To keep silent, ask husbands at home, and not to have authority over men. Part I (I Corinthians 14:33-36 and I Timothy 2:11-12) : The transition from gathering in private to meeting in public space in second generation christianity and the exclusion of ...

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To Keep Silent, Ask Husbands at Home, and not to Have Authority over Men. Part I

(I Corinthians 14:33-36 and I Timothy 2:11-12)

The Transition from Gathering in Private to Meeting in Public Space in Second Generation Christianity and the Exclusion of Women from Leadership of the Public Assembly

The New Testament witness to the appropriate role for women in the leadership and teaching of the early Christian assemblies has often appeared ambiguous to scholars of these earliest Christian sources.[1] Two passages attributed to the apostle Paul, I Cor 14:33-36 and I Tim 2:11-12, severely curtail the

[1] The online journal Lectio Difficilior. European Electronic Journal for Feminist Exegesis (http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/index.html) is particularly useful for tracking recent discussion, especially in German literature, of the leadership roles exercised by Christian women in the New Testament period, cf. especially A. Standhartinger, «Die Frau muss Vollmacht haben auf ihrem Haupt» (1 Korinther 11,10). Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart feministischer Paulusauslegungen (2, 2002) and L. Sutter Rehmann's Probevorlesung, Die paulinischen Briefe in der feministischen Exegese – ein Überblick (1, 2001). For historical overviews of German literature see M. Gielen, Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelethik. Ein Beitrag zur Frage einer christlichen Auseinandersetzung mit gesellschaftlichen Normen (BBB 75), Frankfurt a.M. 1990; C. Janssen, L. Schottroff, B. Wehn (eds.), Paulus. Umstrittene Traditionen – lebendige Theologie. Eine feministische Lektüre, Gütersloh 2001; H. Merklein, Im Spannungsfeld von Protologie und Eschatologie. Zur kurzen Geschichte der aktiven Beteiligung von Frauen in paulinischen Gemeinden, in: M. Evang, H. Merklein, M. Wolter (eds.), Eschatologie und Schöpfung. FS E. Grässer (BZNW 89), Berlin/New York 1997, 231-259; U. Wagener, Die Ordnung des «Hauses Gottes». Der Ort von Frauen in der Ekklesiologie und Ethik der Pastoralbriefe (WUNT II, 65), Tübingen 1994. With a focus on American and British literature, M.Y. MacDonald, Reading Real Women through the undisputed Letters of Paul, in: R.S. Kraemer, M.R. D'Angelo (eds.), Women & Christian Origins, New York/Oxford 1999, 199-220, offers a wide-reaching survey of recent scholarship on the proposed women missionaries and leaders of the New Testament period.

role of women in worship and leadership. In the former passage women are required to keep silence in the assembly of the church and to adopt a subordinate role, asking their husbands at home if they wish to enquire after any matter; women's speech in the assembly is condemned as shameful. The latter passage requires that women, previously admonished to wear modest clothes and not to adorn their hair expensively (vv. 9-10), learn in silence in an attitude of submission, and prohibits to women any role in teaching and any role which allows women to have authority over men, thus denying to women any role which pertains to the leadership of the whole Christian assembly. The content and approach of these passages appears drastically to compromise the consistency of the New Testament witness concerning the proper role of women in the worship and leadership of the Christian assembly. The leadership roles of women such as the house-church leaders Nympha (Colossians 4:15)[2] and the patroness-deacon/servant Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2)[3] seem clear to most contemporary interpreters of the New Testament.[4] Similarly, Junia, who ap-

[2] Cf. the discussion of Nympha in H.-J. Klauck, Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum, Stuttgart 1981, 45-46, who notes that scribes found Nympha's evident leadership role so scandalous that she was turned into a man (Nymphas) in parts of the textual tradition.

[3] Cf. G. Lohfink, Weibliche Diakone im Neuen Testament, in: G. Dautzenberg et al. (eds.), Die Frau im Urchristentum (QD 95), Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1983, 320-338; M. Ernst, Die Funktionen der Phöbe (Röm 16,1f) in der Gemeinde von Kenchreai, in: F.V. Reiterer, P. Eder (eds.), Liebe zum Wort. Beiträge zur klassischen und biblischen Philologie. FS P.L. Bernhard, Salzburg/Wien 1993, 141-154 (in briefer form: Die Funktionen der Phöbe [Röm 16,1f] in der Gemeinde von Kenchreai, PzB 1 [1992] 135-147). Positive evaluation of Phoebe's role in leadership, though perhaps characterized by a tendency to see her designation as diakonos as a technical description reflecting the later order of the church, is offered by D. Reininger, Diakonat der Frau in der Alten Kirche. Diskussionen, Entscheidungen und pastoral-praktische Erfahrungen in der christlichen Ökumene und ihr Beitrag zur römisch-katholischen Diskussion, Ostfildern 1999; P. Hünermann, A. Biesinger, M. Heimbach-Steins, A. Jensen (eds.), Diakonat. Ein Amt für Frauen in der Kirche, Ein frauengerechtes Amt?, Ostfildern 1997; I. Raming, Der Ausschluss der Frau vom priesterlichen Amt. Gottgewollte Tradition oder Diskriminierung?, Köln/Wien 1973. L. Schottroff emphasises that in the earlier phase of Christian social organization, service at table and service in preaching and teaching were both embraced within the verb diakonein, and Phoebe's service to the Church thus took in both (Auf dem Weg zu einer feministischen Rekonstruktion der Geschichte des frühen Christentums, in: L. Schottroff, S. Schroer, M.-Th. Wacker [eds.], Feministische Exegese. Forschungserträge zur Bibel aus der Perspektive von Frauen, Darmstadt 1995, 193-194 and 223-226). See below for further discussion of the character of Phoebe's leadership.

[4] It has been argued that Paul's designation of Phoebe as diakonos, long wrongly interpreted as «deaconess» (i.e. as indicating menial service), may indicate that she was not merely in a general and honorific sense a «servant» of the Church (cf. Paul's frequent self-designation as diakonos) but was recognized as an «herald» or «official messenger», a meaning carried by the term diakonos elsewhere in the New Testament: cf. J. Gnilka, Der Philipperbrief (HThK X.3), Freiburg 1968) 39; M.A. Getty argues that a comparison of

pears with Andronicus[5] as kin to Paul and of note amongst the apostles at Rom 16:7, is now frequently granted status as a woman apostle.[6] Notwithstanding these positive indications which appear to affirm a role for women as vocal leaders of the Christian assembly, a further possible objection to the reality of the call of God to the highest offices in the Church may arise from the New Testament witness through the absence of women within the special circle of the Twelve. In the ancient development of Christian institutional structures the prohibitions of I Cor 14:34-35 and I Tim 2:11-12 ultimately prevailed; women were excluded from the leading offices of the Church, and from presiding at the eucharist.

