



The Rhetoric of Dress and Adornment and the Construction of Identity in Early Christianity

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presented by

Kelsi M. Morrison-Atkins

candidate for the degree of Doctor of Theology and hereby
certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza
Signature Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (Aug 19, 2021 11:40 EDT)

Typed name: Prof. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

Karen King
Signature _____

Typed name: Prof. Karen King

LS Nasrallah
Signature _____

Typed name: Prof. Laura Nasrallah

Date: August 18, 2021

The Rhetoric of Dress and Adornment
and the Construction of Identity in Early Christianity

A dissertation presented

by

Kelsi M. Morrison-Atkins

to

The Faculty of Harvard Divinity School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Theology

in the subject of

New Testament and Early Christianity

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Abstract

In the cultural landscape of the ancient Mediterranean, clothing was not only a covering for the body but also functioned as an ideological system that worked to construct and stratify categories of identity and social roles. On the one hand, garments themselves, such as the *stola* and the *toga*, materialized hierarchal categories of gender, class, and citizenship under the Roman Empire. On the other, women's compliance with normative clothing practices—or lack thereof—served as a measure of broader social and moral decline for elite male writers. The early Christ movement emerged within this world, where clothing ideologies materialized and naturalized binaries of male and female, free and enslaved, citizen and foreigner.

From the proclamation that the baptized have put on Christ to prescriptions regarding how women should dress in the household and assembly, early Christ followers took up cultural norms of dressing and adorning to fashion arguments about the social organization of the community and relations of power within it. This dissertation analyzes the rhetorics of dress and adornment—or arguments that use clothing practices to “think with”—embedded within citations of the baptismal formula and the household/domestic codes. These key examples highlight the ways in which early Christians used dress and adornment in arguments on both sides of debates about equality, piety, and social relationality within and outside of the community.

Using a feminist rhetorical critical and materialist historical framework, this dissertation considers dressing and adorning at the intersection of metaphor and material practices and highlights how structures of power are variously shored up and contested through the

deployment of clothing rhetorics. Rather than identifying the notion of being “clothed in Christ” as distinct from calls to cast aside luxurious garments in early Christian discourse, this dissertation understands both as embroiled in political and theological struggles for equality in early Christianity. In this way, clothing functioned as both garment and argument, and could be utilized at once to justify systems of subordination and to fuel movements for transformation.

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Introduction

In her nineteenth-century commentary on the epistle to 1 Timothy in *The Woman's Bible*, American suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton writes of the letter's clothing regulations, "It appears very trifling for men, commissioned to do so great a work on earth, to give so much thought to the toilets of women."¹ At the time of Stanton's writing, anxieties about women's transgressive dress not unlike those expressed by the author of 1 Timothy also circulated, as demand for increased political agency coalesced with debates about whether their wearing pants risked a fundamental tear in the social fabric.² Such appeals to practices of dress and adornment

1. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Epistles to Timothy," in *The Woman's Bible* (New York: European Publishing Company, 1895), 162. Published in two parts in 1895 and 1898 by a team of collaborators led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible* represents a watershed moment in the history of women's biblical interpretation and underscores the significance of biblical texts as tools for political transformation. However, scholars have long noted the racism, classism, and anti-Judaism as well as the gender essentialism embedded within *The Woman's Bible* which mitigate against the uncritical adoption of this work as the inaugural text of feminist biblical interpretation in the United States. For a critical reevaluation of the history and legacy of *The Women's Bible*, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, 2 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1993) and Sharon Ringe, Carol Newsom, and Jacqueline Lapsley, eds. *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition. (Louisville: WJK Press, 2012). In addition to highlighting the contributions of 19th century African American biblical interpreter Anna Julia Cooper whose legacy is submerged in the attention given to Stanton's work, the first volume of *Searching the Scriptures* includes contributions which address head-on issues of racism and anti-Judaism in the history of Christian feminist biblical interpretation. See also Claudia Setzer, "A Jewish Reading of *The Woman's Bible*," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 27.2 (2011): 71–84.

2. Women's dress reform movements in the United States were prevalent in the Antebellum period through the end of the 19th century, when energies began to dissipate in part due to the backlash that women received for resisting the current fashions. "Bloomers," or billowy trousers worn under skirts, were the quintessential garment of the movement and detractors saw them as variously unfeminine and unpatriotic in no small part because they were inspired by the fashions of women in Turkey, Syria and, later, France. It is also important to note that these reform movements were largely led by upper-class white women, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the eponymous Amelia Bloomer, who had the means both to access the latest fashions and to reject them. While these reforms are widely discussed in the historical record, much less attention is paid to sumptuary legislation in 18th century Louisiana that barred Black women from wearing jewels in their hair and required them to wear a head covering in public spaces. These "Tignon Laws" were issued to tie free Black women to enslaved status, as Victoria Gould writes "it was necessary for women of color who had become too light skinned or who dressed too elegantly, or who, in reality, competed too freely with white women for status and thus threatened the social order, to symbolize their ties to slavery through the simple headkerchief." Gould also highlights the ways in which Black women obeyed the "letter of the law" but nevertheless wore brilliantly knotted silk fabric and jewels, a fashion of resistance which came to be known as the "Tignon." Victoria Gould, "'A Chaos of Iniquity and Discord': Slave and Free Women of Color in the Spanish Ports of New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola," in *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 232–46, 238. On 19th cent. feminist dress reform, see Patricia Cunningham, "Dress Reform," in *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion: The United States and Canada*, ed. Phyllis G. Tortora (Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 190–

as “barometers of social decay”³ have a remarkable tendency to persist and resurface where social movements call into question confluences of dress and identity which some claim are natural.⁴ I argue that debates about the social and political organization of early assemblies in Christ evidence a troubling of naturalized boundaries and hierarchies, and that early Christ-followers innovated and adapted cultural ideologies of dress and adornment in order to fashion individuals and/in community.⁵

“Cosmethics”: Dress, Adornment, and Idealized Femininity

In the cultural landscape of the ancient Mediterranean, the labors (reproductive and otherwise) and dispositions demanded of women in the service of household and state were often described in terms of what they should and should not wear.⁶ Tracing the role of clothing in the visual

95. Gayle V. Fischer, *Pantaloon & Power: Nineteenth-century Dress Reform in the United States* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2001).

3. I take up the helpful language of “barometer of social decay” from Carly Daniel-Hughes. See her *Dressing for the Resurrection: The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage* (London: Palgrave, 2011), 18. She writes of the ancient context, “Women’s sexual propriety and morality (as it was perceived and constructed by male authors) was often not about women at all, but served as a litmus test, a barometer of social decay that ‘infested’ and threatened the ‘traditional’ Roman way of life.”

4. Stanton continues, “Ordering the men to have their heads shaved and hair cropped, while the women were to have their locks hanging around their shoulders, *looks as if they feared that the sexes were not distinguishable and that they must finish Nature’s work.*” *The Woman’s Bible*, 162. Emphasis mine. The concern that the sexes would not be distinguishable in terms of physical form and ethical disposition permeates the backlash against dress reform in America. In the 19th century feminist journal, *The Lily*, Amelia Bloomer rehearses the objections to reform which include “that it tends to unsex the woman, and that in giving her a dress assimilate to that of a man it would give her manners and feelings, which, though becoming man, because proper to him, would be unsuitable and repulsive in a woman.” Amelia Bloomer, “The New Costume for the Ladies,” in *The Rise of Fashion: A Reader*, ed. Daniel Leonard Purdy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 111. What is striking here is the easy association between dress and disposition, as Bloomer’s detractors take quite literally the notions that “clothes make the man.”

5. In this dissertation, I use the terminology of “assemblies” or the transliterated Greek *ekklesia/ekklesiai* to refer to early communities in Christ. I do so to decenter the assumption that assemblages of Christ-followers in the first century were “churches” in a modern sense and to emphasize how these groups characterize themselves discursively as sites of political and civic affiliation. Anna Miller highlights this point in her *Corinthian Democracy: Democratic Discourse in 1 Corinthians* (Pittsburgh; Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015). See also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Empire and Ekklesia,” in *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 69–110.

6. Significantly, textile production was a common household labor under the purview of women and the enslaved in antiquity. While (predominately male) textile production work did exist outside of the domestic sphere,

rhetoric of the 1st century Augustan *Ara Pacis*, Judith Sebesta writes, “Just as the toga signified the Roman male in his civic role as ‘master of the world,’ so the woman’s costume signified her in her private role as protector (*custos*) of her body, its sexuality and her husband’s house/hold.”⁷ In monumental rhetorics such as the *Ara Pacis* as well as in everyday wear, the *stola* functioned as covering and code for the Roman matron, materializing the requisite virtues of the Roman *stolata*: chastity, obedience, and modesty.⁸

Such connections between women’s dress, household order, and civic/social morality also emerge regularly in Greek philosophical discourse.⁹ For instance, in the Neo-Pythagorean letter *Melissa to Klearata*, we read that the prudent (σωφροσύνη) woman

ought to avoid garments of purple cloth, and those that are shot through with purple and gold, since this sort is useful to the *hetairai* for their hunting of more men. But the

the responsibility of clothing the household and perhaps also the production of textiles for distribution was a distinctly domestic labor. Kerstin Droß-Krüpe underscores how particular elements of the textile production process, especially weaving, are ubiquitous in elite male writings on the subject while other aspects, including spinning itself, were largely neglected. Droß-Krüpe contrasts this with the iconographic record in Greek vase painting, which emphasizes spinning to a larger degree. This may be due to the discourses of feminine virtue and wifely duty that coalesce around practices of weaving, where Penelope and Lucretia stand out as prominent examples. Catherine Gines Taylor has recently explored imagery of the Virgin Annunciate spinning which associated her iconographically with domestic femininity. Catherine Gines Taylor, *Late Antique Images of the Virgin Annunciate Spinning: Allotting the Scarlet and the Purple*, Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 11 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018). For the preponderance of myths of weaving at work in the arenas of not only marriage but also politics and art, see John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro, *The Craft of Zeus: Myths of Weaving and Fabric*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

7. Judith Sebesta, “Women’s Costume and Feminine Civic Morality in Augustan Rome,” *Gender and History* 9.3 (2002): 529–41, 531. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* (erected 13–9 BCE) is an important monumental example of the work of clothing rhetorics in shaping the proper embodied performance of elite social roles not only as a private but also a public responsibility. The processional frieze has long drawn scholarly attention for its depiction of women and children, situated as it was against the backdrop of Augustan social reforms which renewed state attention on the workings of domesticity, marriage, and “private life.” See Diana Kleiner, “The Great Friezes of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*: Greek Sources, Roman Derivatives, and Augustan Social Policy,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Antiquité*, 90.2 (1978): 753–85; eadem and Bridget Buxton, “Pledges of Empire: The *Ara Pacis* and the Donations of Rome,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 112.1 (2008): 57–89; Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

8. For a detailed description of the Roman *stola*, see Kelly Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman: Self Presentation and Society* (London: Routledge, 2008), 27–32.

9. For more on the pedagogical strategies of the Neo-Pythagorean letter collections in conversation with the Pastoral Epistles, see Annette Bourland Huizenga, *Moral Education for Women in the Pastoral and Pythagorean Letters: Philosophers of the Household*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 147 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013).

adornment that belongs to the woman who is well pleasing to her very own [husband] is her way of life, and not her robes. . . . On the one hand you should have a blush as a sign of modesty on your face instead of rouge, and, on the other, goodness and the height of decorum and *sōphrosyne* instead of gold and emeralds.¹⁰

In this text, we see a stark example of what I refer to as “cosmethics”—or the resignification of material garments and bodily adornment in terms of normative virtue. Such norms were conditioned by one’s structural position along intersecting axes of gender, class/status, race/ethnicity, and other stratified categories of identity, and were not only understood as ethical dispositions but were encoded in bodily practices. “Cosmethics” represents a key form of what I refer to as the “rhetoric of dress and adornment.” In this framework, clothing practices are deployed not only to prescribe certain modes of sanctioned dress but to persuade individuals and groups to behave and comport themselves in accordance with particular ideological, theological, and/or social-political visions.¹¹

In this case, the blush of shame takes the place of rouge just as prudence should be worn as a kind of jewelry. Rather than framing these resignifications in metaphorical terms, however, this dissertation reads such rhetoric as a call for a woman to display, materially and publicly, her exclusive sexual devotion to her husband in order to avoid association with the sexually promiscuous courtesan.¹² According to Annette Bourland Huizenga, “All these statements

10. Melissa to Klearata, 7–10, 15–17. Translated by Annette Bourland Huizenga, *Moral Education for Women in the Pastoral and Pythagorean Letters*, 171–72.

11. I have adapted the phrase “rhetoric of dress and adornment” from Maria Wyke’s important work, “The Woman in the Mirror: The Rhetoric of Adornment in the Roman World,” in *Women in Ancient Societies: An Illusion of the Night*, ed. Léonie J. Archer, Susan Fischler, and Maria Wyke (New York: Routledge, 1994), 134–51. She writes, “I would argue not only that the male rhetoric of female adornment belongs within the larger representational system that constructs the Roman concept of ‘woman’ but also that an expression of that rhetoric helps elucidate the strategies of the larger system.” “Woman in the Mirror,” 134.

12. Olson notes that while moralizers spilled significant amounts of ink distinguishing “matrons” from “whores,” it is likely that in practice the dress of the wealthy matron was not unlike that of the wealthy courtesan. Kelly Olson, “Matrona and Whore: Clothing and Definition in Roman Antiquity,” in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, ed. Christopher Faraone and Laura McClure (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 186–204.

consistently assert that a wife's choice of modest physical adornment demonstrates that she is sexually active only with her husband, and is not, as are the *hetairai*, on the hunt for "more men."¹³ It is not only that the desire for cosmetics and luxurious clothing is seen as inherently at odds with the cultivation of virtue for women, but also that the opposite—wifely devotion—requires its own embodied signifiers which are defined in contrast with a sexualized and stigmatized other.

The language of "cultivation" is significant, as these virtues and dispositions are not merely an embodied manifestation of an essential or "natural" interior selfhood, as they are often read. While the Cartesian dualism of body and self/psyche has held a strong grip on Western philosophy and historiography since the Enlightenment, contemporary scholars have called into question the historical applicability of this framework to the ancient context and have critiqued the ways in which binaries of mind/body and active/passive are deployed to other and subordinate.¹⁴ As a corrective to the tendency to read modern conceptions of internalized selfhood and subjectivity onto ancient texts, Christopher Gill's study of the innovations of Stoic and Epicurean thought in the Hellenistic and Roman period contrasts a "subjective-individualist" framework of the self with an "objective-participant" framework. He argues that the former represents a more modern conceptualization of "an idea of selfhood centred on self-consciousness, unique individuality, or the first-personal perspective."¹⁵ Highlighting that this consciousness-based notion of selfhood should not be taken for granted even in the present, Gill contrasts this perspective with the "objective-participant" model of the self and argues that it is

13. *Moral Education for Women*, 172.

14. Christopher Gill, *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). I am grateful to Dr. Karen King for this reference.

15. *Ibid.*, 325.

closer to the ancient framework for understanding the self as embedded structurally and relationally.

This framework decenters the “I” in favor of a third-person, objective view of the self which “rejects the idea that there is a peculiarly private, first personal sphere of experience to which the person as subject has privileged access.”¹⁶ While the subjective-individualist framework prioritizes introspection and the individual perspective in ethical reasoning, the objective-participant understanding of the self privileges an understanding of virtue measured against an objective, universal standard. Through this lens, we might see “cosmetics” and rhetorics of adornment as bound up with notions of the development of self/virtue as negotiated through the proper performance of social role behaviors rather than solely an expression of individual choice or agency.

This important shift in understanding of the operative framework of the self is productive not only in the development of more nuanced histories but it also disrupts the ways in which Cartesian dualism has been used to situate the rational, thinking Man over against those deemed Other by association with the body or “fleshiness.” To this end, Mayra Rivera Rivera writes

Rejecting flesh leads to the projection of carnality and its despised traits onto others. Thus flesh becomes a category of abjection. Ancient imaginaries performed their own abjections, notably of Jews and women. More recent ones deploy ‘flesh’ to mark those perceived as failing the ideals of self-containment and mastery: women, sexual minorities, racialized peoples, those living with disabilities.¹⁷

While the writings I analyze are not themselves explicitly interested with questions of the flesh, modern scholars still rehearse this denigration of corporeal practices in characterizations of

16. Ibid., 338.

17. Mayra Rivera Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 154.

wo/men's clothing as a "distraction" in the space of worship.¹⁸ Not only does this interpretation rely upon persistent tropes and practices of policing wo/men's bodies but it also relies on a notably gendered distinction between bodily practices (dressing and adorning) and cognitive ones (attention). Thus, a critique of the framework of subjectivity through the lens of "cosmethics" allows for the emergence of a very different set of questions about what clothing rhetorics *do* ethically, politically, and theologically in the past as well as the present.

Finally, an obsession with luxurious and sumptuous clothing and jewelry was a pervasive stereotype levied against wo/men, and elite writers such as Seneca and Livy saw such desire as a direct refusal of domestic obligations and a danger to the stability of the state itself.¹⁹ Under the sumptuary legislation of the *Lex Oppia* (215 BCE), elite wo/men's display of wealth and status through purple garments or gold embellishments was severely limited, as such clothing was thought to have led directly into a period of violent unrest.²⁰ In Livy's much later account of debates over the repeal of this legislation (ca. 27–9 BCE), he describes women's public

18. Throughout this dissertation, I use "wo/men" with a slash as inclusive of both women and marginalized men and to signal that an essential or unified category of "woman" does not exist. Thus, the use of wo/men also flags the intersection of the social construction of gender alongside race/ethnicity, status/class, and other markers of identity. For a discussion of this term, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 57–59, 108–9.

19. See for instance Seneca's letter of consolation to his mother upon his exile. "Unchastity, the greatest evil of our time, has never classed you with the great majority of women; jewels have not moved you, nor pearls; to your eyes the glitter of riches has not seemed the greatest boon of the human race; you, who were soundly trained in an old-fashioned and strict household, have not been perverted by the imitation of worse women that leads even the virtuous into pitfalls; . . . In you has been seen that peerless ornament, that fairest beauty on which time lays no hand, that chiefest glory which is modesty." Non te maximum saeculi malum, impudicitia, in numerum plurium adduxit; non gemmae te, non margaritae flexerunt; non tibi divitiae velut maximum generis humani bonum refulserunt; non te, bene in antiqua et severa institutam domo, periculosa etiam probis peiorum detorsit imitatio . . . nicum tibi ornamentum, pulcherrima et nulli obnoxia aetati forma, maximum decus visa est pudicitia." (Seneca, *ad Helviam* 16.3–5 [Basore, LCL 254]).

20. Established in 215 BCE and repealed in 195 CE, the *Lex Oppia* outlawed women's wearing of purple garments, owning more than half an ounce of gold, or riding in a chariot any time except during religious holidays. See Eve D'Ambra, *Roman Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 32–33; Phyllis Culham, "The 'Lex Oppia,'" *Latomus* 41.4 (1982): 786–93.

demonstrations against the code as a kind of frenzy²¹ and puts the following into the mouth of Marcus Cato, the primary detractor of repeal:

Citizens of Rome, if each one of us had set himself to retain the authority and sovereignty [*ius et maiestatem*] of a husband over his own wife, we should have less trouble with women as a whole sex. As things are, our liberty, overthrown in the home by female indiscipline, is now being crushed and trodden underfoot here too, in the Forum. It is because we have not kept them under control individually that we are now terrorized by them collectively.²²

Note here the echoes of the individual household as a foundational unit of state power: if each husband would exercise his ownership over his wife, then women as a collective would know their place. An argument about elite women's clothing thus becomes an argument about control in the household, as their public demonstrations are marshaled as further evidence that a desire for luxury has driven women to terrorize and disrupt the normal exercise of the Roman political machine.²³ While we cannot take Livy's account as an accurate representation of the events themselves, the collective action and advocacy of wo/men in the Forum is significant here, and

21. Marcus Cato: And what excuse, that can be spoken without shame, is offered for this present feminine insurrection? "We want to gleam with purple and gold", says one of them "and to ride in our carriages on festal days and on ordinary days: we want to ride through Rome as if in triumph over the law which has been vanquished and repealed, and over those votes of yours which we have captured and wrested from you; we want no limit to our spending and our extravagance." (Livy, *History of Rome*, 34.3 [Yardley LCL 295]).

22. "Si in sua quisque nostrum matre familiae, Quirites, ius et maiestatem viri retinere instituisset, minus cum universis feminis negotii haberemus: nunc domi victa libertas nostra impotentia muliebri hic quoque in foro obteritur et calcatur, et quia singulas sustinere non potuimus universas horremus." Translation adapted from (Livy, *History of Rome*, 34.2 [Yardley LCL 295]). Livy's account is not a straightforward history, but a rhetorical retelling situated in the context of Augustan moral reform. This makes the focus on clothing here of particular interest, as these reforms sought to bring matters of the household under the guise of the state.

23. Valerius, who argues for repeal, states (according to Livy), "If you repeal the Lex Oppia, you will, I suppose, have no authority if you wish to forbid any of the luxuries which the law now forbids! Some men will find daughters, wives, even sisters, less under their control! Never while their males are still alive is female servitude cast off; and the women themselves detest the freedom bestowed by the loss of husbands or fathers. They prefer their finery to be under your authority, not under the law's control." (Livy, *History of Rome*, 34.7.11–13 [Yardley LCL 295]). Scilicet, si legem Oppiam abrogarit, non vestri arbitrii erit si quid eius vetare volueritis quod nunc lex vetat: minus filiae uxores sorores etiam quibusdam in manu erunt. nunquam salvis suis exuitur servitus muliebris, et ipsae libertatem quam viduitas et orbitas facit detestantur. in vestro arbitrio suum ornatum quam in legis malunt esse; et vos in manu et tutela, non in servitio debetis habere eas, et malle patres vos aut viros quam dominos dici.

poses a particular danger to elite masculine sovereignty in the political realm. Taken together, these examples highlight that wo/men's clothing practices were a matter of intense concern and scrutiny in the domains of philosophy, history, ethics, theology, and politics. Dressing and adorning *mattered* in the construction and maintenance of naturalized identity categories such as gender, class/status, and race/ethnicity and, simultaneously, had a role to play in reshaping and resisting oppressive social structures.²⁴

It is within this cultural context that I analyze how early in-Christ assemblies adapted, developed, and deployed stereotypes of wo/men's dress in attempts to limit their growing authority and influence. As a household movement, the participation and leadership of wo/men and the enslaved within in-Christ assemblies necessarily came into tense contact with the deeply-engrained household order that situated the husband/enslaver/father as holding exclusive authority over their wives, enslaved wo/men, and children.²⁵ For those who wished to maintain the status quo, the association between clothing and gender roles proved a useful shorthand for instantiating visions of how power should be materialized and consolidated within communities in Christ. In this dissertation, I argue that the baptismal proclamation that the baptized are "clothed in Christ" cited by Paul in Galatians 3:27 and the ensuing deconstruction of binaries cited in Gal 3:28 destabilizes such ideologies of clothing and status, in which clothing was understood not merely as a covering for the body but a visual and embodied representation of

24. Kristi Upson-Saia illuminates how early Christian women's ascetic dress was an area of heightened tension for early Christian authorities. These late antique women's clothing practices at once displayed and drew attention to the superior piety of Christianity but, in so doing, challenged and destabilized norms of femininity which were solidified through dress. See especially "Performance Anxiety: Dress and Gender Crises in Early Christian Asceticism" in *Early Christian Dress: Gender, Virtue, and Authority* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 59–83.

25. For more on the earliest assemblies as household movements, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Christian Mission and the Patriarchal Household," in *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 251–84.

one's place in the social order, perhaps especially for wo/men. Alternatively, the "dress codes"²⁶ embedded within the discussion of ecclesial and domestic order 1 Timothy and 1 Peter reinforce these frameworks and ground them theologically such that proper dress becomes not only a domestic responsibility but the pathway to communal belonging and even salvation for wo/men. Bringing texts into conversation which are often addressed in isolation, I examine the tension between, and possible counterarguments embedded within, these radically divergent uses of clothing as a tool to "think with," politically and theologically.

History of Scholarship

Addressing the role of clothing rhetorics and the social construction of "proper" wo/men in early Christian sources also means interrogating what counts as a "proper" subject of scholarly analysis within the discipline. Mainstream commentators regularly downplay the significance of discussions of dressing and adorning in early Christian writings. For instance, John H. Elliott flags as noteworthy the ubiquitous use of 1 Peter 3:1–6 in the reception history of the letter, stating "the Church Fathers show more interest in this text in 1 Peter than in other passages *which might be expected to draw attention* such as the letter's Christological statements or other soteriological formations."²⁷ This claim implies, on the one hand, that these dress codes are less significant than the letter's loftier theological themes and, on the other, that they are distinct and separable from the text's Christological and soteriological aims. Rather, in this dissertation I emphasize that theological reasoning is not abstract from but conditions and is conditioned by

26. While the texts themselves do not employ this language, I use the term "dress codes" for two reasons: First, to draw attention to the ways in which ideologies of dress get embedded, often unnoticed, within broader assertions of power and structures of inequality; And second, to call to mind the various ways in which the policing and regulation of clothing practices emerge in authoritative texts and hold an ongoing place of prominence in public institutions, such as schools and churches, in the contemporary American context.

27. John Hall Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Introduction with Translation and Commentary*, AB 37B (New York: Doubleday, c2000), 565. Emphasis mine.

social-political circumstances, including practices of dress and adornment. As Elliott indicates, how wo/men dressed continued to be a problem in Christian assemblies well beyond the time in which the epistles of 1 Peter and 1 Timothy were written and circulated.²⁸ While this reception history is outside the purview of the current project, the ongoing investment in seemingly insignificant issues of how wo/men should dress points to the importance of taking this attention seriously not as distinct from theological debates but as deeply embroiled within them.

Even feminist and gender-critical scholars who take the topic of clothing and adornment seriously still tend to section off the use of clothing regulations from the rhetorical contexts in which they are developed and, in so doing, reconstruct historical wo/men from stereotypical tropes which purposely obfuscate them. In her nearly comprehensive analysis of Greek and Latin references to women's clothing practices, Kelly Olson reads against the grain of texts that seek to limit wo/men's sartorial display and argues that dressing and adorning the body represented rare sites where wo/men could lay claim to social influence outside of the rule of the husband. She writes, "Far from erasing or silencing women, beauty, cosmetics, and fashion were ways for a woman to create visibility and personal space for herself, to enjoy others' attention and admiration, and to wield power and influence over those around her."²⁹ For Olson, the outsized attention moralizers paid to wo/men's clothing practices hints at the dangers they posed to a social system which relied on their economic dependence upon and submission to their husbands. Using these literary sources, Olson argues that it is possible to glean evidence of

28. See the above-cited Kristi Upson-Saia, *Early Christian Dress: Gender, Virtue and Authority* and Carly Daniel-Hughes, *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage*. Upson-Saia, Daniel-Hughes, and Batten have also edited an excellent volume which contributes much to the rapidly growing body of scholarship on ancient dress in the early Christian/Judean context. See *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

29. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, 108.

wo/men who resisted this system and sought intentionally to display their social power and influence through lavish clothing.

In the context of early Christianity, Alicia Batten likewise emphasizes how the “dress codes” of 1 Peter and 1 Timothy hint at the presence of women of wealth and status who remained unswayed by the authors’ attempts to limit their authority and self-expression. According to Batten,

Considering the attention it receives in patristic writings, one might speculate that some women, in certain contexts, resisted giving up their adornment because they wished to display their status and assert their importance by maintaining some degree of economic power, while their male counterparts, concerned about the church’s perception by the larger society, sought to control their appearance even more.³⁰

Taking a sociological approach to these texts, Batten highlights the ways in which the proscription of wo/men’s ostentatious dress in early Christian writings indicates a struggle between wo/men’s desire to engage in individual expression and the broader institutional pressure to assimilate in a context which policed their dress as a measure of the community’s moral fortitude.

While the work of Olson and Batten is productive in highlighting the presence of wo/men, and particularly wo/men of means, who pushed back on the constraints placed upon their dress, in this dissertation I take a different approach. I am less interested in individual choices about dress and self-expression and more invested in the larger ideological system which enables and constrains the “choices” that all wo/men can make and the level of influence they are

30. Alicia Batten, “Neither Gold nor Braided Hair (1 Timothy 2.9; 1 Peter 3.3): Adornment, Gender and Honour in Antiquity,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 484–501, 501. See also her “(Dis)Orderly Dress” in *Scribal Practices and Social Structures Among Jesus Adherents: Essays in Honour of John S. Kloppenborg*, eds. William E. Arnal et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 567–84. Batten productively frames her piece using Harry O. Maier’s notion of ‘wearing theology’. See Maier, “Dressing for Church: Tailoring the Christian Self through Clement of Alexandria’s Clothing Ideals,” in *Religious Dimensions of the Self in the Second Century CE*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 76. ed. Jörg Rüpke and Gregory D. Woolf (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 66–89, 86.

able to achieve within their communities. That is, arguments about clothing as authoritative self-expression can run the risk of representing dressing and adorning as a matter of personal choice or the assertion of economic status, which limits the possibility of a sustained and intersectional critique of the larger structures at play. Both the call to dress modestly and the excess of adornment posed as its foil are embedded within structures of power whose force is not dismantled by choosing one version over the other. Rather, one intended effect of this dissertation is to highlight that studies of dress and adornment pose a unique opportunity to disrupt the equation of agency with resistance and to think more capaciously about where scholars “see” the presence and activity of wo/men, and non-elite wo/men in particular.³¹ It is also crucial to keep in mind the potential consequences of clothing prescriptions for those not specifically named within them, particularly enslaved wo/men, and to attend to how these scripts of “proper” or elite femininity affect those who are called upon through their labors to support and sustain a system within which they are abject and dehumanized.

My aim, therefore, is not to move entirely away from attempts to bring to light the historical presence and possible counterarguments of wo/men in the assemblies. Building on the important insights of scholars such as Batten and Olson, I wish to push the conversation a step further to consider these “dress codes” against the backdrop of clothing rhetorics, such as the notion of the baptized as “clothed with Christ,” which promote an alternative vision of dress and social order. Furthermore, by focusing not just on the binary of adornment/anti-adornment but on

31. As I will discuss in the next section, the work of Saba Mahmood has been particularly influential for my thinking about questions of agency and how feminist theorists tend to define political engagement through an implicitly Western analytical frame. See her *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). For a discussion of how methods and approaches to sources in New Testament and Early Christian Studies can obfuscate women, see Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, “Gazing upon the Invisible: Archaeology, Historiography, and the Elusive Women of 1 Thessalonians” in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, eds. Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, *Harvard Theological Studies* 64 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 73–108.

the multiple sites where early Christians used clothing “to think with,” I argue that we might more effectively track the moments where arguments about clothing index much larger struggles over who is permitted to speak, when, and by what means. By engaging a network of early Christian clothing rhetorics in dynamic conversation, I argue that we might more fully illumine the political and theological stakes of dressing and adorning the body.³²

In this, I am influenced by the work of Kristi-Upson Saia and Carly Daniel-Hughes, who analyze the ways in which early Christian authorities utilized clothing practices rhetorically and discursively to consolidate and define Christian identity and/or to materialize theological ideals. Upson-Saia engages Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity to analyze how ascetic women’s dress destabilized gender norms, despite the attempts of early Christian authorities to manage their appearance and to reify gender difference as a natural given. Whereas Upson-Saia focuses on the clothing practices of ascetic women and the responses of ancient authorities in late antiquity, Carly Daniel-Hughes engages in a close reading of the role of clothing in the theological writings of the third-century Patristic writer Tertullian of Carthage.³³ Pushing back on those, like Elliott, who see clothing as distinct from loftier and disembodied theological themes, Daniel-Hughes underscores the inextricable role of dress and embodiment in Tertullian’s understanding of flesh and resurrection. In the work of Upson-Saia and Daniel-Hughes, dress and adornment function as contested ground for discerning not only what Christians should *look like* but for negotiating relations of power and debating key theological issues.

32. This approach is distinct from those who argue that our access to women is inaccessible, mediated as it is entirely through the voice and perspectives of androcentric texts. See Elizabeth Clark’s classic article, “The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the ‘Linguistic Turn’,” *Church History* 67.1 (1998): 1–31.

33. *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage*.

Following their lead, I shift the focus from attempts to uncover a small group of resistant *individuals* toward an examination of how the authors' rhetoric encodes vestiges of dissident political *visions* and seeks to constrain them by appeals to ideologies of dress and adornment. In so doing, I consider how the exhortation to cast off gold or braided hair and to don the "incorruptible spirit of gentleness and quietude" (1 Peter 3:4) or "good works, as is proper for women who profess God-fear" (1 Timothy 2:10) are deployed to, literally, *engender* ways of being and belonging in Christ. While there likely existed wealthy wo/men in early assemblies in Christ who used their dress to assert their agency and authority, these "dress codes" have effects that extend beyond such a narrow group of wo/men, as the authors of these texts work to construct social subordination in theological terms.

