“The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame”: Physical and Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament

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ABSTRACT

"'The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame':
Physical and Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament"

The New Testament gospels feature numerous social exchanges between Jesus and people with various physical and sensory disability. Yet, traditional biblical scholarship has considered these exchanges as merely incidental. For many scholars addressing the gospels, people with disability described therein have not been considered agents in their own right but exist only to highlight the actions of Jesus as a miracle worker. The aim of this study is to use disability as a lens through which to explore a number of these passages anew. Although these pericopae have been examined at length by numerous scholars, they have rarely been figured specifically in relation to disability. Using the cultural model of disability as the theoretical basis for this examination, we contend that ancient authors use disability as a means of understanding, organising, and interpreting the experiences of humanity. In much the same way that different cultures have their own unique interpretations and expectations of the body based on gender, ethnicity, or sexuality, so it is also the case with human ability/disability. In this way, every body, whether deemed able-bodied or 'deviant', is assigned meaning within the context of its own social, cultural, and religious milieu. This study examines both the Greco-Roman and Jewish background of the gospels prior to assessing the New Testament gospels themselves through three case studies, each addressing different aspects of human ability/disability within the framework of Jesus' ministry. These investigations highlight the ways in which the gospel writers reinforce and reflect, as well as subvert, culturally-driven constructions of disability in the ancient world. We contend that the use of disability as a tool for reading the New Testament will afford us the opportunity to evaluate the gospel material from a new and illuminating perspective and thus contribute to the growing field of disability and biblical studies.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "'The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind and the Lame': Physical and Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament" has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Louise Anne Gosbell (41922557)

23 March 2015

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"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the father through him." Colossians 3:17

For your aural pleasure check out the bands that comprised the soundtrack for this dissertation: Death Cab for Cutie, Band of Horses, Ryan Adams, The Shins, and U2.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of ancient literary sources conform to conventions in *The SBL Handbook of Style* (P.H. Alexander, et al. [eds.]; Peabody: 1999) or *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (S. Hornblower and A.J.S Spawforth [eds.]; 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. However, because I have researched beyond the disciplines of biblical studies and ancient history, I have included here a list of all abbreviations used for journals and other secondary sources. Unless otherwise noted, editions and translations of Greek and Latin authors are from the Loeb Classical Library. Inscriptions are abbreviated, when possible, according to *Guide de l'epigraphiste* (F. Bérard [ed.]; Paris: Édition Rue d'Ulm, 2010) or to G.H.R. Horsley and J.A.L. Lee, "A Preliminary Checklist of Abbreviations of Greek Epigraphic Volumes," *Epigraphica* 66 (1994): 129-70. Papyri are cited according to J.F. Oates, et al. [eds.], *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets Web Edition* (http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html).

Journals

Altsprachliche Unterricht, Der	AU
American Journal of Medical Genetics	Am J Med Genet
American Journal of Physical Anthropology	Am J Phys Anthropol
American Theology Inquiry	ATI
Ancient History Bulletin	AHB
Ancient Narrative	AN
Annals de Medecine Interne	Ann Med Interne
Archäologischer Anzeiger	AA
Biblical Interpretations	BI
Brain and Development	Bran Dev
Bryn Mawr Classical Review	BMCR
Bulletin der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie	Bull schweizerischen gesellschaft anthrop
Bulletin of the History of Medicine	Bull Hist Med
Christian Research Journal	CRJ
Collegium Antropologicum	Coll Antropol
Culture et société médiévals	CSM
Developmental Psychology	Dev Psychol
Disability and Society	Disabil Soc
Disability Studies Quarterly	DSQ
Early Child Development and Care	ECDC
Echos du monde classique/Classical Views	EMC
Evangelical Quarterly	EvQ
L'Evolution Psychiatrique	Evol Psychiatr
Expositor	Exp
Graecolatina et Orientalia	GLO
History of Childhood Quarterly	HCQ
International Journal of Humanities and Social Science	IJHSS
International Journal of Osteoarchaeology	Int J Osteoarchaeol
Journal of Anatomy	J Anat

Journal of Anthropological Sciences	J Anthrop Sci
Journal of Archaeological Science	J Archaeol Sci
Journal of Archaeological Studies	JAS
Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism	J Clin Endocrinol Metab
Journal of Clinical Research and Bioethics	J Clin Res Bioeth
Journal of Disability Policy Studies	JDPS
Journal of Early Christian History	JECH
Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism	JGRChJ
Journal of Hebrew Scriptures	JHebS
Journal of Institute of Art History of Slovak Academy of Sciences	J Art Hist SAS
Journal of Medicine and Philosophy	J Med Phil
Journal of Religion and Health	J Relig Health
Journal of Religion, Disability and Health	J Religion Disabil Health
Journal of the History of Biology	J Hist Biol
Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes	JWI
Medical History	Med Hist
Medicina nei Secoli	MedSec
New England Journal of Medicine	N Engl J Med
Opuscula Atheniensia	OAth
Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland	Proc Soc Antiq Scot
Proche Orient Chrétien	POC
Progress in Clinical and Biological Research	Prog Clin Biol Res
Rehabilitation Counselor Bulletin	Rehab Couns Bull
Rehabilitation Literature	Rehabil Lit
Science in Context	Sci Context
Slavery and Abolition	S&A
Southern Baptist Journal of Theology	SB*J*T
Studying the Historical Jesus	SHJ
Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok	SEÅ

Books

Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity	ASMA
American Anthropological Association Special Publication	AAASP
American University Studies	AUS
Analecta Romana Instituti Danici Supplement	ARIDSup
Art & Religion	AR
Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies	ACIT
Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament	BECNT
Bible Knowledge Background Commentary	BKBC
Biblical Interpretation Series	BIS
Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liége	BFPLUL
British Archaeological Reports International Series	BARIS
Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London Supplement	BICSSup

Classical Languages and Literature	CLL
College Press NIV Commentary	CPNIVC
College Press NIV Commentary	CPNIVC
Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care	CSHSMC
Concordia Commentaries	ConcC
Coniectanea Biblical New Testament	ConBNT
Early Christianity and its Literature	ECL
Humanitas Supplementum	HumSup
International Critical Commentary	ICC
Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies	LHBOTS
Library of New Testament Studies	LNTS
Library of Second Temple Studies	LSTS
Linguistic Biblical Studies	LBS
Mnemosyne Bibliotheca Classica Batava Supplement Series	MBCBSup
New Century Bible Commentary	NCBC
New Daily Study Bible	NDSB
New Studies in Biblical Theology	NSBT
New Testament Archaeology Monograph	NTAM
New Testament Archaeology Monograph	NTAM
New Testament Profiles	NTP
Philosophy and Medicine	PM
Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft	SBA
Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary	SHBC
Society for Old Testament Study Series	SOTSS
Studies in Ancient Medicine	SAM
Studies in Early Medicine	SEM
Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter	TANZ
U. Wilcken *Griechische Ostraka aus Aegypten und Nubien*: Ein Beitrag zur antiken Wirtschaftsgeschichte. 2 vols. Berlin: Verlag von Giesecke and Devrient, 1899.	Wilcken

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

"I'm more than you know.
I'm more than you see.
I'm more than you'll let me be.
...
You don't see me, but you will.
I am not invisible – I am here.
There is no 'them' – there's only 'us.'"

U2 *Invisible* – Raising money for (RED) for victims of AIDS in Africa[1]

§ 1.1 Introduction

In 2014 Irish band U2 released a song entitled *Invisible* as a fundraiser for (RED), a charity organisation working for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS.[2] The message of the song, at least in the way I interpret it, is that despite the large numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS[3] the experiences and needs of these people are often overlooked and neglected. Not only is the issue of HIV/AIDS underrepresented in terms of community action, health promotion, and media coverage, but those living with HIV/AIDS also experience the added complication of having an illness that can appear asymptomatic and therefore hidden. But in response, U2's song announces that despite the invisibility of the illness upon one's body or the invisibility of the issue in the greater community, people living with HIV/AIDS are present in our communities and cannot continue to be ignored and overlooked. The song reminds us that though we might be separated by distance, language, culture, and ethnic background, we are linked through our common humanity: "There is no 'them' – there's only 'us.'"

[1] Bono and The Edge, *Invisible* (recorded by U2); Dublin: Island Records, 2014.

[2] (RED), "Bank of America and (RED)," n.p. [cited 22 October 2014]. Online: http://www.red.org/en/learn/partners/bank-of-america.

[3] According to the Wealth Health Organisation, in 2013 there were 35 million people living with HIV worldwide (WHO, "Global Summary of the AIDS epidemic 2013," n.p. [cited 3 November 2014]. Online: http://www.who.int/hiv/data/epi_core_dec2014.png). However, "97% of those living with HIV reside in low and middle income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa" (Aids.gov, "Global Statistics," n.p. [cited 3 November 2014]. Online: http://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/global-statistics/).

I was struck by the imagery of the song and how it addresses the way in which we perceive, interpret, and respond to marginalised groups within our society.[4] According to the 2010 *World Report on Disability*, the World Health Organization (henceforth, WHO) estimates that approximately 15% of the world's population live with some form of disability.[5] This percentage equates to approximately 785 million persons 15 years and over, with 2.2% - approximately 110 million people – having "significant difficulties in functioning."[6] Despite the prevalence of disability and the fact that with medical advancements and ageing populations the numbers of people with disability is actually on the increase,[7] people with disability are still very much invisible members of our communities. As a result, many people with disability experience greater difficulty accessing community services, education, transportation, communication and other vital services in comparison to their able-bodied counterparts. In fact, people with disability are

> more likely to be victims of rape and violence, less likely to receive legal protection, more likely to be excluded from mass education, be underrepresented in positions of power and more reliant on state benefits and/or charity.[8]

It is this lack of access that has led disability activists to describe people with disability as a "key defining social category"[9] as well as "the world's largest minority" group.[10] Unlike other categories of individuals identified as marginal and/or experiencing broad scale discrimination, whether on the basis of gender, race, or sexuality, the ties that bind people with disability appear on first impression to be much more tenuous.[11] Rather than being grouped together on the basis of "biomedical conditions" or "diagnostic categories," people with disability are considered a distinctive group based on a shared "social and political

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[4] There are actually strong overlaps between the issue of HIV/AIDS and disability. Not only does the WHO classify AIDS as a form of disability, but research indicates that those with disability are more likely to become exposed to the HIV virus than their able-bodied counterparts (e.g., UNAIDS, WHO and OHCHR, "Disability and HIV Policy Brief," (April 2009): 1 [cited 22 October 2014]. Online: http://www .who.int/disabilities/jc1632_policy_brief_disability_en.pdf.

[5] WHO, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva: WHO Press, 2011), 8.

[6] WHO, *World Report*, 8.

[7] WHO, *World Report*, 236.

[8] D. Goodley, *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2011), 2.

[9] C.J. Kudlick, "Disability History: Why we need Another 'Other,'" in *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader* (ed. T. Titchkosky and R. Michalko; Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2009), 31-32.

[10] Tim Wainwright from Action on Disability and Development International as quoted in "Disabled 'world's largest minority'" (K. McVeigh, *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 11, 2011. [cited 24 October 2011]. Online: http://www.smh.com.au/world/disabled-worlds-largest-minority-20110610-1fx19.html).

[11] Nancy Eiesland suggests that the "differences among persons with disabilities are often so profound that few areas of commonality exist (*The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1994], 23).

experience."[12] In this sense, this minority group "is arguably more heterogeneous than those of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation."[13] Christian disability advocate Nancy L. Eiesland wrote of her experiences as a woman with a physical disability stating that

> people with disabilities are distinguished not because of our shared physical, psychological, or emotional traits, but because 'temporarily able-bodied' persons single us out for differential treatment. Although people with disabilities span a broad spectrum of medical conditions with diverse effects on appearance and function, studies indicate that whatever the setting, whether in education, medicine, rehabilitation, social welfare policy, or society at large, a common set of stigmatizing values and arrangements has historically operated against us. This recognition has led activists and sociologists to argue that persons with disabilities constitute a minority group, shaped primarily by exclusion.[14]

The last 40-50 years has seen a growing interest in the social status of people with disability and their representation within society. In the 1970's, following on from the women's and racial anti-discrimination movements, a disability rights movement began aimed at addressing "the social problem (of) the oppressive marginalization of persons with disabilities."[15] Indeed, disability advocate Diane Driedger famously referred to this movement, which was viewed as being well overdue,[16] as "the last civil rights movement."[17] The aim of this disability rights movement, according to disability sociologists, was to shift attention away from "medical diagnoses of individual pathology, associated functional limitations and culturally determined deficits"[18] to focus instead on the "'disabling' economic, political and cultural barriers that prevented people with impairments...from participating in mainstream society as equal citizens."[19]

The recent development of critical disability theory "and the recognition that the category of disability is both constructed and representative of social experiences and culture has had a profound impact on historical studies."[20] In light of these recent developments, it is

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[12] S. Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (New York: New York University, 1998), 12.

[13] G.T. Couser, "Disability as Diversity: A Difference with a Difference," *Ilha do Desterro* 48 (2005): 96.

[14] *Disabled God*, 24.

[15] J.A. Winter, "The Development of the Disability Rights Movement as a Social Problem Solver," *DSQ* 23.1 (2003): 33.

[16] L.J. Davis, "Introduction," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (ed. L. Davis; New York: Routledge, 1997), 1.

[17] *The Last Civil Rights Movement: Disabled Peoples' International* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1989).

[18] M. Oliver and C. Barnes, *The New Politics of Disablement* (2nd ed.; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 11.

[19] Oliver and Barnes, *New Politics*, 12.

[20] J.S. Baden and C.R. Moss, "The Origin and Interpretation of *ṣāraʿat* in Leviticus 13-14," *JBL* 130.3 (2011): 643-662.

the aim of the current study to apply critical disability theory to the gospels of the New Testament. The aim of this study is to use disability as a lens through which to explore a number of key gospel passages anew. Although these pericopae have been examined at length by biblical scholars, they have rarely been examined specifically in relation to disability. Using the cultural model of disability as the theoretical basis for this examination, we contend that the gospel writers, as with other ancient authors, use disability as a means of understanding, organising, and interpreting the experiences of humanity. These investigations thus allow us to consider the way in which the gospel writers reinforce and reflect, as well as subvert, culturally-driven constructions of disability in the ancient world. We contend that the use of disability as a lens through which to assess the New Testament will afford us the opportunity to evaluate the gospel material from a new and illuminating perspective and thus contribute to the growing field of disability and biblical studies.

In what follows in this chapter, we will discuss (a) the shifting academic trends within disability studies and their relevance for New Testament researchers (§ 1.2); (b) the benefits of bringing disability studies into dialogue with biblical research (§ 1.3); (c) the state of academic research into people with disability in Hebrew Bible and New Testament studies (§ 1.4); (d) the purpose, scope, and methodology of the dissertation in light of the foregoing review of disability studies (§ 1.5).

§ 1.2 Disability Studies

While disability advocates claimed the academic world initially failed to respond to the growing disability movement,[21] eventually a specialised field of disability studies developed, foregrounding the "experiences, portrayals, and social treatment" of people with disability.[22] This research was not limited to any one academic discipline but became a diverse interdisciplinary academic field. Thus, disability studies does not represent a unique and specialised methodological approach but serves as a lens through which

[21] E.g., W.V. Bryan, *Sociopolitical Aspects of Disabilities* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishers, 2010), 7-8.

[22] H. Peckruhn, "Disability Studies," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies* (ed. J. O'Brien; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 101.

scholars can view their specific areas of research, whether that is in education, law, technology, humanities, or any other area of investigation.[23]

Many of the earliest works in the field of disability studies were written in response to what disability advocates have labelled the medical model of disability, a framework that situates the 'problem' of a 'disabled' body firmly in the context of an individual's pathology and/or deficit.[24] In response, the earliest writers in the field of disability studies wrote in order to demythologise the 'disabled' body and "debunk the fictions of desirability that invest the 'able' body."[25] For these contributors to disability studies, the 'problem' of the 'disabled' body is not that it must be pathologised, rehabilitated, or cured, but that our social structures are created with the able-bodied in mind. What needs to be addressed and fixed is not the individual with disability, these writers have argued, but rather, it is our societal expectations and structures that limit access for those with bodies outside of what is deemed 'normal.'[26] Consequently, the 'disabled' body should not be viewed as an anomaly, but as a natural part of human diversity. In this sense, disability is "an inescapable element of human experience."[27] Indeed, due to our ageing population, the Australian Bureau of

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[23] We understand the irony of relying on sensory imagery (e.g., "lens"/"view") to describe the experiences as well as the interpretive processes of disability studies. We note here the work of Louise Lawrence in pointing out the sensorially-centred language often used in association with the biblical texts. Lawrence states, for example, "In biblical studies the frequently employed metaphor of the biblical 'text as a window' through which one either looks 'behind', 'at' or 'in front of' belies the sight-centricity of exegetical 'outlooks', 'lenses', and 'perspectives'" (*Sense and Stigma in the Gospels: Depictions of Sensory-Disabled Characters* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013], 25). However, we note that this terminology is employed by numerous disability scholars as a means of describing the combination of disability studies with other forms of academic pursuit (e.g. J.S. Baden, "The Nature of Barrenness in the Hebrew Bible," in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* [ed. C.R. Moss and J. Schipper; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011], 20; J.S. Deland, "Images of God through the Lens of Disability," *J Religion Disabil Health* 3.2 (1999): 47-81; T.E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* [Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008], 70; H.J. Toensing, "'Living at the Tombs': Society, Mental Illness, and Self-Destruction," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* [ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; SS 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2007], 133; Peckruhn, "Disability Studies," 102).

[24] A more comprehensive description of this model as well as other models will be outlined in § 2.2.1.

[25] S.L. Snyder and D.T. Mitchell, "Re-engaging the Body: Disability Studies and the Resistance to Embodiment," *Public Culture* 13.3 (2001): 368.

[26] Lennard J. Davis, for example, suggests that while early studies of race focused on the 'otherness' of the "person of color," more recent studies focus their attention on "whiteness." In the same way, disability studies too have shifted from focusing on the phenomenology of disability to instead focus on society's construction of normalcy. Davis states "the 'problem' is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the "problem" of the disabled person" (*Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* [London: Verso, 1995], 23).

[27] Couser, "Disability as Diversity," 96. Disability writer Lennard Davis suggests "the only universal (of humanity) is the experience of the limitation of the body (*Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism and Other Difficult Positions* [New York: New York University Press, 2002], 32).

Statistics suggest, "the number of Australians with a disability appears likely to increase during the 21st century,"[28] a statistic replicated across the globe.[29]

Disability studies proposes that disability is a "significant and powerful system of representation," similar to those of gender, race, and sexuality, that "assigns traits to individuals, and discriminates among them, on the basis of bodily differences."[30] At the centre of each of these socio-political categories is bodily difference and the extent to which an individual departs from a socially prescribed norm. However, "the border between the disabled and the non-disabled is less permanent and more permeable than those between races and genders."[31] While it is extremely difficult to change one's gender, ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation, by contrast, disability represents an "open minority."[32] As technology advances and new forms of rehabilitation are developed it is possible for bodies to pass from 'disabled' to nondisabled. At the same time, the opposite is also possible with people acquiring disability during their lifetime as a result of injury, ageing, illness, or accident. Despite this, instead of motivating the general populace to alter any 'disabling' societal structures, disability advocates suggest that the prevalence of disability and its inevitability merely generates a response of "anxiety and discomfort"[33] from the able-bodied portion of the community. And yet, it is precisely this inevitability they argue, that means the issue of disability should not continue to be ignored.

Disability studies involves more than just scouring texts for allusions to physical, sensory, or cognitive deviations, but questioning the value that a body is assigned within its own historical, social, political, and religious milieu. Each culture and society attributes

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[28] Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Australian Social Trends March 2011 – Life Expectancy Trends Australia," (March 2011), 5. Cited 10 November 2014. Online: http://www.ausstats.abs .gov.au/ausstats/ subscriber.nsf/LookupAttach/4102.0Publication23.03.112/$File/41020_Lifeexpectancy_Mar2011.pdf.

[29] E.g., S.M. Lynch, J.S. Brown, and M.G. Taylor, "Demography of Disability," in *International Handbook of Population Aging* (ed. P. Uhlenberg; International Handbooks of Populations 1; Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), 566-582; C.D. Mathers et al., "Healthy life expectancy in 191 countries, 1999," *The Lancet* 357 (2001): 1685-1691.

[30] Couser, "Disability as Diversity," 101.

[31] Couser, "Disability as Diversity," 96.

[32] D.B. Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

[33] Couser, "Disability as Diversity," 101.

different values to those bodies deemed 'deviant,'[34] that is, those bodies which divert from societal norms.[35] In this sense, writers in the field of disability suggest, "cultures map personal and moral traits arbitrarily onto somatic anomalies and reserve certain privileges and rights for those deemed normal."[36] It is not simply that a certain literary or historical text includes characters who are blind or of short stature, but what is significant is the way in which these physical characteristics are employed in order to represent one's place in the social framework of the texts. Just as representations of disability should be interrogated in various academic disciplines, so must they be assessed within the historico-religious conventions of the biblical material.

§ 1.3 Disability and Biblical Studies

Disability studies has become a burgeoning field of enquiry within biblical studies over the last 10-15 years. Part of this growing interest in disability can be attributed to a developing interest in the nature of embodiment.[37] Halvor Moxnes proposes that "'the body' is not just another topic in addition to a list of topics,"[38] but rather, ideals regarding the body are woven into the fabric of individuals and societies. It is through our bodies that we know ourselves and know each other. It is in our bodies that we experience life, illness, suffering, and eventually death. The body is thus "always more than a tangible, physical, corporeal object"; it is a "vessel of meaning of utmost significance to both personhood and society."[39]

The way each society portrays, shapes, modifies, and interprets bodies is significant, not just in understanding social attitudes towards the physical body but also in recognising

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[34] On the nature of 'deviancy' as thoughts, characteristics, and behaviour that depart from 'normal' societal expectation, see M.B. Clinard and R.F. Meier, *Sociology of Deviant Behavior* (15th ed.; Boston: Cengage learning, 2016), *passim*.

[35] On disability as a form of bodily 'deviance' see R. Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 19-20; Clinard and Meier, *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*, 456-486.

[36] Couser, "Disability as Diversity," 103.

[37] Of note is S. Garner (ed.), *Theology and the Body: Reflections on Being Flesh and Blood* (Hindmarsh: ATF Press, 2011); L. Isherwood and E. Stuart, *Introducing Body Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); S.T. Kamionkowski and W. Kim (eds.), *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (LHBOTS 465; New York: T&T Clark, 2010); D. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); E. Moltmann-Wendel, *I Am My Body: A Theology of Embodiment* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

[38] "Body, Gender and Social Space," in *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (ed. B. Holmberg and M. Winninge; WUNT I 227; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 165.

[39] D.D. Waskul and P. Vannini, "Introduction: The Body in Symbolic Interaction," in *Body/Embodiment: Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body* (ed. D.D. Waskul and P. Vannini; Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 3.

that the body is a "microcosm of society."[40] The body does not represent a universal, fixed ideal common to all cultures and periods of history; thus, the body must be investigated with particular reference to the history, beliefs, literature, and experiences of any given society. In the process of any study on the body, one will inevitably encounter 'deviant' and/or 'disabled' bodies; those bodies which do not conform to a particular society's expectations of normalcy.[41] Indeed, it is a society's belief in what constitutes normalcy that likewise dictates who is considered 'deviant' and/or 'disabled.'[42] Theologically speaking, Deborah Creamer suggests that it has only been with the "advent of feminist and liberation theologies (that) a successful articulation (has) been offered regarding bodies as possessing unique and specific characteristics that affect theological reflection and practice."[43] It is with this issue of embodiment as a backdrop that a dedicated field of research began addressing disability within biblical studies.

Prior to the beginning of an integrated disability and biblical studies approach, interest in disability in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament were limited. For many biblical scholars, references to disability in the biblical texts were not considered "worthy of critical inquiry"[44] in themselves but were considered secondary to the primary purposes of the text.[45] For the small number of scholars who did address representations of disability, their assessment was usually limited to an attempt at diagnosis. This form of investigation, known as retrospective diagnosis, applies modern medical knowledge and terminology to the descriptions of illness found in the Bible and other ancient sources. Commentators

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[40] Moxnes, "Body, Gender," 166.

[41] See in particular the work of Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, *passim*.

[42] E.g., H. Graßl, "Behinderte in der Antike: Bemerkungen zur sozialen Stellung und Integration," *Tyche* 1 (1986): 38.

[43] D. Creamer, "Toward a Theology that Includes the Human Experience of Disability," *J Religion Disabil Health* 7.3 (2003): 63.

[44] C.R. Moss and J. Schipper, "Introduction," in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* (ed. C.R. Moss and J. Schipper; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.

[45] Bruce Birch writes that in his study on the books of Samuel that he simply "skipped over" those texts which refer to various forms of disability. He notes: "I have been trained in Biblical scholarship with a limited awareness and understanding that has allowed me to spend decades in studying and teaching the Bible without noticing or paying any particular attention to the large number of references to impairment/disability in the biblical witness...It is socially easier not to notice such persons, and I suppose it had been easier for biblical scholars to give texts referencing impairment/disability only the general descriptive treatment accorded to a disabled character that enters the story or the minimal explanation given to a reference to impairment that crops up in a text" ("Impairment as a Condition in Biblical Scholarship: A Response," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* [ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; Semeia Studies 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2007], 185).

using this methodology thus 'diagnose' Job's sores as the result of smallpox,[46] Hezekiah's boils as anthrax,[47] and Peter's mother-in-law as ill with malaria.[48] This kind of inquiry ignores the fact that the biblical material is not medical in nature and does not intend to supply a precise list of symptoms or etiology. In addition, this approach also ignores "the different and changing cultural values attached to certain conditions."[49]

While the New Testament gospels feature numerous examples of people with physical and sensory disability, in traditional biblical scholarship, the presence of those with disability has been considered incidental. For many biblical scholars, the people with disability referred to in the gospels are not considered agents in their own right but exist only to highlight the actions of Jesus as a miracle worker. In this sense, the people with disability in the healing accounts are representative of the 'fallen' humanity that needs to be restored and redeemed through the ministry of Jesus.[50] The removal of disability is thus seen as a foreshadowing of the full restoration of all humanity at the eschaton. Though recent scholarship has moved away from a particularised view of disability and individual sin, many theologians and exegetes still promote the view that disability is a "manifestation of brokenness" connected with living in a sinful world.[51]

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[46] A.R. Short, *The Bible and Modern Medicine: A Survey of Health and Healing in the Old and New Testaments* (London: Paternoster Press, 1953), 53-54; cf. L.L. Ben-Noun, "Figs – The Earliest Known Ancient Drug for Cutaneous Anthrax," *Annals of Pharmacotherapy* 37 (2003): 298.

[47] J.D. Douglas and M.C. Tenney, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 75.

[48] Douglas and Tenney, *Zondervan Illustrated*, 160.

[49] Peckruhn "Disability Studies," 102. For more on retrospective diagnosis, see L.A. Graumann, "Monstrous Births and Retrospective Diagnosis: The Case of Hermaphrodites in Antiquity," in *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies;* a capite ad calcem (ed. C. Laes, C.F. Goodey, and M.L. Rose; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 181-209; K.-H. Leven, "'At times these ancient facts seem to lie before me like a patient on a hospital bed' - Retrospective Diagnosis and Ancient Medical History," in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine* (ed. H.F.J. Horstmanshoff and M. Stol; SAM 27; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 369-386.

[50] J. Lunde, for example, sees Jesus' healings of the "sick and unclean" as representative of "the sick, deaf, blind, and leprous nature of Israel as a whole" (*Following Jesus, the Servant King: A Biblical Theology of Covenantal Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 255.

[51] E.g., "Disability, therefore, is either willed or allowed by God, not as part of the original good plan of creation but rather as the punishment for sinful deeds: disabilities are necessary evils" (D. DeVries, "Creation, Handicappism, and the Community of Differing Abilities," in *Reconstructing Christian Theology* [ed. R.S. Chopp and M.L. Taylor; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994], 135; D.W. Anderson, *Toward a Theology of Special Education: Integrating Faith and Practice* (Bloomington: WestBow Press, 2012), 46; M.S. Beates and A. Vacca, "Retelling the Old, Old Story: Sharing the Gospel with those Living with Intellectual Disability" *CRJ* 37.2 (2014) n.p. Cited 4 November 2014. Online: http://www.equip.org/articles/retelling-old-old-story-sharing-gospel-living-intellectual-disability/# christian-books-2; cf. P.T. Jersild, *Spirit Ethics: Scripture and the Moral Life* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 2000), 166.

For many contributors to disability studies, this interpretation is problematic. Not only does it suggest that people with disability carry or represent more of the sinful and 'fallen' world than their nondisabled counterparts, but it also assumes that as they are, the bodies of those with disability are unacceptable. In his critique of the Levitical purity system, David T. Mitchell suggests that inherent in this system and its desire for priests and offerings without blemish, is the presupposition that those with physical aberrations of any kind (including disability) are representative of the 'Fall.' He goes on to say that

> While the New Testament seemingly breaks with this belief in disability as a sign of individual pollution, the healing of cripples still adheres to a desire for eradication – the temples are opened up by Jesus but only after the blemish has been miraculously removed...the emphasis in either case highlights not the integral nature of disability to embodied life but, rather, the moral imperative behind their social integration.[52]

Other contributors to disability studies find it problematic that people with disability are portrayed merely to accentuate Jesus' ability to heal. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder in their work *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*[53] suggest that disability regularly serves as a prop, or indeed, a crutch, in western literary culture. In this respect, people with disability are over-represented in literary accounts and yet still invisible characters without agency. Mitchell and Snyder suggest that this is because people with disability are merely present in the literary narratives for their "representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight."[54] Rebecca Raphael suggests that this same narrative prosthesis is also represented in the biblical material.[55]

However, for many writing in the field of disability studies, it is the apparent connection between sin and disability that is most problematic. Numerous writers of disability studies accuse the Bible of promoting negative representations of disability especially in those cases where disability is described as a consequence of personal or corporate sin against

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[52] Foreword in *A History of Disability* by H.-J. Stiker (trans. W. Sayers; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), x.

[53] Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000.

[54] Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 49.

[55] *Biblical Corpora: Representations of Disability in Hebrew Biblical Literature* (LHBOTS 445; New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 53. While Raphael's work addresses only the Hebrew Bible, this same principle has been applied by others to the healing accounts of the gospels (e.g., N.K. Houghtby-Haddon, *Changed Imagination, Changed Obedience: Social Imagination and the Bent-Over Woman in the Gospel of Luke* [Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011], 103).

God.[56] For many, the alleged association between sin and disability is seen as contributing substantially to the marginalisation and rejection of people with disability in broader society.[57] F. Rachel Magdalene notes on this issue

> The theological idea that human disability, disease, and disaster stem from human sin is very ancient and continues to hold sway in some theological circles. This concept has contributed to the terrible abuse or total neglect of persons with disabilities and chronic illness in religious settings. Such theology remains highly problematic to those who experience disability, illness, or any kind of trauma, whether or not the subject defines himself or herself as a religious person, because of the predominance of such a theology.[58]

For many of the earliest scholars addressing the intersection of disability and biblical studies, attempts were made to try and 'redeem' any apparently negative representations of disability throughout the biblical material, including the healing narratives in the gospels. Indeed, this approach has been labelled by some scholars as the redemptionist approach.[59] Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper suggest in their edited work on disability and biblical studies that this redemptionist approach "is part of a larger tradition that has emerged in other liberationist approaches to scriptures from marginalized minorities and feminist critics."[60] Hector Avalos cites as an example an article by Kerry H. Wynn on the two major healing accounts in the gospel of John.[61] Though the particular views of Avalos and Wynn will both be addressed in more detail in chapter seven, it is worth noting here that Avalos is critical of Wynn's suggestion that "sin in the Johannine healing narratives is not a cause of disability" and that "faith is not a prerequisite to healing."[62] Darla Schumm and Michael Stoltzfus also suggest that in addition to attempting to redeem any negative examples of disability the redemptionist approach also

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[56] H. Weinberg and C. Sebian, "The Bible and Disability," *Rehab Couns Bull* 23 (1980): 273; H.-J. Stiker, *A History of Disability* (trans. W. Sayers; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 1-5; S. French and J. Swain, "There But for Fortune," in *Disability on Equal Terms* (ed. J. Swain and S. French; London: Sage, 2008), 8.

[57] Stiker, *History of Disability*, 1-5; W. Wolfensberger, "An Attempt Toward a Theology of Social Integration of Devalued/Handicapped People," *Information Service* 8 (1979): 12-26.

[58] F.R. Magdalene, "The ANE Legal Origins of Impairment as Theological Disability and the Book of Job," *PRSt* 34 (2007): 23.

[59] E.g., H. Avalos, "Redemptionism, Rejectionism, and Historicism as Emerging Approaches in Disability Studies," *PRSt* 34 (2007): 92.

[60] "Introduction," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities* (ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; SS 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 4.

[61] "Johannine Healings and the Otherness of Disability," *PRSt* 34.1 (2007): 61-76.

[62] Wynn, "Johannine Healings," 74; Avalos, "Redemptionism," 92.

aims at "'rescuing' the text from modern interpretations that gloss over, ignore, or misrepresent positive depictions of disability."[63]

Avalos, among others, is critical of this method of biblical studies. The primary reason for Avalos' criticism is a reluctance to use the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, or indeed any historical document, to speak into the modern situation of the reader.[64] Avalos adds that conclusions from this approach ultimately "reflect the ethical struggle that results when sacred texts are used to authorize certain views of disability."[65] However, Avalos does concede that this method is still "relevant" for those who "have an interest in applying the Bible's understanding of life to their own lives."[66] Indeed, for those scholars attempting such an approach, such as Amos Yong, this is precisely their goal: to interpret the biblical references to disability in a way that is meaningful and illuminating for those affected by disability in faith communities today.[67]

Avalos proposes a second method of interpreting the references to disability in the biblical material: that which he refers to as the rejectionist approach. Here he notes that the rejectionist position, to which he aligns his own methodology,[68] is based on the belief that "the Bible has negative portrayals of disability that should be rejected in modern society."[69] Indeed, Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper, in their edited work on disability and biblical studies, note a "variant of the rejectionist approach" which they refer to as the 'post-scripturalist approach' which argues that "we should not use any ancient text at all, whether it has positive or negative portrayals of disability, to provide normative values today."[70]

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[63] "Sacred Texts, Historical Tradition, and Disability" in *Disability in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions, and Social Analysis* (ed. D. Schumm and M. Stotlzfus; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 2.