This paper seeks to develop understanding of I Cor 14:34-35 and I Tim 2:11-12 by examining their relation to the ancient ideology of gender and space, the socio-cultural and rhetorical milieu which in particular placed restric-

verses 5 and 9 in I Cor 3 indicate that Paul uses the term diakonos as an alternate for synergos, his term for his co-working missionaries (here himself and Apollos), and that Paul's letter of commendation indicates that churches elsewhere should support Phoebe as they did men like himself and Apollos who traveled to preach the Gospel. Phoebe appears to be mentioned first in the greetings of Rom 16 since she traveled to Rome to deliver Paul's letter to the church of Rome (God's Fellow Worker and Apostleship, in: A. Swidler, L. Swidler [eds.], Women Priests. A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration, New York 1977, 176-182; further E. Schüssler Fiorenza, The Apostleship of Women in Early Christianity, ibid., 135-140).

[5] The appearance of Junia in association with the man Andronicus at Rom 16:7 is not typical of the named women of the New Testament, who usually, like Nympha and Phoebe, appear to be independent women (i.e. widowed or unmarried), cf. E.W. Stegemann, W. Stegemann, Urchristliche Sozialgeschichte. Die Anfänge im Judentum und die Christengemeinden in der mediterranen Welt, Stuttgart 1995, 332: «Die meisten namentlich genannten Frauen sind offensichtlich alleinstehend». M. Eichenauer determines that there was a high percentage of unmaried women in the world of Roman work (Untersuchungen zur Arbeitswelt der Frau in der Römischen Antike [EHS III, 360], Frankfurt a.M. 1986, 142-143).

[6] The case for the feminine form *Junia* and its reference to a woman apostle in Rom 16:7 was fully argued by B.J. Brooten, «Junia ... outstanding among the Apostles» (Romans 16:7), in: Swidler, Swidler, op. cit., 141-144. Her treatment is available in German translation, «Junia ... hervorragend unter den Aposteln» (Röm 16,7), in: E. Moltmann-Wendel (ed.), Frauenbefreiung. Biblische und theologische Argumente, München [4]1986, 148-151. The woman's name Junia is common in antiquity, but the masculine Junias is unattested, cf. Lohfink, op. cit., 327-332. See further in support of Brooten's case M. Gielen, Frauen in den Gemeinden des Paulus. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 1. Jahrhunderts, SaThZ 6 (2002) 182-191 (183-186). On the reluctance of editors of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament to acknowledge the text-critical arguments see P. Artzt, Junia oder Junias? Zum textkritischen Hintergrund von Röm 16,7, in: F.V. Reiterer, P. Eder, op. cit., 83-102. For opposing argumentation in a new, variant form see M.H. Burer, D.B. Wallace, Was Junia Really an Apostle?, NTS 47 (2001) 76-91, who concede the case for the feminine form but argue that episemoi en tois apostolois means «well-known» rather than «outstanding» amongst the (Jerusalem) apostles.

tions on women's behaviour in public, as opposed to private or domestic space. The gender ideology which defines the public sphere as properly belonging to men, and restricts women to the private, domestic sphere has been persistent in Western culture[7] and has indeed been understood by the anthropologist Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo as a universal though «non-necessary» aspect of culture.[8] Karen Jo Torjesen has employed the anthropological understanding of the gender-based dichotomy between public and private space to explain the limitation of women's roles in ministry in early Christianity.[9] She emphasises the limited evidence from the second and third centuries which shows women in leadership roles, and finds a turning point around AD 250: «Up until the middle of the third century, early Christian worship took place in the homes of prosperous householders ... the earlier ‹house congregations› were clearly located in the private sphere.» With the transition to the public sphere, women were no longer allowed leadership roles. The restriction of women's roles only became complete in the fourth century with the construction of basilicas after the model of the Roman reception hall, whose «architectural space clearly defines Christian worship as public.»[10]

With full acknowledgement of Torjesen's leading contribution in this field, an amendment will here be offered to her dating of the emergence of public congregations in early Christianity. It will be argued that the transition to a public form of worship actually happened in many sectors of the church as early as the latter part of the apostolic period, or with the first generation after the apostles. Further, the case will be made that this dating of the transition of Christian worship from the private to the public sphere helps us to account for the restrictive, later New Testament texts (I Cor 14:33-36 and I Tim 2:11-12). Moreover, the discovery that the transition of worship to space which was perceived to be «public» happened in the major urban locations of Christianity within the New Testament period will be applied to explain the general exclusion of women from the monarchical episcopate. The early timing of this transition in many areas also explains the very limited evidence for women in leadership roles from the second to the fourth centuries compared with the New Testament. The present author has argued elsewhere that the rise of the monarchical bishop and the threefold ministry was due to the late first century

[7] Cf. J.B. Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman. Women in Social and Political Thought, Princeton 1981.

[8] Women, Culture and Society. A Theoretical Overview, in: M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds.), Women, Culture, and Society, Stanford 1974, 17-42; The Use and Abuse of Anthropology. Reflections on Feminism in Cross-cultural Understanding, Signs 5 (1980) 389-417.

[9] K.J. Torjesen, When Women Were Priests, San Francisco 1993; Reconstruction of Early Christian Women's History, in: E. Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), Searching the Scriptures, Vol. I, New York 1993, 290-310.

[10] Torjesen, op. cit., 127, cf. 37.157.

development away from a cellular structure of small household groups, under the patronage of a group of householders and linked by the authority of peripatetic apostles, to a form in which larger, gathered city congregations met under the leadership of the first «bishops» proper. The new episcopal class arose to offer authoritative leadership in these larger congregations as the apostolic class passed away.[11] These large city congregations met in public space, where cultural norms of modesty tended to exclude women from leadership roles. Unlike the male apostle Paul, who in Acts 20:20 is depicted as teaching both «in public» (*demosia*) and «from house to house» (*kat' oikous*), i.e. in both «public» and «private» space,[12] the activity of early Christian women preachers appears always to have been restricted according to the typical norms of culture to domestic space; this restriction meant that with the creation of the public office of the monarchical, urban episcopate, women could not exercise influence by occupying the highest office in the churches.

Gender and the ideology of public and private space

The anthropologist Jill Dubisch observes that Greek women in rural villages today should be «Ideally ... confined to the house, leaving its boundaries only as necessity demands and never for idle or frivolous reasons ... By spending too much time outside of the house, a woman is not only neglecting her domestic duties, but also may be engaging in polluting and destructive activities, such as illicit sexual activity or gossip, which can disrupt social relations and damage a family's reputation.»[13] The anthropological categories of honour and shame, at the root of the ideology of gender and space, have been seen to define pivotal values of ancient Mediterranean culture.[14] Public space was the proper place for males, whereas females belonged in the private space of the household.[15] Men acquired honour in the arena of public interaction,

[11] B.J. Capper, Order and Ministry in the Social Pattern of the New Testament Church, in: Ch. Hall, R. Hannaford (eds.), Order and Ministry, Leominster 1996, 61-103. See further below.