It is at this point that this project meets the ongoing discussion of the baptismal formula cited by Paul in Gal 3:27–28 and the adaptations of the household code *topos* among early Christ followers.³⁴ While the political potential of Gal 3:28 has long been the subject of intense scholarly attention,³⁵ the call that the baptized are clothed with Christ has been underexplored or explained away as a puzzling turn of phrase. As a result, the study of Gal 3:27 has been largely limited to a quest for origins or for comparanda that will uncover the "true meaning" of this language. For instance, A. J. M. Wedderburn sees the description of Lucius' initiation into the cult of Isis in *The Metamorphoses* as illuminating how early Christians would have understood

34. Echoes of this baptismal formula in the Pauline and pseudepigraphical epistles can be found in 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:10–11 and references specifically to clothing that likely allude to this formula can be found in Eph 4:22–24; Rom 13:14.

35. There is some scholarly debate regarding whether Gal 3:27–28 constitutes a "baptismal formula" or a Pauline invention. For the reasons discussed in the next chapter, I follow those who identify this as a baptismal formula that would have been recognizable and meaningful to members of early assemblies.

themselves as “clothed with Christ.” Pointing to Lucius’ description of himself as clad in the holy garments of the Sun and set up a statue before the community, Wedderburn argues

it seems undoubtedly true that the widespread convention of attiring priests and worshippers in the manner of their deities would have made this particular New Testament usage more intelligible in the Graeco-Roman world. . . For all around them they saw the adherents of the various pagan cults putting on their deities, dressing up as them, and imitating their actions.³⁶

While I agree that the intersection of clothing and cult in antiquity offers a productive cultural lens for understanding the language of being clothed with Christ in baptism, Wedderburn’s explanation does not get at the rhetorical use of this language in Paul’s letters and beyond. Its frequent repetition indicates that this clothing imagery was persuasive to members of early assemblies in Christ and also troubling to those who wished to shore up kyriarchal power.³⁷ The question therefore is not only *why* early Christians used clothing language to think theologically but also *what work this language does* after the experience of baptismal experience in the rhetorical context in which it is used.³⁸

36. A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 44 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr P. Siebeck, 1987), 339. Sarah Ruden, trans., *The Golden Ass* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 11.24, 266–67.

37. I use the analytical frame of “kyriarchy” developed by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as a way of articulating the multiple and intersecting relations of power that are operative in a given context. While the more common term “patriarchy” emphasizes relations of power based on gender and “hierarchy” implies a divine sanction, the term “kyriarchy” or the rule of the lord or the elite, propertied husband/father/enslaver, develops in conversation with Kimberlé Crenshaw’s notion of “intersectionality” and underscores the ways in which power is determined at the intersection of multiple factors, including gender, class/status, race/ethnicity, ability, sexuality. See Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 14. Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43.6 (1991): 1243–99.

38. See for instance Schüssler Fiorenza, “Ideology, Power, and Interpretation: Galatians 3:28,” in *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 149–74; Antoinette Clark Wire, “Women in the Image and Glory of God,” in *The Corinthian Women Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 116–31. Rosemary Canavan attends to the baptismal clothing language in Col 3:10–11 in conversation with imperial visual rhetorics. Rosemary Canavan, *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Nils Alstrup Dahl and David Hellholm, “Garment Metaphors: The Old and the New Human Being,” in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy: Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 139–58.

Scholars have long noted the subtle shifts in citations of the baptismal formula which often strip away discussions of gender parity, though few have addressed the role of clothing metaphors and their social-material effects in this context.³⁹ For instance, the citation of the baptismal formula in the pseudepigraphical letter to the Colossians alludes to but slightly shifts the language of Gal 3:27–28.

You have clothed yourself with the *new self* (τὸν νέον), which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal, there is neither Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all [and] in all! (3:10–11)⁴⁰

καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν, ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἑλλήν καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομή καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός.

The modifications made here hint at some trouble with the formula’s dissolution of a gender binary, and the focus is on the relationship between Jews and non-Jews rather than on other categories.⁴¹ Here, the individual is clothed with the new (self) and not Christ, and as in 1 Cor 12:13 the “no male and female” element is conspicuously absent. The broader context of the passage understands the consequences of renewal as predominately ethical and cosmological as

39. In addition to Schüssler Fiorenza and Clark Wire above, see Wayne Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *History of Religions* 13.3 (1974): 165–208.

40. Cf. 1 Cor 15:49. For κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν as allusion to the Genesis creation narrative see Dahl and Hellholm, “Garment Metaphors,” 146–50. See also Margaret Macdonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, Sacra Pagina Series 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 58.

41. The addition of “barbarian, Scythian” here likely expands on the category of the “uncircumcised” as barbarians was a pejorative term used for all non-Greeks. The addition of “slave and free” at the end has been somewhat puzzling to scholars given that the focus seems to be on the dissolution of the boundary between Jews and non-Jews. Margaret MacDonald sees this element as an addition which underscores the allusion to the baptismal formula, noting that 3:18–4:1 is especially interested in the behavior of the enslaved. See Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 139. For “barbarian, Scythian” not as juxtapositions but as series following upon the “uncircumcised” see Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 252; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 144. In addition to Canavan cited above, see Harry Maier, “Barbarians, Scythians and Imperial Iconography in the Epistle to the Colossians” in *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder, Frederike Wendt and Petra von Gemunden (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 385–406.

the author then calls upon members of the community to “clothe [them]selves as the holy elect and beloved of God” (3:12). This immediately gives way in v. 18ff to a code of conduct for the household which deems the subordination of wives/women, children, and slaves to the husband/father/master as “fitting (ἀνῆκεν) in the lord.” The emergence of such discussions of domestic order—often referred to as “household codes” or *Haustafeln*⁴² — indicates an ongoing struggle between emancipatory strains of the early in-Christ movement and those who wish to assimilate the assemblies to the structures of household and empire. Schüssler Fiorenza writes, “In taking over the Greco-Roman ethic of the patriarchal household code, Colossians not only ‘spiritualizes’ and moralizes the baptismal community understanding expressed in Gal 3:28 but also makes this Greco-Roman ethic a part of ‘Christian’ social ethic.”⁴³ Furthermore, the need to state and to justify theologically this framework of social relations indicates the presence of those who lived and organized their relationships by a different standard.

The “dress codes” of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3 are likewise embedded within domestic and ecclesial codes of conduct and these texts might therefore be read as encoding similar struggles over how identity and social power should be embodied within the household of God.⁴⁴ While I do not intend to argue here that the emphasis on wo/men’s clothing in these texts should be read as a response in kind to the notion that the baptized have been clothed in Christ, I

42. The language of “household” or “domestic code” is misleading, as this kyriarchal understanding of household relationships is not limited to the confines of domestic space but was a microcosm of the larger imperial social structure, in which the emperor was understood as the ultimate *kyrios*. See Schüssler Fiorenza, *Power of the Word*, 151–54.

43. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 253.

44. Notably, 1 Timothy is concerned with issues of order, hierarchy, and fitness for leadership in the context of the assembly and may not on the surface be readily characterized as a “domestic” or “household” code. However, the text characterizes the assembly as “the Household of God,” and the pseudonymous Paul describes the purpose of his writing as conveying instructions so that “you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). Thus, while the assembly is not itself a household per se, the author seeks to construct and develop social relations in those terms.

highlight the range of effects ignited by these two very different “formulas” which reflect upon the of relationship of clothing and identity. By bringing Galatians 3:27–28 into the conversation on the rhetoric of dress and adornment in 1 Timothy and 1 Peter, I consider how clothing ideologies are deployed in questions of political equality and the theological significance of socially constructed categories of identity. I do so by framing the discussion not around individual sites of “resistance” but around the inscribed multiplicity of visions of the social, political, and theological stakes of getting dressed in the context of household and empire.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

I ground my argument that clothing rhetorics were used to great effect in the development of competing theological and political imaginaries in early assemblies in Christ in two foundational insights regarding the historiography of dress and adornment. First, the meanings of clothing practices, and not just forms and fashions, are historically situated and contingent rather than universal and timeless. Second, these ideologies are largely invisible but become apparent and contestable in moments of political, social, and economic change and/or within parodic or otherwise subversive performances. In his classic ethnography of conceptions of clothing and identity among members of the Kayapo tribe in Brazil, anthropologist Terrence Turner writes

Decorating, covering, uncovering or otherwise altering the human form in accordance with notions of everyday propriety or sacred dress, beauty or solemnity, status or changes in status, or on occasion of the violation and inversion of such notions, seems to have been a concern of every human society of which we have knowledge.⁴⁵

While Turner points to the apparently universal concern with clothing the body, his analysis foregrounds that the specificity of the symbolics of clothing and the values they manifest differ widely across space and time. This is perhaps more difficult to see in the age of globalized fast

45. Terrence Turner, “Social Skin,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2.2 (2012): 486–504, 486.

fashion, and so it is helpful to return to 19th century dress reforms, where vitriolic responses to wo/men wearing pants were waged in a context of struggle over norms of gender and social mobility at the turn of the century. Furthermore, the labors of working-class wo/men had long required that they wear clothing considered unsuitable for upper-class wo/men, and so debates about who might properly “wear the pants” emerges as an attempt to reify the category of elite femininity as distinct from the gender expression of lower-class wo/men.

It is difficult to engage in a study of gender, clothing, and power without incorporating the work of Judith Butler, whose theory of performativity has left an indelible mark on how we understand the social construction of and resistance to norms of gender and embodiment. In her ground-breaking work, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler frames gender as “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.”⁴⁶ Butler argues that gender is “performative” in that the illusion of an “essential” gender is produced discursively through the repetition of socially constructed norms and behaviors which make one legible as *either* a “man” or a “woman.” Through subversion or parodic performance, such as drag, gender is revealed to be a citation or imitation of a so-called “natural” or “biological” given that takes on the illusion of the natural through its repeated performance.⁴⁷

Butler’s theory of performativity influences my understanding of the ways in which gender is socially constructed and contested through notions of “proper” dress and adornment

46. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 1999), 43–44.

47. Butler “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13–31.

and provides a framework for understanding how these norms are grounded in appeals to imitation. But her work has also been charged with privileging the linguistic/discursive over the material, with conflating agency and resistance in ways that privilege a Western, liberal feminist perspective, and with focusing on gender to the exclusion of other socially constructed categories of identity such as race, ethnicity, and class.⁴⁸ Thus, I bring Butler's insights regarding the social construction and embodied performance of gender norms into conversation with her conversation partners, such as Rosemary Hennessey and Saba Mahmood, who focus more acutely on material dynamics of power as well as the implications of inhabiting a norm as itself an act of political agency.

To underscore the intersections of gender, class/status, and race/ethnicity in cultural “dress codes,” I engage the work of feminist materialist scholars such as Rosemary Hennessey. Emerging out of Marxist feminism, Hennessey attends to the pervasive, if subtle, ideologies and structural constraints which result in an unequal division of social power and privilege. Her work provides a lens for me to consider how clothing “choices” not only represent a sense of identity but actively work to construct it, as the range of possibilities for self-expression available to an individual are constrained based on their social location. To question or redefine these constraints is to press in material ways upon the very categories of identity that structure relations of power in the social world, and as such presents a danger to that structure.⁴⁹ To use

48. Butler has been highly receptive and responsive to critique, and in addition to her response to feminist materialist critiques in *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), she also engages her critics in the preface to the second edition of *Gender Trouble*.

49. While Butler and feminist materialists like Hennessey have often been embroiled in debates about the materiality of discourse, it is in this point where I see them intersecting in ways that are fruitful for my own project. For more on this debate, see Judith Butler's response to her critics in *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993). Rosemary Hennessey, “The Material of Sex,” in *Profit and Pleasure*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2018), 37–73. See also Amy Hollywood, “Performativity, Citationality, Ritualization,” *History of Religions* 42.2 (2002): 93–115.

Hennessey's language, practices of dress in a given cultural context might be aptly described as "preconstructed," or part of an ideological system that is materialized in the social world such that it "serves as an anchor in the symbolic order for the articulation of subjectivities across race, class, gender, and other salient differences."⁵⁰ Understood in this way, clothing practices and rhetorics function as a means of shaping identities and materializing unequal relations of power. Dressing and adorning the body is thus not merely an assertion of "individual" agency, identity, or self-expression but a subtle negotiation of one's participation in a largely unrecognized system that moderates proper behavior and visually manifests social relations of power and privilege.

Furthermore, these structures are not and never can be totalizing, as wo/men certainly worked (and continue to work) to fashion themselves in ways that ran counter to the dominant ideologies of gender, race/ethnicity, and class/status. However, the insights of Saba Mahmood compel us as readers and historians to resist conflating agency and resistance such that wo/men are visible as political actors only when they openly resist. Rather, Mahmood's ethnographic work with the women's mosque movement in Egypt pushes back on the liberal feminist notion that the veil is inherently a symbol of subordination and highlights the political work of practices that are rarely seen by Westerners as such.⁵¹ Furthermore, rather than thinking of embodied

50. Rosemary Hennessey, *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 75. Hennessey interrogates the meaning of "discourse" in feminist theory and argues for an understanding of discourse as ideology which constructs social difference as inequality rather than as neutral pluralism. She writes, "A theory of ideology makes it possible to explain the complex ways social reality is shaped—through the overdetermined relations among mechanisms for making sense, distributing resources, dividing labor, and sharing or wielding power. . . The causal logic underlying a theory of discourse as ideology makes it possible to acknowledge the systematic operation of social totalities like patriarchy and racism across a range of interrelated material practices. These totalities traverse and define many areas of social formation—divisions of labor, dimensions of state intervention and civil rights, the mobility of sites for production and consumption, the reimagination of colonial conquest, and the colonization of the imagination. If feminism as a mode of reading is to confront and explain the highly differentiated positioning of 'woman' across densely mediated social practices like these—those spanning the sexualization of the female body in the west and the feminization of colonized peoples, for instance—it cannot relinquish systemic analysis." xvi–xvii.

51. "My argument in *Politics of Piety* suggests that political projects are not only the result of coalitional organizing, ideological mobilization, and critical deliberation. They are predicated upon affective, ethical, and

practices such as clothing as exterior representations of an inner subjectivity, Mahmood uses an Aristotelian framework to analyze how embodied practices work on the self in the formation of ethical and political subjects. She writes,

By reversing the direction between outward bodily acts and subjective interiority (the former enacts the latter rather than represent or express the latter), the Aristotelian model raises interesting questions about bodily capacities and routine daily acts that make kinds of subjects and sociopolitical imaginaries possible.⁵²

For Mahmood, the Western feminist understanding of agency as operative only in sites of overt resistance fails to address the multiple and various ways agency is performed in relation to hegemonic structures. While I do not aim to engage in an Orientalist conflation of anthropological work on contemporary Islamic communities with the circumstances of ancient wo/men, Mahmood's work is important for my project because it raises a different set of questions of these clothing prescriptions and their impact on the lives of wo/men beyond a binary framework of prescription/resistance to them.⁵³ Mahmood opens up space for us to push back on assumptions that clothing practices are a reflection of an essential "inner self" toward a more nuanced accounting of the ways in which practices such as clothing the body work to shape the self ethically, politically, and theologically.⁵⁴ Early Christian authorities were likewise, if

sensible capacities that are often ignored as consequential to the analysis of politics." Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), xiii.

52. Ibid., xvi.

53. Kate Wilkinson also engages Mahmood's theoretical framework in a study of late antique Christian women. See her *Women and Modesty in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

54. Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the "habitus" is also productive here. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, refers to the ways in which embodied norms and expectations are engrained, mostly unconsciously, such that individuals become competent actors in a social field. These embodied habits, dispositions, and even tastes and preferences are not developed cognitively but through embodied practices which work to construct and reward "competent actors," or individuals who behave appropriately in response to governing norms. In the realm of clothing, Bourdieu's practice theory approach provides a framework for understanding the relationship between individual and structure while also highlighting the importance of embodied practices as working on the self. This disrupts the notion that

perhaps unconsciously, aware of this possibility. Thus, this struggle might be framed not only as one against luxury or ostentation but rather as a struggle over the shape of gender and virtue in relation to the ethical, political, and theological innovations of the earliest communities in Christ.

I engage these theoretical insights in conversation with those of feminist rhetorical analysis in the study of the New Testament and early Christianity. In “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn,” Schüssler Fiorenza lays out four key components which inform my methodological approach to rhetorics of dress and adornment in this dissertation. First, androcentric language is not reflective or descriptive of reality, but rather regulates and constructs it as the intersectional experiences of wo/men are subsumed under the “generic” masculine. Second, all language is performative and political. Third, a critical analysis of the rhetoric of texts must include an analysis of structures of domination and exclusion encoded within it. Fourth, language and knowledge of the world are rhetorical, and thus subject to transformation and redefinition.⁵⁵ Thus, in referring to language about clothing and adornment as “rhetorics of dress,” I aim to highlight that no reference to dressing and adorning the body should be understood as merely descriptive. Rather, following Judith Butler, I am interested in how such references seek to construct what they purport to name or describe.⁵⁶ My rhetorical analysis of early Christian attempts to regulate dress aims not only to interrogate the author’s own argumentative strategies but also to surface potential alter-narratives that wo/men may have developed and lived into.

clothing is in some way an expression of an “interior” self on the exterior of the body. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

55. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 93.

56. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 10. “To claim that discourse is formative is not to claim that it originates, causes, or exhaustively composes that which it concedes; rather, it is to claim that there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body.”

Finally, it is necessary to briefly outline my understanding of the relationship of metaphor and materiality. In the study of dress and adornment, scholars often make implicit distinctions between more abstract/metaphorical clothing language and references to material practices of clothing the body. On the surface this is not necessarily a problem, as it seems rather obvious that language such as “clothed in Christ” or “clothed in virtue” is quite different from references to adorning with gold or braided hair. But this becomes problematic when the “metaphorical” is set apart from the social-material circumstances in which it circulates. In this dissertation I argue that both “types” of clothing rhetoric are grounded in historically contingent conceptions of what clothing means and how it functions to structure relations of identity, status, and power.

To take an example, the call to “put on the full armor of God” in Eph 6:10-18 highlights the interplay between the metaphorical and the material that I aim to explore here. While this call does not necessarily promote donning military garb or taking up arms, this rhetoric is nevertheless deployed in a world overflowing with images of cuirassed emperors subduing “the nations” and thus the rhetorical force of this call might be productively understood as bound up with monumental rhetorics of violence and domination.⁵⁷ It is also possible to identify the “metaphorical” within seemingly straightforward references to clothing practices. As noted in Sebesta’s reading of the Ara Pacis, the material *stola* was freighted with the weight of feminine virtue just as luxurious garments were often used metaphorically to describe unruly and unethical femininity.⁵⁸ A stark differentiation between the metaphorical and the material downplays the

57. See the work of Laura Nasrallah on the effects and affects generated by spaces, places, and material/visual culture. *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); “Grief in Corinth: The Roman City and Paul’s Corinthian Correspondence,” in *Contested Spaces: Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. David L. Balch and Annette Weissenrieder (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 109–40. For interpretation of Paul’s letter to the Galatians alongside visual rhetoric, see also Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul’s Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

58. Judith Sebesta, “Women’s Costume and Feminine Civic Morality in Augustan Rome.”

ways in which language shapes embodied experience and these experiences shape in turn how arguments about clothing are received and enacted.

Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into three main chapters, each examining a particular instance of early Christian clothing rhetoric. Chapter one, “Fashioning Community: The Politics of Putting on Christ” analyzes the history of scholarship of Gal 3:27–28 and argues that the call that the baptized are “clothed with Christ” is integral to the political work of the baptismal formula. Rather than dismissing this language as a puzzling abstraction or seeing it merely as a clue to ritual practice of taking off or putting on clothing at baptism, I engage it alongside broader ideologies regarding the role of “everyday” clothing practices in constructing and sustaining hierarchies of gender, race/ethnicity, and status in antiquity. Turning to the debates over the Corinthian wo/men prophet’s hair and head-covering, I argue that this baptismal clothing rhetoric was materialized in the practices of the Corinthian wo/men prophets who used it to fuel their visions of an alternative social and political order.

Chapter two, “As Is Proper for Women Who Profess *θεοσέβεια*: (En)gendering God-fear in 1 Timothy” situates 1 Timothy’s dress codes in the context of theological debates over the authority to speak and teach. While scholars have long noted the intertextual echoes between 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, this conversation often presumes a distinction between the “theological” debates about gender and speech as symbolized by the veil and the “social/economic” debates over luxurious dress symbolized by the proscription of gold, pearls, and expensive clothes. Rather, I argue 1 Timothy’s framing of anti-luxury tropes in terms of what is “proper for women who profess *θεοσέβεια*” highlights that here, too, debates about the “natural” expression of gender are staged on theological grounds. Silence and obedience

embodied through “modest and decent” dress and reproductive potential are framed as the proper expression of wo/men’s piety and a pathway to salvation for wo/men in the community. The “good” woman is thus established through the framework of dress as a foil to the gossips, widows, and busy bodies who pose an ongoing challenge to the divinely sanctioned authority that this Paul seeks to claim for himself.

Chapter three, “Putting on ‘Heirs’: Constructing Wifely Virtue in 1 Peter” considers 1 Peter’s use of a common trope in ancient clothing discourse—that the “good wife” should adorn herself with the deeds of exemplary women that are impossible to cultivate alongside luxurious dress. I highlight instances of ancient texts and material culture which worked to achieve two interrelated aims: to discipline wo/men’s material clothing practices (and thus to make immediately identifiable those wo/men who strayed from such norms) and, in so doing, to construct a genealogy of elite femininity which presents subordination to the husband as both a civic and religious duty. 1 Peter operates with similar logics, contrasting outward adornment with the adornment of holy wo/men of old, who “used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands” (3:5) and rewarding wo/men who behave in accordance with these virtues as “daughters of Sarah” (3:6). Because scholars have been so minutely focused on determining the precise text and tradition of Sarah referring to Abraham as “lord,” they are unable to consider the subtle ways in which 1 Peter shapes the meanings of dressing and adorning in order to make their inclusion as “daughters of Sarah” contingent upon such practices.

In the conclusion, I turn my attention to the reverberations of the themes addressed in this dissertation in the contemporary world. On the one hand, I consider how wo/men’s dress continues to be a matter of public scrutiny and, for politicians and other wo/men in positions of authority, a means of minimizing their influence. On the other, I analyze the alternative

deployment of dress and adornment not just in resistance to such norms but as a mode of political engagement in and of itself. I engage ancient and contemporary materials together not to conflate their diverse transcultural and transhistorical meanings but rather to highlight the ongoing social, political, and material stakes of getting dressed in contexts of kyriarchal power. Thus, this study contributes not only to the field of New Testament and Early Christian studies but also to larger conversations both within and outside of the study of religion which focus on embodiment, power, and politics.

Chapter 1

Fashioning Community: The Politics of Putting on Christ

Throughout this dissertation, I emphasize that clothing practices in the ancient Mediterranean were not merely a set of choices an individual made about how to represent themselves to others but an extension of far-reaching ideologies of identity and power.¹ Socially constructed categories of status, race/ethnicity, and gender were visualized and reified through dress and adornment, as is evidenced by the close attention ancient writers paid to the maintenance of such sartorial distinctions.² It is within this framework that texts that would come to be understood as early Christian utilized rhetorics of dress in conversation with and response to broader cultural norms.³

Rather than starting with the more explicit “dress codes” of 1 Timothy and 1 Peter, I begin with the notion of the community as “clothed in Christ” cited by Paul in the letter to the Galatians (Gal 3:27; cf. Rom 13:14; Col 3:10–11; Eph 4:22–24; GosMary 10:11–14; GosPhil 75:

1. Jerome H. Neyrey writes, “Clothing was not mere body covering, but indicated one’s role and status, and so it is best viewed in terms of the values of honor and shame.” While the framework of honor/shame encodes unequal power dynamics, Neyrey’s otherwise thorough discussion of the various ways in which clothing marked and materialized difference is missing an analysis of power. See “Clothing,” in *Handbook of Biblical Values*, ed. Bruce Malina and John Pilch (Peabody MA: 1998), 21–27, 22.

2. The work of Kelly Olson is particularly illuminating here, as she analyzes closely the ways in which ancient writers worked to police status markers through clothing as a response to the regular usurpation of such symbols of inequality. See her *Dress and the Roman Woman* as well as *Masculinity and Dress in Roman Antiquity* and “Matrona and Whore: Clothing and Definition in Roman Antiquity.” See also Cynthia Colburn and Maura K. Heyn, eds. *Reading a Dynamic Canvas: Adornment in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008). Jonathon Edmondson, “Public Dress and Social Control in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome,” in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, ed. Jonathon Edmondson and Alison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 1–21.

3. I avoid using the category of “early Christian” to describe these letters and the early assemblies that received and engaged them. Instead, I use the language of “in-Christ” communities and writings to indicate that these texts predate “Christianity” as a movement distinct from Judaism. The insights of the New Perspective on Paul have contributed much to our understanding of Paul within Judaism and have disrupted long-held assumptions that Paul himself was a “convert” to Christianity, which has its roots in Christian supersessionism and anti-Semitism. See Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

21–24).⁴ This key aspect of the baptismal proclamation is rarely understood as a metaphor that draws its meaning in part from existing cultural understandings of what clothing means and does. In this chapter, I argue that the proclamation that the initiated have put on Christ is a political metaphor that uses clothing “to think with.” Rather than separating the notion of being clothed in Christ from the dissolution of binaries articulated immediately thereafter, I argue instead that Galatians 3:27–28 should be read as a single, cohesive idea which highlights the material, social, and political effects of this metaphorical change of clothing.⁵ I conclude with a discussion of the Corinthian wo/men prophets as a key example of the potential of this language for remaking naturalized understandings of the relationship between clothing, identity, and authority. Rather than focusing on this clothing metaphor only as a marker of individual baptismal transformation,

4. While the range of adaptations of this language in early Christian writings is vast, for the purposes of this chapter I focus my attention on the baptismal formula Paul cites in Gal 3:27–28 and its reverberations in 1 Corinthians, particular chapter 11. For further reading on other citational echoes of this proclamation, see Hugo Lundhaug, “No Longer a Christian, but a Christ’: Deification and Christology in the Gospel of Philip,” in *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 73 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 153–399. Carly Daniel-Hughes, “Putting on the Perfect Man: Clothing and Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip,” in *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity*, eds. K. Upson-Saia, C. Daniel-Hughes, and A. Batten (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate), 215–32. Canavan, *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae*. Dahl and Hellholm, “Garment Metaphors.” P.W. Van der Horst, “Observations on a Pauline Expression.” Jung Hoon Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 268 (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

5. While there remains some controversy regarding whether this text and its cognates should be characterized as a baptismal formula or a Pauline innovation, in this dissertation I follow those who have argued that it should be recognized as a baptismal proclamation which resonated with members of in-Christ assemblies long after the event of baptism. In addition to the frequency with which this theme emerges across a wide range of early Christian literature, there is also evidence within the text of Galatians and 1 Corinthians that Paul cites a formula that would have been familiar and persuasive to his audience. First, there is a shift from the first to second plural in vv. 25 to 29 of Galatians. Second, there is an ill fit between text and context, where only the “neither enslaved nor free” pair bears a relationship to the topic under discussion. And even this clashes with the allegory of Sarah and Hagar in 4:21–31, which reasserts dynamics of enslavement vs. freedom. Finally, that Paul and other writers continue to contend with arguments emerging from this language also indicates its importance in early assemblies. For arguments regarding its status as a baptismal formula, see Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c1979, 2016), 181–201; Wayne Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity”; Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, trans. Emilie T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress, c1966); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Neither Male nor Female: Alternative Vision and Pauline Modification,” in *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, c1984), 204–40. For an argument against its status baptismal formula, see Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *There is No Male and Female: The Fate of a Dominical Saying in Paul and Gnosticism*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 20 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

I argue that the notion that the baptized have been clothed with Christ is a fundamentally political claim.

Clothed in Christ: Gender and the Making of a Metaphor

The portion of the baptismal formula cited in Galatians 3:27 articulates the baptized as having put on Christ (ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε). Baptism is here understood as a gesture of clothing oneself with a figure, the χριστός, rather than a garment. The verb ἐνδύειν can have the general sense of “to go into,” but is frequently used to articulate being clothed/clothing oneself either literally or metaphorically and often with implications regarding how one should comport oneself ethically. Several examples in the LXX and in-Christ writings attest to this usage. In the Gospels, the verb is used to refer to literally clothing the body, as in Matthew 6:28–29, “And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.” This reference is illuminating, highlighting not only that clothing the body was a matter of some anxiety for the ancients but also that getting dressed could be conceived as a matter of divine providence.⁶

Examples from the Hebrew Bible describe individuals as being clothed in the πνεῦμα of a person or the divine or in a characteristic such as righteousness (δικαιοσύνη). In Judges 6:34, for instance, “the πνεῦμα of God clothed Gideon” (“took possession of” NRSV; cf. 1 Chr 12:18, 2

6. This connects, of course, to God providing clothing to Adam and Eve in Gen 3:21. For a collection of approaches to clothing as material culture, see Mary Harlow and Marie-Louise Nosch, eds. *Greek and Roman Textiles and Dress: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* (Oxford; Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2014). For broad context regarding the importance of clothing in religious contexts, see Cecilie Brøns and Marie-Louise Nosch, eds. *Textiles and Cult in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Ancient Textiles Series 31 (Oxford; Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books, 2017). Cecilie Brøns, *Gods and Garments: Textiles in Greek Sanctuaries in the 7th to the 1st Centuries BC*. Ancient Textiles Series 28 (Oxford; Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books, 2017).

Chr 24:20).⁷ A similar notion is also present in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, in which those who are to be incorporated into the tower must clothe themselves with the names of the twelve virgins, who represent a variety of virtues necessary for salvation.

‘And who are these virgins?’ ‘These,’ he said, ‘are holy spirits. No one can be found in the kingdom of God if these do not clothe him in their clothing. It will be of no use for you to receive the name alone without receiving the clothing from them. For these virgins are the powers of the Son of God. If you bear the name but not his power, it will be in vain.’⁸

In these cases, clothing is used to describe divine encounter which shapes the ethical self.

A third use of ἐνδύειν in Jewish and Christian writings can be found in the passages that refer to the “armor of God” (cf. Wis 5:17-19; Isa 59:17; Rom 13:12, 1 Thess 5:8, Eph 6:11, 14). These passages rework the symbolics of garments of war, imbuing them with the virtues and qualities necessary for the survival of the community in hostile environments or to describe the agency and activity of God against God’s enemies.⁹ For instance, in Ephesians, garments such as the “shield of faith” and the “helmet of salvation” (Eph 6:13–17) are donned by the community as the mechanisms of defense against the “day of evil” (6:13).

7. For analyses of clothing from theoretical, thematic, and textual perspectives, see the recent handbook Christoph Berner et al., *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible: A Handbook* (London, UK ; New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2019). For discussion of spirit possession in early Christianity, see Giovanni Bazzana, *Having the Spirit of Christ: Spirit Possession and Exorcism in the Early Christ Groups*, Synkrisis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020).

8. I am grateful to Chance Bonar for this reference. (*Shepherd of Hermas*, Sim. 9.13.2 [Ehrman LCL]). αἱ δὲ παρθένοι αὗται τίνες εἰσίν; αὗται, φησίν, ἅγια πνεύματά εἰσι· καὶ ἄλλως ἄνθρωπος οὐ δύναται εὐρεθῆναι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐὰν μὴ αὗται αὐτὸν ἐνδύσωσι τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτῶν· ἐὰν γὰρ τὸ ὄνομα μόνον λάβῃς, τὸ δὲ ἔνδυμα παρὰ τούτων μὴ λάβῃς, οὐδὲν ὠφελήσῃ· αὗται γὰρ αἱ παρθένοι δυνάμεις εἰσὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. ἐὰν τὸ ὄνομα φορῇς, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν μὴ φορῇς αὐτοῦ, εἰς μάτην ἔσῃ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ φορῶν. For questions of gender and comportment in the *Shepherd* more broadly, see Mary Rose D’Angelo, “The Sobered Sibyl: Gender, Apocalypse, and Hair in Dio Chrysostom’s Discourse 1 and the Shepherd of Hermas,” in *The End of the World in Medieval Thought and Spirituality*, eds. Eric Knibbs Jessica A Boon, and Erica Gelser (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 17–40.

9. For more on the “armor of God” passage in Ephesians, see Nils Neumann, “Die Panoplia Gottes: Eph 6,11-17 als Reflexion der Belagerung einer Stadt,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 106.1(2015): 40–64. Robert A. Wild, “The Warrior and the Prisoner: Some Reflections on Ephesians 6:10-20,” *CBQ* 46 (1984): 284–298. In her commentary on Ephesians, MacDonald connects this to the call to put on the “new human” in Ephesians 4:22-24 (*Colossians and Ephesians*, 343–50).

By presenting this range of political and theological uses of clothing language, I do not seek to argue that there was any actual “Christ garment” which members of early assemblies wore. Nor do I assume that this brief discussion covers comprehensively the myriad uses of this term. Rather I argue that, like the armor of God passages, the metaphor of putting on Christ was grounded in and opens space to reshape the meanings of widely recognizable material clothing practices. While such rhetorics of dress and adornment sit at the intersections of the material and the metaphorical as well as the social-political and the theological, the notion of being “clothed in Christ” has not been fully analyzed in these terms. Thus, I turn to two examples of scholarship which begin to incorporate clothing into an analysis of the baptismal formula cited in Galatians: Wayne Meeks’ influential discussion of the baptismal formula as a reunification of the primal androgyne and J. Albert Harrill’s more recent discussion of Gal 3:27 in light of the Roman *toga virilis* ceremony. Both of these scholars gesture to the important roles clothing plays in the transformation that Paul underscores as a result of baptism, but do not fully attend to the interactions of this metaphor with intersectional ideologies of dress and adornment, which would have made it not only an effective and affectively generative claim but also a potentially radical one for the letter’s audiences.

