Bodies, Borders, Believers

Ancient Texts and Present Conversations

Edited by

Anne Hege Grung
Marianne Bjelland Kartzow
Anna Rebecca Solevåg

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Bodies, Borders, Believers

Ancient Texts and Present Conversations

Essays in Honour of Turid Karlsen Seim on Her 70th Birthday

Edited by
Anne Hege Grung,
Marianne Bjelland Kartzow,
and Anna Rebecca Solevåg

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Acknowledgments

This volume is an expression of appreciation and gratitude to Turid Karlsen Seim.

As she is celebrating her seventieth birthday she can look back on an outstanding career, where she has made a significant impact through her engagement in ecumenical encounters, as a professor of Theology and New Testament studies and as the Head of Department at the Norwegian Institute in Rome. She was the first woman to receive a doctoral degree in theology from a Norwegian university, the first female professor in New Testament studies in Norway, and until recently the only woman to serve as Dean at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo.

What she has achieved remains an inspiration, particularly to the generation of women academics who have followed. The three editors of this volume are in a particular position of gratitude as her former doctoral students. Seim's special gift for critically reading texts, detailed and thoroughly, has been a great advantage to us.

We would like to thank Svein Helge Birkeflet, Academic Librarian at the theological library at the University of Oslo, for collecting Turid Karlsen Seim's publications in the bibliography at the end of this volume.

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Anne Hege Grung, Marianne Bjelland Kartzow,
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Oslo/Stavanger, December 2014

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Introduction

"The double message nurtures a dangerous remembrance."

—TURID KARLSEN SEIM,
THE DOUBLE MESSAGE, p. 260

CONCLUDING HER GROUNDBREAKING BOOK on patterns of gender in Luke-Acts, this sentence may also summarize what Turid Karlsen Seim has initiated and contributed to a variety of fields and discourses for more than forty years. In international ecumenical work, as professor of Theology and New Testament Studies, and as Head of Department at the Norwegian Institute in Rome, she has looked critically for double messages hidden in ancient texts or revealed in present conversations. She has contributed with creative and innovative thinking, based on her exceptional gift of reading, ancient texts, or theological documents alike. Seim is herself a pioneer in her interdisciplinary and border-crossing movements, but also as the first woman to receive a doctoral degree in theology from a Norwegian university (in 1990). In this volume colleagues, former students, and friends honor her work and engage with some of the themes central to her scholarship.

This book, titled *Bodies, Borders, Believers,* represents a broad spectrum of issues. Contributors from different contexts with interest in text, history, and contemporary communities, all relate in one way or another to Seim's broad research interests. Among the contributors many scholarly traditions, theoretical orientations and methodological approaches are represented, making this book an interdisciplinary and border-crossing endeavor in itself. This cross-disciplinary collection includes biblical scholars, ecumenical theologians, archeologists, classicists, art historians, and church historians, working side by side to probe the past and its receptions in the present.

There are several reasons why **bodies** matter. In this book, concepts and ideas about bodies as they appear in ancient texts and as they exist in our world as concrete human beings are put under scrutiny. A variety of theories and methods are used in order to emphasize the importance of a critical perspective on the body. To pay attention to birth and lifegiving processes, gender and sexuality, enslaved bodies, life stages, bodily transformations, and metamorphoses reveals how complex human life is and always has been. In what way can we relate to the body? How can we use the body to think with? What kinds of bodies have been and are worth remembering? Is there any continuity between bodies of the past and bodies of the present and, if so, what about the future? To play with Seim's words: How may we reveal the double messages? How may we nurture a dangerous remembrance? How may we probe the complexities of human life?

Borders are there to organize and categorize reality, but they can also be crossed. They may change and many are surprisingly flexible. The distinction between life and not-life is not always fixed in ancient texts, where resurrection, transformation, and immortality disturb the order of such categories. Death is not always the opposite of life, especially if eschatology or metamorphosis is at the center of attention. There are also borders in human life, stable or flexible, between the different life stages, between childhood and adulthood, between being a boy and becoming a man, between children and parents. And there are borders between different groups, such as slave and free, men and women, "Greek and Jew," although the power to uphold them can be contested and negotiated. Some borders can be blurred or porous, for example between religious groups, ethnicities, or traditions, and representatives or members of such groups can meet in dialogue and constructive encounters—or in open conflict. Some transitions have rituals to help the person and its surroundings negotiate and give meaning to change, such as the Christian practice of baptism. To cross borders can be a way of opposing or protesting against status quo. To move between worlds culturally, mentally, or geographically can open up new spaces, but it can also be destabilizing and even threatening. To cross borders has been characteristic of Seim's career. She has crossed borders between research areas, traveled between countries, and challenged and defied norms related to gender and academic leadership.

A central way to categorize those who belong to a religious tradition, in particular the Christian communities, is to call them **believers**. But what do they believe and how are their lives influenced by what they believe? How do such believers relate to each other, how do they agree or disagree, how do they navigate each other's worlds when they do not share values or visions? How do believers from different faiths and religions relate to each

other, in particular the three traditions that share the destiny of being called "children of Abraham"?

The early Christian believers, from whom texts in different languages, genres, and shapes have survived, most certainly represented a rather diverse group, concerning background, social status, and the way they interpreted the role of Christ. But these Christ-believers produced documents that are considered canonical in many parts of the world today. Moreover, they are important texts not only as religious foundation but also as cultural memory. The ecumenical dialogue in which Seim has participated for many years represents one important place where these complex processes are discussed and strategies of coexistence and community are explored.

We have divided the various contributions in this volume into four parts. The first part is called *Visions across Time and Space*. Karen L. King contributes with a comparative study of Philo of Alexandria and a contemporary Korean-American Presbyterian Church and examines how they use, however differently, sex-gender strategies to represent and negotiate group boundaries. Outi Lehtipuu's article "No Sex in Heaven—Nor on Earth?" follows, in which the early Christian discourse on resurrection and asceticism is contextualized and scrutinized, with Luke 20:27–38 as the point of departure. Hugo Lundhaug writes about the body of God and the corpus of historiography, related to the anthropomorphic controversy. Stories about Eve have changed as the myth traveled across time and space. Antti Marjanen looks at how the Eve tradition from Genesis is reworked in the *Apocryphon of John*. The ethereal substance of light in early renaissance paintings is the theme of Per Sigurd Tveitevåg Styve's contribution. He shows how the context of medieval optics provided art theorists and artists with a concept of light.

The second part, *Life Stages and Transformations* opens with an article about the transience of ethnic categories. John J. Collins reads the ancient novel *Joseph and Aseneth* as a story about a foreign woman who is transformed into a proper Jewish wife. The transformative idea of resurrection is the focus of Ingvild Sælid Gilhus's article on the apologetic text *Octavius* by Minucius Felix. She discusses the conceptions of animals, human beings, and superhuman beings and their relation to change and permanence. Margaret Y. MacDonald discusses the role of education, socialization, and parenting in early Christian discourse related to Roman ideas about the family, with a special view to Ephesians. Marriage and birth are life stages that together with the concept of slavery were used as salvation metaphors in early Christianity. Anna Rebecca Solevåg asks in what way these salvation metaphors shaped early Christian ideas about slavery, marriage, and birth. Line Cecilie Engh's article is an example of the versatile potential inherent in

biblical texts. Engh discusses how Ephesians 5 was used in pro-papal propaganda in the later Middle Ages.

The third part, *Contested Dynamics of Community,* starts with an article by Adela Yabro Collins, who examines ancient texts on female prophecy. Another female religious role is studied by Katariina Mustakallio. She shows how the special identity of the Vestal Virgins of Rome was created by means of rituals, legal and sacral privileges, and obligations and how their social bonds and emotional ties with their original families were regarded. Kari Elisabeth Børresen explores the Roman Catholic teachings on priesthood related to men and women in an *imago Dei* perspective, and relates this to the ecumenical challenge of women priests. Ecumenical dialogue is the focus in the remaining articles in this section. André Birmelé presents development and prospects in the dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans. Olav Fykse Tveit discusses the unity of the church in the light of WCC's general assembly 2014 in Busan. Stephanie Dietrich's contribution focuses on the discussion of the church's identity as a diaconal church and how this should be mirrored in church structures.