[12] Cf. J.H. Neyrey, Teaching you in Public and from House to House (Acts 20.20). Unpacking a Cultural Stereotype, JSNT 26 (2003) 69-102.

[13] J. Dubisch, Culture Enters through the Kitchen. Women, Food, and Social Boundaries in Rural Greece, in: J. Dubisch (ed.), Gender and Power in Rural Greece, Princeton NJ 1986, 195-214 (200), cited in: A. Batten, More Queries for Q. Women and Christian Origins, BTB 24 (1994) 44-51 (44).

[14] This has been emphasized in particular in the writings of the ‹Context Group› of New Testament scholars, cf. B.J. Malina, J.H. Neyrey, Honour and Shame in Luke-Acts. Pivotal values of the Mediterranean World, in: J.H. Neyrey (ed.), The Social World of Luke-Acts. Models for Interpretation, Peabody MA 1991, 25-65; B.J. Malina, The New Testament World, Louisville KY ^{2}1993, 28-62.

[15] Cf. Torjesen, op. cit., 59-61, 112-113; J.H. Neyrey, What's Wrong with this Picture?

where male sexuality was understood to be aggressive.[16] By contrast, women preserved the honour of their males and family group by preserving their shame, acknowledgement in the public sphere of their sexual exclusiveness. Since sexual exclusiveness was most easily challenged if a woman moved too freely outside the protected sphere of the household, the conventions of female modesty included semi-seclusion.

The restrictions which the cultural handling of sexuality placed on women for the sake of male and family honour were transformed in rhetorical discourse into virtues. The gender ideology of public and private included a powerful political component, by which leadership roles in the public sphere were restricted to men, while the only proper sphere of female control was the household. According to a Pythagorean treatise of the second or third century BC «Men's vocations are to be generals and city officials and politicians, and women should guard the house and stay inside and receive and take care of their husbands».[17] The ideal woman was absent from public space or silent and invisible when within it. Aristotle counted silence as the principal virtue of a woman, appealing to the poetic tradition: «All classes must be deemed to have special attributes; as the poet says of woman, ‹Silence is a woman's glory›, but this is not equally the glory of men.»[18] For Plutarch, «a virtuous woman ought to be most visible in her husband's company, and to stay in the house and hide herself when he is away»; the women of early Rome were «not to speak, even on the most necessary topics, unless their husbands were with them»; indeed, «the name of a good woman [i.e. any information concerning her], like her person, ought to be shut up indoors and never go out».[19]

We should, of course, distinguish between these rhetorically depicted ideal restrictions on women's behaviour and the complexities of actual social practice. The confidence, high status and wealth of elite women tended to press against and even break these ideal boundaries, and such conventions were impossibly impractical for ordinary working women. Many relevant texts must be seen as «prescriptive» rather than «descriptive». Moreover, the modern categories of «public» and «private» do not directly equate with those of the an-

John 4, Cultural Stereotypes of Women, and Public and Private Space, BTB 24 (1994) 77-91.

[16] Cf. Malina, Neyrey, op. cit., 35-38, 49-52; Torjesen, op. cit., 137, 141-142.

[17] Cf. H. Thesleff (ed.), The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period, Abo 1965, 151-154; K.S. Guthrie, The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library, Grand Rapids MI 1987, 263-264.

[18] Politics 1.13.

[19] Plutarch, Advice to Bride and Groom 9; Lycurgus and Numa 3.5; In Praise of Women 242E. In Pericles' famous funeral oration, the virtuous widow is she «of whom there is least talk among men whether in praise or blame», so completely withdrawn from public space and comment that she has reputation for neither good nor evil (Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.45.2).

cient world. For example, elite women did appear in public and were involved (if obliquely) in the «public» realm of politics, and a woman's dominant role within the internal administration of the elite household was not without political significance.[20] For minority religious and social groupings such as Jews and Christians, nonetheless, these Graeco-Roman ideals probably weighed significantly on thought and practice, since such groups probably sought to eradicate opportunity for accusation by their pagan neighbours against their women and community morality on such grounds. The Jewish philosopher and scripture interpreter Philo, writing shortly in advance of the first New Testament authors, would have kept women out of public space altogether. With other ancient moralists, he increased the rhetorical force of the ideal of the virtuous, silent woman by means of a harsh opposing stereotype of women's speech and activity in public space as meddling and sexual impropriety. Since public activity was the preserve of men, the woman who got involved in a matter outside her household might be attacked for interfering where she did not belong. Philo tragically constructs a supposed virtue of holy silence out of the restricted movement and social isolation he sought to impose on women.[21] Perversely opposing judgements about a woman's movement in public space

[20] For a nuanced discussion of the complexities of the categories of «public» and «private» as they apply to women's roles in the household and politics see Stegemann, Stegemann, op. cit., 311-319. These authors emphasise that while the earlier view of the «oriental inaccessibility» of women in the Graeco-Roman world may be held to be superseded, the judgement of some scholars who find that the ancient world allowed considerable freedoms to women in public space is «rather optimistic», 315. Cf. Frau (K. Thraede), RAC 8, Stuttgart 1970, 197-269; R. Just, Women in Athenian Law and Life, London 1991, 106ff.

[21] Special Laws 3.169: «Market-places and council-halls and law-courts and gatherings and meetings where a large number of people are assembled, and open-air life with full scope for discussion and action – all these are suitable to men both in war and in peace. The women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house, within which the middle door is taken by the maidens as their boundary, and the outer door by those who have reached full womanhood.» «A woman, then, should not be a busybody, meddling with matters outside her household concerns, but should seek a life of seclusion. She should not show herself off like a vagrant in the streets before the eyes of other men, except when she has to go to the temple, and even then she should take pains to go, not when the market is full, but when most people have gone home, and so like a freeborn lady worthy of the name, with everything quiet around her, make her oblations and offer her prayers to avert the evil and gain the good.» We may compare how Plutarch held that Numa, the legendary king of Rome, had forbidden Roman matrons from «busy intermeddling, taught them sobriety, and accustomed them to be silent» (Lycurgus and Numa 3.5) and Juvenal's charge of gossip against the woman active outside the home, who was «rushing boldly about the entire city, attending men's meetings, talking with unflinching face and hard breasts to generals in their military cloaks ... she picks up the latest rumours at the city gates, and invents some herself» (Sat. 6.398-409). Women's exclusion from public space could even be made a necessary consequence of universal female moral incapacity: «Every woman has loose morals; the virtuous woman has just escaped notice», Life

meant that it was literally an area in which women could not win. For Philo, when piety compelled the virtuous woman to move in public space, she would avoid crowds. Conversely, the Pythagorean tract noted above judged that since movement «at dawn or dusk» in public space put her sexual exclusivity in question, the virtuous woman only left the house «when the forum is full of people, accompanied by one or at the most two servants.»[22] Paul Veyne describes such customary accompaniment of the Roman woman as her «mobile prison»,[23] an apposite description too for the rhetorical discourse created by such exaggerative moralising.