[64] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 100.

[65] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 100.

[66] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 99.

[67] E.g., the works of Amos Yong, for example, which include *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007); *The Bible, Disability and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). For example, Yong is critical of the edited work of Moss and Schipper as he suggests that a purely historical assessment of the biblical material fails to engage with texts which are intrinsically linked to various faith communities (e.g., review of C.R. Moss and J. Schipper, *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*, *H-Disability/H-New Reviews* (February 2012), n.p. [cited 17 November 2014]. Online: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3503.

[68] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 100.

[69] Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper "Introduction," 4-5.

[70] Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper "Introduction," 5.

By contrast, theologian Amos Yong states that he "reject(s) the 'rejectionist' approach" which he says attempts to "blame the Bible for the plight of people with disabilities."[71] For Yong, the issue is not with the biblical texts themselves but the way in which these texts have been interpreted which has resulted in the marginalisation and stigmatisation of people with disability throughout Christian history. Yong notes regarding his 2011 work, *The Bible, Disability and the Church: A New Vision for the People of God*, that

> What this book provides is an honest discussion on the many texts that have been read as stigmatizing disabilities so that we can become more aware of how our biases and discriminatory attitudes have been historically justified, and how these prejudices remain, to this day, based both implicitly and explicitly on such misconstruals of the Bible…The task before us, then, is to apply a hermeneutics of suspicion not necessarily to the biblical text but to our own traditions of interpretation that have taught us how to read it.[72]

Avalos defines a third approach to disability which he refers to as the historicist approach. This approach, Avalos suggests, is one that assesses disability in the biblical material and other religious texts purely for historical purposes without any attempt to develop a modern application.[73] Jeremy Schipper, for example, in his work on disability in the book of Isaiah, notes that disability studies in the biblical material is not about advocating for equality for people with disability but it is simply about understanding better the normative ideals of the ancient Israelites.[74] Interestingly, while Avalos is critical of the redemptionist approach for attempting to seek meaning from the texts for the modern reader, Avalos also notes that the historical method – the approach that *does not* seek to have any such modern application – faces "the greatest challenge in terms of relevance."[75] He questions the relevance of historicist approaches and suggests that scholars attempting this kind of historical assessment might consider indicating "the sort of applications any historical lessons have for us."[76]

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[71] *Bible, Disability*, 7 n. 2.

[72] *Bible, Disability*, 8. Yong suggests he is presenting a more enlightened redemptionist position which he refers to as a "disability hermeneutic" in which he tries to "distinguish what the Bible says (regarding disability) from how the Bible has been received (on this subject)," 12-13.

[73] Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper, "Introduction," 5; cf. Avalos, "Redemptionism," 96.

[74] *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant* (Biblical Refigurations; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). It is worth noting that numerous disability advocates disagree with this approach, suggesting that disability studies as a field of enquiry began in order to assist people with disability in their fight for full equality (cf. Goodley, *Disability Studies*, 2).

[75] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 100.

[76] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 100.

While these categories have been taken up by other scholars addressing the intersection of disability and biblical studies,[77] we are wary of Avalos' proposed framework. While we can concede that this may be a summary of research to date, it does not need to continue to define future studies in this area. We must accept that while there are seemingly negative representations of disability in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that Yong is likewise correct in suggesting that poor interpretation of these texts has compounded the stigmatisation and marginalisation of people with disability.[78] He suggests that while "normate"[79] interpretations of the biblical texts on disability are still dominant, the resources for overcoming such prejudices are present within the biblical tradition and can thus be "retrieved and reappropriated through the use of a disability-friendly hermeneutic."[80]

What then is the aim of disability studies in relation to the biblical texts? As with using disability as a lens in other academic disciplines, integrating disability and biblical studies relies on using the already existing conventions of biblical scholarship, "including methods of argumentation, standards for acceptable evidence, citations of primary texts in their original languages and relevant secondary scholarship familiar to other scholars trained in biblical studies."[81] The intersection of disability and biblical studies is more than simply assessing isolated incidences of people with disability in the Hebrew Bible or New Testament but looking more broadly at the way that disability is woven through the biblical texts and thus becomes interwoven with other biblical categories.[82] Indeed, Deborah Creamer suggests that without addressing the issue of disability it is impossible to address

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[77] E.g., J. Gillibrand, *Disabled Church – Disabled Society: The Implications of Autism for Philosophy, Theology and Politics* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2010), 105-106; Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 9; J. Metzger, "Disability and the Marginalisation of God in the Parable of the Snubbed Host (Luke 14:15-24)," *BCT* 6.2 (2010): 23.2; D. Mitchell and S. Snyder, "'Jesus thrown everything off Balance': Disability and Redemption in Biblical Literature," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* (ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; SS 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 173-184; Schumm and Stoltfus, "Sacred Texts," 1-3; L.S.C.A. Thompson, "Rising Above a Crippling Hermeneutic," (PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2014), 7-9.

[78] A. Yong, review of H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper, *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies, J Religion Disabil Health* 14.1 (2010): 92.

[79] The term "normate" was coined by Rosemarie Garland Thomson in referring to "the constructed identity of those who, by way of the bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of authority and wield the power it grants them" (*Extraordinary Bodies*, 8). That is to say, that the able-bodied, those who are considered "normal," become the measuring-stick by which all other bodies, especially those considered deviant and/or impaired, are judged.

[80] A. Yong, review of H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper, 92.

[81] Moss and Schipper, "Introduction," 4.

[82] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 2.

the issue of embodiment in general.[83] To address the body one must pursue all manifestations of the body including the body rejected, 'deviant,' and/or 'disabled.'

Moss and Schipper suggest that the purpose of disability and biblical studies is not about attempting to "reconstruct the lived experience of people with disabilities in antiquity" as this is almost impossible from the limited information we have regarding disability in the biblical material.[84] However, Moss and Schipper also note that thinking concertedly about disability in the context of biblical studies does "increase our understanding of how these texts both reflect and reinforce ancient cultural ideas about identity and social organization."[85] In their article "Disability Studies and the Bible," Nyasha Junior and Jeremy Schipper suggest that "even in texts that do not deal with disability explicitly, the critical study of disability may help us to understand better the cultural expectations for human normalcy reflected in biblical literature."[86]

At the same time, it is also worth considering the benefits of disability studies in further research in the biblical texts. Including biblical studies as part of the wider study of disability is important due to the large number of works in the academic field of disability studies which consider the Bible as the origin of discrimination towards people with disability.[87] Moss and Schipper note that disability scholars have been unilateral in their use of the biblical material to describe negative views of disability and recommend that in order to truly use the Bible for any sort of critical study of disability then the literary, cultural, and religious variations between each of the books of the Bible must be taken into consideration.[88]

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[83] *Disability and Christian Theology*, 4.

[84] "Introduction," 6.

[85] "Introduction," 6.

[86] "Disability Studies and the Bible," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and their Applications* (ed. S.L. McKenzie and J. Kaltner; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2013), 33.

[87] N.L. Jacobs, review of C.R. Moss and J. Schipper, *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* notes that "the Bible has played and continues to play a significant role in the shaping of western concepts of disability, as a social and cultural artefact" (*Disabil Soc* 28.2 [2013]: 290).

[88] E.g., "for the Hebrews (disability) was a sign of imperfection that was incompatible with the sacred, and in early Christianity, the ambivalence of disability was one that needed healing because it was the result of sin" (P. Devlieger, F. Rusch, and D. Pfeiffer, "Rethinking Disability as Same and Different! Towards a Cultural Model of Disability," in *Rethinking Disability: The Emergence of New Definitions, Concepts and Communities* [ed. P. Devlieger, F. Rusch, and D. Pfeiffer; Antwerp: Garant, 2003], 11).

In the final section of this chapter, we will propose a distinctive methodology that, it is hoped, will bring traditional disability studies into a more helpful dialogue with the biblical texts. It is hoped that this methodology will continue the work already begun in plotting a new way for biblical scholars, trained within their own hermeneutical and methodological context and tradition, to handle the evidence more appropriately in light of the many issues raised by disability studies outlined above. But first, it is worth summarising the current scholarship on the overlap between disability and biblical studies.

§ 1.4 Literature Review

As noted above, for much of the twentieth century, biblical scholars did not consider disability a worthy topic for in-depth investigation. While a small number of popular texts existed, any investigations of disability were usually limited to the lived experiences of people with disability in faith communities,[89] disability and pastoral care,[90] or other practical work with people with disability in faith communities.[91] When biblical references to disability first began to be investigated, the works were primarily theological in nature. Of particular note is the work of Nancy Eiesland, especially *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability.* The foundation for Eiesland's work was the belief that religious studies of disability in the Christian tradition had thus far represented disability as either one of two extremes: either it was an expression of God's blessing or God's damnation.[92] For Eiesland, such a binary assessment of the 'disabled' body failed to engage with the real-life experiences of people with disability.[93] This dichotomous view, Eiesland suggested, also furthered the belief that the life of a person with disability was wholly

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[89] K. Deyer Bolduc, *His Name is Joel: Searching for God in a Son's Disability* (Louisville: Bridge Resources, 1999); J. Eareckson-Tada, *Joni: An Unforgettable Story* (25th Anniversary Edition; Sydney: Strand Publishing, 2001).

[90] L.G. Colston, *Pastoral Care with Handicapped Persons* (Creative Pastoral Care and Counselling Series; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); J. van Dongen-Garrad, *Invisible Barriers: Pastoral Care of Physically Disabled People* (London: SPCK, 1983).

[91] E. Foley (ed.), *Developmental Disabilities and Sacramental Access: New Paradigms for Sacramental Encounters* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994); S. Govig, *Strong at the Broken Places: Persons with Disabilities and the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989); J. Mitchell-Innes, *God's Special People: Ministry with the 'Handicapped'* (Grove Pastoral Series 62; Nottingham: Grove Books, 1995); G. Okhuijsen, and C. van Opzeeland, *In Heaven There are no Thunderstorms: Celebrating the Liturgy with Developmentally Disabled People* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992); B. Webb-Mitchell, *Unexpected Guests at God's Banquet: Welcoming People with Disabilities into the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

[92] Eiesland, *Disabled God*, 70-71.

[93] Eiesland, *Disabled God*, 70-71.

'other' not only to the rest of humanity but also to God.[94] However, for Eiesland, the image of God who is expressed in the broken and indeed 'disabled' form of the crucified Christ removes this sense of 'otherness' instead revealing God not as an "omnipotent, self-sufficient God" but as one who continually carries the deformities of the crucifixion upon his body.[95] In this sense, Eiesland proposes that the image of the "disabled God" shows divinity as well as humanity as "fully compatible with experiences of disability."[96]

In 1998, Eiesland also co-edited a second work on disability with Donald E. Saliers entitled *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*.[97] The motivation for the volume was an attempt to answer the question "What implications are or ought to be raised by the full participation of people with disabilities in the life of the Christian church?"[98] This work is diverse in its content including both "theological reflection" as well as "practical theology" and including one section dedicated to "biblical interpretation" which features a number of exegetical reinterpretations of significant biblical passages regarding disability.[99] Other theological works on disability that have been influential include Deborah Beth Creamer's *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities*[100] and the works of Amos Yong noted above.[101]

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[94] On disability as a form of 'otherness,' see J. Clapton and J. Fitzgerald, "The History of Disability: A History of Otherness," *New Renaissance Magazine* 7 (1997): n.p. [cited 14 March 2014]. Online: http://www.ru.org/human-rights/the-history-of-disability-a-history-of-otherness.html; D.V. Edelman, "Introduction," in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period* (ed. E. ben Zvi and D.V. Edelman; LHBOTS 591; Bloomsbury: London, 2014), xiii-xx.

[95] N.L. Eiesland, "Encountering the Disabled God," *The Other Side* 38.5 (2002): 13; Kudlick, "Disability History," 31-32.

[96] D.B. Creamer, "Theological Accessibility: The Contribution of Disability," *DSQ* 26.4 (2006): n.p. [cited 10 November 2014]. Online: http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/812/987.

[97] Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

[98] N.L. Eiesland and D.E. Saliers, "Preface," in *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice* (ed. N.L. Eiesland and D.E. Saliers; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 16.

[99] This section on biblical interpretation contains four articles: H. Avalos, "Disability and Liturgy in Ancient and Modern Religious Traditions," 35-54; S.J. Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult: The Priestly Rationale for Exclusion," 55-71; C.C. Grant, "Reinterpreting the Healing Narratives," 72-87; S. Horne, "'Those Who Are Blind See': Some New Testament uses of Impairment, Inability and Paradox," 88-101.

[100] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

[101] See § 1.3. In addition, see S.V. Betcher, *Politics and the Spirit of Disablement* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); L.H. Merrick (ed.), *And Show Steadfast Love: A Theological Look at Grace, Hospitality, Disabilities and the Church* (Kentucky: Presbyterian Publishing, 1993); D.A. Pailin, *A Gentle Touch: From a Theology of Handicap to a Theology of Human Being* (London: SPCK, 1992); H.S. Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship: Profound Disability, Theological Anthropology, and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, *passim*.

A second area of study that has grown exponentially are those works combining a biblical studies/theological approach with practical information to assist churches and individuals with the inclusion of people with disability in faith communities. One of the earliest works of this kind is Roy McCloughry and Wayne Morris' 2002 work *Making a World of Difference: Christian Reflections on Disability*.[102] This particular style, combining biblical studies, theology, and ministry guidance, has proven popular and continues to produce numerous such works written at the popular level.[103]

There has also been a developing area of biblical scholarship addressing the issue of disability. In general, there have been a far greater number of works addressing disability in the Hebrew Bible than those focusing on the New Testament material. Judith Abrams' work *Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli*[104] was the earliest work produced specifically addressing disability in the Jewish literary forms. Abrams' investigation is an "historical, literary and anthropological survey" of disability through the Jewish corpus.[105] The greater portion of this book, however, is dedicated to an extensive coverage of the rabbinic purity regulations[106] as well as the rabbinic categorisation of people with disability and the implications of halakhic observance for people with disability[107] rather than a detailed sketch of disability in the Hebrew Bible. This is likewise the case with Tzvi Marx's work *Disability in Jewish Law*.[108]

More recent publications have grappled more closely with the text of the Hebrew Bible. Jeremy Schipper, in his 2006 work *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David Story*,[109] focuses primarily on the account of Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel, but Schipper argues that disability is employed throughout the Hebrew Bible as

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[102] London: SPCK, 2002.

[103] Other works along these lines include D.W. Anderson, *Reaching Out and Bringing In: Ministry To and With Persons with Disabilities* (Bloomington: WestBow Press, 2013); M.S. Beates, *Disability and the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); Gillibrand, *Disabled Church, passim*.

[104] J.Z. Abrams, *Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli* (Washington: Gallaudet, 1998).

[105] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, ix.

[106] *Judaism and Disability*, 16-70.

[107] *Judaism and Disability*, 123-197.

[108] T.C. Marx, *Disability in Jewish Law* (vol. 3 of *Jewish Law in Context*; ed. N.S. Hecht. London: Routledge, 2002).

[109] New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

one of many tropes used to describe and interpret Israelite national identity.[110] Schipper's 2011 work *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*[111] specifically addresses the imagery of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 and will be explored in more detail in chapter four (§ 4.3).

The first works solely dedicated to disability across the breadth of the Hebrew Bible both appeared in 2008 with Saul M. Olyan's *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*[112] along with Rebecca Raphael's *Biblical Corpora: Representations of Disability in Hebrew Biblical Literature.*[113] Olyan notes his work focuses on the "textual representation of disability in several ancient corpora" rather than attempting a study of "disabled individuals or groups from Israelite and Jewish antiquity."[114] This is because it is difficult, indeed almost impossible, to reconstruct the day-to-day experiences of people living with disability in the ancient world, let alone recognise any particular regional, ethic, or cultural variations which would have influenced these experiences.[115] As with Schipper's work before him, Olyan suggests that disability serves as a literary trope in the Hebrew Bible and is used as a means of realising and communicating "patterns of social inequality."[116] In a similar way, Raphael's work assesses the way in which disability is used as a literary device throughout the Hebrew Bible. She describes her work as attempting to "examine the systematic ways that the Hebrew Bible represents disability and relates disability to its other concepts."[117] Yael Avrahami's 2012 work *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible* has also been used extensively throughout chapter four. While Avrahami's work does not specifically addresses the issue of disability, her discussions of the senses in the Hebrew Bible have some important implications for disability studies. As a consequence, this book forms an important basis for the work done in chapter four on disability in the Hebrew Bible.

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[110] Cf. Moss and Schipper, "Introduction," 5.
[111] Biblical Refigurations; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
[112] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
[113] Assessing the issue of embodiment in general including the issue of the deviant/disabled body is the 2010 edited work of Kamionkowski and Kim (eds.), *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology*, *passim.*
[114] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 3.
[115] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 4.
[116] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 3.
[117] *Biblical Corpora*, 1.

An additional work addressing otherness in the Hebrew Bible has also contributed to the literature on disability, that is, Ehud ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman's edited work *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*.[118] A number of other works have also addressed disability issues in the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls including Johanna H.W. Dorman's 2007 publication *The Blemished Body: Deformity and Disability in the Qumran Scrolls.*[119]

Works specifically addressing disability in the New Testament material are far fewer in number. The most notable work in this respect is Louise Lawrence's 2013 publication *Sense and Stigma in the Gospels: Depictions of Sensory-Disabled Characters*. Lawrence's work critiques the traditional interpretations of the healing accounts in the New Testament gospels. Lawrence describes traditional interpretive methods of gospel interpretation as "ableist"[120] and thus working only to reinforce the belief that the "sensory-disabled" characters are present only to reinforce the message of Jesus as healer.[121] Lawrence's aim is to re-think this traditional approach and instead re-frame the healing stories in order to highlight the personhood of those with sensory disabilities in the gospels.[122] Lawrence's work is multidisciplinary in its approach utilising both disability and biblical studies as well as cultural anthropology and various ethnographic studies.[123] Likewise employing

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[118] LHBOTS 591; Bloomsbury Publishing: London, 2014. It is also worth noting the work of Saul M. Olyan which addresses various forms of social inequality in the HB. Olyan addresses multiple categories of social categorisation including a section on disability (*Social Inequality in the World of the Text: The Significance of Ritual and Social Distinctions in the Hebrew Bible* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011]).

[119] Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit, 2007. See also Dorman, "The Other Others: A Qumran Perspective on Disability" in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple* (LHBOTS 591; ed. E. ben Zvi and D.V. Edelman; Bloomsbury: London, 2014). Other articles addressing disability in the DSS include A. Shemesh, "'The Holy Angels are in their Council': The Exclusion of Deformed Persons from Holy Places in Qumranic and Rabbinic Literature," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 4 (1997): 179-206; K.H. Wynn, "The Invisibility of Disability at Qumran," AAR Annual Meeting, 20 November, 2000. n.p. Cited 11 December 2002. Online: <http://www6.semo.edu/lec/wynn/qumran.html>; C. Wassen, "What Do Angels Have against the Blind and the Deaf? Rules of Exclusion in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Common Judaism. Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism* (ed. Wayne O. McCready and Adele Reinhartz; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 115-129.

[120] Ableism refers to the "network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human" (F. Campbell, *Frontiers of Ableism* [Sydney: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009], 19). Discrimination against people with disability or assumptions of able-bodied as the societal norm are also referred to as disableism or generally as a form of social apartheid. For more on this, see P. Harpur, "From Disability to Ability: Changing the Phrasing of the Debate," *Disabil Soc* 27.3 (2012): 325-337.

[121] *Sense and Stigma*, 9.

[122] *Sense and Stigma*, 9.

[123] *Sense and Stigma*, 9.

some of the principles of disability studies is Natalie K. Houghtby-Haddon's 2011 work which addresses the Lukan account of the "bent-over" woman who is healed by Jesus, *Changed Imagination, Changed Obedience: Social Imagination and the Bent-Over Woman in the Gospel of Luke.*[124] Although it remains unpublished, the 1997 doctoral dissertation of Felix N.W. Just, *From Tobit to Bartimaeus, from Qumran to Siloam: The Social Role of Blind People and Attitudes toward the Blind in New Testament Times*[125] is often cited by those addressing the disability in the New Testament.[126] In addition, there have been a number of publications addressing physiognomy and disability in the ancient world. The most notable and relevant for this study is Chad Harstock's *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization.*[127]

A number of edited works have also been published which address disability across both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. The first book to address disability in biblical studies was the edited work of Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*. This volume was born out of papers presented at the healthcare and disability sessions of the Society of Biblical Literature (henceforth, SBL) annual meetings.[128] In the introduction to this volume, the authors note that the publication of this work marked new territory by "integrat(ing) disability studies with biblical studies."[129] Amos Yong described this work as being long overdue as biblical studies was in need of a "sustained critical analysis of and engagement with biblical notions of 'disability'" that had been introduced in Eiesland's edited work.[130] A second edited work, also born out of the SBL healthcare and disability sessions, is Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper's *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature.*[131] The most significant development in this book was a growing number of works addressing disability in various New Testament contexts with the editors noting the disparity between

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[124] Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011.

[125] Ph.D. diss., Yale, 1997.

[126] Just's dissertation is cited in other works on disability and biblical studies (e.g., C. Harstock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization* [Leiden: Brill, 2008], 54; J. Kok, "The Healing of the Blind Man in John," *JECH* 2.2 [2012]: 52 n.76).

[127] Cf. M.C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts*: *The Subversion of Physiognomy in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

[128] These sessions began at SBL in 2004 with the session then titled "Biblical Scholarship and Disabilities."

[129] Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper, "Introduction," 9.

[130] Review of H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper, *This Abled Body*: 91.

[131] New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

research on the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament texts up to that point.[132] A third edited work also originating in the SBL disability and biblical studies sessions is due for publication in 2016, that is, *The Blind, the Deaf, and the Mute: Examining Categories of Disability in the Bible*, edited by Joel Baden, Candida R. Moss, Nicole Kelley, and Laura Zucconi.[133] Also of interest is the section on Christian and Jewish texts in the 2011 edited work of Darla Schumm and Michael J. Stoltfus, *Disability in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions and Social Analysis.*[134]

It is also worth noting the burgeoning number of works addressing disability in the Greco-Roman world. Though these texts rarely include discussions on the New Testament corpus, these works have greatly assisted in a better understanding of the roles and social status of people with disability in the Greco-Roman world.[135] The earliest comprehensive work on disability in Greco-Roman antiquity is Robert Garland's *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World.*[136] Garland's work has become fundamental reading for any historical analysis of disability as well as being recognised as a "hallmark" text of benefit to any study of Greco-Roman antiquity in general.[137] Garland's work was eventually followed by the 2003 work of Martha L. Rose, *The Staff of Oedipus: Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece.*[138] While Garland at times argues that all

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[132] Moss and Schipper, "Introduction," 6.

[133] Semeia Studies. Atlanta: SBL, forthcoming 2016.

[134] New York: Palgrave, 2011.

[135] This will be addressed in detail in chapter three.

[136] London: Duckworth, 1995. It is worth noting the inclusion of the Greco-Roman world in Henri-Jacques Stiker's 1982 work *Corps infirmes et sociétés* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1982). This work has since been published in English as *A History of Disability* (trans. W. Sayers; Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999). In addition, there is also the work of Australian scholar Nicholas Vlahogiannis, *Representations of Disability in the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 1998); cf. N. Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," in *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity* (ed. D. Montserrat; New York: Routledge, 1998), 13-36; N. Vlahogiannis, "Curing Disability," in *Health in Antiquity* (ed. H. King. London: Routledge, 2005), 180-191.

[137] K. Upson-Saia, review of R. Garland, *Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, *BMCR* (2011): n.p. [cited 15 November 2013]. Online: http://bmcr.brynmawr .edu/2011/2011-04-47.html.

[138] M.L. Rose, *The Staff of Oedipus: Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2003). In addition, Rose has also published a series of articles under her maiden name, Martha L. Edwards, which also address the issue of disability in the Greco-Roman literature. These include "The Cultural Context of Deformity in the Ancient Greek World: 'Let There Be a Law That No Deformed Child Shall Be Reared,'" *AHB* 10 (1996): 79-92; "Constructions of Physical Disability in the Ancient Greek World: The Community Concept," in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (ed. D.T. Mitchell and S.L. Snyder; Michigan: University of Michigan, 1997), 35-50; "Deaf and Dumb in Ancient Greece," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (ed. L.H. Davis; New York: Routledge, 1997), 29-51; "Women and Disability in Ancient Greece," *AW* 29 (1998): 3-9.

people with disability in Greco-Roman antiquity would have experienced exclusion and/or marginalisation as a result of their disability,[139] Rose presents an alternative view of people with disability, at least in the Greek world. Rose suggests that disability was ubiquitous in ancient Greece and as such it would not have been unusual to see people with disability employed in various tasks of trade and politics.[140] Rose casts doubt upon the long-standing stereotypes of the ancient Greeks as exposing 'deformed' infants to instead consider the diversity of representations of people with disability across the literature, epigraphy, and artwork of the ancient Greek world.[141] Interestingly, a comprehensive work on disability in the Roman sources only appeared in 2013, ten years after Rose's work on disability in the Greek world. This edited work of Christian Laes, C.F. Goodey, and M. Lynn Rose is entitled *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies* a capite ad calcem.[142] Additional works on disability in the Greco-Roman world will be addressed in more detail in chapter three.[143]

The growing interest in disability in antiquity has resulted in disability issues becoming more frequently represented in general anthologies and encyclopedias of the ancient world. Examples of this include Johannes Stahl's article on "Physically Deformed and Disabled People" in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*,[144] Heike Peckruhn's article on "Disability Studies" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*,[145] and Livio Pestelli's "Disabled Bodies: The (Mis)Representation of the Lame in Antiquity and their Reappearance in Early Christian and Medieval Art" in *Roman Bodies: Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century.*[146]

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[139] E.g., Garland suggests that in general people with disability were considered "expendable and useless" in Greco-Roman antiquity (*Eye of the Beholder*, 29).

[140] *Staff of Oedipus*, 39.

[141] *Staff of Oedipus*, *passim*.

[142] Leiden: Brill, 2013. Note also the 2014 release of another work by Christian Laes, this time in Dutch, also on disability in the Roman Empire: C. Laes, *Beperkt? Gehandicapten in het Romeinse Rijk* (Leuven: Davidfonds Uitgeverij, 2014).

[143] See § 3.2.1.

[144] In *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (ed. M. Peachin; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 715-733.

[145] In *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies* (ed. J. O'Brien; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 101-111.

[146] In *Roman Bodies: Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (ed. A. Hopkins and M. Wyke; London: British School at Rome, 2005), 85-97; cf. B. Holmes, "Marked Bodies: Gender, Race, Class, Age, Disability and Disease," in *A Cultural History of the Human Body. Volume 1: In Antiquity* (ed. D.H. Garrison; Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2010), 159-183; N. Kelley, "The Deformed Child in Ancient Christianity," in *Children in Ancient Christianity* (STAC 58; ed. C.B. Horn and R.R. Phenix; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 199-225; L. Trentin, "Teaching about Disability in the Classics Classroom," in *From Abortion to Pederasty:*

Numerous other works have been influential in the growing area of disability and biblical studies, though few of them address the issue of disability directly. From the fields of anthropology, medical history, and philosophy come a number of works that have helped frame the issues of disability that appear in the biblical material. Most notably are Erving Goffman's *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*,[147] Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, and various works of Michel Foucault including *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*[148] and *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason.*[149] Other works that have been influential regarding the ancient health care systems include Hector Avalos' *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East: The Role of the Temple in Greece, Mesopotamia and Israel*[150] and *Health Care and the Rise of Christianity*,[151] as well as John J. Pilch's *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology.*[152] Although these texts do not specifically address the issue of disability, they do relate other issues pertinent to the study of disability in its ancient context and for this reason are addressed on numerous occasions throughout this dissertation.

At the present time, no secondary work exists that specifically addresses disability in the gospels from a purely biblical studies perspective. As noted, Louise Lawrence's work does address disability in the gospel material, however, Lawrence employs an inter-disciplinary approach incorporating research from various fields of enquiry such as anthropology and comparative religious studies. The reason for this multidisciplinary approach is that Lawrence proposes that by drawing on sensory anthropology and disability studies it is possible to seek new interpretations of characters with sensory disabilities in the gospels. Lawrence's aim is to offer "new and cathartic interpretations which reconfigure the profiles of these flat and often silent characters in fresh and innovative ways."[153] However, while

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Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classic Classroom (ed. N.S. Rabinowitz and F. McHardy; Columbus: Ohio State University, 2014), 53-70.

[147] New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

[148] Trans. A.M. Sheridan; London: Routledge, 1973. Originally published as *Naissance de la clinique; une archéologie du regard médical* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963).

[149] Trans. J. Khalfa; Abingdon: Routledge, 2009. Originally published as *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).

[150] Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.

[151] Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1999; cf. H. Avalos, "Medicine," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. E.M. Meyers; 5 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University, 1997), 3:450-459.

[152] Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.

[153] Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma,* 9.

conceding that characters with disability in the gospels are "flat and often silent,"[154] Lawrence proposes that the "stigma" of disability still resides primarily in the history of interpretation rather than with the descriptions of people with disability in the gospels themselves. In this way, the biblical texts have been subjected to ableist interpretations which have prioritised the senses, particularly the use of sight and hearing, over other methods of engaging with, and responding to, the human experience. While Lawrence's commitment to new interpretations of the biblical narratives is refreshing, Lawrence is apparently critical only of the methods of interpretation of the texts rather than addressing any difficulties of disability representation inherent in the texts themselves.

Apart from Lawrence's work, there has been no other comprehensive studies of disability in the gospel material. While a small number of works have attempted to assess disability across the breadth of the biblical material, these are primarily edited works and are therefore lacking in a systematic investigation of disability in the biblical material. The gospels then only feature as small elements in a larger collection of variegated interpretations of disability across the biblical corpus. In this way, there is still much to be done in grappling with the representations of disability in the New Testament gospels as well as across the full breadth of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. However, it must be said, that disability studies is in its formative stages as an academic discipline and the preceding comments, while critical, are given in the hopes of steering this developing discipline in new directions.

§ 1.5 Purpose and scope of this study

The purpose of the current study is to use disability as a lens through which to view a number of gospel passages which include representations of physical and/or sensory disability.[155] Though these passages have been assessed in depth over generations of New Testament scholarship, they have rarely been brought into dialogue with the implications and concerns that have been raised by recent disability studies. Traditional scholarship has often considered people with physical and sensory disability in the gospels merely as vehicles through which the gospel writers highlight Jesus' ability to heal illness and

[154] Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma,* 9.

[155] The reasons we have limited this investigation only to physical and sensory impairments will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.

impairment. The aim of this study is to put aside ableist scholarship which has relegated impaired figures to the margins of biblical scholarship and to examine these pericopae anew in light of the examples of disability from antiquity. As Moss and Schipper have noted, it is difficult, if not impossible, to recreate the actual lived experiences of people with disability in first-century Palestine via the New Testament texts.[156] However, what we can address is the way in which people with physical and sensory disability are *textually represented* within the epigraphic, medical, and literary sources of the ancient world, as well as specifically in the gospels themselves. These comparative studies can assist us in our interpretation of bodily difference as it is expressed in the New Testament gospels. As Olyan has noted in regards to his work in the Hebrew Bible, such assessments acknowledge the role that "disability must have played...in creating and shaping of social categories and, therefore, social differentiation"[157] in the communities of the biblical authors.

When I first began my research for this dissertation, I was advised by a number of ancient historians and biblical scholars that I was attempting to ask questions of the biblical texts that the texts themselves simply could not answer. Disability, it was suggested, is a modern phenomenon and it is not possible for the biblical texts to speak meaningfully about any aspect of disability. While it is certainly true that there is no word for 'disability' in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin,[158] the mere presence of characters with disability in our sources indicates they have *something* to say about the body in general and about the 'deviant' body in particular. As with other ancient writers, the gospel writers employed the language of physical difference and deviations from the so-called 'norm' as a means of defining social categories. One such example addressed in detail in this dissertation is the parable of the great banquet in chapter 14 of Luke's gospel. Here the gospel writer uses the descriptors of "the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind" (τοὺς πτωχοὺς καὶ ἀναπείρους καὶ τυφλοὺς καὶ χωλοὺς εἰσάγαγε ὧδε; 14:21) as a means of representing and employing known social categories. While the parable of the banquet may not enlighten us regarding the daily life experiences of people with physical and sensory conditions in first-century Palestine, it does allude to prevalent value judgements from antiquity regarding such people; in this example, physical and sensory disability are directly categorised alongside those who are

[156] "Introduction," 6.
[157] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 4.
[158] Issues regarding definitions of disability will be addressed in more detail in chapter two.

financially destitute (πτωχός). As Saul M. Olyan has noted, the categorisation of people who are poor with those who are maimed, blind, or mobility impaired implies that within the cultural, social, and cultic framework within which the biblical author was writing, all of these designations are implicitly linked through a shared set of "devalued characteristics."[159] A disability studies approach to the gospels allows us to ask new questions regarding social categorisation and the value and significance of the body – both 'normal' and 'deviant' as they are presented in the canonical gospels.

More than simply assessing the role and agency of specific figures with disability in the gospels, a disability studies approach to the gospel texts emphasises that disability is used by the ancient authors as "a means of narrating, interpreting, and organising human life in the ancient world."[160] Disability, along with race/ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, is part of the way a society frames its understanding of the body both individually and corporately. Regardless of the absence of an over-arching term for disability, every body, whether deemed able-bodied or 'deviant,' is assigned meaning within the framework of its social, cultural, and religious milieu. The purpose of this study is thus to explore the ways in which the physically- and sensory-impaired body is assigned meaning within the context of the canonical gospels. Rather than a systematic approach to the gospels analysing every reference to physical and/or sensory impairment in the gospels, this study includes three case studies which feature representations of physical and/or sensory disability: that is, the parable of the banquet (Lk. 14:1-24), the woman with a flow of blood (Mk. 5:25-34), and the healing of the impaired man and blind man in the gospel of John (Jn. 5:1-18; Jn. 9:1-41). To date, there is no published work that addresses disability in the gospels from a historical perspective in the way in which it has been done as part of this current investigation.