The last part, *Patterns of Ambiguity,* deals with texts and contexts in which complex categories like sexuality, gender, and ethnicity are addressed. These categories are often ambiguous, contested, and under constant negotiation. Halvor Moxnes builds on Seim's thesis from *The Double Message* and asks about the place of men and masculinities in Luke's Gospel. David L. Balch compares two Greco-Roman mother-and-son pairs in his article and finds patterns of similarity as well as difference. He reads Luke's portrayal of Jesus and Mary in light of Dionysius of Halicarnassus's portrayal of the Roman warrior Coriolanus and his mother, Veturia. Ursula King lifts up how religious traditions can contribute to the making of peace and how they can confront seeds of violence. Marianne Bjelland Kartzow uses present discussion on reproductive health, infertility, and surrogacy and theories of intersectionality to ask some new questions to various texts dealing with the slave girl Hagar, in particular in Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:21–31. David Hellholm rereads Rom 1:21–32 and discusses the role of same-sex relations related to the "heathens" Paul is constructing. In the final contribution of this volume Anne Hege Grung presents Muslim and Christian women's readings of sacred texts, looking for strategies and models to deal with complex texts and complex contexts.

All of these articles show the contributors' interest in engaging with Turid Karlsen Seim and her many areas of scholarship. Her outstanding career remains an inspiration. As several of the authors in this volume express, she is valued as colleague, teacher, and mentor. We believe that to continue the conversation, from the past to the present and into the future, and to

engage with the "dangerous remembrance" of bodies, borders, and believers is the best way to honor Turid Karlsen Seim.

We would like to end this introduction where we started: with *The Double Message*. Published more than twenty years ago, it still offers an important perspective on Luke-Acts. According to Seim, although Luke is unique in mentioning several women, in particular in the Gospel but also in Acts, there is a certain ideology telling them to be silent and stay out of leadership. It is not merely a question of whether Luke is good or bad news for women; said with the nuanced and complex analytical reasoning that always has characterized Seim's way of reading and interpreting:

> In his narrative Luke manages the extraordinary feat of preserving strong traditions about women and attributing a positive function to them, while at the same time harbouring an ironic dimension that reveals the reasons for the masculine preferences in Acts presentation of the organization of the Christian group, of the public missionary activity and legal defence before the authorities. (p. 259)

Yet, this double message still nurtures a dangerous remembrance.

In honor of Turid Karlsen Seim on her seventieth birthday,
and with the hope that the conversation may continue.

PART I

Visions across Time and Space

1

Comparative Study of Gendered Strategies to Represent the Sacrality of the Group

Philo of Alexandria and a Korean-American Presbyterian Church

Karen L. King

Throughout her distinguished academic career, Turid Karlsen Seim has focused on issues of women and religion. In doing this work, she crossed many borders and boundaries, professionally and geographically, opening up innovative new spaces of inquiry in the field of New Testament Studies and operating on an international scope. This comparative study of sex-gender strategies that are used to represent and negotiate group boundaries is dedicated to her in gratitude for her friendship and appreciation for her leadership in the field.

Introduction

Frequently social tensions that arise in contemporary pluralistic societies appear to concern issues about gender, women's roles, or sexual ethics. Dress, driving, same-sex marriage, child brides, genital cutting, contraception, and abortion come quickly to mind among others. Many of these are at times linked with particular religious groups, either by a group's self-representation or in popular imagination and rhetoric. Although they receive media attention almost solely when sparking conflict, sociologists note

that encounters between groups in pluralistic settings can lead to instabilities that potentially also engender innovative negotiation, both within the group and in relation to outsiders. In this essay, I want to ask what might be learned about sites of conflict and negotiation by inquiring comparatively about how religious-ethnic groups deploy sex-gender strategies to construct group boundaries. The study will focus on comparing Philo of Alexandria and Korean-American Presbyterians in Chicago.

My analysis draws heavily on the comparative method described by David Frankfurter.[1] Four of his points are particularly helpful. The first is that "comparison is the very foundation of *generalization*, which historians do habitually, with every second-order term they use or system they observe."[2] Such terms include *inter alia* "ethnicity," "gender," and "religion." Each of these can be considered to be a "second-order, heuristic category of classification that implies applicability to a particular spectrum of like data."[3] From this perspective, it is clear that choosing which cases are relevant for the topic at hand already implies involvement in comparative work. My initial choice of cases implicitly assumed a complex, second-order pattern of social analysis that focuses selectively on certain aspects of human social life and not others. I chose Philo and Korean-American Presbyterians for comparison because differences as well as similarities loom large from the outset. Both are "foreign" minority groups (Jews and Korean Christians) in religiously and ethnically plural societies (ancient Alexandria and contemporary Chicago) with historical and immediate relations to "imperial" powers (Greece/Rome and China/US). And yet they appear in contexts that are widely divergent in many obvious respects, including time, geographical location, and culture.

A second point concerns the status of second-order terms and patterns. As Frankfurter writes, "We do not, of course, delude ourselves with the impression that the patterns exist apart from their *heuristic* function in making sense of religion in context or that they grasp in any way the totality of content or experience. They simply aid us in making sense of phenomena and in bringing our observations to new situations."[4] Frankfurter's point emphasizes that such heuristic, posited patterns are subject to reconsideration and rectification. Indeed reflexive critique of the categories and pattern is crucial both to the method and to the goal of the comparison. What does

1. Frankfurter, "Comparison."
2. Ibid., 85.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 88.

comparison of Philo and Korean-American Presbyterians help us to see that we do not by looking at each case in isolation?

Third, Frankfurter notes that the frequently stated concern that one cannot control the necessary data across widely dispersed fields misses the point: "(I)t is not infinitely broad expertise that is required to invite a comparison but a sense of what it is one is trying to describe, to form, to clarify."[5] This formulation is an invitation to consider the goals of the project. In this study, my initial interest was in using comparison to help deepen my understanding of how sex-gender discourses function in group self-definition, the limits and possibilities.

Finally, as a procedural method, Frankfurter suggests beginning exploration "*not* with the question, 'what is this datum *like*?' but rather by asking, 'Of what phenomenon or system in religion might the datum be an *example*?'" He emphasizes that "one uses the pattern not as a static grid to force on the data but as (a) a gauge of *difference* among cases across history while also a principle for *relating* those cases . . . ; (b) a hypothetical *dynamic system* in which a text or archeological datum makes sense *pending additional data*; and (c) a means of bringing an historical artifact—text, object, event—into broader conversation with humanistic inquiry, not as an amusing anecdote or exotic anomaly but as a critically described *case* of some revealingly human phenomenon."[6] This procedure gives a central place to my initial assumption that the data under examination are examples of an operative pattern in which gender ideologies that mark religious-ethnic boundaries and work rhetorically and performatively to establish identities are themselves unstable. It is this way of framing the pattern that opens the question of what happens when those ideologies are overtly called into question.[7]

Part of the comparative project includes attention to the modern frameworks of analysis, both those of the modern studies on which I rely and certain assumptions of my own framework. In the discussion of the two cases that follow I draw on a number of contemporary scholars, but rely in particular upon the work of Maren Niehoff for Philo and Kelly Chong for Korean-Americans. Both take up Frederik Barth's anthropological, circumstantialist framework in which ethnicity is not treated as a fixed, primordial,

5. Ibid., 92.

6. Ibid., 98.

7. Much happens of course "under the radar," so to speak. Many changes are not brought to overt speech, in part an effect of where attention is directed ("don't look here"; "this cannot be spoken"). The strategy of silence (and silencing) can be one of the most effective modes of negotiation, as well as of maintaining the status quo, but here I will consider only sites of overt tension.

and essentialized characteristic identifying an homogeneous group, but rather ethnicity is understood to be shaped strategically in particular contexts in interaction with others. In my framework, the relation of religion and sex-gender discourses to this dynamic is not predetermined, but appears differentially depending upon particular aims as well as constraining and enabling conditions. Essentializing representations of ethnicity, religion, or sex-gender norms are treated as rhetorical and discursive constructions mobilized toward certain aims but producing multiple effects. Both Philo and Korean-Americans naturalize (constructed) categories of sex-gender and rhetorically value morality in terms of performative deviation from a normative gender script, but, as we will see, each is negotiating particular circumstances in which their categories and valuations are being contested in certain limited regards.[8] Similarly, although Philo and Korean-Americans use the terms "*Iudaios*" and "Christian" respectively as if their meanings were fixed, each is deeply implicated in projects of defining and negotiating what it means to be Jewish or Christian, respectively. I use the term "religion" to discuss these projects, but with the caveat that this term, too, is a second-order heuristic category with a complex history in modernity.[9]

Let's turn now to consider each of the two cases separately before returning to comparison. While the brief and highly selective exposition of these cases certainly does not do justice to their full complexities, my hope is that it will provide a mapping of the territory which will allow certain broader points of comparison to appear.