The honour competition was greatest amongst the males of the city elite. Since conspicuous public roles increased men's vulnerability to attacks on the reputation of their wives and daughters, elite wealth emphasised the retreat of the virtuous woman. Philo made exaggerated female modesty, withdrawal, and quietness a badge of social rank. Substantial restriction to the home was the price such moralists sought of the elite woman for the high public standing of her husband. Xenophon in his *Oikonomikos* articulated the ancient ideal gender division of labour management, something of a fiction: «the woman should be responsible for all work indoors, and the man take charge of outdoor activities.»[24] The timidity and caution of the woman, and the kinds of work at which she excels, make her more suited to the sheltered space of the home.[25] Such elite views really arose from concerns about male honour rather than division of labour. The labour burden of the elite household largely fell upon its male and female slaves. Once essential directives had been given, competent slaves could be entrusted with oversight of the household. Yet the mistress's freedom from labour presented a danger if time spent outside the home resulted in accusation. More than household management, the elite male required of his wife the preservation of his honour and legitimate heirs, central concerns ideally met by keeping his wife generally at home. The elite male ideal of beauty even preferred a woman to have a white complexion, indicating that she remained indoors, unlike working women who could not avoid work in the fields and marketplace.[26]

This was an impossible standard of propriety for women of the lower classes, who undertook many tasks outside the home, and might at best keep virgin daughters within the immediate vicinity of the house. Women who owned

of Secundus the Philosopher 1, in: D.E. Aune, Graeco-Roman Literature and the New Testament, Atlanta 1988, 114.

[22] Cf. Thesleff, op. cit., 154; Guthrie, op. cit., 264.

[23] P. Veyne (ed.), A History of Private Life. I. From Pagan Rome to Byzantium, Cambridge MA 1987, 75.

[24] Oikonomikos 7.22, cf. Hierocles, On Duties 4.28.21ff.

[25] Oikonomikos 7.25-27.

[26] Cf. S.B. Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves. Women in Classical Antiquity, New York 1975, 83.

no slaves to run errands for them had to venture into the public sphere.[27] The reality of life for the vast majority of women in the ancient world involved the public tasks of carrying, buying and selling at the markets, and land work (in the company of their males), as well as the domestic tasks of spinning, weaving and food preparation. Walter Scheidel has shown the importance of female labour in his treatments of the working women of the ancient agrarian economy, whom he calls «The most silent women of Greece and Rome».[28] In ancient literature the lot of these women was rarely discussed; the discourse of the elite moralists shows how they were easily tainted with the accusation or suspicion of immorality.

For the better-off family of the ancient city, the ideology of gender and space was not dealt with at the outer threshold of the wealthy courtyard house, but extended to division of space within the house. The «women's quarters» (*gynaikôn* or *gynaikônitis*), where women lived and worked, were located in the more remote rooms of the house, at a distance from the entrance. The women's living area was separated from the men's quarters by a door which could be bolted.[29] Although archaeological evidence for the «women's quarters» is not so full as that for the identification of the *andrôn* in the ancient Greek house, definite examples can be cited, for example the domestic unit comprising a kitchen, a hearth and a chimney at Olynthus which was ap-

[27] Cf. Batten, op. cit., 45. The expense of seclusion is noted by P. Jeffrey for modern day India: Frogs in a Well. Indian Women in Purdah, London, 1979, 24. E.W. Handley, Theme and Variations, in: C. Questa, R. Raffaelli (eds.), Due Seminari Plautini: La tradizione del testo; i modelli (Ludus Philologiae 11), 2002, discusses the motifs found in the New Comedy in the presentation of the daily task of collecting water. On the dangers to women of unguarded conversation when fetching water away from the house observed by a contemporary anthropologist amongst the Sarakatsiani, a group of transhuman shepherds in the Epirus region of Greece, cf. J. K. Campbell, Honour, Family and Patronage. A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community, Oxford 1964, 86. The present author's student Pamela Rex has identified a fascinating folk song from Northern India that identifies the same social values: The grandfather ran barefoot after the bridal palanquin/ «O father of my son-in-law, please stop for a moment/ Our daughter is going to your house/ Do not speak to her harshly/ She will plaster your floor/ And clean the pots/ But do not send her to fetch water!/ She will prepare the bread/ and grind the corn/ But please do not send her to fetch water!/ If at the well she smiles at a stranger/ Both our families will be ruined!» «Honour killings» arising from such unintentional actions are well known in parts of Asia and the Near East and are also recently reported amongst Asian communities in Great Britain, cf. the reports in The Times (London): Police to Review More than 100 «honour killings» (June 22, 2004), and: Asian Suicides may be Honour Killings (December 6, 2004); A Murderous Clash of Cultures , The Sunday Times. Review (London) October 5, 2003.

[28] W. Scheidel, The Most Silent Women of Greece and Rome: Rural Labour and Women's Life in the Ancient World, GaR 43 (1996) 1-10, 202-217.

[29] This is Philo's «middle door», cf. Special Laws 3.169, cited above, note 21; cf. also Xenophon, Oikonomikos 9.5-6.

parently used exclusively by women.[30] If the house had an upper storey, the women's quarters might be located there for greater privacy – or isolation.[31] The dining room, where guests were entertained, was included in the men's area. It was itself termed the *andrôn* and was located so that male guests entering the house would have no cause to approach the women's quarters. The archaeological remains of many ancient Greek houses attest rooms, fitted with masonry couches, that can be identified as the dining room/*andrôn* of the house.[32] Entry by an unrelated male into the women's quarters would be seen as outrage against custom and hospitality, if not criminal.[33] The orator Lysias once impressed the court by claiming that his sister and niece were «so well brought up that they are embarrassed in the presence even of a man who is a member of the family.»[34]

The *andrôn* provided the usual setting for early Christian worship in the Pauline congregations. In terms of the gender-space ideology, it lay on the border between public and private, «separate both from the private world of the household and the fully public world outside.»[35] In Greek custom women often dined apart from men in the women's quarters. When male guests were entertained in the *symposia* of ancient Athens, the wife and daughters of the household had no part to play. Courtesans, flute-girls and prostitutes provi-