In contrast with the work of Louise Lawrence on disability in the gospels, this current study focuses solely on an historical assessment of the biblical texts. Throughout the dissertation we draw on a range of epigraphical, archaeological, paleopathological, icongraphical, and literary sources as a means of investigating some of the variegated ways the ancient Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Christian sources represented the physically-

[159] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 35.
[160] Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper, "Introduction," 3-4.

and/or sensory-impaired body. Before investigating the issue of physical and sensory disability any further, however, it is important to set some parameters on what exactly constitutes a physical and/or sensory disability. For this reason, chapter two is dedicated to the issues of definition and the various models used to understand and interpret disability. Using these models as the basis of research into the ancient sources, we then move on to two background chapters which paint with broad brushstrokes some of the ways physical and sensory disability were represented in antiquity. Firstly, chapter three includes an investigation of physical and sensory disability in Greco-Roman antiquity. This chapter addresses the way in which physically and/or sensorially impaired bodies were represented across a broad range of ancient sources including historical texts, mythological texts, and medical works such as the Hippocratic corpus and the works of Galen and Soranus. Physical and sensory disability is also depicted in the epigraphic and votive evidence of Greco-Roman antiquity as well as in its iconography. Some evidence has also been gathered from the area of paleopathology; a field of study analysing human diseases in skeletal remains. Chapter four then features an investigation of physical and sensory disability in the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish texts of the Second Temple period. While we do not possess the same detailed information regarding causes and/or treatment of physical and sensory disability from our Jewish sources, there are still various representations of disability throughout these sources. This chapter then examines the way in which the 'deviant' body is represented in the Hebrew Bible using two separate rubrics based on disability-related language native to the Hebrew Bible. While there is little in the way of paleopathological or iconographical evidence from the Jewish world, there is still an abundance of representations of physical and sensory disability across a range of historical, prophetic, poetic and rabbinic texts. While there are monographs dedicated specifically to disability in the Hebrew Bible, as well as works dedicated both to our Greek and Roman sources, very little work has been done to connect this research with the work of the New Testament gospels.

This formative background information is then built upon to assess the way in which physical and sensory disability are depicted in three selected portions of the New Testament gospels. Chapter five features an assessment of the parable of the banquet in Luke 14:15-24 and the references to "the crippled, the blind and the lame" that are depicted therein. This chapter includes a historical investigation into the role that people with

physical and sensory disability played in ancient banqueting practices suggesting that there is a more literal dimension to the interpretation of this pericope than has been previously considered. Chapter six then assesses the account of the woman with a flow of blood in Mark's gospel (5:25-34). Although the woman with the flow of blood is not generally interpreted as someone with a physical and/or sensory disability, through the investigation included herein, it can be seen that the woman's physical condition, along with the social stigma she experienced in response to this condition, can certainly be interpreted as a form of disability. Thus using some of the tools of disability studies we address the way in which a woman with a "flow of blood" (ῥύσει αἵματος) may have been interpreted in a first-century C.E. context. Finally, chapter seven includes a more traditional exegetical approach to the two major healing accounts that occur in the gospel of John. Both narratives include a person with a long-term, non-urgent physical or sensory disability that is healed by Jesus, at his own instigation, on the Sabbath. Both texts also feature a discussion regarding sin and a disputation with Jesus' opponents. Both texts also feature not only the healing proper but also the healed person's response to it. This chapter addresses these two healing accounts in detail and proposes that the issue of disability represented is more nuanced than previous scholars have given credit.

Finally, in the conclusion we draw together the findings of our investigation into the representations of physical and sensory disability in the gospel material. We contend that the use of disability as a lens through which to assess the New Testament has afforded us the opportunity to assess the gospel material from a new and illuminating perspective. While there are numerous monographs on disability in the Hebrew Bible as well as on disability in the Greco-Roman world, very few works link this historical background with the New Testament material. Our hope is that the current study will assist with bridging this gap and contribute to the growing field of disability and biblical studies.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE LANDSCAPE OF DISABILITY:
THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

§ 3.1 Introduction

In order to assess the representations of disability that appear in the New Testament gospels, we must first provide some context for this investigation. Although the gospels have long been considered a product of their Jewish heritage, it is only more recently that scholarship has taken an interest in the wider social, political, religious, and economic context of the gospel material.[1] The Greco-Roman systems of trade, culture, and politics are being cited more often by scholars of the New Testament for their direct influence on the content and style of the gospel accounts. For this reason, if we are to assess the representations of disability in the canonical gospels, it is first beneficial to explore some of the varied ways disability is represented in the wider Greco-Roman context.

In this chapter, we will examine some of the ways that disability is represented in a range of Greek and Roman sources. Included in this examination are representations of disability in various literary, medical, epigraphical, and iconographical sources.[2] Although the diversity of sources, not to mention, the broad historical period being covered, poses a number of challenges, such an examination allows us to explore some of the variegated ways people with physical and sensory disability were depicted in the Greco-Roman world. Although other scholars addressing disability have focused their attentions on the everyday experiences of people with disability in the ancient world,[3] this chapter focuses instead on the way in which people with physical and sensory disability are *represented* in these

[1] While there has been a history in biblical scholarships of attempting to differentiate between the "Jewish" and "Hellenistic" influences in early Christianity, more recent readings are far more nuanced suggesting these two fields of influence are harder to differentiate than has been previously suggested. Wayne A. Meeks, for example, proposes that rather than an opponent to Hellenism, "Judaism was in some senses a Hellenistic religion" ("Judaism, Hellenism, and the Birth of Christianity," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*," [ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001], 25). In this way, it is not as easy to differentiate the gospel writers' Hellenistic influences from their Jewish ones. For this reason, it is important to explore a range of literature and artwork that was prevalent and influential in the first century C.E. as a means of expressing the polyvalent nature of first-century Palestine.

[2] On occasion, we have also used evidence from the field of palaeopathology. Paleopathology is the study of diseases and other conditions in ancient human populations as revealed from skeletal and soft tissue remains (e.g., R.T. Steinbock, *Paleopathological diagnosis and interpretation: Bone diseases in ancient human populations* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1976), ix; C. Roberts and K. Manchester, *The Archaeology of Disease* (2nd ed.; New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 9.

[3] E.g., Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*.

sources, especially those sources that have a direct bearing on our understanding and interpretation of the New Testament material. How do the Greco-Roman sources present people with physical and sensory disability? What ways do our ancient sources depict people with disability participating in community roles? How did the cause of someone's disability impact the way they were perceived in society? How much did the appearance of impairment impact the way a person with disability was represented in our ancient sources?

In general, the material covered in this chapter is dated to the Greco-Roman period, approximately, 332 B.C.E. – 360 C.E.[4] However, at times, we will also examine sources that fall outside of this time frame if they have been particularly influential in the Greco-Roman period or if these texts have a direct bearing on our interpretation of the gospels. The designation of "Greco-Roman" has been used in this chapter as a means of referring to the comprehensive melting pot that existed throughout the Mediterranean following Alexander and his successors and the emergence of the Roman hegemony. While we acknowledge that "there certainly were differences in different times and places," however, in general, the mixture of these Greek and Roman cultures was "sufficiently similar across times and places for the culture to count as a single, comprehensive entity."[5] We suggest that this is also true for the issue of disability and its presentation in antiquity. This assessment is by no means exhaustive and we direct the reader to the growing corpus of academic works assessing the intersection of Greco-Roman antiquity and disability studies for more detailed discussions of particular areas.[6]

As for the title of this chapter, we have borrowed the description of a "landscape of disability" from Martha L. Rose's book *The Staff of Oedipus: Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece*[7] as we believe this is particularly helpful in expressing the contribution of

[4] These dates cover the beginning of the early Hellenistic period through to the end of the late Roman period. For a discussion on the influence of Greco-Roman culture on the Galilean Jesus and his followers, see the work of Mark A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS 134; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-42.

[5] T. Engberg-Pederson, "Introduction: Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. T. Engberg-Pederson; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), 2.

[6] See below § 4.2.

[7] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 9-28.

disability to the sensorially-engaged world of Palestine in the first century.[8] Evidence suggests that physical and sensory disability were exceedingly common in Greco-Roman antiquity and so disability would have inevitably been a part of the visual landscape of human diversity. In addition, the phenomenon of disability would also have contributed to the visual aspect of a culture, that by the time of the Empire, found great entertainment and pleasure in the display of people and other works of nature deemed unusual, curious, or portentous. These aspects will be explored throughout this chapter. In this way, this chapter focuses on the way people with physical and sensory impairments are *perceived* and *portrayed* in our ancient sources recognising not only the sensorial nature of the Greco-Roman world but the particular role that some people with impairments played in the overall *spectaculum* of Greco-Roman antiquity.

In this chapter, we will first confront a number of the challenges in interpreting representations of disability in our Greco-Roman sources. In order to situate our discussion of disability, we will then address how a physically- and/or sensory-impaired body would have been perceived and interpreted in relation to the elite ideal of *kalokagathia* and the physiognomic-consciousness upon which this ideal was built. Following this, we will briefly address a number of causes of physical and sensory impairment in the ancient world. While our medical sources contain numerous references to causation for illness and impairments, this examination will only address a small number of causes paying particular attention to cases where causation is an essential element in determining the treatment of a person with an impairment. Next we will examine the options available for the healing of the impaired body, or under some circumstances, its disposal. Finally, we will address the historical shift that took place in the late Republic that saw a growing interest in deviant bodies for amusement and entertainment. Included in this discussion will be a number of artworks reflecting these ideals. This chapter will conclude with some final thoughts on the variegated presentations of these impaired bodies in the Greco-Roman world and the way in which these

[8] On the issue of the senses in the Greco-Roman world, see Shane Butler and Alex Purves (eds.), *Synaesthesia and the Ancient Senses* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013) and Jerry Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome*, see chapter 4 "Common Scents, Common Senses," 123-161. See also the edited works of Mark Bradley (*Smell and the Ancient Senses* [Abingdon: Routledge, 2014]) and Constance Classen (*A Cultural History of the Senses in Antiquity* [6 vols.; London: Bloomsbury Press, 2014]).

assessments can contribute to our understanding of the depictions of disability in the New Testament gospels.

§ 3.2 Source Material

§ 3.2.1 Secondary Sources

As noted above, there are already a number of excellent monographs on the issue of disability in the Greek and/or Roman worlds. Most notable are Martha L. Rose's, *The Staff of Oedipus: Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece*, Robert Garland's, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, and more recently the edited work of Rupert Breitwieser, *Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen/Disability and Impairment in Antiquity*[9] and the edited work of Christian Laes, Martha L. Rose, and Chris Goodey, *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies;* a capite ad calcem. In addition to this, there has been a flood of recent works in English, French, and German also addressing various aspects of disability in antiquity[10] including specific kinds of disability,[11] political and religious leadership,[12] disability and illness in Greek and Roman

[9] SEM 2; BARIS 2359; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012.

[10] E.g., D. Gourevitch, "Un enfant muet de naissance s'exprime par le dessin: à propos d'un cas rapporté par Pline l'Ancien," *Evol Psychiatr* 56.4 (1991): 889-893; Graßl, "Behinderte in der Antike," *passim*; *idem*, "Zur sozialen Position geistig Behinderter im Altertum," in *Soziale Randgruppen und Außenseiter im Altertum* (ed. I. Weiler and H. Graßl; Graz: Leykam, 1988), 107-116; *idem*, "Behinderung und Arbeit," *Eirene* 26 (1989): 49-57; N. Kelley, "Deformity and Disability in Greece and Rome," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* (ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; SS 55; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 31-46; P. Matter, "Der Behinderte in der griechischen Gesellschaft der Antike," *AU* 32.2 (1989): 54-61; A. Mehl, "Behinderte in der antiken griechischen Gesellschaft," in *Behinderte als pädagogische und politische Herausforderung. Historische und systematische Aspekte* (ed. M. Liedtke; Schriftenreihe zum Bayerischen Schulmuseum Ichenhausen; Münich: Bad Heilbrunn, 1996), 119-135; J.N. Neumann, "Die Mißgestalt des Menschen: ihre Deutung im Weltbild von Antike und Frühmittelalter," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 76.2 (1992): 214-231; J. Renger, "Kranke Krüppel Debile: eine Randigruppe im Alten Orient?" in *Außenseiter und Randgruppen: Beiträge zu einer Sozialgeschichte des Alten Orients* (ed. V. Haas; Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1992), 113-126; Stahl, "Physically Deformed and Disabled People," *passim*; Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 13-36.

[11] E.g., C.G. Bien, *Erklärungen zur Entstehung von Mißbildungen im physiologischen und medizinischen Schrifttum der Antike* (Sudhoffs Archiv 38; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997); Dasen, *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece*, *passim*; C.F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability': The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); A. Tatti-Gartziou, "Blindness as Punishment" in *Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion* (ed. M. Christopoulos, E.D. Karakantza, and O. Levaniouk; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), 181-190; L. Trentin, *The Hunchback in Hellenistic and Roman Art* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

[12] E.g., C. Baroin, "Intégrité du corps, maladie, mutilation et exclusion chez les magistrats et les sénateurs romains," in *Handicaps et sociétés dans l'histoire. l'estropié, l'aveugle et le paralytique de l'Antiquité aux temps modernes* (ed. F. Collard and É. Samama; Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 49-68; *idem*, "Le corps du prêtre romain dans le culte public: début d'une enquête," in *Corps outragés, corps ravagés. regards croisés de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge* (ed. L. Bodiou, V. Mehl, and M. Soria; CSM 21; Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 291-316.

art,[13] including "grotesque" figurines,[14] and paleopathological evidence of illness and disability on skeletal remains from antiquity.[15] While this chapter can by no means address the issue of disability as thoroughly as these works have done, it is our hope this chapter will serve as a bridge between the research being done in the sources of the Greco-Roman world and the references to disability that appear in the New Testament material, in this way better contextualising the portrayals of disability in the gospels. To date, very little work has been done to examine representations of disability in the gospels with the broader use of disability as a social category throughout the Greco-Roman literature. While Nicole Kelley has a chapter on disability in the Greco-Roman world in the edited work on disability and biblical studies *This Abled Body*, in essence this a simply a summary of the work of Rose and Garland up to that time.[16] In addition, while Kelley offers some important insights into disability, this information is not brought into direct dialogue with the biblical material in any way. In this way, this chapter aims to addressing only a few specific areas that will help to assist with illuminating representations of disability that occur in New Testament gospels.

§ 3.2.2 Primary Sources

It has been noted by many of the above scholars that in addition to the difficulties associated with definitions of disability in antiquity we are also faced with a general paucity of available sources regarding disability.[17] Considering how prevalent disability must have been in the Greco-Roman world,[18] this high frequency of disability does not seem to be

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[13] M. Garmaise, *Studies in the Representation of Dwarfs in Hellenistic and Roman Art* (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1996); M.D. Grmek and D. Gourevitch, *Les maladies dans l'art antique* (Penser la médecine; Paris: Fayard, 1998); L. Giuliani, "De Seligen Krüppel: Zur Deutung von Missgestalten in der Hellenistischen Kleinkunst," *AA* (1987): 701-721; T. Lorenz, "Verwachsene und Verkruppelte in der antiken Kunst," in *Soziale Randgruppen und Außenseiter im Altertum* (ed. I. Weiler and H. Graßl; Graz: Leykam, 1988), 349-368; Pestelli, "Disabled Bodies," *passim*; W.E. Stevenson III, *The Pathological Grotesque Representation in Greek and Roman Art* (Ph.D. diss., 1975).

[14] E.g., P. Ballet and V. Jeammet, "Petite Plastique Grands Maux. Les 'Grotesques' en Mediterranée aux Époques Hellénistique et Romaine," in *Corps Ouragés, Corps Ravagés de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge* (ed. L. Bodiou, V. Mehl, and M. Soria; CSM 21; Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 39-82.

[15] E.g., P. Charlier, *Les monstres humains dans l'Antiquité: Analyse paléopathologique* (Paris: Fayard, 2008).

[16] Kelley, "Deformity and Disability," *passim.*

[17] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 1-9; Kelley, "Deformity and Disability," 31.

[18] Saskia Hin suggests that the high rates of infectious disease and the high incidences of general injuries as well as military-related injuries resulted in relatively low life expectancy in the Greco-Roman period (*The Demography of Roman Italy: Population Dynamics in an Ancient Conquest Society 201 BCE-14 CE* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 202). In addition, Hin suggests that in the Roman period people in Roman Italy spent approximately 15%-16.5% of their lifetime in ill health and/or with a "severe disability," as compared to 8% in modern developed countries" (*Demography of Roman Italy*, 202, 267). She

adequately represented in the medical sources of antiquity. This is possibly for a number of reasons. Firstly, according to Plato, the life of a person deemed "constitutionally sick and intemperate" was considered to be "of no use to himself or to others, and that the art of medicine should not be for such nor should they be given treatment even if they were richer than Midas."[19] In addition, the ancient medical sources also suggested those conditions deemed incurable were also not worth the efforts of the physician.[20] It is this focus on the curable that likely accounts for the rare attestations of physical and sensory impairments in our ancient medical sources.[21]

Secondly, as has been noted by other scholars addressing disability in the ancient world, not only are our references to disability limited, but what little we do have is often "anecdotal or idiosyncratic."[22] While this lacuna presents difficulties with attempts to recreate the lived experiences of people with disability in the Greco-Roman world, we are able to use these extant sources to gain insight into some of the ways disability was narrated and interpreted in the ancient world. However, there is a second issue connected with the origins of our ancient sources. It is generally acknowledged that the Greco-Roman world was characterised by a low rate of literacy.[23] While the extant literature from the Greco-Roman period is expansive, it has been argued that it is only reflective of a small portion of the ancient community, that is, the literate elite. As a result, we are relying on these elite sources for information on an issue that was likely not of great interest to them.[24] Even on those occasions where disability is addressed as part of the sphere of experience of the elite author, we cannot assume that the elite person's experience of disability would be identical to those experiencing disability among the non-elite. For example, Pliny the Younger in a letter to Fadius Rufinus describes a man named Domitius

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also notes that it is a characteristic of societies with low life expectancy rates that "ill health and disabilities are spread more evenly over the life course and are as much a concern for young adults as for the old" (*Demography of Roman Italy*, 202).

[19] Plato, *Resp.*, 3.408B (Shorey, LCL).

[20] "As for patients with gout...(they) are all incurable by the human art, as far as I know" (Hippoc., *Prorr.* 2.2.8.1-4 [Potter, LCL]); cf. H. von Staden "Incurability and Hopelessness: The Hippocratic Corpus," in *La Maladie et les maladies la Collection Hippocratique*" (ed. P. Potter, G. Maloney, and J. Desautels; Quebec: Actes du Ve Colloque International Hippocratique, 1990), 110-111.

[21] Cf. Neumann, "Mißgestalt des Menschen," 216.

[22] Kelley, "Deformity and Disability," 31.

[23] E.g., M.W. Gleason, "Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire," in *Life, Death and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (ed. D.S. Potter and D.J. Mattingley; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 67; W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[24] J. Toner, *Rethinking Roman History* (Cambridge: The Oleander Press, 2002), 52.

Tullus who was "crippled and deformed in every limb (*omnibus membris extortus et fractu*)...and could not even turn in bed without assistance."[25] Pliny recalls the "humiliations of his infirmity" (*debilitas*) and Tullus' need to rely on his wife and servants to be fed and cleaned despite all his wealth.[26] Despite the "miserable" (*misero*) image Pliny the Younger conjures for Rufinius, Tullus in the least has wealth enough to employ servants to assist him.[27] One cannot help but wonder how different the experience would have been for a member of the non-elite.

Despite the absence of non-elite voices in our ancient literary sources, it is possible to garner some insights into non-elite presentations and expressions of disability via other means. This is done by addressing other forms of documentary and visual evidence from the ancient world such as epigraphical records, epistolary communications, and representations of disability in Greek terracotta figurines and vases. It is here among the vast quantity of epigraphic and visual material that we find an "independent source of information about the values and preoccupations of non-elites."[28] While these forms are not without their interpretive issues,[29] it is here that we are much more likely to encounter the voice of the "ordinary" non-elite in antiquity.[30]

§ 3.3 Methodological Considerations

In addition to these issues related to the form of our ancient sources themselves, there are also challenges regarding the way we apply the cultural model – or indeed, any modern model of disability – to these sources. Firstly, the ancient world "did not have conveniently constructed definitions of disability, especially classifications that also connoted social status."[31] As a consequence, while there are certainly examples of people with impairments

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[25] *Ep.* 8.18.9 (Radice, LCL).

[26] *Ep.* 8.18.9-10 (Radice, LCL).

[27] *Ep.* 8.18.

[28] M.B. Roller, review of John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Everyday Romans: Visual Representaions and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy 100 BC-AD 315*, BMCR (2005): n.p. [cited 21 Septemer 2011]. Online: http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2005/2005-04-68.html#n5; cf. J.R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Everyday Romans: Visual Representaions and Non-Elite Viwers in Italy 100 BC-AD 315* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans* (London: Profile Books, 2011).

[29] See the forthcoming edited work of Clemente Marconi, *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) esp. T. Hölscher, "Semiotics to Agency," 662-686.

[30] Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, 2-3.

[31] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 15.

that would be classified as disability by modern medical standards, such as vision or hearing impairments, neither the Greeks nor Romans possessed a particular word which encompassed the "medical, social, economic and political connotations"[32] implicit in the modern understanding of "disabled/disability."[33] Although the Greeks used the word ἀδύνατος (unable) to describe some forms of physical impairment, Martha L. Rose suggests that this term is potentially dangerous because it is semantically similar to the word "disabled"[34] but is not parallel in meaning. Rose argues that ἀδύνατος is not employed as a means of describing the overall status of a person as "disabled."[35] She proposes instead that disability in antiquity was "treated as a family and civic issue, in which disability status was defined and negotiated between individuals on a case-by-case basis within a community."[36] This is particularly evident in Lysias' speech 24, *On the Refusal of a Pension*. Here Lysias recalls the plight of a man who had been classed among the "unable" (ἀδύνατος) and subsequently had been receiving a state pension.[37] The letter describes the claims made against the man claiming he no longer met the criteria for the pension because he had been witnessed working, riding horses, and socialising with friends. The debate in Lysias' speech is not whether the man had a genuine impairment – this is not in doubt – but rather, whether the impairment prevented him from fulfilling his socially prescribed roles.[38] This challenge is summarised by Nicholas Vlahogiannis:

> the ancient world did not have conveniently constructed definitions of disability, especially classifications that also connoted social status. Specific terms and a variety of metaphors existed identifying physical conditions, but ancient medical sources did not provide precise taxonomies of diseases and disability to match contemporary medical classifications, only approximations.[39]

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[32] Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Women and Disability," 6.

[33] E.g., Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 16, 20.

[34] *Staff of Oedipus*, 13.

[35] Peter Arzt-Grabner suggests that ἀδύνατος ("unable") only expresses disability (or physical limitation) when it is used in combination with a particular organ ("Behinderungen und Behinderte in den griechischen Papyri" in *Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen/Disability and Impairment in Antiquity* [ed. R. Breitwieser; SEM 2; BARIS 2359; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012], 47).

[36] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 3.

[37] According to Lysias 24, Athens offered a small pension to those war veterans who were ἀδύνατος ("unable"; cf. Plut., *Lives: Sol.* 31.2; Arist., *Ath. pol.* 49.4; *Philochorus* FGrH 328 F 197b).

[38] For more on the Athenian pension, see J. Fischer, "Behinderung und Gesellschaft im klassischen Athen: Bemerkungen zur 24: Rede des Lysias," in *Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen/ Disability and Impairment in Antiquity* (ed. R. Breitwieser; SEM 2; BARIS 2359; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 41-45; Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 35-38; Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 96-98;

[39] "Disabling Bodies," 15.

Despite this, both Greek and Latin had a vast range of words that could be used to describe the phenomenon of physical and sensory impairment. Unlike our modern medicalised terms with their focus on etiology, the terminology applied by the ancient authors is generalised and describes only the "outward appearances or symptoms" of any particular impairment or illness.[40] The kind of terms that are used to describe disability in our ancient sources are generally vague by modern standards with a wide semantic range.[41] None of the vocabulary was specific to disability but rather gained "specific meaning only in the individual contexts in which they were used."[42] Nicole Kelley suggests that this "level of abstraction" is evidenced by the terminology used to describe disability in our extant sources: "'maimed' (πηρός/*mancus*), 'mutilated' (κολοβός/*curtus*), 'ugliness' (αἶσχος/*deformitas*), 'weakness' (ἀσθένεια/ *infirmitas*), and 'lameness in the leg' (χωλός/*tardipes*)."[43] To illustrate the possible semantic range, note Aristotle's use of the word πηρός (deformed). On one occasion, Aristotle uses the term πηρός to describe neonates with supernumerary members as being "deformed" (ἀνάπηρος)[44] while on another occasion he applies this same word to refer to the "deformity" of baldness (πήρωσις).[45]

Robert Garland suggests that despite the absence of an over-arching term for disability, there was "an implicit acknowledgement of the natural kinship that exists between all disabled persons, irrespective of the precise nature of their disability."[46] Martha L. Rose, however, disagrees, arguing that "the Greeks did not perceive a category of physical disability in which people were a priori banned from carrying out certain roles and compartmentalized into others."[47] Rose argues that there is "no indication that people with physical handicaps in the ancient Greek world identified themselves or were identified as a distinct minority group, as is the case today."[48] According to Rose, while people with similar bodily impairments may have been grouped together, for example, the "maimed," there was no bodily devaluation associated with this categorisation.[49]

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[40] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 11.
[41] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 11.
[42] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 12.
[43] Kelley, "Deformity and Disability," 33.
[44] *Gen. an.* 769b.
[45] *Gen. an.* 737a; cf. Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 12.
[46] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 63.
[47] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 2.
[48] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 95.
[49] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 36.

However, there are numerous examples in both our Greek and Roman sources that group together various terms for impairments in such a way as to indicate "they denote a larger conceptual category."[50] The "blind" and the "lame," for example, often appear in our ancient sources linked together in this way.[51] This grouping together of two or more different categories of disability is also used synecdochically throughout our ancient sources to represent a broader category of people with disability and/or those considered to be ill, weak, poor, or vulnerable.[52] In this sense, the implications of such a grouping are wholly negative, presenting people with physical and sensory impairments as participating in a shared experience of social devaluation. Diogenes Laertius records a question asked of the philosopher Diogenes of Sinope as to why people give money to beggars but not to philosophers. Diogenes of Sinope replies "because they think they may one day be lame or blind (ὅτι χωλοὶ μὲν καὶ τυφλοὶ), but never expect that they will one day turn to philosophy."[53] Though no mention is made of the ablebodiedness of the beggars in the question posed to Diogenes Sinope, there is an assumption made in his answer: there is a natural link between the poor – in this case beggars – and people who are "blind" or "lame."[54]

In terms of our impairment-related language, there are some additional challenges. Although we may be able to identify the kind of terminology that was used to describe physical and sensory impairment in the Greco-Roman world, we must still be careful to avoid placing our modern comprehensions of impairment onto the ancient sources. For example, references to persons who are blind (τυφλός) in the New Testament gospels or other Greek sources are not the same as discussions of blindness in the modern world. By modern standards, someone is classified as "blind" or "legally blind" only if "they cannot

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[50] Schipper, *Disability Studies and the HB*, 66. Schipper speaks specifically here about the use of such groupings in the HB, but this can certainly be applied to other ancient sources also.

[51] Linking the "blind" with the "lame" or "deaf" is commonly attested (e.g. Plutarch refers to someone who "has no perception regarding himself" but is a "blind and deaf tenant in his own body" [*De tuenda* 19; Babbitt, LCL]). Plato records the conversations of Socrates and Crito as the former is awaiting execution. As part of Socrates' criticisms of Crito he states "But you preferred neither Lacedaemon nor Crete, which you are always saying are well governed, nor any other of the Greek states, or of the foreign ones, but you went away from this city less than the lame and the blind and the other cripples" (*Crito* 53a [Fowler, LCL]). This will be addressed in more detail in chapter 7

[52] E.g., Olyan, *Social Inequality*, 126.

[53] Diog. Laert. 6.2.56.

[54] In the same passage, Diogenes Laertius states that the word "disabled" ought to be applied not to the deaf or blind, but to those who have no wallet" (Ἀναπήρους ἔλεγεν οὐ τοὺς κωφοὺς καὶ τυφλούς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας πήραν; 6.2.33 [trans. Hicks, LCL]).

see at six metres what someone with 'normal' vision can see at 60 metres or if their field of vision is less than 20 degrees in diameter."[55] Such technical definitions are necessitated in the modern world by medical and political requirements because the technical degree of one's vision impairment impacts a person's ability to hold a driver's licence, claim for disability benefits, request subsidised public transportation and/or subsidised technologies.[56] While an individual in the modern world may be classified as "legally blind," they may still possess some vision and the possibility to discern light and/or shapes.[57] In contrast, Felix N.W. Just, in his work on blindness in the New Testament, contends that the Greek term τυφλός, when used in a literal sense, always connotes "*total* sightlessness, and thus (it) denotes only those people who were considered to be completely blind" in the ancient world.[58] In this sense, the use of τυφλός for blindness in the ancient sources has a far narrower range of meaning than our modern definition of blindness.

In addition to the difficulties with the range of meanings for any Greek or Latin word, there are also issues of the culture itself. While disability scholars agree that disability has

> existed in all societies and at any given historical period...the kinds of disabling restrictions that existed and the experiences of disabled people, both individually and collectively, have varied from society to society and from age to age.[59]

This means a condition we may consider disabling in the modern, Western world may not have attracted stigma or limited a person's social role in the ancient world and vice versa. Indeed, there would have been numerous conditions that in the ancient context would have been understood as 'disability' in the sense there was a physical and/or sensory condition in combination with stigma and a negative social value.[60] However, the conditions considered disabling in the ancient world may or may not possess the same

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[55] Vision Australia, "Blindness and Low Vision," n.p. [cited 11 March 2014]. Online: http://visionaustralia .org/living-with-low-vision/newly-diagnosed/blindness-and-low-vision.

[56] Vision Australia, *Driving with Significant Vision Loss* (Sydney: Vision Australia, 2013), 1-6; Vision Australia, "Mobility Benefits and Entitlements," n.p. [cited 11 March 2014]. Online: http://www .visionaustralia.org/living-with-low-vision/learning-to-live-independently/in-the-community/useful-tips-and-mobility-fact-sheets/mobility-benefits-and-entitlements; Vision Australia, "Equipment Funding Options," n.p. [cited 11 March 2014]. Online: http://www.visionaustralia.org/living-with-low-vision /learning-to-live-independently/using-technology-and-computers/getting-your-hands-on-technology /equipment -funding-options.

[57] J. Sardegna et al., "Legally blind," in *The Encyclopedia of Blindness and Vision Impairment* (ed. J. Sardegna et al.; 2nd ed.; New York: Facts on File, 2002), 137.

[58] "From Tobit to Bartimaeus," 21.

[59] Oliver, *Politics of Disablement*, 17-18.

[60] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 17.

negative valuation in the modern world. Nicholas Vlahogiannis proposes that some examples of this might have included polydactylism (an excess of fingers or toes), left-handedness, old age, obesity, and/or impotence.[61]

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with disability as an indiviudal with "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities" whereby "major life activities" are identified as "caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working."[62] Disability, as far as the ADA is concerned, is an impairment which limits an individual's ability to live autonomously and independently in the modern western world. In contrast, Martha L. Rose suggests that what would have constituted disability in the ancient community would have been much more community oriented. Rose determines that in the ancient world merely having an impairment would not have immediately rendered one 'disabled,' but rather, a person would have been understood as limited or 'disabled' if they were unable to "fulfil the tasks of membership in the community."[63] Rose suggests that "the parameters of physical ability were not inherent in the individual, determined by medically-defined conditions, but rather shifted from one circumstance to the next because they were determined by the ability to carry out one's roles in the community."[64]

What would have been considered disabling would thus shift from person to person depending on factors such as ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status.[65] Rose proposes that someone may have had a physical or sensory impairment but if it did not impinge on one's ability to fulfill their socially prescribed roles then their impairment would have been of little concern in Greco-Roman antiquity. For men, these roles were primarily connected with the fulfillment of civic duties, which included various "religious, military, financial, judicial and political (obligations)."[66] For women, their role was primarily defined by

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[61] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 17.

[62] Department of Justice, "ADA Regulation for Title III," 2004: n.p. [Cited 21 January 2014]. Online: http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/reg3a.html#Anchor-36104. The Australian Disability Discrimination does not have such technical means for assessing those who are considered to have a disability (Australian Government Productivity Commission, *Review of the* Disability Discrimination Act 1992: *Productivity Commission Inquiry Report* [Melbourne: Commonwealth of Australia]).

[63] Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Constructions of Physical Disability," 35.

[64] Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Women and Disability," 4.

[65] Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Women and Disability," 4.

[66] R.K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 53.

marriage and child-bearing[67] as well as participation in the maintenance of the *domus*/οἶκος (household). [68]

In Rose's view, having an impairment did not necessarily result in exclusion or marginalisation from the community. If someone with an impairment was still able to fulfill their social duties then their condition would not have been considered disabling. What Rose does not address in her work is what the consequences would have been for those who were *not able* to fulfill their socially prescribed roles. What was the consequence for those impaired males who could not participate in the military or employment? What was the consequence for women unable to fulfill their domestic roles in the *domus*/οἶκος such as bearing children? While Rose is correct in dismissing long-held stereotypes that presume a physical or sensory impairment was automatically tantamount to marginalisation and discrimination, she neglects to address the life experiences of those with severe impairments who did fail in their social responsibility and did experience stigma as a result.

