciprocity inherent in it.

Robert Jewett understands the relationship between Paul and Phoebe as a complicated one. In his article "Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission," he concludes that Phoebe was the primary instrument through which Paul intended to carry out his plans for a Christian mission in Spain. A brief summary of his theory here might be helpful.

As revealed in Rom 15:24, Paul envisioned a Christian mission in Spain which he sought to carry out with the help of the churches in Rome. Yet language barriers, political hostility and most importantly, the lack of a Jewish community there, etc. rendered his usual improvisational missionary strategy impossible. His plans could only be realized with the help of a person of social status and influence who would penetrate the Roman community and thereby "create the logistical base for the Spanish mission."

Jewett's theory, of course, presupposes the traditional view that Rom 16 was part of the letter to the Romans and that it was intended for Rome, not Ephesus - a view that is not held in the present paper.
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For this task, Paul enlisted the aid of Phoebe, deaconess of the church in Cenchreae and patroness to Paul and his churches. Because both roles presuppose her wealth and social prominence, "the churches of Rome would have no fear that cooperation with her would require onerous financial obligations on their part." In fact, "they would be honored by the prospect of involvement with a person of this social status." For this purpose then, Paul "recommends" Phoebe to the churches at Rome.

Whether or not we support Jewett's theory concerning Paul's intended Spanish mission, his model of the relationship between Paul and Phoebe, is a valuable one and has important implications for our own analysis. Whether Paul expected her support and patronage in a projected Spanish mission, as Jewett proposes, or whether, as I have argued, her destination is Ephesus, it is reasonable to assume that he expected her to play some role in support of his efforts.

In the case that she was going to Ephesus, the presence in Ephesus of a person of status and means, who was at the same time intimately associated with Paul through a mutual and reciprocal indebtedness, would serve to secure Ephesus firmly within the Pauline orbit. At a time when, as Rom 15 illustrates, Paul felt pressured and hampered by competitors, the presence of a powerful pro-Pauline figure in Ephesus could only serve to reinforce Paul's tenuous position in the East.

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What then, can we conclude about their relationship? We can say with some degree of certainty that it is inadequate to describe theirs as a patron-client relationship in the normal sense.

Paul certainly thinks of his churches as clients and is quick to invoke the principles of reciprocity. In his correspondence with them, he frequently invokes parental imagery, reminding his followers that he has done a great deal for them and that they owe him allegiance. There is, however, no evidence in realms of spiritual authority that Paul sees himself as a client of anyone, or admits to having any patrons (not even the Jerusalem church or Cephas) except of course, for God and Christ.

Yet Paul’s description of Phoebe as a “patron of many and of myself as well” seems to imply that, on some level, he considered her his social superior. Jewett has no problem with this implication, (he talks of Paul’s “relatively subordinate social position as her client”)\(^71\) nor does Judge (Paul is acknowledging his social dependence on Phoebe”).\(^72\)

Admittedly, it is tempting to understand their relationship in terms of the religious and social aspects of culture, according to Paul the spiritual domain, and to Phoebe the financial domain. But the political and social structure of the first


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century does not permit such a clear cut distinction. As Halvor Moxnes observes:

In antiquity the economy was never a "sector" of society, a separate institute with its own rules. It was embedded in society and in its power structure. This structure of power ruled production and exchange systems, which therefore did not operate according to a "free market" economy. Consequently, this economy must be studied within the framework of the social organization of society as a whole."73

To treat Phoebe, therefore, "merely" as a financial benefactor, if that is what she was, is to misunderstand the nature of benefaction in antiquity. Benefaction included not just financial support, but also allowing clients access to one's social and economic channels.74

Conclusion: The fact remains that Paul does call Phoebe a patron, a title which strongly implies some sort of mutual obligation. I suggest that it is Paul's part of this mutual obligation that we are seeing here. As a Christian missionary, Paul would in-


On the inseparability of religion and economics, see also Karl Polyani et al., Trade and Market in the Early Empires (Glencoe: Free Press, 1957; repr., Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1971) 250; "For religion or government may be as important for the structure and functioning of the economy as monetary institutions or the availability of tools and machines that lighten the toil of labour," and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Methodological Considerations in the Debate Over the Social Class of Early Christians," JAAR 52 (1985) 525; "In antiquity the political and the economic systems were inseparable."

evitably have built a large body of friends and followers throughout the Roman Empire. In Rom 16, Paul is exploiting this network of "clients" on behalf of Phoebe, introducing her to his network of connections and thereby reciprocating her material benefactions to him and his Church.

It is likely that Phoebe’s patronage extended far beyond the financial support. According to Fiorenza, Phoebe’s patronage did not consist merely in financial support and hospitality on behalf of clients but also in bringing her influence to bear in using her connections for them.\(^{75}\)

While Phoebe no doubt supported Paul in various ways, I suggest that Paul expects the situation of mutual indebtedness between himself and Phoebe to continue even after his departure for Jerusalem and the West, and that the Ephesians enter into a relationship with Phoebe. This double relationship will secure Paul’s interests in the East.

If these analyses are correct, then what we have here is an agreement of "equals," albeit with vastly different spheres of influence. It is precisely the fact that they were equal, at least on certain levels, that set theirs apart from the typical patron-client relationship. While the usual exchange of material benefaction for honour and gratitude likely took place, they were able to offer each other much more. Phoebe, a wealthy and independent woman, likely educated, and patron to one or more clubs, undoubtedly moved in the upper classes, among those of her social rank. As a member of the upper classes, she was able to

\(^{75}\) Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 182.
secure connections for Paul and his church connections which, in a status conscious society like Rome where wealth and power went hand in hand, could only be beneficial. Paul, a Christian missionary and himself a member of the artisan class, would be in constant contact with people from all strata of society, including the lower and working classes. He was able, therefore to supply for Phoebe an entire network of people who would be more than grateful to extend their hospitality to a wealthy patron.