[30] Cf. M. George, Domestic Architecture and Household Relations: Pompeii and Roman Ephesos, JSNT 27 (2004) 7-25, see 21 and figure 3 on 18. George follows the analysis of G. Mylonas, Excursus II: The Oecus Unit of the Olynthian House, in: D.M. Robinson (ed.), Olynthus pt. XII. Domestic and Public Architecture, Baltimore MD 1946, 369-368; L. Nevett, Separation or Seclusion? Towards an Archaeological Approach to Investigating Women in the Greek Household in the Fifth to the Third Centuries BC, in: M. Parker Pearson, C. Richards (eds.), Architecture and Order. Approaches to Social Space, London 1994, 98-112, Gender Relations in the Classical Greek Household, ABSA 90 (1995) 363-381; W. Hoepfner, E.-L. Schwandner, Haus und Stadt im klassischen Griechenland, München ^{2}1994. N. Cahill, Household and City Organisation at Olynthus, London 2002, has noted the limited evidence that the distribution of «gendered artefacts» offers for being sure the «oecus units» were the location where women worked in food preparation and weaving.

[31] Cf. Lysias, 1.6-14, cf. Pomeroy, op. cit., 81-82.

[32] Cf. George, op. cit., 21, who gives the example of house A vii 4 at Olynthus.

[33] Cf. Lysias 3.6-7, Demosthenes 47.53; Pomeroy, op. cit., 81. On division of space in classical Greek housing and its analogy to a courtyard house of the Hausa tribe at Kano in Nigeria see: S. Walker, Women and Housing in Classical Greece: The Archaeological Evidence, in: A. Cameron, A. Kuhrt (eds.), Images of Women in Antiquity, London 1983, 81-91.

[34] Lysias 3.6, cf. K.J. Dover, Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour, in: Women in the Ancient World. The Arethusa Papers, Albany 1988, 143-157 (145).

[35] N.R.E. Fisher, Greek Associations, Symposia, and Clubs, in: M. Grant, R. Kitzinger (eds.), Civilisation of the Ancient Mediterranean, Vol. II, New York 1988, 1167-1197 (1173). Vitruvius, De Architectura, VI, calls «common» those parts of the house where unrelated males gathered, as opposed to «private» those parts of the house reserved for family members.

ded female company if this was required.[36] Roman practice, at least in the late republican and early imperial periods, allowed the woman of the household a role in entertaining. Sometimes the Roman wife might recline next to her husband. Often the women present would be given a couch or section of couches apart from the men.[37] Meal customs in the eastern Mediterranean underwent a measure of change in the period immediately prior to the New Testament,[38] as Roman practice brought new influences to bear. The late republican and early imperial periods had also allowed Roman *matronae* (freeborn married women) increased freedom of action in public,[39] but this limited «emancipation» was soon perceived as a threat to the stability of the political order.[40] It was checked both by the Augustan marriage laws,[41] and a resurgent emphasis in popular rhetoric on the importance of traditional female virtues. Roman influence on meal practices within eastern Mediterranean households does not imply greater freedom in the public space outside. The gender-space ideology of public and private was also part of Roman perceptions and is emphasised in the period.[42]

[36] Cf. H. Blümner, The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks, New York 1966, 202ff.; K.E. Corley, Private Women, Public Meals, Peabody MA 1993, 25-28.

[37] Cf. Corley, op. cit., 29.

[38] Cf. Corley, op. cit., 24-79, 180-181.

[39] Cf. M. Arthur, «Liberated Women»: The Classical Era, in: R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz (eds.), Becoming Visible, Boston 1977, 60-89. Cornelius Nepo (99-24 BC) observed differences between Greek and Roman customs in the first century BC: «Many actions are seemly according to our code which the Greeks look upon as shameful. For instance, what Roman would blush to take his wife to a dinner-party? What matron does not frequent the front rooms of her dwelling and show herself in public? But it is very different in Greece; for there a woman is not admitted to a dinner-party, unless relatives only are present, and she keeps to the more retired part of the house called ‹the woman's apartment›, to which no man has access who is not near of kin» (Lives of Famous Men, Preface 6-7). See further on this theme L.C. Nevett, Continuity and Change in Greek households under Roman rule. The role of women in the domestic context, in E.N. Osterfeld (ed.), Greek Romans and Roman Greeks (ASMA 3), Aarhus 2002, 81-97.

[40] Cf. Pomeroy, op. cit., 149-189; P. Brown, Late Antiquity, in: P. Veyne, A History of Private Life, I, From Pagan Rome to Byzantium, Cambridge MA 1987, 247-248.

[41] Cf. A. Rouselle, Porneia. On Desire and the Body in Antiquity, Oxford 1988, 87; J.P.V.D. Balsdon, Roman Women. Their History and Habits, London 1962, 217; Corley, op. cit., 55.

[42] Livy (59 BC-AD 17) told the story that the Roman officers at the legendary siege of Ardea in Latium debated whose wife was the most virtuous. They decided to visit each of their homes in turn, unannounced, to settle the question. Lucretia was found spinning at home, while the others dined luxuriously. She was pronounced the most virtuous (1.57-69). The moralist Valerius Maximus (first century AD) told stories of an earlier Rome, more sensitive to morals, in which one Roman husband had divorced his wife for appearing in public with her head uncovered, another because his wife spoke privately in public with a freedwoman of poor reputation, and a third because she went to the games without his knowledge (Memorable Deeds and Sayings 6.3.10-12). Even the Roman aristocratic wo-

The rise of the threefold ministry and the move out of domestic space

The rise of the threefold ministry of bishop, elder and deacon in the early second century may be explained by considering the principal social realities of the New Testament church. These were the proclamation of the Gospel by peripatetic missionaries, the meeting of congregations within the households of wealthy patrons who entertained visiting peripatetics, and the central act in the worship of these house-churches of a common meal with ritual elements. These social realities explain the grounds for the ultimate emergence of three classes of community officers. First, the early Christian churches were founded and re-visited by a class of authoritative *peripatetic missionaries* who depended upon the material support of the congregations (I Cor 9:4-12). This group contained those called apostles by virtue of their commission from the historical Jesus or sponsorship by particular congregations (II Cor 8:23).

Second, a plurality of *householder-overseers* oversaw the cellular pattern of a multiplicity of household congregations in each city.[43] Wealthy patrons offered their households as meeting places and held authority in these gatherings (I Thess 5:12-13). Women who are known to have functioned in this role included Phoebe the *diakonos* at Cenchreae whose role as «servant» and patroness (*prostatis*)[44] to her house-church and Paul is affirmed in Rom 16:1-2. The term *prostatis* regularly indicates both «president» and «patroness» in usage outside the New Testament.[45] Others are Nympha of Laodicea, greeted in Paul's letter to the Colossians (4:15) and Lydia of Philippi (Acts 16:12-15.40). Male overseers in Corinth included the wealthy Titius Justus[46] and

man was highly vulnerable to the charge of immorality when her contacts with unrelated men departed from such expectations. Cicero annihilated the wellborn Clodia's reputation, successfully making her a «shameless and wanton courtesan» for her public attendance at «dinner parties with men who are perfect strangers», even «in the city, in her park» and «amid crowds» (In Defence of Caelius, 20.44-49; cf. Corley, op. cit., 59-60, 63-66).