Wayne Meeks’ “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity”¹⁰ touches on the role of clothing in baptism, even as this is not the primary objective of his work.¹¹ For Meeks, the baptismal formula Paul cites in Gal 3:26–28 narrates the

10. Wayne Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *History of Religious* 13.3 (1974): 165–208.

11. One significant limitation of Meeks’ work is the implication that this androgynous human represents the equal copresence of the “masculine” and the “feminine.” Rather, ancient notions of androgyny were largely androcentric and involved the total absorption of the feminine into the masculine. This is not to say that androkyriocentrism was totalizing such that there could be no consideration of the equality of the sexes, but rather to highlight that the overcoming of gender difference in these contexts is often presented as the absorption of the “feminine” into the “masculine.” See Daniel Boyarin, “‘There Is No Male and Female’: Galatians and Gender

reunification of the male and female in accord with the first androgynous human of Gen 1:27 (“male and female created he them” NRSV). Combining the anthropological work of Claude Levi-Strauss with the linguistic theory of J. L. Austin, Meeks conceptualizes the ritual of baptism as the performance of this primordial creation myth. This type of narrative approach which creates a hierarchal relationship between text/myth, belief, and embodied practice has rightly been critiqued by ritual theorists, and Meeks’ reconstruction of the ritual context itself at times presumes too much based on limited evidence of the earliest baptismal rites.¹² However, his analysis makes space for considering clothing as an important element of the ritual that gives rise to the affective force of baptism.¹³ He writes,

Reinforced by dramatic gestures (disrobing, immersion, robing) such a declaration [Gal 3:28] would carry—within the community for which its language was meaningful—the power to assist in shaping the symbolic universe by which that group distinguished itself from the ordinary ‘world’ or larger society. . . New attitudes and altered behavior would follow—but only if the group succeeds in clothing the novel declaration with an ‘aura of facticity.’¹⁴

Trouble,” in *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1994), 180–200. Moving away from associations with a myth of primal androgyny, Joseph A. Marchal reconsiders the diversity of the concept and practice of androgyny in antiquity, with the Corinthian wo/men prophets engaging in activities of gender transgression which would have been intelligible, if dangerous, in Paul’s eyes. See “A Close Corinthian Shave: Trans/Androgyne,” in *Appalling Bodies: Queer Figures Before and After Paul’s Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 30–67.

12. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). The Protestant emphasis on text and belief over ritual and embodied practice has a long colonial and imperial legacy in the history of the study of religion. Interrogating the ways in which the aesthetic performance of belief has been racialized/Othered in intellectual movements such as the New Atheism, Ashon Crawley writes, “I am intrigued by the ways Islam is cast in the New Atheist movement as a modality of thought and practice that is most violent, and it seemed to me, this is asserted because of the public practice of belief, the way belief is worn on the flesh (in the case of the khimar, niqab, burka, and hijab, as examples). Such belief is worn—like the racialization of the flesh—and such wearing produces a crisis in the meaning of belief as practice. We might call this wearing of *belief in the flesh*—“in” here indexing both *internal* to and the *state or condition* of the flesh.” *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*, Commonalities (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 25. I am grateful to Dr. Laura Nasrallah for this reference.

13. By “affective force” I refer to the collective emotional response generated by the ritual performance which would have contributed to the ongoing importance and effectiveness of this experience outside of the ritual context.

14. Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 182.

In Meeks' view, baptism worked to construct a counter-cultural communal identity so long as the performance was sufficiently convincing. His argument frames clothing as costume within this performance, where donning and doffing of garments punctuate the ritual at key elements. Here, clothing serves a material and performative—but temporary—site from which individuals might step outside of and disrupt the normative associations of dress and identity to make way for embodying new ways of being in the world.¹⁵

The possibility of gender equity and the transformation of social roles in early Christian communities is at the heart of Meeks' analysis, though he limits the issue of clothing to the ritual moment itself. This is surprising, since clothing practices re-emerge significantly in the conflict over wo/men's hair and head-covering practices in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, which he addresses in detail. Meeks characterizes the conflict between Paul and the Corinthian wo/men prophets as a debate over the *functional* equality of men and wo/men and the *symbolic* differences performed with and through clothing. This distinction will be discussed further below, but I highlight here the ways in which Meeks' history-of-religions framework limits the capacity to “see” clothing as the source—and not just the byproduct—of conflict and debate outside of the immediate baptismal context. The argument is thus unable to account for the ways in which ancient ideologies of clothing and identity did not allow for the simultaneous existence of *functional* equality and *symbolic* difference.¹⁶ Clothing practices encoded political and social capital, and,

15. Mary Rose D'Angelo argues based on later evidence of baptismal praxis that the movement from nakedness to a shared garment would have been a powerful visual image of the erasure of marks of servitude and subordination when combined with the baptismal proclamation. See “Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels: Women's Heads in Early Christianity,” in *Off With Her Head! The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Howard Eilberg Schwartz and Wendy Doniger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 131–64, 138.

16. For Meeks' discussion of clothing symbolism in the context of ancient religions, see “Image of the Androgyne,” 185–89.

as I will argue below, the political imaginary of baptism would have been potent grounds for shifting the symbolics of clothing which visualized and stratified difference.

More recently, Harrill's "Coming of Age and Putting on Christ: The *Toga Virilis* Ceremony, Its Paraenesis, and Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Galatians"¹⁷ situates Paul's citation of the baptismal formula in Galatians alongside the *toga virilis* ritual of Roman domestic cult. More so than Meeks, Harrill examines Paul's rhetorical deployment of this formula in light of clothing practices that were likely familiar to a colonized audience in East steeped in the symbols of Roman imperial power.¹⁸ But while Harrill begins to articulate how masculinity, citizenship, and belonging coalesce around this rite of passage, his reading of Paul's rhetoric leaves these categories largely unchallenged. While Paul may perhaps have developed an analogy between being clad in Christ and in the toga, the range of uses and ongoing conflicts over this language highlight that more is at stake in his argument than an adaptation of a ritual ready at hand.

Reviving and expanding a comparison which has been occasionally but briefly made in scholarship on this passage,¹⁹ Harrill argues that Paul filters the experience of baptism through the lens of the *toga virilis* ceremony in which young elite Roman males set aside the trappings of childhood (*toga praetexta* and *bulla*) and donned the garment of the adult citizen (*toga virilis*).²⁰

17. "Coming of Age and Putting on Christ: The *Toga Virilis* Ceremony, Its Paraenesis, and Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Galatians" *Novum Testamentum* 44.3(2002): 252–77. Harrill explicitly and helpfully pushes back on the quest for "origins" or a singular meaning which has characterized scholarly discussions on the notion of "putting on Christ," which include Meeks' own.

18. Harrill seeks to build a case that this Roman domestic ritual was known and even practiced in the provinces, including Galatia. See "Coming of Age," 263–266.

19. For overview of previous scholarship, see "Coming of Age," 254 n. 8–11.

20. Fanny Dolansky, "Coming of Age in Rome: The History and Social Significance of Assuming the *Toga Virilis*," MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1999; eadem, "*Togam Virilem Sumere*: Coming of Age in the Roman World," in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, 47–70.

This change of clothing into the quintessential garment of Roman citizenship was a public event, signaling the transition into manhood and the moral self-governance it ideally conveyed. Harrill sees echoes of this ritual in Paul's framing of baptism in Galatians, where the "Christ" that is put on might be understood as an analogue of the Roman toga with its symbolism of citizenship, belonging, and, of course, masculinity and patrilineal descent.²¹

Indeed, this emphasis on genealogy is in keeping with the letter's overall investment in promoting an understanding of shared identity as "sons of Abraham" (Gal 3:29), and Harrill draws out compelling intersections between the ethical mandates imposed upon the budding free male citizen and Paul's own framing of belonging in Christ.²² For instance, with the conferral of the toga came the young man's divestment from the authority of the *paedagogos* and a robust moral discourse developed around cautioning young men to make good use of their newfound freedom.²³ According to Harrill, Paul mimics this elite moral rhetoric in his assertion that "the

21. Freedom and manhood were prerequisites of citizenship, and Rendell makes this connection explicit in his 1912 reading of the passage in terms of the *toga virilis* ceremony. "At a certain age, the Roman youth exchanged the *toga praetexta* for the *toga virilis* and passed into the rank of citizens. So the Christian had been invested at his baptism with the robe of spiritual manhood. Whereas he had before been under the control of rules and regulations, like a child in his father's house, he possessed now the independence of a grown-up son." *Expositor's Greek New Testament: The Epistle to the Galatians*, ed. W.R. Nicoll (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912), 174. Emphasis mine. Paul's fixation with masculinity in the letter to the Galatians has been examined at length. See for instance Brigitte Kahl, "No Longer Male: Masculinity Struggles Behind Galatians 3:28?," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 79 (2000): 37–49. For an intersex reading of debate between Paul and Galatian audience, see Joseph A. Marchal, "Bodies Bound for Circumcision and Baptism: An Intersex Critique and the Interpretation of Galatians," *Theology & Sexuality* 16.2 (2010): 163–82.

22. Whether or not one should translate "sons" in gender inclusive terms is a matter of debate. I prefer as a rule to use the inclusive translation, as there were wo/men receiving these ideas. However, it is also important to acknowledge the overarching patriarchal impulse of the letter to the Galatians and to account for the ways in which the wo/men in the community surely had to "think twice" whether they were included, given that lineage and inheritance were thoroughly patriarchal institutions. For further discussion of the construction of ethnicity and genealogy in the letter's rhetoric, see Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). On the baptismal formula specifically and the construction of race/ethnicity, see Johnson Hodge and Denise Kimber Buell, "The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123. 2 (2004): 235–51.

23. Harrill cites as evidence the following illuminating statement from Plutarch to his pupil Nicander: "I ask you to believe that in persons of good sense the passing from childhood into manhood is not a casting off of control, but a recasting of the controlling agent, since instead of some hired person or slave purchased with money

law was our *paedagogos* before Christ came” (Gal 3:24) and “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Gal 5:1). In short, Harrill seeks to demonstrate that putting on Christ in Galatians functions as a “coming of age,” or, perhaps more accurately, a “coming into manhood” in which the transition to moral self-governance was manifested in line with a ritual built upon civic discourses of clothing and its implications for ethical comportment based on gender and class.²⁴

Harrill hints at these issues briefly, connecting Paul’s concept of baptism to prevailing ideologies of masculinity. He writes,

In this way, Paul’s language for maturity ‘in Christ’ resembles ideologies of masculinity in wider classical culture: while considered normative and a natural result of baptism, maturity ‘in Christ’ (like Roman masculinity) is fragile, fluid, and incomplete until anchored by firm discipline and constant moral behavior—working hard, constantly testing, taking pride in the effort, and each sharing the load (6:4–5) without weariness (6:9). Such language would have been heard in Roman imperial society as a command to act like a man.²⁵

In keeping with the patriarchal emphasis of the letter, Harrill acknowledges that Paul’s interpretation of baptism reflects and reinforces frameworks of masculinity. But his reading does not address the ways in which these associations clash with the proclamation that such constructs no longer exist in Gal 3:28. Harrill’s analysis thus subtly reinforces Paul’s andro/kyriocentrism by failing to account for the ways in which a ritual which foregrounds ideologies of masculinity and citizenship might have been received by those who lie outside of these frameworks yet are named explicitly within the formula—wo/men, slaves, and other Others. Thus, Harrill provides one interesting example of how this analogy *works* for Paul, but doesn’t ask *for whom* it works—namely, those who are already empowered by a kyriocentric notion of citizenship and inclusion.

they now take reason as the divine guide of their life, whose followers alone may deservedly be considered free.” (*Moralia*, 37C–E).

24. “Coming of Age and Putting on Christ,” 275.

25. *Ibid.*

Both Meeks and Harrill turn our attention importantly to the presence of clothing rhetoric in this much-discussed formula, but neither fully addresses the ritual of baptism and its attendant clothing imagery alongside broader ideologies of clothing, power, and social roles/identities. In both studies, kyriarchal frameworks of masculinity are not displaced but reified for those clothed in Christ, even as they conflict with the dissolution of boundaries and binaries articulated within the formula itself. In order to bring these aspects of the baptismal formula and its after-effects into higher relief, it is necessary to draw out the significance of clothing as a material, visual marker of the structure and order of the world. Whereas these and other scholars give the impression that ritual clothing practices constitute a discrete category of dress, in the next section I argue that the social, political, and theological resonances of clothing are mutually constitutive and operative in all instances in which people dressed themselves and encountered other dressed bodies, both within and beyond the moment of baptismal initiation.

Clothing and the Order of the World

Historian of clothing Mary Harlow underscores the social import of clothing practices in the ancient Mediterranean, writing,

the styles of clothing and the textiles they were made from allowed ancient people to make assessments about the rank, status, ethnicity, age, and most importantly of all, the class and gender of any individual they encountered. A quick glance at the clothing accoutrements, and body language of another person would allow the viewer to place them socially, and, if they could not identify the dress code, at the very least to perceive whether the wearer was a stranger.²⁶

Note Harlow's trinity of "clothing, accoutrements, and body language." The body of the wearer and the garment(s) themselves were perceived in dynamic relationship to one another, telling a story about the character and status of the wearer. In this sense, ideologies of clothing exist

26. Mary Harlow, *Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in Antiquity*. Vol. 1. The Cultural Histories Series (London: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2018), 1.

alongside physiognomic discourses, which were developed largely by and in the service of elites in order to sort and assess others based on their physical appearance and comportment. While on the surface this seems very similar to contemporary practices of “sizing up” others based on their dress, it is difficult to overstate the distinctions between how ancient wearers understood clothing and our own encounters with clothing in the age of fast fashion. As noted in the introduction, the production of clothing in antiquity was a process, quite literally, close to home. Most individuals had only one or two garments, as even the simplest garments had to be meticulously woven on looms with hand spun fibers, processes which took extensive time and skill at every stage. Harlow notes that nearly all ancient persons would have been familiar on some level with the production of woven textiles, and many would have been able to assess at little more than a glance the quality of workmanship and the level expense and labor involved.²⁷ Thus, even at the level of production, clothing told a very specific story about oneself and one’s household.

To use the language of Maud Gleason, this was a “face-to-face” culture characterized by a “forest of eyes—a world in which the scrutiny of one’s fellow man was not an idle pastime but an essential survival skill.”²⁸ In the ancient physiognomic literature, writers go to great pains to

27. Harlow, “Introduction,” in *Cultural History of Dress and Fashion*, 8. See also Lucille A. Roussin, “Costume in Roman Palestine: Archaeological Remains and the Evidence from the Mishnah,” in *The World of Roman Costume*, ed. Larissa Bonfante and Judith Sebesta (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 182–190, 183. In his argument that the concept of the “synagogue” should be expanded to include craft guilds previously excluded from the category, Richard Last cites the purple-dyers of Hierapolis as a mixed-ethnicity group which displayed aspects of devotion to the Judean deity. These insights have fascinating implications not only for the scholarly taxonomy of associations, but also for the intersections of textile production and religious praxis. See Richard Last, “The Other Synagogues,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 47(2016): 330–363.

28. Maud Gleason, “Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E.,” in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, eds. David Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 389–415, 389. For more on the social implications of visual culture, see Shadi Bartsch, *Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) and Carlin Barton, “Being in the Eyes: Shame and Sight in Ancient Rome,” in *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body*, ed. David Frederick (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2002), 216–35.

identify precisely the modes of bodily comportment that clearly distinguish the deceitful from the honest, the feminine from the masculine. In so doing, these discourses work to construct and stabilize these categories. While specific garments are less often discussed in this body of writing, grooming habits are frequently cited as indicative of one's adherence—or not—to the “natural” signs of gender difference. Clement of Alexandria, writing just over a century after Paul, takes particular interest in the comportment of men and wo/men, and argues that men who pay excessive attention to taming the hairiness that is the very symbol of masculinity should be “read” as having unnatural sexual desires.²⁹ Here, too, how one clothed and groomed oneself was not only a matter of personal preference. Bodily demeanor and comportment were thought to *shape* and *manifest* the self in ways that paradoxically troubled the strict delineation between men and wo/men, masculinity and femininity as essential, discernable, and natural binaries. Gleason writes that despite their differing theological justifications, Clement “shares with pagan moralists the assumption that ‘feminine’ grooming habits will alter more than the surface appearance of the man who indulges in them. Like an illness, these habits will infect his essential masculinity.”³⁰ Of course, these “natural” differences and distinctions were not natural at all, as the very necessity of writing such treatises reveals the fragility of such socially constructed categories.

While a systematic overview of textile production or physiognomic literature lies outside the scope of this project, I raise these points to underscore the social and ideological dimensions of ancient practices of dress and adornment that go beyond frameworks of self-expression. That

29. Ibid., 399–400. *Paedagogus*, 3.15.2. Clement's *Paedagogus* devotes a surprising amount of attention to how elite Alexandrian Christians should and should not dress, as well as the kinds of garments they should and should not desire. For more on the theological significance of hair and grooming in later works, see Kristi Upson-Saia, “Hairiness and Holiness in the Early Christian Desert,” in *Dressing Judeans and Early Christians*, 155–72.

30. Gleason, “Semiotics of Gender,” 389.

clothing and bodily comportment were understood not just to represent but to *shape* the self and even the household/community is quite distinct from notions of clothing as an exterior expression of an interior selfhood which is reflected through choices made about dress. To a certain extent, even the notion of “choice” regarding clothing practices is a concept known only to elites who could afford multiple garments. Clothing ideologies not only governed how individuals were perceived in relation to others but also held social-political and material significance in naturalizing and disciplining roles and behaviors by bringing them to the level of the body.

The close relationship between clothing and social order in this period is evident in the linguistic association between the Greek *κόσμος*, “order, arrangement” and the verb *κοσμέω* which refers to ordering and arranging but also, especially for wo/men, to dressing and adorning.³¹ Likewise, we derive the English term “culture” from the Latin *cultus*, whose semantic range includes dressing and caring for the body as a civilized and civilizing practice. Referring to the vocabulary of women’s clothing in particular, Kelly Olson notes that the language of *cultus*, *ornatus*, and *mundus* were frequently used in Latin literature to describe the order of the heavenly realm.³² The appropriate arrangement of the body spoke to the well-being and orderliness of the world and, as in the case of the repeal of the Lex Oppia, the wayward dress of women often functioned rhetorically as a measure of broader social-political decline.³³ For wo/men in particular, dress and bodily comportment were understood as a measure of adherence

31. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, 7–9.

32. *Ibid.*, 9.

33. See Introduction for discussion of Livy’s account of the repeal of this sumptuary legislation.

to the mores of household and state and a symbol of the health of both.³⁴ This gendered ethical paraenesis—the flip-side of that of the *toga virilis*—aimed to instruct women in how best to array themselves bodily and, by extension, ethically and politically.³⁵

Whereas the *stola* and *πέπλος* materialized a strictly delimited set of ethical and social norms governing “proper” matrons, the lack of an identifiable garment for the enslaved was an alternative method of disenfranchisement.³⁶ While our evidence for the dress of the enslaved is frustratingly scant, Bradley and Olson indicate that the enslaved likely wore either a short garment allowing for the freedom of movement necessary for hard labor, or were dressed lavishly by their enslavers as a representation of their wealth and prestige.³⁷ Their garments would almost always have been second-hand, expressing either objectified status as laborers and/or reflecting the prestige and power of their enslaver. According to Seneca, the very suggestion that the enslaved wear a uniform to mark their status evoked anxieties about revolt, as

34. Carly Daniel-Hughes, “Bodily Displays of Modesty: Or, How to Power Dress in the Roman World,” in *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage: Dressing for the Resurrection*, 15–43.

35. Judith Sebesta, “Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman,” in *The World of Roman Costume*, 46–53. For the Greek context, see Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, ed. *Women's Dress in the Ancient Greek World* (London: Duckworth and the Classical Press of Wales, 2002); Mireille M. Lee, *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Greece* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015). There seems in general to be less temporal specificity to scholarly discussions of Greek dress, and both volumes cover multiple centuries.

36. Shaye Cohen cites Pseudo-Xenophon’s *Constitutions of the Athenians* 1.10 as evidence for the practice of distinctive clothing for the enslaved. Here, the author writes of the lavish dress of the enslaved in Athens: “For the people there are no better dressed than the slaves and metics, nor are they any more handsome.” (Merchant LCL) I do not see here evidence for the widespread practice of a distinctive garment for the enslaved, but rather a rhetorical use of the enslaved to make a particular set of claims about Athens itself. Shaye Cohen, “‘Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not’: How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?,” in *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 25–68, 30.

37. For slave dress, see Keith R. Bradley, “Roman Slavery and Roman Law” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 15.3(1988): 477–95; Kelly Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, 42–44, 104–106; eadem, “Status,” in *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in Antiquity*, ed. Mary Harlow (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 105–118. Michele George, “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Toga,” in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, 94–112, esp. 103–107.

this opened the possibility that the enslaved would see their own numbers measured against that of their enslavers and organize for their freedom.³⁸

This is not to say that writers like Seneca wished for the distinction between free and enslaved to be invisible or undetectable. The capacity of clothing to change or obscure one's "actual" status was a matter of much concern, and ancient elites developed discursive strategies to essentialize status distinctions between free and enslaved persons. For instance, the fall of a high-born woman into slavery is a common trope in the Greek novels. But whereas women like Callirrhoe can assume the mantle of enslavement for a time, *Callirrhoe* and similar works are swift to point out their beauty as a mark not only of their essential freedom but also as a testament of the impossibility that those of high status could ever be truly enslaved.³⁹ In her analysis of this and other Greek novels in conversation with the enslaved wo/men of Luke-Acts, Christy Cobb argues that such narratives belie the fluid boundary between enslaved and free status, which was much more malleable than these writers would like.⁴⁰ Ideologies of clothing

38. "A proposal was once made in the senate to distinguish slaves from free men by their dress; it then became apparent how great would be the impending danger if our slaves should begin to count our number." (Seneca, *De clementia* 1.24.) For discussion, see Bradley, "Roman Slavery and Roman Law," 477. It is important not to conceive of this boundary only in terms of the type of garments but also the worn symbols of enslavement which we might not immediately think of as "clothing." Bradley writes, "slaves might carry other physical indications of their servitude that were immediately noticeable—the marks of branding, the shackles worn by those consigned to the chain-gang, the iron collars fixed around the necks of recaptured runaways, the scars of beatings slaves had received from owners or overseers, the shaved heads of war captive." "Roman Slavery and Roman Law," 480.

39. (Chariton, *Callirrhoe*, 2.1.5–6 [Goold LCL]). "Although Dionysius was pleased to hear of the girl's beauty, for he was a great admirer of women, he was not pleased to hear she was a slave. Being an aristocrat and preeminent all over Ionia in rank and culture, he refused to take a slave as concubine. "Leonas," he said, "it is impossible for a person not freeborn to be beautiful. Have you not learned from the poets that beautiful people are the children of gods, and all the more likely children of the nobly born?" For discussion of this piece, see Christy Cobb, *Slavery, Gender, Truth, and Power in Luke-Acts and Other Ancient Narrative* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2019), 103.

40. Ibid.

and comportment emerged to secure these boundaries and to protect, against all evidence to the contrary, the notion that nobility and freedom were the natural property of all “beautiful” bodies.

Furthermore, it is difficult to overstate the importance of rhetorics of dress and adornment in the construction of race and ethnicity and, by extension, “Romanness” and the kyriarchal self-identification of Empire.⁴¹ Elite stereotypes about wo/men’s insatiable desire for finery are frequently grounded in anxieties about “foreignness.” For instance, Pliny the Elder writes in *Natural History*, “And by the lowest reckoning India, China and the Arabian peninsula take from our empire 100 million sesterces every year—that is the sum which our luxuries and our women cost us; for what fraction of these imports, I ask you, now goes to the gods or to the powers of the lower world?”⁴² Pearls in particular are an issue for Pliny and other Roman elites, signifying anxieties about dependence on foreign trade and wo/men’s stereotypical penchant for foreign goods as weakening Roman imperial power and control over the subordinated and foreign Other.⁴³ Maria Wyke succinctly articulates this twin anxiety, writing, “Adorned in imported luxuries, the woman whose image is constructed in the mirror becomes herself a foreign commodity, and is defined through her body as all that is alien and pernicious to the traditionally minded Roman male.”⁴⁴

41. For broad overview of ethnic dress in antiquity see Ursula Rothe, “Ethnicity,” in *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in Antiquity*, 119–34.

42. (*Natural History*, 12.84 [Rackham, LCL]) See Ria Berg, “Wearing Wealth,” 25–31 for discussion of the vice of *luxuria* in Roman ethical discourse which was conceived by Pliny almost as much an illness as a moral failing.

43. For more on the pearl, see Kelly Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, 54–55, 88. Alicia Batten, “Signifying the Pearl: East and West,” in *Dressing Judeans and Early Christians*, 241–58. On “foreignness and femininity” as twin anxieties in the elite Roman imaginary, see Upson-Saia, *Early Christian Dress*, 15–18.

44. Maria Wyke, “Woman in the Mirror: The Rhetoric of Adornment in the Roman World,” 141.

But garments could also be marshalled from the position of the colonized to set themselves apart from the garments of the colonizer, as is the case in Tertullian's *De pallio*. Ironically, Tertullian chastises the men of Carthage for spending their time pondering clothing at the beginning of a text which is itself devoted to the merits of the pallium over the Roman toga.⁴⁵ Tertullian urges his compatriots to cast aside the toga in favor of the mantle (*pallium*) which signifies the superiority of Carthaginian Christian masculinity over that of its Roman counterpart. In so doing, Carly Daniel-Hughes argues, Tertullian constructed a form of early Christian masculinity that "sat ill at ease with the trappings of state and Empire when compared to the elite Roman conception it appropriated."⁴⁶

The question of a distinctive Jewish/Judean dress in this period has generated no small amount of discussion. Some, such as Shaye Cohen, argue that while there are biblical commandments which mandate the wearing of the tzitzit and tefillin and texts that describe Jewish women as veiled in public, there is little evidence of widespread and visible daily practices of dress differentiated Judeans from their Greek and Roman counterparts.⁴⁷ Cohen writes, "Jews were not distinctive either by their looks or by their clothing. Jews of Antioch looked Antiochene, Jews of Alexandria looked Alexandrian, Jews of Ephesus looked Ephesian, and the Jews of Rome looked like just another exotic group from the East."⁴⁸

45. "You, who have always been leaders of Africa, men of Carthage, noble of old and blessed today, I am glad that you live in such happy times that you can find both the time and the pleasure of censuring clothing! This is the sort of pursuit of peace and plenty. All is well on the part of the empire and on the part of the sky." Trans. Vincent Hunink, *Tertullian: De Pallio, A Commentary* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 2005), 31.

46. Carly Daniel-Hughes, "The Clothing that Maketh the Christian Man: Tertullian's *On the Pallium*," in *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage*, 45–61, 61.

47. Cohen, "Those Who Say They are Jews and Are Not," 30–34.

48. *Ibid.*, 34.

Others, including Joshua Schwartz, argue that while clothing practices were likely quite different in Palestine and Babylonia than in the Diaspora, there were distinctive markers, including the tzitzit and tefillin, by which Judeans would have been recognized as such by others.⁴⁹ Naftali Cohn focuses in particular on Mishnaic laws regarding wo/men's dress and notes, "In the Mishnah, the regulated adornment and display of the female body was as much about the larger Judean social body as it was about individual Judean women. Adorning in a uniquely Judean way linked individual women to the larger group, to the people as a whole."⁵⁰ For Cohn, the issue is not so much whether Judean women's dress and adornment would immediately differentiate them from others. Rather, Cohn notes instead the ways in which the rabbis used women's clothing in the construction of a Judean social body.

Taking a middle route, Lucille Roussin compares archaeological material from the Bar Khokba period in the Cave of Letters at En-Gedi with textual evidence from the Mishnah and hypothesizes that ancient Judeans adapted the fashions of the day to conform with Jewish law. Nevertheless, she asserts that these adaptations—such as weaving without mixing linen and wool—were not necessarily readily visible to non-Jews.⁵¹ Nevertheless, this highlights the ways in which such practices might index an appearance of conformity to the norms of the colonial powers but which, beneath surface, encode a potentially subversive allegiance to a Divine authority.

49. Joshua Schwartz, "Clothes Make the Jew: Was There Distinctive Jewish Dress in the Greco-Roman Period?," in *Dress in Mediterranean Antiquity: Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians*, ed. Alicia Batten and Kelly Olson (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 247–56.

⁵⁰ Naftali Cohn, "What to Wear: Women's Adornment and Judean Identity in the Third Century Mishnah," in *Dressing Judeans and Early Christians*, 30–44, 30; 43–44.

51. Roussin, "Costume in Roman Palestine," 188. The textile remains found in the Cave of Letters accord with the artistic representation of garments in the Dura Europos frescoes, including dyed tunics with a gamma pattern worn by women.

In this section, I have very briefly sketched the ideological and discursive significance of dress and adornment in the ancient Mediterranean. As is evident in these examples, the intersections of dress and social-political roles and identity categories I underscore here are not discrete or neatly separable but are mutually implicated along multiple axes of power. This highlights the importance of an analysis of the rhetorical function of clothing over against a discussion of ancient “costume” as an implicitly neutral category. Furthermore, while these examples focus primarily on material garments and bodily comportment, I argue that this context is crucial to understanding the social-political significance of the metaphor of being clothed with Christ for early assemblies steeped in this “face-to-face” culture. The baptismal proclamation was uttered collectively against the backdrop of a world in which boundaries of Jew/Greek, slave/free, male and female were shored up and hierarchized through appeals to the body and its adornment.

Baptismal Clothing Imagery and the Dissolution of Social Boundaries and Binaries

Although Hans Dieter Betz describes the metaphor of being clothed in Christ as an “explanatory insertion of great significance,”⁵² this significance is rarely explored in conversation with the much-controverted dissolution of binaries Paul cites in Galatians 3:28 (cf. Col 3:10–11; 1 Cor 12:13).⁵³ I argue, however, that the preceding discussion of cultural ideologies of dress, embodiment, and status contributes new dimensions to the ongoing discussion of equity as a social imaginary in early assemblies in Christ. Rather than engaging vv. 27–28 as separate ideas—one speaking to the circumstances of the individual and the second to the larger

52. *Galatians*, 186. “The language is certainly figurative, but it goes beyond the dimension of merely social and ethical inclusion in a religious community; it suggests an event of divine transformation.”

53. These citations of the formula famously omit the “no male and female” pair.

community—I argue that they might be fruitfully read in causal relationship with one another in the service of an alternative social order. Given the centrality of dress to the construction and maintenance the larger social structure, an understanding of self and community as clothed in Christ emerges in contact and conflict with material practices of dress that identified and differentiated persons based on kyriarchal notions of “natural” power and privilege.

Whether or not the assemblies to which Paul wrote could have understood or envisioned social-political transformation based upon the baptismal proclamation has been a matter of much debate among feminist scholars since the 1970s. On the one hand, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues that the baptismal formula should be understood not as an eschatological claim or a return to a primal androgyny but rather as a radical transformation of social relations in the present. Arguing that the baptismal proclamation functions at the ecclesiological rather than anthropological level, Schüssler Fiorenza writes, “While patristic and gnostic writers could express the equality of Christian women with men only as ‘manliness’ or as abandonment of her own sexual nature, Gal 3:28 does not extol maleness but the oneness of the body of Christ, the church, where all differences are overcome and all structures of domination are rejected.”⁵⁴ For Schüssler Fiorenza, the baptismal formula is thus a political and ecclesiological claim that initiates an ongoing struggle for justice and equity within the community.⁵⁵

In conversation with Schüssler Fiorenza’s influential argument, scholars such as Lone Fatum and Dale Martin argue that Gal 3:28 should not be read as the impetus for any social

54. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Neither Male nor Female: Alternative Vision and Pauline Modification,” in *In Memory of Her*, 205–241, 219.

55. See Schüssler Fiorenza, “Ideology, Power, and Interpretation: Galatians 3:28,” in *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 149–174.

movement or struggle for the equal participation of wo/men as wo/men.⁵⁶ Instead, they contend that no elevation in status for wo/men and other marginalized groups can be gleaned from the baptismal formula, as the totalizing androcentric bias of the text and context makes such a conception impossible for Paul or his audience to imagine, let alone implement. Ancient androgyny, as has been underscored in response to Meeks' work, did not indicate *equality* of male and female elements but rather the *absorption* of the female into the male.⁵⁷ To this end, Lone Fatum argues that Gal 3:28 "does not allow Christian women an opportunity of being affirmed as women, but fixes them in a state of asexuality dependent upon the androcentric concept of human normality."⁵⁸ Fatum's view of androcentric androgyny, however, is totalizing and does not leave space to consider the evidence that enslaved and free(d) wo/men in early assemblies in Christ utilized this proclamation as grounds to argue for their equal participation within the *ekklesiai*. As I will discuss in more detail below, it was not only possible for wo/men to "think outside" of androcentric androgyny and kyriarchal inequality but also to enact and effect its opposite in part through the manipulation of hegemonic practices of dress and adornment.⁵⁹

56. Lone Fatum, "The Image of God and the Glory of Man: Women in Pauline Congregations," in *The Image of the God: Gender Models in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*, ed. Kari Elisabeth Børreson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 50–133; eadem, "Women, Symbolic Universe, and Structures of Silence: Challenges and Possibilities in Androcentric Texts," *Studia Theologica* 43(1989): 61–80. Dale Martin, "The Queer History of Galatians 3:28," in *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 77–90.