The Letter to the Philippians

Rhetorical Analysis: From the whole of the Philippian church, only two are singled out for specific admonition: Euodia and Syntyche (4:2). Yet, in spite of the emphasis Paul accords them, Euodia and Syntyche often have been interpreted as minor or insignificant figures with little or no bearing on the overall purpose of the letter, or on the community at large.

For example, one of the earliest commentators of the historical-critical method, Albert Schweigler, concluded that Euodia and Syntyche were not two women, but representatives of

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76 Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom, 47; Rohrbaugh, "Social Class," 519-46.

77 Whether or not Paul was a Roman citizen cannot be affirmed with certitude. Luke maintains that he was, but this may be more a Lukan embellishment than a secure datum of scholarship.

two distinct parties within the church. According to Schwegler, they could not have been actual historical figures, since such an understanding "would give the passage an extremely strange character."\(^7\)

Even some later commentators have classified the conflict between these women as a minor one. C. Lattey, for example, describes Euodia and Syntyche as "the two ladies whose squabbles were presumably the chief cause of trouble";\(^8\) J. C. Du Buisson as "two Christian women at Philippi who had quarrelled,"\(^9\) while Margaret Avery surmises that their "quarrel" was about "who should distribute alms or teach the church's children."\(^10\)

These characterizations are not entirely incorrect, just as the description of Phoebe as a "helper" is not incorrect, but it conveys an image of unimportant or petty bickering that casts doubt on their role as authoritative figures. As we shall see, such characterizations are not supported by the rhetoric of the letter or the historical evidence.


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In any case, this type of derogatory characterization is not the dominant view, as commentators generally acknowledge the importance of Euodía and Sintyché to Paul and the Philippian church. For example, according to Mary Ann Getty

In jaming Euodía and Sintyché suggests that they were influential leaders and that their quarrel had ecclesiastical repercussions....Only if they were significant leaders would he mention them by name.\textsuperscript{83}

In the same vein, Karl Barth writes that

the only thing that can be assumed with certainty is, that it was not merely some personal squabble that Paul had in view in bidding them to auto phronein.\textsuperscript{84}

Still, little or no attempt has been made to understand the precise nature of their role in Philippi or to situate them more firmly in the social structure of the first century. Therein lies the value of the following rhetorical analysis. Such an analysis will attempt to learn more about Euodía and Sintyché by examining the admonition against them in 4:2 in the context of epistolary rhetoric.

An important rhetorical feature in the letter to the Philippians is the thanksgiving period (1:3-11). Ground-breaking

\textsuperscript{83} Mary Ann Getty, \textit{Philippians and Philemon} (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1980) 60-61.

work on the Pauline thanksgiving period was carried out by Paul Schubert in 1939. Comparing the Pauline thanksgiving periods to the thanksgiving periods of general papyrus letters of the Hellenistic Age, Schubert concluded that "[t]he function of the epistolary thanksgivings in the papyrus letters is to focus the epistolary situation, i.e., to introduce the vital theme of the letter." The same holds true for the Pauline letters.

Philippians is a good example of Schubert's theory, since "[t]he characteristic structural pattern exhibited by all Pauline eucharisto thanksgiving period is fully maintained in [it]." Four important topics "which find their development in the body of the letter" are introduced in the thanksgiving (or proem) that set the tone of the letter and are reiterated throughout: praise and gratitude (1:3, 5-6, 9-11; 2:6-11; 4:4-5, 20); fellowship of the community (1:5; 2:3-4, 12, 14; 4:4-7, 15); completion of the Lord's work (1:6; 2:2, 36). For our analysis of Euodia and Syntyche, it is the fourth theme, being of the same mind (phronein), that is particularly relevant.

According to Bauer, the Greek verb phronein means to "have

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Schubert, Form and Function, 81.

Ibid., 77.
thoughts or (an) attitude(s), be minded or disposed,” but as Beare points out, “not primarily in the intellectual sense; it bears rather upon the entire orientation of the emotions and the will, the whole inward disposition.” Essential to the rhetorical structure and arrangement, *phronein* occurs eleven times in the letter to the Philippians (1:7; 2:2a, 2b, 5; 3:15, 15, 16, 19; 4:2, 10a, 10b), although it is not always used in the same way. At least five times, the term used by Paul as part of a common phrase to convey his "feelings" for them and how they should "think" and "feel" for one another. Let us trace its development throughout the letter.

*Phronein* is introduced in 1:7 as part of Paul's justification for the confidence he has expressed in their completion of the Lord's work. He "feels" corporate solidarity with them because they are "fellow worshippers" (*synerginoi*) in grace and in his suffering. The word is employed here on two levels. Literally, he is referring to the Philippians' assistance via Epaphroditus. Figuratively, he is also expressing his view of the corporate experience of grace and redemption, a view that resurfaces in 1 Cor 8; 11; 12, etc.

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" BAGD, 866.


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Phil 2:2, and especially 2:5, raises this to a new plane. Paul feels corporate solidarity with the Philippians, now they are encouraged to "feel" or "think/apprehend" solidarity in Christ. In this way, Paul invokes the drama of redemption through suffering. It is not enough merely to be of one mind; their lives must reflect their fellowship if dissection is to be averted.\textsuperscript{93}

Thus, by the time he gets to 4:2-3, the term phronein is heavily freighted. The ground work for understanding his admonition has already been laid: the only threat to their corporate salvation is internal dissection.