[43] From Rom 16:3-5.10-11.14-15 at least four house-churches may be identified in Rome. At Corinth at least three house-churches are identifiable, led by Crispus (Acts 18:5-8), Gaius (Rom 16:23) and Stephanas (I Cor 16:15; cf. 16:19). Cf. W. Meeks, The First Urban Christians, New Haven 1983, 75.

[44] This feminine noun is well-attested with the technical sense of «patroness», cf. W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, F.W. Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Chicago ^{2}1979, 718. Though it is not used in the feminine form elsewhere in the New Testament, it seems clearly to indicate a woman with authority over other people, cf. P. Gundry, Women Be Free, Grand Rapids MI 1977, 101-102.

[45] Cf. prostatis (H. Schaefer), PRE.S 9, 1962, 1287-1304.

[46] Titius Justus may be identical with the Gaius referred to in Rom 16:23, host to Paul and the whole church, since Gaius was a common *praenomen*, and Justus a natural *cognomen* for a God-fearer (cf. the God-fearer Cornelius in Acts 11, whose alms [i.e. acts of righteousness, *tsedaqah*], are acceptable to God [v. 6], the description of the pious gentile synagogue-building centurion of Luke 7:1-10 as «worthy» [v. 4], and the theory relating the

Crispus (Acts 18:7-8), and Stephanas (I Cor 16:15-16).[47] Since this local leadership functioned within the private sphere of the household, it was appropriate, rather than dissonant, that independent women also exercised leadership in this role. Householder-overseers did not yet gather as the council of elders in public space which we see in the letters of Ignatius. Terminology for them in Paul's letters remains fluid and non-technical since they remain obscured from view within the private sphere.[48]

Third, the host was naturally assisted by a group of *servants* during the worship meal. As in the day-to-day running of the household, servants prepared and served food and met guests at the door (cf. Acts 12:13). Such servants joined their masters in conversion to the new faith, as had the servants of the God-fearing Cornelius (Acts 10:7.44-48; 11:14), and in the context of domestic worship probably came to exercise an assisting role in the elements of ritual which were part of the Christian meal. In view of the frequency of female household servants, women as well as men probably assisted in these early rituals. It is conceivable that the Christian life-ideal of servanthood meant that the privilege of serving at the meal was extended to certain trusted guests, in contradiction of the customs of hospitality.

By the early second century the functions of peripatetics, householders, and meal-servants had developed into the threefold order of bishop, elder, and deacon visible in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. The key to understanding this development is the scale of the meetings reflected in Ignatius' correspondence, which is altogether larger than the regular meetings of earlier house-congregations. The dining rooms of typical Graeco-Roman city houses averaged about ten by fourteen metres in size, as shown by the remains at Herculaneum and Pompeii.[49] Earle Ellis estimates that a triclinium dining ar-

Noachide commandments [bSanhedrin 56a-58b], based on Noah being the first person in scripture to be termed «righteous» [Gen 9:9], to the God-fearers; cf. K. Lake, Proselytes and God-fearers, in F.J. Foakes-Jackson, K. Lake [eds.], The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. 5, Additional Notes, London 1933, 74-96; M. Bockmuehl, Jewish Law in Gentile Churches, Grand Rapids MI 2000, 172-173).

[47] Paul explicitly vouchsafed the authority of the householder-patrons at Corinth, which arose through the conventions of reciprocity, since they had «devoted themselves to the service of the saints» (I Cor 16:15-16).

[48] They are «governors» (*kyberneseis*, I Cor 12:28); «those who have charge, preside» (*proïstamenoi*, I Thess 5:12, Rom 12:8); «overseer-deacons» (*episkopoi kai diakonoi*, Phil 1:1). Phoebe was «deacon» and «patroness» (*diakonos* and *prostatis*, Rom 16:1-2). In the different parlance of Acts, these householder-overseers are termed *presbyteroi* (14:23), perhaps reflecting development towards the Ignatian order.

[49] Cf. A. Maiuri, Ercolano I, Roma 1958, 198, 208, 266, 280, 384, 394; A.G. McKay, Houses, Villas, and Palaces in the Roman World, London 1975; H. Eschebach, Pompeji, Leipzig 1978, 312; E.E. Ellis, Pauline Theology. Ministry and Society, Exeter 1989, 140-141; Capper, op. cit., 63-64. On the scale and social complexity of the space of the wealthy houses of Pompeii and the large *insula* (apartment block) at Herculaneum and the possible

rangement in such a room could comfortably accommodate a gathering of twenty or so people.[50] This figure concurs with G.M. Calhoun's calculation that the dining clubs of classical Athens, which met in private homes, had on average a membership of twenty – it appears that the scale of larger city dining rooms had not changed significantly in six centuries.[51] When weather permitted, however, the inner, partly uncovered space of a courtyard house could accommodate a meeting of from one to two hundred. The regular weekly form of worship in the first gentile congregations was probably the smaller house-group, in which Paul envisages every member present taking an active part (I Cor 14:26). Larger, combined meetings of house-groups were probably arranged especially when a significant peripatetic was visiting, when a plural leadership of local householders greeted the visitor. Since in Ignatius' letters the elders appear as a gathered group around the bishop, with numerous deacons in attendance, it seems clear that by the early second century meetings in the dining rooms of private houses had receded in significance, at least in the areas which Ignatius knew, and the weekly gathering of a much larger number of the Christians of a city together had become the usual form of worship and the form of meeting which was identified most closely with the social and institutional expression of the church.

By Ignatius' day the earlier authority-bearing peripatetic class has been replaced by the local episcopal class, who ruled over these larger gathered meetings. This happened both through the settling of peripatetics in one place (particularly older figures), and the promotion of leading elder-overseers of house-congregations to preside over the larger meetings.[52] As the house-churches coalesced into a larger regular meeting, prominent householders came to form a college of elders under the bishop. Larger covered spaces to accommodate the large weekly meetings which Ignatius describes were thus probably available by this time. These may have been formed as the churches acquired formerly private houses by purchase or occasional gift, and modified these for employment as meeting spaces. It is known that the professional and religious clubs of the Graeco-Roman world, in social form directly comparable with the early Christian churches,[53] sometimes became owners of private

use of these types of space for the meetings of Pauline congregations, see D.L. Balch, Rich Pompeiian Houses, Shops for Rent, and the Huge Apartment Building in Herculaneum as Typical Spaces for Pauline House Churches, JSNT 27 (2004) 27-46.