57. Martin, "Queer History," 83. For a discussion of how discourses of sexual difference were negotiated among early Christians, see Benjamin Dunning, *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference in Early Christian Thought*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) has long been a key text in thinking about gender in antiquity along a spectrum of masculinity, or the "one-sex" body theory. For a critique of this framework, see Helen King, *The One-sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence*, History of Medicine in Context (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013).

58. Fatum, "The Image of God and the Glory of Man," 79. Martin, "Queer History," 84–85.

59. This statement implies that "women" represents a unified category uninflected by race/ethnicity and/or status. For an intersectional reading of this text, see Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, "'Asking the Other Question': An

The question behind the question structuring these debates about social equality roils around the extent to which embodied differences *matter* in the construction of social difference, and whether social “equality” is possible at all in contexts of where perfection is measured against an andro-kyriocentric norm. It is here that the call that the baptized have clothed themselves with Christ might be productively reintroduced into a conversation that all but sets it aside. Just as Gal 3:28 is often characterized as a spiritual rather than social-material reality, so also do scholars tend to read Gal 3:27 as indicating an abstract metaphorical-theological concept.⁶⁰ In light of the above discussion of clothing ideologies, I argue that the notion of being clothed with Christ represents an alternative imaginary of the relationship of clothing to structures of power. This clothing metaphor presents a challenge to a world in which strictly delineated clothing practices encoded one’s “natural” role in the social structure. And this challenge was not only theoretical or metaphysical, but one taken up and enacted by those, like the Corinthian wo/men prophets, who wished to materialize this alternative vision of clothing and authority.

Before moving into an analysis of the sites where being clothed with Christ collides with material practices of dress and adornment in early assemblies, it is necessary to articulate the relationship between metaphor and materiality as it relates to these discourses. Rather than seeing this clothing rhetoric as free-floating and immaterial, I argue that this, like all metaphors,

Intersectional Approach to Galatians 3:28 and the Colossian Household Codes,” *Biblical Interpretation* 18 (2010): 364–89.

60. This is especially the case in Jung Hoon Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, though his arguments about this passage are built upon a larger history of connecting this language with Paul’s language of the “New Adam.” He writes, “it is probable that the putting-on-Christ metaphor in Gal 3.27 describes what the new creation has brought about in the believer, that is, a radical change from the Adamic to the Christ-like. The believer used to resemble the fallen Adam, but he has been re-created in Christ. The old nature of the fallen Adam, which used to occupy his being, has now been replaced by the new nature of Christ. He has put on Christ as his garment; he is now governed by a Christ-like character.” *The Significance of Clothing Imagery*, 124.

must be engaged as part of a web of connections which are effective and meaningful only in their interactions and intersections with the social-cultural context and the circumstances of both author(s) and interpreter(s). Metaphors can create new ways of “seeing” the world, but always in relation to what already exists. While this means that historians can never trace the intended or received meanings of a given phrase once and for all, it also opens space to consider the ways in which this interaction between symbolic universe and social world can give rise to unanticipated sites of resistance or reimagination.

In “Can an Enslaved God Liberate?” Sheila Briggs offers a nuanced model of the political possibilities generated where metaphor and theology meet the material circumstances of life in antiquity.⁶¹ She cites the example of the *kenosis* passage in Philippians 2:7ff as an example of a text which seems, on the surface, to valorize the enslaved while also working very hard below the surface to absolve Christ of any association with enslaved status. She writes,

Phil 2:7b [(“but he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave)] is not *about* slavery as a social institution. . . Yet when one has established that Philippians does not contain a reference to the social institution of slavery, one is confronted with the fact that the material reality of that social relationship has been transformed into metaphor, that the cultural, including the religious, imagination of the Greco-Roman world is bounded by the mentality of a slave society.⁶²

Greco-Roman culture was saturated with the institution of enslavement, and Briggs argues that this makes it possible for the text to draw upon tropes and “ideals” of enslavement (e.g.,

61. Sheila Briggs, “Can an Enslaved God Liberate?: Hermeneutical Reflections on Philippians 2:6-11,” *Semeia* 47(1989): 137–53. Her work also intervenes on the division of texts into the binary “liberative” and “oppressive.” She argues that we must accept that some texts do not do the work of justice, but this does not mean that they might not be used, “from below,” in the service of an alternative project. More recently, Tyler Schwaller analyzes the letters of Paul through the lens of queer theory and highlights the centrality of enslavement to the development of early Christianity as well as the myriad ways in which the enslaved worked against their dehumanization. See Schwaller, “The Use of Slaves in Early Christianity: Slaves as Subjects of Life and Thought” (Th.D. Diss., Harvard University, 2017).

62. *Ibid.*, 143.

unwavering obedience to the enslaver) in ways that do not valorize or work to the advantage of the enslaved but rather bolster and legitimize the power of the enslaver and the ideologies and institutions that uphold it.⁶³

Briggs also sheds light on the simmering anxiety in the text, which is eager to distinguish Christ's ontological freedom from the social and material circumstances of enslavement.⁶⁴ She writes, "To be able to think the enslavement of God makes it possible to conceive of an inversion of the hierarchy of being and worth held in ancient society."⁶⁵ What the text makes possible it also submerges, and that submergence is the starting point for an alternative vision.⁶⁶ Within this very framing which serves the kyriarchal regime lies the possibility of resistance to it, as it holds out the possibility that such systems are not natural or given but subject to deconstruction.⁶⁷ Briggs' insights bring to light what often gets lost in discussions of the baptismal formula:

63. "Can an Enslaved God Liberate?," 146: "Phil 2:6-11 on the metaphorical and theological level was part of a social construction of reality that conveyed the message to those enslaved that opposition to their slavery was as hopeless as resistance to their humanity."

64. This is also a key tension in the ancient Greek novels discussed above.

65. "Can an Enslaved God Liberate?," 149.

66. See also Briggs' discussion of intersectionality and Galatians 3:28: "Slavery and Gender," in *On the Cutting Edge: The Study of Women in the Biblical Worlds Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, eds. Jane Schaberg, Alice Bach, and Esther Fuchs (New York: Continuum, 2007), 171–92.

67. This slippage has also been identified in texts, such as 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:10–11, which modify the status erasures encoded in the baptismal formula and omit the "no male and female" element altogether. Schüssler Fiorenza identifies this erasure as key evidence for an ongoing emancipatory strain within the earliest assemblies. In response to those who saw the baptismal call as a social-political mandate, she argues that early Christian authorities instantiated a Christianized version of the "domestic code" tradition which codified the role behaviors deemed proper for wo/men and the enslaved who seem to have posed an especial challenge. In these same contexts, modifications are made to the baptismal clothing metaphor, as we see a shift between the "Christ" that is put on in Galatians and Romans to the "new human" in Ephesians and Colossians. While this shift receives only a modicum of the attention paid to modifications of the latter part of the formula, it comes as no surprise that those who wish to reaffirm kyriarchal household relations as a communal norm would shift the notion of what is "put on" from the radically disruptive political figure "Christ" to the more generalized "new human." In these cases, it is striking that it is the ethical framework of the community which will set them apart from the broader cultural context and not the practices of social equality. Here, we see further echoes of anxieties that emerge in later writings—that the radical claims that likely drew the marginalized to the assemblies in Christ might also be a liability, bringing potentially dangerous attention to the community.

debates over the social-political organization of the community were not only engaged rhetorically, theologically, and philosophically but were also developed at the level of the body and contested in no small part on those grounds.

The Fashion of the Christ: Alternative Arrangements in the Corinthian Assembly

To this point, I have addressed baptismal clothing imagery and cultural ideologies of dress and adornment as discourses which interpenetrate one another and have argued that material clothing practices and their social-political meanings should be considered when attempting to understand the meaning of baptismal clothing imagery. In so doing, this chapter works toward an understanding not only of the *meaning* of this language in the contexts it is deployed, but also what it *does* in shaping the world(s) of those who received them. Thus, in this last section I return to a distinction posed first by Wayne Meeks—that Paul’s response to the Corinthian wo/men prophets’ fervor for equality was aimed at distinguishing “functional equality” from the “symbols of difference” which lay at the heart of ancient gender differentiation. On this, Meeks writes,

Against this “cosmic audacity,” Paul insists on the preservation of the *symbols* of the present, differentiated order. Women remain women and men remain men and dress accordingly, even though ‘the end of the ages has come upon them.’ Yet these symbols have lost their ultimate significance, for the ‘form of this world is passing away. Therefore, Paul accepts and even insists upon the equality of role of man and woman in this community which is formed already by the Spirit that belongs to the end of days.’⁶⁸

But the very idea that “women remain women” and “men remain men” and that they “dress accordingly” belies a troublesome relationship between gender comportment and social order, and underscores how disrupting one can lead to a dangerous upending of the other.

68. Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne,” 208.

Following Briggs' model, even if this characterization represents Paul's side of the story, that he needs to respond in this way at all to the arguments posed by the Corinthians highlights that the counterargument was at stake as well—that the social imaginary proposed by the baptismal formula necessitates a transformation in the material, embodied symbols which constructed and naturalized the kyriarchal structure. The much-discussed example of the Corinthian wo/men prophets offers up an important example of the intersections of clothing metaphors and material practices in the political struggles that emerge in the wake of the baptismal proclamation. Against the grain of Paul's argument, this very early example of the ways in which theology and politics converge around debates about clothing provides an important glimpse into why clothing practices—and wo/men's clothing practices in particular—were a matter of ongoing concern for early Christian authorities in the second and third centuries and beyond.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is one of few writings included in the New Testament to refer to wo/men in authoritative roles directly and has been generative for feminist scholars despite the convoluted argument Paul levies against the way that wo/men's hair and heads are arrayed while prophesying. Having urged the community to "be imitators of me, as I imitate Christ"⁶⁹ (1 Cor 11:1)—perhaps a subtle hint that he has "put on Christ" the correct way—Paul makes a series of arguments against the Corinthian men and wo/men who refuse to comply with what he believes to be properly gendered hairstyle and head-covering practices.⁷⁰ First, he argues from tradition

69. For a reading of Paul's calls for imitation through a Foucauldian discursive lens, see Elizabeth Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, WJK Press, 1991).

70. For discussion of the role of men in this passage, see Gillian Townsley, *The Straight Mind in Corinth: Queer Readings Across 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, *Semeia Studies* 88 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017). Her analysis responds to the work of those such as Jerome Murphy O'Connor and Richard Oster. See Murphy O'Connor "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482-500; Oster, "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11.4," *NTS* 34 (1988): 481-505.

(11:2). Second, he makes a hierarchal claim that “Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of every wife, and God is the head of Christ.” (v. 3). Third, he turns to honor and shame, punning on the aforementioned “hierarchy of heads”—“Any man who prays or prophesies with his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head—it is one and the same as having her head shaved.” (vv. 4-6). Fourth, he deploys the narrative of creation to argue that man is the image and reflection of God, while woman is the reflection of man (vv. 7-8). Fifth, he argues that head covering is necessary as a symbol of authority “because of the angels” (vv. 9-10).⁷¹ Sixth, he argues from mutual dependence: “For just as woman came from man, so man comes thorough woman, but all things come from God.” (vv. 11-12); and seventh, he argues from nature: “Does not nature (φύσις) itself teach that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him. But if a woman wears long hair, it is her glory?”⁷² (vv. 13-15).⁷³ Finally, 1 Corinthians argues from precedent: “But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.” (v. 16).

Against the grain of Paul’s claims, it is possible to discern hints of the arguments posed by his opponents. Perhaps most obviously, they have differing understandings of “headship” and the order of creation (11:2–6). Questions of honor and shame are at stake here, which would have been a very forceful argumentative strategy in a “face-to-face” culture where these are

71. While outside the scope of this dissertation, the question of what meant by “because of the angels” has been quite puzzling to scholars. See Jason David BeDuhn, “‘Because of the Angels’: Unveiling Paul’s Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118.2 (1999): 295–320.

72. For more on the hypersexualization of women’s hair as a strategy of subordination in 1 Corinthians, see Mary Rose D’Angelo, “Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels.”

73. See also Troy Martin, “Paul’s Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13-15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123.1 (2004): 75–84.

slippery but significant modes of social currency.⁷⁴ While Paul argues that wayward head and hair covering and practices disgrace the offending person's "head"—with the pun on headship very much intended—his opponents are apparently convinced that their bodies are no longer subject to such strictures of propriety which serve the interests of a social-political structure that no longer applies. Furthermore, these arguments are not only political but also theological. Paul argues not for adherence to norms of "propriety" in contexts of interaction with the broader culture, but in those of prophetic encounter with the divine in the context of the assembly. Thus, the debate between Paul and the Corinthians is not just about whether to cover one's head but the extent to which gendered norms of clothing and comportment are and remain significant in the eyes of the divine.

In her groundbreaking recovery of the Corinthian wo/men prophets' arguments, Antoinette Clark Wire argues that both sides appeal to the equality articulated in the baptismal formula, and especially to the meaning and implications of the final claim that there is "no longer male and female." Clark Wire identifies this as a primary source of the letter's discontent, as the baptismal proclamations were taken up and embodied by these wo/men in ways that ran counter to Paul's own interpretation.⁷⁵ According to Wire, the discussion of men as the "image of God" in 1 Cor 11:7–9 and the absence of the "no male and female" in 1 Cor 12:13 indicates that there was no small debate about gender (in)equality and the implications of the baptismal formula for what constitutes an "orderly" arrangement in the assembly. Paul's reassertion of the hierarchy of

74. See Plevnik, "Honor/Shame" in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. Pilch and Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 106–14; Carolyn Osiek, "Women, Honor, and Context in Mediterranean Antiquity," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 64.1 (2008): 323–37; Alicia Batten, "Neither Gold nor Braided Hair (1 Timothy 2.9; 1 Peter 3.3): Adornment, Gender and Honour in Antiquity."

75. Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 122–128.

creation may be read as an attempt at “warding off a Corinthian view that the believer already *embodies* God’s image in Christ”—a view grounded in appeals to the baptismal proclamation and its allusions to the first account of creation.⁷⁶

For these wo/men, equality was an imminent reality, with transformations in the political order of the world necessarily affecting how equity is embodied and performed. Wire concludes, “This passage indicates that the important functions of prayer and prophecy are carried out by women as well as men without any distinctive sign in their dress indicating subordinate status.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, Mary Rose D’Angelo locates the baptismal notion of being clothed with Christ as an impetus for an alternative set of clothing practices, writing

The women in the Corinthian community (and, despite 11:16, perhaps of other communities as well) may have rejected the wearing of veils on the basis of their experience of ‘putting on Christ’ in baptism. They would thus have sought to continue the baptismal practices within the assembly, asserting that the gendered, sexual meaning given to their heads was abrogated ‘in Christ’—through their baptism and within the community.⁷⁸

However, it is crucial here not to equate unveiling with liberation, which is a common Western feminist presupposition that Saba Mahmood and Fatima Tofghi have rightly critiqued.⁷⁹ And, indeed, the language of “veiling” in a specific sense is absent here as Paul instead uses language of being “covered” or “uncovered” (κατακαλύπτω or ἀκατακαλύπτω). Thus, the issue might more rightly be described as a contestation over what Myerowitz Levine refers to as the “gendered grammar” of ancient hair, where hair functioned both metonymically and

76. Ibid., 123. Emphasis mine.

77. Ibid., 130.

78. D’Angelo, “Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels,” 137.

79. See Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*. See also Fatima Tofghi, “Unveiling the European Woman,” in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 478–491.

metaphorically as a cipher for the self and as a stereotype of women's sexuality.⁸⁰ This association was deployed with particular potency to denigrate women in "disorderly" cults whose free-flowing hair represented an uncontrolled state of mania.⁸¹

Without essentializing the veil as the quintessential garment of "otherness" and subordination, it is still possible to see in this larger argument two material implications of the Corinthian wo/men prophets' political clothing practices which were likely grounded in and justified theologically by appeals to the baptismal formula and the notion of being clothed with Christ. Against Paul's interpretation, these wo/men saw the status reversals embedded within the baptismal formula as a performative claim which intervened not only in relations of power but also on the symbolics of clothing and bodily comportment which materialized and upheld them. Joseph A. Marchal highlights that while the framework of androcentric androgyny so often applied to these discussions presumes that the Corinthian wo/men prophets understood their actions in those terms,⁸² this totalizing theory of ancient androgyny is unable to account for the multiplicity and diversity of androgyny in antiquity. Engaging the work of Butler and Jack Halberstam, Marchal argues that the Corinthian wo/men's reshaping of their bodily comportment to subvert gender norms was not an attempt to "make themselves male" but rather a troubling of this very binary. Marchal highlights that the Corinthian wo/men's transformative bodily practices

80. Molly Myerowitz Levine, "The Gendered Grammar of Ancient Mediterranean Hair," in *Off with Her Head!: The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, 76–111.

81. Molly Myerowitz Levine, "The Gendered Grammar of Ancient Mediterranean Hair" in *Off with Her Head!: The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, 76–111. "Individual actors through their individual acts participate in a larger grammar, a system of collective significance, which, *inter alia*, is used to make symbolic statements regarding women's place in the larger social order and cultural scheme. In practice, whenever stories are told and acts are performed, members of a group manipulate and transform hair as if it were a word in a sentence, instinctually conforming to a dynamic but firm set of rules, a grammar that paradoxically enables transformation even as it suppresses true change." "Gendered Grammar," 81.

82. See also Joseph Marchal, "A Close Corinthian Shave: Trans/Androgyny," in *Appalling Bodies: Queer Figures Before and After Paul's Letters* (New York: Oxford, 2020), 30–70.

might be read as a performance of “female masculinity” that forced a reckoning with the imperial gender framework that assigned “proper” gendered modes of dressing and comporting oneself. Marchal writes, “Female masculinities suggest gender repetitions, combinations, and citations besides androgyny, forms of action and identification that do not foreclose the variety of roles played by females; forms that offer other routes for considering how gendered and embodied scripts can operate differently and repeat subversively.”⁸³ Rather than imagining androgyny as the “reunification” of male and female or as the absorption of the masculine into the feminine, therefore, the Corinthian wo/men prophets subversively redeploy cultural ideologies of clothing to disrupt the normative framework which kyriarchally differentiates men and women, assigning “proper” practices to both.

Furthermore, Shelly Matthews has argued in intersectional terms that the kinds of bodily modifications Paul scorns as disgraceful in this passage might be understood “from below” as performances of solidarity with and among the marginalized. Matthews demonstrates that Paul’s claim that the wo/men who refuse to veil are “one and the same as those whose heads are shaven” might rightly be understood as an act of affiliation with those who were marked in their bodies as belonging to the very bottom of the social ladder. She writes,

To take up a practice that makes her “as one and the same as the woman whose head is shorn (11:5b)” is a dramatic challenge to conventional norms of propriety. . . . Shaving of the head may signal a woman’s voluntary break with a man through divorce or renunciation of engagement; or it may serve as a signal of widowhood. But further, and at least as provocatively, a forcibly shaved head signals shame, sometimes associated with a convicted adulteress, sometimes with a menial slave. Therefore, we might imagine that the unveiled women in the Corinthian assembly are troubling not just the male/female binary or an early Christian baptismal formula, but also the slave/free binary and—in as much as race/ethnicity

83. Marchal, “Female Masculinity in Corinth?: Bodily Citations and the Drag of History,” *Neotestamentica* 48.1 (2014): 93–113, 105.

are constructed in relation to status—perhaps categories of Jew, Greek, Barbarian, and Scythian as well.⁸⁴

Considering Matthews' work, we begin to see more fully the ways in which transformations in clothing practices have a ripple effect that extends beyond the male/female binary. The Corinthian wo/men prophets, with heads uncovered and hair wild and perhaps even shaven, represent and perform their understanding of the assembly as an assemblage of identities which have been proclaimed at baptism as equal in the eyes of God. 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 thus encodes vestiges of practices and possibilities which militate against Meeks' notion of the co-existence of “functional equality” alongside “symbolic difference.” Indeed, for the Corinthian wo/men prophets such a claim represents a contradiction in terms, as ideologies of clothing and adornment are never neutral but always marked by structures of power.

By highlighting the political and theological possibilities embedded in the notion of being clothed with Christ and its disruptive embodiments in Corinth, I wish to press beyond the notion of transformative clothing practices as intervening only upon the deconstruction of gender but to consider what it makes possible for constructing alternative visions of the role of self and/in the social-political order. Reading against the grain of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, we see flickers of the ongoing tensions that coalesced around dress and adornment as a charged site of interaction between the theology and politics of the community and the ideologies which structured the broader cultural context in which it was situated. This site of struggle and conflict helps move readers from the attempts to assess the *meaning* of putting on Christ to addressing the *effects* of

84. Shelly Matthews, “A Feminist Analysis of the Veiling Passage,” *lectio difficilior* 2 (2015): 1–20, 12. See also her “‘To Be One and the Same with the Woman Whose Head is Shaven’: Resisting the Violence of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 from the Bottom of the Kyriarchal Pyramid,” in *Sexual Violence and Sacred Texts*, ed. Amy Kalmanofsky (Cambridge: FSR Books, 2017), 31–51.

this clothing imagery in fashioning community. If being clothed with Christ is the theory, disruptive dress is the praxis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the imagery of the baptized as “clothed with Christ” should be read as an integral part of the much-discussed dissolution of binaries that follows immediately upon its heels. Rather than searching for the origins of this puzzling phrase in discrete categories of “religion” or “ritual,” I argue that its resonance as a political, theological, and social claim should be understood alongside cultural ideologies of clothing, status, and power. In conversation with those who underscore the ways in which the Corinthian wo/men prophets harnessed the power of the baptismal formula to envision the world otherwise, I have argued that this alternative vision was developed and grounded in a redefinition of practices of dress and adornment for those “clothed in Christ.”

With this transformative potential in mind, I turn in the next two chapters to texts which use rhetorics of dress and adornment to limit, rather than expand, the boundaries of communal belonging. The “dress codes” in the letters of 1 Peter and 1 Timothy use clothing rhetoric to naturalize wo/men’s subordinate status and to strip them of their authority and influence. While these two texts utilize almost identical anti-adornment tropes that circulated widely in the ancient world, I argue that the two should be studied on their own terms. In the second half of this dissertation, I engage in an analysis of 1 Timothy and 1 Peter respectively to highlight how each text uniquely develops cultural and philosophical tropes of dress and adornment to theologize wo/men’s subordination. That later authors were continually forced to contend with these issues reveals that the intersections of clothing, gender, and authority were ongoing sites of contestation

and redefinition with implications not just for individual bodies but for the very order and organization of this world.

Chapter 2

“As is Proper for Women who Profess *θεοσέβεια*”: (En)Gendering God-fear in 1 Timothy

Claudia Quinta traced her descent from Clausus of old, and her beauty matched her nobility. Chaste was she, though not reputed so. Rumor unkind had wronged her, and a false charge had been trumped up against her: it told against her that she dressed sprucely, that she walked abroad with her hair dressed in varied fashion, that she had a ready tongue for gruff old men.¹

[Likewise, I wish] also for women to dress themselves in orderly clothing with shame and prudence, and not with their hair braided and with gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but in good works, as is proper for women who profess God-fear. Let a woman learn in silence with complete submission. I allow no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; but she is to be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with prudence. (1 Timothy 2:9–15)²

In book four of the *Fasti*, Ovid recounts a well-known tale of the Roman matron Claudia Quinta (ca. 300 BCE) and her efforts in bringing the mother goddess Cybele to Rome’s shores.³ In Ovid’s retelling, when the ship carrying the goddess runs aground in the shallows of the Tiber, even the strongest men of Rome are unable to coax the ship or the image of the goddess contained within to budge. The high-born matron Claudia Quinta at last emerges from the crowd of matrons waiting to welcome Cybele and attempts to persuade the goddess despite the ill-

1. Claudia Quinta genus Clauso referebat ab alto, nec facies impar nobilitate fuit: casta quidem, sed non et credita: rumor iniquus laeserat, et falsi criminis acta rea est; cultus et ornatis varie prodissse capillis obfuit, ad rigidos promptaque lingua senes. (Ovid, *Fasti* [LCL Frazier], 4.305-311).

2. Ωσαύτως [καὶ] γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, ἀλλ’ ὁ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν. Γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ· διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρὸς, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. Ἀδὰμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη, εἶτα Εὕα. καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν· σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, ἐὰν μείνωσιν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἁγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης· Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

3. For more on this and other iterations of Claudia Quinta’s narrative, see Eleanor Leach, “Claudia Quinta (Pro Caelio 34) and an Altar to Magna Mater,” *Dictynna* 4 (2007): 1–10. Glenys Davies, *Gender and Body Language in Roman Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 65.

repute she had garnered for her luxurious dress and disrespectful wit. According to Ovid, she fixes her gaze upon the goddess, and pleads:

Fruitful Mother of the Gods, graciously accept your suppliant's prayers on one condition. They say I am not chaste. If you condemn me, I will confess my guilt; convicted by the verdict of a goddess, I will pay the penalty with my life. But if I am free of crime, give a proof of my innocence, and, chaste as you, yield to my chaste hands.⁴

As she pulls lightly on the rope, the ship comes easily to shore and affirms Claudia's virtue with a divine stamp of approval.

In its various iterations, the story of Claudia Quinta is leveraged to do work at the intersection of gender, piety, and politics, and figures such as Cicero and Livy applaud her as an exemplar of feminine virtue to decry the declining morals of the wo/men of their time.

According to Krishni Burns, "During the Roman Empire, a number of authors, from Pliny to Augustine, held up Claudia Quinta as an example of Republican virtue to the point that her identity as a paragon subsumed her role as a religious figure."⁵ Ovid's first-century CE retelling of a third-century BCE legend thus has much to say about how virtue is read upon the body and the role of the divine in assessing the proper performance of femininity. Whereas her peers deemed her unchaste due to the perceived showiness of her clothing and biting wit, she appeals to a higher authority and the goddess vouches for her virtue. In this narrative, the divine has a

4. supplicis, alma, tuae, genetrix fecunda deorum,
accipe sub certa condicione preces.
casta negor. si tu damnas, meruisse fatebor;
morte luam poenas iudice victa dea.
sed si crimen abest, tu nostrae pignora vitae
re dabis et castas casta sequere manus' (*Fasti*, 4.319-324; Translation adapted from Frazier LCL).

5. Krishni Burns, "Constructing a New Woman for the Body Politic: The Creation of Claudia Quinta," *Helios* 44.1 (2017): 81-98, 86. Burns highlights how the construction of Claudia Quinta as a proper matron coincides with anxieties about women's opulent dress and their political lobbying as expressed in Livy's account of the *Lex Oppia*. She writes, "Claudia's ostentatious appearance was similarly deemed inappropriate, as it ran counter to current law and garnered her a bad reputation; and yet nothing about her appearance was outside the bounds of traditional dress, and her virtue is upheld by a divinity. Claudia's presence, both in literary constructions of the myth and in her physical statue at the entrance to the Palatine cult site, bridged the gap between the foreign exoticism of the cult and the traditional culture of Roman religion." "Constructing a New Woman," 92.

role to play in assessing the proper performance of gender and, in so doing, hold up its mores as signifiers of piety.⁶

The intersections of gendered virtue and piety are also at issue around matters of dress and adornment in the second-century epistle 1 Timothy, though in this case the judgment of the assembly is not set apart from but stands in for that of the divine. By calling upon wo/men in the *ekklesia* to dress themselves “in orderly clothing with shame and prudence (αἰδώς, σωφροσύνη), and not with their hair braided and with gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but in good works as is proper for women who profess God-fear (θεοσέβεια),” 1 Timothy distances showy ornamentation from the proper expression of piety for wo/men. Making an even stronger claim to the intersections of gender, embodiment, and piety than Paul himself in 1 Corinthians 11, the Paul of 1 Timothy renders properly dressing and adorning the body into a proclamation of reverence for the divine. In this chapter, I explore in depth the theological resonance of the “dress codes” of 1 Tim 2:8–10 which are often subsumed within historical arguments about the economic status of wo/men in the community.⁷ By justifying its subordinating clothing rhetoric with the phrase “as is proper for wo/men who profess God-fear (θεοσέβεια),” I argue that 1

6. The gods in antiquity were quite concerned with how followers dressed, particularly during festivals and rites. This inscription of 200 lines from 92–91 BCE Messenia provides a list of regulations for the festival of Andania, including prescriptions regarding the clothing of initiates. While men are commanded only to “stand barefoot and wear white clothing,” women’s dress is much more highly regulated with differentiations in the cost and type of garment based on the status of the wearer. No women, however, are permitted to “wear gold, or rouge, or white makeup, or a hair band, or braided hair, or shoes made of anything but felt or leather from sacrificial victims.” “The Andanian Mysteries of Messenia,” in *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook*, ed. Marvin W. Meyer; (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 51–59, 53. Alicia Batten discusses these and similar clothing regulations in ancient cults, highlighting their echoes in early Christianity. See Alicia Batten, “(Dis)Orderly Dress.” See also Laura Gawlinski, *The Sacred Law of Andania: A New Text with Commentary* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

7. See for instance Alan Padgett, “Wealthy Women at Ephesus. I Timothy 2:8-15 in Social Context,” *Interpretation* 41.1 (1987): 19-31. Padgett argues that this passage does not exclude all women from leadership but is concerned primarily with wealthy converts of high social standing who were particularly susceptible to the itinerant “false teachers” that 1 Timothy rejects. On the topic of divine interest in economic issues, I am indebted to the insights of Jennifer A. Quigley. Her framework of “theo-economics” traces the complex intertwining of theology and economics and provides a detailed and innovative accounting of the role of the divine in matters of economic interest. See Jennifer A. Quigley, *Divine Accounting: Theo-Economics in Early Christianity*, Synkrisis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

Timothy brings theology to the level of the body, as adherence to cultural ideologies of dress and their concomitant social roles becomes a publicly-adjudicated measure of wo/men's piety.

The Context of the Letter

1 Timothy is part of the Pastoral letter collection alongside 2 Timothy and Titus, all of which are ascribed to Paul. While some scholars continue to assert that Paul himself penned these letters, the overwhelming consensus is that the Pastoral epistles are pseudonymous letters whose inscribed recipients were well-known protégés of Paul.⁸ While the question of authorship has been largely settled, scholars still debate precisely why the author of the Pastorals wrote in Paul's name.⁹ Dibelius and Conzelmann, for instance, argue that the author was a follower of the "Pauline school" and wished to translate his teachings to second generation, more "bourgeois," communities of Christ followers who are somewhat distanced from Paul's own eschatological fervor and apocalyptic certainty.¹⁰ More recently, Annette Merz has argued convincingly that the author of the Pastorals is not an unbiased "translator" of Paul's own teaching but rather worked

8. Perhaps most notably, Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible Commentaries 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

9. While often framed in moralistic terms as intentional deception, pseudonymity in antiquity was a variegated practice which did not hold the same moral valence as our contemporary notions of "forgery" or "plagiarism." Often, works are pseudonymously attributed so as to take on elements of their authority, invoke/interpret a particular intellectual lineage, or perhaps to secure transmission. This is not to say that the ancients were unconcerned with the morality of issues of misattribution or that cases of outright deception did not exist, but to emphasize that pseudonymous attribution should be read as one among many compositional practices and strategies in antiquity that do not map neatly onto our own. For an analysis that takes up the deception framework, see Bart Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (New York: Oxford, 2013). David Brakke's response outlines a variety of alternative modes of thinking about attribution in the context of early Christianity. See Brakke, "Early Christian Lies and the Lying Liars Who Wrote Them: Bart Ehrman's Forgery and Counterforgery," *The Journal of Religion* 96.3 (2016): 378–90. For discussion of author-function with particular attention to social, material, and discursive contexts of attribution practices see Karen King, "'What is an Author?': Ancient Author-Function in the *Apocryphon of John* and the Apocalypse of John," in *Scribal Practices and Social Structures among Jesus Adherents: Essays in Honor of John S. Kloppenborg*, eds. William E. Arnal, Richard Ascough, Robert A. Derrenbecker, and Philip A. Harland (Leuven: Peeters, 2016). 15–42.

10. For a critique of Dibelius/Conzelmann's "bourgeois Christianity," see Reggie Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, c1990).

explicitly in Paul's name in order to pin down a particular interpretation of some of his more controversial teachings.