That the theme of "being of one mind" culminates in a rebuke to Euodia and Syntyche, strongly indicates that Paul believes the problem between them bears upon the fellowship; and hence, the salvation of the entire community. Clearly, Craddock recognizes this fact when he writes:

Paul is not just trying to embarrass two members by having their names read aloud in a worship service. When he dips into an earlier paragraph for two expressions addressed to the whole church, striving or laboring side by side (1:27) and being of the same mind or attitude (2:2), he is reminding them that they are leaders and therefore are able by words or deeds to polarize the congregation, destroying the one soul, one mind, one body.\textsuperscript{94}

In addition to the strategic use of phronein, the importance of Euodia and Syntyche is illustrated in at least three other ways in the rhetorical structure of the letter.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 44-45.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 70.
First, is the use of *sunethlesan* in 4:3. Paul writes that Euodia and Syntyche *aitines en to euaggelio sunethlesan*. The word *sunethlesan* is often translated in a way that depicts Euodia and Syntyche as having "laboured" with Paul, itself an important concept. Yet if Paul simply had meant "labourer" or "co-worker," it is difficult to justify why he did not employ his usual term "synergos," ("helper, fellow-worker"). Instead he chooses "synethlesan." Bauer translates Phil 4:3 as "they have fought at my side in spreading the gospel," a depiction which strongly implies Euodia and Syntyche were active in evangelizing the Philippian community with Paul, perhaps as equals.

Second, it is significant that Paul addresses the two women in exactly the same way ("I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord"), showing that he does not favour one side or the other. Nor does he intervene directly, but invokes the help of a third party to do so. In some disputes, Paul does

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95 For example, RSV, KJV.

96 BAGD, 787. See for example, Rom 16:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 1:24, 8:23; Phil 2:25, 4:5; Col 4:11; 1 Thess 3:2; Phm 1:1, 24.

97 BAGD, 783. Similarly LSJ defines the term as to "struggle together." Several biblical translations show a similar understanding of the word. See for example NEB; NIV; Moffatt, NAB.

The only other occurrence of the word *sunethlesan* in the New Testament is Phil 1:27 which is usually translated as "striving" (RSV, KJV) or "contending" (NIV, NEB); also as "fighting" (Moffatt); "battling" (NJB); "exerting" (NAB).

98 In 4:3, Paul addresses "gnesie syzuge" whom he asks to help Euodia and Syntyche. The expression is a puzzling one and can be understood in two ways: (1) as a general phrase meaning "true yokefellow." (RSV; NEB; NIV; Moffatt; KJV; or NAB)
not mind intervening on behalf of a particular party: in the letter to Philemon, for example, his sympathies clearly lie with Onesimus. That he takes measures to remain neutral in the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche indicates that theirs is a conflict of some momentum, and one in which he cannot be caught in the middle."

Finally, the arrangement of the discourse lends further support to their importance. While Euodia and Syntyche are not mentioned themselves until 4:2, the problems arising from their situation is, of course, the main focus of the letter. Introduced in the proem (1:3-11), it is more emphatically stated in the proposition (2:1-5) and recapitulated in the peroration (4:5-20). When they finally are introduced, it is immediately before the epilogue which has the two-fold effect of bringing the theme to a climax and ensuring that the recipients understand and remember the rebuke.

The question that needs to be answered then, is what was the nature of their role that was so important to the Philippian

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pendable fellow worker"). Suggestions as to whom Paul is referring here include Luke, Silas, Epaphroditus, Lydia, and Paul's wife, (2) the term can also be understood as a personal name, Syzygus (NJB; NIV footnotes the possibility) - a name which is attested nowhere else in the New Testament. Syzygus is usually understood as an influential man or women in Philippi, perhaps a church leader. For a fuller explanation see Beare, Philippians, 144-45; Getty, Philippians and Philemon, 62; Barth, Philippians, 119-20; Lattey, "Philippians," 1130.

community and in the Pauline church? To answer this, we turn now to an examination of the socio-historical situation behind the letter.

**Socio-Historical Analysis:** Before we begin our discussion of the nature of Euodia's and Syntyche's role in Philippi, two points must be kept in mind: (1) that we are dealing with Christianity in its infancy; and, (2) the likenesses of primitive Christianity to first century collegia. So closely related were the two that it is perhaps inappropriate to speak of earliest Christianity and voluntary clubs as two separate institutions. While Paul would likely have upheld Christianity as something altogether different, perhaps even above the secular clubs, to outsiders, including new members, potential members, and even patrons, there may have been no difference at all. For the sake of clarity then, in the following analysis, "church" and "club" will be used interchangeably. Hence, to be a church leader was to be a club leader and, at least in religious organizations, to be a club patron was to adhere to club policy.

In what capacity Euodia and Syntyche were involved in the collegia is unclear, but the emphasis Paul accords them in the letter speaks for their involvement on some authoritative level. They might be leaders; they might be patrons. Several factors bear inspection.

We know nothing of the background of Euodia and Syntyche, but, considering the honour they receive from Paul and the effect
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their struggle had upon the community, it is conceivable that they were elite women. In this case, they may have performed some official function in the Christian organization, or have been patrons to it.

In fact, even if Euodia and Syntyche were of servile origin\(^{100}\) – although there is no real evidence of this – we cannot exclude the possibility that they were leaders.

We will recall from Chapter Two that voluntary associations modelled their internal hierarchy on the Roman government, leaders being chosen from the ranks of members. Because collegia did not discriminate on the basis of social status, slave or freedwomen were just as likely to become leaders as anyone else (except, of course, in the professional collegia that were organized along gender lines).