As well as those who might have been marginalised because of an inability to fulfill their socially prescribed roles there would also have been those limited in their social duties solely on the grounds of stigma. This is evidenced in the legal sources of antiquity which are replete with limitations imposed upon people with various physical and sensory impairments. Nicholas Vlahoginnias indicates that while an Athenian male may not have had his citizenship revoked as a result of physical or sensory impairment, he may have had his "civic rights curtailed."[69] The body was "a functional tool of community production,

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[67] For example, M.L. Edwards [= M.L. Rose], suggests the societal requirement for women in the ancient world were conception and childbearing ("Women and Disability," 3-9). Johannes Stahl states that "infertility in women amounted, for all intents and purposes, to a disability, and was treated as such. Thus, the reportedly first case of divorce in the Roman Republic, initiated by a certain Sp. Carvilius Ruga, was founded on the inability of his wife to provide him with children (Gell., *NA* 4.3.2; 17.21.33)" ("Physically Deformed and Disabled People," 719).

[68] For women in wealthier families, the maintenance of the *domus* consisted of supervision of household affairs and slaves. In the case of poorer families, the women were required to carry out these household tasks themselves. For detailed information about the role of women in antiquity, particularly in relation to the *domus*, employment, citizenship, and social status, see W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968); S. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schoken, 1975) and D.M. Schaps, *Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979).

[69] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 18.

procreation and military survival."[70] Without the physical and/or sensory ability to achieve these standards, there was every possibility that that body would be deemed "useless" (ἄχρηστος). An example of this can be seen in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' description of the general Horatius:

> Thus Horatius, who had shown so great valour upon that occasion, occupied as enviable a position as any Roman who ever lived, but he was rendered useless (ἄχρηστος) by his lameness (πήρωσις) for further services to the state; and because of this misfortune he obtained neither the consulship nor any military command either.[71]

While these issues of terminology, definitions, and available sources would indeed pose difficulties in piecing together the lived experiences of people with disability in the ancient world, these issues are not so problematic for the current study. While there are certainly challenges with addressing disability in our Greco-Roman texts, it will be seen in this chapter that disability is attested frequently enough for us to gain some insight into the meaning and value attributed to the impaired body in the Greco-Roman world.

§ 3.4 The Body in Antiquity

As was noted in the introduction (§ 1.3), the growing interest in the issue of disability in antiquity has arisen alongside a developing interest in the role of the body in itself.[72] As noted there, Halvor Moxnes proposes that "'the body' is not just another topic in addition to a list of topics,"[73] but rather, ideals regarding the body are woven into the fabric of individuals and societies. In this way, bodies

> are never abstract; they are always gendered and always placed. They represent men or women, and they are placed in biological, social and cosmological hierarchies, as well as in spaces that have different characters: domestic, public, ritual and cultic.[74]

To this summary of the encultured and engendered body, we might also add the functionality of the body and its ability to meet or defy any given culture's expectations of

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[70] Vlahogiannis, "Curing Disability," 183.

[71] *Rom. ant.* 5.25.3 (Cary, LCL).

[72] As was noted in chapter one (§ 1.4), one particularly influential work on the body in antiquity is that of anthropologist Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, *passim*. In addition to this, is Douglas' work *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon, 1970). These works are significant not only for their representation of the physical and individual body, but also the body as "a microcosm of society" (Moxnes, "Body, Gender and Social Space," 165). For the assessment of the body in relation to the NT material, see Martin, *Corinthian Body* and Karl Olav Sandnes, *Body and Belly in the Pauline Epistles* (SNTSMS 120; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[73] "Body, Gender and Social Space," 165.

[74] "Body, Gender and Social Space," 165.

'normalcy.' We will here explore some of the ways this somatic functionality was expressed and explored in Greco-Roman antiquity.

§ 3.4.1 *Kalokagathia*

In his work on physiognomy, Ingomar Weiler suggests that for the ancient Greeks somatic normalcy was determined by, but also a reflection of, the ideal of *kalokagathia*;[75] a combination of the virtues of both goodness (ἀγαθός) and beauty (καλός) and signifying both "physical and moral excellence."[76] Weiler notes that the term *kalokagathia* is only rarely attested in the extant Greek sources[77] but that the ideal was very much formative in the rationale of the elite in the ancient world.[78] *Kalokagathia* was the quintessential quality of the gods and thus the elite of humanity were likewise expected to reflect this same beauty and nobility.[79] This was especially the case for those in positions of divine representation such as kings and heroes.[80] While the imagery of *kalokagathia* may be traced to the Iliadic ideals of Homer in the fifth-century B.C.E.,[81] scholars have noted the far-reaching influence of this ideal of beauty and goodness. Weiler suggests that the idea of *kalokagathia* became so firmly "associated with male representatives of the aristocracy, and later with the citizenry"[82] that it became "'the aim of Athenian education down to the Classical period.'"[83] This ideal is attested not only in literary sources[84] but is also visually represented in various forms of art from at least the fifth century B.C.E. onwards. By this

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[75] I. Weiler, "Inverted *Kalokagathia*," *S&A* 23.2 (2002): 11.

[76] St.G. Miller, *Arete: Ancient Writers, Papyri, and Inscriptions on the History and Ideals of Greek Athletics and Games* (2nd ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 216.

[77] Weiler, "Inverted *Kalokagathia*," 11.

[78] John R. Clarke states that an "elite Roman possessed the four prerequisites necessary to belong to the upper strata of society: money, important public appointments, social prestige, and a membership in an *ordo* (the *ordines* are those of senator, Decurion, and equestrian)" (*Art in the Lives*, 4; cf. G. Alföldy, *Social History of Rome* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991], 107-108).

[79] Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 34.

[80] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 16; cf. R. Hawley, "The Dynamics of Beauty in Classical Greece" in *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity* (ed. D. Montserrat; London: Routledge, 1998), 37-54; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 34; I. Weiler, "Zur Physiognomie und Ikonographie behinderter Menschen in der Antike," in *Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen/Disability and Impairment in Antiquity* (ed. R. Breitwieser; SEM 2; BARIS 2359; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 12. Note also Daniel Ogden's study suggesting a link between bastardy and lameness in the Greek sources" (*The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* [London: Duckworth, 1997], 32).

[81] Weiler, "Inverted *Kalokagathia*," 11.

[82] Weiler, "Inverted *Kalokagathia*," 11.

[83] Weiler, "Inverted *Kalokagathia*," 11, including a citation from N. Yalouris, *The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece*: *Ancient Olympia and the Olympic Games* (Athens: Ekdotike Athenaon, 1977), 52-64.

[84] E.g., Plato, *Lys.* 207a.

time, Weiler suggests, both *Kalokagathia* and *Arete* (virtue) were used as personifications in sculpture and on vases.[85]

Brooke Holmes proposes that in this presentation of the ideal human specimen, these discourses both

> require and create a normative subject: free, male, leisured, in the prime of life, healthy and native to the geographical zones whose climates uniquely foster Greekness and Romanness. This normative body, while a statistical rarity, is the yardstick of everyone else."[86]

It is the idealisation of this perfect example of humanity that simultaneously creates a class of 'others' identified by those "qualities that are the inverse of those ideals" so highly prized.[87] While goodness, virtue, and intelligence are the characteristics of the well-proportioned, symmetric, and beautiful, it stands to reason that the opposite is also true: "physical ugliness, human abnormality, deformity, illness and handicap (are likewise) indicative of a corresponding character and mind."[88] Such beliefs are expressed by Aristotle:

> Ill-proportioned men are scoundrels; this applies to the affection and to the female sex. If the ill-proportioned are scoundrels the well-proportioned would naturally be just and courageous. But one must refer the standard of good proportion to the good treatment and good habit of the body, and not merely looking to the male type, as was laid down to start with.[89]

For Aristotle, the non-disabled, proportionate male is the "assumed norm"[90] and the *telos* of humanity.[91] "Any deviation from this 'norm,' either in terms of maleness or the body as

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[85] See R. Foerster, ed., *Scriptores Physiognomonici Graeci et Latini* (vol. 2.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), 238.

[86] Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 161.

[87] Cohen, "Introduction," 6; cf. L.L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 36.

[88] Weiler, "Inverted Kalokagathia," 14; cf. Weiler, "Physiognomie und Ikonographie," 13. In this German text, Weiler includes a composite list of negative physical traits that represent the "antitype to *kalokagathos*" (Weiler, "Physiognomie und Ikonographie," 13; translation mine). Some of the features on this list include "ugly facial features, various physical deformities; bulging, gaping eyes; large, prominent ears; unkempt hair, coarse clothes; comical contortions; curved Negro figure, barbaric features, a hulking barbarian type of head" (Weiler, "Physiognomie und Ikonographie," 13; translation mine). Weiler's list is based on physiognomic traits assessed by a number of scholars including Robert Garland (*Eye of the Beholder*, 46-48), Nikolaus Himmelmann (*Archäologisches zum Problem der griechischen Sklaverei* [Abhandlungen der geistes-und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 13; Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1971], 18, 26-28, 35-38), Leonhard Schumacher (*Sklaverei in der Antike: Alltag und Schicksal der Unfreien* [Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001], 71, 76, 90), Frank M. Snowden (*Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in Greco-Roman Experience* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970], 177-180); Sabine Vogt (*Aristoteles, Physiognomonica* Aristoteles, Werke in deutscher Übersetzung, Band 18,6 [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999], 72, 45-107), and Paul Zanker (*Die Trunkene Alte: Das Lachen der Verhöhnten* [Frankfurt: Fischer, 1989], 24, 65).

[89] Arist., *Physiog.* 814a (Hett, LCL).

[90] Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 164.

[91] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 26.

a whole, was regarded as a deformity or monstrosity."[92] Though the language of *kalokagathia* is one of binary opposites, each of the categories that defined the elite male were not so dichotomous but rather existed on a sliding scale with any number of possible deviations. For Aristotle, while women are the first deviation from somatic normalcy,[93] this "deformity" is "a necessity required by nature" to ensure the continuance of the species.[94] Slaves too, as a form of deviation from the norm, also serve a particular societal function.[95] Other deviations which are considered "contrary to nature" are also possible, however, they serve no societal purpose.[96] It is the very uselessness of those born "contrary to nature" that underpins Aristotle's utopian ideals for the exposure of "deformed" (πεπηρωμένον) infants[97] which will be addressed in more detail below.[98] According to the Aristotelian taxonomy, offspring were ranked in terms of their desirability. Of highest rank was the production of (male) offspring that resembled its father, followed by offspring that resembled its mother, and at the bottom of the scale was offspring with any number of other "deformities" that render it unlike its parents or even other ancestors.[99]

The implications of this ideal of *kalokagathia* and the desirable body have been explored in recent scholarship on gender constructions in the ancient world. While gender is generally considered to be static in the modern world,[100] for the ancient Greeks and Romans, maleness was not merely determined by one's sex (i.e., male or female genitalia), but by the expression of those characteristics culturally aligned with the male sex.[101] In this sense, gender existed on a continuum with masculinity on one end and femininity, or

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[92] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 26; cf. Arist., *Hist. an.* 4966, 507a.

[93] *Gen. an.* 767b.

[94] *Gen. an.* 767b (Peck, LCL).

[95] Arist., *Pol.* 1252a34-b5.

[96] Arist., *Gen. An.* 770b, 772b.

[97] *Pol.* 1335b 19-21 (Rackham LCL).

[98] See § 3.7.1.

[99] For Aristotle, "anyone who does not take after his parents is really in a way a monstrosity (τέρατι), since in these cases nature has in a way strayed from the generic type" (*Gen. an.* 767b, [Peck, LCL]).

[100] Although there is definitely some shifting on this front with the development of queer studies and third gender studies, for example, "Groups whose gender identities and enactments fall outside of socio-cultural norms for women and men are often described by both scholars and the groups' members as constituting a 'third gender' or 'third sex' (L. Zimman and K. Hall, "Language, Embodiment and the 'Third Sex'" in *Language and Identities* [ed. C. Llamas and D. Watt; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010], 166).

[101] The Foucaultian idea that the sexual identities of homosexuality and heterosexuality were absent in Greco-Roman antiquity has had long-reaching consequences in scholarship (Michael Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* [New York: Random House, 1985]). For a summary of this Foucaultian idea of sexuality and the subsequent academic responses, see Brooke Holmes, *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 84-110.

rather, effeminacy, located at the other, with the possibility of 'sliding' in between the two.[102] Certain physical and behavioural characteristics were then associated with the male identity: a hairy chest and full beard, a deep voice, unlike the feminised voices of eunuchs and invalids, as well as control over one's body in terms of motion as well as emotions were all indicators of masculinity.[103] Thus, masculinity was something that must be achieved[104] with the identity-conscious male always alert and on watch to ensure this display of masculinity was not perceived as slipping. Indeed, Craig A. Williams refers to the maintenance of masculinity as a "performance" that can be undone in "one stumble"[105] with the mere accusation of effeminacy endangering "the benefits and privileges associated with the elite male status."[106]

In comparison to the list of qualities connected with masculinity, there was likewise a corresponding list of characteristics associated with effeminacy. Thus, accusations of *not* being a man might include various claims of *effeminatus* ("effeminate") or *muliebris* ("womanish") behaviour. These might include "acting like a woman," walking delicately, talking in a womanish voice, using womanish body gestures, wearing loose womanish, colourful clothing, perfume, curling their hair, and hair removal from the legs and chest.[107] Lack of self-control over bodily desires and the expression of emotions were likewise considered effeminate characteristics[108] as was the fear of death.[109] One certain sign of effeminacy was allowing oneself to become the "passive," penetrated partner in sexual acts.[110]

While the issue of gender may well be the "central axis" in determining the value of the elite male,[111] physical ability and appearance were also significant categories of classification. Even from birth, the ancient medical sources suggested that there were

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[102] Gleason, "Elite Male Identity," 75-76.

[103] Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 164; cf. Holmes, *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy*, 15.

[104] M.W. Gleason, "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century CE," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* [ed. D.M. Halperin, J.J. Winkler, and F.I. Zeitlin; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990], 391).

[105] C.A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 156.

[106] Holmes, *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy*, 113.

[107] Cf. Gleason, *Making Men*, 67-70, 74-76.

[108] Cic., *Fin.* 2.94; Sen., *Ep.* 67.4.

[109] Val. Max., *De cupiditate vitae* 9.13; Val. Max., *De Disciplina Militari* 2.7.9.

[110] Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 15-19, 124-159.

[111] Gleason, *Making Men*, *passim*; Holmes, *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy*, *passim.*

measures that needed to be taken in order to maintain the "esthethic expectations of the upper class."[112] The second century C.E. medical writer Soranus directs midwives on the correct procedures for massaging and swaddling the newborn in order to ensure that the infant "may grow straight and without deformity (ὀρθὰ καὶ ἀστραβῆ)."[113] This, however, must be done with great care according to Galen[114] who says that inaccurate wrapping can cause deformity rather than prevent it.[115] Soranus also notes that it is important to remove the swaddling clothes only once "there is no fear of any of (the infant's) parts being distorted," which may take 40 or 60 days, or possibly even longer.[116] He adds that "in some cases this comes about more quickly because of a better structure of the body while in others it comes about more slowly because of a weaker physique."[117]

Body modification did not cease with infancy but continued through childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. This was done through a combination of diet, measured exercise and sexual relations, and through a maintenance of the body's natural equilibrium. According to the Hippocratics, and reaffirmed in the work of Galen, "health is the result of a proper balance or equilibrium within the body, whereas illness is caused by humoral imbalance."[118] According to the Hippocratic work *The Nature of Man*, and Galen's subsequent commentary, there are four humours that make up the body, that is, phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile.[119] According to this Hippocratic author, "perfect health is said to prevail when these four humors are in equilibrium."[120] In addition, the body also consists of various temperaments (κρᾶσις) that must also be maintained for somatic balance. "*Krasis* is literally the 'mixture' of essential qualities of hot, cold, wet and dry and is related to the balance of the four humors in the body (which have these same qualities) and also to the patient's psychological profile or character (temperament in the modern

[112] Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 27.
[113] Plut., *De lib. educ.* 3 (Babbit, LCL).
[114] I. Johnston, *Galen:* On Symptoms *and* Diseases (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 19.
[115] Galen, *On the Causes of Diseases* VII.2 (trans. Johnston).
[116] 2.19.42 (trans. Temkin).
[117] 2.19.42 (trans. Temkin).
[118] P. Carrick, *Medical Ethics in Antiquity: Philosophical Perspectives on Abortion and Euthanasia* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1985), 28.
[119] Hippoc. *Nat., Hom.* 5. An earlier version exists in the Hippocratic work *On Diseases* where the four humours are described as phlegm, blood, bile, and water (4.35); cf. Galen, *In Hipp. De nat. hom. comm.*, 1 *prooem.* 11: CMG V as cited in J. Jouanna, *Greek Medicine from Hippocrates to Galen: Selected Papers* (SAM 40; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 338.
[120] Carrick, *Medical Ethics*, 29; cf. Hipp., *Morb.* 4.

sense)."[121] While it was believed that the body's temperament shifts in different environs, in various stages of life,[122] and even across different parts of the body,[123] it was also believed that there were marked differences in temperament between men and women. In general, it was the hot, dry temperament that characterised the qualities of the male, associating him with "masculinity, strength and vigor." [124] This is outlined in the Hippocratic text *Regimen 1*:

> The males of all species are warmer and drier, and the females moister and colder, for the following reasons: originally each sex was born in such things and grows thereby, while after birth males use a more rigorous regimen, so that they are well warmed and dried, but females use a regimen that is moister and less strenuous, besides purging the heat out of their bodies every month. [125]

Michael Foucault argues that the medical writings of antiquity, especially those of the first and second centuries C.E., promote the view that the elite male was responsible for the state of his body. Foucault suggests that diet, exercise, and moderated sexual relations all "served as functional devices that would enable individuals to question their own conduct, to watch over and give shape to it, and to shape themselves as ethical subjects."[126] In this sense, it was not merely enough for an infant to be born with the right balance of virtues, but it was the responsibility of the individual to maintain these virtues through adherence to diet, exercise, and other regimes that would ensure the continuance of balance. Deviations in the humors or temperaments could result in any manner of illnesses or impairment. "Sexual excess, for example, might weaken sight and hearing, the sense organs, and cause loss of memory."[127]

Ultimately, the ideal human body was one that free of impairment and disease and one which reflected the *kalokagathia* of the gods. While nature on occasion deviated from this norm, it was this (male) body free from imperfection and perfectly balanced in the humours that showcased the good design of nature.[128] According to Aristotle, the unique design of the human body in terms of its physiology and anatomy made it worthy of its

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[121] S.P. Mattern, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 102.

[122] According to Aristotle, "...old age is cold and dry" (*Long. Brev.* 466a 17-20; Hett, LCL).

[123] Mattern, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing*, 102-103.

[124] Mattern, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing*, 104.

[125] 1.34 (Jones, LCL).

[126] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 13, 15-20.

[127] Vlahogiannis, "Disabling Bodies," 22 referring to the work of Foucault.

[128] See V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2004), 92.

place at the pinnacle of all living creatures.[129] While disease and humoural imbalance would occur during one's lifetime, it was the responsibility of this apex (male) creature to employ a range of methods both prophylactically and subsequent to an illness in order to ensure the preservation and maintenance of this example of creation.

§ 3.4.2 Physiognomy

These principles of *kalokagathia* and the dedication to somatic balance were predicated on the art of physiognomy: "the systematic diagnoses of a man's physical character from his bodily features."[130] In *On Physiognomics*,[131] the Pseudo-Aristotelian[132] author outlines a complete list of physical and behavioural indicators from which physiognomic signs could be read and decoded.[133] The list includes: "movements, shapes and colours, and from habits as appearing in the face, from the growth of hair, from the smoothness of the skin, from voice, from the condition of the flesh, from parts of the body, and from the general character of the body."[134] The extent to which these physiognomic principles informed the ancient constructions of gender and ethnicity has been noted by numerous scholars. What is yet to be done is a detailed study of the way these principles also shaped ancient attitudes towards those with impairments and other physical and sensory deviations. According to the Pseudo-Aristotelian text, "mentality and character correspond to appearance,"[135] especially those parts of the body upon which "there is greatest evidence of intelligence"

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[129] *PA* 2.10.655b37-656a8; 656a10-13; cf. Galen, *UP* 15.4-7.

[130] A.M. Armstrong, "The Methods of the Greek Physiognomists," *G&R* 5.1 (1958): 52. For a more detailed analysis of physiognomy in the ancient world, see T.S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); E.C. Evans, "Physiognomics in the Ancient World," *TAPA* 59.5 (1969): 1-101; M. Popović, *Reading the Human Body: Physiognomics and Astrology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic-Early Roman Period Judaism* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 67; Leiden: Brill, 2007); S. Swain (ed.), *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's* Physiognomy *from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Sabine Vogt, *Aristoteles: Physiognomonica*; *idem*, "The Study of Physiognomy in the Second Century A.D.," *TAPA* 72 (1941): 96-108. In connection with the NT material, see Harstock, *Sight and Blindness*, *passim*; Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts*, *passim*; M.L. Humphries, "The Physiognomy of the Blind: The Johannine Story of the Blind Man," in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (ed. E.A.Castelli and H. Taussig; Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996), 229-243.

[131] The most detailed study of this text is by Sabine Vogt, *Physiognomonica*, *passim*.

[132] The association with Aristotle to the text of *Physiognomonica* "is a relatively late tradition, and the Aristotelian authorship of the text has been doubted since the nineteenth century" (Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 86-87).

[133] A.R. Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation: Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse* (BIS 121; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 34.

[134] *Physiog.* 806a29-34 (Hett, LCL).

[135] Weiler, "Inverted Kalokagathia," 13.

such as "the eyes, forehead, head and face; secondly, the region of the breast and shoulders, and lastly that of the legs and feet; the parts about the belly are of least importance."[136] The reason for the correlation, according to the Pseudo-Aristotelian text, is that the "body and soul interact with each other so that each is mainly responsible for the other's affections."[137] This, the Aristotelian writer notes, is visible in the animal kingdom whereby "no animal has ever existed such that it has the form of one animal and the disposition of another, but the body and soul of the same creature are always such that a given disposition must necessarily follow a given form."[138]

Elizabeth C. Evans has argued that from the time of Homer through until at least the third century C.E. physiognomic descriptions "in epic, history, drama, and fiction, as well as in medical writings, were used by writers to explain the character's actions."[139] The Homeric works feature some of the earliest examples of physiognomic principles at play. First, is the example of the Greek soldier Thersites in *The Iliad.* Thersites is described as

> αἴσχιστος δὲ ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε: φολκὸς ἔην, χωλὸς δ' ἕτερον πόδα: τὼ δέ οἱ ὤμω κυρτὼ ἐπὶ στῆθος συνοχωκότε: αὐτὰρ ὕπερθε φοξὸς ἔην κεφαλήν, ψεδνὴ δ' ἐπενήνοθε λάχνη.
>
> Ugly was he beyond all men who came to Ilios: he was bandy-legged and lame in one foot, and his shoulders were rounded, hunching together over his chest, and above them his head was pointed, and a scant stubble grew on it.[140]

Thersites is described as criticising Agamemnon and questioning the army's participation in the Trojan War. In response, Odysseus rebukes Thersites before the entire assembly and beats him on his back and shoulders with Agamemnon's sceptre. While Thersites buckles over in pain weeping, the rest of the assembly is described as breaking "into a merry laughter at him."[141] Thersites is the antithesis of the Homeric hero; his body is a foil for that of his social and somatic superiors Odysseus and Agamemnon.[142] Homer makes

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[136] Arist., *Physiog.* 814b5-8 (Hett, LCL).
[137] 805a9-10 (Hett, LCL).
[138] 805a11-14 (Hett, LCL).
[139] Parsons, *Body and Character*, 17; cf. Evans, "Physiognomics," 1-101. Dominic Montserrat also suggests that physiognomy influenced the descriptions of slaves used in epigraphic sources, particularly in relation to lost slaves (*Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt* [London: Kegan Paul International, 1996], 56; cf. J.A. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006], 37).
[140] Hom., *Il.* 2.216-220 (Murray, LCL).
[141] Hom., *Il.* 2.264-276 (Murray, LCL).
[142] Cf. Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 43.

this plain in his descriptions of Thersites where there is a direct correlation between Thersites' hideous body and his repugnant character.

The second example is that of Hephaistos in *The Odyssey.* Following Hephaistos' failed marriage with Aphrodite and his capture of her in the arms of her lover Ares, Hephaistos presents the two to Zeus to seek recompense for his betrayal. Instead of retribution, all the Olympian gods roar with laughter when Hephaistos presents the naked couple before the gods, after which, Zeus allows Aphrodite and Ares to go free.[143] Hephaistos expresses his disdain at his misshapen (ἠπεδανός) body which is the antithesis of that of his rival Ares:

> Ζεῦ πάτερ ἠδ' ἄλλοι μάκαρες θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες,δεῦθ', ἵνα ἔργα γελαστὰ καὶ οὐκ ἐπιεικτὰ ἴδησθε, ὡς ἐμὲ χωλὸν ἐόντα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτηαἰὲν ἀτιμάζει, φιλέει δ' ἀίδηλον Ἄρηα, οὕνεχ' ὁ μὲν καλός τε καὶ ἀρτίπος, αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γεἠπεδανὸς γενόμην
>
> 'Father Zeus, and you other blessed gods that are forever, come hither that you may see a matter laughable and unendurable, how Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, scorns me for being lame and loves hateful Ares because he is handsome and strong of limb, whereas I was born misshapen.'[144]

In both examples, the beautiful and strong heroes, Odysseus, Agamemnon, and Ares, are each contrasted with the repulsive and unattractive Thersites and Hephaistos. In both cases, the idealised figures act to bring shame and disgrace upon their misshapen counterparts with the result in both instances being "inextinguishable" laughter and open mockery experienced by both Thersites and Hephaistos.[145] For a physiognomically-conscious audience,[146] the descriptive language in these texts would have been unmissable.

The use of physiognomic language was also a tactic employed in legal or rhetorical engagement as a means of discrediting one's opponent. Indeed, second-century C.E. rhetorician Polemo of Laodicea in his handbook *De Physiognomonica*, suggests the belittling of one's opponents was one of the particular uses of the science of physiognomics.[147] Though Polemo is credited with consolidating the science of physiognomics as a rhetorical art form,[148] examples of such physiognomic critiques of

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[143] 8:343.
[144] 8:306-312 (Murray, LCL).
[145] Cf. Weiler, "Zur Physiognomie und Ikonographie," 14; Graßl, "Behinderung und Arbeit," 57.
[146] Cf. Evans, "Physiognomics," 1-101.
[147] Cf. Evans, "Physiognomics," 12.
[148] Harstock, *Sight and Blindness*, 17.

opponents regularly appear in our sources on oratory.[149] This is apparent in Cicero's recollections of his conflicts with the Roman statesman Vatinius. Cicero is described as openly chastising Vatinius before the magistrate and crowd by drawing attention to Vatinius' visibly noticeable *strumae* (swollen adenoids).[150] Quintilian also comments on the repartee between Vatinius and Cicero noting that

> Another method of making light of a statement is to suggest a reason. Cicero employed this method against Vatinius. The latter was lame (*pedibus aeger*) and, wishing to make it seem that his health was improved, said that he could now walk as much as two miles. "Yes" said Cicero, "for the days are longer."[151]

Again, the aim of Cicero's attacks on Vatinius' were to highlight that his character was as repugnant as his physical appearance. Interestingly, Seneca notes that Vatinius, though "a man born to be a butt for ridicule and hate, was a graceful and witty jester."[152]

Pliny and Juvenal also record the scathing attacks on one L. Valerius Catullus Messalinus who was an unpopular informer during the reign of Emperor Domitian. Pliny and Juvenal's attacks included mentioning that Messalinus had gone blind in his old age, a fact they attribute not to the ageing process but his reprehensible personality. Pliny describes Messalinus by announcing that his "loss of sight had increased his cruel disposition, so that he knew neither fear, shame nor pity."[153] While Juvenal describes him as a "great and remarkable monstrosity even in our age (*grande et conspicuum nostro quoque tempore monstrum*)."[154]

For Pseudo-Aristotle, the connection between one's physical body and personality were so strongly intertwined that he states that a shift in mental character will cause a corresponding change in the presentation of the body. The reverse is also true, notes Aristotle, so that with the alterations to the body there will likewise be a corresponding shift in the characteristics in the mind. Pseudo-Aristotle offers the example of "drunkenness and illness; for it is evident that dispositions are changed considerably by

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[149] Chad Harstock suggests the "widespread use of physiognomics in ancient rhetoric gives witness to the effectiveness with which Polemo and others were able to use physiognomy to empower friends and demonize opponents" (*Sight and Blindness*, 17).

[150] Cic., *Vat.* 4; cf. A. Corbeill, *Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 43-56.

[151] Quint., *Inst.* 6.3.77 (Butler, LCL); cf. Macrob., *Sat.* (2.4.16).

[152] Sen., *Constant.* 17.2-3 (Basore, LCL).

[153] *Epis.* 22.4-5 (Radice, LCL).

[154] *Sat.* 4.115 (Braund, LCL).

bodily affections."[155] For Pseudo-Aristotle, such shifts in physical or mental states are a natural consequence of the existence of physiognomy: it would be impossible for it to be any other way.[156] Even if it were possible to give "good things" such as "honour, wealth and bodily excellences" to a "foolish" man, Aristotle suggests that such an act would be worthless:

> If a man is foolish or unjust or profligate he would gain no profit by employing them, any more than an invalid would benefit from using the diet of a man in good health, or a weakling (ἀσθενὴς) and a cripple (ἀνάπηρος) from the equipment of a healthy man and of a sound one.[157]

Note the implications of Aristotle's physiognomic ideals. Even if it were possible to give these virtues to a "foolish" man, he would not have the ability to employ them. An incompatibility between the body and the mind then is simply not possible as one state will inevitably influence the other. In addition, note the subtext of Aristotle's presentation regarding those with physical impairments. It is not merely that the "foolish man" is bereft of "honour, wealth and bodily excellences," but this same "foolish man" is linguistically paralleled with the "invalid," "weakling," and "cripple," acting to reinforce these physiognomic ideals and presenting physical impairment and foolishness as corresponding entities.

While these physiognomic principles were helpful in determining the personality of others, there was also a more tangible and "targeted implementation"[158] of these physiognomic principles in the Greco-Roman world. Some public offices, for example, were not able to be filled by those with physical impairments. Plato notes that to fill the office of the priest one must have physical integrity. He notes that those seeking the role of the priest would be scrutinised in order to determine whether a candidate was "sound (ὁλόκληρος) and true-born (γνήσιος)."[159] Cassis Dio, in a passage regarding leadership, states "with those who were over 35 years of age (Augustus) did not concern himself, but in the case of those who were under that age and possessed the requisite rating he compelled them to become senators, unless one of them was physically disabled (ἀνάπηρος)."[160] In addition, it is a

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[155] *Physiog.* 805a4-5 (Hett, LCL).

[156] Indeed, if any dissonance between body and character did exist then this in itself would be an indication of a 'feminised' body; one that had experienced "some kind of human interference in the production of corporeal signs" (Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 167).

[157] *Eud. Eth.* 1248b (Rackham, LCL).

[158] Weiler, "Inverted Kalokagathia," 14.

[159] Plato, *De leg.* 759c (Bury, LCL).

[160] Cassius Dio, 54.26.8 (Cary, LCL).

concern about physical integrity that makes Claudius' family question whether he should be allowed to advance into the role of Emperor because of his failure to meet bodily standards.[161]

This association between high profile civic roles with physical integrity also reinforces the relationship between lower class positions, especially manual labour, with those lacking in physical integrity. The body of the slave is the most pertinent example of this. The principles of physiognomics reveal that it is not merely that a person becomes a slave, but rather, the whole character of the slave is written upon his body.[162] Indeed, each slave has been created by nature in such a way as they can be physically identified as a slave and so that they are physically equipped for their position of servitude. It is nature's design, Aristotle notes, to ensure that the body of the slave and 'master' can be distinguished merely by appearance.[163]

It is not just the bodies of slaves that are relegated to low-status positions. Our ancient sources record numerous examples of people with disability working in various low-status employment positions. It is this ideal that forms the basis of a quip used by Plautus in his play *The Pot of Gold*: "He stays up entire nights and then, in daytime, he sits at home like some lame cobbler (*claudus*) for the entire day."[164] For some people with disability, manual labour such as that of a cobbler may have been an alternative to more mobility-reliant positions in agriculture. However, positions of manual labour were considered repugnant by the elite.[165] In this respect, a person with a physical or sensory impairment in the role of a manual labourer (βάναυσος) would have been doubly despised.

Ironically, not only were these positions of manual labour filled by people with impairments, but there was also a high risk of acquiring further impairments due to the

[161] Suetonius notes that "throughout almost the whole course of his childhood and youth (Claudius) suffered so severely from various obstinate disorders that the vigour of both his mind and his body was dulled, and even when he reached the proper age he was not thought capable of any public or private business" (2.1; Rolfe, LCL).

[162] While women were also kept as slaves, we have used the masculine pronoun here in keeping with the way that the slave is described in the physiognomic sources.

[163] Arist., *Pol.* 1254b27-1255a3.

[164] 72-73 (de Melo, LCL).