To paraphrase her insights, Merz argues that the question should not be "How does the 'authentic' Paul help us to understand the pseudonymous letters?" (or vice versa) but rather "How do the pseudonymous letters actively work to *shape and reframe* Paul's thought?"¹¹ These moments of textual contact thus allow us to see where and to what ends the author of the Pastorals seeks to mold the reception of Paul's own rhetoric to establish once-and-for-all how Paul's own letters should be received and interpreted.¹² As I will discuss in more detail below, this approach can make it difficult to see the communities that existed and debated these issues behind these two authoritative Pauls.¹³ However, Merz's intertextual approach helps push the conversation away from notions of the author of the Pastorals as a dutiful translator of Paul's

11. Annette Merz, *Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus: intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption Der Pastoralbriefe*, Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments Bd. 52 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004). See also Merz, "The Fictitious Self-Exposition of Paul: How Might Intertextual Theory Suggest a Reformulation of the Hermeneutics of Pseudepigraphy?," in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, eds. Thomas L. Brodie, Dennis Ronald MacDonald, and Stanley E. Porter, trans. Brian McNeil, New Testament Monographs 16 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 113–32. See also Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Westminster, c1983), who sees the Pastorals and the *Acts of Paul* in conflict over the reception of Paul's legacy and teachings, with the latter perhaps being circulated orally by women. More recently, Susan Hylen rejects this thesis of distinction, arguing that the texts have much more in common regarding women than most scholars recognize. See *A Modest Apostle: Thecla and the History of Women in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). While it is outside the scope of this chapter to discuss the much-discussed relationship of the Pastorals to the *Acts of Paul*, and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* in particular, I note here a general trend toward overemphasizing the virtue of "modesty" as an isolated and distinctly "feminine" virtue rather than as part of a larger matrix of gendered virtue in studies of women and leadership in early Christianity.

12 For application of Merz's approach to another text in 1 Timothy, see Margaret Mitchell, "Corrective Composition, Corrective Exegesis: The Teaching on Prayer in 1 Timothy 2, 1–15," in *1 Timothy Reconsidered*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, Monographic Series of "Benedictina"; Biblical-ecumenical Section 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 41–62.

13. It should be noted as well that Merz emphasizes a deceit framework for understanding the Pastorals' pseudonymity. While I would push back on this point, Merz helpfully diverges from many previous scholars in taking seriously the strategies of self-referentiality and her work contributes in productive ways to our understanding of the rhetorical and discursive effects of writing in Paul's name for both the text and its readers. See Merz, "Fictitious Self-Exposition," 115–16.

teachings to an understanding of the letters as invested in claiming Pauline authority to push an interpretive agenda around issues—such as wo/men’s roles and the political organization of the community—which continued to be hotly debated.

The relationship of the Pastoral Epistles to the values and mores of the larger Roman Empire is another key question in scholarship on the letters.¹⁴ The Pastorals, and notably 1 Timothy, seem on the surface to accommodate or even assimilate Roman social mores and ethical values within the ethos of the assemblies in Christ. On the one hand, 1 Timothy utilizes elements of the “household code” tradition which outlined the proper kyriarchal order of members of the Roman household and applies them to relations within the *ekklesia*. This *topos* is developed in the letter’s notion of the *ekklesia* as the “household of God” (1 Tim 3:15), and the text prescribes silence and submission for women (2:8–15) and the enslaved (6:1–2) which are characteristic of early Christian deployments of domestic codes. Likewise, 1 Timothy’s prescriptions regarding dress, silence, and reproductive salvation fall squarely within this rhetorical unit, troubling the boundaries between so-called “private” and “public” space.¹⁵

14. This question of assimilation versus resistance is repeatedly taken up in relation to early Christian writings, and this is perhaps especially the case with 1 Timothy and 1 Peter. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this binary is problematic as texts do not exist in a vacuum but are produced and received in contexts where writers and hearers must negotiate—intra- and inter-personally—the forces, values, and demands of life under the Roman Empire.

15. The literature on the identification and function of “household codes” in early Christian writings is vast. See the Introduction and Chapter 1 for further discussion. There is some debate in the literature regarding whether 1 Timothy conceives of the assembly along the lines of a household. David C. Verner argues in favor of the social organization of the church in terms of that of the household in *The Household of God : The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, Dissertation Series Society of Biblical Literature 71 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983). Katherine Shaner highlights the qualifications for leadership in the community are based upon the model of kyriarchal subordination in the household, which obscures the actual participation of wo/men and the enslaved in the community. See Katherine Shaner, “Power in the Ekklesia” in *Enslaved Leadership in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford, 2018), 87–110. On the other hand, Korinna Zamfir argues that we should not consider the *ekklesia* as a solely domestic space, but rather understands the οἶκος θεοῦ as a political and cosmic space. She writes that the “community described metaphorically as oikos or domus or even an oikos of god(s) is not conceived as a household. The oikos-metaphor refers to human and divine societies – the city, the state (the Empire), the sacred sphere (the divine household and the cultic association), and even the cosmos. The latter is a society ruled by the supreme deity, inhabited by human and divine beings, explicitly designated as household and polis of God.” Korinna Zamfir, “Is

The letter also valorizes virtues which were considered particularly “Roman” or imperial values. For instance, εὐσέβεια, or piety, features prominently in the Pastorals and especially in 1 Timothy.¹⁶ In the Roman imperial context, εὐσέβεια referred to the duty and reverence due to the gods, to the state, and to the emperor as *Pater Patriae*.¹⁷ Angela Standhartinger sees the Pastoral letters’ emphasis on piety as influenced by both the Roman ideal and the Jewish apologetic use of the term. She argues that the Paul of the Pastorals deploys this language as intra religious polemic—highlighting that their communities “live in piety” and thus preserve the social order over against the impious and chaos-sowing followers of Christ whom they oppose.¹⁸ T. Christopher Hoklotubbe likewise highlights the rhetoric of piety as a political strategy of self-differentiation, where the Pastorals seek to distance themselves from the more radical strains of the movement which promoted the equality of wo/men and the enslaved and posed a challenge to an imperial structure that already suspected the movement of dangerous sedition.¹⁹ Thus,

the ekklesia a Household (of God)? Reassessing the Notion of οἶκος θεοῦ in 1 Tim 3.15,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 511–28, 526–27.

16. 1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7–8; 6:3–6; 6:11; 2 Tim 3:5; Tit 1:1.

17. As Standhartinger notes, with the rise of Augustus there is a renewed emphasis on piety in the framing of social and legal dynamics of household and state. In the *Res Gestae* 35, Augustus identifies himself as the *Pater Patriae* or “Father of the Fatherland” and thus situates the state as a macrocosm of the household with the ultimate *kyrios* at its head. See Angela Standhartinger, “‘Eusebeia’ in den Pastoralbriefen: Ein Beitrag zum Einfluss römischen Denkens auf das entstehende Christentum,” *Novum Testamentum*, 48.1 (2006): 51–82, 63. For comparison of 1 Timothy with Seneca’s *Epistulae Morales*, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “Reading to Virtue,” in *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture: Essays in Honor of Hans Dieter Betz*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 110–21.

18. “‘Eusebeia’ in den Pastoralbriefen,” 80–81. “Mit der Römischen Nobilität des 2. Jh. vertreten die Pastoralbriefe die These, dass ein ‚Leben in Frömmigkeit‘ gemäß göttlicher Ordnung Grundlage des gesellschaftlichen Wohlstandes und des Friedens ist. Konflikte entstehen allein in interner Auseinandersetzung (1 Tim 4:7–8; 6:3–6; 2 Tim 3:5). Die Pastoralbriefe behaupten, dass die von ihnen positiv beschriebenen christlichen Gemeinden ‘in Frömmigkeit leben’, und grenzen sich von einer unfrohen (1 Tim 1:9; 4:7–8; 6:5; 2 Tim 2:16) bzw. Schein frommen (2 Tim 3:12–13) Praxis ab.” See also Mary Rose D’Angelo, “‘Eusebeia’: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of 4 Maccabees and the Pastorals,” *Biblical Interpretation* 11.2 (2003): 139–65.

19. T. Christopher Hoklotubbe, *Civilized Piety: The Rhetoric of Pietas in the Pastoral Epistles and the Roman Empire* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017).

according to Hoklotubbe, the rhetoric of εὐσέβεια is used to address internal as well as external dynamics by constructing an ideal way of life built around notions of reverence and duty to God and empire. He writes, “The problem, then, that the Pastoral deployment of piety sets out to solve is, how could Christians show themselves to be loyal and obedient subjects to the Roman Empire and good neighbors to their peers without compromising the integrity of their exclusive devotion to a countercultural Jewish messiah who had been crucified by the Romans?”²⁰

This emphasis on the intersections of politics and theology in the Pastorals’ construction of piety is a productive framework for thinking through the rhetoric of dress in 1 Timothy 2:8–3:1a, and vv. 8–10 in particular.²¹ While the concerns with wo/men’s authority as well as anxieties about wo/men’s dress have been the topic of centuries of discussion in both academic and ecclesial contexts, these issues are not often considered as two sides of the same coin. But, as we have seen in the baptismal formula and its aftermath, questions of dress and adornment are bound up with questions of power. Echoes of the social implications embedded within the notion of being “clothed with Christ” continued to ignite struggles over the political organization of in-Christ communities and fueled theological debates about what piety *looks like* for women. Imperial values and virtues are not merely the backdrop for these debates, but provide the philosophical, theological, and cultural grist for imagining, on both sides, the contours of identity in Christ.

20. Ibid., 11.

21. While I focus primarily on vv. 8-10, I follow Annette Merz in demarcating 2:8-3:1a as a rhetorical unit. As noted in the previous chapter, rhetorics of dress and adornment are tied to social roles, and as such the claim that women are “saved by childbearing” is ideologically connected to the letter’s dress codes.

Moral Fibers: Gender and Virtue in the History of Scholarship on 1 Timothy 2:8–3:1a

The regulations concerning dress in 1 Timothy 2:8–3:1a have been, and continue to be, used as theological justification for limiting wo/men’s leadership in religious communities.²²

Infamously, Tertullian alludes to this passage as he demands that wo/men in his community dress themselves modestly as both penitence for and performance of Eve’s deception.²³ “Do you not know that you are each an Eve?” he asks, and continues, “*You* are the devil’s gateway: *you* are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree . . . And do you think about adorning yourselves over and above your tunics of skins?” This early riff on 1 Tim 2:15 and the association of wo/men’s clothing with their status as descendants of Eve is just one among many appeals to a genealogy of submission meant to keep wo/men in their place.²⁴ But it also evinces that such controversies over women’s dress were ongoing after 1 Timothy was written and circulated.

When analyzing this pericope, modern commentaries tend to make assumptions about these ancient wo/men based on 1 Timothy’s description of their clothing. For instance, Bruce Winter’s *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women in Pauline Communities* collects Roman legal codes, plays, and poetry to assert that the clothing prescriptions texts such as 1 Timothy are a response to the emergence of so-called “new

22. See for instance Andreas J. Köstenberger, and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005). Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: MIL Baker Book House, 1992). Sharon Hodgkin Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991).

23. *On the Apparel of Women* 1.1; see Carly Daniel Hughes, “Why Is She the “Devil’s Gateway”?” Debating Adornment in Christian Carthage,” in *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage: Dressing for the Resurrection*, 63–93 which connects Tertullian’s statements to his conflation of women, flesh, and shame.

24. I will address the question of dress, adornment, and genealogy in particular in the next chapter on 1 Peter.

women.” This type of woman, he writes, “was promiscuous, sometimes indulging in casual sexual liaisons as her husband might have done. Her interest was in self-gratification and not the good deeds that enhanced the lives of others.”²⁵ Winter’s approach takes andro/kyriocentric sources as descriptive rather than prescriptive, and as such is unable to recognize the ways in which this category of “new woman” is itself a rhetorical construction rather than a representation of a historical group of wo/men who identified themselves or were identified by others as such. Indeed, the anti-family, self-absorbed “new woman” stereotype has a long history, traveling under a host of names and emerging regularly when wo/men challenge the status quo. In her review of Winter’s work, Shelly Matthews puts it succinctly: “That is, as one sees the contours of W.’s New Woman emerge, one finds that she is really the ‘Old Woman’—as old as Eve herself, or at least as old as the many misogynist interpreters of Genesis 2 who blame all the world’s ills on Eve/Woman’s aggressive, dangerously sexual, desire.”²⁶ By not taking into account the methodological and historical insights of feminist and gender critical scholarship, Winter reifies a harmful category at the expense of the ancient wo/men he claims to bring into view.

Luke Timothy Johnson interprets 1 Timothy 2:8–10 through a binary lens of internal character vs. external comportment, which more implicitly relates the supposed dangers of wo/men’s dress. Like many scholars before him, he identifies the problem that the author seeks to address as one in which wo/men’s adornment has become a distraction in the space of worship. He writes, “Such self-adornment can also be disruptive of worship by causing excessive

25. Bruce W. Winter, “You Were What You Wore in Roman Law: Deciphering the Dress Codes of 1 Timothy 2:9-15,” *SBL Forum*, n.p. Online: <http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=277>

26. Shelly Matthews, review of *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* by Bruce Winter, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67.1 (2005): 162–63, 162.

attention to personal appearance rather than goodness of character.”²⁷ While less overt than Winter, Johnson inadvertently reinforces in his reading the notion that wo/men should be ever mindful of their appearance lest they lead men astray. Furthermore, Johnson presumes a binary between the cultivation of virtue and attention to clothing practices that mimics rather than questions the presuppositions of 1 Timothy’s anti-adornment rhetoric. This binary of “excessive attention to personal appearance” and “goodness of character” rehearses tropes of vanity as a particularly feminine vice without considering *why* 1 Timothy might tie ethics to clothing practices so closely. With these two examples, we see the ways in which the harmful legacies of 1 Timothy’s rhetoric of dress and adornment subtly make their way into contemporary scholarship, particularly when the perspective of the author is taken as authoritative and descriptive rather than prescriptive and crafted in response to alternative perspectives.

Feminist and gender-critical scholars have long been attuned to the dangers of such over-identification with the author and have read 1 Timothy 2 against the grain to bring to light the presence and participation of wo/men that the epistle desires to keep silent. For instance, Alicia Batten argues that the wo/men to whom 1 Timothy writes were likely wealthy and influential in and used their clothing practices to claim their authority within the community. She writes,

Women likely knew the consequences of their public face, and attempted to use their arts of adornment as tools to negotiate their involvement in the community at certain moments. At any rate, the fact that women continued to adorn themselves in the early church, as evident from the attention male writers give to the subject, reflects the value women placed on these practices.²⁸

27. Johnson, *1 Timothy*, 204. Kenneth Cukrowski comes to a similar conclusion regarding the “problem” of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in “An Exegetical Note on the Ellipsis in 1 Timothy 2:9,” in *Transmission and Reception: New Testament Text-critical and Exegetical Studies*, ed. Jeff Childers and D. C. Parker, (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2006), 232–38.

28. Batten, “Neither Gold Nor Braided Hair,” 501.

Rather than assessing their moral status in terms of the author's assessment, Batten helpfully situates the persistence of such "dress codes" in the context of ongoing struggles over wo/men's social advancement. Batten's argument that wo/men's wealth and influence was often expressed through their clothing practices is also well-supported by ancient evidence. As Ria Berg argues, jewelry and fine garments were a form of portable wealth which were largely outside of the control of the husband or patriarch.²⁹ Of course, such fineries were more widely accessible to women of high status, who could make financial contributions to the community and, in so doing, enhance their authority and influence within it.³⁰ This influence likely posed a significant challenge not only to ideologies of gender which relied upon the silence and subordination of wo/men, but also to those kyriarchal authorities who wished at once to consolidate their own authority and to avoid undue attention from potentially hostile outsiders.

The economic lens is an important one, but the focus on the display of wealth through adornment leaves little space to consider how 1 Timothy's dress codes might have fallen on the ears of those of lesser status. Furthermore, these interpretations do not get at the theological stakes of 1 Timothy's argumentation, which articulates proper dress and adherence to normative social roles as an expression of "God-fear." According to Kristi Upson-Saia, such attempts at scripting wo/men's dress represented attempts "first, to persuade and motivate Christians to dress

29. Ria Berg, "Wearing Wealth: Ornatus and Mundus Muliebris as Status Markers of Women in Imperial Rome," in *Women, Wealth, and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Päivi Setälä, ta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 25 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2002), 15–73.

30. Katherine Bain's work focuses women's socio-economic status in Asia Minor in this period. See *Women's Socioeconomic Status and Religious Leadership in Asia Minor in the First Two Centuries C.E.* Emerging Scholars (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2014). For analysis of the rhetorical deployment of wealthy women as patrons in early Christianity, see Shelly Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity*, Contraversions (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Hoklotubbe, "Honoring Piety in the *Ekklesia*," in *Civilized Piety*, 127–48.

in particular ways by convincing them of the orthodoxy of their interpretations of dress and, second, to infuse such appearances with scriptural, ethical, and theological meaning until Christians' physical appearance could ultimately signify the group's superior morality on its own."³¹ While Upson-Saia is writing primarily from the vantage of late antiquity and the text of 1 Timothy does not reflect a systematic or institutionalized framework of "orthodoxy" versus "heresy," Upson-Saia productively underscores that early Christian attempts to shape wo/men's dress were deployed not merely to limit the influence of a particular class of wo/men.³² Rather, they were deployed rhetorically to shape the organization of the community more broadly, and in so doing, worked to naturalize the intersections of dress, gender, and social order by justifying them on theological grounds.

Framing the Question: Categorizing the Rhetoric of Dress and Adornment in 1 Timothy

The questions we bring to ancient clothing rhetorics are often conditioned by modern categories and taxonomies of dress. That is, contemporary scholars have internalized a stark separation between "everyday" practices dress and those imbued with religious or sacred significance and our analyses are often structured accordingly. In this way, whether scholars explore the theological stakes of an argument about clothing depends in no small part on the type of clothing in question. For instance, the preceding chapter engages 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 as an example of the ways in which the metaphor of the baptized as "clothed with Christ" was materialized and embodied by the Corinthian wo/men prophets. There, Paul was tasked with arguing against those who performed an alternative social organization in part through their practices of dress and

31. Upson-Saia, *Early Christian Dress: Gender, Virtue, and Authority*, 36.

32. See Karen L. King, "Factions, Variety, Diversity, Multiplicity: Representing Early Christian Differences for the 21st Century" *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 23.3–4 (2011): 216–37.

adornment and, in so doing, reveals the fragility of the kyriarchal system that those wo/men sought to disrupt. Because head-covering practices and prophecy are the nodes around which the debate about gender norms turn in 1 Corinthians, theological issues stand in the foreground and scholars often focus their analysis of clothing in this passage at the intersections of gender and religion/theology. Rather than situating 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 as a text about “religious/theological dress” and 1 Timothy 2:8–15 as about “everyday” or “luxurious” dress, I ask instead what it would mean to bring the same questions to both texts: How is clothing rhetoric used to articulate a vision of social-political order? How is this order justified theologically? What counterarguments might have emerged in response to this rhetoric?

Korinna Zamfir and Joseph Verheyden highlight significant thematic overlaps in terminology and content between 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2 which, in line with Merz, indicates a desire—or even an anxiety—to “pin down” a particular interpretation of Paul’s controversial claims regarding wo/men both in 1 Cor 11 and 14:33–36b.³³ Both letters are concerned with the intersection of clothing practices and gender hierarchy (esp. 1 Cor 11:3,7; 1 Tim 2:12), both make arguments about what is “proper” for wo/men, particularly in the context of prayer and prophecy (1 Cor 11:13, 1 Tim 2:10), and both draw heavily on Genesis narratives in order to ground their arguments in favor of wo/men’s secondary status (1 Cor 11:7–10; 1 Tim 2:13–14). Interestingly, both also seem compelled to deal with the fact that the reproductive potential of wo/men might be used as an argument in favor of their authority (1 Cor 11:12; 1 Tim

33. Merz and Zamfir and Verheyden are the first I have seen to make connections between 1 Cor 11 and 1 Timothy 2:8–15, which productively intervenes in a scholarly tendency to see this passage in light of the exhortation to women’s silence in 1 Cor 14:33–36. Korinna Zamfir and Joseph Verheyden, “Text-Critical and Intertextual Remarks on 1 Tim 2:8–10,” *Novum Testamentum* 50.4 (2008) 376–406. See Merz, *Fiktive Selbstausslegung*, 339–43 for discussion of intertextual relationship between 1 Cor 11:3 and 1 Timothy 2:14.

2:15).³⁴ Zamfir and Verheyden also see 1 Timothy as combining Paul’s “cultic rule” in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 with the “station” or “household” code traditions widely prevalent in Greco-Roman household discourse. They conclude, “Through the expansion of the congregational context with the station code tradition, 1 Timothy extends the scope of the restrictive rule to both the role of women in the church and in Christian life in general.”³⁵ This is a crucial insight, which I will take up in what follows with a close attention both to the work of *clothing* specifically in this rhetoric of subordination and to the ways in which the theological grounding of these tropes constructs the performance of subordinate femininity as “proper” God-fear.

Building on this, I argue that despite the glitz and glamour of the garments in question in 1 Timothy, the wo/men to which the Paul of 1 Timothy is compelled to respond might be read likewise staking their own claims around clothing practices and authority on theological grounds. Because the text hints that dressing in modesty and prudence is “proper for wo/men who profess *God-fear* (θεοσέβεια),” it is possible that the wo/men in the community understood themselves as authoritative based not—or not only—on their economic influence. Rather, they might have grounded their authority in an alternative definition of reverence for God, which the author worked to redefine in terms of gender subordination. To make this argument, I engage in a rhetorical analysis of 1 Timothy 2:8–3:1a in relation to the arguments that come immediately before in vv. 1–7. The letter’s dress codes are rarely read within the immediate rhetorical context, and 2:8 is often taken as an abrupt shift in argumentation rather than a logical next step in the author’s argument. A close reading reveals that 2:8–3:1a repeats and expands in a

34. See Merz, *Fiktive Selbstausslegung*, 363. She sees these ideas about salvation and procreation in 1 Timothy 2:15 as influenced intertextually not only by 1 Cor 11:3 but also 2 Cor 11:2ff as well as Eph 5:23.

35. Zamfir and Verheyden, “Text Critical and Intertextual Remarks,” 405.

gendered key the themes of prayer, knowledge, ‘proper’ conduct and salvation addressed in 2:1–7.

“I desire likewise. . .”: Men and Wo/men in the Ekklesia

First, the Paul of 1 Timothy urges that all people—including “kings and all who are in high positions” (2:1–2)—should receive prayers, supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings “so that we may lead a quiet (ἡρεμον and ἡσυχία)³⁶ life in all godliness (εὐσεβεία) and dignity (σεμνότητι)” (2:3). According to Margaret Mitchell, the Pastoral Paul wishes here to extend the boundaries of the community and its interests to include those of the wider imperium to ward off any charge of seditious conduct. She writes,

The bottom line, for the author of 1 Timothy 2,1–8, is that Paul was not against prayer for emperors and rulers, but commanded it to be performed, both to ensure a peaceful life, and because it is consistent with his gospel—a universal soteriology that is far from suspicion of exclusive sectarianism and hence treasonable, religious separatism.³⁷

For Mitchell, this rhetoric speaks to an outward facing consciousness on the part of the author who is concerned to portray the community as aligned with imperial values.

The “quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (2:3; NRSV) is thus a capitulation to cultural values of decency and quietude that stand in stark contrast to the stereotypes of wild and disorderly practices of other contemporary cults, perhaps including the cult of Magna Mater which Claudia Quinta helped to “domesticate” in the Roman context. Conveniently, the very cultural values that will keep the community out of trouble are also “right and acceptable (τοῦτο καλὸν καὶ ἀπόδεκτον) in the face of God our savior (ἐνώπιον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ)” who wishes to include all—including those in high places—in the divine plan of

36. The NRSV translates ἡσυχία in 2:3 as “peaceable.”

37. Mitchell, “Corrective Composition, Corrective Exegesis,” 56.

salvation and the knowledge of the truth (2:4–6). The pericope concludes with a familiar Pauline appeal to the trustworthiness of the author’s message as “apostle and herald” to the aforementioned truths (2:7). With this articulation of “universal salvation,” everyday practices in the lives of those under empire become take on a cosmic significance. Subjection to empire becomes salvation of empire.

While some read the turn to wo/men’s clothing in 1 Tim 2:9 as a distinct line of argumentation from the discussion of men’s comportment during prayer in 1 Tim 2:8, I argue that 1 Tim 2:8–9 should be read instead as a starting point for delineating precisely how the preceding exhortations at the intersection of ethics, politics, and theology are to be enacted and embodied. In chiasmic form, 2:8–10 reiterates these points in a gendered key, with indications that wo/men are the linchpin of this plan. In 2:8, the text singles out the men in the assembly: “I desire, then, that in every place (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or argument.” Both within and outside of the context of the assembly, men’s practices of prayer are governed by the ethic of quietude articulated previously.

In 2:9, the text turns to wo/men, and it is here that scholars debate whether the regulations regarding dress governs only contexts of prayer or if they should be understood more broadly. The debate turns on the lack of a finite verb in 2:9, as it is not immediately clear from the context how best to complete the βούλομαι construction carried over from 2:8. On the one hand, if one carries over the βούλομαι προσεύχεσθαι, then the “dress codes” remain under the rubric of prayer. On the other, if one understands βούλομαι κοσμεῖν as governing 2:9, then there is a distinct shift from men’s prayer to wo/men’s clothing practices. Conzelmann and Dibelius walk a line between the two, stating that “It is probable that these regulations, here doubtless intended

for the worship service, originally referred to the behavior of women in general.”³⁸ While the interpretive issues are certainly exacerbated by the grammar of the text, they also emerge from an implicit binary between “sacred” and “everyday” practices. Turning our attention to the theological significance of practices of dress and adornment, we begin to see the ways in which the boundaries between “religious” and “everyday” clothing are porous and fluid and, as a result, can be reshaped to suit the author’s attempts to shape wo/men’s practices at the intersection of gender and piety.

As noted previously, the vice of *luxuria* as a matter of much attention among ancient moralists who were concerned with the twin dangers of “foreignness and femininity.” Perhaps surprisingly, the regulations governing wo/men’s dress and adornment in cultic contexts are quite like what we find in the philosophical literature. Disrupting the tendency to distinguish “sacred” from “profane” dress in the ancient Greek context, Harianne Mills cites an example from the cult of Demeter near Petras, where “women may not have gold weighing more than one obol, nor wear a brightly colored or purple garment, nor be painted with white [cosmetics].”³⁹ Similar restrictions on sumptuous garments and elaborately plaited hair are common in inscriptions which regulate wo/men’s bodily comportment in sacred space.⁴⁰ According to Alicia Batten, these regulations served to upend or suspend normal social hierarchies made visible through dress. She concludes that these practices have a different function in texts like 1 Timothy, as

38. *The Pastoral Epistles*, 45.

39. Harianne Mills, “Greek Clothing Regulations,” 258. Inscription in Sokolowski, *LSCGS* 33.

40. Men’s clothing was also often regulated within sacred spaces, with proscriptions on gold and/or shoes. However, these prescriptions did not garner the kinds of close scrutiny and potential consequences that women’s clothing practices garnered. For discussion of differences and similarities between men’s and wo/men’s regulations in ancient cults, see Batten, “(Dis)Orderly Dress,” 575–78; Mills, “Greek Clothing Regulations,” esp. 259–61.

wo/men were compelled to ‘wear their theology’ in ways that bolstered the community’s reputation.⁴¹

When the letter’s dress codes are read against the backdrop of 1 Tim 2:1–7, there is no distinction between clothing practices “inside” vs. “outside” the community and that there is no practice of dressing and adorning for wo/men which is not also an assertion of proper God-fear—or lack thereof. Indeed, the same matrix of terms appears in both the preceding discussion of the desirable way of life and the “dress codes” for wo/men. This includes a call to quietude (ἡσυχία, 2:2, 2:11), to prudence (σεμνότητι and σωφροσύνη,⁴² 2:2, 2:9) and, importantly for the present analysis, to piety or God-fear (εὐσέβεια and θεοσέβεια, 2:2, 2:10). Finally, these practices and ways of being are described as “proper” in the face of God and especially for those who profess θεοσέβεια (2:3, 2:10). In short, situating 1 Timothy’s regulations regarding clothing within the larger context of the imperial plan of salvation in 1 Timothy 2 therefore reveals of rhetorical continuity between 2:1–7 and vv. 2:8–3:1a, with the former articulating a vision of “universal” salvation on a grand scale and 2:8–3:1a bringing that vision down to the level of individual bodies both within and outside the *ekklesia*.

Dressing and Professing θεοσέβεια

The centrality of wo/men’s practices of dress and adornment in 1 Timothy’s argument in chapter two indicates that a distinct challenge to the author’s vision emerged from these practices. This shifts the analytical framework away from one of wo/men posing an implicitly sexualized

41. Batten, “(Dis)Orderly Dress,” 584.

42. Annette Bourland Huizenga’s work productively situates the Pastorals’ ethical prescriptions for wo/men in the context of Neo-Pythagorean women’s letters. See her discussion of the cultivation of “feminine” virtue in *Moral Education for Women in the Pastoral and Pythagorean letters: Philosophers of the Household*, especially “Topics for Women,” 329–64. See also her recent commentary on the Pastorals in the Wisdom Commentary series, *1-2 Timothy, Titus*, Wisdom Commentary 53 (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016).

“distraction” in the worship space toward an understanding of clothing as a site of intense debate over how piety should be enacted and embodied. In the dress codes of 1 Timothy 2:8–10, dressing in “shame and prudence,” in “good works” is described as “proper for wo/men who profess θεοσέβεια” (2:10). This framework of pious propriety then becomes the grounds upon which wo/men are barred from the authority to teach and are compelled to learn in “silence with full submission” in vv. 11–12. Reading against the grain of these mandates, however, we see glimmers of wo/men who understood themselves as embodying a very different political and theological vision of “God-fear” which may have empowered them to speak and to teach contrary to the will of the kyriarchal powers that be.

Because scholars are often fixated on the value of the proscribed garments themselves, they are unable to address the theological capital of “proper God-fear” upon which these prescriptions are justified. In the remainder of this chapter, I focus my attention on the phrase “as is proper for wo/men who profess God-fear” (ὁ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν). Given the Pastorals’ overarching suspicion of wo/men’s speech, the emphasis on what is proper for those who *profess God-fear* indicates that the author here wishes to inculcate an understanding of silent, feminine piety which was not being practiced in the communities who received this epistle. Rather, it is possible that these wo/men held a very different understanding of the relationship of their practices of dressing and adorning to their status and standing in the eyes of God.

1 Tim 2:10 is the only instance of the term θεοσέβεια in the Pastorals, and one of only two uses in the texts that comprise the New Testament, the other being John 9:31. More significantly, the Pastoral epistles overwhelmingly prefer εὐσέβεια, which, as noted by Mary Rose D’Angelo, Angela Standhartinger, and T. Christopher Hoklotubbe, is a loaded concept

around which the Pastorals' vision of the community turns.⁴³ That the author uses different language here, particularly in proximity to ἐπαγγέλλω, "proclamation/profession," hints to Conzelmann and Dibelius that this might be a self-designation, though they understand it as communal rather than specific to the wo/men being addressed.⁴⁴

The translation "god-fearer" might suggest a much broader conversation, focused on the extent to which the term functions as a designation of a category of Gentiles interested in Jewish practices. Scholars such as Ross Kraemer and Judith Lieu⁴⁵ have cautioned against understandings of the term as indicating a stable or unified category of Gentile adherents to Judaism and assert that its meanings and contours should be adjudicated contextually and discursively. Furthermore, it is the noun θεοσεβεία rather than the adjective θεοσεβής that is operative in 1 Timothy. As such, there are few grounds to extrapolate that the community overall or the wo/men addressed here understood themselves as "God-fearers" in any substantive sense.⁴⁶ Rather, such piety language often functioned rhetorically to bolster the status of groups as adhering uniquely to its precepts. In the case of 1 Timothy, the author is compelled to respond

43. See 1 Tim 2:2, 3:6, 4:7–8, 6:3, 6:6, 6:11; 2 Tim 3:5; Tit 1:1.

44. "Since there is no mention of Christ, one can assume that the expression is a self-designation which was already common in Judaism." *The Pastoral Epistles*, 46. They compare the usage here with Philo's in *Vit. cont.* 3, but there εὐσεβεία and not θεοσεβεία is used. Prior to 1 Timothy's use, most attestations of the term come from a Jewish milieu as argued by Standhartinger, emerging primarily in 4 Maccabees and the writings of Philo. See 4 Macc 7:6, 7:22, 17:15. For use in Philo see *De opific.* 154.6; *Quis rerum*, 60.2; *De congressu*, 130; *De fuga* 150; *De Abrahamo* 114; *De vita Mos.* 1.303; *De virtut.* 186; *De spec. leg.* 4.170.

45. Judith Lieu, "The Race of the Godfearers," *Journal of Theological Studies* 46. 2 (1995): 483–501. Ross Shepherd Kraemer, "Giving up the Godfearers," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 5.1 (2014): 61–87.