Nor would a servile origin necessarily exclude the possibility that Euodia and Syntyche may have been patrons. We have seen in Chapter One that there were a number of ways in which women, even freedwomen, could achieve financial independence. More importantly, they were able to dispose of their own finances in whatever way they saw fit. Horsley provides us with the example of Lydia, whose servile status is indicated not only by her name, but by her occupation (purple-dyer), and geographical

\(^{100}\) The name Syntyche, meaning "Fortunate" or "Lucky," sounds suspiciously like a slave name, but we lack the evidence to decide for certain. For the meaning of their names see Herbert Lockyer, *The Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967) 55, 162.
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origin. She is evidently wealthy and able to conduct her affairs independently.¹⁰¹

The idea of patronage actually fits well with the situation in Philippi. Since clubs normally had more than one patron,¹⁰² it is quite conceivable that Euodia and Syntyche were both patrons to the Pauline group, vying for honour, one trying to "squeeze" the other out for top priority.

This sort of fierce competition between them is picked up on by F. W. Beare (although certainly not in the collegial sense of conflict) who concludes that Euodia and Syntyche were engaged in some sort of conflict, "each one feeling that her services are outstanding and entitle her to a superior place,"¹⁰³ and more recently John Hargreaves, who writes, "perhaps each one felt that what she did for the congregation, and the gifts that God had given her, made her superior to the other."¹⁰⁴

It is interesting that Philippians is the only one of Paul’s letters that mentions officials in the opening address. This may be a clue to the position of women in Philippi. Consider the

¹⁰¹ Horsley, New Documents, 2:25-32, esp. 27-28. Here, Horsley is working under the assumption that the purple dye trade was an imperial monopoly. If so, then it would almost certainly have been run by slaves, freedmen and freedwomen.

In his New Documents 3:54, Horsley raises the issue of whether the purple trade was in fact an imperial monopoly. If not, then Lydia’s servile status is not as certain, although it cannot be excluded. She may have been a freedwoman; she may have been free-born. Again, we lack the evidence to say for certain.

¹⁰² Cicero, Oratio pro Sestio, 9.

¹⁰³ Beare, Philippians, 143.

¹⁰⁴ Hargreaves, Philippians, 113.
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facts: (1) That episkopoi and diakonoi are present in Philippi is evident; (2) The only two that Paul mentions by name from the Philippian community are Euodia and Syntyche; (3) Paul addresses them in the first person ("I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche"); and, (4) there is no evidence that the leaders of the Christian organization in Philippi were called anything but episkopoi and diakonoi. Clearly, for those who do not begin with the assumption that women could not have held such roles, the possibility that Euodia and Syntyche were among the leaders in Philippi (i.e., episkopoi and diakonoi), must remain open.

Again, this does not preclude their status as patrons: they may have been leaders and patrons. Phoebe, after all, is apparently both operative in the church (diakonos) and a patron to it. Consider also the example of the cult of Zeus.\(^{105}\) Dionysius clearly is a leader in the club, or a member of some special status; it is to him the divine ordinances from Zeus are relayed. That Dionysius is also a patron to the club is evidenced by the fact that he apparently has offered his oikos as a meeting place.\(^{106}\) This is not to say, of course, that patrons were necessarily members of the club. In professional associations,

\(^{105}\) Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 9-10.

\(^{106}\) Barton and Horsley raise the possibility that oikos here refers not to the house of Dionysius, but to the association in general. However, the use of the word in the inscription, (i.e. the fact that members are apparently required to swear an oath each time they enter the oikos; and as Barton and Horsley point out, the phrase "his own oikos") points to its interpretation as an actual building. See Barton and Horsley, "Hellenistic Cult Group," 15-16.
for example, wealthy patrons were rarely members, but in the case of religious clubs, a patron almost necessarily was a devotee of the god(s) involved. After all, it is difficult to imagine one bestowing benefaction upon a religious organization of which he/she was not a devotee. Perhaps patrons belonged to a special class of "honoured" members or devotees. We cannot be certain.

That we cannot decide with any degree of certainty whether Euodia and Syntyche were leaders or patrons or both, does not bear significantly upon our analysis of the Philippian situation. Either way, they were in an authoritative position, and in an agonistic culture such as the first century Mediterranean world, this inevitably entailed a conflict or competition for honour and influence. A brief explanation of this culture will be helpful.

According to Bruce Malina, circum-Mediterranean cultures are agonistic, which means they "look upon all social interactions outside the family or substitute family (circle of friends) as a contest for honour."107 One acquires honour, he explains,

by excelling over others in the social interaction that we shall call challenge and response...a sort of social pattern, a social game...in which persons hassle each other according to socially defined rules in order to gain the honour of another. Now since honour is the pivotal value (much like money in our society), nearly every interaction...has undertones of a challenge to honour.108

Conclusion: It was likely this sort of "social game" in which Euodia and Syntyche were engaged. Paul rightly recognized the


108 Ibid., 29-30.
threat such a conflict posed to the fellowship of the community and to the completion of God’s work. Knowing that the behaviour of the most prominent members (i.e., Euodia and Syntyche) would, to some degree, determine the behaviour of the rest of the group, he frames the letter with them in mind. The climactic use of phronein, the rhetorical arrangement, the careful emphasis on the corporate dimension of salvation, even the fact that Paul grammatically balances his admonition to them so as not to exhibit preferential treatment, provide an effective strategy in combatting the agonistic character of interpersonal relationships, particularly among those who have honour and influence.