[50] Cf. Ellis, op. cit., 144.

[51] G.M. Calhoun, Athenian Clubs in Politics and Litigation, Austin TX 1913, 27.

[52] Didache 13 indicates the process of peripatetics settling in one location, Didache 15 the appointment of local figures to office. Diotrephes, «who likes to be first», and «refuses to welcome the brethren» in 3 John 9-10 points to possible tensions between local and peripatetic leadership.

[53] Cf. Ellis, op. cit., 123-141.

houses, which they rented out or used for their communal activities.[54] The expansion of the dining-space of a house through the replacement of internal walls with arches is attested by a late third century Christian meeting house.[55] The early church building discovered at Capernaum was based originally on a room in a private house and also gives evidence of such extension.[56] It would also have been within the financial capacity of a well-supported city congregation to rent or acquire halls for meeting.[57] The first purpose-built Christian buildings appear with the basilicas of the fourth century, based on the form of the Roman public reception hall and resulting from the emperor Constantine's espousal of Christianity. However, sizeable meeting places, especially those formed by modification of houses, were probably available to churches in many locations before the time of Ignatius.

Phoebe, Lydia and Nympha as overseer-servants, presbyters and priests in first-generation Christianity

In later Christianity, the order of priests presided at the eucharist. This function was neither restricted to the class of monarchical bishops nor extended to the class of deacons. The term priest is etymologically a contraction of *presbyteros*. These facts confirm the origin of the Ignatian council of elders with the plurality of local householders who held the Christian meal in their homes in the apostolic era. As the peripatetic, apostolic class passed away, it was replaced by monarchical bishops. Hence a later thinker like Cyprian saw the authority of the priest or presbyter as deriving from the episcopal *sacerdotium*.[58] However, the class which had originally led worship in their homes continued to preside at the eucharist after it had been moved to public space. While Christian worship remained in private space, women householders in early Christianity presided at the eucharist, and were counted, in the parlance of the later Church, amongst the priests of the community. The New Testa-

[54] Cf. F. Poland, Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens, Leipzig 1909, 460-461.

[55] Cf. C.H. Kraeling, The Christian Building (Excavations at Dura-Europos. Final Report, VIII, Part II), ed. M.I. Rostovtzeff et al., London 1943ff., 7-30.

[56] Cf. E.M. Meyers, J.F. Strange, Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity, London 1981, 58-61, 128-130. Ellis, op. cit., 141, thinks that the earliest reference to church buildings is Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 7.5 (c. AD 200).

[57] Just as Paul had once rented the lecture-hall of Tyrannus for preaching, probably from a Greek professional or religious association (Acts 19:9. The *schole tyrannou* may be compared with the phrase *in schola collegii fabrum* [«in the clubhouse of the collegium of artisans»] in CIL XI, 2702, or Martial, Epigrams 3.20.8; 4.61.3, «in the Poets' club», cf. Ellis, op. cit., 139).

[58] Cf. Priest (F.L. Cross [ed.]), The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, London 1958, 1104.

ment figures Phoebe, Lydia and Nympha are clearly identifiable as part of this class of householder-overseers.

As noted above, Paul calls Phoebe a servant (*diakonos*) of her church and a patroness (*prostatis*) of Paul and many others (Rom 16:1-2). As a householder and patroness, Phoebe held authority by the conventions of reciprocity. She was not a servant or «deacon» of the church in the narrow sense of a table-servant and carer for the poor[59] – the term *diakonos* has not yet acquired this technical significance. The conventions of reciprocity and hospitality would have been broken if women householders were denied authority in the gatherings which took place in their own homes. To extend the vocabulary of Gerd Theissen, there was love-matriarchalism as well as love-patriarchalism in early Christianity.[60] Phoebe constantly presided as host at the Christian meal which was the centre of house-church worship.[61] We have no reason to assume that Paul placed any limitation of her role in this context, but must assume rather, from the warmth of his commendation, that he saw her as a figure of equal authority to Stephanas and the other male householder-patrons in Corinth (cf. I Cor 16:15).

The god-fearer Lydia was a woman of independent means, a merchant in purple-dyed garments of Philippi. The information given about her in Acts 16 and Paul's letter to Philippi show that she too was a householder who hosted visiting apostles and had authority over the church which met in her house. When Paul arrived at Philippi on his second missionary journey, his first successful preaching was to women (probably both Jews and God-fearers) who met in a building by the stream of the Gangites or Angites outside the city for worship on the Sabbath. The author of Acts calls this building a *proseuche*, a

[59] A possible inclination to characterize Phoebe's role as practical service conducted in a domestic context and therefore of limited significance for understanding women's leadership roles may be apparent in the words of H.-J. Klauck, Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum (SBS 103), Stuttgart 1981, who writes: «Der Dienst der Phoebe wird wesentlich darin bestanden haben, daß sie als Gastgeberin fungierte und die Filialgemeinde von Kenchreai, die von Korinth aus gegründet worden war, in ihrem Haus beherbergte» (31). Similarly, G. Karssen, Frauen der Bibel, Neuhausen/Stuttgart ^{4}1985, 194-197, is unwilling to express certainty as to the «official» character of Phoebe's leadership: «Wir wissen nicht, ob Phöbe ein regelrechtes Amt innehatte (z.B. eine Diakonisse war) oder ihren Dienst ‹inoffiziell› tat.» The categories employed in the formulations of Karssen and Klauck may suggest a need to fully acknowledge the sociological appreciation of the natural authority of the wealthy women of the first generation over the meetings of the house-churches meeting in domestic space under their patronage, as well as the likelihood that elite women might function as emissaries and missionaries of the church.

[60] G. Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, Edinburgh 1982, 73-96. Theissen formed his term «love-patriarchalism» as a contrast to Ernst Troeltsch's coining of the term «Liebeskommunismus», in his: Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen, Tübingen 1912.

[61] Cf. R. Edwards, The Case for Women's Ministry, London 1989, 75, 84 n. 4; J.D.G. Dunn, J.P. Mackey, New Testament Theology in Dialogue, London 1987, 135.

place of prayer (16:13.16), a term largely synonymous in ancient Jewish usage with *synagoges*, «synagogue».[62] Small house-synagogues may in public perception have been regarded as private space. Nonetheless, since Luke uses *synagoges* elsewhere in Acts, his choice of term here may indicate reluctance to view these women as administering worship in public space. This may be an indication that by the time of the writing of Luke-Acts many churches were meeting in public space where the implication of women's leadership was undesirable.