Philo of Alexandria

Philo (c. 20 BCE—50 CE) was a Greek-speaking Jew living in Alexandria, in the Roman province of Egypt. He came from a wealthy and distinguished family, and authored a relatively large corpus of philosophically sophisticated literature treating special topics and books of Scripture (LXX).[10] Later in life, he acted as the leader of a Jewish delegation to the Roman emperor Caligula following the widespread violence against Jews that broke out in Alexandria in 38 CE. Two of his treatises deal with the strained situation of the Jews of Alexandria under Roman rule (*Legatio ad Gaius* and *In Flaccum*). Although scholars are not entirely certain about the precise legal

8. For a performative treatment of sex-gender, see especially Butler, *Undoing Gender*.

9. For an incisive sketch of that history, see Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious."

10. See Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 158–80.

status of Jews under Ptolemaic or Roman rule, the sources seem to indicate, as Barclay argues, that under the previous Greek, Ptolemaic regime, the Jews in Alexandria had been recognized as "privileged residents," not aliens, a status far above that of other non-resident aliens as well as Egyptians. In particular, their right to practice their "ancestral laws" was ensured. In 38 CE, however, the Roman governor Flaccus dissolved these privileges, and it is in the aftermath of this change of status, as well as the anti-Jewish violence, that Philo wrote the two treatises.[11] Maren Niehoff argues that, in these latter treatises in particular, it is possible to read Philo's attempts to negotiate an esteemed position for Jews within the Roman world, and Egypt in particular.

In what follows I rely in particular on her illuminating monograph, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture*. There she offers an analysis of "the ways in which Philo constructed Jewish identity and culture in first-century Alexandria."[12] Her book draws heavily on patterns of ethnic grouping developed by the Norwegian anthropologist, Fredrik Barth, in which the focus is on the processes of generating and maintaining ethnic groups, and on ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance.[13] Niehoff's use of his framework results in a variety of results useful for our topic of religion, gender, identity, and boundaries. I limit myself to those areas that fit this topical interest, stressing that gender is only one site among others in Philo's strategic, rhetorical construction of Jewish identity.

A major strength of Niehoff's analysis is to show how Philo aims to negotiate the place of Jews in the context of Roman Egypt. As she concludes: "The way in which he [Philo] constructed Jewish descent, significant Others and distinctly Jewish values are interpreted in light of contemporary Roman concerns."[14] She also emphasizes that Philo is neither representative of Jewish diaspora nor is his the only voice or position. Often he appears to be formulating his position directly against those of other Jews, as well as in response to the views of non-Jews, including Egyptians and Romans. While he is highly literate in Greek culture, Niehoff stresses that his views "have to be appreciated not only vis-à-vis Greek culture, but also in relation to the discourse among Romans, Egyptians and other Jews of various political colours."[15] In short, with Philo we find ourselves engaging with the positionality of an elite male member of a minority group in a multi-religious,

11. See ibid., 48–71; see also Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 161–83.

12. Niehoff, *Philo*, 1.

13. See Barth, Introduction, esp. 199.

14. Niehoff, *Philo*, 9; see also 6–9.

15. Ibid., 13.

imperial context in which certain tensions are evident. Some concern disagreements among Alexandrian Jews over various perspectives and practices in relation to their wider environment.[16] Others are framed in reaction to disparagement of distinctive Jewish practices (like circumcision) or the violence against Jews under Flaccus, including setting up images of the emperor Gaius Caligula in Alexandrian synagogues, and later Jewish retaliation during the reign of Claudius.[17]

Much of Philo's writing concerning Jewish identity can be read as attempts to negotiate these tensions, and certain gendered positions arguably belong to this larger enterprise. We will discuss three: the role of maternal descent in establishing Jewish identity; gender strategies in setting boundaries (esp. of Egyptians as the Other); and portraying the superiority of Jewish religiously-based sexual mores to position Jews as superior to other groups.

Maternal descent in Judaism first appears in the Roman imperial period.[18] Niehoff notes how Philo's early and innovative treatment of this topic coincides with Roman policy that rigorously distinguished ethnic groups (Romans, Greeks, Alexandrian citizens, Jews, Metropolitans, and Egyptians) in terms of social class and taxed each at a different rate.[19] The status of mothers played a determinative role in assigning status to offspring.[20] Neihoff argues that Philo's emphasis on Jewish maternal descent was articulated in this context: "He asserted the superior standing of the Jews by constructing their descent in a way which conformed to Roman perspectives and policies."[21] Philo's main focus was therefore not on purity, but on the civil status of the mother,[22] and he reinterpreted Biblical stories to fit this new social reality.[23] In his hands, foreign women married to important Biblical figures (such as Hagar, Zilpah, Bilhah, and Tamar) were transformed into exemplary Jewish matriarchs.[24] Niehoff concludes, "As an upper-class citizen, he (Philo) emphatically asserted the high social status and proper Jewishness of the Biblical matriarchs. He accepted neither slaves

16. See Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 103–228.

17. See the discussion of ibid., 55–60.

18. See Cohen, *The Beginning of Jewishness*, 263–307. Cohen also notes the gendered character of conversion history and practice (306–7)—another relevant topic for gender, religion, and border-crossings.

19. Niehoff, *Philo*, 20.

20. Ibid., 21.

21. Ibid., 22.

22. Ibid., 17–18.

23. For a general discussion of this phenomenon, see Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*.

24. See Niehoff, *Philo*, 23–33.

nor foreigners in the pedigree of the Jews."[25] Philo's exclusion of slaves and foreigners from Jewish pedigree is in line with Roman practice that placed such groups at the lowest levels of social status.

Moreover, Niehoff points to Barth's argument that in a multi-ethnic society where boundary-crossing contact is "pervasive and unavoidable," the construction of a strong Other is a rhetorically crucial foundation for tightening a group's boundaries.[26] She notes that Philo is most clearly engaging in this kind of boundary work in portraying low-status Egyptians as the feminized Other over against his positive portrait of masculine Jews. His rhetoric is, however, more complex in relating Jews to Greeks and Romans. Philo painted these relations as complementary, while yet portraying Jews as superior to Greeks (who had learned much from Moses), and ultimately even to Romans, although he aligned Jews most closely with the latter.[27] As Niehoff shows, however, not all Jews in Alexandria would have accepted Philo's positionality, and Philo tends to portray Jews who cross his stringent boundaries too far as deserters.[28]

One strategy among others in Philo's arsenal is the claim of superior piety and values, including strict sexual mores.[29] He claims that Jewish women, unlike other women in their urban environment, are exemplary in their modesty and are entirely segregated. He also charges that the Egyptians engage in licentiousness and incestuous marriages; the Greeks, in homoerotic relations. Even the Roman general Mark Antony, he suggests, could be overcome by the wiles of Cleopatra and thus become feminized and un-Roman, but the Jewish patriarch Joseph in contrast refused Potiphar's wife and displayed Jewish zeal for continence, piety, and masculine self-control. In general, however, Philo aligns Jewish sexual and family values with those of the Romans.

Mary Rose D'Angelo fills out and extends Niehoff's portrait focusing more precisely on the gendered aspects of Philo's connection of Jewish piety to Roman family values. She argues that:

> Philo's creative apologetic response . . . does not reproduce Roman law or the moral propaganda that accompanied it, but represents the moral demands of Judaism as meeting, and indeed exceeding, those of the imperial order. He thus assures both the Jews of Alexandria and their Roman masters that Jewish sexual

25. Ibid., 32.
26. See ibid., 45; Barth, Introduction, 198–99.
27. See Niehoff, *Philo*, 45–74.
28. See ibid., 46
29. See ibid., 75–110, esp. 95–105.