Whether we understand Euodia and Syntyche as leaders in the Christian organization, as patrons to it, or as both, two facts are evident: (1) their influence in Philippi was so great that the conflict between them was felt throughout the entire community and was perceived as a threat to their corporate salvation; and (2) they, like Phoebe, were a vital part of Paul’s missionary activity.

The First Letter to the Thessalonians

Background: No women are mentioned specifically in the Thessalonian correspondence, but their presence in Thessalonica during the political stirrings is indicated by Acts 17. Because our analysis draws heavily upon the materials contained in Acts 17, a brief discussion of the reliability of Acts is warranted.
In recent years, the reliability and accuracy of Acts has been called into question. One of the first to do so was Ernst Haenchen who claims that

"The representation of Paul in Acts...shows that here we have no collaborator of Paul telling his story, but someone of a later generation trying in his own way to give an account of things that can no longer be viewed in their perspective."^109

John C. Hurd expresses the same incredulity in using Acts "a secondary historical source to provide the historical background against which letters, primary historical sources are to be understood."^110 A. N. Sherwin-White takes it a step further and accuses Acts of possibly having "garbled" in formation in at least one instance.^111 Even Martin Hengel, who essentially supports the use of Acts, must acknowledge that "in some cases he [Luke] rigorously omits everything that does not fit in with his narrative purposes," yet "elaborates what he wants to stress."^112

Nevertheless, there are those who maintain that Acts cannot be dismissed so easily. Having examined the treatment of Paul in Acts in some detail, Jacob Jervell concludes: "I am therefore inclined to assert that whatever Luke writes on the subject of

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Paul is historically correct, even if not in detail." Donfried takes a similar position. Holding to the axiom of John Knox that Acts should be used only as a supplement to the letters and that "of our two sources the letters of Paul are obviously and incomparably the more trustworthy," Donfried maintains "increasingly I am persuaded of the historical accuracy of much of the material in Acts."  

It seems that Acts is not uniformly reliable. The part played by the urban rabble in the Thessalonian riot, for example, probably is Lukan. It is one of eleven mob or riot scenes described in Acts, for which Luke had a distinct purpose. According to Richard I. Pervo:

Since the ruling class did not regard such gatherings as desirable manifestations of popular democracy, pointing the finger at them would in no way discredit the Christian movement.  

Moreover, "the hostile mobs provide exciting reading."  


116 Pervo, Profit With Delight, 36.

117 Ibid., 37.
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Yet, it is not necessary to accept the reliability of the framework of Acts or all of the details of various accounts to consider seriously the reliability of individual parts. In fact, on literary ground, there is evidence that Acts 17 is not simply Lukan fabrication. For example, in regard to the "decrees of Caesar" (Acts 17:7) and the charges brought against the apostles at Thessalonica, E. A. Judge has shown that

[t]he technical accuracy of the author of Acts in matters of legal and political practice has been demonstrated at many points, and not the least in other aspects of this very passage.118

According to him, if the politarchs in Thessalonica were responsible for administering oaths of loyalty to the Caesarian house, then conversely, they would be responsible for punishing violations of that oath. It follows that if Paul's preaching was deemed to be subversive to "the decrees of Caesar," then it would have been their duty to remove the threat.119

Similarly, the mention of Jason cannot be dismissed simply as a "Lukanism," since he is attested nowhere else in Acts.

Rhetorical Analysis: In any case, in order to understand the nature of the involvement of women in the Thessalonian conflict, we must first attempt to uncover the rhetorical situation and the rhetorical problem that underlie the letter. Since the events of


119 Ibid., 1-7.
Acts 17 are prior to the writing of 1 Thess, 1 Thess may, in at least a general way, provide a reflection on those events.

Much about the rhetorical situation is revealed in the exordium (1:2-10) and the narratio (2:1-3:13) where a number of important topics emerge. In 1:5, Paul invokes the power of the gospel which manifests itself in word, in power and the Holy Spirit. He commends the Thessalonians' imitation of himself (1:6), of the churches in Judea (2:14) and on their subsequent success and fortitude (1:7-9). Paul's care for the Thessalonians and his desire to be with them is illustrated throughout the letter (1:2-3, 2:8, 17-20; 3:9-10). Perhaps most importantly, he stresses the sufferings of the Thessalonians (1:6; 2:14; 3:3-4), and his own suffering (2:2, 18; 3:7), reminding them that he had predicted these while he was still there (3:3-4). Hence, part of the rhetorical situation is consternation caused by persecution.

From this outline we can infer the following itinerary. Having left Thessalonica, perhaps hurriedly, Paul and his co-workers tried to visit there again, but for some reason ("Satan hindered us" 2:18) were unable to do so. Fearful that the Thessalonians had succumbed to temptation, he sent Timothy, who reported that the Thessalonian church had been successful in spite of opposition and pressure.

Of particular interest is 2:1-12. It contains a series of antitheses which defend the apostolic example. These verses have been interpreted variously. W. K. Clarke, for example, believes that in these verses Paul is responding to accusations made
against him which "take the form of comparison with the war-raging preachers of heathen cults and philosophers, whose immorality and wheedling methods are well attested." 120 George A. Kennedy and C.C. McCown take a similar position, although they feel Paul is defending himself in anticipation of opposition, rather than from accusations already made. 121 According to Jack T. Sanders, Robert Funk, John L. White122, 2:1-12 constitute the body or part of the body of the letter, thus making 1 Thess an apologetic letter. The apology, however, is not necessarily made in response to a personal attack. Abraham Malherbe explains in this regard:

Paul's description of himself is therefore not to be viewed as a personal defense. In keeping with his paraenetic intent, he reminds his mimetai of the qualities they should imitate in their model. 123

Given the rhetorical position of these verses (i.e., it is the first topic of the narratio) and the vehemence with which he asserts his credentials, it is likely that Paul is responding to charges already made. In any case, the rhetorical problem he faces is an attack on his credibility because the Thessalonians

120 Clarke, Concise Bible Commentary, 887.

121 Kennedy, Rhetorical Criticism, 142-43; C. C. McCown, "First and Second Thessalonians," Abingdon Bible Commentary, 1267.