[165] Aristotle is of the opinion that "unskilled labourers (τῶν βαναύσων τεχνιτῶν)...are only useful for bodily work (τῷ σώματι μόνῳ χρησιμων)" (*Pol.* 1258b20-27; cf. *Pol.* 1258b33-38; Rackham, LCL).

nature of the work being done. Blacksmiths, miners, tanners, and glass-workers all experienced a high risk of eye damage in antiquity.[166] Not only this, but Alison Burford, in her work on *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society*, suggests that those working as manual labourers (βάναυσος) also experienced a muscular development of the body which Burford proposes was in itself considered a kind of deformity.[167] It is the blacksmith Hephaistos who embodies these characteristics and ideals most poignantly. Not only is he mocked by the other Olympians because of his physical impairment but also because of his chosen profession.[168]

According to J. Albert Harrill, the Greco-Roman belief in physiognomics thus "influenced Greek and Roman constructions of the female, barbarian, the beast, and the slave as fixed character types."[169] These types did more than simply stereotype about a person's character based on their physical appearance; it was the belief that physical characteristics presented a precise method of reading the body in order to establish make an informed summation of their character. In this sense, while Martha L. Rose's proposal that one's utility and their ability to fulfil their socially prescribed roles was central to a person's ability to function and be accepted into the ancient community, there are also other determining factors. One of these, it has been suggested, is the general perception of a person's character based on their somatic integrity or lack thereof. The way a person appeared and was thus perceived by others contributed to one's status and worth according to our literary sources. It was through the interpretation of a person's appearance that an onlooker could determine another's character and reliability as well as their potential deviancy. While it was possible

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[166] Disabling injuries are commonly attested in our ancient sources for metalworkers and miners with eye damage also commonly noted among glass-blowers and blacksmiths (A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1972], 72; A. Fischer, "The Lives of Glass-Workers in Sepphoris," in *The Archaeology of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, Class and the "Other" in Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Eric M. Myers* [AASOR 60/61; ed. D.R. Edwards and C.T. McCollough; Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2007], 306; A.P. Kazhdan, "Glass, production of," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* [ed. A.P. Kazhdan, et al.; vol. 2; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991], 853).

[167] Burford noting references to the physical descriptions of Hephaistos in *The Iliad* 18.410ff. (*Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society*, 72).

[168] E.g., "Hephaestus, who, however, is not in great luck, but works at the blacksmith's trade over a fire, living in smoke most of the time and covered with cinders, as is natural with a forge-tender; moreover, he is not even straight-limbed, as he was lamed by his fall when Zeus threw him out of Heaven" (Lucian *Sacr.* 6; Harmon, LCL). Maria Pipili also adds, "The inferior status of workmen is indicated in Greek art mainly through their pose and dress. The labouring individual, whose body is often distorted by the effort put into his work, is dramatically contrasted with the respectable citizen" ("Wearing an Other Hat," in *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* [ed. B. Cohen; Brill: Leiden, 2000], 154).

[169] Harrill, *Slaves in the NT*, 37.

to control one's body and mannerisms enough to alleviate fears one might be read as being effeminate, such a tactic was not possible when it came to somatic integrity. For people with physical and sensory impairments, little could be done to cover over these aberrations, leaving people with impairments perpetually open to the negative interpretation of onlookers.

§ 3.5 Causes of Physical and Sensory Impairment

Our ancient sources are replete with anecdotal recollections of the causes of physical and sensory impairment. Our sources attest to both congenital conditions[170] as well as various impairments acquired through accidents, diseases, and work-related injuries.[171] While it is not possible to explore all of these different causes of disability in the Greco-Roman world, we present here a small selection of examples as a means of highlighting the link between one's impairment, its causation, and the subsequent treatment of the impaired person by the greater community.

As noted above, it was considered the responsibility of the individual to control and maintain health and balance in his own body. If however, a neglect of this duty led to chronic illness or impairment, indications seem to be that there would be little sympathy. Aristotle, for example, states:

> And not only are vices of the soul voluntary, but in some cases bodily defects are so as well, and we blame them accordingly. Though no one blames a man for being born ugly, we censure uncomeliness that is due to neglecting exercise and the care of the person. And so with infirmities and mutilations (ἀσθένειαν καὶ πήρωσιν): though nobody would reproach, but rather pity, a person blind from birth, or owing to disease or accident, yet all would blame one who had lost his sight from tippling or debauchery. We see then that bodily defects for which we are ourselves responsible are blamed, while those for which we are not responsible are not. This being so, it follows that we are responsible for blameworthy moral defects also.[172]

The cause of an impairment is an important element in a fictional case from Quintilian's *Declamations*. The story describes the case of a distinguished military officer who is accused of striking out the eyes of a prostitute. The law, according to Quintilian, required that as punishment for his act, the man had to choose between becoming the woman's

[170] E.g., Hippoc., *AWP* 14; Hippoc., *Artic.* 62.1-2; Galen in *On the Differentiae of Diseases* 7.2 (= 7.26-27 Kühn); Pliny *HN.* 7.11.50.

[171] Celsus notes that a fractured femur can cause a permanent mobility impairment (*De. med.* 8.10.5; cf. Hippoc., *Art.* 63). The Hippocratic author *Coan Prenotions* also notes that immobility can also arise from damage to the muscles in the thighs (498).

[172] Arist., *Eth. Nic.* 3.1114a 25-8 (Rackham, LCL).

guide or being blinded himself. The officer elects to have his own eyes removed because it would be too degrading for him to spend his days as a guide to a prostitute. In response, the woman informs the officer that his "deformity (*debilitas*) will not be as it would have been if you had suffered it in battle."[173] The implication here is that while being blinded might attract attention or sympathy if it was received in combat, impairments arising from a person's poor judgement or unwise behaviour would result in very little pity from the community.

§ 3.5.1 War Wounds

As noted above (§ 3.3) participation in the military was "the most basic criterion for establishing the functional normality of Roman men."[174] A number of our ancient texts indicate that physical and sensory impairment could determine a person's acceptance into, or rejection from, various military positions.[175] In contrast, there are also numerous accounts of men attaining military admittance despite severe mobility and even vision impairments.[176] Whatever one's somatic integrity on entering the military, Robert Garland argues that the "style and tactics of ancient warfare were such that the battlefield must have produced a vast number of disfiguring and disabling injuries."[177] Christine F. Salazar in her work on war wounds in Greco-Roman antiquity concurs contending that the most

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[173] *Decl.* 297 (Shackleton Bailey, LCL).

[174] Stahl, "Physically Deformed and Disabled People," 719.

[175] Evidence on this is varied. Some sources indicate that one had to be extremely impaired not to be able to fight. Plutarch refers to a man named Aristogeiton who wanted to be excused from military duty on account of his extensive injuries (*Phoc.* 10.1-2). Although it appears he was released from military duties, he was thus labelled "lame (χωλός) and worthless" in the process. In Diodorus' account of the Amazonian women maiming their sons to prevent them from going to war, it seems they were forced to maim not one but all four of their sons' limbs to prevent them from being taken into military service (Diod. Sic. 2.45.1-3). Other sources, however, attest injuries and impairments preventing people from taking up a military role. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Horatius Cocles was deprived of his military and political career due to his infirmity (2.25.3). For more on this, see B. Baldwin, "Medical Grounds for Exemption from Military Service at Athens," *CPhil* 62 (1967): 42-43.

[176] Tacitus, for example, refers to men participating in their thirtieth or fourtieth campaign despite having lost limbs in previous battles (*Ann.* 1.17). Herodotus cites the account of Hegesistratos who fought at the battle of Plataea despite using an artificial foot made of wood (9.37-38). Plutarch, in his *Sayings of Spartans*, repeats several times the belief that someone who was lame (χωλός) or crippled (πηρωθεὶς τὸ σκέλος) such as Androcleidas the Spartan, could still participate in battle because active combat did not require the ability to run away but only the ability to stand and fight (*Sayings of Spartans* 211f.; cf. 217c; 234e). Plutarch mentions the Greek general Timoleon who continued to take part in active battle despite his advanced years and limited eyesight (*Tim.* 37.6-8). Cassius Dio even mentions a boy who had "no shoulders or arms" who was able to use his feet to shoot a bow and arrow (54.8-9).

[177] *Eye of the Beholder*, 22.

common impairments received in battle were lameness and loss of limbs,[178] but especially eye and facial damage.[179]

Évelyne Samama proposes that the language used to describe wounds acquired in battle shifted over a period of time.[180] As a legacy of the ideals of *kalokagathia*, the literature of the Classical period still subscribed to the necessity of the blemishless body even for those in the military. However, Samama asserts that a change takes place in the fourth-century B.C.E. regarding descriptions of bodily infirmity acquired in battle.[181] While Plutarch describes Philip II of Macedon as being ashamed of his bodily infirmities, he also describes Philip as making no attempt to cover his scars, instead bearing them "openly as symbolic representations graven on his body, of virtue and manly courage (ἀρετῆς καὶ ἀνδραγαθίας περιφέροντα)."[182] This transition, Samama suggests, is apparent by the time of the literature describing Philip's son Alexander the Great where these battle wounds begin to be spoken of as displaying a combatant's courage and honour (ἀρετή).[183]

While physical aberrations were used by orators to discredit their opponents, in the case of wounds attained in battle, orators would not only "refer verbally to their battle scars" but would "open their tunics in order to exhibit those scars"[184] as a means of revealing their bravery and valour. The studies of both Jennifer Glancy[185] and Matthew Leigh[186] on the rhetorical use of wounds show that while, in general, there was respect for those who

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[178] Examples of these kinds of wounds can be seen in numerous medical and literary sources, epigraphic evidence, and the palaeopathological record e.g., Luc., *Tox.* 60 (lameness); Proc., *Goth.* 6.4.15 (wounded hand); Proc., *Vand.* 3.22.18 (paralysis of little finger from a hand wound); Plut. *Publ.* 16.7 (lameness); Plut. *Sayings of Spartan Women* 241e (mobility impairment).

[179] *The Treatment of War Wounds in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (SAM 21; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 34. The Roman generals Horatius Cocles and Sertorius both lost an eye in battle (Plut., *Publ.* 16.4-7; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 5.23.2-25; Plut., *Sert.* 4.2; Plin., *HN* 7.28.104-105). An inscription at Epidauros attests to a request for healing from one Anticrates of Cnidus whose eyes were damaged by a spear during battle (*ACIT* 1:235 Stele II.32). Clarisse Prêtre and Phillippe Charlier refer to a skull, dated to the sixth century B.C.E., with a significant knife wound that though not fatal would have resulted in the loss of one eye (*Maladies humaines, thérapies divines: analyse épigraphique et paléopathologique de textes de guérison grecs* [Villeneuve d'Ascq, France: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2009], 92-93).

[180] "A King Walking with Pain? On the Textual and Iconographical Images of Philip II and other Wounded Kings," in *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies:* a capite ad calcem (ed. C. Laes, C.F. Goodey, and M.L. Rose; Brill: Leiden, 2013), 231-248.

[181] "A King Walking with Pain?," 243.

[182] Plut., *De. Alex. fort.* 331c (Babbitt, LCL).

[183] Plut., *De. Alex. fort.* 331c.

[184] J.A. Glancy, "Boasting of Beatings (2 Corinthians 1:23-25)," *JBL* 23.1 (2004): 105.

[185] Glancy, "Boasting of Beatings," 99-135.

[186] M. Leigh, "Wounding and Popular Rhetoric at Rome," *BICS* 40.2 (1995): 195-212.

obtained wounds in battle that this extended only to certain types of injuries. "Honourable scars"[187] were those which appeared on the front of the combatant's body highlighting that he had acquired his wounds in the height of battle and facing his enemies face-to-face. In contrast, wounds on the back were considered signs of cowardice, attained as a combatant attempted to escape.[188] This contrast between the marks of valour and cowardice is reflected in Aelian's account of Spartan mothers as they claimed the bodies of their sons who had died in battle. "If the wounds on her son's corpse were in the front, she arranged for burial in the family plot. If the wounds were in back, she slunk away; the corpse was left for anonymous burial."[189] Indeed, Plutarch repeats a story several times that emphasises the valour of face-to-face combat. In one rendering of the tale, Plutarch refers to Androcleidas, who is questioned about his military competence because he is "lame" (χωλός). Androcleidas implies that his mobility impairment is of no concern in battle because he intends to stand and fight not run away.[190]

Despite the rhetoric of valour, there are certainly discrepancies in the Greco-Roman material regarding wounds obtained in battle. According to Cicero's *De Oratore*, the consul Sp. Carvillius had received a war wound severe enough to cause him difficulties with walking, the shame of which impacted his desire to be seen in public.[191] According to Cicero, Sp. Varvillius' mother encouraged him to be publicly viewed as the wound proved he was courageous in battle.[192] Both Tacitus and Aulus Gellius refer to the general Sertorius who lost an eye in battle.[193] Aulus Gellius records that while Sertorius "rejoiced greatly in his bodily disfigurement (*dehonestamenum*)" as bearing witness to his bravery, Gellius claims that such beahviour was "unheard of and extravagant."[194] Gellius refers to Sertorius' injury as *dehonestamenum* indicating that it was both a disgrace and a dishonour.[195]

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[187] E.g., Quint., *Inst.* 2.15.7; Livy 45.39.16.
[188] E.g., Livy 45.39.16.
[189] Glancy, "Boasting of Beatings," 107; cf. Aelian 12.21.
[190] *Sayings of Spartans* 217c; cf. 210f.; 234e; 241e.
[191] 2.248-249.
[192] Cic., *De or.* 2.248-249.
[193] Tac., *Hist.* 4.13; Gell., *NA* 2.27.
[194] Rolfe, LCL.
[195] Salazar, *Treatment of War Wounds*, 34.

One of the most telling tales in this respect is the account of Alexander the Great's encounter with a band of 800 Greek soldiers[196] who had been brutally maimed when their Persian enemies had captured them.[197] Quintus Curtius records than upon seeing the mutilated men that Alexander was so moved that he offered to return all the men to their homeland to ensure they were reunited with their families. Convinced, however, that their families would be repulsed by their appearance and wanting to keep them free from the burden of their care, many of the men rescinded Alexander's offer instead requesting that Alexander find them a new location where the group of men could reside together away from the public eye.[198] Although we cannot know for certain what the response would have been to the men's mutilated appearance, the soldiers themselves are convinced that they would not have been seen as bearing the marks of bravery. Instead, the soldiers believe the extent of their mutilation would ensure that they could only be seen as repulsive.[199] As a result, through their shared experience of punishment and disfigurement, the soldiers forge their own alternative community away from the public eye.

§ 3.5.2 The Punished Body - Human

While there are certainly examples of an association between war wounds and honour, in general, wounds on the body were considered shameful (ἄτιμος) rather than a source of boasting. The violable body, the "beatable" body,[200] is one of servitude and stands in contrast with that of the elite, controlled, impenetrable body.[201] To be beaten and physically abused is to have no control over one's own physicality. Such lack of control stood in contrast to the physiognomic ideal of utmost command over one's gestures, voice, emotions, and physical boundaries (see § 3.4.2). Jennifer Glancy suggests that being "subject to beating, being vulnerable to the power of another man (or woman) to order a whipping, was not a rite de passage associated with maturing to manhood, but a state which diminished any claim to manliness."[202] As a result, physical or sensory impairment

[196] Diodorus records that it is 800 soldiers while Quintus Curtius records 4000.
[197] Quint. Curt., *Hist. Alex.* 5.5.5-24; cf. Diod. Sic. 18.69.2-9 and Justin 11.14.
[198] Quint. Curt., *Hist. Alex.* 5.5.8-9.
[199] Quint. Curt., *Hist. Alex.* 5.5.12.
[200] J.A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 33.
[201] Cf. J. Walters, "Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought," in *Roman Sexualities* (ed. J. P. Hallett and M.B. Skinner; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 29-43. Walters suggests that while there is certainly an aspect of this "impenetrability" that is sexual, it does include the image of corporal violence against the body also (Walters, "Invading the Roman Body," 37; cf. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge*, 31.
[202] Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge*, 30.

which was the result of corporal punishment would place the impaired body in a position of degradation equating it with one of servitude and shame.[203]

Corporal punishment is regularly attested in our ancient sources by those in positions of power in our Greco-Roman sources. This is particularly the case with the Roman emperors who are depicted as enacting punishment for a range of alleged transgressions. Nero in one example is described by Suetonius as gouging out the eye of a Roman knight as a punishment for being too outspoken.[204] Augustus also is described as inflicting this same penalty but Suetonius makes the gruesome addition that in this case it was done "with his (Augustus') own hand."[205] Suetonius also includes numerous examples of the emperors cutting off the hands of those who had caused them displeasure. Domitian is described as using this punishment in combination with the scorching of genitals[206] while emperor Galba is described as cutting off the hands of a money changer who had acted dishonestly. Following their removal, Galba had the money changer's hands nailed to his table.[207] The *Historia Augusta* also mentions the macabre humour of the emperor Commodus who used appellations such as "one-eyed" (*luscinios*) and "one-footed" (*monopodius*) for people he had himself mutilated. [208]

Other figures of power are also shown to enact this kind of somatic punishment especially on one's political enemies. Plutarch and Athenaeus recall the account of Lysimachus, king of the Macedonians, who, upon being slighted by his friend Telesphorus, had his friend mutilated by having "his eyes gouged out, his nose and ears lopped off, (and) his tongue cut out."[209] Seneca also adds that following the mutilation Lysimachus had Telesphorus "shut up in a cage as if he were some strange and unknown animal and for a long time lived in terror of him, since the hideousness of his hacked and mutilated face had destroyed every appearance of a human being."[210] Diodorus recalls the "bloodthirsty" reign of Diegylis, king of the Thracians, who would "cut off the hands and feet and heads of

[203] On the abuse inflicted upon Jesus' body prior to the crucifixion in dialogue with the apostle Paul's rendering of his body as one of servitude, see Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge*, 48-80.
[204] Suet., *Nero* 5.2.
[205] Suet., *Aug.* 27.4 (Rolfe, LCL).
[206] Suet., *Dom.* 10.5.
[207] Suet., *Galba* 9.1.
[208] HA, *Comm.* 10.6.
[209] Plut., *On Exile* 606B (De Lacy, LCL); Ath. 14.616c.
[210] Sen., *De Ira* 3.17.3-4 (Basore, LCL).

children and hang them about their parents' necks to wear, or cut off portions of the bodies of husbands and wives and exchange them."[211] In this case, there may be some amount of hyperbole at play to emphasise the barbaric behaviour of Greece's enemies, however, in either case, the tales reinforce the image of humiliation and degradation associated with such physical punishment.

This kind of punishment was also commonly used on belligerent slaves seen to be disrespectful or acting above their station. Galen, for example, gives a detailed account of the abuse experienced by slaves, speaking of those who not only "hit their slaves but kick(ed) them and gouge(d) out their eyes and strike them with a pen," the latter activity which he claimed to have witnessed for himself.[212] Herodotus, in his narratives about the Scythians, also mentions that they blinded their slaves to stop them from being able to run away.[213] Caligula likewise is described as cutting off the hands of a slave as punishment. Suetonius recalls:

> When a slave took a strip of silver from a dining couch at a public banquet in Rome, Gaius turned him over to an executioner on the spot, and he was paraded through the company of diners with his hands cut off and hung in front of him around his neck and with a placard going ahead that gave the reason for his punishment.[214]

Although to our modern twenty-first-century sensibilities the shocking images of physical abuse enacted upon the slaves seems utterly reprehensible, in the context of the Greco-Roman world it served to reinforce the status quo. The imagery of the elite body as controlled and inviolable was juxtaposed with the permeable slave body. The greatest indication of these apparently binary categories (i.e., inviolable elite body, violable slave body) is when this precept of bodily control is flagrantly disregarded. It is in the course of such a confusion of bodies, where the inherent honour of the elite body is disregarded and instead treated with the shame and humiliation of lower-class bodies, that the

[211] Diod. 31.14.2. Diodorus also records a story about Syrian slaves who "cut off the hands of their captives, but not content with amputation at the wrist, included arms and all in the mutilation" (34/35.8; Walton, LCL). Herodotus recalls the account of Pheretime, wife of Battus III of Cyrene, who, upon hearing of her son's murder, tracked down those responsible and impaled them in a public place. Not content with this, she went on to cut off the breasts of their wives (4.202). Herodotus also notes the example of Amestris, wife of Xerxes, king of Persia, who sought revenge upon the woman whom she thought was having an affair with her husband and thus she had Masisites' wife (who is unnamed in the story) mutilated by cutting off her breasts, nose, ears, and lips, which were thrown to the dogs. The abuse finally ended with her tongue being cut out (Hdt. 9.108-111).

[212] Galen, *De animi morbis* 4 Kühn 5117.

[213] Hdt. 4.2.

[214] Suet., *Cal.* 32.2 (Rolfe, LCL).

presuppositions of status and worth are reinforced: there is something awry in the dishonourable abuse of an honourable body. Such an example is seen in Cicero in his detailed account of the abuse of a Roman citizen named Gavius of Consa who is flogged and crucified at the hands of the Roman magistrate Gaius Verres. Though Gavius pleads to be released, announcing all the while his Roman citizenship, Verres does not intervene as Gavius is violently beaten. Despite Gavius' honourable status, he is not impervious to the "dishonor and ignominy"[215] brought upon him by the public and violent abuse of his body. As Jennifer Glancy has noted, in Cicero's view, while "Verres was wicked...he also effectively degraded Gavius, into whose skin an emblem of submissiveness was beaten."[216] His wounds would thus forever align his body with the deviant status of the violable slave. Despite his innocence, his body is forever marked with shame and dishonour; a state all the more despicable as it was thrust upon a body that was formerly one of virtue and honour.

§ 3.5.3 The Punished Body - Divine

Throughout the extant Greco-Roman sources, physical and sensory impairments are often depicted as the result of divine punishment. This topic has been addressed at length by numerous scholars so it is not our intention to summarise that scholarship here, however, it is worth noting the tradition and its possible influence on perceptions of physical and sensory impairments in the Greco-Roman world. As with punishment at the hand of human aggressors, punishment deemed to be the work of the divine would likewise leave irremovable stigma. In the vast majority of accounts, divine punishment takes the form of blindness which serves as an enacted metaphor for ignorance or death.[217] Divine punishment is also regularly associated with an individual or community crossing the boundaries between humanity and the divine. Homer tells of the plight of the musician Thamyris who is blinded by the Muses following his attempt to rival their musical prowess.[218] Apollonius of Rhodes refers to the Thracian king Phineus who "lost the sight of both eyes (ὄψεις πεπηρωμένος)" at the hands of Zeus for revealing too much of the gods'

[215] Glancy, "Boasting of Beatings," 110.
[216] Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge*, 32.
[217] Cf. R.G.A. Buxton, "Blindness and Limits: Sophokles and the Logic of Myth," *JHS* 100 (1980): 23-37; E.A. Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light: Especially the Case of Oedipus at Colonus of Sophocles* (American University Studies 17; New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 11-26, 49-55.
[218] Hom., *Il.* 2.592-600.

truth to humanity,[219] while Callimachus refers to another seer named Teiresais who was blinded by the gods for seeing Athena naked.[220]

§ 3.5.4 Somatic Neglect

As will be addressed in more detail below, the role of the *paterfamilias* involved not only finding healing for those in his household who required it, but also guiding the *domus*/ οἶκος in their diet, exercise, and prophylactic use of medicine.[221] As noted earlier in the chapter (§ 3.4.2), the elite male had a responsibility to maintain the somatic integrity of his body. For those elites who succumbed to poor health as a result of failing to maintain the suggested standards of diet and exercise, there was little sympathy from their nondisabled contemporaries especially in the case of those conditions deemed the direct result of such personal neglect. As a consequence, there are a number of diseases that were explicitly linked with somatic neglect and/or failure to act with self-control and temperance.

One such example of this is gout. Gout is an illness often represented in Greco-Roman antiquity and one associated with a lack of self-control. Suetonius describes the difficulties of gout as experienced by emperor Galba describing his distorted hands and feet that meant "he could not endure a shoe for long, unroll a book, or even hold one."[222] In the satirical works of Lucian of Samosata and Aristophanes, among others, gout is often linked with "intemperance"[223] and gluttony.[224] Pliny the Elder, in a letter to Calestrius Tiro, relays the death of his friend Corellius Rufus who starved himself to death to end the "unbelievable agony" associated with gout.[225] Due to the belief that gout was the result of gluttony and lack of self-control, it can be easily imagined that someone ill with gout may have experienced some level of stigma. Indeed, in the case of Pliny's friend it is certainly possible that his desire to end his life may have been motivated by the stigma of his condition as much as the discomfort and immobility associated with it. Due to the

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[219] Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* II 178-434; Apollod. 1.9.21; Diod. Sic. 4.44.4.
[220] Callim., *Phdr.* 243a.
[221] R. Jackson, *Doctors and Disease in the Roman Empire* (London: British Museum Publications, 1988), 32.
[222] Suet., *Galb.* 2:1 (Rolfe, LCL).
[223] Luc., *Gall.* 23; Luc., *Trag. passim.*
[224] Arist., *Plut.* 559; Hor., *Sat.* 2.7.
[225] *Ep.* 1.12 (Radice, LCL).

Hippocratic belief that gout was incurable,[226] patients with gout would likely have been drawn to the Asclepian temple in search for healing due to Asclepius' reputation for treating incurable conditions. For this reason, gout is one of the conditions attested as being healed amongst the Asclepian inscriptions.[227]

Like gout, dropsy is also widely attested in the ancient sources and is likewise associated with intemperance.[228] Dropsy, which was easily recognisable by "grotesque" swelling of the body,[229] could lead to severe mobility issues as the condition worsened.[230] In Greek satire, dropsy is used metaphorically to express an unquenchable desire for wealth or power. Polybius, for example, notes that "in the case of dropsy the thirst of the sufferer never ceases and is never allayed by the administration of liquids from without, unless we cure the morbid condition of the body itself, so it is impossible to satiate the greed for gain."[231] Like gout, dropsy appears on a petition list among the Asclepian cures. However, Philostratus recalls one particular petitioner experiencing dropsy who was "continually drunk" and unwilling to relinquish the pleasures of alcohol. Consequently, Philostratus records that Asclepius "neglected him and did not even visit him in sleep."[232] The man with dropsy turns instead to Apollonius of Tyana for an explanation for Asclepius' inaction. Apollonius thus advises the man with dropsy that Asclepius would not heal someone who acted in a manner which was "contrary to (his) illness" by his "love of wine" and "rich foods."[233] This association between dropsy and unquenchable thirst becomes important for our reading of Luke 14:1-24 in chapter 5.

While it is not possible to cover in detail a large number of the congenital and acquired impairments attested in our extant sources, these brief examples highlight that impairment

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[226] Hippoc., *Prorr.* 2.2.8.1-4 (Potter, LCL).

[227] *ACIT* 1:237 Stele II.43.

[228] E.g., "But look at the rich: name the disease to which these creatures are not subjected by their intemperance; gout, consumption, pneumonia, dropsy – they all come of high feeding" (Luc, *Gall.* 23; Harmon, LCL).

[229] C. Timmerman, "Chronic Illness and Disease History," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine* (ed. M. Jackson; Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2011), 393.

[230] Among the Asclepian cures is one for a woman named Arata who was experiencing dropsy. According to the inscription, Arata was not able to travel to Epidauros herself and so her mother goes in her place. It seems apparent that her lack of mobility is directly associated with her physical condition (*ACIT* 1:233, Stele I.21).

[231] Polyb. 13.2.1-2 (Paton, LCL).

[232] Philostr., *VA* 1.9 (Jones, LCL).

[233] Philostr., *VA* 1.9 (Jones, LCL).

was not simply about the physical conditions themselves but also the mode by which the impaired person acquired their condition. It also highlights that in some instances there is a significant social consequence depending on the way in which a person came upon their impairment. In this sense, not only did functionality and appearance have a bearing on the perceived worth of an individual with physical or sensory impairment, but it could also be impacted by the specific way a person came to experience their impairment.

§ 3.6 Healing

The topic of healing in the ancient world has been likewise addressed in great detail by numerous scholars[234] including scholars applying medical anthropological methods to the New Testament material.[235] It is not our intention to summarise the vast amount of work that has been done in this field, but rather, to address briefly some of the healing and/or curing options available to people specifically experiencing physical or sensory impairments in Greco-Roman antiquity.

According to Roman law, the *paterfamilias*, the head of the household, had power over life and death (*ius vitae ac necis*) for his *domus*.[236] Part of this responsibility, by the time of the late Republic and early imperial period, was in taking care of his own health and wellness as well as that of his entire household. "Failure (of the *paterfamilias*) to control one's health was unacceptable because it endangered the stability, or revealed the instability, of one's household."[237] Cato the Elder refers to this tradition noting the wide range of healing options available for consultation. Among the repertoire at the disposal of the *paterfamilias* might be various herbal remedies recommended for treatment of numerous conditions from indigestion and headaches to deafness and skin wounds.[238] Cato notes that the *paterfamilias* might also have at his disposal any number of medical

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[234] E.g, Jackson, *Doctors and Disease*, *passim*; H. King (ed.), *Health in Antiquity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005); G. Majno, *Healing Hand: Man and Wound in the Ancient World* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1975); Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*; J. Scarborough, *Roman Medicine* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969).

[235] E.g., Avalos, *Health Care and the Rise*, *passim*; Avalos, *Illness and Healthcare*, *passim*; P.F. Craffert, *Illness, Health and Healing in the New Testament: Perspectives on Health Care* (Pretoria: Biblia, 1999); G.B. Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); S. Guijarro, "Healing Stories and Medical Anthropology: A Reading of Mark 10:46-52," *BTB* 30.102 (2000): 102-112; Pilch, *Healing in the NT*, *passim*.

[236] T.G. Parkin and A.J. Pomeroy, *Roman Social History: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2007), 73.

[237] Goodey and Rose, "Mental States," 34.

[238] Cato, *Agr.* 156-158.

encyclopaedia to help 'diagnose' and treat a range of health concerns.[239] As noted above, the avoidance of health issues was considered the best option so the first responsibility of the *paterfamilias* was to encourage the prophylactic use of medicines in combination with exercise, diet, and bathing.[240] Treatments might then have been a combination of herbal remedies, incantations, and evocations of various gods.[241] These instructions were likewise contained in the medical encyclopedia.

If however, the nature of the illness or impairment was such that it might have been considered beyond the scope of home remedies then it was the role of the *paterfamilias* to seek additional healing methods. By far our greatest source of information from antiquity regarding treatments for illness and impairments are the Greek medical writers, especially those of the Hippocratic school. In his seminal work on healing temples in the ancient world, Hector Avalos notes that there was no division between legitimate and illegitimate healing options in Greco-Roman antiquity[242] and as a result there was an array of different healing options available. Not only were there ἰατροί, medical physicians, but a range of different "folk" healers.[243] Vivian Nutton suggests these included herb cutters, druggists, midwives, gymnastic trainers, diviners, exorcists, and priests.[244] John E. Stambaugh notes that it is "not hard to imagine that an invalid in Rome was faced with a bewildering variety of options, and no reliable guidance in finding treatment."[245] This is apparently confirmed by the advice of first-century C.E. Roman physician Celsus who outlines for a patient the manner in which "each of the Greek medical schools would treat a fever, (before) he advocates trying them all."[246]

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[239] These encyclopedia would have included such works as by Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, Celsus' *De Medicina*, and Soranus' *Gynecology*.

[240] Celsus, for example, promotes the use of prophylactic medicine as well as the maintenance of health through diet and exercise. According to Celsus, the healthy should have no need for medical professionals (*De. med.* 1.1).

[241] Scarborough, *Roman Medicine*, 20.

[242] Avalos, *Illness and Healthcare*, 260.

[243] G.E.R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[244] V. Nutton, "Medicine in the Greek World, 800-50BC," in *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC – AD 1800* (ed. L.I. Conrad; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16; cf. L. McNamara, "'Conjurers, Purifiers, Vagabonds and Quacks'? The Clinical Roles of the Folk and Hippocratic Healers of Classical Greece," *Iris: Journal of the Classical Association of Victoria* 16-17 (2003): 2-25.

[245] J.E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 136-137. Pliny the Elder, for example, suggests that the large number of specialist physicians also made the search difficult as it left the patient unsure who to appeal to for a particular condition (*HN* 29.5.11).

[246] Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, 136-137; cf. Cel., *De med.* 3.14.

The term ἰατρικῇ developed around the fifth-century B.C.E. "to describe the healing practiced by doctors" in contrast to those healers who used amulets, "purifications and magic."[247] Hippocrates and the subsequent school of healers developed as a designated field of 'experts' in the field of ἰατρικῇ (medicine) in the same way that others became 'experts' in other areas.[248] The Hippocratic author of *On Sacred Disease* is sceptical of the healing abilities of these kinds of healers suggesting that "by these sayings and devices they claim superior knowledge, and deceive men by prescribing for them purifications and cleansings."[249] However, inefficacy and fraudulence were not limited solely to folk healers. Galen proposes that many healers were lacking in medical knowledge[250] and were for this reason offering inadequate treatments that at best did not bring about healing but at worst exacerbated the illness.[251] Some health providers were apparently in the profession for the sole purpose of depriving people of their funds[252] with some turning healing into a public spectacle in order to attract additional patients.[253]

The risk of fraudulent and/or inefficacious healers would have made the search for healing difficult for any patient. However, for those with permanent impairments there was also the possibility that a healer may simply refuse to treat them because it was the belief of physicians that they should not waste their effort on those who were "constitutionally sick."[254] Part of a physician's skill was considered to be his ability to determine which conditions were incurable[255] or had been left untreated too long for medical intervention

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[247] B.L. Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing in Fifth-Century Greece: Between Craft and Cult* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 11.

[248] E.g., "...like all Hellenic craftsmen (*demiourgoi*), the physician was seen to be in the possession of the technical body of knowledge peculiar to his craft alone" (Carrick, *Medical Ethics*, 12).

[249] Hippoc., *Morb. sacr.* 3.10-12 (Jones, LCL).

[250] "There were no regular courses of medical teaching to be undertaken, no examinations to be passed, no qualifications to be gained, no controlling body and no general agreement on standards or required skills. In effect, there was no restraint on anyone who wished to set up himself (or herself) as a healer, and levels of ability evidently varied widely" (R. Jackson, "Holding on to Health? Bone Surgery and Instrumentation in the Roman Empire" in *Health in Antiquity* [ed. H. King; Abingdon: Routledge, 2005], 97).

[251] Hippoc., *Fract.* 1.1.

[252] Pliny also refers to the magi, stating that their main aim was gaining wealth for themselves (*HN* 30.1).

[253] Plut., *Quomodo adul.* 71a: "...like the physicians who perform operations in the theatres with an eye to attracting patients" (Babbitt, LCL).

[254] Plato, for example, states: "They thought that the life of a man constitutionally sick and intemperate was of no use to himself or to others, and that the art of medicine should not be for such nor should they be given treatment even if they were richer than Midas" (*Resp.* 3.408B; Shorey, LCL).