> probity, marital chastity and familial devotion are of such a high standard that the Jewish tradition can instruct the empire and its subjects in the piety, restraint and manliness that enable rule of the world.[30]

She points out one additional element that will be useful to comparison below. In Philo's interpretive hands, the fifth commandment to honor parents is broadened to include patron-client and ruler-subject relations as part of the Mosaic legislation. In this way, D'Angelo suggests, Philo is able to formulate Jewish piety "in response to the gendered protocols of imperial family values."[31] She concludes that Philo refers to the fifth commandment to argue that Jewish devotion to the one God and to Mosaic legislation are what "makes the Jews the most moral and law-abiding, the most family-oriented and responsible of the emperors' subjects."[32]

The interpretive adaptation of Scripture to negotiate the situation of Alexandrian Jews as a criticized minority group in Roman Egypt is striking, but no less so than Philo's strategies of group boundary setting in relation to Roman legal, civic, and discursive norms of sex, family, and masculinity. In defending and promoting the status of Alexandrian Jews, Philo adopted and adapted Roman ideology that valorized obedient subordination to Roman rule, reinscribed Roman social, gender, and ethnic hierarchies, and hardened civic identity around the ethnic status of mothers. These reinscriptions involved to some extent rewriting the story of Hebrew slaves in Egypt and shifting the ethnic identity of important matriarchs, while simultaneously portraying a denigrated Egyptian Other against which Jewish superiority could be highlighted. It is hard not to conclude that, in the context of the violence against Jews in Alexandria, Philo perceived what was at stake in the status of Jews in Alexandria to be no less than their safety and even survival under Roman rule. Indeed only decades later, Jewish revolts in the eastern Mediterranean resulted in the nearly complete destruction of the Jewish community in Alexandria.[33] Philo's works survived only through Christian mediation.[34]

30. D'Angelo, "Gender and Geopolitics," 64–65; see also esp. 75–81, 88.

31. Ibid., 75.

32. Ibid., 74.

33. See Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 78–81; Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 198–205.

34. See Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*.

Korean–American Presbyterians

The history of Korean-American Christians is tied to both US missions in Korea and US immigration policy. The first Protestant missionaries in Korean were US citizens: Horace Allen (a Presbyterian physician in 1884), Horace Underwood (Presbyterian, 1885), and Rev. and Mrs. Henry Appenzeller (Methodists, also 1885). By the early twentieth century groups of Protestant missionaries and churches in Korea were working together to found hospitals and universities. Because of these efforts, Korean Christians have played strong roles in education and medicine in the modern period. In addition, the persecution of Christians during Japanese occupation gave Christians a reputation for supporting Korean nationalism and contributed to their prominence after Korean independence. The presence of the US military during and following the Korean War also worked to solidify ties between Korea and the US.[35]

US immigration policy, however, tells its own story. While a few persons immigrated already in the late nineteenth century and prominent individuals were educated in the US, larger numbers of Koreans arrived only with shifts in US immigration policy, first in 1952 (especially for spouses of military servicemen) and then more rapidly in 1965 when quotas for Asians were abolished. Koreans have been in the top five countries of origin for immigration since 1975. Between 70–80% of Korean-Americans identify as Christian, with the largest denomination being the PCUSA.[36]

In this essay, I want to focus briefly on two scenarios: Kelly Chong's sociological study of second-generation Korean Americans at two ethnic churches in Chicago in 1995 (Presbyterian Church USA and Methodist), and the 2010 General Assembly of the PCUSA.

Chong's study offers evidence contrary to the assimilationist paradigm of US immigration, which postulates that second-generations reject "native" religion and ethnicity in favor of the American "melting pot." Instead, her study documents the vitality of second generation Korean Americans' robust ethnic church affiliation. She argues that "when an ethnic group is faced with a strong sense of social marginalization believed to arise from its racial status, the ethnic church can play a dominant role in the group's quest for identity and a sense of belonging."[37] From her analysis, she concludes that the Korean ethnic church supports a defensive and exclusive identity in two key ways: "first, through a general institutional transmission

35. See Kim, *History of Christianity in Korea*; Moffatt, *The Christians of Korea*.

36. See Chong, "What It Means to Be Christian," 260; Lee, "From the Coercive to the Liberative," 76–84.

37. Chong, "What It Means to Be Christian," 259; see also 262, 268.

of Korean culture and second, by the way a set of core traditional Korean values are legitimized and sacralized through the identification with conservative Christian morality and worldview."[38] Her method is ethnographic, as a participant-observer and conducting interviews. The theoretical framework engages sociological work on immigration and especially ethnicity,[39] but she, too draws on Frederik Barth's work.[40]

Chong's study lets us see the ways in which the tension between the desire to maintain ethnic identity and the pressure to assimilate exerted by mainstream denominational structures[41] is productive in adaptively negotiating the intersecting boundaries of religion, ethnicity, and gender.[42] As in Niehoff's study of Philo, she found appeal to a superior sexual morality to be a part of the group's self-construction. Strategies involved advocating proper male/female distinctions in dress styles, segregating men and women,[43] forbidding pre-marital sex, and emphasizing hierarchical relations of respect and obedience toward parents, elders, and men generally. While noting that Korean Americans affirm the same family and sexual values and conduct as other conservative American Christians, Chong states that gender and age-based hierarchies reflect particularly Korean (Confucian) values. In this way, identifying themselves and their values as Christian worked to "sacralize" Korean social values. As interviewees put it: "The more you believe in God, the more Korean you tend to be," and "You have to become Korean to become Christian."[44] Chong found that eliding Korean and Christian identity served to justify other kinds of conduct aimed at facilitating strong ethnic group boundaries and bonding, such as intragroup marriage.

At the same time, emphasis upon these values allowed members to consider their practice of Christianity superior to that of (other) Americans. One example is in the way that Biblical interpretation of the fifth commandment to honor parents is used both to reinforce Korean age and

38. Ibid., 259.

39. See ibid., 262–66. For another approach focused on transnationalism and religion, see Levitt, *God Needs No Passport*.

40. See Chong, "What It Means to Be Christian," 269, where she notes his point that "basic value orientations" are crucial to setting group boundaries."

41. See Lee, "Fruits and Challenge," a study of Protestant Korean Christians in the US which provides an illuminating discussion of this issue.

42. A problem for me in her framework is what seems to be a sharp and uninterrogated distinction between religion and ethnicity (see esp. Chong, "What It Means To Be Christian," 265), but it is clearly one shared by her informants who speak overtly about the troubled relation between being Christian and being Korean.

43. Bible classes, for example, are "strictly gender-segregated" (ibid., 274).

44. See ibid., 273.

gender-related family hierarchies and reciprocally to mark the superiority of Korean Christianity over white American social values and practices. Chong also points more broadly to "visceral critiques of American society which seem to crop up ubiquitously in sermons." She concludes: "In this fusion of Christian and Korean worldviews, the rationale for boundary maintenance becomes one of conservative morality, which is articulated in its critique against the 'moral decay' of society, including sexual immorality, extreme individualism, relativism, and lack of family values and discipline."[45] Here we might point again to Barth's point that self-definition requires an Other. Sex-gender strategies ("conservative morality") thus aimed to strengthen inner-group ties and to offer a positive valuation of Korean identity in the context of white racism.

Such strategies, however, are not without their own complexities. For example, within the Korean ethnic church, intergenerational tensions over gender roles occur that intersect with broader tensions in the US over racial/ethnic diversity, sexuality (esp. pre-marital and same-sex relations), and women's roles in religion and society. Chong notes that, particularly among younger and second-generation Korean Christians, push-back occurs against a variety of practices and attitudes, such as the views that women are supposed to be submissive and accept a top-down administration and decision-making process; girls are not supposed to be friendly with boys; and widows are encouraged not to remarry but to be devoted and chaste to their deceased husband and his family.[46] Ambivalence is felt not only in tensions with the values of the wider society but in the fact that the Korean ethnic church "serves a classic 'double function': as an apology and legitimation for the status quo, but also as a means of empowerment, protest, and liberation for the socially subordinate group."[47] Chong argues that the high valuation attached to female submission sharpened the ambivalence felt especially by women members.