122 Cited in Hendrikus Boers, "The Form Critical Study of Paul's Letters: 1 Thessalonians as a Case Study," NTS 22 (1975-76) 150.

feel that they were abandoned in persecution, or were surprised by it and hold Paul responsible: the precise nature of the charges, we can only infer. In response, Paul argues that he has suffered just like them, and they, just like the churches in Judea, and just like the Lord. Much of 1 Thess 1-3 is devoted to regaining his damaged credibility, damage that was caused by persecution.

The substance of Paul’s advice is contained in the propositio (4:1-2) and the probatio (4:1-5:12). Three topics receive specific attention: chastity (4:3-8); brotherly love (4:9-10); and work (4:11-12). Significantly, this paraenetic section is followed by the promise of the parousia (4:13-5:12). In a community such as Thessalonica, already politically volatile and under threat of persecution, talk of chastity and brotherly love likely would have caught the attention of outsiders. The promise of the imminent parousia, a term normally reserved for the visit of a ruler, king, or high official, almost certainly would have.

To what extent such unfavorable attention materialized, needs to be examined. At this point then, an examination of Christian persecution in Thessalonica is warranted. Let us turn our attention to the socio-historical discussion of 1 Thessalonians.

Socio-Historical Analysis: On the basis of the three main texts that bear upon the issue (1:6, 2:13-16 and 3:3-4), commentators
regularly have acknowledged the existence of persecution, but its precise nature and source remains largely undefined.

There are three major possibilities as to the source of persecution. First, Act 17 suggests that the persecution arose from the Jews who, with the urban rabble, complain to the politarchs. The argument for Jewish involvement rests on two major premises: (1) assuming that Paul was working from within the synagogue system, it is conceivable that his apocalyptic preaching was considered to be at odds with the established doctrine. As a result, reports of rivalry were made to the local politarchs and magistrates, and, (2) if there was a Jewish community in Thessalonica, it is possible that the anti-semitic riots of 41 C.E. were instilled firmly in their memory. The presence of a Jewish missionary then, whose preaching was already causing friction with the magistrates, likely would be seen as a potentially explosive threat.\footnote{124}{For a discussion of the anti-semitic riots of 41 C.E., see Mary E. Smallwood, The Jews Under Roman Rule Vol. 20 (ed. Jacob Neusner; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976) 244-49.}

A second possibility is that the persecution was carried out as a result of social pressure fueled by the suspicion aroused by Christian social arrangements. Two practices in particular figure prominently in this regard. The first is Paul’s coinage of the word philadelphia\footnote{125}{On Paul’s use of philadelphia see John S. Kloppenborg, “‘Concerning Philadelphia’: Paul and the Discouragement in 1 Thess 4: 9-12,” 7-9 (Unpublished paper. Cited in typescript).} to refer to his entire congregation. The term was not uncommon in hellenistic society, but it was used...
only to refer to real brothers and, of course, only to males. The second was the practice of "the holy kiss" which would undoubtedly have attracted unfavorable attention. Such behaviour gave rise to rumors of promiscuity and immorality among the Christians that may well have occasioned their persecution.

Third, it is possible that the persecution was instigated politically and carried out by the politarchs on behalf of Rome. In this case, the persecution was caused not so much by Christian practices, but by the association of Christianity with voluntary organizations. As we know, Rome harbored a deep rooted fear and suspicion of any sort of social gathering, fearing political adversity and social unrest.

These three possibilities are not, of course, mutually exclusive. The Pauline community engaged in various activities and used language which would attract the attention of various outside groups and provoke suspicion for several reasons: Jewish groups, because a Jewish missionary was provoking disturbances; neighbors, resentful of the new or suspicious social arrangements fostered; and the politarchs because of subversive sounding terminology.

While it is difficult to isolate any one factor, it is my contention that the persecution in Thessalonica arose as a direct

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126 On the practice of "the holy kiss" see Kloppenborg, "Concerning Philadelphia," 10-11 who maintains that "This gesture, which was normally between closely related kin, could be, and later in fact was, construed by outsiders as a sign of promiscuity, Oedipal intercourse and general immorality." See also Stephen Benko, "The Kiss," Chap. 4 in Panan Rome and the Early Christians (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984) 79-103.
result of conflict, political and social, with the voluntary associations there. This will be demonstrated in greater depth later.

Before drawing any conclusions as to the role of women in the Thessalonian conflict, there is one final topic that bears upon our discussion: the constituency of the Christian community at Thessalonica. Three factors concerning the cultural and racial content of the congregation need to be examined, the first two from the letter itself, and one from Acts 17.

First, 1 Thess 1:9-10 and 2:15-17 suggests that they were essentially Gentiles having "turned to God from idols." A Gentile community in Thessalonica, however, is difficult to reconcile with the description in Acts which presupposes a rather substantial Jewish population there. Scholars are divided on the issue. Ernest Best, I. Howard Marshall, and others, who conclude that Luke has exaggerated the Jewish presence, look to three main facts: (1) that Paul neither addresses Jewish Christians in the Thessalonian correspondence, nor does he make frequent reference to the Hebrew Bible; (2) that there is no evidence of Greek synagogues or Jewish inscriptions in Thessalonica; and (3) that Acts 17 provides the only evidence of a Jewish population.\footnote{Jewett, Thessalonian Correspondence, 118-19.} Those, such as Ernst von Dobschutz and Robert Jewett, who give credence to Acts' account or at least consider the possibility, point to the Jewish names of certain Christians known to be from Thessalonica (i.e., Aristarchus, Jason, maybe Secundus). In
addition, Jewett draws attention to recent excavations that attest to its racial and religious diversity. In view of this evidence, we can conclude that while there was likely some Jewish population there, the Thessalonian community was largely comprised of Gentiles.