46. While I do not dispute wholesale the textual and archaeological evidence which indicates that there existed in some contexts, including perhaps Aphrodisias, groups of Gentiles interested in Jewish practices who were referred to or referred to themselves as "god-fearers," I am not convinced that such a category of people underlies 1 Timothy's usage. Following Standhartinger and Hoklotubbe, I see 1 Timothy as engaged in debates about piety in the imperial context more broadly, and the use of θεοσεβεία as a site of intra-communal contestation of the contours of piety in relation to the struggle over the equal participation of wo/men and the enslaved in response to the baptismal proclamation.

to wo/men who grounded their claims to teach and preach in their own superior God-fear, which the author works to deconstruct through the rhetoric of dress and adornment.

As noted above, the terms θεοσέβεια/θεοσεβής are roughly synonymous with εὐσέβεια/εὐσεβής and are often used interchangeably in ancient texts. For instance, 4 Maccabees uses both terms even as the latter is used more frequently.⁴⁷ Attending to the use of piety language in the Pastoral Epistles specifically, Hoklotubbe connects the Greek εὐσέβεια/εὐσεβής to the Roman *pietas*, which includes not only reverence and correct action in relation to the gods but also filial and civic devotion and, following the majority of scholars, sees θεοσέβεια/θεοσεβής as belonging to this matrix of piety language.⁴⁸ One important distinction between the two is that θεοσέβεια/θεοσεβής emerges with greater frequency in Jewish writers, even as these same writings—like 4 Macc and the works of Philo— often make use of both.

For instance, in *de Opificio Mundi*, Philo writes that the Tree of Life should be understood as a symbol of Θεοσέβεια, “the greatest of the virtues” (τὴν μεγίστην τῶν ἀρετῶν). In the next sentence, God watches as judge and sees that humankind is inclined to wickedness, “taking little heed of piety and holiness” (εὐσεβείας δὲ καὶ ὁσιότητος ὀλιγοροῦσαν).⁴⁹ Lieu highlights that only *Joseph and Aseneth* uses θεοσέβεια to the exclusion of all other terms within this matrix, though the dating and provenance of this particular text is notoriously difficult to

47. Εὐσέβεια language is used in 46 instances. Θεοσέβεια language is used just three times in 4 Macc. (7.6, 7.22, 17.15), particularly concentrated around the elder Eleazar and his refusal to concede to the passions. Notably, Θεοσέβεια is described in 17:15 as claiming victory over the tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes. In his recent commentary, deSilva translates θεοσέβεια quite broadly as “religion,” synonymous with θρησκεία, with the exception of 17:15 where θεοσέβεια is personified and feminized which DeSilva translates as “Reverence for God.” David DeSilva, *4 Maccabees: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006).

48. Hoklotubbe, *Civilized Piety*, 4–7. See also, 162 n. 37 where he counts θεοσέβεια as an additional use of εὐσέβεια in the Pastorals.

49. *De opif.* 154–155. See also *De fuga*, 150, where θεοσέβεια is described as the “fairest possession.”

identify.⁵⁰ In short, there is no hard and fast distinction to be made universally between εὐσέβεια/εὐσεβής and θεοσέβεια/θεοσεβής as preferred by “pagans” and Jews, respectively.

Angela Standhartinger argues that εὐσέβεια in Jewish writings was repeatedly deployed in the context of claims to the superior piety of the Jews. She writes that this usage not only situates Jewish thinkers in the context of Greco-Roman philosophical and moral discourse, but also lays claim to the perfection of the very virtue that the imperial elites held dear. Judaism is not just a form of εὐσέβεια, but its very *telos*.⁵¹ Claims to piety thus become claims of identity and resistance to imperial power, and in this context the specificity of the term θεοσέβεια might emerge as particularly potent. According to Judith Lieu, “‘God-fearing’, θεοσεβής, offered further advantages over εὐσεβής for it pointed more directly to Jewish worship of the one God and rejection of idolatry, a theme already present in their use of the latter term.”⁵² Thus, rather than trying to make either term the favored possession of either Jews or Greeks and Romans, it is more productive to consider how claims to piety directed toward the divine specifically are deployed to assert the superiority or divine favor enjoyed by one group over another, particularly in light of charges of idolatry which emerge regularly in second-century writings.⁵³ 1 Timothy’s use of θεοσέβεια language, however, is rarely considered worthy of sustained analysis on its own

50. Lieu, “The Race of the Godfearers,” 495-96. While the text does not employ god-fearing language in relation to clothing specifically, it is concerned overall in significant ways with the relationship of clothing to transformation. See Meredith Warren, “A Robe Like Lightning: Clothing Changes and Identification in *Joseph and Aseneth*,” in *Dressing Judeans and Early Christians*, 145–62.

51. Standhartinger, “Eusebeia in den Pastoralbriefen,” 80.

52. Lieu, “Race of the God-fearers,” 496.

53. Lieu cites the Martyrdom of Polycarp as one telling example, as the crowd is said to have “‘to marvel[ed] at the nobility of the God-loving and God-fearing race of Christians” as they faced persecution. According to Lieu, this is one important instance in a larger trend in which “God-fearing” becomes characteristic of the stories early Christians tell of themselves as a novel *genos*. See “The Race of Godfearers, 501.” See also Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race?: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

terms. Lieu notes that 1 Timothy 2:10 represents a rare New Testament use of the term but does not discuss it explicitly as part of the broader second-century discourses of identity formation.⁵⁴

Perhaps the closest analogue to 1 Timothy's deployment of God-fearer language is the book of Acts, where the concept also frequently collides with issues of gender. It should be noted that Acts uses slightly different terminology, preferring the participial form of σέβομαι to describe those who perform appropriate fear and reverence toward God. For instance, the first convert in Philippi, Lydia of Thyatira, is described even before her conversion as σεβομένη τὸν θεόν (16:14). Shelly Matthews demonstrates how elite, "god-fearing" wo/men are deployed rhetorically in texts such as Luke-Acts and Josephus' *Antiquities*⁵⁵ in order to elevate the status of the community by demonstrating that only properly socialized women—and not the frenzied maenads of other, more seditious cults—are interested in associating themselves with it.⁵⁶ According to Matthews, elite, "god-fearing" women's interest in the Way in Luke-Acts should be understood within the broader context of elite women's benefaction. Their interest and investment served to bolster the status of the Way and to distract from the much more widely declaimed presence of lower class individuals who were drawn to the movement.⁵⁷ Matthews writes, "Through highlighting Gentile noblewomen's support for their communities these authors

54. Lieu, "Race of the Godfearers," 488 n. 15.

55. See for instance Josephus' famous description of Poppaea, the wife of Nero, as θεοσεβής in *Antiquities*, 20.189-196. Matthews discusses this example in "Ladies' Aid: Gentile Noblewomen as Saviors and Benefactors in the *Antiquities*" in *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Christianity*, 29–50, 33–36.

56. Matthews builds on the work A. Thomas Kraabel, who has argued that the "God-fearers" were class of Gentiles interested in Judaism against those who would argue that the term refers generally to notions of piety. According to Matthews, "Reading *phoboumenos/oi* and *sebomenos/oi* as specific to this class of Gentile synagogue affiliates grants a rich symbolic import to the text, but a reading that equivocates about this terminology does not." *First Converts*, 58.

57. Matthews, *First Converts*, 67.

may be promoting the understanding of their respective communities not so much as ‘foreign cults’ but as political communities modeled to some extent on the Greek city or *collegia*.⁵⁸

Indeed, in the texts Matthews brings together, “god-fearing” rhetoric is used not only—or even primarily—to construct a new *genos* identity but rather to indicate the community’s ability to assimilate and coexist with sanctioned social-political structures.

It is possible to see 1 Timothy as attempting to construct, against strong opposition, the kind of genteel wo/men “god-fearers” we see in Acts. Whereas the narrative of Luke-Acts places elite, “god-fearing” women at key points and presents them as performing their roles immaculately, the wo/men “who profess God-fear” in the communities to which 1 Timothy was written seem to have posed no small challenge to the prescribed order of the community. Indeed, the sheer attention paid to wo/men’s speech in the text indicates that they proclaimed controversial ideas and comported themselves contrary to what the author considered “proper.” Furthermore, whereas Luke-Acts designates women such as Lydia as “god-fearers,” in 1 Timothy this profession is put into the mouth of the wo/men in question and indicates that there was some dispute over the contours of this term and its relationship to gendered norms.

Finally, whereas the god-fearing women in Luke-Acts are framed as elite or empowered in some way,⁵⁹ the same cannot be assumed of all the wo/men to whom 1 Timothy is written. In early assemblies in Christ, free(d) and enslaved wo/men are addressed simultaneously, and such imperial ideals of feminine virtue did not or could not apply equally to all wo/men. While Lieu and Matthews emphasize an *inter-religious/ethnic/civic* framework for understanding the work

58. Matthews, *First Converts*, 64.

59. There is some debate regarding whether Lydia as a “purple-dyer” (πορφυρόπωλις) would have been wealthy or elite, and perhaps may have been a freed slave. See Christy Cobb, *Slavery, Gender, Truth, and Power*, 169–173.

of this designation, 1 Timothy 2 might be understood with Standhartinger as deploying “god-fear” language to resolve *intra*-communal disputes over the directions that the burgeoning movement might take. 1 Timothy 2:8–10 is therefore more than a mere tirade against luxury but rather a concerted effort to define the content of feminine θεοσέβεια against those within who might have held a different theological and social-political understanding of what it means to be “god-fearing.”

Following Standhartinger, I argue that 1 Timothy’s use of θεοσέβεια is not only an appeal to imperial values but also an attempt to discipline those Christ followers whose speech and authority the letter deems impious and dangerous—in many cases, wo/men and the enslaved.⁶⁰ That 1 Timothy 2:10 deviates from the Pastorals’ otherwise exclusive use of εὐσέβεια and that it is applied in particular to wo/men indicates, I argue, that we have here a spark of submerged argumentation where the author cites wo/men’s own language back to them and attempts to define its contours in line with imperial values of feminine submission and subordination. The letter seeks quite literally to clothe women in the “good works” of silence to defang wo/men’s claims to authority and influence in the community. Against the grain, however, that these wo/men “professed θεοσέβεια” and yet likely behaved contrary to the author’s desire indicates that they embodied θεοσέβεια and performed piety otherwise, perhaps through lavish dress but also through teaching and promoting theologies and political imaginaries that ran against the imperial status quo.

Dressed to Profess: What Does God-Fear Look Like?

60. Standhartinger, “Eusebeia in den Pastoralbriefen,” 80f. See also Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Gossip and Gender: Othering of Speech in the Pastoral Epistles*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 164 (Berlin; New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2009).

Having established 1 Timothy's "god-fear" language within a broader landscape of agonistic piety, I turn now to the importance of the language of proclamation and profession which immediately precedes it. While it may be argued that this profession of God-fear is imposed and constructed by the author rather than claimed by the wo/men themselves, I argue that there are sufficient grounds to understand "god-fear" as a self-designation by the wo/men in the community and, further, that this proclamation was grounds for wo/men to assert their authority to teach and preach in the assembly. First, the verb *ἐπαγγέλλω* is significant. While this term can refer to a promise or oath and is used by Paul to refer to the covenant of Abraham,⁶¹ it can also refer to a proclamation or profession⁶² and this is the valence that the verb has elsewhere in 1 Timothy.⁶³ The Paul of this epistle exhorts Timothy to guard against the "profane babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge; by *professing* it some have missed the mark as regards the faith" (6:21).⁶⁴ Here, the use has a negative valence and is directed at those who proclaim for themselves knowledge (*γνῶσις*) contrary to that promoted by the author.

Of course, it is difficult to make sweeping claims for consistency in meaning in a single text with only two uses of the verb. However, based on evidence from the Pastorals, it is possible to conclude that the wo/men addressed in 2:10 also make professions about themselves that the author finds suspect. In fact, there may have been significant overlap in the populations making both claims—to *θεοσέβεια* and to special knowledge, as *θεοσέβεια* was often connected to

61. See for instance Gal 3:19.

62. *TDNT*, 577.

63. The noun form is, however, used to refer to "promise" in 1 Tim 4:8.

64. Ὁ Τιμόθεε, τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον ἐκτρεπόμενος τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδονύμου γνώσεως, 21 ἢν τινες ἐπαγγελλόμενοι περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἡστόχησαν. (1 Tim 6:20–21)

wisdom, virtue, and philosophy in Jewish writings.⁶⁵ While it is outside the scope of this dissertation to address the expansive scholarly conversation on the “opponents” in the Pastorals,⁶⁶ it is evident that wo/men’s speech posed an ongoing problem for the author of these letters. Typically, the countervoices in 1 Timothy are constructed in androcentric terms—as figures from outside (presumably male) who infiltrated the porous and malleable minds of wo/men in the community. Linda Maloney challenges this presupposition, arguing that the Paul of the Pastorals is not besieged by outsiders but by the wo/men in the *ekklesia*. She writes,

Rather than communities in which a few ‘upstart’ women are seeking a voice and pursuing sensational oddities preached by outsiders, I find communities in which women are well organized (too well, from the author’s point of view), women who preach, teach, prophesy, travel, preside at worship and preserve certain “Pauline” traditions that are anathema to the author of the Pastorals.⁶⁷

Rather than focusing her attention on the endless search for a coherent set of teachings from outside, Maloney underscores that the author’s opponents might just as readily have been wo/men who lived and comported themselves in accordance with a different set of teachings—

65. See for instance the references to Philo above (79 n. 182) as well as 4 Macc 7:2–23: “What person who lives as a philosopher by the whole rule of philosophy, and trusts in God, and knows that it is blessed to endure any suffering for the sake of virtue, would not be able to overcome the emotions through godliness (θεοσέβειαν)? For only the wise and courageous are masters of their emotions. Likewise, the mother of martyrs is described as “god-fearing” when she is not overcome with emotion or grief at the death of her children (16:12). See also the cry of Wisdom in Prov 1:29, who refuses those “who hated knowledge and did not choose God-fear (θεοσέβειαν).”

66. For more on opponents, see Korinna Zamfir, “Elusive Opponents in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Shadowy Characters and Fragmentary Evidence: The Search for Early Christian Groups and Movements*, ed. Joseph Verheyden, Tobias Nicklas, and Elisabeth Hermitschek; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 388 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 27–48. Lloyd Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” *Sociology of Religion* 58.4 (1997): 343–52. Idem, *The Polemic of the Pastorals: A Sociological Examination of the Development of Pauline Christianity*, Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplement Series 264 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

67. Linda Maloney, “The Pastoral Epistles,” in *Searching the Scriptures: Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 361–81, 362.

potentially those of the already-circulating letters of Paul that the pseudonymous author of this epistle wished to reinterpret in kyriarchal terms.⁶⁸

Indeed, anxieties about women's speech make their way into nearly every direct reference to wo/men in the Pastorals, and whatever they might be saying is, according to the author, infectious to the "healthy/sound teaching" that is proclaimed as unified and authoritative.⁶⁹ Marianne Bjelland Kartzow has demonstrated well the ways in which 1 Timothy seeks to "other" those who run counter to the author's aims by appealing to ancient (and persistent) stereotypes of wo/men's speech. This discourse of wo/men's speech as frivolous and dangerous to the health of the community, she argues, was a common strategy for limiting or discrediting women's witness.⁷⁰ Situating the Pastorals within this gendered discourse of power, she writes, "Whatever these women did, among all the suggestions given by scholars, whether they had leading positions, opposed the *oikos*-codes, visited the sick, or represented an alternative theological understanding, their activities could easily be labeled as gossip within the ancient gender system."⁷¹ In short, the perceived danger in what was being said or spread was compounded by the fact that wo/men were the ones doing the talking. Given the Pastorals' overarching suspicion of wo/men's proclamations, it is likely that ἐπαγγέλλω here holds the same

68. See 2 Timothy 3:6–7, where the opponents threaten to "make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires."

69. An exception to this would be the discussion of wo/men deacons in 1 Timothy 3:11, which calls upon them to be "serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things." While some translate this as referring to the wives of the deacons, there is ample evidence from Paul's letters of wo/men serving as διακονοί, including Phoebe of Cenchreae in Romans 16.

70. Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Gossip and Gender: Othering of Speech in the Pastoral Epistles*; "Female Gossipers and their Reputations in the Pastoral Epistles," *Neotestamentica* 39.2 (2005): 255–72.

71. *Ibid.*, 268. It is also important to note, as Kartzow does, that forms of marginalized speech labeled "gossip," such as "whisper networks" do significant political and protective work for the marginalized in subverting structures of power.

derisive tone expressed in 1 Tim 6:21. In this light, the author's claim that clothing in the "good works" of silence and subordination is "proper for wo/men who profess God-fear" emerges as a reframing of a self-conception that they might have claimed and embodied through their clothing practices, contrary to what the author considered "proper." Clothing practices thus emerge—and persist—as a site of theological debate over gender and power.

What is Proper?: Seeing Beyond *Luxuria*

Scholars have rarely attended to the wo/men's proclamation embedded within the rhetoric of dress and adornment in 1 Timothy 2:8–10. On the one hand, I argue that this is in part because we are often distracted by the text's anti-luxury tropes and, as a result, have framed the issue of wo/men's dress solely in terms of economics rather than a theological debate not unlike the one staged around head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16. On the other hand, the failure to notice the relationship of practices of dress and proclamations of piety subtly encodes modern distinctions between embodiment and speech, with the latter implicitly passive and the former inherently active. Attending to the theological valence of clothing practices, however, makes possible a more inclusive reading of the text beyond wealthy wo/men who might have—and likely did—claim their authority on the grounds of their economic status. Shifting to an analysis of how dress is imbued by the author with a gendered theological valence broadens the interpretive landscape of this passage and allows us to see beyond questions of upper-class wo/men's self-expression and identity and the idea that economic influence was the only grounds wo/men had for claiming authority and equality. Instead, we might begin to consider in new ways how this rhetoric of dress and adornment might have fallen on the ears of an audience comprised of diversely situated wo/men.

Such a reading, I argue, contributes two key insights to our understanding of this text. First, we can begin to see the theological construction of gender norms in the text, as the author's argument rests upon the assumption that the proper performance of silent femininity is itself an act of religious devotion, and that all who resist this framework are *improper women and improper God-fearers*. In this sense, what is metaphorical and what is material in this passage is fascinatingly fluid. Gold and pearls and costly clothing can certainly be material garments that the author wishes for wo/men to cast aside—and the history of interpretation bears this out.⁷² But if gold and braided hair are contrasted with clothing in “good works,” then doing the opposite—refusing to be silent and subordinate, taking up one's authority, not having children—are all a metaphorical clothing in ostentatious finery and all are framed in opposition to proper piety and pose a challenge to the overall kyriarchal structure. “Professing θεοσέβεια” is therefore not limited to upper class wo/men but might have been claimed by all of the marginalized, especially the enslaved, who stood against or could not comply at all with 1 Timothy's understanding of what it means to be god-fearing.⁷³

Second, returning to the example of Claudia Quinta, we might imagine that these wo/men resisted the notion that “God-fear” is something that humans can discern upon another's body. This is not to say that it is something internal or essential but rather that that these wo/men professed their θεοσέβεια as visible and verifiable in the eyes of God, no matter how they wished to or were compelled to comport themselves. While the author seeks to engender compliance by appealing to the mores of upper-class femininity, the range of wo/men who professed and

72. See for instance, Cyprian of Carthage, *De habitu virginum* 2.8. Clement, *Paedagogus*, 3.11

73. The injunction to modesty in dress and sexual practices could not apply to the enslaved, who were unable to resist the advances of their enslavers without risking violence or death. See Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

performed God-fear in alternative ways is potentially much more expansive. Being clothed in “proper” God-fear might then be imagined as an alternative to, rather than a consolidation of, the embodiment of kyriarchal norms.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that scholarship on 1 Timothy’s clothing rhetoric has not fully considered its theological implications, as the discussion centers around the garments proscribed rather than the grounds upon which they are banned. On the one hand, scholars can inadvertently preserve kyriocentric readings of the text by taking the Paul of the Pastorals’ words at face value. These scholars reinforce notions that wo/men’s bodies are public property and a potential “distraction” in the assembly. On the other hand, feminist and gender critical scholars can lose sight of socially and economically disempowered wo/men by arguing that only women of economic means could claim their authority and equality, and only on those grounds. In this chapter, I have charted an alternative interpretive path, which highlights the author’s attempt to define gender subordination performed through clothing as an act of reverence for those who “profess God-fear.” I argue that this embedded profession hints at the presence of wo/men who claimed themselves to be “god-fearers” in ways that ran contrary to the author’s vision of imperial salvation. By focusing on the theological and political stakes of debates over garments that we might not immediately see as such, 1 Timothy emerges as a rich site of investment in what equal participation in the *ekklesia* looks like.

In the next chapter, I turn to the letter of 1 Peter, which likewise deploys ideologies of clothing and gender in a theological key to limit the authority of wives. Whereas 1 Timothy seeks to ground piety in the proper performance of gender with and through clothing practices, 1 Peter deploys rhetoric of dress and adornment to construct a genealogy of obedience and

subordination. In so doing, wives in the community are understood to “belong” only insofar as they properly perform a particular vision of Sarah as obedient matron with and through their dress.

Chapter 3

Putting on ‘Heirs’: Constructing Wifely Virtue in 1 Peter¹

Wives, in the same way, be subservient to your own husbands, so that, even if some do not obey the word, they may be won over [lit. “gained as a profit”] without a word by their wives’ conduct when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Let not such adornment be outward by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; but rather [let the adornment be] the covered person of the heart (ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος) in the immortality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is luxurious (πολυτελής) in God’s sight. It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by submitting to their husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you (1 Peter 3:1–6).²

Whereas 1 Tim 2:8–3:1a speaks to wo/men as a group, 1 Pet 3:1–6 is especially interested in the comportment of ideal wives in the *ekklesia* and urges them to trade luxurious outer adornment for that of the “covered person of the heart”³ (ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος) which is itself

1. Portions of this chapter have been published in “Worn Stories: (Ad)dressing Wives in 1 Peter,” in *Dress in Mediterranean Antiquity: Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians*, ed. Alicia Batten and Kelly Olson (London: T & T Clark, 2021), 289–98. I am grateful to Alicia Batten, Kelly Olson, and Kristi Upson-Saia for their feedback on this work in its various stages.

2. Ὅμοίως αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ, διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἄνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν. ὣν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἑξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος, ἀλλ’ ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος ὃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής. οὕτως γὰρ ποτε καὶ αἱ ἅγαι γυναῖκες αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς θεὸν ἐκόσμουν ἑαυτάς ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ὡς Σάρρα ὑπήκουσεν τῷ Ἀβραάμ κύριον αὐτὸν καλοῦσα ἧς ἐγενήθητε τέκνα ἀγαθοποιῶσαι καὶ μὴ φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν.

3. The NRSV translates this as the “inner self.” Paul J. Achtemeier writes, “The ‘secret person’ in this context refers not so much to the general aspect of the human being as it does to the person who is determined by a faith that is visible directly only to God (cf. Matt 6:5, 6, 18) and that is apparent to other human beings only by way of external acts. . . . The thrust of the passage with its emphasis on the internal quality of the person, by implication visible only to God, is a topos of biblical thought and appropriately for this context, emphasizes the contrast between outward appearance and inner reality.” *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 213. Many translators, including John Elliott, compare this construction to the Pauline ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος in Rom 7:22 and Eph 3:16. John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, Anchor Bible Commentary 37b (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 565. Horrell makes a more compelling connection to the call to “make the lord Christ holy in your own hearts” (κύριον δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἁγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν) and to make apologia without fear. “Fear, Hope, and Doing Good: Wives as a Paradigm of Mission in 1 Peter” *Estudios Bíblicos LXXIII* (2015): 409–29, 422. Rather than reifying a binary between “inner self” as a realm of authentic and accessible self-knowledge which is displayed, in part, on the surface of the body through dress, I have chosen instead to translate this as the “covered person of the heart.” This translation of κρυπτός brings the discussion back to clothing as a mode of expressing and cultivating virtue. Furthermore, while there is not enough textual evidence to determine conclusively, it is also possible that the ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος may refer obliquely to the baptismal “new human” articulated in, for instance, Eph 4:22–24. I am grateful to the members of the New Testament dissertations seminar at Harvard University, and especially Drs. Judith Lieu and Karen King for their helpful insights on this translation issue.

luxurious/costly (πολυτελής) in the eyes of God (3:4). Under the watchful eyes of God, husband, and Empire, 1 Peter’s rhetoric of dress and adornment constructs wives’ clothing practices as an imitation of the “holy women of old” (3:5)—especially the matriarch Sarah (3:6)—who adorned themselves in subservience to their husbands. In this chapter, I analyze the tension in Peter’s anti-adornment rhetoric between the acknowledgement of wives’ influence on the growth and reputation of the community and the letter’s insistence that they know and perform their “place” in the assembly through their dress.⁴ In calling for the imitation of Sarah’s subservience to Abraham, 1 Peter seeks to construct a historical genealogy of femininity that is enacted and sustained through practices of dressing the body. This representation is not without complication, however, as no tradition describes Sarah’s deference to Abraham in the exact terms deployed by 1 Peter and, in fact, numerous sources attest to the opposite.

Just as 1 Timothy’s clothing rhetoric worked to curtail wo/men’s subversive speech, so also does 1 Peter 3:1–6 circumscribe wives’ influence on the growth of the community in terms of bodily practices rather than persuasive speech or teachings. It is not their own participation in and affiliation with the community outside of the control of their husbands—which they likely undertook at their own risk—but their ability to “win over” their husbands without a word that is celebrated in this text. I argue that 1 Peter’s clothing rhetoric situates wives within a lineage of wifely duty that the author deems not only holy (ἅγιος) but also necessary for maintaining their belonging within the community as “daughters of Sarah.” The wives in the community are called to “put on” Sarah’s paradigmatic obedience and are thus incorporated insofar as their embodied expression of obedience is successful. 1 Peter’s appeal to clothing and adornment is thus situated within a gendered genealogical claim that is both intra- and extra- communal. On the one hand,

4. 1 Pet 3:1 uses the verb κερδαίνω, “to gain as a profit” to describe the involvement of husbands in the community as a potential result of their wives’ influence.

the letter addresses the charge that the community is a new and dangerous upstart cult by appealing to Abraham and Sarah to solidify the assemblies' status as ancient and aligned with the history of Israel.⁵ On the other, this appeal to the in-Christ movement's Israelite roots works to convince wives in the community to comport themselves in line with established tradition or risk a radical break with the lineage of Sarah and other holy wo/men of old.

The Context of the Letter

1 Peter is a likely second-century pseudepigraphical letter⁶ which claims to have been written by Peter from Rome to “the exiles of the diaspora” (παρεπιδήμιος διασποᾶς)⁷ in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1).⁸ The inscribed readership of the letter is quite broad, and even this is a subtle feature of its holistic rhetorical strategy—to construct a shared identity and history despite the geographical span and diverse socio-political circumstances of the communities addressed. The rhetorical context of the epistle is defined by

5. This is a common apologetic strategy among early Christians, situated as they were in a cultural landscape which valued antiquity and found novelty suspect. See for instance, Justin Martyr, *First Apology* in which Justin argues that Moses, more ancient than the Greek philosophers, foretold the coming of Christ (32).

6. Commentators have made much of 1 Peter's elevated Greek and rhetorical sophistication which, paired with the lack of discussion about the life of Jesus, mitigates against authorship of the fisherman-turned-disciple Simon Peter. On the very first page of his commentary, Achtemeier writes, “Among the first things that will strike the reader of this letter is the quality of its Greek, and the fact that its structure often reveals a certain facility in rhetoric, an anomaly for one who in another context is identified as ‘unlettered’ (Acts 4: 13)” (1 Peter, 1).

7. For diaspora-centered readings of 1 Peter, see Maia Kotrosits, “On the Historical Queerness of Christianity,” in *Rethinking Early Christianity Identity: Affect, Violence, and Belonging* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 47–84; Benjamin Dunning, “Introduction: Aliens, Christians, and the Rhetoric of Identity,” in *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity*, *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 1–24; Shively Smith, *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter's Invention of God's Household* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2016).

8. 1 and 2 Peter are both categorized as “catholic” or “general” epistles alongside James, the Johannine letters, and Jude. The criteria for this categorization are quite loose and seems to stem in no small part from a shared lack of confidence in the data regarding the circumstances of their authorship and provenance as well as the precarity of their place in the canon. Eusebius is the earliest extant source of this taxonomy, though it is clear that it predates him as he describes James and Jude as part “of the seven called general.” At least regarding James and Jude, Eusebius himself doubts the authenticity of the epistles but attests to their regular usage in early assemblies. *Church History*, 2.23.25.

suffering and persecution, as the author instructs assemblies in navigating and responding to their situation of exile among hostile outsiders. The first chapter of the letter is saturated with these themes, which are echoed throughout: the notion of “suffer[ing] various trials” (1:6), the importance of preparedness and readiness for action (1:13), an emphasis on holiness and right conduct among Gentiles (1:15–16), and rebirth of “imperishable seed” (1:23).⁹ While it is unlikely that there was any widespread and systematic persecution of Christians in this period, the letter utilizes a sense of collective anxiety in the construction of a group identity among these disparate assemblies.¹⁰

These themes are refracted through the prism of the Septuagint and the history of Israel. The claim that the recipients have been “sprinkled with Christ’s blood” (1:19) and thus represent “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (2:9) is often cited as grounds for identifying the text as supersessionist, seeking to claim Israel’s history and Scriptures for itself.¹¹ But identifying 1 Peter as a “Christian” text which colonizes Israel’s history implies that there is a clearly defined boundary between “Jewish” and “Christian” as early as the second century.¹² Following those scholars who argue against an early and definite

9. For emphasis on patient endurance of suffering in the letter, see 1 Pet 1:6–7; 2:12, 19–21; 3:13, 17–18; 4:1–2, 12–19; 5:9–10. The call that the enslaved and wives patiently endure suffering on the models of Christ and Sarah in chs. 2–3 will be discussed in this chapter. For more on suffering and the construction of early Christian identity in the centuries after 1 Peter’s composition and circulation, see Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

10. Indeed, as Maia Kotrosits notes, while scholars largely agree that there is no systematic persecution at work in the background of 1 Peter, they nevertheless frequently hold to an understanding of suffering that is tied to a distinctly “Christian” identity (even as being a *christianos*, she highlights, is only one of many causes of suffering articulated in the letter). See “On the Historical Queerness of Christianity,” 68 n. 55.

11. See for instance Betsy Baumann-Martin, “Speaking Jewish: Postcolonial Aliens and Strangers in 1 Peter,” in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of 1 Peter*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Baumann-Martin (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 144–78. See also Schüssler Fiorenza’s pushback on her argument in *1 Peter: Reading Against the Grain*, Phoenix Guides to the New Testament (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2014), 35–37.

12. Misset-van de Weg points to a number of references, direct or indirect, to the LXX including “the ‘stone texts’ as the Christological marker in 2.6–8 (cf. Isa 8.14; 28.16; Ps. 118.22); the Isaian basis for the theology

“parting of the ways” between Judaism and Christianity,¹³ I am cautious of attempts to identify 1 Peter along a Jewish/Christian binary. Instead, 1 Peter might be read instead as identifying with the Scripture and history of Israel and casting a vision of communal identity in those terms.¹⁴ In light of this, the deployment of the legacy of Sarah which would likely have been meaningful to members of the assemblies takes up a particular framing of history to shape bodies and behaviors. Just as the letter’s citations of the Septuagint present the history of Israel and the example of Christ as a palliative for real or perceived estrangement and suffering, it also combines these same histories with ideologies of dress and adornment and the power dynamics of the Greco-Roman household to ground and argument for wo/men’s subordination in the seemingly incontrovertible past.

Submission, Suffering, and the Order of the Household

With this broad overview of the letter in mind, I now turn to the immediate context of 1 Peter’s clothing regulations, which are situated within a “domestic” or “household” code spanning 1 Pet 2:18–3:7. As has been discussed, domestic codes were common in ancient philosophical

of atonement (Isa 52–53); the importance of Hos. 1 and 2 in defining Christianity’s new identity as the people of God in 2.1–10 and the use of Ps. 34 (3.10–12) for underlining the ethical admonitions.” Magda Misset-van de Weg, “Sarah Imagery in 1 Peter,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Maria Mayo Robbins (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2004), 50–62, 52 n. 8.

13. The literature on this topic is vast. See for instance, Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Schüssler Fiorenza, *1 Peter: Reading Against the Grain*; Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds. *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); Judith Lieu, “The Parting of the Ways’: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?,” *JSNT* 56 (1994): 101–19.