An example of this ambivalence was on full display at the 2010 General Assembly of the PCUSA, held in Minneapolis, MN. Participants in this annual meeting were asked to consider an "overture" to establish a non-geographical Korean language presbytery within the Synod of the South Atlantic. In the discussion of this overture (G-04.08), three second-generation, Korean-American women clergy spoke against it.[48] In a later account of the

45. Ibid., 279.

46. Ibid., 277.

47. Ibid., 282.

48. In the same assembly, it can be noted, Korean American Presbyterians actively opposed the ordination of same-sex persons (see "Korean Congregations Issue Plea to Support Amendment O," *The Layman Online*, at http://www.layman.org/news7ebb/

event, one of the women, Theresa Cho, elaborated her reasoning, saying that:

> just as Korean-speaking pastors and elders find it challenging to participate in presbyteries that are primarily English-speaking, women have difficulty participating in Korean-language presbyteries, because their voices traditionally are not honored and respected. Our contention was that Korean women are most likely to have a voice when they are able to speak with the whole body of the church rather than only within the Korean community. A Korean American presbytery would create an insular environment and promote male-only leadership.[49]

The assembly supported the women clergy and voted 514–125 against the overture. In the aftermath, however, the three women clergy were harassed and told they were betraying their race/ethnic group. Theresa Cho, for example, was charged by male Korean pastors with pursuing her own agenda to gain personal power at the expense of the Korean group. In my view, this reaction works less to reveal Rev. Cho's motives than it does to expose the fragility of the "double function" strategy which attempts to empower Koreans in the context of white racism in the US by justifying women's subordination.

In an on-line essay posted on the Website of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Mary Paik, a senior pastor in the PCUSA, reflected on these events in terms of her own experience within the Korean-American church across more than three decades.[50] Her comments thoughtfully lay out the complexity of the issues involved: power struggles within the PCUSA; difficulties of Korean-speaking parishioners within a largely English-speaking denomination; shifting American values of gender and sexual equality in (ordained) leadership and marriage, including controversies over same-sex relations; white racism, including struggles about "inclusivity" and "racial justice"; and generational change and conflict. This complexity makes it quite clear that the sacralizing of sex-gender norms as a strategy for strengthening ethnic boundary-setting, such that gender, ethnicity and religion are aggregated in group self-definition, will always be partial, fragmentary, and unstable. This instability can be perceived as unsettling but it offers the potential for alternative constructive performances. I think, for example, of Sang Chang, a Korean New Testament scholar, ordained Presbyterian minister, and former president of Ewha University, who is now the President of the World

[accessed May 29, 2014]).

49. Cho, "Room to Speak," 13.

50. See Paik, "A Reflection."

Council of Churches from Asia. The exemplary public leadership of this Korean Presbyterian woman on the global stage offers its own argument for implementing new intersections of ethnicity, religion, and gender in the US as well.

Comparison

One of the things that struck me most forcefully in reflecting on these two cases was how similar are the sex-gender strategies used by Philo and Korean-American Presbyterians. In both cases, sex-gender discourse is used:

- to define and police religious-ethnic identity and boundaries in terms of superior heteronormative morality and masculinity;
- to define the character of (ideal) inner-group bonds in terms of hierarchical relations of obedience, duty, and respect among members defined by sex-gender status and norms;
- and to police individuals' sexual and gendered behaviors.

While these similarities are produced in part by the heuristic framework of analysis, that is, the second-order terms and pattern that selectively highlighted certain elements, they are nonetheless striking given the distance between the two cases in time, geography, and culture. The similarities do become more muted and dissipated when differences are considered—not least in ancient versus modern sex-gender discourses, notions of race/ethnicity, and political organization (empire and nation state), among others.

Differences appear by looking at the specific contexts in which the sex-gender strategies are deployed. For Philo, the context is the imperial Roman lowering of the status of Alexandrian Jews relative to other ethnic groups (Greeks and Egyptians), as well as the violence against Jews that broke out in 38 CE. For Korean-Americans Christians, the context is immigration of a minority ethnic group into the USA, a democratic but white racist nation state where Christianity is highly valorized. In both contexts, groups are ranked on a scale that rhetorically correlates social status with conformity to established (or perceived) norms of ethics and morality, thus enabling gendered strategies of empowerment. In this context, one of Philo's arguments is that Jews should be ranked higher due to their superior continence and masculinity, and their ethnic privileges restored and protected, while Korean-American Presbyterians assert the superiority of their strict gender/age hierarchies and heterosexual family relations, and, partially on that basis, claim an appropriate position of prestige and respect within the PCUSA.

Comparison illuminates how similar strategies serve these contextually differing aims. Three examples will serve as illustrations:

- Both Philo and Korean-American ministers appeal to Scripture to attest their exemplary piety. Each cites the fifth commandment to honor parents in order to emphasize the gender subordination of female to male, children to parents. They do so, however, in service of different aims. According to Niehoff, Philo appeals to the commandment to align Jews with broader Roman social structures—not just the ancient patriarchal family, but patron-client and imperial ruler-subject relations. The Korean-Americans Chong studied, on the other hand, appeal to it to distinguish themselves from other types of American parent-child relations and to intensify conformity to strictly hierarchical norms of gender and age within the Korean church group.
- Both Philo and the leadership of the Chicago Korean Presbyterian Church also argue for segregation of women and female chastity as markers of group superiority. But for Philo, this behavior is represented as conforming to and surpassing Roman values and practices, while for the Korean Church, it is contrasted with deficient mainstream US American values and practices.
- Finally, both assume distinct sex-gendered roles of male and female in a variety of realms including family, education, space, and leadership (although the specifics of each of these differ), and they define "deviant" sexual behaviors as those belonging to inferior "Others" (e.g., incest, adultery, same-sex relations—again not understood precisely the same way). Yet while both appeal to sacred texts and sacralizing discourse to mark sex-gender values as specifically Jewish or Christian, Philo is attempting to use this discourse to align himself with Roman (imperial) "family values," while Korean-Americans are using it to distinguish themselves from "American decadence."

What comparison clearly shows in these examples is that any particular sex-gender strategy is not predictably tied to a particular aim, but can be deployed to do a wide variety of work socially and politically.

It might seem, however, that the strategies are aimed in different directions. Philo's argument appears to be set over against religious others (Romans, Greeks, Egyptians), while the Chicago church's argument is an intra-religious (Presbyterian) matter. Yet Philo is implicitly defining what it means to be Jewish even as the Chicago church is defining what it means to be properly Christian, and both are deploying discourses of strict female chastity and subordination, as well as rejection of same-sex relations, to

mark group superiority in pluralistic contexts.[51] That is, no matter where the strategies are immediately and consciously aimed, setting borders has reciprocal (and perhaps unintended) implications for determining who are insiders as well as for positioning a group within the broader, socially plural context.

Not only aims, but outcomes can be considered. The ultimate failure of Philo's negotiation of the complexities of being Jewish in the pluralistic social context of Roman Alexandria raises questions about possible outcomes of Korean-American Presbyterians' negotiation of US society. While Philo may have had some, perhaps even considerable, influence in his own day, subsequent Jewish revolts resulted in the destruction of the Alexandrian Jewish community under Roman rule,[52] and in the long term it was the rabbis whose strategies of group self-definition would come to dominate Jewish practice. Might this history suggest relativizing the sex-gender strategies of Korean-American church leaders in light of powerful factors such as patterns of immigration, shifts in US racial demographics, or the effectiveness of civil rights legislation? Might the increasing percentage of Koreans in the PCUSA lead to appropriation of Korean values of gender and age hierarchies within that denomination, or might the rhetorical linkage of those values to Korean ethnicity undermine a broader impact among non-Korean-Americans? Or might something else entirely occur? It is not possible to say, not least because such strategies have multiple, often unpredicted effects. In the case of the Chicago church, the appeal to strict sexual mores and segregation, especially for women, puts pressure on members to conform to group-distinctive behaviors, but the effects varied: some were drawn to deepen ties with the church further into the group, while others, especially Korean youth, became alienated. We can imagine similarly multiple responses to Philo's attempts to define Jewish identity in terms of normative Roman and Jewish sex-gender mores, given the evidence of varied and divergent practices by Jews in Alexandria and Egypt more broadly.[53] Indeed Philo's nephew serves as one example of the possibilities and limits for advancement for elite Jews within the Roman imperial system.[54]

51. The requirement of in-group marriage would be an additional arena of tension and contention.

52. See Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 161–83, 198–205; Barclay, *Jews in Mediterranean Diaspora*, 48–81.