Second, Paul's references to his own work and his admonitions to work, suggests that he had framed the letter primarily with artisans and handworkers in mind. Again the image of a working class congregation has been viewed as contradictory to the material found in Acts. According to Jewett it is difficult to square Paul's remarks with the image in Acts of the Thessalonian congregation as containing an impressive number of upper-class women.

Finally, and related to this point, is the suspicion that the mention of "leading women" may be pure Lukian invention. Following Pervo, Jewett maintains that

[t]he congregation is depicted as marked by representative leaders from high society (Acts 17:4), matching the typical Lukian emphasis on "the ease" with which Paul lived "in the upper level of society." This reflected the preferred upper-class origin of character in Greco-Roman novels while downplaying the predominantly lower-class origins of Christianity.

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128 Ibid., 118-120.


130 Jewett, Thessalonian Correspondence, 120.

131 Ibid., 117.
According to Pervo, "those singled out by Luke are nearly always quite prominent in the social world of their day." For example, some of Paul's early converts mentioned in Acts include Barnabas, a Levite (4:36), Priests (6:7), property owners, an Ethiopian official, a centurion, a companion of Herod (13:1), Lydia, the jailer, an Aeropagite, the head of the synagogue in Corinth, wealthy and leading citizens in Berea, and a Roman proconsul (13:12).

Two points in the preceding discussion concerning the constituency of the Thessalonian congregation appear to undercut the likelihood of women's involvement in the conflict at Thessalonica. A closer examination, however, reveals that this is not necessarily the case.

First, Jewett finds it difficult to reconcile the popular image of a working class congregation in Thessalonica with the description in Acts of a number of wealthy women. On the contrary, given the nature of voluntary associations, it is expected that members of the elite, including women, are associated with artisan organization as patrons. Hence, Jewett's conclusion does not hold.

Second, the Pervo-Jewett observation that the mention of "leading women" in Acts may be a Lukanism has some merit, yet when tested against the actual status, role, and gender of those

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132 Pervo, Profit With Delight, 78.

133 Ibid., 77-78.
whom Paul does encounter in Acts, it is clear that the arguments are not compelling. Three points will illustrate this.

First, the pattern they allege of Paul’s continuous association with and help from members of the upper classes, is far from pervasive. While this may be true for Acts 17, it is not consistent throughout the entire book. In Acts 18, for example, Paul encounters trouble with the authorities in Corinth. There is no indication that he received support from the upper classes here. Of course, as Pervo points out, Paul was helped by Crispus, the head of the synagogue, but such a person would hardly be a member of the elite. Conversely, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13) was a member of the elite, but there is no indication that he helped Paul.

Second, against the implication that Paul is associated primarily with upper-class supporters, those with whom he does associate do not even function in parallel roles. Barnabas’ relation to Paul (i.e., colleague) is quite different than that of Sergius Paulus (i.e., interrogator), Crispus (i.e., supporter), and Lydia (i.e., who offered her house).

Finally, there is no pattern in Acts of Paul’s association with women, wealthy or otherwise. Hence, the alleged pattern breaks down fairly quickly.

Taking into account the rhetorical situation, the rhetorical problem and its cause (i.e., persecution), and the social dynamics of the first century, there is a more plausible solution
to the question of women's involvement in the Thessalonian conflict, as the following conclusion will demonstrate.

**Conclusion:** First of all, in what sense these women were "leading women" needs to be examined. As we know from Chapter One, there is no evidence from the first century of women's leadership in the political sphere: such offices were restricted primarily to men of senatorial/equestrian rank in Rome and the decurion class in Greek cities. Yet their presence is indicated by Acts 17. I suggest the most natural context in which to view these women is in connection to voluntary associations.

Paul likely would have seen the events in Thessalonica as part of his missionary work in the Lord proclaiming the gospel and inspiring supporters for his "group." But taking into account the socio-historical factors, it is possible that Paul "Christianized" a trade organization. Consider the facts. We have seen that the Thessalonian community likely was composed primarily of the "free artisan or small trader" who, for practical purposes, tended to set up shop in close proximity to one another. It follows as a natural consequence that the Thessalonians to whom Paul preached had organized themselves into a professional guild. After all, as Kloppenborg points out,

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"[m]embership in professional associations was probably not only a factor of common profession, but also of location."136

If Paul did, whether inadvertently or not, Christianize a trade organization in Thessalonica, then our understanding of the rhetorical and historical situation behind the entire letter is inevitably nuanced. Moreover, such a conception sheds important light on two areas in particular.