[255] *Prognostics 1* says that it is not possible to cure all disease (1.8-9); cf. Hippoc., *Art.* 8.8-12.

to be effective.[256] As a result, the sanctuaries of healing gods offered an additional hope for healing for those deemed incurable by physicians.

As a consequence, it is likely that many people with physical and sensory impairments who would have been considered incurable by the ἰατρός (physician) would have sought healing in the Asclpeian cult. This transition into the healing sanctuaries of Aslcepius was probably regarded as a natural progression considering Asclepius' status as an ἰατρός (physician) himself.[257] From the fifth-century B.C.E. onwards, Asclepius and the associated temple-cult became credited with the ability "to cure diseases of every kind."[258] Inscriptions from the Asclepian temples credit the god with healing people with physical and sensory impairments such as blindness,[259] speech impairment,[260] paralysis,[261] and mobility impairment.[262] Indeed, it appears that Asclepius' reputation for curing of chronic illnesses and permanent impairments was one of the cult's most persuasive elements offering the hope of a restored body that regular ἰατρικῇ could not offer especially in the case of long-term conditions.[263] Consider the following example from Epidauros that records an Asclepian healing from a condition doctors may have deemed incurable:

> Antikrates of Knidos, eyes. This man, hit by a spear through both his eyes in battle, was blind and carried the spearhead around with him lodged inside his face. While sleeping here he saw a vision. The god seemed to extract the dart and fit the...pupils back into the eyelids. The next day he left healed.[264]

For all of these reasons, healing sites such as those associated with the cult of Asclepius were very popular in the Republic and early Empire as attested in both epigraphy and terracotta votives.[265] While the Asclepian cult offered a viable alternative to many who

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[256] For example, one Hippocratic author states that the "sacred disease" is no less curable than any other unless the patient delays treatment for too long (*Morb. Sacr.* 2.1-7).

[257] Hom. *Il.* 4.193-194. Wickkiser also suggests that even after his deification, Asclepius retained an affinity with the *iatroi* because his healing methods were not simply supernatural but replicated the methods used by human *iatroi*, for example, surgical procedures and the application of medicine (Wickkiser, *Askelpios, Medicine, and the Politics*, 52-53).

[258] Strabo, *Geog.* 8.6.15; cf. § 3.4.3.

[259] *ACIT* I:230, Stele I.4; 1:231, Stele 1.9; 1:233-234, Stele II.22; 1:235, Stele II.32, etc.

[260] *ACIT* I:230, Stele I.5.

[261] *ACIT* I:236, Stele II.37; 1:237, Stele II.38.

[262] *ACIT* I:233, Stele I.16; 1:236, Stele II.35.

[263] E.g., healing for a woman pregnant for five years (*ACIT* I:232, Stele I.1) and a man with a spear lodged in his jaw for six years (*ACIT* I:232, Stele I.12).

[264] *ACIT* I:235, Stele I.32.

[265] Amongst these anatomical votives have been found almost all parts of the body, including many eyes in connection with the numerous inscriptions regarding blindness, as well as many legs, in connection with the references to mobility impairment (see M. Lang, *Cure and Cult in Ancient Corinth: A Guide to the*

were in need of healing, the need to petition from within the temple itself may have restricted access for some people with mobility impairments. However, there are examples amongst the Asclepian inscriptions suggesting petitioning on behalf of another person was possible. This may have been necessary in the case of someone with a mobility impairment or someone with chronic illness, for example.[266] Other healers in the Greco-Roman world included a range of miracle workers such as Apollonius of Tyana who is credited with healing a "lame" (χωλεύω) man, a case of paralysis of the hand (χεῖρα ἀδρανὴς), and vision loss (ὀφθαλμὼ δέ τις ἐρρυηκὼς ἀπῆλθε πᾶν ἔχων τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς φῶς).[267] Emperor Vespasian is likewise credited with healing a blind man (*caecitas*)[268] as well as a man with a withered hand (*manum aeger*).[269]

Overall, there were numerous healing options available to people with impairments in Greco-Roman antiquity. The *paterfamilias* not only had at his disposal various methods available to prevent health problems, but also a range of home treatments for anyone in the *domus* who did fall ill or become impaired. Other healing options included physicians and the field of ἰατρικῇ, various folk healers, healing gods and especially the temples of Asclepius, as well as various itinerant miracle workers. Due to the desire of physicians to only treat those conditions deemed curable, it is likely that many people with physical and sensory impairments were required to search for healing among the folk healers and especially in the healing sanctuaries of Asclepius. According to the inscriptions at Epidauros and other healing sites, numerous people with blindness, paralysis, lameness, and other long-term health conditions found healing from their illnesses through supplication to Asclepius. Such a reputation as Asclepius had for healing "diseases of every kind"[270] would surely have attracted numerous people with impairments to the Asclepian healing centres in search for healing.

Asklepieion [American Excavations in Old Corinth, Corinth Notes 1; Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1977], 7-8).

[266] However, there are only a few examples throughout the Asclepian inscriptions of people petitioning on the behalf of others, ie., *ACIT* I:233, Stele I.21.

[267] Philostr., *VA* 3.39; cf. § 3.2.1

[268] Tac., *Hist.* 4.81; Suet., *Vesp.* 7.2.

[269] Tac., *Hist.* 4.81.

[270] Strabo, *Geog.* 8.6.15; cf. § 3.4.3.

§ 3.7 Disposing of the Deviant Body

According to a number of our ancient sources, when slaves became too ill or "useless" to work, the *paterfamilias* to which the slave belonged had the right to dispose of the slave as he wished. Cato the Elder notes that slaves that were too old or sick should be sold along with other animals and tools which no longer accomplish their desired tasks.[271] Under the Republic, the law of *patria dominica* allowed a *paterfamilias* ultimate power over all property under his care which also included slaves.[272] Sources from the Republic period indicate that this law extended to the *paterfamilias* having the legal right to kill slaves that were no longer useful or wanted.[273] These laws changed in the imperial period with less authority being retained by the *paterfamilias*.[274] Thus, by the time of Claudius' rule, we have the well known edict that disallowed both the abandoning of sick and unwanted slaves on the isle of Aesculapius as well as the outright death of any slave.[275] The abandoning of slaves was not the only way a person with an impairment or chronic illness may have been disposed of in antiquity. In this section we will address two forms of disposal of the deviant body; that is, the disposal of impaired or 'deformed' infants as well as the expulsion of *pharmakoi*. The first topic will be addressed in greater detail due to the high number of extant sources that address the disposal of infants.

§ 3.7.1 Infanticide and Exposure

The exposure and/or infanticide of neonates in Greco-Roman antiquity is a topic that has been discussed extensively by ancient historians but with very little consensus. While there are those who consider that infanticide was deemed a "normal" or "common" method of birth control in the ancient world, especially in the case of "deformed, weak, illegitimate or unwanted infants,"[276] there are others who are sceptical of claims that such a broad scale

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[271] Cato, *Agr.* 2.7.

[272] Cf. J.F. Gardner, "Slavery and Roman Law," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery* (ed. K. Bradley and P. Cartledge; vol. 1: The Ancient Mediterranean World; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 432-433.

[273] Gardner, "Slavery in Roman Law," 432-433.

[274] E.g., *Cod. Theod.* 9.12.1, 2.

[275] Suet., *Claud.* 25.2.

[276] D. Instone-Brewer, "Infanticide and the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15," *JETS* 52.2 (2009): 301; cf. Cynthia Patterson who says that "the exposure of the physically defective infant is usually – and correctly I think – considered a routine practice in ancient Greece" ("'Not Worth the Rearing': The Causes of Infant Exposure in Ancient Greece," *TAPA* 115 [1985]: 113); M. Ducos, "Penser et surmonter le handicap: les écrits des juristes romains," in *Handicaps et sociétés dans l'histoire: l'estropié, l'aveugle et le paralytique de l'Antiquité aux temps modernes* (ed. F. Collard and É. Samama; Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 85.

implementation of either infanticide[277] or exposure took place in Greco-Roman antiquity. As a means of deciphering the complexities of these issues, Judith Evans Grubbs suggests that the first task is to differentiate clearly the act of exposure from that of infanticide.[278] Evans Grubbs suggests that even though exposure "quite often...did result in the child's death"[279] she states "intention and means might be quite different."[280] Both Evans Grubbs and John Boswell, in his extensive work on abandonment, suggest that too often scholars addressing the issues of exposure and infanticide have conflated the issues which, Boswell argues, "not only obscures the history of (exposure), which was the *alternative* to infanticide in much of Europe, but also seriously blunts the possibility of accurate demographic assessment of the impact of either one."[281]

Exposure, therefore, according to Evans Grubbs is "the rejection of a neonate in the first week of life, before it was accepted into the family and undergone rituals of purification and naming."[282] She suggests that in terms of exposure that "both literary and legal sources indicate that from the archaic Greek period on...*expositio* was considered a viable means of ridding oneself of an unwanted infant."[283] Exposing a child meant "there was always the chance that the baby would be picked up and reared by someone else and could eventually be reclaimed by its original parent. Unrealistic as this scenario appears, it did occur."[284]

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[277] E.g., A.M.E. Haentjens says that while infanticide did occur, that it "should never be regarded as commun (sic) practice" ("Reflections on Female Infanticide in the Greco-Roman World," *Ant Class* 69 [2000]: 264).

[278] J. Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure and Infanticide," in *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World* (ed. J. Evans Grubbs, T. Parkin, and R. Bell; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 62. Judith Evans Grubbs is critical of scholars in the past who have conflated exposure and infanticide (e.g., William L. Langer who defines infanticide as "the wilful destruction of newborn babies through exposure, starvation, strangulation, smothering, poisoning or through the use of some lethal weapon" ["Infanticide: A Historical Survey," *HCQ* 1 (1974): 353-354]) cf. Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure and Infanticide," 62.

[279] Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure," 83. Evans Grubbs is critical of the view presented by John Boswell, who suggests that most abandoned children were picked up ("Infant Exposure," 83; cf. J. Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 83.

[280] Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure," 83.

[281] Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 44. Italics original.

[282] Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure and Infanticide," 83.

[283] J. Evans Grubbs, "Hidden in Plain Sight: *Expositi* in the Community," in *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture* (ed. V. Dasen and T. Spath; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 293; cf. W.V. Harris, "Child-Exposure in the Roman Empire," *JRS* 84 (1994): 2.

[284] J. Evans Grubbs, "Church, State and Children: Christian and Imperial Attitudes Toward Infant Exposure," in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (ed. A. Cain and N. Lenski; Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 119. The frequency of exposure is attested in a number of ways in the Greco-Roman world. Firstly, exposure appears regularly as a plot device in plays and novels (see Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 75-80; L.R. van Hook, "The Exposure of Infants at Athens," *TAPA* 51 [1920]: 140-141; D.B. Redford, "The Literary Motif of

Indeed, this occurrence was common enough that the Roman legal writings are replete with cases of *expositi*, exposed infants, caught in disputations regarding their legal status.[285] Infanticide, on the other hand, whereby the parents, primarily the *paterfamilias*, make a conscious decision to kill an unwanted infant is much more rarely attested in the ancient world.[286]

Much of the recent debates on infanticide and exposure centre around the extent to which these practices took place in Greco-Roman antiquity.[287] Numerous studies have included demographical analyses[288] or paleopathological evidence[289] to argue either for or against the systemic use of infanticide in antiquity particularly in relation to female and "deformed" infants.[290] However, for the purposes of this chapter, it is not our intention to address the extent to which these phenomena took place in the Greco-Roman world, but rather, to address the way in which the Greco-Roman writers describe and/or advocate for infanticide or exposure. According to our ancient sources, what were the circumstances

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the Exposed Child," *Numen* 14.3 [1967]: 209-228). Secondly, there are also a number of well-known mythical personages who were recorded as being exposed as infants. These include Oedipus, the healing god Asclepius, (e.g. Paus. 2.26.3-5), as well as Remus and Romulus, the legendary founders of the city of Rome (E.g., Livy 1.4; Plut., *Rom.* 3-5). While some exposed infants were raised as adopted children, others were collected for the sole purpose of becoming slaves. There are numerous examples of wet-nurse contracts from Roman Egypt that attest to the extensiveness of this practice whereby a wet-nurse had to be employed in order to feed a newly found infant; cf. M. Corbier, "Child Exposure and Abandonment," in *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World* (ed. S. Dixon; London: Routledge, 2001), 52-73; J. Boswell, "*Expositio* and *Oblatio*: The Abandonment of Children and the Ancient and Medieval Family," *Anc Hist Rev* 89.1 [1984]: 15-16).

[285] Cf. Evans Grubbs, "Church State and Children," *passim.*

[286] L.R.F. Germain suggests that one of the additional problems with addressing the issues of infanticide and exposure is that previous scholars have taken a small number of references to infanticide and exposure in our extant sources and extrapolated them for the whole of the ancient Mediterranean and for a much broader period of time than the texts themselves allow ("L'exposition des enfants nouveau-nes dans la Grece ancienne," *Recueils de da société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions* 35 [1975]: 218-219).

[287] See W.V. Harris, "The Theoretical Possibility of Extensive Infanticide in the Graeco-Roman World," *CQ* 32.1 (1982): 114-116.

[288] M. Golden, "Demography and the Exposure of Girls at Athens," *Phoenix* 35 (1981): 330-331; W. Ingalls, "Demography and Dowries: Perspectives on Female Infanticide in Classical Greece," *Phoenix* 56 (2002): 246-254.

[289] Numerous adult skeletons have been unearthed that display the effects of substantial congenital conditions that would have been noticeable at birth, such as various types of spinal deformation (Hippoc., *Art.* 55; cf. M.D. Grmek, *Diseases in the Ancient Greek World* [trans. M. Muellner and L. Muellner; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989], 69-70); cf. S. Mays and M. Faerman, "Sex Identification in Some Putative Infanticide Victims from Roman Britain using Ancient DNA" *J Archaeol Sci* 28 (2001): 555-559; J.K. Papadopoulos, "Skeletons in Wells: Towards an Archaeology of Social Exclusion in the Ancient Greek World" in *Madness, Disability and Social Exclusion: The Archaeology and Anthropology of 'Difference'* (ed. J. Hubert; London: Routledge, 2000), 96-118.

[290] E.g. Daniel Ogden suggests that the fact there is such little paleopathological evidence of adults with *congenital* defects probably indicates that most neonates with visible defects were put to death (*Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece,* 14).

under which infanticide or exposure were considered a viable option, or indeed, a moral or legal necessity? What were the particular recommendations with respect to the birth of deformed infants?

According to our ancient sources, infanticide and exposure were enacted for numerous reasons in the ancient world. Some sources record that they were carried out in response to the parents' poverty[291] or as a means of limiting family size.[292] Other texts refer to illegitimate or questionable parentage[293] or the birth of female neonates as a motivation for infanticide or exposure.[294] Recent scholarship on infanticide and exposure in antiquity also reflects a growing interest in the fate of neonates with physical and/or sensory disability.[295]

Possibly the most well-known text referring to infanticide in the Greco-Roman world is Plutarch's description of the Spartan practice of infanticide of "deformed" (ἄμορφον) infants.

> Offspring was not reared at the will of the father, but was taken and carried by him to a place called Lesche, where the elders of the tribes officially examined the infant, and if it was well-built and sturdy, they ordered the father to rear it, and assigned it to one of the nine thousand lots of land; but if it was ill-born (low birth) and deformed (ἄμορφον), they sent it to the so-called Apothetae, a chasm-like place at the foot of Mount Taygetus, in the conviction that the life of that which nature had not well equipped at the very beginning for health and strength was of no advantage either to itself or to the state."[296]

The implications of the text are that only those who are of the best breeding stock should be allowed to breed in order to ensure that the offspring will be of the highest quality. This was deemed of particular importance to ensure that the military was serviced with as large

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[291] Longinus, *Daphne and Chloe* 4.35.

[292] E.g., Musonius Rufus 15.

[293] Augustus forbade his grand-daughter Julia from raising her illegitimate child (Suet., *Aug.* 65.4).

[294] Cf. Golden, "Demography and the Exposure of Girls," 316-331; Haentjens, "Reflections on Female Infanticide"; Ingalls, "Demography and Dowries," 246-254; Mays and Faerman, "Sex Identification," 555-559; S. Pomeroy, "Infanticide in Hellenistic Greece," in *Images of Women in Antiquity* (ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 207-219; E. Scott, "Unpicking a Myth: The Infanticide of Female and Disabled Infants in Antiquity," in *TRAC 2000: Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference* (ed. G. Davies, A. Gardner, and K. Lockyear; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 143-151.

[295] D.W. Amundsen, "Medicine and the Birth of Defective Children: Approaches of the Ancient World," in *Euthanasia and the Newborn: Conflicts Regarding Saving Lives* (ed. R.C McMillan, H.T. Engelhardt Jr, and S.F. Spicker; Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1987), 50-69; Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Cultural Context of Deformity," 79-92; Scott, "Unpicking a Myth."

[296] *Lyc.* 16.1-3 (Perrin, LCL).

a number as possible of able-bodied soldiers.[297] While this text is often used as evidence for the practice of infanticide,[298] the historical integrity of this passage has recently been disputed on a number of grounds.[299]

Plato likewise is often critiqued in terms of his endorsement of infanticide for neonates with visible impairments. Plato's recommendations are seen as part of his broader discussion of marriage, the purpose of which was to produce offspring and preferably offspring that would improve the human stock.[300] In his utopian ideal, Plato recommends that "the maximum number of superior adults should couple with others of equal value"[301] while the number of inferior adults, for example those who are too old or too weak, should be kept to a minimum.[302] This statement is made more explicit in *The Republic* where he states that those "offspring of the inferior" and those who are "born defective (ἀνάπηρον), they will properly dispose of them in secret, so that no one will know what has become of them."[303] Aristotle likewise makes mention of the rearing of infants in this utopian state declaring that: "As to exposing or rearing the children born, let there be a law that no deformed (πεπηρωμένον) child shall be reared."[304]

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[297] Plut., *Lyc.* 16.1-3.

[298] E.g., E.g., Garland: *Eye of the Beholder*, 14; D.L. Braddock and S.L. Parish, "An Institutional History of Disability," in *Handbook of Disability Studies* (ed. G.L. Albrecht, K.D. Seelman, and M. Bury; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 11-68.

[299] For example, archaeological evidence does not seem to support Plutarch's claim. While archaeologists found numerous remains at the chasm of Mount Taygetos (otherwise known in Greek as Kaiadas) they "failed to establish the presence of infant or child bones" (T.K. Pitsios, "Ancient Sparta – Research Program of Keadas Cavern," *Bull Schweizerischen Gesellschaft Anthrop* 16.1-2 [2010]: 15). This evidence suggests that while the site may have been used to deposit skeletal remains, they were not unwanted neonates, but rather, the remains of Spartan traitors and enemies and "those convicted of serious crimes" (Pitsios, "Ancient Sparta," 15). However, in this particular case, it seems that Plutarch's reference to the disposal of "ill-born and deformed" neonates is merely part of his anti-Spartan invective, or in the very least part of his "Spartan mirage." The term "Spartan mirage" was coined by French historian François Ollier (*Le Mirage spartiate* [2 vols. Paris: de Boccard, 1933-1943]) and has been described as "...the partly distorted, partly imaginary picture of Sparta that its non-Spartan admirers needed and wanted to believe represented the reality" (P. Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001], 93).

[300] E.g., Plato, *De leg.* 773D.

[301] Amundsen, "Medicine and the Birth," 51.

[302] Plato, *De leg.* 773D and 783D-E; cf. "...the best men must cohabit with the best women in as many cases as possible and the worst with the worst in the fewest, and that the offspring of the one must be reared and that of the other not, if the flock is to be as perfect as possible" (Plato, *Resp.* 459d-e [Shorey, LCL]).

[303] *Resp.* 460c (Shorey, LCL). Plato also states that those who have already passed the prescribed age limit for the procreation of children may still have intercourse but should prevent any children conceived from being born, or if they are actually born, "should deal with them on the understanding that there is no rearing of such children" (Plato, *Resp.* 461c [Shorey, LCL]).

[304] *Pol.* 1335b 19-21 (Rackham, LCL).

While some have argued that Plato's reference to disposing of infants in secret is a euphemism for infanticide,[305] this interpretation seems less likely when the text is read in connection with Plato's additional comments on this topic in *Timaeus*.[306] Here Plato summarises his previous argument on limiting the breeding of the inferior and states in addition that the offspring of the bad (κακῶν) should be "secretly dispersed among the inferior citizens."[307] He then recommends that as the children grow they should be re-examined to ascertain their own abilities with the possibility they can be brought "back again."[308] When these texts are read together, Plato does not seem to be endorsing the killing of defective newborns, but rather, recommending some form of abandonment or exposure whereby a defective newborn is raised away from the general populace. It is also possible that Aristotle's comments on exposure are also to be understood in the same way.

In addition to the ambiguity of language regarding the actual act of "secreting away," some scholars suggest that these texts are not even reflective of current practice but instead are part of the authors' vision of a future utopia. In this respect, both Martha L. Rose and G. Gerritt van N. Viljoen suggest that Plato and Aristotle are only discussing a hypothetical "highly-regulated utopian state."[309] Indeed, Garland suggests that "The fact that Aristotle found it necessary to recommend that there should be a law 'to prevent the rearing of deformed children...demonstrates that some parents were inclined...to rear them."[310]

The issue of exposure/infanticide is raised again in Plato's *Theaetetus*.[311] Plato, through the character of Socrates, "uses the birth of a child who is unworthy of rearing as a metaphor for an empty idea."[312] While Martha L. Rose suggests that "only conjecture allows one to interpret the theoretical infant in question as physically deformed or mentally

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[305] Carrick, *Medical Ethics*, 114-115; M. Delcourt, *Stérilités mystérieuses et naissances maléfiques dans l'Antiquité classique* (BFPLUL 83; Paris: Librairie Droz, 1938), 42-43; contra Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, 82; Viljoen, "Plato and Aristotle," 64.

[306] Cf. Patterson, "Not Worth the Rearing," 106.

[307] *Tim.* 19a (trans. Jowett).

[308] *Tim.* 19a.

[309] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 34; cf. G. van N. Viljoen, "Plato and Aristotle on the Exposure of Infants at Athens," *AClass* 2 (1959): 58-69; Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 162; M. Huys, "The Spartan Practice of Selective Infanticide and its Parallels in Ancient Utopian Tradition," *AncSoc* 27 (1996): 47.

[310] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 15; Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure," 88; Huys, "Spartan Practice," 47; Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 32; Scott, "Unpicking a Myth," 147.

[311] Harris, "Child-Exposure," 4.

[312] Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Cultural Context of Deformity," 82.

weak,"[313] it is not impossible to suppose that in speaking of infants "unworthy" of being reared he has in mind those classifications he has used in the other texts – those who are born of weak/undesirable parents as well as those born with deformities. While Rose implies that it is impossible to gain any insight into current practice from this metaphorical reference to exposure, others suggest that "the whole comparison would be sheer nonsense unless a custom prevailed of disposing of defective newborns."[314]

As with Plutarch's claims regarding Sparta, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in the second century B.C.E., also speaks of a legal responsibility to dispose of the impaired child, although in this case, the text speaks specifically of exposure (ἐκτιθέναι) rather than infanticide. Dionysius attributes to Romulus, the founder of Rome, who was himself a victim of exposure,[315] a law requiring that all citizens are to raise all their male children and the first-born of the female children and that he (Romulus) "forbade them to destroy any children under three years of age unless they were maimed (ἀνάπηρον) or monstrous (τέρας) from their very birth."[316] These maimed or monstrous children he would permit to be exposed (ἐκτιθέναι) after showing the infant to the family's five closest neighbours.[317] While some historians doubt the historical accuracy of this law,[318] at the very least the text probably does still reflect "contemporary (Augustan) concerns about child-rearing and perhaps also social practices."[319]

What is significant in Dionysius' text is the description of the infants being "monstrous" (τέρας). While a "maimed" infant might refer to a neonate with any number of physical

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[313] *Staff of Oedipus*, 32.

[314] Amundsen, "Medicine and the Birth," 61; cf. Patterson, "'Not Worth the Rearing,'" 112.

[315] Livy 1.4.

[316] 2.15.

[317] 2.15.

[318] Boswell suggests that Dionysius' comments on this law are questionable as there is "no known source, (it is) written seven centuries after the alleged event, and supported by no other documentation, legal, historical, or literary" (Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers,* 59); cf. A. Allély, "Les enfants malformés et considérés comme prodigia à Rome et en Italie sous la république," *RÉA* 105.1 (2003): 130; H. Bennett, "Exposure of Infants in Ancient Rome," *CJ* 18.6 (1923): 343; Delcourt, *Stérilités mystérieuses*, 50-51; Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 16; contra Robert Villers suggests that it is likely that the law of Romulus was true in terms of needing 5 witnesses for the child because of the fact that the law required 5 witnesses in the case of drawing up a will (*Rome et le droit privé* [Paris: Albin Michel, 1977], 45).

[319] Evans Grubbs, "Infant Exposure," 90.

anomalies,[320] the language of *terata*, or monstrous births, focuses Dionysius' discussion on births of portentous significance. *Terata* were considered, especially in the Roman world, to be harbingers of evil and thus it was deemed necessary for such "monstrous" births to be expiated for the sake of the community.[321] "The Greek term τέρας referred both to a portent and, in a concrete sense, a physical monstrosity."[322] Likewise, the Latin word *monstrum* also indicated something physically unnatural whether that be a deformed infant or some other wondrous sign from the gods.[323] The use of the Greek τέρας or Latin *monstrum* reflected a belief in "a supernatural event thought to be a portent from the gods, a warning of some sort."[324] For this reason, it was the duty of every citizen to report any anomalous birth to the ruling authorities.[325] Livy, in his extensive list of portentous signs, describes not only those infants born with physical deformities but also those born with any unusual characteristics, for example, the birth of an infant with teeth,[326] the birth of an infant "as large as a four-year-old,"[327] those born of indeterminate sex[328] as well as the birth of twins or other multiple births.[329] In this sense, the need "destroy" the infant was less about whether the child would be an economic burden on its family or whether it would be unable to contribute to the greater good, but rather, it was concerned with keeping the city safe from the gods' impending wrath.[330]

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[320] Aristotle uses the same word to describe the birth of a baby with the head of a monkey (Arist., *Gen. An.* 769b) as he does in describing "the deformity of baldness" (*Gen. an.* 784A); cf. Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 33.

[321] W. den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome: Some Historical Aspects* (MBCBSup 57; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 94.

[322] D. Felton, "Rejecting and Embracing the Monstrous in Ancient Greece and Rome," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (ed. A.S. Mittman and P.J. Dendle; Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 104.

[323] In their extensive catalogues of *prodigium*, Livy, Julius Obsequens, and Cicero refer not only to deformed infants, those with severe physical impairments (Cic., *De div.* 1.121), but other 'unnatural' births such as the birth of hermaphrodites (Livy 1.56.5), multiple births (Obs. 25), and children who are born with teeth, who were all considered portents (Liv. 41.21.12).

[324] D. Felton, "Rejecting and Embracing," 104; cf. Allély, "Les enfants malformés et considérés," 130.

[325] Annie Allély notes that under Roman law there existed the *procuration prodigiorum*. These laws were related to the rites performed by the city in order to expiate the sins. Allély notes as part of ensuring that the sins were expiated that people had to be watching out for prodigies and report them to the state officials. Whether or not anomalous births were actually reported, however, is uncertain (Allély, "Les enfants malformés et considérés," 148).

[326] Livy 41.21.12.

[327] Livy 27.37.5.

[328] Livy 39.22.5. For more on this, see L. Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence: Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (trans. J. Lloyd; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[329] Julius Obsequens 14. For more on multiple births, see V. Dasen, "Multiple Births in Graeco-Roman Antiquity," *OJA* 16.1 (1997): 49-63.

[330] Allély, "Les enfants malformés et considérés," 127-156.

Cicero, in a text similar to that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, mentions a law included as part of the Twelve Tables dating to the fifth century B.C.E. whereby the birth of a deformed child is again seen as a matter of legal and civic import.[331] Cicero states that according to the Twelve Tables it was required that the *paterfamilias* should "kill quickly a deformed (*deformitas*) infant."[332] As was noted above, the *paterfamilias* had power over life and death (*ius vitae ac necis*) in his *domus* which included the right to decide the fate of any infant born within his *domus*. In contrast, this law also ensured that the *paterfamilias* retained rights over any children born to his household even if that child had been exposed and raised by someone else.[333]

Indeed, Martha L. Rose suggests that the only text that appears to have instructions that are meant for "practical application" is that of the second century C.E. medical writer Soranus.[334] In a section entitled "How to Tell the Newborn that is Worth Rearing" Soranus writes:

> ...the infant which is suited by nature for rearing will be distinguished by the fact that ...when put on the earth it immediately cries with proper vigour; for one that lives for some time without crying, or cries but weakly, is suspected of behaving so on account of some unfavourable condition. Also by the fact that it is perfect in all its parts, members and senses...that the natural functions of every <member> are neither sluggish nor weak...by conditions contrary to those mentioned, the infant not worth rearing is recognised."[335]

Although it is uncertain the extent to which infanticide or exposure of 'defective' newborns took place in the ancient world, what is depicted in our ancient sources is the idea that those infants that deviated from the anticipated norms were not ideal and did not meet the expected standards of the newborn. While our paleopathological and medical texts indicate that at least some parents did raise infants with congenital defects,[336] as far as our elite sources are concerned this was not ideal and would have continued to add to the stigma of those infants with physical and sensory impairments.

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[331] den Boer, *Private Morality*, 99.
[332] Cic., *De Leg.* 3.8.19 (Keyes, LCL).
[333] Evans Grubbs, "Hidden in Plain Sight," 297.
[334] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 34.
[335] *Gyn.* 2.10 (trans. Temkin).
[336] The Hippocratic texts refer to numerous congenital conditions that would have been present at birth but the child has still been raised. Examples include congenital dislocations of the hip, ankle, and wrist (*Art.* 55). This is confirmed also by paleopathological remains from the Roman period. For example, two skeletons with congenital spinal deformation were found buried together in a Roman camp in Corinth (Grmek, *Diseases in the Ancient*, 69-70); N.-G. Gejvall and F. Henschen, "Two Late Roman Skeletons with Malformation and Close Family Relationship from Ancient Corinth," *OAth* 8 [1968] 79-193).

§ 3.7.2 *Pharmakoi*

The practice of scapegoating is one that is presented throughout various ancient cultures[337] and appears in the Greek tradition mainly in the form of the φαρμακός or καθάρματα;[338] a human offering to cleanse the community "from the pollution and from their evil, and to find a cure for the disaster they were enduring."[339] Attestations to *pharmakoi* are limited in the Greco-Roman sources but do appear in both historical and mythological texts. The most detailed text is from the sixth-century B.C.E. poet Hipponax of Kolophon who expresses a desire that his enemies would be treated like *pharmakoi.* Hipponax then describes in detail a ritual of a *pharmakos* being well fed before being beaten on the genitals with sticks and eventually burned. The historicity of this text is clearly questionable because of its genre[340] but other more historical texts also describe the expulsion of *pharmakoi*. The other attestations are divided into two categories. The first group attests to the necessity of *pharmakoi* under exceptional circumstances such as in the case of famine and drought. Such an example exists in the scholia on Aristophanes' *Plutus* 454e:

> [. . .] ὅτε γὰρ χρησμὸς περὶ τοιούτου ἐγένετο, εὑρίσκετο δυσειδὴς πάντα ἐκεῖσε ἄνθρωπος. τοῦτον ἕκαιον, "κάθαρμα" ποιοῦντες τῆς πόλεως διά τινα θεομηνίαν. ἀρμένου οὖν τούτου εἰς τὸ καυθῆναι, περιέψων αὐτὸν πάντες, λέγοντες "γενοῦ ἡμῖν ἀπαλλαγὴ κακῶν."
>
> [. . .] For when there was an oracle concerning such an event [a disaster or offence against the gods], a thoroughly ugly man was found and brought to that place. They burned him, making him the offscourings of the city because of divine wrath. Therefore, when he had been selected for burning, everyone wiped him clean, saying, "Become a deliverance from evils for us."[341]

A second group of sources refers to *pharmakoi* being sacrificed annually as part of the Thargelia, the festival dedicated to Apollo.[342]

Pharmakoi are regularly described as those of low-status and often with some physical anomaly. A scholion on Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* suggests that "the most unpleasant and mistreated by nature, maimed and lame man, such sort...they sacrificed"

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[337] Bradley McLean suggests that the use of the word "scapegoat" isn't appropriate for the non-Jewish sources and proposes the use of the word "scapeman" (B. McLean, "On the Revision of Scapegoat Terminology," *Numen* 37.2 [1990]: 168-173).

[338] Eupolis fr. 384 (=117K); Scholia on Aristophanes *Frogs* 733; Aristophanes *Plutus* 454. Also described as *perikatharma* and *peripsema* (cf. Bremmer, 304).

[339] Scholia on Aristophanes' *Knights* 1136c (trans. Compton); cf. Hipponax 5–10W/26–30Dg; 6Dg = Tzetzes *Chiliads* 5.728ff.

[340] Jan Bremmer notes that invective played an important role in ancient poetry and therefore it is difficult to see this as a genuine historical representation of reality ("Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece," *HSCPh* 87 [1983]: 300).

[341] Trans. Compton.

[342] Hipponax 104W/107Dg; *The Suda s.v. Pharmakos* = Harpokration.