Lydia was a God-fearer who believed and was baptised by Paul with her whole household, indicating her wealthy householder status. The narrative of Acts shows that she was from this time on a principal host and leader of the church at Philippi. She prevailed on Paul to stay at her house and receive her hospitality and support, actions which confirm her wealth and show her adopting, with Paul's acceptance, the role of patron to both house-church and travelling apostle (Acts 16:11-15). In the Acts narrative she continues in this role of host and local leader. There follows the disturbance over Paul's deliverance of a slave-girl from a spirit of divination by Paul. The girl's owners are furious, stirring the crowds against Paul and Silas and provoking their imprisonment by the magistrates. Miraculous release from prison leads to the conversion of the Philippian jailer with all his household. Before Paul and Silas leave the city at the magistrates' request, they «visited Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they exhorted them and departed» (16:40). Clearly, Lydia's dining room probably became the first meeting place for Christians in Philippi; the Philippian jailer's was probably the second.

Lydia's eagerness to offer support to Paul is paralleled by Paul's indication in his letter to the Philippians of their readiness to support him on his departure from the city:

> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent me help once and again (Phil 4:15-16).

Since at Paul's departure from Philippi we learn from Acts of only two converted households in which Christians could start to meet, it is clear that this passage refers to Lydia's generosity and implies that the Philippian jailer was similarly eager to offer financial support. His generosity may be partly explained from his escape of death by his own sword (16:27) and his embarrassment, alongside the Philippian magistrates, at having participated in the beating and imprisonment of a Roman citizen (16:35-39). He had joined Lydia in loading Paul and Silas with provisions and money on their departure. Paul Sampley has suggested that Paul and the Philippian leaders had entered

[62] Cf. K. Lake, H.J. Cadbury, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. IV, Translation and Commentary, London 1933, 191.

into an honourable Roman contract, a *societas* partnership, for the furtherance of the Gospel. Paul's part was to preach, while the Philippian church gave material support (cf. *ekoinonesen*, «entered into partnership», 4:15).[63] We would expect this form of Roman contract to be entered into by persons of equal social status. Estimates of the jailer's social status range from veteran soldier and citizen to public slave; Brian Rapske opted for the latter in his monograph on Paul's experience of imprisonment.[64] In this case Lydia would probably have been the principal partner at the inception of the arrangement, which lends support to the ancient conjecture that she is the «true yokefellow» to whom Paul refers at Phil 4:3.[65] If Sampley is correct to find the very explicit *societas* form of reciprocity in this letter, the consequence probably follows that Paul saw Lydia as his own *authoritative* representative amongst the converts whom he had left behind in Philippi.

Paul's letter to Philippi was written at the latest no more than about twelve years after his visit in Acts 16. Philippians was written either shortly before Romans (on the Ephesian imprisonment theory) or within a few years after. We can assume that in Philippians as in Romans the term *diakonos* has not yet acquired its later technical significance. We may therefore draw on the reference to Phoebe as «patroness» and *diakonos* in Rom 16:1-2 in our understanding of the reference to the «overseers and servants/bishops and deacons» at Philippi (Phil 1:1). It seems likely that the phrase does not refer to two ranks of community officers, overseers and meal-servants, as it would in the early second century in the Ignatian correspondence. Rather, the phrase *episkopoi kai diakonoi* is hendiadys, two terms referring to the one group of those who were both «overseers» and «servants» of the congregation. The first term denotes these leaders' authority over the congregation which met in their own homes, while the second adds the characteristic Christian emphasis that the patron and leader of a group was its servant, in accord with the words of Jesus that «whoever would be great among you must be your servant».[66] Paul's reference to the leadership of the Philippian congregation in his opening greeting is unique in his correspondence. Paul usually greets his addressees as the «church» and/or «saints» in a particular location.[67] Most commentators deduce that the Philippian leadership is mentioned because they are responsible for organising Paul's financial support. Paul quickly refers to his

[63] P. Sampley, Pauline Partnership in Christ, Philadelphia 1980.

[64] B. Rapske, Paul in Roman Custody, Grand Rapids 1994, 261-262.

[65] It is well known that Paul's term, *syzygos*, «was most often applied to women in their relationship to men», J.T. Fitzgerald, Philippians in the Light of Ancient Friendship, in his edited collection, Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech (NT.S 82), Leiden 1996, 141-160 (149).

[66] Mk 10:43, cf. 35-45, Matt 20:20-28, Lk 22:24-27.

[67] Cf. Rom 1:7, I Cor 1:2, II Cor 1:1, Gal 1:1 («churches»), Eph 1:1, Col 1:1 («saints and faithful brethren»), I Thess 1:1, II Thess 1:1.

thankfulness for this «partnership in the Gospel» (Phil 1:5) and makes formal thanks for it at the close of his letter (4:10-20). Philippians is the only letter of Paul containing thanks for material support, which explains the distinctive greeting. Paul refers to the congregation's knowledge that this material support had been a feature of the congregation's relationship with him from the first (4:15-16). His reference at 1:5 similarly implies his readers' knowledge of the undertaking «from the first day until now». This suggests that the personnel in the Philippian church to whom Paul refers at 1:1 still included those who had initiated the arrangement with Paul on his departure from Philippi. Lydia, therefore, was one of the group of «overseer-servants» greeted at the opening of the letter. When Paul refers to the organisation of collections in Corinth for the church in Jerusalem, it is clear that the money was collected on a weekly basis and stored under each housholder's oversight. Weekly collections alleviated the necessity for collections after Paul's arrival, when the house-churches would already have the money to hand (I Cor 16:1-3).[68] Lydia and other householders at Philippi had probably collected money for Paul in weekly meetings in their homes in similar fashion.

Of Nympha of Laodicea we know only that she entertained a church in her home (Col 4:15), but nothing in Paul's mention of her suggests any limitation of her role in this context. The evidence we have concerning Phoebe, Lydia, and Nympha shows that Paul accepted women as much as men in the role of householder-overseers, the leadership class in early Christianity which ultimately evolved to become elders and priests. That we can only name three independent women in Paul's letters who occupied this leading role has not to do with any theological preference for men but with the simple facts of property-relations. Households were usually led by married men. Wealthy women who stood independently at the head of large households were rare, and usually widows. Wealthy women who had never married were rare, if they existed at all, since a large inheritance usually called forth concern for male heirs carry to forward the estate.[69] Only in virtue of typical property-relations were there fewer women than men at the head of the wealthy households by which Christianity gained a firm foothold in each city.

(To be continued)

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[68] Cf. Ellis, op. cit., 93-95.

[69] In classical Athens the deceased husband's closest male relative, starting with his brothers, had the duty or privilege of marrying the *epikleros* to retain the property in the family group, cf. Pomeroy, op. cit., 60-62.