First, as a professional collegia, it would doubtless already have patrons, possibly including the "leading women" of Acts. It is possible also that a shift of allegiance in cultic matters would occasion a shift of patrons in the collegia. This brings us to the occasion of Christian persecution in Thessalonica. To outsiders, especially some members of the upper classes, Paul’s proselytizing activity in Thessalonica may have been construed as a political threat and a calculated effort to steal clients, thereby dishonoring their former patrons. Their fears were not necessarily unfounded. Perhaps some of Paul’s new converts had been members of other clubs who, for one reason or another, found the arrangements unsatisfactory and switched allegiance.137

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136 Ibid., 15.
137 That there is not more evidence of political disturbances in connection to voluntary associations and of clients switching patrons, is not in itself surprising. Our main source of information concerning voluntary associations is in inscriptions and we would not expect to find such incidents recorded there.
Such an act would not go unnoticed. When a client left a patron for allegiance to another, it was rightly perceived by the patron as a reflection upon his/her honour. Perhaps more than anything else in antiquity, to threaten one's honour antagonized him/her into retaliatory action. Moreover, Paul's use of politically loaded terminology in 1 Thess (i.e., parousia, apantesis, kyrios, ecclesia) did nothing to defuse the situation. To an outsider, Paul and his church may not only have been perceived as a new club which was stealing clients, but one with potential political aspirations as well. Either one would have been enough to stir people, especially those among the upper classes who had the most to lose, into action. The combination of the two inevitably would warrant a political movement of suppression not on a religious basis—Rome, remember, was tolerant of foreign cults—but as a threat to social order and political stability. Such an explanation, of course, lends support to our earlier assertion that the persecution was directly connected to the voluntary associations.

Second, and more importantly, it sheds light on the involvement of women in the Thessalonian conflict. The membership of women in professional organizations is rare. Yet women are present among the Thessalonian converts and in a "leading" capacity. The most logical context in which to view them is as patrons to local collegia. As Pervo points out, "Luke affirms in
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a most engaging way, that one can be a Christian and still have social aspirations."\textsuperscript{138}

One question remains: how did these wealthy women patrons become involved with the Pauline group? Their involvement can be seen on two levels. As patrons, any new organization starting up in their community would have caught their attention. As women, the Christian movement would have been particularly attractive to them. According to Fiorenza:

Although rich women, like rich men, received no honors in the Christian community in return for their patronage, nevertheless they did receive influence and standing they did not otherwise have in patriarchal society or in the official Roman patriarchal religion. Well-educated women in particular, with independent resources of wealth, could develop leadership and have influence in this movement options denied them in society at large.\textsuperscript{139}

In this way, we can envision the women of Acts inextricably involved in the Thessalonian turmoil.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{138} Pervo, Profit With Delight, 81.

\textsuperscript{139} Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 182.

CONCLUSION

Reconstructing the role of women in the early Christian church is a momentous task obscured not only by historical and literary barriers but by the downplaying of women inherent in a first century patriarchal society. Unfortunately, such a conception is augmented in the twentieth century by some scholars who continue to view the role of women through the optic of androcentric frameworks, rather than through the broader spectrum of the social, economic, and legal realities. Nowhere is this more evident than in the scholarly treatment of women in the Pauline corpus.

A survey of the pertinent literature has shown that there has been differential treatment regarding the translation of diakonos and prostatis for Phoebe that robs her of her rightful place in the memory of the early Pauline church. Similar treatment has been observed of Euodia and Syntyche who, in spite of their prominent feature in Philippians, receive little scholarly attention and even less acknowledgement of their importance to Paul and the church in Philippi.

An examination of the legal evidence clearly has demonstrated that women were far from incapable or dependent figures bound by the constraints of the law. Marriage sine manu all but dissolved the restrictions of marriage cum manu; Augustus' ius trium liberorum allowed certain women to transact business independently of a guardian, and enabled them to dispose of their property as they saw fit; tutor fiduciarius won for women the right to make a will; and tutor optimus let her choose her own
Conclusion

guardian. In short, women had in their power various means to acquire wealth and freely dispose of it. Hence, if they so desired to assume the role of patron, they were certainly in the legal position to do so.

In the second chapter we examined the role and function of voluntary associations in the first century, which are comparable to the earliest Pauline churches. The evidence in a number of extant inscriptions shows that women were involved with these clubs on various levels, depending on the type of association it was. There is strong evidence of the presence of women, mostly non-elite women, in associations, particularly the religious ones; strong evidence of women patrons to various kinds of clubs; and some evidence that women gained positions of leadership.

The evidence in three of Paul's letters, Romans, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians in conjunction with Acts 17, was re-examined against the background of the legal and social evidence of the first century, and interpreted in light of the overall epistolary structure of the letters. Viewed in this way, it is arguable that Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche, and the "leading women" of Acts 17, provide a good example of women's involvement in the voluntary associations. The precise capacity of their involvement remains uncertain, as we lack the evidence to speak of this with certitude. Nevertheless, a number of observations can be made.

First, it was shown that the relationship between Paul and Phoebe was likely one of mutual indebtedness, introducing each other to their own network of clients and friends, and thereby
establishing for one another a new positive social relationship. Moreover, the phraseology Paul employs in his description of her ("deaconess of the church at Cenchreae"; "as befits the saints") indicates that she was a member and leader in the Christian organization as well.

Similarly, we saw that Euodia and Syntyche were significant figures in their own right. They may have been leaders in the Pauline group, as indicated by the reference to "bishops and deacons" in the prescript; they may have been patrons of it engaged in a struggle for honour; or, as in the case of Phoebe, and Dionysius of the Zeus cult, they may have been both. Either way, they were clearly in a position of authority and honour.

Finally, it was observed that the "leading women" of Acts 17 were involved closely in the Thessalonian turmoil. We will recall that the Thessalonian congregation likely was composed primarily of artisans, hence, it is quite conceivable that they had organized themselves into professional associations. Since women's membership in professional associations was rare, the most natural context in which to understand their involvement is as patrons.

Clearly, the role of women in the Pauline corpus and its social environment has been largely misunderstood and underestimated. It is hoped that in some way this thesis will serve to redress the unbalance.
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