14. I make this claim with two important caveats. First, to say that the symbolic universe of the text is a Jewish one is not to deny that such a self-presentation is potentially politically advantageous, no matter the author’s or the audience’s own position in relation to these traditions. Indeed, the author’s use of Israelite identity for a likely Gentile audience might have achieved at least two goals at the same time: to construct a history and self-understanding for disparately situated and largely Gentile communities and to lay claim to the ancient status and relative political clout of Judaism in a context in which new religious movements were eyed with suspicion. Secondly and to this end, to say that 1 Peter is not a supersessionist text is not to deny the ways in which this text was and is used to support claims of Christian superiority over Judaism in the history of its interpretation.

literature, and prescribed the ideal relations among members of the household which were thought to secure in turn the health and well-being of the state. Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and Aristotle's *Politics* are two representative examples of the "household management" genre, which described the social roles and dynamics governing three key relationships: enslaver/enslaved person, husband/wife, and parents/children.¹⁵ These relationships, according to Aristotle, constitute the "smallest parts" of the household, just as the household represents the smallest parts of the *politeia*.¹⁶ The second half of each pair was understood to be "naturally" subordinate to the first, just as the body is "naturally" subordinate to the soul.¹⁷ Upon close reading, however, these are not three distinct relationships but rather three articulations of the relationship of a subordinated party (wo/men, enslaved persons, children) to the same figure—the *kyrios*. Thus, Schüssler Fiorenza proposes that this trope is more accurately described as a "pattern of kyriarchal submission."¹⁸

15. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical commentary*, trans. Sarah Pomeroy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), especially "The Family in Classical Greece," and "The Domestic Economy," 31–67. Aristotle, *Politics*, esp. I.1253b. 1 Peter's household code is perhaps the most-discussed element of the letter, particularly since the near simultaneous publication of John Elliott's, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) and David L. Balch's *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981). Whence emerges the infamous "Balch-Elliott debate" regarding the question of 1 Peter's assimilation or resistance to the structures of the Roman Empire. This debate has been a nearly exclusive focus in scholarly discussions of the letter and often excludes feminist and womanist contributions to the debate from the perspective of the marginalized and vulnerable in the assemblies. See for instance, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's analysis, published at nearly the same time but often not considered as part of this debate in *In Memory of Her*, 260–66 and her broader contextualization of the household code *topos* in the New Testament in Part III "Tracing the Struggles: Patriarchy and Ministry," 243–343. See also Clarice Martin, "The Eyes Have It: Slaves in the Communities of Christ-believers," in *Christian Origins*, ed. Richard Horsely; People's History of Christianity Vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 221–38. Martin focuses on the "eye-service" language in Colossians' and Ephesians' use of the domestic code, but her insights concerning the precarity and violence of as well as possible resistance to enslavement is relevant to the present discussion. For directions beyond Balch-Elliott see David G. Horrell, "Between Conformity and Resistance: Beyond the Balch-Elliott Debate Towards a Post-Colonial Reading of 1 Peter," in *Reading 1 Peter with New Eyes*, 111–43.

16. Aristotle, *Politics*, I.1253b.

17. *Ibid.*, I.1259b.

18. Schüssler Fiorenza *Ephesians*, Wisdom Commentary Series 50 (Minneapolis: Liturgical Press, 2018), 90–94.

Like 1 Timothy, 1 Peter is somewhat irregular in its use of the *topos*, as it refers only to two of the three traditional pairs, the relationship of enslaved persons to their enslavers (2:18–25) and wives to husbands (3:1–6, with a very brief note to husbands in 3:7). The author begins with a lengthy exhortation to the enslaved and states that they should patiently endure suffering and abuse at the hands of their enslavers. The author proposes Christ as a paradigm for the desired response of the enslaved to suffering, violence, and abuse (2:18–25). This call for obedient suffering is then applied to wives who “likewise” (ὡσαύτως) should accept the domination of their husbands as the enslaved to their enslaver. The author concludes with a brief and puzzling address to husbands, that they should “show consideration for your wives . . . paying honor to the woman as the weaker vessel (ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει). . . so that nothing may hinder your prayers” (3:7).¹⁹

Furthermore, unlike the “traditional” examples of Xenophon and Aristotle, 1 Peter addresses wives and enslaved persons directly in its exhortations to obedience and subordination rather than speaking exclusively to the master of the household. John Elliott sees this as a small gesture toward the full participation of wo/men and the enslaved in the community, granting them a level of moral self-determination that he argues would have been radical for the time. Elliott writes, “Whereas this tradition mentioned wives only indirectly in advice addressed

19. The metaphor of body as vessel (σκεῦος) is also present in 1 Thess 4:4, and there is some debate whether this refers to ownership over wives or to the body of an implied male addressee. Such ambiguity is not present in 1 Peter 3:7, and this perhaps sheds light on the Pauline usage. Given the context of the patient endurance of abuse and suffering that connects the exhortations to the enslaved and to wives, it is possible that 1 Pet 3:7 should be read, quite literally, as advising husbands to exercise restraint when acting violently toward their wives. I have not seen a commentary which engages such a reading, but I argue that we must acknowledge violence as part and parcel of kyriarchal dominion over the household. Thus, following Elliott’s translation but not his interpretation, the call to “live considerably with your wives as with a weaker feminine vessel” might be understood as referring literally to women’s vulnerability to breakage, not unlike a chipped vessel. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 576. Indeed, the “proper” exercise of violence toward the enslaved was a mark of manly virtue, as for instance in Galen, *The Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul's Passions* 4–5 and Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 3.38–9 regarding Plato. Such a reading would also make sense of the puzzling conclusion that husbands should treat their wives “so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” I am grateful to Chance Bonar for these references.

specifically to husbands/householders, early Christians address wives directly as responsible moral agents in their own right, as they do Christian enslaved persons”²⁰ and, later, “As in the case of household enslaved persons, he diverges from household management tradition in *addressing wives directly* (rather than charging husbands with their instruction), thereby acknowledging these wives as intelligent and responsible moral agents in their own right.”²¹ Whereas Elliott sees this direct address as an act of acknowledgement of the moral personhood of wives and the enslaved, this articulation of the household code might instead be read “from below” as indicating the ongoing trouble that these groups caused by refusing or failing to be adequately obedient to those in power. Furthermore, that 1 Peter sees the long-suffering obedience of wives and the enslaved as paradigmatic reveals that the text’s sense of their capacity for moral self-cultivation extends only to their willingness to submit to kyriarchal authority. What constitutes virtue, and for whom, is always bound up with structural relations of power and privilege.

Obedience as (Ancient and Holy) Adornment (1 Pet 3:5)

Thus, rather than attempting to rescue 1 Peter’s use of a domestic code as a progressive acknowledgement of the moral agency of wives and the enslaved, I argue instead that the author works to naturalize and normalize subordination and obedience by appealing to exemplary figures. Because this dissertation focuses on the political and theological work of clothing prescriptions in particular, my analysis is centered on the command to wives to adorn themselves as Sarah, the paradigmatic wife, even as it must be acknowledged that the commands to the

20. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 552. I agree with Jennifer Bird that such arguments render suffering a virtue, thus decentering any possibility of social change. See Jennifer Bird, *Abuse, Power, and Fearful Obedience: Reconsidering 1 Peter’s Command to Wives* (London: T & T Clark, 2011). 26–30.

21. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 553–54.

enslaved and to wives are rhetorical mirrors of one another.²² In this section, I push back further on the notion of “moral agency,” highlighting how the subordination of wives is not presented as an ethical choice but a historical truism, limiting the wives’ capacity to resist these cultural mores and maintain their “citizenship” in the assembly in Christ.

First, it is necessary to situate the language of obedience within the context of social relations of kyriarchal power rather than within an abstract system of universal ethical principles. In her study of the vocabulary of obedience in the New Testament writings, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge observes that questions of “moral agency” and “ethical choice” frequently make their way into scholarship on the semantic range of Greek terms denoting obedience, including ὑπακούω and ὑποτάσσω. Briggs Kittredge challenges a common scholarly distinction between obedience that is “freely chosen” (ὑπακούω) and obedience which is demanded from an external force (ὑποτάσσω). This distinction in translation is often justified not only on the grounds of their different lexical roots, but also by assumed differences in the circumstances of usage between the “authentic” and deuterio-Pauline writings. That is, ὑπακούω is more common in Paul’s letters and ὑποτάσσω emerges with more frequency in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, which are characterized as more heavily emphasizing submission to authoritative figures.²³ Briggs Kittredge traces the ways in which scholars use these imposed distinctions to claim that Paul himself emphasized obedience as something chosen from within whereas his later readers understood it as something imposed from without.

22. For Christ as paradigm of the suffering of the enslaved in the context of ancient enslavement and its violence, see Martin, “The Eyes Have It,” 235ff.

23. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, *Community and Authority: The Rhetoric of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition*, Harvard Theological Studies 45 (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 38.

Briggs Kittredge pushes back on this consensus, arguing instead that the use of these two terms is more interchangeable than often assumed. Citing evidence from Plato to Philo and Josephus, Briggs Kittredge argues that both terms were understood in antiquity as belonging to the same semantic field, with both serving to bolster relations of social subordination. She writes,

Those who maintain that Paul is using the verb ὑπακούειν to mean ‘free obedience’ or obedience outside the social hierarchy that organized his world must refute the quantity of evidence from these contemporary authors that suggests that Paul, in line with the use of the language of his time, uses both words to designate ‘obedience’ as a feature of relationships of subordination.²⁴

In both cases, obedience is a compulsory mandate rather than a freely cultivated ethical disposition.

Of course, 1 Peter is not a Pauline text and thus scholars are less constrained by the conventional hermeneutics of a Pauline “canon within the canon.” In fact, 1 Peter’s commands to enslaved persons and wives bolsters Briggs Kittredge’s argument, as the letter uses both terms with no clear difference in meaning (ὑποτάσσω: 2:18, 3:1, 3:5; ὑπακούω 3:6). Such a distinction between “freely chosen” vs. “compulsory,” if present in 1 Peter, would undercut the embedded exhortation to wives by implying that their obedience and Sarah’s are qualitatively distinct, with theirs being a choice and Sarah’s being compulsory. The results of her analysis can be productively applied to 1 Peter, replacing Elliott’s understanding of “moral agency” with a conception of obedience as tool of social and political subordination.²⁵

That obedience to their husbands is something that wives must “put on” reveals in and of itself that such dynamics are not natural or inevitable but must be argued and normalized. Balch

24. Ibid., 51.

25. This is distinct from saying that the kyriarchal structure is so totalizing that wo/men and enslaved persons could not imagine themselves as ethical subjects. Rather, what I am arguing here is that the text should not be read as espousing an emancipatory inclination simply by addressing women and enslaved persons directly.

makes a telling observation regarding the presence and activity of wives and the enslaved in the community,

Persons in Roman society were alienated and threatened by some of their slaves and wives who had converted to the new, despised religion, so they were accusing the converts of impiety, immorality, and insubordination. As a defense, the author of 1 Peter encouraged the slaves and wives to *play the social roles* which Aristotle had outlined; this, he hoped, would shame those who were reviling their good behavior.²⁶

Balch notes an interesting slippage here. The notion of “play[ing] the social roles which Aristotle had outlined” underscores that these dynamics are contingent upon proper embodied performance of predetermined structural and household roles and not necessarily a sincere desire to fulfill them. This allows us to consider anew the role of clothing rhetoric in 1 Peter 3:1–6, which is rarely addressed as part of the letter’s larger arguments. Often, 1 Peter 3:1–6 is either elided with 1 Timothy 2:8–15 as “Christian” versions of conventional anti-adornment tropes or similarly taken as evidence of the presence of wealthy wo/men in early assemblies.²⁷ As a result, the rhetorical work of these clothing prescriptions—and their significant influence in the history of interpretation—get overlooked. Rather than imagining 1 Pet 3:1–6 as cordoned off from the letter’s theological content, I consider instead how 1 Peter manipulates cultural tropes of dress to solidify submissive obedience to their husbands as a theological mandate for wives.

26. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 109. Emphasis mine.

27. While the commonalities between 1 Timothy and 1 Peter are noted regularly, few address the question of dependence or relationship. Selwyn suggests a common source for the two, with perhaps limited circulation given that it only appears in two letters. Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: McMillan, 1947), 184, 435 and discussed briefly in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 212. It seems more likely that the “catechetical source” was not a text per se but a shared ideological investment in theologizing cultural norms of dress and the subordination of wo/men.

Body Language in 1 Peter: Rewriting Tropes of Seduction

1 Peter's commands to wives reflects a widespread norm that wives and the enslaved must follow the gods and rites of the *kyrios*. For instance, Plutarch famously describes a husband's gods as the true and only friends a wife should have. He writes

A wife ought not to make friends of her own, but to enjoy her husband's friends in common with him. The gods are the first and most important friends. Wherefore it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the front door tight upon all queer rituals and outlandish superstitions. For with no god do stealthy and secret rites performed by a woman find any favour.²⁸

This final sentence reveals in miniature a pervasive anxiety—that wo/men's participation in cultic practices not sanctioned by their husband or the Emperor was an act of sedition against both the gods and the larger society.²⁹ As noted in the last chapter, wo/men were cast as uniquely susceptible to the allure of “foreign” cults and as such their religious practices were to be highly circumscribed and regulated by husbands or fathers.³⁰ Wo/men's interest in the early Christ movement, Schüssler Fiorenza argues, thus posed a danger to social order, as the “conversion of the subordinate members of the house who were supposed to share in the religion of the *paterfamilias* constituted a revolutionary subversive threat.”³¹

28. Plutarch, “Advice to the Bride and Groom.” (*Moralia* II, 140D [LCL Babbitt])

29. See also Caroline Johnson Hodge, “‘Holy Wives’ in Roman Households: 1 Peter 3:1–6,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Feminist Thought* 4.1(2010): 1–24; Cicero, *Laws* II.7.19–27.

30. Josephus' account of the matron Paulina, who was raped by a spurned suitor posing as the god Anubis, draws upon these stereotypes. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.65–84 and Shelly Matthews, “Crimes of Passion: Religion, Sex and State Subversion in *Antiquities* 18.65–84,” in *First Converts*, 10–28. Matthews underscores that the “twin perils” of women's sexual misconduct and foreign cults, both of which were perceived as a threat to the security and stability of the state at the time of Josephus' writing. Of course, early Christians seized upon similar tropes of sexual slander in their own attempts to assert the superiority of Christian virtue. See Jennifer Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Susanna Drake, *Slandering the Jew: Sexuality and Difference in Early Christian Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

31. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 264.

In light of this, wives and the enslaved were particularly vulnerable to retaliation on the part of the *kyrios* and as such 1 Peter's commands might rightly be read as a "survival strategy" which worked to mitigate violence against these groups by demonstrating the community's assimilation to cultural mores of domination and obedience in the household.³² But this "survival strategy" was not merely interested in the safety and security of those most socially disempowered, as it plainly articulates that wives' become Sarah's daughters based precisely on their response to the inevitability of danger in 3:6.³³ Rather, the call for obedience on the part of wives is driven largely by apologetic impulses and complicates readings which let 1 Peter "off the hook" for advocating household submission. Thus, it is important to recognize the tensions within the text's use of the enslaved and wives as exemplars: the most vulnerable are deemed capable of "winning over" the most powerful for the good and growth of the community, but only within a kyriarchal social order which reinforces their ongoing subordination to those they bring into the fold.³⁴

1 Peter's clothing rhetoric emerges at the intersection of these apologetic and missionary interests and rewrites cultural and literary tropes of women's dress as seductive such that it is the

32. See also Michal Beth Dinkler, "Sarah's Submission: Peter's Analogy in 1 Peter 3:5-6," *Priscilla Papers* 21.3 (2007): 9–15.

33. Kotrosits, *Rethinking Early Christian Identity*, 65–66.

34. The much-cited letter of Pliny to Trajan underscores not only the state's concern with the in-Christ movement as a dangerously new and potentially seditious cult, but also provides evidence of enslaved wo/men's participation and leadership and the risks of belonging which fell upon the bodies of the most marginalized. As an addendum to his famous record of Christ-followers' accounts of their innocence of the charge of unlawful political association, Pliny notes with chilly disinterest "Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses." Because the truth of a slaves' witness could only be secured under the duress of torture, this troubling evidence of enslaved wo/men's leadership in early communities in Christ highlights how the risks of participation in this new movement could be met with state violence. Pliny, *Letters*, 10.96–97. Page DuBois, *Torture and Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Clarice Martin also highlights how violence toward the enslaved could be framed as pedagogical in ways that problematize arguments about the exemplarity of the enslaved in 1 Peter. Citing Plutarch's discussion of the scholar Ammonius' beating of an enslaved person as an "object lesson" for self-control, Martin writes "The expendable slave's body thus provided the living pedagogical instrument for the free to advance ideological truth." "The Eyes Have It," 235.

allure of “good works” rather than ornate or ostentatious dress that will draw their husbands into the community. As I have argued so far, submission to authority is the primary mode of relationality in 1 Peter and is deployed throughout to convey the letter’s concentric dynamics of kyriarchal power: subjection to God, Empire, and husband/enslaver. The commands to wives begin by compelling them, just as enslaved persons, to subject themselves, in this case to their own husbands (ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν). The goal of this subservience is missionary in nature, as even the most skeptical husbands might be “won over” (κερδηθήσονται; lit. gained as a profit) when they observe “the purity and reverence of your lives” (3:2 τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν). The author puns on λόγος as both Word—in this case of Christ—and general speech, as the husband who is not persuaded by the Word/a speech (τινες ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ) might be persuaded without a word (ἄνευ λόγου) through the silent and submissive bodily comportment of the letter’s idealized wife.

Kristi Upson-Saia underscores that early Christians made productive use of tropes of dress, gender, and virtue in attempting to promote a particular vision of Christianity’s superiority as inscribed upon the very bodies of its adherents. She writes, “By linking particular forms of dressing to preconceived notions of virtue and vice, and by juxtaposing the ways in which virtue and vice were embodied in the dress of Christians and pagans, Christian writers further motivated their audiences to obey their counsel and signified the pious look.”³⁵ This strategy becomes especially common in later writings, but is also present in 1 Peter whose rhetoric is aimed not at outrightly proscribing certain forms of dress, but at convincing wives to assent to a particular vision of dress, beauty, and virtue. This embodied *logos* cleverly reverses the tropes of

35. Kristi Upson-Saia, *Early Christian Dress*, 41.

wo/men as dangerously seductive that often follow upon discussions of wo/men's dress, as the text works to train wo/men in the proper performance of wifely obedience.

This aspect of 1 Peter's rhetoric is lost in most English translations of the text, which assimilate its unique diction to make it accord with other uses of the anti-adornment trope in ancient literature.³⁶ Discourses of dress and adornment abound with cautionary tales seeking to demonstrate how an excessive obsession with adornment is the opposite of wifely devotion, where women are described as more interested in trapping and seducing potential suitors into parting with their wealth than in attending to the needs of her husband/household. In a declamation entitled "The Foreign Merchant," Seneca the Elder writes of a woman accused of adultery. At issue in this imaginary legal exercise is the inheritance of an unnamed wife who, while her husband is abroad, is named heir to a foreign merchant's fortune because he deemed her to be chaste (*pudicam repperi*, 2.7.1). Her husband finds this suspect—perhaps because she is now independently wealthy. In the arguments in favor of her status as a wily adulteress, we read:

Wretched flocks of maids labor³⁷ so that the adulteress may be visible through her thin dress, so that her husband has no more acquaintance than any outsider or foreigner with his wife's body.—I will assess her future chastity; meanwhile, despite her denials, I have found her unchaste.—Everyone talks of you as unchaste. You are called chaste by only one man, a foreigner; on his lips praise is more harmful than accusation.—I have never heard my wife called chaste except in her lover's codicil.—Cast your eyes on the ground, and close your ears to the voices of foreigners: leave others, each for himself, to do the denying for you.—He said she is chaste, I say she is unchaste; doubtless you will prefer to believe a citizen rather than a foreigner, a husband rather than an adulterer.³⁸

36. For instance, as noted above, the translation "inner self" for ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος and the erasure of economic language, especially κερδαίνω and πολυτελής.

37. For more on the labor of the enslaved in cultivating the appearance of elite slaveholding women, see Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, 85–86; Kampen, *Image and Status: Roman Working Women at Ostia*, 117–127, 149–153; Leslie Shumka "Designing Women: The Representation of Women's Toiletries on Funerary Monuments in Roman Italy," *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, 172–191.

38. Seneca, *Controversiae*, 2.7.3 (Winterbottom LCL).

There is much to unpack here, particularly around whose witness to the wife's chastity is to be believed and the dynamics of foreigner/citizen as a mark of truthfulness.³⁹ For the purposes of this chapter, it is especially important to underscore that her husband is convinced of her unchastity both by her revealing dress and the corresponding gossip surrounding her alleged behaviors in his absence. Her clothing and her community are understood to bear a more truthful witness to her moral fortitude than her own. According to the husband, the only possible means of gaining the merchant's wealth was through seduction, rendered through revealing and scandalous comportment which was itself expressive of her lack of proper devotion and obedience to her husband in his absence.⁴⁰

Conversely, in the case of 1 Peter 3, women's clothing practices are deployed in the service of a very different kind of seduction—gaining as a profit (note the economic language) their husband's commitment to the λόγος of Christ. As noted above, this “silent speech” or, as I prefer “holy seduction,” sets up an implicit contrast between the kinds of adornment meant to stir up desire in the onlooker (gold, jewels, braided hair) and the cultivation and embodiment of virtues which characterized the devoted wife (gentleness, tranquility, silence). The latter, 1 Peter argues, are “luxurious” in the eyes of God (ὅ ἐστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής, 3:4).⁴¹ 1 Peter

39. As Upson-Saia notes, Roman anxieties about foreignness and femininity converge around discourses of vice, particularly in terms of *luxuria*, or the excessive desire for finery that was so often characterized as a desire for foreign goods. She writes, “Roman moralists linked female vice to foreign vice through the luxury products they shared. Foreign and feminine identity and vice, I argue, were not abstract concepts. Both could be deciphered once spectators were trained to “see”. . . Because such moralizing discourse was primarily interested in demarcating boundaries—between Romans and foreigners, among the classes, and between men and women—it was advantageous for such divisions to be made *visibly* perceptible in this way.” *Early Christian Dress*, 17.

40. Seneca, *Controversiae*, 2.7.

41. As in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, how the body is clothed in the eyes of God is a matter of significant attention.

thus safely reframes what might be understood as an adulterous affiliation with individuals outside of the household as the ultimate expression of devotion to both God and husband. 1 Peter's anti-adornment rhetoric might therefore be understood as a pedagogical "script" for the performance of wifely virtue, which is cultivated primarily for the good and growth of the community and is sanctioned with a divine stamp of approval. This script, of course, need not be followed and its very presence in this text indicates that it likely was not.

Citational Practices: Genealogies of Femininity in Ancient Texts and Material Culture

1 Pet 3:1–6 twice affirms and displaces women's authority simultaneously—they have power over their husbands, but only insofar as they are subordinated to them (3:1–2). They are integral to the life and growth of the community, but only insofar as they follow Sarah's exemplary obedience (3:6). Even as 1 Peter rewrites tropes of adornment and seduction, it thus retains the hint of an anxiety inherent to these discourses: that wo/men might use their bodies to gain advantage—and even authority—over those in power. The letter is quite explicit that husbands are to be "gained as a profit" not by their wives' teachings but rather by their airtight adherence to mores of wifely obedience. As we saw with 1 Timothy, however, wo/men were engaged in the theological and political struggles among early assemblies in Christ despite attempts to silence them. Whereas 1 Timothy does so by overtly proscribing their speech, 1 Peter is more subtle in its aims and seeks instead to persuade wives to fall in line first by constructing a history and genealogy of wifely submission and then by making their belonging contingent on the bodily citation of this history, which further naturalizes and normalizes it.

Judith Butler's theory of "citationality" offers a productive framework for considering both how this text aims to work upon bodies and the possible sites of subversion or redeployment that this rhetorical strategy encodes. Citationality is a central aspect of Butler's theory of

performativity—or the constitution of gender as a “natural” effect of biological sex through the ongoing embodiment of legible gender norms.⁴² Citationality refers to the necessity within such normative frameworks of gender to repeat and imitate an “original” model whose originality is not given or natural but is constructed as an effect of this very repetition.⁴³ To elaborate this concept, Butler uses the example of drag performance not as a “copy” of a gender performance that belongs properly to another but rather as an imitation that calls into question who can “properly” lay claim to gendered scripts of behavior. She writes,

Drag constitutes the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn, and done; it implies that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation. If this is true, it seems, there is no original or primary gender that drag imitates, *but gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original*; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself.⁴⁴

In other words, Butler underscores that what seems timeless and irrefutable about gender norms is in fact sustained through their repeated performance which lends them an aura of historicity. Furthermore, these norms can always be performed otherwise in ways that call into the question their naturalized and normalized status. Such attempts to tie bodily practices to prescriptive histories was a common strategy used to discipline and shape wo/men’s behaviors in antiquity. The project of “making matrons” is visible and material in the statuary landscape of second-century Asia Minor, and Plancia Magna of Perge stands out as one significant example of the

42. Butler writes in the preface to the 1999 edition of *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, “The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body.” (New York: Routledge, 1999), xv.

43 In addition to *Gender Trouble*, see also Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13–31.

44. Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” 21.

power, influence, and visibility of wo/men of the highest social strata and the representational tensions inherent to displaying publicly her position as both ideal matron and ideal patron.⁴⁵

Plancia Magna is a familiar figure in the study of wo/men in antiquity, as she was apparently independently wealthy⁴⁶ and occupied powerful positions in Perge, including being named *demiourgos* of the city and priestess of both Artemis and Magna Mater.⁴⁷ Perhaps most significantly, she is responsible for the main city gate of Perge—an extensive and costly building project which was likely a model for other public monuments in nearby cities.⁴⁸ The southern arch and the neighboring gardens and baths exhibited not only the wealth and prosperity of the city but also combined the theological and the political, as Greek deities and Roman imperial figures stood side by side in its niches. Many of the honorary inscriptions here are also rendered in both Greek and Latin, further emphasizing this colonial hybridity.⁴⁹ Plancia Magna herself was a looming statuary presence in the gate complex, including the arch, courtyard, and baths that abutted the southern gate. Three honorific statues of her were present, perhaps at different times, in this area. As Dillon notes, it would have been impossible for anyone entering or exiting the city, courtyard, and/or the baths not to encounter an image of Plancia Magna.⁵⁰

45. Mary Boatwright, “Plancia Magna of Perge: Women’s Roles and Status in Asia Minor,” in *Women’s History and Ancient History*, ed. Sarah Pomeroy (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, c1991), 249–72, 261.

46. Likely through direct inheritance rather than dowry, see Boatwright, “Plancia Magna of Perge,” 256. For an overview of women’s patronage in second century Asia Minor, see Katherine Bain, *Women’s Socio-Economic Status and Religious Leadership in Asia Minor*.

47. Boatwright, “Plancia Magna of Perge,” 250.

48. Nearby Atteleia also boasted a parallel structure, also erected by a woman, Iulia Sancta, which Boatwright sees as evidence of civic competition. *Ibid.*, 262.

49. *Ibid.*, 250–251. For more on this inscription, see Andrea Gatzke, “The Gate Complex of Plancia Magna in Perge: A Case Study in Reading Bilingual Space,” *Classical Quarterly* 70.1 (2020): 385–96.

50. Sheila Dillon, *The Female Portrait Statue in the Greek World*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 156.

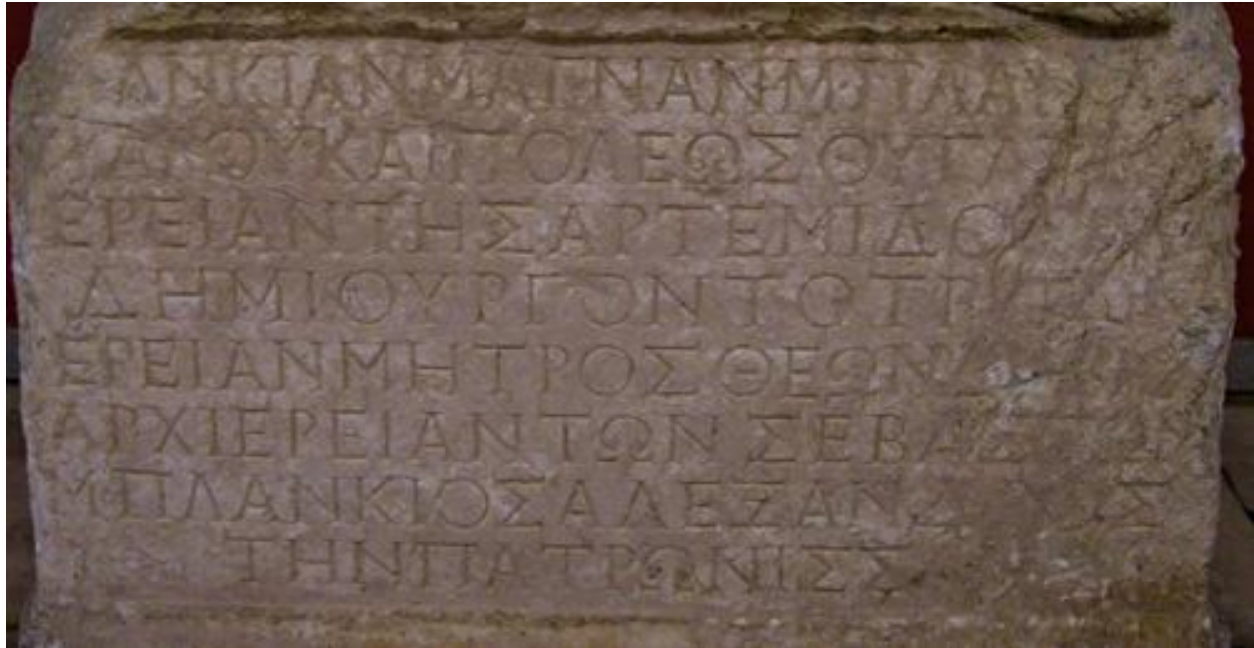
The sheer repetitiveness of her statuary presence thus represents a case study in the aforementioned representational tensions embedded within images of influential matrons in Asia Minor around the time that 1 Peter was written and circulated.⁵¹ Her portrait in the style of the Large Herculaneum woman is perhaps the most iconic of these images (see Fig. 1 below). It was found in front of a display wall that bordered the western side of the courtyard, just south of the city gate. Near to it were statues of imperial women also in the Large Herculaneum style, which Dillon identifies as likely an intentional placement on Plancia Magna's part to emphasize her close relations with the imperial center.⁵² In addition to the encompassing drapery typical of this statue type, Plancia Magna is also represented wearing a crown, perhaps indicating her priesthood in the cult of Cybele or her superior feminine virtue, or both.

51. While we know that Plancia Magna was married to a high-ranking imperial official, Iulius Cornutus Tertullus, it is important to note that she was not often described by her relation to him.

52. Identified by Dillon as possibly Sabina and Marciana or Matidia. *Portrait Statues*, 159.



(Fig 1: Plancia Magna. Image courtesy of J. Gregory Given)



(Fig. 2: Statue Base with Greek Inscription. Image courtesy of J. Gregory Given.)⁵³

This representation of a powerful and exceedingly wealthy woman is and was instructive, not just for the historian but also for the ancient viewer.⁵⁴ It is no accident that her image takes the form of the Large Herculaneum woman, which was a statue type of extraordinary popularity in the second century, particularly in Asia Minor. More than 200 statues of this type remain, which depict elite women heavy drapery, with the left hand almost entirely obscured and the right hand pulling the mantle over the left breast in a “V” shape. Dillon identifies this type as decidedly “matronly,” representing the subject’s exemplary virtue front and center through her

53. Plancia Magna, daughter of Marcus Plancius Varus and [daughter] of the city// Priestess of Artemis and *demiourgos* and throughout her life first and sole and priestess of the mother of the gods// pious and patriotic. My translation with gratitude for the translation assistance of J. Gregory Given. Based on transcription from Shelagh Jameson, “Cornutus Tertullus and the Plancii of Perge,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 55 (1965): 54-58, 55.

54. Glenys Davies, “Portrait Statues as Models for Gender roles in Roman Society,” in *Role Models in the Ancient World: Identity and Assimilation*, ed. Sinclair Bell and Inge Lyse Hansen (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 207–20.

dress and bodily comportment.⁵⁵ These statues might also be understood to function genealogically, as the shared shapes situate the woman being represented within a particular material lineage of gender and power.⁵⁶

While the history of scholarship on the Large and Small Herculaneum women has long attributed the repetition of forms to a lack of originality on the part of sculptors, recent work—particularly that of Jennifer Trimble and Glenys Davies—has considered anew the effects of the repetition of conventional forms and the pedagogical function of such recursivity in the lives of everyday viewers.⁵⁷ Trimble situates the work of these images at the intersections of gender and social class, highlighting the ways in which such repetitive forms worked in tandem to impose

55. Dillon, *Female Portrait Statues* 160–61. “And while the inscriptions on the statue bases tend to emphasize the individual accomplishments of the portrait subjects, the use of the traditional and generalizing face style for the portrait heads emphasized the shared ideals of female beauty, dignity, and personal modesty. It was perhaps this last highly desirable female virtue that led Plancia Magna, who may have been around 60 at the time of her grand building donations, to choose the more old-fashioned Greek style of female portrait over a more individualizing Roman imperial model for her image: the Large Herculaneum form at is decidedly matronly, particularly when one compares it to the more obviously sexually charged Pudicitia format.”