(τὸν ἀηδέστατον καὶ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως ἐπιβεβουλευμένον πηρόν, χωλόν, τοὺς τοιούτους ... ἔθυον).[343] A scholion on Aristophanes' *Knights* describes the "*pharmakos*" as someone "exceedingly low-born, penniless, and useless (λίαν ἀγεννεῖς καὶ πένητας καὶ ἀχρήστους)"[344] and according to Tzetzes, it was the most deformed of all who was selected as the *pharmakos* (τὸν πάντων ἀμορφότερον).[345] While in some instances *pharmakoi* were put to death,[346] on other occasions it appears they are expelled from the city as a symbolic death.[347]

Although the term *pharmakos* is absent from the narrative, Philostratus certainly appeals to the idea of expiation in his account of Apollonius of Tyana ridding the city of Ephesus of the plague. Philostratus records that Apollonius had the whole population assemble in the theatre at the statue of Heracles Apotropaeus. Here he found old man "blinking his eyes as if blind...he was clad in rags and was very squalid of countenance. Apollonius then directed the Ephesians to "'Pick up stones as you can and hurl them at this enemy of the gods.'" While the Ephesians were at first reluctant, Apollonius urged them to action and "some of them began to take shots and hit him with their stones." At this, the beggar "who had seemed to blink and be blind, gave them all a sudden glance and his eyes were full of fire." At this moment, the Ephesians "realized it was a demon and stoned it so thoroughly as to raise a pile of stones on it."[348]

The negative associations with *pharmakoi* are clearly apparent in the way the word comes to be used by later sources as a form of insult.[349] Although our sources regarding *pharmakoi* are limited, again this imagery continues to reinforce the worthlessness of the people with physical disabilities or anomalies that it these people who would be among the first to be selected as a possible sacrifice.

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[343] Scholia on Aristophanes *Frogs* 733 (trans. Compton).

[344] Scholia on Aristophanes *Knights* 1136c (trans. O'Neill).

[345] Tzetzes Schol. Aristophanes *Frogs* 733a (trans. Compton); Schol. Aesch. *Sept.* 680.

[346] Scholia on Aristophanes *Knights* 1136c; Scholia on Ovid *Ibis* 467-468.

[347] Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 90 (trans. Pfeiffer), with *diēgēsis* II; Petronius, fr. 1 = Servius *Commentaries on Virgil's Aeneid* 3.57

[348] Philostr., *Apoll.* 4.10 (Jones, LCL).

[349] Lysias refers to his enemy Andokides as a *pharmakos* and an abomination (6.53). Demosthenes describes Aristogeiton also as a *pharmakos* (25.80).

It is impossible to know the extent to which the practices of infanticide and the disposal of *pharmakoi* took place in the Greco-Roman world. Though there are numerous sources attesting to the widespread nature of the exposure of infants, it cannot be known the extent to which infants were exposed purely on the basis of physical and sensory impairment. While the reality may well have been that none of these practices were particularly common, they all still appear as part of the presentation of somatic ideals in the Greco-Roman world, reinforcing an idealised view of the body that equated somatic deviancy with that considered against nature. In this sense, the general populace were under the obligation to be alert for cases of deviancy with the responsibility of passing this information on to the authorities. This is the case with both deformed infants and other forms of *prodigia*. It was then the role of the authorities to dispose of the deviant infant, or in the case of other non-human *prodigia*, select a *pharmakos* to serve the expiatory needs of the community.

§ 3.8 Collecting the Deviant Body

Scholars have noted that from the first century B.C.E. onwards, responses to the deviant body progressed from feelings of abhorrence and fear to that of curiosity. Carlin A. Barton notes that by the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire, Romans became "entranced by the horrific, the miraculous, and the untoward, hypnotized by violence and cruelty and death."[350] Barton notes that this interest in the "horrific" expressions of humanity was manifested especially in the spectacle of gladiatorial contests. What began as battles between condemned criminals and "the refuse of Roman's wars"[351] quickly developed into a popular form of entertainment throughout the Empire.[352] In addition to the expression of violence, however, also grew an interest in non-hegemonic forms of the body. While this included the grotesqueness of the beaten and bloodied gladiator, this interest also developed for people with unusual and deviant bodies. This is because, according to the Roman lyric poet Horace, it is the "abnormal and unusual – the *curious* – that captures and transfixes the eyes."[353]

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[350] C.A. Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 87.

[351] Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, 13.

[352] Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, 13.

[353] Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, 87; cf. Hor., *Ep.* 16.

Literature from this period indicates a surge in interest in the unusual and curious. Pliny records that during their imperial reign both Augustus and Claudius sought out those deemed to be the tallest men in the Empire at the time with Augustus even keeping the bones of such men on display as "objects of curiosity."[354] Suetonius notes regarding Augustus that

> if anything rare and worth seeing was ever brought to the city, it was his habit to make a special exhibit of it in any convenient place on days when no shows were appointed. For example a rhinoceros in the Saepta, a tiger on the stage and a snake of fifty cubits in front of the Comitium.[355]

In addition, Augustus was also known to include among his displays people with various physical impairments and other unusual physical characteristics. Suetonius records that Augustus presented a man named "Lycius, whom he showed merely as a curiosity; for he was less than two feet tall, weighed but seventeen pounds, yet had a stentorian voice."[356] Pliny likewise informs us that a man named Conopas, who was the shortest man alive during the principate of Augustus, served as a *deliciae* or pet of the emperor's grand-daughter Julia.[357] Whatever interest Augustus may have had for collecting deviant bodies, according to the *Historia Augusta*, it paled in comparison to that of Emperor Elagabalus.[358] Elagabalus' penchant for deviant bodies was such that he kept an enormous collection amongst those who resided at his court. The *Historia Augusta* states that when Alexander Severus came to power, he inherited an extensive collection of human oddities from Elagabalus such as

> *Nanos et nanas et moriones et vocales exsoletos et omnia acroamata et pantomimos populo donavit; qui autem usui non erant singulis civitatibus putavit alendos singulos, ne gravarentur specie mendicorum.*
>
> Dwarfs, both male and female, fools, catamites who had good voices, all kinds of entertainers at table and actors of pantomimes he made public property; those however, who were not of any use were assigned, each to a different town...in order that no one town might be burdened by a new kind of beggar.[359]

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[354] Pliny, *HN* 7.16.75.

[355] Suet., *Aug.* 43.3 (Rolfe, LCL).

[356] Suet., *Aug.* 43.3 (Rolfe, LCL).

[357] Pliny, *HN* 7.75.

[358] On the historical reliability of the *Historia Augusta*, see R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); D. Pausch, "Unreliable Narration in the *Historia Augusta*," *Ancient Narrative* 8 (2010): 115-136.

[359] HA, *Alex. Sev.* 34.2 (Magie, LCL).

Other Roman emperors were also inclined to keep company with people considered to be out of the ordinary. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, the Emperor Claudius liked to pass time in conversation with a certain "buffoon" named Julius Pelignus who Tacitus describes as being "made doubly contemptible by hebetude of mind and grotesqueness of body (*deridiculo corporis iuxta despiciendus*)."[360] Suetonius also writes about the Emperor Domitian, who, at public events such as gladiatorial battles was often seen in the company of a boy with an "abnormally small head."[361] Tacitus also informs us about a certain Vatinius during the reign of Nero about whom he states: "Vatinius ranked among the foulest prodigies of that court; the product of a shoemaker's shop, endowed with a misshapen body (*corpore detorto*) and a scurrile wit, he had been adopted at the outset as a target for buffoonery."[362]

This developed interest in collecting the deviant body appears to have culminated in the development of a "monster market" in Rome which specialised in the sale of slaves with various physical abnormalities. Plutarch writes

> there are some who take no account of...the beauty of the boys and women for sale, but haunt the monster market (*teraton agora*), examining those who have no calves, or are weasel-armed, or have three eyes, or ostrich-heads, and searching to learn whether there has been born some commingled shaped and misformed prodigy.[363]

While there can be no doubt that Plutarch's speech contains some degree of hyperbole, there are numerous examples from the ancient sources of people purchasing physically or intellectually impaired slaves. The Greek rhetorician Longinus writes that the desire to have a deformed slave was such that some children were deliberately maimed by being bound and confined in boxes with the intention of creating human dwarfs.[364] The search for a slave with an intellectual disability is behind a quip that appears in Martial's Epigrams: "He had been described as an idiot; I bought him for twenty thousand sesterces. Give me back my money, Gargilianus; he has his wits."[365]

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[360] Tac., *Ann.* 12.49.1 (Jackson, LCL).

[361] "During the whole of every gladiatorial show there always stood at his feet a small boy clad in scarlet, with an abnormally small head (*paruo portentosoque capite*), with whom he used to talk a great deal, and sometimes seriously" (Suet., *Dom.* 4.2; Rolfe, LCL).

[362] Tac., *Ann.* 15.34 (Jackson, LCL).

[363] Plut., *De curios.* 520c (Helmbold, LCL).

[364] Long., *Subl.* 44.5. It is this idea of deliberate mutilation that seems to be behind the fictional story in Seneca's *Controversaie* entitled "The Crippled Beggars." In this account, Seneca describes a story about a man who would pick up exposed children and deliberately cripple them in order to use them as beggars to promote sympathy (10.4.1-25).

[365] 8.13; Ker, LCL.

§ 3.8.1 Entertainment

The desire to collect non-hegemonic bodies was motivated, at least in part, by the belief that deviant bodies were in themselves a form of entertainment. As has been noted by numerous scholars of the ancient world, one response to physical and intellectual deviancy was one of laughter and mockery.[366] Mary Grant notes that "laughter has its origin in the contemplation of the ugly or defective is a fundamental and frequently recurring definition in Greek and Roman theories of the laughable."[367] Though Robert Garland's suggestion that the "derision of the disabled is almost certainly a universal phenomenon"[368] is probably over-stating the situation, there is certainly evidence from our ancient sources that people with physical impairments were a source of amusement to the nondisabled members of the ancient community.

According to Aristotle, "the laughable is one category of the shameful."[369] Both the Roman rhetoricians Cicero and Quintilian express similar views suggesting that those with physical anomalies were the ideal subjects for ridicule and derision. Cicero, although advocating a belief that such humour can be taken too far and end up in jokes of "bad taste," still endorses the view that "there is good matter enough for jesting" in deformity (*deformitas*) and bodily disfigurement (*corporis vitia*).[370] Quintilian concurs citing Cicero and stating that "laughter is not far from derision. As Cicero says, it has its basis in a certain deformity and ugliness (*deformitate aliqua et turpitudin*)."[371] Indeed, Pliny the Elder, in the context of discussing a range of human and animal "monstrosities," proposes that not only do such anomalies offer amusement but that nature deemed that it would be so: "These and similar varieties of the human race have been made by the ingenuity of Nature as toys for herself (*ludibrium*) and marvels for us (*miraculum*)."[372]

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[366] Corbeill, *Controlling Laughter*, *passim*; Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 73-86; M.A. Grant, *The Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the Laughable: The Greek Rhetoricians and Cicero* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1924), *passim*; Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 34-48.

[367] Grant, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories*, 19.

[368] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 73. Stahl makes a similar hyperbolic statement suggesting, "It was not only those who (willingly or unwillingly performed for the amusement of others who had to deal with being derided – every disabled person was constantly subject to being mocked because of his or her physical condition" ("Physically Deformed and Disabled People," 723).

[369] *Poetics* 5.1449b 33f (Halliwell et al., LCL).

[370] Cicero, *De or.* 2.58.238-239.

[371] Quint., *Inst.* 6.3.

[372] Pliny, *HN* 7.32 (Rackham, LCL).

Such mockery, according to Laurence L. Welborn, is "an extreme expression of 'aesthetic disdain' towards the weak and defective."[373] It is precisely through the mockery of the marginal members of society that the nondisabled elite male can be assured of his own identity.[374] Examples of such mockery are attested throughout our Greco-Roman sources. As noted above, vilification of one's judicial or rhetorical opponents often involved personal attacks which drew attention to any deviations in physical appearance, body language, or character. However, it is not just those engaged in rhetorical repartee who became the brunt of mockery and derision. Historians have noted that with economic changes that took place in the early years of the Empire, the poor were more visible in public places than had previously been the case.[375] Economic destitution, it seems, coupled with the growing interest in collecting deviant bodies led numerous people with unusual physical characteristics to install themselves in more permanent seats of mockery. According to our ancient sources, entertainment at public events was one way an individual with a physical or sensory impairment or with atypical physical features could find employment. Examples from our literary and iconographical sources indicate that people with unusual physical characteristics were involved in a range of entertainment during the Imperial period. This entertainment included musicians, dancers, pankratiasts, athletes, as well as roles in the theatre. The specific connection between impaired entertainers and the Greco-Roman symposium will be explored in more detail in chapter five (§ 5.8) thus we will here focus on the particular example of the theatre.

The role of laughter-maker, jester, or fool has a long association with those with physical impairments or unusual somatic features. As noted above, this is not merely for the apparent comic value associated with the non-hegemonic body but because the very idea of such 'otherness' serves to reinforce the superiority of the elite class.[376] Such a sentiment is expressed by Cicero in his discussions of the mime:

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[373] Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 142; cf. Weiler, "Inverted Kalokagathia," 16.

[374] Cf. Giuliani, "De Seligen Krüppel," 718.

[375] Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 3; cf. G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 189-191, 195; Alföldy, *Social History of Rome*, 135.

[376] According to Vicki J. Vanik, "Fools and jesters have existed as important figures in nearly all cultures. Sometimes referred to as clowns, they are typological characters who have conventional roles in the arts, especially to engage in nonsense. But fools are also a part of social and religious history; they may be individuals, often deformed, who live particular sorts of prescribed and marginalized lives in most societies; or they may play key roles in the serious or mock rituals that support social and religious beliefs" ("Preface," in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art and History: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook* [Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998], xiii).

> For can there be anything so droll as a pantaloons (*sannio*)? Yet it is for his face, his grimaces, his mimicry of mannerisms, his intonation, and in fact his general bearing, that he is laughed at. Humorous I am able to call him, but humorous for a low comedian, and not in the sense in which I would have an orator humorous. Accordingly this kind of wit, though raising as much laughter as any, is not at all our kind: it caricatures peevishness, fanaticism, mistrust, pomposity and folly...(it) consists in mimicry, but this we may employ only by stealth, if at all, and but momentarily, as fuller use of it does not befit the well-bred. A third kind is grimacing, which is beneath our dignity. A fourth is indecency, not only degrading to a public speaker, but hardly sufferable at a gentlemen's dinner-party.[377]

For Cicero, while there is some humour in this kind of comedy, it is a comedy of "folly" and "mimicry" and not the kind performed by the "well-bred." This same sentiment is expressed in a letter of Pliny the Younger to his friend Julius Genitor responding to the latter's complaints about the entertainment at a recent symposium. Pliny notes Genitor's complaints about the "mimes (*scurrae*), clowns (*morio*) and male 'dancers,'" whom Genitor has allegedly described as "monsters" (*prodigium*) and sympathesises with his disdain stating "I find nothing novel or amusing to attract me in that sort of 'dancer's' charms, in a mime's impudence, or a clown's folly (*si quid molle a cinaedo, petulans a scurra, stultum a morione profertur*)."[378]

Robert Garland suggests that "the comic theatre...provided the ideal context for the verbal and physical derision of the disabled."[379] For this reason, there are numerous examples of dwarves, and others with unusual physical characteristics, fulfilling the role of the mime (μῖμος) in the comic theatre. Aulus Gellius refers in passing to those men "conspicuous for their deformity (*deformitas*) and their ludicrous (*deridiculus*) appearance (who) imitate actors and play the buffoon."[380] Cicero likewise in his discussions regarding mimes "speaks of their general deformity, their baldness and their ridiculous grimaces."[381] Among this class of deviant mimes was a particular group that Laurence L. Welborn has identified as the "comic-philosophic" mime. So, a wise fool who, in his utter foolishness, "is able to give voice to irreverent thoughts about the rulers, thoughts that are forbidden to normal members of society."[382]

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[377] Cic., *De Or.* 2.61.251-252 (Sutton & Rackham, LCL).
[378] Pliny, *Ep.* 9.17.2-3 (Radice, LCL)
[379] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 77.
[380] *NA* 11.13.10 (Rolfe, LCL).
[381] Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 121.
[382] Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 121.

The image of this wise fool is encapsulated in the imagery of the Greek fabulist Aesop. Though Aesop purportedly lived in the sixth century B.C.E., his inclusion in Plutarch's *Banquet of the Seven Sages* and the production of a biography on Aesop's life around the time of the early Empire, revitalised interest in his skills as a comic mime. Though it is difficult to determine the historical reliability of the biography, it is noted there that Aesop was "of loathsome aspect, worthless as a servant, potbellied, misshapen of head, snub-nosed, swarthy, dwarfish, bandy-legged, short-armed, squint-eyed, liver-lipped – a portentous monstrosity."[383] In this way, "Aesop is portrayed as a typical anti-hero, physically and socially inferior but mentally the master of his superiors, and as the champion of popular wisdom, problem-solving, and fable-telling."[384]

In sum, the role of the 'deformed' fool in the mime and the unflattering popular depiction of Aesop the fable-teller as a "portentous monstrosity" demonstrate that in Greco-Roman society at least some forms of entertainment were characterised by a mockery of those with unusual physical characteristics. As a result, some people were willing to trade on their physical anomalies in such a way that would allow them to find positions of employment within the houses of the wealthy and elite of the Greco-Roman world.

§ 3.8.2 'Grotesque' Figurines

According to many scholars, these ugly and misshapen actors of theatre are not only immortalised in the literature of the Greco-Roman world but also in various art forms. Amongst the vast array of terracotta figurines from the Hellenistic and Roman periods is a category of figurines generally categorised as 'grotesque.' While opinions differ regarding the distinction between figurines classed as grotesques and those considered caricatures,[385] grotesques are understood to represent the very real distortions and 'deformities' of real people.[386] In this way, William E. Stevenson, in his work on grotesque figurines, describes

[383] *Life of Aesop* 1 (trans. Daly).

[384] G.-J. van Dijk, "Aesop" in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece* (ed. N.G. Wilson; New York: Routledge, 2006), 19.

[385] For a recent discussion on this issue, see A.G. Mitchell, "Disparate Bodies in Ancient Artefacts: The Function of Caricature and Pathological Grotesques among Roman Terracotta Figurines," in *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies:* a capite ad calcem (ed. C. Laes, C.F. Goodey, and M.L. Rose; Brill: Leiden, 2013), 275-298.

[386] However, these categories are nebulous and "do not constitute as uniform a group as the modern collective term seems to suggest" (E. Süvegh, "Hellenistic Grotesque Terracotta Figurines," *Dissertationes Archaeologicae* 3.2 [2014]: 143).

this particular style of terracotta figurines as "pathological," indicating that the features of these figurines are not exaggerations but crafted to replicate real-life illnesses and malformations.[387] In general, these pathological grotesque figurines are characterised by "bodily deformities, such as a hunch, a protruding paunch, crooked legs, and exaggerated features, and they all have one distinguishing mark, a large phallus."[388] Both dwarfs and hunchbacks are commonly attested among these grotesque figurines (see fig 3.1, 3.2).

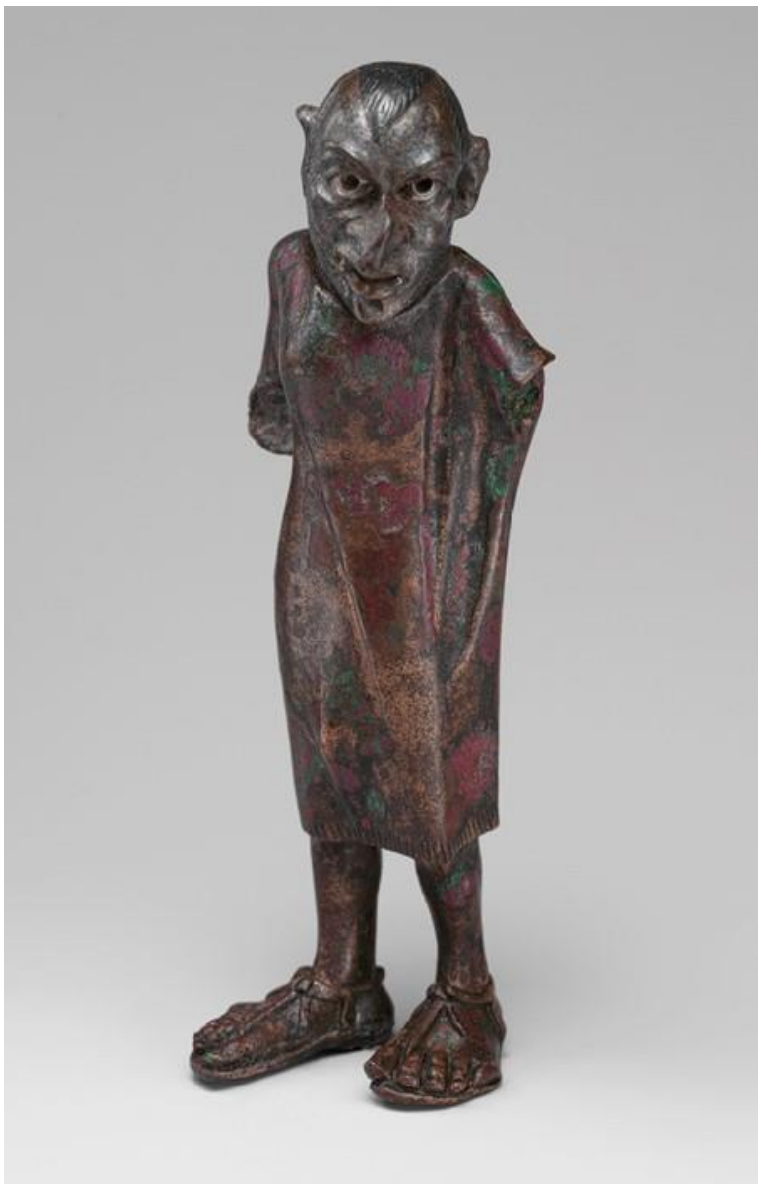

Fig. 3.1 Hellenistic Greek Bronze
Grotesque mime
2nd century BCE – 1st century CE
New York Metropolitan Museum

[387] Stevenson, *Pathological Grotesque*, *passim.*
[388] G.M.A. Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime," *AJA* 17.2 (1913): 151.

It has been the opinion of numerous scholars addressing the grotesque figurines that their origins lie with the Greek theatre and in particular the actors of New Comedy.[389] Gisela M.A. Richter in her work on grotesque figurines, for example, considers the figurines as fitting the descriptions of the mime from New Comedy reported in our ancient sources.[390] She notes in particular the similarities between Cicero's descriptions of the mime as "deformed" with "foolish and ridiculous grimaces"[391] with the artistic renderings of the grotesque figurines. Richter cites the example of a bronze grotesque figurine housed at the New York Metropolitan museum (fig. 3.1) which along with other grotesque figurines epitomises the "same bodily deformity, the grimaces, the large phallus, the baldness, the occasional moodiness of expression (as well as the) generally ridiculous and coarse appearance" associated with the literary descriptions of the mime.[392] While this particular figurine features no inscriptions, some examples of grotesque figurines have also been recovered which include inscriptions labelling them as μιμολόγοι (mimes).[393] Other grotesque figurines are also indisputably in possession of masks or present other features that directly connect them with the theatre as well as the mime.[394]

Gisela Richter's work on the mime and the grotesque figurines was initially written in part to refute the claims of Alan J.B. Wace who considered the grotesque figurines a form of *probaskania*, that is, those objects that were used to deflect the 'evil eye.'[395] For Richter, the sole purpose of the grotesque figurines was to depict the mimes of the theatre and to emphasise their entertainment value.[396] In contrast, Wace had argued that the Greek terracottas were not examples of high art but were crude, mass-produced items that would have been readily available for purchase in Greco-Roman antiquity.[397] These attributes in

[389] The identity of the grotesque figurines has been debated since the time of Jean M. Charcot and Paul Richer from the *La Salpêtriere* school in Paris when they first suggested that the figurines were inspired by genuine pathology (*Les Difformes et les Malades dans L'art* [Amsterdam: B.M. Israel, 1889], *passim.*

[390] Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime," 154.

[391] Cic., *De or.* 2.68-72; Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime," 154.

[392] Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime," 154.

[393] Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime," 155.

[394] See Stevenson, *Pathological Grotesque*, 53.

[395] Wace, "Grotesques and the Evil Eye," 109.

[396] Richter, "Grotesques and the Mime," 151. Both Hetty Goldman and Margarete Bieber follow Richter in considering the grotesques as representations of the mime (e.g., H. Goldman, "Two Terracotta Figurines from Tarsus," *AJA* 47.1 [1943]: 22-34; M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939); *idem*, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic* Age (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).

[397] Wace, "Grotesques and the Evil Eye," 109.

combination with specific imagery known to deflect evil led Wace to suggest that the "majority of (these figurines) were…used as charms against the Evil Eye."[398]

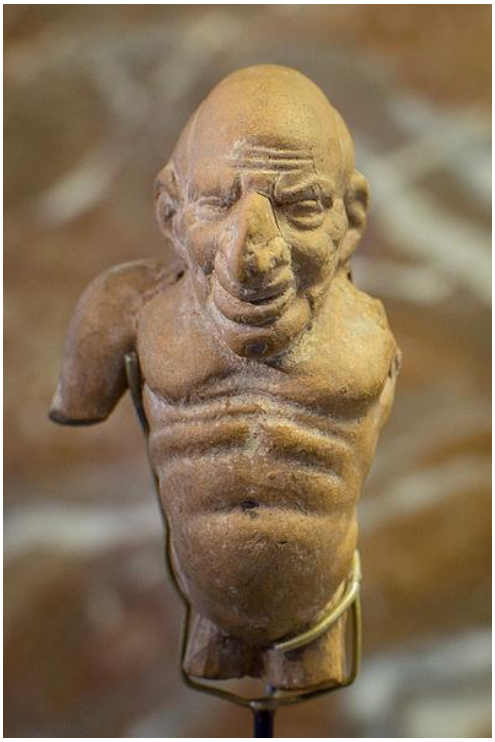

Fig. 3.2 Terracotta figurine
2nd century B.C.E. - 2nd century C.E.
Louvre, Paris

The ὀφθαλμὸς βάσκανος or the 'evil eye' refers to the power possessed by a person to bring harm or injury to others simply through one's gaze. Such power is wrought through feelings of envy (φθόνος) or jealousy (βασκανια) at the "happiness, beauty and prosperity" of others.[399] The alleged power of the 'evil eye' is described by Plutarch in his *Table Talk*, with the character of Mestrius Florus attesting his knowledge of such things: "We know, for instance, of persons who seriously hurt children by looking at them, influencing and impairing their susceptible, vulnerable constitutions."[400] Fear of the 'evil eye' was such that methods and devices developed as a means of averting or deflecting the power of its gaze. These defensive items are known as προβασκανία (probaskania) or apotropaia[401] and, according to Pliny, were used widely from infants through to those in the highest

[398] Wace, "Grotesques and the Evil Eye," 109.

[399] V. Dasen, "Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," in *The Materiality of Magic* (ed. D. Boschung and J.N. Bremmer; Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 181.

[400] Plut., *Quaest.* 680c-683b (Clement & Hoffleit, LCL).

[401] The Greek word ἀποτρόπαιος is "a descriptive term meaning 'averting evil'; it derives from the Greek verbal root *apotrépein*, 'to hinder, avert evil, or desist'" (P. Keegan, *Graffiti in Antiquity* [Abingdon: Routledge, 2014], 134).

leadership as a form of protection against evil.[402] *Probaskania* could take the form of amulets or other jewellery to be worn upon the body,[403] mosaics (see fig. 3.3; 3.4), as well as mobiles or ornamental decorations that could be hung outside of homes or workplaces[404] or any manner of object that could be worn or displayed.

The inclusion of specific symbols indicated that an item or image was meant to function apotropaically. Doro Levi suggests that "tridents, swords, spears, arrows, daggers, and also nail or pins" were all considered to function apotropaically and appear regularly in connection with the 'evil eye.'[405] Alan J.B. Wace also notes the frequent depiction of enlarged phalloi which he describes as "a most potent charm against the evil eye."[406] Such visual representations of *probaskania* are to be found in two mosaic portions of flooring uncovered in Antioch. Not only do these mosaics depict many of the images closely associated with *probaskania*, but both of these also feature people with unusual somatic characteristics. The first mosaic (fig. 3.3) features a 'grotesque' figure of a dwarf playing an aulos. The figure has an enlarged phallus and is clutching sharpened objects in his hands while turning away from an image of an eye which is surrounded by a range of apotropaic items such as a dog, a trident, and a scorpion.[407] The Greek phrase *καί σύ* ("and you") also appears in this mosaic, a formula also commonly used on *probaskania*. Despite the clear interpretation of the text, it is unclear precisely what it meant by the phrase. It is possible the "and you" is meant in a positive sense of including one's friends amongst those being protected against the 'evil eye.' In contrast, the phrase may have served as more of a threat to one's enemies.[408] A second mosaic found in the same location omits the image of the eye itself but retains the phrase *καὶ σύ* and enlarged phalloi, this time

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[402] "And yet the baby is further under the divine protection of *Fascinus*, guardian not only of babies but of generals (*imperatores*) [...] hanging under chariots of generals at their triumphs he defends them as a physician from jealousy (*medicus inuidiae*)" (Pliny, *NH* 28.39 [Jones, LCL]).

[403] For numerous examples of apotropaic amulets, see Dasen, "Probaskania," *passim*.

[404] Lisa Trentin describes two hanging vases featuring hunchbacks possibly used for this purpose (*Hunchback in Hellenistic and Roman Art*, 47-52).

[405] D. Levi, "The Evil Eye and the Lucky Hunchback" in *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* (ed. R. Stilwell; vol. 3; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), 221.

[406] "Grotesques and the Evil Eye," *BSA* 10 (1903/1904): 110.

[407] Levi, "Evil Eye," 220.

[408] Levi, "Evil Eye," 226; cf. S. De Luca and A. Lena, "The Mosaic of the Thermal Bath Complex of Magdala Reconsidered: Archaeological Context, Epigraphy and Iconography" in *Knowledge and Wisdom: Archaeological and Historical Essays in Honour of Leah Di Segni* (ed. G.C. Bottini, L.D. Chrupcała, and J. Patrich; Milan: Edizioni Terra Santa, 2014), 11.

featured on a misshapen hunchback (fig. 3.4 cf. fig. 3.5). This mosaic is commonly referred to as the "lucky hunchback."[409]

Fig. 3.3 Roman Mosaic
2nd century C.E.
House of the Evil Eye, Antioch

It is this link between apotropaic imagery and deviant humans such as hunchbacks and dwarves which has led scholars to suggest that the range of grotesque figurines from the Greco-Roman period were also used as apotropaia. Wace, for example, argues that many of the characteristics commonly appearing on the grotesque figurines such as the hunched back and grotesque facial features, are also frequently attested in other visual representations of the 'evil eye.'[410] Wace noted that not only did the Greek terracotta figurines feature grotesque physical characteristics but they are also regularly depicted as

[409] Levi, "Evil Eye," *passim*; L. Trentin, "What's in a Hump? Re-examining the Hunchback in the Villa Albani-Torlonia," *CCJ* 55 (2009): 132 n. 6.
[410] Wace, "Grotesques and the Evil Eye," 109.

being ithyphallic.[411] Indeed, as William E. Stevenson suggests, it is "the presence of the emphasized or overstated phallus in many grotesque figures, especially dwarfs, that points to their actual nature as apotropaia."[412] The "power of the phallus" to reflect evil in combination with hunchbacks and dwarfs served as a powerful source of *probaskania* (see figs. 3.3 & 3.4).[413]

Fig. 3.4 Roman Mosaic
"The Lucky Hunchback"
2nd century C.E.
House of the Evil Eye, Antioch

While earlier scholars debated the relationship of the grotesque figurines to the theatre or apotropaia, Robert Garland suggests that such a differentiation of their function is actually a moot point. He proposes that it is not necessary to choose between interpreting the figurines as mimes or as apotropaia but that both interpretations can exist simultaneously.[414] Indeed, Clairève Grandjouan proposes that even if a distinction did exist between "genre, theatrical and grotesque figurines" during the Hellenistic period, such stark categorisation diminished during the Empire.[415] The most likely reason, she

[411] Wace, "Grotesques and the Evil Eye," 113.
[412] Stevenson, *Pathological Grotesque*, 46.
[413] Stevenson, *Pathological Grotesque*, 47; Trentin, "What's in a Hump?," 148.
[414] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 110.
[415] *The Athenian Agora: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens; vol. 6: Terracottas and Plastic Lamps of the Roman Period* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1961), 23.

contends, is as a result of the developing fascination with "the use of deformed persons for the mime and other classes of entertainment."[416] As a result, the overlapping imagery of the grotesqueries of the mime and the ugliness of the *probaskania* combine to produce an incredibly powerful apotropaic tool.

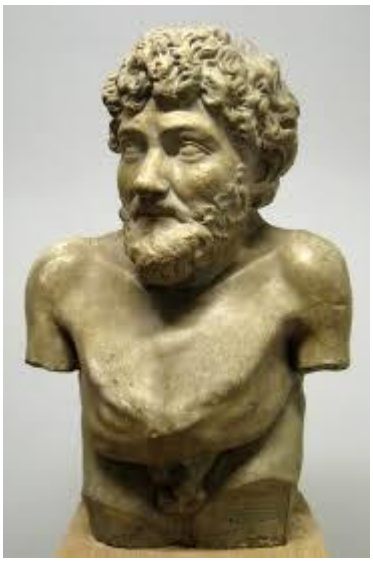

Fig. 3.5 Marble bust
2nd century C.E.
Rome, Villa Albani[417]

Not satisfied with merely visual representations of grotesque people, there is also good evidence to suggest that by the Roman period a more potent form of apotropaia were used, that is, actual embodied people with various disabilities, deformities, and somatic irregularities. Indeed, it is certainly possible that using people with disability as a form of real-life probaskania is likely to be one of the motivations for the Roman emperor's predilection for the company of misshapen and grotesque companions (see § 3.8).[418] The use of both the mime and people with deformity as talismans against the "evil eye" is encapsulated in the representation of the "misshapen" Aesop. According to the *Life of Aesop*, the "dwarfish...monstrosity" Aesop was "dumb and could not talk"[419] and had been purchased as a slave by his master specifically because of his humped and misshapen appearance in order that he might serve as a living apotropaia.[420]

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[416] *Athenian Agora*, 23

[417] For a detailed analysis of this particular marble hunchback, see Trentin, "What's in a Hump?," 130-156.

[418] Cf. Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, 168; Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 110; Stevenson, *Pathological Grotesque*, 58.