53. See, for example, Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 103–228. Although his framework of analysis, which evaluates practices according to "levels of assimilation," is problematic, his study offers fascinating evidence of a variety of behaviors and attitudes among Egyptian Jews.

54. See Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 185–90.

Comparison does caution against assuming that Korean-American sex-gender strategies will be effective at strengthening a positive ethnic group identity in the US in the long term.

One "crack" already became apparent in the challenge of Korean-American woman ministers to the establishment of Korean-language presbyteries in which their roles would potentially be diminished. The success of their challenge within the PCUSA suggests that much depends on the broader social context. In the US, debates over women's roles, constructions of masculinity, and GLBTQ sexualities destabilize strategies that sacralize sex-gender norms of heterosexual-reproductive marriage and male dominance. In this climate, deploying a conservative sex-gender discourse based on gender and age hierarchies makes Korean-American Christians' assertions of superiority on sex-gender grounds vulnerable, as is seen when second-generation Korean-Americans question women's subordination, the exclusion of younger members from decision-making, or (less frequently) the disparagement of GLBTQ sexualities. Moreover, insofar as gender and age subordination and the emphasis on natal family (including heterosexual marriage and reproduction) are specified as ethnically Korean values, resistance to them implies a critique of the linkage of ethnicity to religion (i.e., of tying being Korean to being truly Christian). As we saw with the women pastors who challenged the establishment of a Korean-language presbytery, challenging women's subordination within the church could be perceived not only as contrary to Christian teaching on gender roles but as a breach of ethnic loyalty. What does this imply about how gender, ethnicity, and religion are related? Comparison again is helpful.

Arguable, the rhetoric of both Philo and some Korean-American Presbyterian ministers naturalizes gender (i.e., certain constructed and performative sex-gender norms). With regard to ethnicity and religion, however, difference appears. In Philo's construction of being Jewish, no terms distinguishing religion from ethnicity are operating, [55] while in the Chicago Church case, the categories of "Christian" (religion) and "Korean"

55. Scholars generally agree that the term "religion" is a modern Western concept arising and functioning within certain discourse. But Burrus notes that "one might also say that it is in late antiquity that something *like* a mapping of religious identity first emerges, as a complex effect of both Roman imperialism and the rise of Christianity, each of which profoundly unsettles proper links between ethnicity, locality and cult, thus giving rise to discursive strategies of ethical-religious subjectification partly disembedded from race or place" ("Mapping as Metamorphosis," 9). Burrus then asks: "Is religious discourse then mapped in antiquity as a competition among cultural claimants of masculine perfection? Alternatively, is it mapped as an irruption of ambivalently subversive or counterhegemonic genders to which empire paradoxically gives rise?" (10) She answers both questions in the affirmative.

(ethnicity/race) are treated as separable domains, and their relationship is a topic of overt reflection and dispute. Indeed what is under dispute is precisely the apparent strategy of the some Korean-American Presbyterian ministers to attempt, as Philo does,[56] to aggregate sex-gender practices, ethnic identity, and religious sacrality (i.e., obedience respectively to Mosaic legislation or Scripture). That is, they aggregate being Korean, being Christian, and observing certain sex-gender values and practices into the rhetorically constructed bundle of proper Presbyterian identity. The potential in modernity to disaggregate religion, ethnicity, and gender, however, implies that challenge to any one category exposes not only the instabilities of each, but opens fractures and cracks in their posited alignment. The wide availability of such distinctions in modern social discourse (and not just in academic analysis) makes disaggregation easier than for Philo. It is such disaggregation that potentially leads to greater instabilities, increased need for negotiation, and possibilities for new modes of performing race, sexuality, and sacrality. It is perhaps ironic that the invention of the categories of "religion, religions, religious" has come to offer potentials most certainly unforeseen by those who invented and deployed them for quite different ends.

Concluding Reflections

The similarities of the sex-gender strategies of Philo and Korean-American Christians demonstrate the perdurance of hetero-normative sex-gender strategies to empower minority ethnic and religious minority groups. As I noted at the beginning of this essay, however, the instabilities in group strategies and encounters as well as shifts in performative contexts can also lead to innovative negotiation. Indeed any pattern used to analyze how sex-gender strategies are deployed to define group boundaries needs to have room for potential opposition, resistance, and negotiation, as well as alternative strategies for adaptation to varying social-material-political conditions. The complexity of forces at play in the contemporary world offer many possibilities. Among these, the possibility for the discursive disaggregation of sex-gender from religion and ethnicity may suggest particularly rich possibilities.

In the end, the hope for me is that the religious tradition I share in common with Koreans and with these fellow Americans may (continue to) work to provide a space for fully realizing democratic values of respect for

56. See the discussion of Buell, "*Why This New Race?*," regarding both the discursive stability and the possibilities for ethnic mutability in Mediterranean antiquity.

people, young and old, of all sexualities and racial-ethnic groups, as well as for activism in securing protection from violence and discrimination. In this hope, I take inspiration in looking to Turid Karlsen Seim, whose life and work have been in the service of just such goals.

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2

No Sex in Heaven–Nor on Earth?

Luke 20:27–38 as a Proof-Text in Early Christian Discourses on Resurrection and Asceticism

Outi Lehtipuu

According to all three Synoptic Gospels, Jesus engages in a controversy with the Sadducees over the resurrection of the dead.[1] The story has puzzled scholars and other readers of the Bible alike. In her monograph *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke–Acts* and subsequent articles, Turid Karlsen Seim has offered a persuasive reading of Luke's version of the debate demonstrating that the Lukan Jesus promotes celibacy as a sign of an anticipatory participation in the resurrection. Those who "neither marry nor are given in marriage" are like angels (ἰσάγγελοι) and cannot die. The passage became important for several early Christian writers in their discussions on resurrection and on celibacy. In this essay, I analyze some early interpretations of the passage as a token of my gratitude to all that I have learned from Turid and her scholarship.

In the narrative, some Sadducees who "say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit"[2] try to trip Jesus up by asking him whose wife a woman who has married seven brothers, one after another, will be at the resurrection. Jesus escapes the trap by denying any marriage after resurrection: "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given

1. Mark 12:18–27; Matt 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–38.

2. Cf. Acts 23:8. All biblical passages are according to the *New Revised Standard Version*, copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, if not otherwise noted.

in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." He then confirms the reality of resurrection by quoting the story of Moses and the burning bush: "And concerning the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living."

Jesus' answer contains several peculiarities. If Jesus wants to demonstrate the reality of resurrection, why does he appeal to the example of the patriarchs? In what sense can they be a proof of God being "God of the living"—were they not dead both at the time of Moses and at the time of Jesus, until the resurrection on the last day? The incongruity is even stronger in Luke's version of the story, for he has made an addition: "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him."[3] The present tense of the verb *ζάω* implies that the patriarchs are alive—have they, then, already been raised from the dead? The phrase "all live to him" has a close counterpart in 4 Maccabees, a writing that does not speak about resurrection but about immortality (*ἀθανασία*) and that links "living to God" both to the patriarchs long gone and the contemporary faithful: "they believe that they, like our patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, do not die to God, but live to God"[4] and "those who die for the sake of God live to God as do Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the patriarchs."[5]

It may be asked, however, whether the tension is only ostensible, or whether it is based on the presupposition that "resurrection" is something other than "immortality." This has been the traditional view in scholarship where the "Hebrew" concept of the resurrection of the body and the "Greek" concept of the immortality of the soul have been sharply contrasted and taken to be mutually exclusive.[6] Early Jewish and Christian belief, it has been claimed, cherishes a monistic understanding of the human being where body and soul make up a unified whole. Greek thinking, in contrast, is believed to promote strict dualism of body and soul. The evidence does not support such a clear-cut dichotomy, for both ideas and different kinds of combinations of them exist side by side in early Jewish sources and the many Greco-Roman polytheistic cults and mythological stories were no less

3. This is a literal translation of the Greek *πάντες γὰρ αὐτῷ ζῶσιν*. The *NRSV*'s rendering of the phrase is "to him all of them are alive."