56. This is not the only repetitive statue form available for wealthy women to represent themselves. The funerary statues of women in the guise of Venus have also attracted significant attention even as they are much less common (any may even have been commissioned by freedwomen or their families). On the surface, the nudity of these statues might mitigate against associating them with the rhetoric of the Herculaneum type, but this is perhaps not so simple. Eve D’Ambra highlights that the Venus statues’ nudity is contrasted with the stern and sometimes aged features of the woman represented, and more likely works to bridge the gap between the woman being represented and the goddess herself, and indeed might have been deployed to secure a genealogical link to the goddess. Laura Nasrallah emphasizes the competing social and theological arguments presented in these images, despite a scholarly obsession with their nudity rather than what it represents or conveys about gender and the divine. She writes, “Of course, there is no one meaning of the Knidia and there is no one meaning of her reproductions or reproductions of other Venuses; the Roman matron represented as Aphrodite may signal modesty and shame, and, concurrently, the power of the goddess and the honor due her.” *Christian Responses to Roman Art. And Architecture: The Second Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 268. She also notes in a footnote that in this notion of nudity as adornment we might see rich comparisons with early Christian notions of flesh as a garment that is put on and taken off. (*Early Christian Responses* 264 n. 43.) For more on this statue type see Eve D’Ambra, “The Importance of Being Venus,” in *Icon, Cult, and Context: Sacred Spaces and Objects in the Classical World*, ed. Maura K. Heyn and Ann Irvine Steinsapir (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2016), 65–78. Eadem, “Nudity and Adornment in Female Portrait Sculpture of the Second Century A.D.” in *I Claudia II: Women in Roman Art and Society*, ed. Diana E.E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 101–14; Larissa Bonfante, “Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art” *American Journal of Archaeology*, 93.4(1989): 543–70.

57. See Jennifer Trimble, *Women and Visual Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

upon the viewer both a sense of the status of the matron represented and also viewer's own (likely lesser) status in relation to her. She writes,

These bodies associated their subjects with known social and symbolic categories. Since they were restricted almost entirely to the portraiture of civic elites, these statue bodies played an important role in configuring the known world and social relations in it. They helped construct and constrain the experience of viewers in a hierarchical representation of social value and possibility.⁵⁸

Glenys Davies takes a slightly different tack, arguing alongside Mary Boatwright that such images represent the ideological tensions that surface around powerful women in public life. She thus identifies the goal of the Herculaneum women as softening anxieties about women's public appearance by underscoring their ultimate adherence to conventions of matronly modesty and chastity. In short, gender does not supersede social class for elite women like Plancia Magna who—despite their social power—are still primarily represented as “proper” matrons.⁵⁹

The differences in emphases between these two works could perhaps be understood as taking different orientations to questions of intent versus effect. Davies' argument emphasizes how the presentation of the statue itself expresses and negotiates tensions between wo/men's ideological subordination and the reality of their social influence. Thus, she underscores the oxymoronic character of the composition—the tight draping as at once modest and erotic, the lack of luxurious adornment offset by the cost of the statue itself.⁶⁰ Trimble, on the other hand, is interested in effect and impact, whereby questions of ideal gendered representation are somewhat less central than the relations of power implicitly constructed between the object and its viewer.

58. Ibid., 6.

59. Glenys Davies, *Gender and Body Language in Roman Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 183.

60. Davies, *Gender and Body Language*, 183, here engaging with Trimble's work. Note the contrast with Sheila Dillon, who sees this as a non-erotic representation.

For Trimble, then, the act of viewing is a negotiation of power which does not necessarily neglect issues of gender and domesticity but focuses much more on the construction of status relations in encounter with the material object.

To use Robin Bernstein's language, we might imagine this statue of Plancia Magna as part of a web of "scriptive things" which "arrange and propel bodies in recognizable ways, through paths of evocative movement that have been traveled before."⁶¹ This idea of pedagogical or "scriptive" encounters is developed by Bernstein to track modes of racialization that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries as individuals interact with racist "things," from caricatures to children's alphabet books. Her work highlights how scriptive things are not inert objects but active forces which invite and even demand reflection not only on what the thing represents but also oneself in relation to it. According to Bernstein, "things are performatives in that they *do* something: they invite humans to move. Dances with things, too, are performative in that they constitute actions: they *think*, or, more accurately, they are the *act of thinking*. Things script meaningful bodily movements, and these citational movements think the otherwise unthinkable."⁶²

Bernstein also notes that scriptive things can function as a way of seeing that assists scholars in articulating the more mundane movements of bodies and affiliations for which we have little and ephemeral evidence.⁶³ In the case of the Herculaneum woman, the circuits of power Bernstein articulates are reversed but still operative, as it the thing itself and not its

61. Robin Bernstein, "Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race," *Social Text* 27.4(2009): 67–93, 70.

62. *Ibid.*

63. "The scriptive thing is a heuristic tool for dealing with incomplete evidence—and all evidence is incomplete—to make responsible, limited inferences about the past." *Ibid.*, 76.

user/viewer who cites and, in so doing, constructs elite femininity. The statue of Plancia Magna teaches the viewer how to engage with it, even as the results of this pedagogy cannot be determined in advance and as she herself deftly navigates the pull of political agency and exhortations to matronly modesty. She/the statue compels viewers to reflect not only on their own bodies, but also their own virtue as she represents an ideal to which the viewer should aspire but likely cannot fully emulate. Despite the accolades recounted on the statue's pediment, Plancia Magna's adherence to the shape of idealized femininity is what the viewer of her statue encounters most readily. Whether she chose to represent herself in this way or not, by casting her body in a ubiquitous form of idealized—if complex—representation of matronly femininity, the image works as part of their ongoing construction and naturalization of cultural codes of matronly femininity as a civic good.

Genealogical arguments founded upon ideologies of clothing, gender, and power are also a prominent feature of moralizing texts, which frequently encourage women to clothe themselves in the characteristics of exemplary women of old. Plutarch makes prolific use of this strategy, more implicitly in *On the Bravery of Women*⁶⁴ and quite explicitly in *Advice to the Bride and Groom*. Here, Plutarch exhorts the bride-to-be Eurydice to hold close to the “sayings of the wise and good” as

You cannot acquire and put upon you this rich woman's pearls or that foreign woman's silks without buying them at a high price, but the ornaments of Theano, Cleobulina, Gorgo, the wife of Leonidas, Timocleia, the sister of Theagenes, Claudia of old, daughter of Scipio, and of all other women who have been admired and renowned, you may wear about you without price and, adorning yourself with these, you live a life of distinction and happiness.⁶⁵

64. See Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, “*Mulierum Virtutes (Moralia 242E-263C)*,” in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 106–34.

65. Plutarch, *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, 145F (LCL Babbitt).

Plutarch uses clothing to illustrate the cultivation of virtue through exemplary figures, whose histories Eurydice is expected not only to know but also to embody. In so doing, Plutarch situates Eurydice within a lineage of “good wives” who promoted and reinforced the ideals of the state—equating civic belonging with participation in a lineage of domestic femininity.

As with the looming statuary presence of Plancia Magna in the visual landscape of Perge, Plutarch appropriates banal clothing practices to construct a history of presence, a lineage which connects matrons across time and space through the articulation of a shared history that obfuscates its own constructedness. Such genealogical rhetorics are more difficult to resist than outright prescriptions such as those articulated in 1 Timothy, as they are naturalized and grounded in histories that take on an air of irrefutability by their very repetition.

“You Have Become Her Daughters . . .”: Wifely Submission and Belonging in 1 Peter

1 Peter deploys a similar strategy in 3:5–6, though scholars rarely read these verses as part of the letter’s clothing rhetoric. Here, wives in the community are to clothe themselves in the obedience of “holy women of old,” particularly that of Sarah who “obeyed Abraham and called him lord.” The wives in the community become daughters of Sarah insofar as they clothe themselves metaphorically in her exemplary obedience. As with 1 Peter’s anti-adornment rhetoric in 3:1–4, scholarly engagements with 3:5–6 are often more interested in pinning down the original source of this rhetoric than investigating its effects. At issue here is that the only place where Sarah refers to Abraham as “lord” in the Septuagint is in Genesis 18:12, where her tone is decidedly more mocking than obsequious. Upon learning that she and Abraham are to bear a child, we read “So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, ‘After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?’” Misset-van de Weg summarizes what is at stake: “The question is, however, whether and why the author might also have presumed his readers would not fail to

recognize this image of Sarah and could even rely on their knowledge of Sarah as a submissive wife in Genesis.”⁶⁶

If the goal of this example is to invoke a particular history to shape the actions of wives in the present, it would seem to be counterproductive to directly contradict a shared understanding of Sarah. According to Troy Martin, “If the author of 1Pet created the situation of Sarah’s calling Abraham “lord” or misinterpreted Gen 18,12, he should have provided an explanation for his readers similar to Paul’s explanation in Galatians 4:21-31. . . The paraenetic example of Sarah would only be meaningful if the recipients and author of 1Pet shared a common opinion about Sarah.”⁶⁷ Martin here demonstrates a prevailing concern to ease the tension between text and context such that the author(s) of 1 Peter emerges as an authoritative reader of an apparently stable text and tradition. Jennifer Bird takes a different tack, noting “In addition to erasing or taming the image of Sarah this move reflects a freedom to manipulate women and the texts that give voice to them. Given the significance of narratives in forming the Judeo-Christian traditions, this kind of freedom has far-reaching effect.”⁶⁸

Scholars have proposed various solutions to this “problem.”⁶⁹ Mark Kiley has proposed an alternative set of intertexts for 1 Pet 3:6, and argues that the letter combines elements from Gen 12 and 20 in which Sarah follows along with Abraham’s dangerous plan to pass her off as his sister to ensure their survival through Egypt.⁷⁰ Kiley’s proposal has the benefit of connecting

66. Misset van de Weg, “Sarah Imagery in 1 Peter,” 55. For alternative interpretation of 1 Peter’s use of Gen 18:12 as in line with Rabbinic readings, see Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 104.

67. Troy Martin, “The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Pet 3,6,” *ZNW* 90.1(1991): 139–46, 140. I am grateful to Kelsie Rodenbiker for this reference.

68. Bird, *Abuse, Power, and Fearful Obedience*, 32.

69. See also Bird’s summary of these approaches in *Ibid.*, 30–32.

70. Mark Kiley, “Like Sara: The Tale of Terror behind 1 Peter 3:6” *JBL* 106.4: (1987), 689–92.

the call for obedience with anxieties about “dangerous” beauty, as Abram’s plot to pass Sarai off as his sister is due in large part to his fear that the Egyptians’ attraction to Sarah will compel them to murder him (Gen 12:12–13). Martin, among others, objects to Kiley’s proposal on the grounds that Sarah does not refer to Abraham as “lord” in either chapter 12 or 20.⁷¹ However, his answer to Kiley likewise exemplifies a desire for a stable, textual basis for 1 Peter’s reference to Sarah as obedient to Abraham. Martin proposes that the *Testament of Abraham* lies behind 1 Peter 3:6 and argues that this intertext is more likely to represent a common ground between the author(s) and audience(s) of 1 Peter. His proposal is based on three key insights: a) that Sarah repeatedly refers to Abraham as “lord” in *TestAbr*; b) that Sarah is understood to be the mother of proselytes in both texts and c) the text connects a lack of fear with good deeds.⁷² Martin’s proposal does account for a number of missing evidentiary pieces in Kiley’s, but still assumes that the author(s) of 1 Peter was unwaveringly committed to a single text and tradition.

A third proposal, responding more directly to Kiley, breaks out of this intertextual obsession and points to the ways in which Sarah’s marked lack of obedience in Genesis 18:12 posed a problem worth addressing not only for 1 Peter but for other Jewish writers in this period as well.⁷³ Where Kiley and Martin seek to emphasize 1 Peter’s loyalty to received traditions, Dorothy Sly underscores the interpretive license taken with respect to already circulating traditions of Sarah as wife of Abraham and mother of proselytes. Bringing 1 Peter into conversation with Josephus and Philo⁷⁴, Sly argues that “some details in the Genesis account of

71. Martin, “TestAbr and the Background of 1Pet 3,6,” 140.

72. Ibid., 146.

73. Dorothy L. Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b in the Light of Philo and Josephus,” *JBL* 110.1 (1991): 126–29.

74. Paul’s own “reading” of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians 4:21–31 might also be part of this conversation, though Sly does not engage it directly.

Sarah and Abraham's marriage were embarrassing to men in the Hellenistic Age and that consequently the writer of 1 Peter may have been more deliberate in reinterpretation the story than Kiley would allow."⁷⁵ More specifically, the question of Sarah's obedience to Abraham is confounded by the overwhelming instances of Abraham's obedience to Sarah, an unfortunate circumstance that requires no small amount of attention.⁷⁶

Philo's prevailing strategy is to make lemonade out lemons. In *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies*, Philo praises Abraham's obedience to Sarah, writing "Rarely then shall we find one who combines attention, memory and the valuing of deeds before words, which three things are vouched for in the case of Abraham, the lover of learning, in the phrase 'He hearkened to the voice of Sarah,' for he is represented not as hearing, but as hearkening, a word which exactly expresses assent and obedience."⁷⁷ Lest we assume that Philo here represents a kind of proto-feminism, Sly notes the three-pronged approach to abstracting this obedience from the marriage context to an allegorical realm. She writes, "Faced with the evidence that Abraham did indeed obey his wife, Philo resorted to several tactics: allegory, denial of Sarah's womanhood/wifeness, and subtle reconstruction of details in the story."⁷⁸ Sly's approach underscores the flexibility of traditions to the exigencies of the present⁷⁹ and disrupts notions of the author of 1 Peter as an authoritative interpreter of a stable text/tradition.

75. Ibid., 126.

76. Ibid., 127. For instance, in Jubilees 17.6 Abraham is called upon by God to obey Sarah's wish to expel Hagar: "in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, harken to her words and do (them)." For Philo's strategies, see for example *Cherubim* 9; *Prelim Studies* 68.

77. *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies* 68–69 (LCL Colson)

78. Sly, "1 Peter 3b," 127.

79 See also Misset-van de Weg, "Sarah Imagery in 1 Peter," in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, 59–60. "Thus, the author of 1 Peter may have taken vital problems of early Christianity as a hermeneutical principle and resignified, among others, the Abraham-Sarah cycle to meet those concerns."

Sly's approach opens space to consider how 1 Peter likewise reworks traditions that might trouble the kyriarchal status quo and deploys them in the service of a genealogical project. Whereas Philo's approach is allegorical, 1 Peter's is genealogical and posits idealized, matronly femininity as something worn and performed in order to belong. Commenting upon the grounding of 1 Peter's clothing rhetoric in an argument about lineage in 3:6, Maia Kotrosits writes, "These women have earned a precarious place in Israel as Sarah's daughters, but it is a place dependent upon their obedience and submission to the values of the household codes."⁸⁰ To use the language of Denise Kimber Buell, discourses of ethnicity as both fixed and fluid are brought to bear here in 1 Peter's attempt not only to define what constitutes a proper matron but also to ground it in a history whose authority and antiquity are difficult to refute.⁸¹

The call that the wives in the community have "become [Sarah's] daughters" in 3:6 brings this dissertation full circle. The convergences and divergences between the argument and impact of the rhetorics of dress and adornment in Gal 3:27–28 and 1 Peter 3:1–6 are evident even as it is impossible to determine whether the latter is responding directly to the former. Paul's citation of the baptismal formula in Galatians relies on a particular understanding of the baptized as "sons of Abraham" which is accomplished through the act of being clothed with Christ.⁸² This inheritance is energized by the deconstruction of kyriarchal relations of power, such that all are one in Christ. The framework of communal inclusion in 1 Peter 3:1–6 likewise relies on arguments about lineage and genealogy, in a key that is distinctly gendered and reliant not on the dismantling but on the shoring up of power relations which reinforce a long history of wo/men's

80. Kotrosits, *Rethinking Early Christian Identity*, 66.

81. Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race?: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia, 2005).

82. "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." (Gal 3:29).

subordination, despite the necessity of the dangerous work of attracting their husbands into the community. By being adorned in obedience and “never letting fears alarm [them]” the wives in the community can secure, provisionally, their status as Sarah’s daughters. Whereas Philo felt compelled to respond to the dangerous reversal of obedience in the traditions of Abraham and Sarah by allegorizing the obedience of the former to the latter, 1 Peter might be read here as not only shaping these traditions to comply with Greco-Roman mores but also to push back on an alternative rhetoric of dress and adornment available to early communities in Christ which might have energized claims for equity and justice in early assemblies in Christ.

Conclusion

Using the rhetoric of dress and adornment as an analytical focus, this study orbits two aspects of early in-Christ writings that have been key sites of feminist analysis: the baptismal formula and the household codes. As I note in the first chapter, scholars have read these texts with an eye toward their competing visions of equality vs. subordination and as evidence of ongoing debates over the structure and organization of the assemblies. These two “formulas” are thus rightly read as articulating the push and pull of liberation and domination, echoing across the centuries debates about what is imaginable and possible for varied assemblages of people creating something new in the shadow of Empire. But scholarship on the dissolution of boundaries and binaries cited in Gal 3:27–28 or the shoring up of the same in regulations in assemblies (1 Tim 2:8–15) and households (1 Pet 2:18–3:6) rarely ask after the seemingly out-of-place and yet significant role of dress and adornment in all three.

I began this dissertation by underscoring the extent to which cultural ideologies of clothing structured the social world in the ancient Mediterranean, as dress and bodily adornment materialized one’s place in the social order and the expected role behaviors that followed upon it. Ancient texts and material culture make abundant use of dress and adornment as tools for shaping their visions of an orderly κόσμος, and I develop the notion of “cosmethics” to account for the various ways in which the symbolics of clothing could be reshaped either to maintain, reject, or redefine the status quo. Members of in-Christ assemblies, embedded as they were in this cultural landscape, deployed and/or adapted cultural ideologies of dress and adornment to develop theological, political, and social visions of the self and/in community. This dissertation tracks a key tension in the use of rhetorics of dress and adornment in early in-Christ communities, positioning the radical potential of the proclamation that the baptized have been

clothed with Christ alongside the “dress codes” in 1 Timothy and 1 Peter, which echo kyriarchal clothing ideologies in a theological key.

In Chapter One, “Fashioning Community: The Politics of Putting on Christ,” I focus my attention on the baptismal formula cited by Paul in Gal 3:27–28. On the one hand, the proclamation that the baptized are “clothed in Christ” is not given sufficient attention in scholarship which attends to the social, material, and political implications of the dissolution of boundaries and binaries which follows immediately upon its heels. On the other hand, scholarship that does attend to clothing imagery in the baptismal formula often relegates it to the realm of metaphor or understands it in solely androcentric terms. Highlighting the work of clothing practices in the construction of socially stratified and intersecting categories of identity, I argue that baptismal rhetoric of dress and adornment should be understood instead as offering space for early followers of Christ to imagine the relationship of clothing and social organization otherwise—as a tool for remaking the world rather than reifying inequality. I then turn to the Corinthian wo/men prophets and argue that their alternative practices of hair-dressing and head covering, energized by the baptismal formula, were not merely an expression of their understanding of equality but a strategy for bringing about social transformation. Their definition of baptismal “cosmethics” reveals the mutual imbrication of metaphor and materiality in response to rhetorics of dress and adornment.

In Chapter Two, “‘As is Proper for Women who Profess *θεοσέβεια*’: (En)Gendering God-fear in 1 Timothy,” I turn to the prescriptions regarding wo/men’s dress in the letter of 1 Timothy. I argue that binary categories such as “religious” vs. “everyday” dress can obfuscate an analysis of the theological import of seemingly mundane clothing practices. Given 1 Timothy’s proscription of luxurious clothing items, scholars often make the case that 1 Timothy is

particularly concerned with the presence and participation of wealthy wo/men who were using their economic influence to lay claim to power in the early assemblies. While I do not reject this argument entirely, I argue that such an acute focus on wealthy wo/men does not account for how non-elite wo/men would have responded to this rhetoric or for the theological implications of equating certain practices of dress with “proper” piety. Focusing on 1 Timothy’s claim that clothing in shame and prudence and in the “good works” of silence and subordination is “proper for wo/men who profess God-fear,” I argue that this rhetoric of dress and adornment belies an ongoing struggle not only over economic influence but over what constitutes “proper” piety for wo/men. Reading against the grain, I argue that the text evidences the presence of variously situated wo/men who profess alternative understandings of prudence, piety, and the relationship of dress to gender and authority/influence in the community. By highlighting the theological significance of clothing practices rarely seen as such, this analysis moves away from problematic readings of this passage that interpret 1 Timothy 2:8–10 as concerned with wo/men whose dress poses an implicitly sexualized “distraction” in the context of worship. Such readings reify and theologize even today the policing of wo/men’s bodies in ways that can and should be disrupted.

In Chapter Three, “Putting on ‘Heirs’: Constructing Wifely Virtue in 1 Peter,” I argue that the letter to 1 Peter seeks to downplay the influence of wives and the risks they undertook to promote the development of early assemblies in Christ by circumscribing their actions within the framework of wifely obedience performed with and through their dress. Whereas scholars often make the case that 1 Peter’s household code is more liberative in that it addresses the enslaved and wives directly as moral agents, I argue that such a reading obscures the ways in which notions of virtue are not universal but conditioned by socially constructed identity categories and relations of power. As a result, these interpretations do not analyze the material circumstances of

subordination, but appeal instead to an abstract and universal notion of virtue and/or the capacity for moral reasoning. Instead, engaging with Judith Butler's notion of "citationality," I analyze 1 Peter's rhetoric of dress and adornment alongside texts and material culture which work to construct a genealogy of "proper" femininity by bringing history to the level of the body. Despite their growing influence in the community, the wives that 1 Peter addresses are called to clothe themselves in the subordinating obedience of the "holy women of old." While the text works to construct Sarah as a paradigm of wifely obedience, I highlight the ways in which this appeal to historical memory is problematized by traditions which indicate the contrary. Rather than attempting to pinpoint the exact reference to Sarah calling Abraham "lord" that the text draws upon, I argue that it is more productive to consider the ways in which wives' belonging in the community is contingent upon their performance of a constructed history and genealogy of wifely obedience.

Throughout this dissertation, I have worked to push back on a scholarly tendency to subordinate issues of dress and adornment to the loftier theological or political strivings of the early in-Christ movement and I have argued that early Christian wo/men used clothing rhetorics to articulate visions of social and political transformation even as kyriarchal authorities worked to solidify kyriarchal norms on those same grounds. While this analysis focuses on ancient wo/men, I want to be clear that this is not to essentialize or reify the category of "woman" or to exclude or erase trans and non-binary persons, ancient or contemporary.¹ In this dissertation, I have analyzed how rhetorics of dress work to construct and naturalize categories of identity and

1. For work at the intersection of feminist, queer, and trans theory in early Christianity/biblical studies Joseph A. Marchal, *Appalling Bodies Queer Figures before and after Paul's Letters* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020). Teresa J. Hornsby and Deryn Guest *Transgender, Intersex, and Biblical Interpretation*, Semeia Studies 83 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

power, including gender, and have argued that by exploiting the cracks and fissures in these arguments and bringing to light possible counter-movements we might not only reconstruct a more inclusive history of early Christianity but also work toward dismantling the ongoing force of these “texts of terror” in naturalizing oppressive gender norms. Further collaboration among feminist, queer, and critical race theorists and historians of dress is necessary to press on the categories and lenses through which we “see” clothing and to illuminate further its role at the intersections of multiple and ongoing kyriarchal structures.

Furthermore, I have argued that ancient practices of dressing and adorning the body are often set apart from language and metaphors about clothing. Rather than seeing the two in dynamic interaction, discussions of clothing are often siphoned into binaries of metaphorical vs. material, religious vs. non-religious, ritual vs. everyday. In this framework, the proclamation that the baptized have “clothed themselves with Christ” and its intertextual echoes are understood as ritual and metaphorical language, having little bearing on how initiates conceptualized their own practices of dress and its social meaning in the wake of this transformation. Likewise, the exhortation that women cast aside their jewels and fine garments is often understood as referring to everyday economic and material practices of dress, with little effect on how these wo/men might have conceptualized their clothing practices in social-political and/or theological terms.

This dissertation “flips the script” of these assumptions. On the one hand, I analyze the baptismal notion of being clothed with Christ and the controversy over the comportment of the Corinthian wo/men prophets as an intervention in the “everyday” domination embedded in the conflation of dress, identity, and prescriptive social roles. I argue that the baptismal formula encodes the dissolution of boundaries and binaries for all those clad in Christ and becomes grounds for reimagining what clothing means and for whom to disrupt ideologies of “natural”

difference and kyriarchal power. On the other hand, I examine the “dress codes” in 1 Peter and 1 Timothy not primarily in economic terms but as evidence of ongoing struggles over what it looks like to embody piety, belonging, and/or divinely inspired speech or learning. In these texts, ostentatious dress is as much metaphorical as it is material, symbolizing the kinds of activities, knowledge, and claims to authority which challenge the authors’ vision of “proper” piety, belonging, and order in Christ. It is my hope by the end of this analysis readers will see anew the ways in which these issues are all mutually imbricated, that economic and material concerns for early communities in Christ were also theological ones, and that ritual practices have unpredictable material reverberations that push back against their categorization as discrete or isolated activities or imaginaries.²

Finally, I have used the tools of feminist rhetorical and historical analysis to counter the areas of inquiry that are considered worthy of “rigorous” study by the larger guild.³ While self-identified feminists from a variety of political and theological backgrounds have long pointed both to the silencing of wo/men in these texts and the embedded evidence of their critical roles in the development of early Christianity, the role of dress and adornment as a staging ground for these struggles has been largely unaddressed. By neglecting to turn our attention to how conflicts and counter-movements worked to shape the construction of normative dress and adornment as a

2. The work of Catherine Bell is particularly influential in pushing back on assumptions of ritual as an isolated activity, tied inextricably to “belief” or as a bodily representation of a narrative mythology. Rather, her notion of “ritualization” as a “strategic way of acting” highlights both the indeterminacy of ritual praxis as well as its embeddedness within structures of power. See *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

3. For a critique of the andro-kyriocentric presuppositions of the guild of biblical studies, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Shifting the Focus: The Politics of Biblical Studies,” in *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 57–82. Here, Schüssler Fiorenza highlights the ways in which the assumption of “value neutral” scholarship employ a falsely generic andro/kyrio-centric lens that further obfuscates its own assumptions and preconceptions. Schüssler Fiorenza instead proposes a critical and metacritical “feminist ethic of inquiry” which orients biblical scholarship toward a critical analysis of justice and equity in and around biblical texts.

marker of identity and authority, the road has been left unencumbered for malestream commentators to import stereotypes of women's bodies as "distractions" or wo/men in general as particularly inclined toward the "bodily" over the "intellectual" onto 1 Timothy, 1 Peter, and other ancient texts.

The viral rise to prominence of the #MeToo movement in 2017⁴ has drawn renewed attention to the ways in which the silencing of those who experience sexual assault and harassment is achieved in no small part by appeals to their bodies and their clothing. One need only to consider how sexual violence is routinely justified and excused by the question: "What were they wearing?" to see the ways in which survivors' dress remains a matter of public scrutiny, where their own witness bears less weight than what might be read upon their dress.⁵ By attending to ancient rhetorics of dress and adornment, we might engage more explicitly how

4. It is important to underscore that the Me Too movement founded by Tarana Burke in 2006 existed long before Alyssa Milano's viral tweet in 2017. The organization was founded to empower and provide support to young Black women who were survivors of sexual violence, to show these women that they are not alone, and to raise awareness of the unspoken magnitude of violence against women. See "History and Inception" Online: <https://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/>. Since Milano's tweet and the subsequent indictment of several prominent serial abusers, including Harvey Weinstein, the movement has exposed the violence and abuse of power in nearly every cultural arena. The movement has also sparked a renewed interest in rape culture in the study of Religion more broadly and in biblical studies in particular. See Rhiannon Graybill, Meredith Minister, and Beatrice J. W. Lawrence, eds. *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements*, Feminist Studies and Sacred Texts Series (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2019). Amy Kalmanofsky, ed. *Sexual Violence and Sacred Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Feminist Studies in Religion Books, 2017).

5. Mary Simmerling's poem "What I Was Wearing" is an arresting illustration of the ways in which survivors' experiences are undermined by the constant question: "What were you wearing?" The poem concludes:

i remember also
what he was wearing
that night
even though
it's true
that no one
has ever asked.

Her poem launched a traveling art exhibit curated by student survivors of sexual assault entitled "What Were You Wearing?" Online: <https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/stories>.

the seeds of silencing and rape culture in these texts continue to exert an influence in the political and religious realms.⁶

This is a key issue, as ideologies of dress, identity, and power resonate across space and time as wo/men's practices of clothing and adorning are policed with shocking regularity—perhaps most visibly for those who aspire to public office.⁷ For wo/men in leadership positions, clothing represents a particularly harsh “double bind”: the public demands that they adhere to strictly define scripts of “proper” feminine dress even as notions of the undue attention paid to their clothing or comportment is used to undermine their qualifications for leadership and to distract from the content of their policies. As Nadia Brown and Danielle Casarez Lemi underscore, this double bind is compounded for Black wo/men politicians whose clothing, and particularly their hairstyles, are under constant and unwavering scrutiny in a political arena in which the white cisgender male is the norm.⁸ While there is growing public awareness of the ways in which judgements about clothing are used to limit wo/men's leadership in the public

6. See for instance the highly-controversial letter sent by Maryann White, who self-describes as a “Catholic mother of four sons with a problem only girls can solve—leggings.” Here, White rehearses a number of tropes regarding women's dress as a distraction and danger to men as she exhorts young women to stop wearing leggings, particularly in contexts of worship. “The Legging Problem” *The Observer*. 25 March 2019. Online: <https://ndsmcobserver.com/2019/03/the-legging-problem/>.

7. See Deborah Tannen, “The Double Bind: The Damned-if-you-do, Damned-if-you-don't Paradox Facing Women Leaders,” in *Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Reflections by Women Writers*, ed. Susan Morrison (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 126–39.

8. Their work underscores the importance of an intersectional approach to the politics of appearance, as the history of enslavement, anti-blackness, and European beauty standards in the United States shape indelibly how Black wo/men politicians' appearances are perceived in the public sphere. Brown and Casarez Lemi write, “The continuing manifestations and intrusions on their bodies today are legacies of Black women's historical lack of ownership of their bodies. To deny the racist, sexist, and patriarchal underpinnings that have created a culture in which Black women are both demeaned and fetishized on the basis of their physical appearances would be shortsighted. Black women are often simultaneously hypervisible and invisible, meaning that they are perceived as overly present and are yet ignored altogether, which either renders them as something with which they do not fully identify or erases other signifiers that they wish to adopt.” Nadia E. Brown and Danielle Casarez Lemi. *Sister Style: The Politics of Appearance for Black Women Political Elites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 6.

sphere, the results of this dissertation pave the way for further analysis of the recursivity of these clothing rhetorics in the present.

Another aim of this dissertation is to revisit the notion that “pious” or “religious” dress is set apart from or is reactionary to the trends and fashions of the broader culture and to highlight how even the most ostentatious sartorial displays can hold theological significance for both the wearer and the individuals they encounter. Further work might be done to this end, focusing on the categories prevalent in the study of the early Christianity in particular and the study of Religion more broadly. That is, while we readily see items such as amulets and signet rings as functional or even “magical,” scholars rarely consider them in more everyday terms as worn objects which interact with other elements in an assemblage of adornment. We might ask not only how everyday fashions hold theological meaning, but also how garments or jewelry that we might see as conveying “religious” meaning might have been adapted as a form of self-fashioning for elites and non-elites alike. Such an intervention in our frameworks of analysis allows for further inquiry into key tensions in early Christian writings between a culturally conditioned suspicion of luxury and a tendency to cast eschatological visions in those terms.

In short, while this dissertation engages material culture to some extent, further work on the rhetoric of dress and adornment might engage more explicitly with objects of adornment as arguments in themselves. In this way, studies in dress and adornment both within and outside of early Christianity might more richly attend to the labor of the marginalized in the production of clothing and textiles and the ways in textile work is itself politically, economically, and theologically significant. The results of such studies would enhance our understanding of the role of dress and adornment in meditating between human and divine and might lead to further attention to “small finds” such as jewelry and textile fragments not just as expression of

individual identity or wealth but as part of a web of objects with theological and/or philosophical significance.⁹

Finally, work remains to be done on the relationship of dress, adornment, and divinely authorized speech for early Christ-followers. While an exploration of this topic lies outside of the scope of this dissertation, anxieties about dress surface regularly alongside anxieties about speech, from the Corinthian wo/men prophets to the notion ἄλογος persuasion on the part of 1 Peter's obedient wives. Further studies might consider the ways in which divine speech is understood as bestowed upon those "properly" dressed or how appeals to improper dress are a potent strategy for, quite literally, silencing dissent.

From being clothed in Christ to restrictions on gold, braided hair, and luxurious garments as is "proper" for wo/men who profess God-fear or who wish to fashion themselves in imitation of the holy wo/men of old, clothing *mattered* for members of the earliest assemblies in Christ. By taking seriously how rhetorics of dress, adornment, and identity work to instantiate competing visions for what community, authority, and belonging look like for these groups, this dissertation pushes beyond understandings of dress and adornment as universal and ahistorical to consider clothing as an ideological system which works to construct the structures of power that it purports to represent. Dressing and adorning in these communities, therefore, was as much argument as arrangement, compelling us to consider how rhetorics of dress and identity work into the present both to justify systems of subordination and to fuel movements for transformation.

⁹ The recent exhibit at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World models this work. See Thelma K. Thomas, ed, *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity*, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

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