4. *ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ*; 4 Macc 7:19.

5. *ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ*; 4 Macc 16:25.

6. A classic example of this is Cullman, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead," 9–35.

diverse. The traditional stance has been thoroughly refuted[7] but echoes of it still frequently appear in the scholarly literature.[8]

The Lukan version of the resurrection debate shows how, instead of representing clearly distinguishable alternatives, the concepts were often blurred and conflated. Jesus gives the Sadducees a "double answer";[9] the dead are raised and the patriarchs are alive. The logic of Jesus' argument in v. 38 requires that the patriarchs have been alive all along. Their resurrection means their postmortem exaltation to heaven where they already participate in spiritual and immortal heavenly life.[10] "Resurrection is being recast as immortality," as Turid has phrased it.[11]

There is more to Luke's reshaping of Jesus' answer. Whereas Mark—and Matthew who follows Mark closely in this passage—makes a temporal distinction between life now, when people marry and (be)get children, and life after resurrection, when they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven, Luke puts less emphasis on the chronological dichotomy. According to Turid's reading, while Luke's Jesus does not totally abandon the temporal categories, his accent is on spatiality and on transfer from an earthly to a heavenly sphere.[12] This means that the distinction in Luke's version is not so much between now and then but between two groups of people: "children of this age" and "children of the resurrection."[13] These are concurrent groups that are not differentiated by time but by ethical characteristics.[14] Those who are considered "worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead" show their belonging to this group by not marrying; that is, by choosing celibacy. They have become like angels and can no longer die.[15] Through their ascetically inclined lifestyle they already participate in the resurrection and "live to God" like the patriarchs.[16]

7. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 219–23.

8. For a recent example, see Segal, *Life after Death*, 533–35.

9. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1301.

10. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 26–27.

11. Seim, "In Heaven as on Earth," 28.

12. Seim, *Double Message*, 215–17; "Children of the Resurrection," 119–20; "In Heaven as on Earth," 23.

13. Luke 20:34, 36. Seim, *Double Message*, 216–17.

14. Cf. the juxtaposition of "children of this age" and "children of light" in Luke 16:8. In this passage, it is clear that Jesus refers to two coexisting but morally different groups of people.

15. The connection between celibacy and immortality shows that there is a link between marriage and death: marriage and procreation are needed in order to overcome death by gaining afterlife through progeny. Seim, *Double Message,* 219.

16. There are several other early Jewish and Christian texts, such as *Joseph and*

Angelic Beings and the Resurrection of the Flesh

The question of how Jesus' answer to the Sadducees should be interpreted became a topic of a heated debate early on. During the formative centuries of Christianity, the resurrection of the dead—one of the most controversial issues—was often used as a test or touchstone for belonging: in several texts only those who understand resurrection in the same way as the author are counted as authentic Christians.[17] Often the question evolved into a dispute concerning the resurrection of the flesh: would resurrection entail the recovery of the earthly body or not? Jesus' words about the resurrected ones as angels offered an important proof-text for those Christians who rejected the belief in the resurrection of the flesh. It is noteworthy that they did not necessarily refute a bodily resurrection—but for them the resurrection body would undergo a complete transformation and be made of another substance than the imperfect and weak earthly flesh. The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh did not deny that there would be some change; the resurrection body would be a perfected body, no longer subject to sin, weakness, and corruption. However, they insisted that it would still be the same body of flesh and blood.

There were several reasons why some Christians found the idea of the resurrection of the flesh untenable. In a writing entitled *On the Resurrection* that was formerly ascribed to Justin Martyr (and whose anonymous author is therefore called Pseudo-Justin) three sets of reasons are given. First, the resurrection of the flesh is impossible (ἀδύνατον), since that which is corrupt and disassembled cannot be restored to the same state in which it was previously. Second, it is useless (ἀσύμφορον), for who would want back the weak flesh that causes humans to sin. If the flesh will rise, its deficiencies will also rise with it. Third, either the body will rise in its entirety, with all its members and body parts, or it will rise only in part. If the latter is the case, God's power is manifestly imperfect since he cannot make the whole body rise. The former alternative, however, is strange and out of place (ἄτοπον), since there is no need for all body members after the resurrection. Had not Jesus said "they will be like angels" and being angel-like denotes life without sexual intercourse and eating? Why, then, would the risen body include sexual and alimentary organs?[18]

Aseneth or Philo's idealizing description of the Therapeutae in *De vita contemplativa* that link immortality with a certain lifestyle; see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 39–42.

17. I discuss the topic in detail in my book *The Debate over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity*.

18. Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 2.

For Pseudo-Justin, an ardent promoter of the resurrection of the flesh, this is an inferior opinion (χείρων) and the arguments used only mislead the faithful ones. Both this and the fact that his opponents use Jesus' words as their proof show that these deniers of the physical resurrection are other Christians. Strikingly, their arguments are very similar to the ones that Celsus, the most famous second-century critic of Christianity, brings forward.[19] This indicates that there were no clear borderlines, on the one side Christians defending the resurrection of the flesh and on the other side non-Christians ridiculing it, but the boundaries crisscrossed and often ran between diversely thinking Christian groups. For example, Origen, Celsus' Christian partner-in-dialogue, did not attack Celsus' reasoning against resurrection, but rather complained that he had not understood the true Christian position. It is only the "simpler believers" who maintain that the earthly flesh will rise again. In his reading of Jesus' debate with the Sadducees, Origen takes "being like angels" to mean that at the resurrection the human body will be transformed into a celestial spiritual body that is of a much finer and higher substance than the earthly body.[20]

In his counterargument, Pseudo-Justin creates an alternative exegesis of Jesus' words. He does not reject the reasoning of his opponents as such; he agrees that there is no sex or eating in heaven. However, the rival interpretation goes wrong when it maintains that this logically leads to the conclusion that there is no bodily resurrection.[21] At the resurrection, sexual organs will remain intact but they will not be used for the same functions as on earth. The basic function of the womb is to become pregnant and that of the "masculine part" (*μόριον ἀνδρικόν*) to beget. However, neither function is necessary: there are barren women who do not become pregnant even though they have a womb and others, both women and men, who abstain from sexual intercourse and still have their sexual organs.[22] To strengthen his argument, the writer even refers to the animal world; mules have sexual organs but they do not bear or beget. If having sexual organs does not unavoidably lead to sexual intercourse in this world, it will certainly not do so in the world to come.

19. See Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.14.

20. Origen, *On First Principles* 2.2.2. This passage, as most of the work, is only preserved in Rufinus's Latin translation, which is not a literal one. Thus, it is not entirely certain whether it corresponds to what Origen wrote in the original Greek.

21. Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 3.

22. Cf. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 61.6–7: "We also, as we are able, give the mouth release from food, and even abstain from sexual intercourse. How many voluntary eunuchs are there, how many virgins wedded to Christ, how many barren of both sexes equipped with genitals that bear no fruit."

All in all, the writer has a negative attitude toward sexual intercourse. He praises Jesus for not falling to the "desires of the flesh" and values the virgin birth which "destroyed begetting by lawless desire." In his life, Jesus showed that sexual intercourse can be abolished; even though he otherwise submitted himself to a fully human life and had to eat, drink, and clothe himself, he did not have sex. This, in Pseudo-Justin's view, shows that sexual intercourse is not a necessity like the others. The logic of this line of thought for bodily resurrection is not completely clear. Pseudo-Justin draws an analogy between this life and the life to come. If the redundancy of sexual intercourse in this life implies that it is not necessary in the world to come, does not the necessity of food, drink, and clothing for the earthly flesh imply their inevitability for the resurrected flesh as well? According to a strong tradition, however, angels did not eat[23]—how could those who will be like angels in heaven need food or drink? In his counterargument, however, Pseudo-Justin does not address the question of eating but restricts his discussion to sex.

Another early defender of the resurrection of the flesh was Tertullian of Carthage. He faced similar challenges as Pseudo-Justin when interpreting Jesus' words about angels and solved them much in a similar fashion but went even further in elaborating a counterexegesis. In his treatise which is also known by the name *On the Resurrection*, Tertullian reminds his readers that those who asked Jesus about the woman of seven husbands at the resurrection were Sadducees, who were known for refuting the resurrection of both the body and the soul. In his answer, the Lord affirmed the resurrection of both parts: the scriptures openly preach resurrection and God certainly has the power to raise the dead. The Sadducees, who do not believe in the resurrection, show ignorance of the scriptures and disbelief in the power of God, he claims,[24] as do all those who understand Jesus' words

23. The Jewish tradition knew many stories where angels appear in human guise and seem to be eating but this proves to be an illusion. For example, in Tobit, when the archangel Raphael discloses his true identity, he explains that "although you were watching me, I really did not eat or drink anything—but what you saw was a vision" (Tob 12:19). Similarly, in the *Testament of Abraham*, the archangel Michael is one of the three men who visit Abraham in the oaks of Mamre. Abraham invites the visitors to dine with him and Michael needs advice from God. He says: "Lord, all the heavenly spirits are incorporeal, and they neither eat nor drink. Now he has set before me a table with an abundance of all the good things which are earthly and perishable. And now, Lord, what shall I do? How shall I escape his notice while I am sitting at one table with him?" The Lord answers: "Go down to him and do not be concerned about this. For when you are seated with him I shall send upon you an all-devouring spirit, and, from your hands and through your mouth, it will consume everything which is on the table" (*TAbr* 4:9–10; trans. Sanders in *OTP*).

24. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 36. Cf. Mark 12:24.

as proof of a non-bodily resurrection. What the Lord says is: “they will not marry”—he does not say “they will not be raised.” They will certainly be raised but they will be transformed “into an angelic state by that garment of incorruptibility” (*in statum angelicum per indumentum illud incorruptibilitatis*). Since their substance has changed, they do not marry and they do not die—yet they are raised in a fleshly substance. Tertullian turns the reasoning of his rivals upside down and states that the whole question of the Sadducees about the prospective heavenly marriage of the woman implies that they will be raised bodily—without a body with all its members capable to marry, the whole question would be senseless.

Tertullian also emphasizes that the body will be raised in its entirety. His rivals ridicule such a view by asking what mouth, teeth, throat, gullet, intestines, and stomach would serve when eating and drinking have ceased. And why would there be a need for the reproductive organs, when there is no marriage and no procreation?[25] Tertullian counters these contradictions with arguments similar to those of Pseudo-Justin; the members have one set of functions in this life and another set in the future life. “When life itself has been delivered from necessities the members also will be delivered from their functions: but they will not for that reason be unnecessary.”[26] First of all, it is necessary that all body parts will remain since they will also be judged. Secondly, there are many other functions for them. For example, the most important function for teeth is not eating but praising God, as the example of Adam shows. “Adam pronounced names for the animals before he plucked of the tree: he was a prophet before he was an eater.”[27] Other important functions for the teeth consist in helping in articulation and adorning the mouth.

Similarly, the different apertures of the “lower parts” of men and women (*inferna in viro et in femina*) are not needed for copulation only but also for health so that “the excreta may be filtered” and the function of the womb is not only to gather the male seed but to control the excess of blood “which the less energetic sex has not the strength to throw off.”[28] These functions may be in line with ancient medical understanding, but Tertullian’s reasoning faces the same problem as those of Pseudo-Justin above: if angels, and those like them, do not eat, do they then need to defecate?

25. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 60.2–3.

26. Ibid., 60.5. Translation here and elsewhere follows that of Evans in Tertullian’s *Treatise on the Resurrection*.

27. Ibid., 61.1.

28. Ibid., 61.3.

In a further passage of the same treatise,[29] Tertullian develops another line of argument. When Jesus speaks of the "children of the resurrection" he says that they will be *like* angels—not that they will be angels. He refers to the story of the three men visiting Abraham in Mamre, who were widely believed to have been angels.[30] According to Tertullian, the story shows that angels can be like human beings. Even though they do not lose their angelic substance and have no human flesh, they eat, drink and have their feet washed. If angels, who are spiritual beings, can be treated as if they had human flesh, why would human beings—who are of flesh—not be able to partake in heavenly life, "being, under their angelic clothing, no more tied to the usages of the flesh than the angels then, under human clothing, were tied to the usages of the spirit?"[31]

In another writing aimed against Marcion's understanding of the resurrection of Christ, however, Tertullian gives a different reading of the Genesis passage. Marcion, who claimed that the visible world was created by a lower God, did not accept the physical resurrection of Christ but maintained rather that the disciples saw the spirit of the resurrected Christ and that his fleshly form was only apparent.[32] This was similar to the appearance of the angels to Abraham and Lot. Tertullian rejects this interpretation and affirms that the angels were of "veritable and complete human substance."[33] He adds ironically that perhaps Marcion's God, who has never produced any flesh, would not have been able to provide the angels with a fleshly body. In contrast, "my God who reshaped into the quality we know, that flesh which he had taken up out of clay . . . was no less able out of any material whatsoever to construct flesh for angels as well."[34] Tertullian even refers to Jesus' debate with the Sadducees but without countering Marcion's interpretation of it: "And truly, if your god promises to humans some time the true substance of angels—They will, he says, be as the angels—why should not my God too have granted to angels the true human substance, from wheresoever he may have taken it?"[35]

Debates over the meaning of Jesus' words to the Sadducees continued in later centuries. An early fourth-century example is offered in the

29. Ibid., 62.

30. Genesis 18; cf. n23 above.

31. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 62.3.

32. Cf. Luke 24:39.

33. Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.9.2. Translation here and elsewhere by Evans (with slight modifications).

34. Ibid., 3.9.3.

35. Ibid., 3.9.4.

Discourse on the Resurrection by Methodius, the bishop of Olympos. The text is cast into a dialogue with a certain Aglaophon, but it is directed against the alleged views of Origen. The text has survived only in parts, preserved in later writings.[36] Methodius' reasoning follows along lines similar to his predecessors but he develops them further. He draws arguments in favor of the resurrection of the flesh from the heavenly hierarchy, from the goodness of creation, and from the metaphorical nature of Jesus' words.

Methodius shares Tertullian's viewpoint and explains that Jesus speaks of the resurrected ones as being like angels but he does not identify them with angels.[37] Angels are only one class of immortals; in addition to them, there are rulers (ἄρχοντες) and powers (ἐξουσίαι) and all of them have "different species, bodies and varieties." A creature of one class cannot be changed into another kind; angels cannot become powers for each class of beings has its own place and order. Thus, human nature will not be changed into an angelic one but only resemble it. When God created humans He intended them to be humans, not angels. Proposing that humans become angels at the resurrection implies that the creation of humans was a mistake. Either God had originally wished to make an angel but was too weak to accomplish it, or his creation was bad and he repented of it. Both ideas would be blasphemous.

In Methodius' view, being like angels at the resurrection does not denote resurrection without flesh but life without marriage. Resurrection life will be angelic life in the sense that it will resemble life in paradise in honor and glory. Instead of marriage-feasts and other festivities, the resurrected ones will be in the presence of Christ and praise him with the angels. Yet there is gradation between the "children of the resurrection" and angels. Just as it is possible to say of the moon on a bright night that it "shines like the sun" without meaning that it is the sun, it can similarly be said of the resurrected ones that they are like angels even though they are not transformed into angels. Lastly, Methodius makes a terminological point. Raising up cannot mean the resurrection of the soul only, because only the one that has fallen can be raised up. It is the body that dies and is laid down into the grave, while the soul remains immortal. Thus, those who say that there is no resurrection of the flesh, deny any kind of resurrection. Jesus talked about the raising of the dead which cannot be anything other than raising their flesh into a new life.

36. A largish portion is preserved in Epiphanius's *Panarion* 64.12–62, and another fragment in Photius's *Bibliotheca* 234.

37. Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.41.3—43.8.