[419] *Life of Aesop* 1 (trans. Daly).

[420] *Life of Aesop* 16 (trans. Daly).

Bettina Bergman in her work on the spectacle in the Greco-Roman world has argued that the grotesque figurines and other depictions of human anomalies served an additional purpose.[421] Bergman suggests that because of the low rate of literacy in the ancient world that visual representation was a significant contribution to the way the general populace understood and responded to various elements in the community.[422] She argues that while images of deformed and ugly people would have been employed as *probaskania*, at the same time they served to fulfil the curiosity of eager onlookers from both the elite and non-elite classes alike.[423] In this way, the image of the grotesque and physically impaired fulfilled the dual role of both deflecting the gaze of the 'evil eye' while simultaneously drawing the gaze of the audience to themselves. The purchase of grotesque figurines, or even finding amusement in the observation of such figurines, was a more complex interaction than a perverse voyeurism. Rather, this obsession with the grotesque and deviant allowed the public in antiquity "to implicate themselves pleasurably in the spectacle of deviancy while at the same time reaffirming their own non-deviant status."[424]

In this final section we have seen that by the time of Empire there was a growing interest in the collection of figurines as well as real-life people with physical and sensory disability as well as others with non-hegemonic body forms. While it was the responsibility of the elite male to avoid or minimise any signs of somatic irregularity in himself, the presence of impairment or deviancy in another person or object could make them more desirable. Such deviant bodies were sought after by the time of the Empire to function in a number of ways. The belief that the unusual and deformed were by their very nature entertaining is made apparent in the works of Cicero and Quintilian, and as such, the collection and display of such bodies brought amusement to the viewer. For this reason, such impaired and deformed bodies were used as a form of spectacle at public events such as gladiatorial battles as well as in private symposia. The specific example of deviant bodies used in the context of banqueting and symposia will be explored in more detail in chapter five (§ 5.8). The distinction between the elite male body which must *appear* whole and in balance but

[421] B. Bergmann, "Introduction: The Art of Ancient Spectacle," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Studies in the History of Art 56; ed. B. Bergmann and C. Kondoleon; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 9.

[422] Bergmann, "Introduction," 15.

[423] Bergmann, "Introduction," 15.

[424] J. Walters, "Making a Spectacle: Deviant Men, Invective, and Pleasure," *Arethusa* 31.3 (1998): 355-356.

not draw unwanted attention is thus juxtaposed to the undesirable and imperfect body which becomes a public body *to be viewed.* This paradox is all the more apparent through considerations of the deformed and impaired body as *probaskania*; it is the very repugnance and ugliness of their non-hegemonic bodies that can both attract and deflect the potentially destructive powers of the 'evil eye.'

§ 3.9 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have examined a range of representations of physical and sensory disability from the Greek and Roman periods of antiquity. We have surveyed descriptions of people with disability from a wide range of historical, literary, and medical sources as well as addressing a number of visural representations of disability also. The anecdotal and incidental nature of our extant sources makes it almost impossible to garner enough information to reflect on the daily life experiences of people with disability in antiquity, however, what we are able to do is reflect on some of the ways disability in presented within our ancient sources. As with other social categories used to describe, categorise, and identify people in the ancient world, physical and sensory disability is likewise employed as a means of inferring social status and inherent value. For many of our sources, disability is represented as something wholly undesirable and, especially for the elite male, all care must be shown in order to avoid, minimise, or reduce the visual signs of a physical or sensory disability or any other somatic irregularity. Lowering the risk of disability needed to begin even before conception with potential parents needing to be diligent in finding the right potential partner and the ideal times and temperaments for conception to take place. From birth, measures needed to be taken to ensure a person did not have any physical deviations. Swaddling, massage, a moderated regimen of diet and physical activity were all necessary in order to prevent, as much as possible, the risk of illness or impairment. Although the perfectly balanced wholly nondisabled body is a statistical rarity, it was still the model against which all other bodies were compared.

In contrast to this idealised and moulded ideal body was the imbalanced body lacking somatic integrity. For the physiognomically-conscious people of antiquity, a physical deformity or impairment was more than just about unattractiveness but what this anomaly revealed about one's personality and character traits. Through the mere act of observation, the value, reliability or trustworthiness of a person could be determined. While the

nondisabled, balanced body was associated with goodness and strength of character, the impaired or deformed body was likewise connected with weakness, lack of self-control, and unreliability.

Nicholas Vlahogiannis contends that one of the ways the community responds to disability is in marking the "disabled from other members in the community, turning the disabled person's private body public: an object of consideration, interpretation, communication and social construction."[425] Throughout this chapter, we have seen this principle at work. The bodies of the physically and sensorially deviant are represented as a paradox of the ideal body, and by extension, the ideal character, that was so desired in the Greco-Roman world. Such deviancy and departure from socially expected norms resulted in marking the bodies of the deviant as wholly 'other' and thus bodies which needed to be observed and critiqued by the public eye. Although it is not certain the extent to which these ideals may have impacted the day to day life experiences of people with physical and sensory disability in the Greco-Roman world, what is more certain is that in the eyes of the socially elite, the deviant body was one that could, or indeed should, be moulded, massaged, interpreted, fixed, disposed of, or laughed at. From public spectacles of healing by physicians, to deformed slaves, from watching out for portentous births to mockery and entertainment of the grotesque mime, the deviant body was a body that was liable to contempt and ridicule, or in the very least constant observation, interpretation, and devaluation. In the next chapter we will move on to assess some of the ways the deviant body was represented as part of the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish texts from the Second Temple Period as additional background for our assessment of disability in New Testament gospels.

[425] Vlahogiannis, "Curing Disability," 181. Vlahogiannis here recognises the work of L.J.Rogers and B.B. Swadener eds., *Semiotics and Disability: Interrograting Categories of Difference* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

CHAPTER TWO:
MODELS OF DISABILITY

§ 2.1 Introduction

Before proceeding to our assessments of disability in our ancient sources, we must first build some framework for the discussions that will take place. In this chapter, we will address a number of the key models of disability encountered in the field of disability studies. Although numerous models have been proposed, this discussion will address only three of the most influential models, that is, the medical model, the social model, and the cultural model of disability. Following this summary, we will also outline the motivations for selecting the cultural model of disability for the basis of this present study.

§ 2.2 Models of Disability

According to the World Health Organization, disability "is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives."[1] Consequently, while disability is considered a "universal experience of humanity,"[2] the way in which disability is interpreted and experienced is by no means universal. The experiences of people with disability differ dramatically depending on the nature of their impairment/s as well as their social and cultural context, their gender, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. For this reason, "a global definition of disability that fits all circumstances, though very desirable, is in reality nearly impossible."[3] As a result, while different definitions exist for the purposes of clinical research and diagnosis, special education, legal matters including contraventions of the Disability Discrimination Act,[4] and numerous other fields of enquiry, there does not exist one all-encompassing definition of disability applicable to all these fields. Instead, enquiries into the experiences of disability usually refer to a number of different models of disability. In this section, we will address three of the most influential models.

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[1] WHO, "Disabilities," n.p. [11 March 2014]. Online: http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/.

[2] T. Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (ed. L.H. Davis; New York: Routledge, 1997), 221.

[3] B.M. Altman, "Disability Definitions, Models, Classification Schemes, and Applications," in *Handbook of Disability Studies* (ed. G.L. Albrecht, K.D. Seelman, and M. Bury; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 97.

[4] The Australian Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed in 1992 following the development of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990.

§ 2.2.1 Medical Model of Disability

In the modern era, our understanding of disability has been primarily based on what disability activists label the medical model of disability.[5] The medical model, while not a formally proposed model for interpreting disability, refers to a general framework that existed prior to the disability rights movement. At the core of this model is the notion that disability is the direct result of biological anomalies. According to the medical model, the 'problem' of a 'disabled' body resides firmly in the pathology and/or deficit of an individual's body and the way this body fails to meet society's expectations of 'normality.' Consequently, people with disability are relegated to "a category of rejects, as people flawed in some aspect of their humanity."[6] It is this overly-medicalised view that disability advocates argue is the basis of the World Health Organization's 1980 development of the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH).[7] The ICIDH system suggested the following definitions:

> Impairment: any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function.
> Disability: any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.
> Handicap: Disadvantage for an individual in fulfilling appropriate roles.[8]

Though this presentation of disability sought to emphasise both impairment, as well as its social consequences,[9] the ICIDH was widely criticised by disability advocates. For these critics, the ICIDH maintains that disability begins with the individual rather than sufficiently expressing the social barriers that prevent the full participation of people with impairments.[10] In addition, disability advocates argue that the terms "loss, abnormality, restriction or lack of ability," as they are used in the ICIDH, "are heavily laden with cultural

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[5] Disability activist Michael Oliver, developer of the social model of disability, refers to the medical model as the "individual model" or the "medical tragedy theory" (*The Politics of Disablement* [London: MacMillan Education, 1990], 17-18).

[6] S. Brisenden, "Independent Living and the Medical Model of Disability," *Disabil Soc* 1.2 (1986): 173.

[7] Renowned British disability activist Dr Rachel Hurst described the ICIDH as the "official, international, underpinning of the medical model of disability" ("To Revise or Not to Revise?," *Disabil Soc* 15.7 [2000]: 1083).

[8] WHO, *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps: A Manual of Classification Relating to the Consequences of Disease* (Geneva: WHO, 1980), 27, 28, 29.

[9] Michael Bury, one of the developers of the ICIDH (along with Philip Wood and Elizabeth Badley) wrote that the ICIDH was written "to challenge the medical model and assumptions about disablement...we were pressing for greater recognition of (what came to be called) social exclusion in response to disablement" (M. Bury, "A Comment on the ICIDH2," *Disabil Soc* 15.7 [2000]: 1074).

[10] T. Shakespeare et al., "Models," in *Encyclopedia of Disability* (vol. 5; general ed. G.L. Albrecht; vol. eds. S.L. Snyder and D.T. Mitchell; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006), 1103.

meaning and indicate a perception of impairment and disability as characteristics of individual deficit or personal tragedy."[11] In this sense, disability is considered a wholly negative and undesirable state that must be prevented and/or 'fixed.' The only valid responses to disability, according to this model, are medical care and treatment, "prevention through biological/genetic intervention or screening; treatment through rehabilitation service; and prevention through early diagnosis and treatment."[12] The ultimate aim of this medical intervention is to alter, or at least, present, the 'disabled' body as close to 'normal' as possible.

§ 2.2.2 Social Model of Disability

The "social model" of disability was developed in response to this medical model and instead "focuses on the constructed dimensions and culturally shaped perceptions of variations in mental and physical embodiment."[13] The social model was originally developed by the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS), but it is disability advocate Michael Oliver "who is credited widely with formalizing and establishing the social model in western academia."[14] The social model rejects the idea that the 'problem' of disability is located within the body of an individual, instead relocating the 'problem' to disabling societal structures. While there may be a physiological deviation (impairment), the real 'problem,' according to the social model, lies in the "social and structural discrimination that people with impairments face."[15] Michael Oliver notes the example of members of the Deaf community who may find it difficult to communicate with those who are hearing.[16] Oliver suggests that the problem here is not that the Deaf "are

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[11] C. Cameron, "The Medical Model," in *Disability Studies: A Student's Guide* (ed. C. Cameron; London: Sage Publications, 2013), 99. Italics original.

[12] Cameron, "Medical Model," 99.

[13] Peckruhn, "Disability Studies," 102.

[14] B.A. Areheart, "Disability Trouble," *Yale Law & Policy Review* 29 (2011): 351; cf. Oliver, *Politics of Disablement*, *passim*. See also V. Finkelstein, *Attitudes and Disabled People* (New York: World Rehabilitation Fund, 1980); A. Samaha, "What Good is the Social Model of Disability?," *University of Chicago Law Review* 74 (2007): 1251-1252.

[15] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 22.

[16] It is important to note here something of Deaf culture. "Not every deaf person uses sign language or participates in events and organizations sponsored by the Deaf community. In fact, a large majority of deaf people do not affiliate themselves with the Deaf community at all, primarily because they became deaf later in life." Thus, it has become part of disability culture since the 1980s to make a distinction between those who are deaf but do not participate in the Deaf community in contradistinction to those who are Deaf and fully embrace Deaf culture. "Thus, 'deaf' with a lowercase 'd' refers to the physiological condition of not hearing regardless of whether or not they choose to identify with the Deaf community. On the other hand, "Deaf" with a capital D, is used to characterize deaf individuals who use sign language as their primary mode

unable to speak" but rather "the rest of us do not speak their language."[17] The social model of disability

> sees the issue mainly as a socially created problem, and basically as a matter of the full integration of individuals into society. Disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence, the management of the problem is social action, and it is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the environmental modifications necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life.[18]

Michael Oliver proposes that rather than "an impairment specific approach,"[19] such as the medical model presents, the social model helps to emphasise the unity and the shared experience of disablement encountered by people with disability.[20] The social model compares disability to other forms of social discrimination, such as racism, sexism, and homophobia, with the outcome that disability also must be addressed at a social rather than on an individual level. As Jeremy Schipper notes, "it would seem absurd to argue that we could resolve (other issues of discrimination) if individuals could just overcome their minority status and act like a white, heterosexual man."[21] The wide influence of the social model was evident in 2001 when the World Health Organization was encouraged to alter its ICIDH model of disability to a system that better incorporated the social model; the result being the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health* (ICF).[22]

However, while Michael Oliver, among others, still actively advocates the necessity of the social model,[23] other scholars have become more critical of the limitations of this model.

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of communication, identify with Deaf Culture, and participate in the Deaf Community" (T.K. Holcomb, *Introduction to American Deaf Culture* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2013], 38).

[17] "The Social Model in Action: If I had a Hammer," in *Implementing the Social Model of Disability: Theory and Research* (ed. C. Barnes and G. Mercer; Leeds: The Disability Press, 2004), 30.

[18] WHO, *ICF: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (Geneva: WHO, 2001), 20.

[19] Oliver, "Social Model in Action," 30.

[20] Oliver, *Politics of Disablement*, *passim*.

[21] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 15.

[22] WHO, *ICF*, *passim*.

[23] For example, Michael Oliver has stated that "there is still a great deal of mileage to be gained from the social model and that we weaken it at our peril" ("Defining Impairment and Disability: Issues at Stake," in *Exploring the Divide* (ed. C. Barnes and G. Mercer; Leeds: The Disability Press, 1996), 29. Colin Barnes staunchly defends the social model against its critics stating that "these approaches shift attention away from the primacy of economic forces in the creation of disablement toward a politically benign focus on culture, language and discourse" ("The Social Model of Disability: Valuable or Irrelevant?" in *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies* [eds. N. Watson, A. Roulstone and C. Thomas; London: Routledge, 2012], 12-29). Barnes also replies in detail to some of the specific criticisms of the social model noted above ("Social Model of Disability," 12-29).

Some scholars have argued that the social model ignores the embodied reality of impairment, to an extent, delegitimising the potential pain and hardship that can be associated with an impairment.[24] Critics also argue that the social model advocates for a "socially constructed discrimination comparable to racism, sexism, or homophobia,"[25] but that unlike these forms of discrimination, disability represents a genuine physiological experience that is different from that which is considered 'normative.' In this sense, Junior and Schipper assert that "even if social and structural discrimination against people with impairments did not exist, persons with impairments would continue to navigate their environment differently than the nondisabled because of the biological realities of their minds or bodies."[26] Dimitris Anastasiou and James M. Kauffman note in this respect the example of people with intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder who experience "cognitive, emotional, and social problems that are the defining characteristics" of their disability.[27]

A further criticism of the social model, and related to the previous one, lies in the binary presentation of impairment and 'disability' as two distinctive categories. Critics of this aspect of the social model argue that in reality it is much harder to determine where one's impairment ends and the subsequent disablement and discrimination begin. We return again to the example of Autism given above. Autism Spectrum Disorder refers to a "range of complex developmental disorders that can cause problems with thinking, feeling, language, and the ability to relate to others."[28] If a person on the Autism spectrum has difficulty communicating with others and/or accessing community services, to what extent is this the result of their biological or neurological 'impairment' or the result of a disabling

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[24] L. Crow, "Including All Our Lives," in *Encounters with Strangers: Feminism and Disability* (ed. J. Morris; London: Women's Press, 1996), 55-72; J. Morris, *Pride against Prejudice: Transforming Attitudes to Disability* (London: The Women's Press, 1991), 10; A. Silvers, "An Essay on Modeling: The Social Model of Disability" in *Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (ed. D.C. Ralston and J. Ho; Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 19. Michael Oliver has responded strongly to this criticism by stating that this view "is based upon a conceptual misunderstanding because the social model is not about the personal experience of impairment but the collective experience of disablement" (Oliver, "Social Model in Action," 24). In addition, Oliver asserts that he cannot accept the suggestion that "the social model is not based upon disabled people's experiences. Quite the reverse, it emerged out of the experiences of disabled activists in the 1970s" (Oliver, "Social Model in Action," 25).

[25] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 22-23.

[26] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 22-23; D. Anastasiou and J.M. Kauffman, "The Social Model of Disability: Dichotomy between Impairment and Disability," *J Med Phil* 38 (2013): 445.

[27] "Social Model," 450.

[28] R.M. Gourdine, "Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, Services for" in *Encyclopedia of Human Services and Diversity* (ed. L.H. Cousins; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2014), 126.

society unprepared and unwilling to embrace neurological diversity?[29] Such an example highlights the difficulty in determining a clear differentiation between one's impairment and the subsequent discrimination associated with it.

A final criticism of the social model is that it merely shifts the 'problem' of disability from the *individual* to *social structures*. John Swain and Sally French, for example, argue that a "non-tragic view of disability" means eradicating the language of disability as a 'problem' altogether.[30] Instead, disability ought to be represented "as a positive personal and collective identity, (with) disabled people leading fulfilled and satisfying lives."[31]

§ 2.2.3 Cultural Model of Disability

While the social model remains the predominant model for disability studies, the cultural model of disability has a growing number of adherents. The cultural model proposes that due to the complexities of disability, it is impossible to define disability by just one factor, whether that factor is an individual's medical condition (i.e., the medical model) or "social discrimination against people with impairments" (i.e., the social model).[32] In this respect, the cultural model "examines how notions of disability and *nondisability* (or "able-bodiedness") operate within a given culture."[33] In this model, disability equates to more than a medical diagnosis, drawing attention to the way a diagnosis "comes freighted with meaning and symbolism and connotation" within the context of one's own society and culture.[34] Disability then is "not so much the lack of a sense or the presence of a physical or mental impairment as it is the reception and construction of that difference."[35]

According to Jeremy Schipper, who is credited with developing the cultural model in consultation with disability activist David T. Mitchell,[36] the cultural model emphasises that

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[29] Note the developing neurodiversity movement promoting and celebrating ASD as a form of difference and diversity rather than a form of disability (e.g., S.K. Kapp et al., "Deficit, Difference, or Both? Autism and Neurodiversity," *Dev Psychol* 49.1 [2013]: 59-71; P. Jaarsma and S. Welin, "Autism as a Natural Human Variation: Reflections on the Claims of the Neurodiversity Movement," *Health Care Analysis* 20.1 [2012]: 20-30).

[30] "Towards an Affirmation Model of Disability," *Disabil Soc* 15.4 (2000): 571.

[31] "Towards an Affirmation Model," 571; cf. Silvers, "Essay on Modeling," 19.

[32] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 23.

[33] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 23. Italics original.

[34] T. Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited* (2nd ed.; Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 50.

[35] Davis, *Bending Over Backwards*, 50.

[36] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 19

"disability is not only a result of social organization, but integral to social organization itself."[37] Thus, Schipper suggests that "the goal of disability studies becomes not just the isolation and removal of social barriers that disable people with impairments, but the interrogation of how society uses the category 'disability' to narrate, interpret, and organize its world."[38] The cultural model promotes disability not as a static, unchanging global phenomenon, but rather, disability is experienced, represented, and interpreted differently across various cultures and historical periods. The cultural model thus recognises that disability is "locally variable, at the least, and entirely relative and contingent, at most."[39]

While there is certainly room to include and develop both the social and cultural models of disability,[40] we have elected to follow the cultural model of disability for this particular study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the cultural model focuses on the way in which disability is *represented* in any given culture. As was noted in the introductory chapter (§ 1.3), although we are unable to "reconstruct the lived experience of people with disabilities in antiquity,"[41] we are able to study the way in which disability is *represented* in our ancient sources. The cultural model aids in highlighting that "representations of disability are not value-free or transparent, but help to develop and work out social and cultural ideologies or worldviews."[42] The cultural model of disability thus allows us the opportunity to examine and evaluate the way in which disability is represented by the gospel writers. What "social and cultural ideologies" are being represented by the gospel writers in their use of disability-related language? In what ways did the gospel writers manifest or critique views of impairment in their socio-religious context?

Secondly, the cultural model also reinforces the notion that disability is not a static concept that transcends cultural and historical boundaries. As noted above, disability is not a fixed, universal method of cataloguing the human body. Disability is culturally and socially located, its meaning derived from a particular group's "expectations for human

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[37] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 20.
[38] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 20.
[39] Shakespeare, *Disability Rights*, 50.
[40] For more on other alternative models of disability, see Swain and French, "Towards an Affirmation Model," 569-582 and Shakespeare et al., "Models," 1101-1107.
[41] Moss and Schipper, "Introduction," 6.
[42] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 20.

normalcy."[43] For this reason, Moss and Schipper note that thinking concertedly about disability in the context of biblical studies "increase(s) our understanding of how these texts both reflect and reinforce ancient cultural ideas about identity and social organization."[44] What do the gospel writers reveal about the inclusion and/or exclusion of people with disability in first-century Palestine? What were the social and religious ramifications for those who did not meet these "expectations for human normalcy" according to the gospel texts?

Finally, the cultural model is also useful for the present study in that it recognises that it is not always possible to clearly demarcate between an "impairment" and the resulting "disability" as they are defined in the social model. Disability scholar Susan Wendell contends that "the distinction between the biological reality of disability and the social construction of a disability cannot be sharply made,"[45] and thus the cultural model is more effective in expressing the diversity of the human experience of disability "as a site of phenomenological value."[46] Rebecca Raphael gives the following example indicating the complexities involved with such terminology:

> If someone has a visual impairment that can be corrected with glasses, we do not call her disabled. Suppose the condition progresses. When she can no longer drive at night, is she disabled? Perhaps not. However, when she can no longer drive at all, most inhabitants of post-industrial societies would now regard her condition as a disability. Is it biological or social that we need to operate during the day more so than at night? At what exact moment did the impairment become a disability?[47]

This aspect of the cultural model of disability is also particularly helpful in assessing our ancient sources where it can be difficult to differentiate between a person's impairment and disability. Tom Shakespeare and Nicholas Watson thus note that "impairment and disability are not dichotomous, but describe different places on a continuum or different aspects of a single experience."[48] For example, in chapter seven, we address the two major healing accounts featured in the gospel of John, the first of which is the man with an

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[43] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 33.

[44] "Introduction," 6.

[45] *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 35.

[46] S.L. Snyder and D.T. Mitchell, *Cultural Locations of Disability* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 6.

[47] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 7.

[48] "The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?" in *Exploring Theories and Expanding Methodologies: Where We Are and Where We Need To Go* (ed. B. Altman and S. Barnett; Research in Social Science and Disability 2; Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2001), 22.

impairment in chapter five. While the man is described as ἐν ἀσθένεια ("weak"/"infirm"), he is certainly not described as completely mobility impaired as might have be indicated if the author employed the word χωλός ("lame"). While it may be that the gospel writer intends for readers to understand that this man is lame, it is not certain from the text. While the man appears to remain in constant proximity to the healing pool of Bethesda, it is unclear whether this is as the result of a physical inability to move elsewhere or as a result of social expectations that would limit the man's ability to function within his cultural group. In this sense, it is difficult to demarcate between the man's "impairment" and his "disability" according to the binary categories presented in the social model. However, while this is the case, the cultural model still recognises that there are both biological factors (impairment) as well as social ones at play within any discussion of impairment and disability.

Ultimately, the cultural model, with its view of disability as a shifting and culturally-determined phenomenon, is most suitable for an assessment of disability in the New Testament gospels. Nyasha Junior and Jeremy Schipper succinctly note that the use of the cultural model of disability for biblical studies can assist biblical scholars to

> 1. Focus on the cultural values associated with disability and nondisability in the...Bible... 2. become more aware of the contemporary cultural values that a scholar assumes in her or his interpretation of these biblical representations of disability; and 3. determine whether scholarly interpretations of how disability operates in a given passage find sufficient support in the biblical text.[49]

§ 2.3 Terminology

As a result of using the cultural model of disability, we have employed the language of "disability" throughout this dissertation. That is to say, rather than strictly distinguishing between a person's physiological condition (that is, the physical and/or sensory "impairment") and any subsequent discrimination ("disability"), we have adhered to the language of the cultural model in employing the term "disability" to describe the combined experience of an *impairment* as well as the *social implications of an impairment*. At times, we have employed the term "impairment" to acknowledge specifically the physiological condition; but in general, this current study uses the term "disability" in a broad sense to

[49] Junior and Schipper, "Disability Studies," 25. While Junior and Schipper refer specifically to the HB, we suggest these points are applicable to the NT material also.

address both the disabling barriers of society (as suggested in the social model) as well as the all-encompassing ontological phenomenon of disability.

It is worth noting here that while we have been careful in the usage of disability-related language throughout the dissertation, ultimately, the language of disability itself is flawed and unsatisfactory. While the language of "disability" is the one that "currently holds the neutral ground,"[50] Rebecca Raphael suggests that in essence this term still implies that "a body part, sense, or function is not present or does not perform according to standard specs."[51] Such a definition is for this reason not reflective of "the wide range of anatomical, physiological, and functional variety" experienced in the human body.[52] Whether deviations in human ability are classified in terms of a dichotomy of "normal"/"abnormal," or the more socially acceptable "disabled"/"able-bodied," neither set of categories represent the wide variety of abilities, as well as limitations, possible in the human body. Perhaps in some senses this failure to fit into neat categories is emblematic of the liminal and interstitial nature of disability in general.[53]

Despite the challenges of disability-related terminology, for the purposes of discussions on the experience of disability, we are reliant on some form of language for disability, however flawed or imprecise it may be. Throughout the current study, we have used the "person-first" approach to disability terminology, referring to a "person with disability" rather than a "disabled person."[54] While strong proponents of the social model continue to refer to themselves as a "disabled person"/"disabled people,"[55] in general, current disability

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[50] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 5.

[51] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora,* 5.

[52] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora,* 5.

[53] Cf. P.J. Devlieger, "Generating a Cultural Model of Disability," (paper presented at the 19th Congress of the European Federation of Associations of Teachers of the Deaf (FEAPDA) October 14-16, 2005), 8. Online: http://www.feapda.org/FEAPDA%20Geneva%202005/culturalmodelofdisability.pdf. I am grateful to Dr Emmanuel Nathan for pointing out the work of Devlieger to me.

[54] While we have employed the phrase "person with disability," the status quo seems to shift between this and other phrases such as "person with a disability," "persons with disability," "person with disabilities," and so on.

[55] For example, Australian disability advocate Stella Young regularly described herself as a "disabled person": "Let me make this quite clear. I do not identify as a person with a disability. I'm a disabled person" (Stella Young, "*Reporting it Right*: How the Government got it Wrong," n.p. [cited 15 Nov 2012]. Online: http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/articles/2012/11/15/3633193.htm).

conventions in Australia are to recognise the "person" before their "disability."[56] While some scholars choose to use the phrase "temporarily able-bodied" as a means of highlighting the possibility of shifting from one state to the other,[57] we have employed the term *nondisabled* throughout this dissertation. *Nondisability*, at least for the present time, seems best suited to expressing that disability represents human variation rather than a deviation from the 'norm.' In this way, the language of *nondisability* moves disability scholarship away from what Simi Linton refers to as the default position for interpretation: "the male, white, nondisabled scholar."[58]

It is worth noting that in the present study, we are not investigating all forms of disability mentioned in our ancient sources. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), in accordance with general protocols in Australia, groups impairments into five broad categories; intellectual, psychiatric, sensory/speech, acquired brain injury, and physical/diverse.[59] However, for the purposes of the present study, we have limited our investigation to physical and sensory disability. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, there is simply not enough space in the current study to cover well all five of these categories of disability. Secondly, while intellectual disability is discussed in various ancient sources,[60] there are no clear cases of intellectual disability recorded in the New Testament gospels.[61] With respect to mental health conditions, the issues are complicated by the association between mental health conditions (i.e., "madness" [μανία]) and demon possession in the New Testament and other ancient sources. An example of this can be seen in John 10:19 where Jesus is accused by his opponents of both having "a demon and

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[56] For an example of guidelines on person-first language, see Department of Human Services Victoria, *Reporting it Right: Media Guidelines for Portraying People with a Disability* (Melbourne: Industry, Workforce and Strategy Division, Victorian Government, Department of Human Services, 2012), 8.

[57] Dan Goodley, for example, suggests that this phrase "recognises that many people will at some point become disabled" (*Disability Studies*, 1).

[58] Linton, *Claiming Disability*, 13-14.

[59] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Disability Prevalence and Trends* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2003), xix. On some occasions these classifications appear as physical/diverse, sensory/speech, psychiatric, and intellectual. "Acquired brain injury" can thus be included under psychiatric or intellectual disability.

[60] C.F. Goodey and M.L. Rose, "Mental States, Bodily Dispositions and Table Manners: A Guide to Reading 'Intellectual' Disability from Homer to Late Antiquity," in *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies;* a capite ad calcem (ed. C. Laes, C.F. Goodey, and M.L. Rose; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 17-44; E. Kellenberger, "Children and Adults with Intellectual Disability in Antiquity and Modernity: Toward a Biblical and Sociological Model," *CrossCurrents* 63.4 (2013): 449-472; J. Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 54-91 (chapter on "Mental Health").

[61] E.g., Kellenberger, "Children and Adults," 465.

(being) out of his mind" (Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται). A discussion of mental health issues and associations between "madness" and demon possession in the ancient sources could easily constitute a separate investigation. In this respect, we draw the reader's attention to a number of recent works addressing mental health issues in antiquity.[62]

It is worth a final comment on other forms of impairment included as part of this study. Although the inclusion of illness under the umbrella of 'disability' is rather contested in regards to both the ancient and modern sources,[63] we have opted to include as part of this investigation any biological illness or condition which is associated with any stigma, exclusion, or marginalisation according to our ancient sources.[64] However, we have followed the lead of Saul M. Olyan who has chosen to keep such conditions in his discussion of disability as these images fulfill the bipartite representation of disability, that is, that there is both a biological condition (impairment) as well as sociological element to a person's condition.[65] Martha L. Rose in her investigation of disability in the ancient Greek sources also does not include discussions of epilepsy and dwarfism in her investigations. Her primary reason for doing so is because of complicated "religious associations" with these particular conditions.[66] However, we agree with the proposal of Moss and Schipper that in the "ancient literature the distinction between 'religious' and the 'medical' is hard to describe."[67] Such stark categorisation of medicine or healers as

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[62] R.M. Grant, "Views of Mental Illness Among Greeks, Romans, and Christians," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune* (NovTSupp 122; ed. J. Fotooulos; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 369-404; W.V. Harris (ed.), *Mental Disorders in the Classical World* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 38; Leiden: Brill, 2013); A.R. Solevåg, "'Are You Out of Your Mind?' Accusations of Madness and Demon Possession in the New Testament," Presentation at The Stavanger International Conference on Disability, Illness, and Religion. May 7-9, 2014. Stavanger, Norway.

[63] E.g., Julie Mulvany's exploration of the definitions of disability and illness in connection with mental health issues ("Disability, Impairment, or Illness? The Relevance of the Social Model of Disability to the Study of Mental Disorder," *Sociology of Health & Illness* 22.5 (2000): 582-601.

[64] For example, Johanna H.W. Dorman, in her work on disability in the Qumranic literature, discusses the reasons why she deliberately overlooks skin-related and other kinds of diseases in her investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls (*Blemished Body*, 12). In comparison, Dorman cites the work of French scholar K. Berthelot who does include skin-disease, specifically *ṣāra'at*, as part of her investigation of disability in the Qumranic texts (e.g., K. Berthelot, "La place des infirmes et des 'lépreaux' dans les texts de Qumrân et les évangiles," *Revue biblique* 113 [2006]: 211-241).

[65] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 2-3.

[66] Rose, *Staff of Oedipus*, 6-7. Rose's secondary reason for omitting both epilepsy and dwarfism is that both topics have been covered in monographs (e.g., O. Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* [2nd ed.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971]; V. Dasen, *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993]; *Staff of Oedipus*, 6-7).

[67] Moss and Schipper, "Introduction," 3; cf. Pilch, *Healing in the NT*, 35.

'secular/pagan' in comparison to 'religious' methods of healing are notions that would have been foreign to the people of first-century Palestine. As a result, we have not excluded any illness or impairment merely on the basis of so-called religious connections.

One final comment on terminology. It has become the standard in English texts on medicine in the ancient world to distinguish between 'illness' and 'disease.'[68] In medical anthropology, the term 'illness' is used to describe the "immediate experience of a sick person, the 'experience' of disease."[69] 'Illness' in this sense does not refer to etiology or diagnosis, but focuses on the ill person's "perception, experience, and interpretation of certain socially devalued states including, but not limited to disease."[70] In contrast, 'disease' refers to the "conceptualization of disease by physicians."[71] 'Disease' in this sense is a "concept that describes abnormalities in the structure and/or function of human organs and organ systems."[72] 'Disease' refers to the medical and scientific causation of a person's illness. This differentiation in language will be employed throughout this dissertation.

§ 2.4 Summary

In this section we have summarised three of the key models for disability commonly employed in disability studies. While noting the historical significance of both the medical model and social models, we have determined that it is the cultural model which is best suited to this current study. The cultural model uses the principles introduced in the social model – that is, that disability is both a biological and social phenomenon – but also acknowledges that it is not always possible to determine the exact point at which a biological factor becomes a social one. As a consequence, the cultural model focuses on analysing the way in which disability-related language is used to represent the phenomenological experience of disability. Having now established the theoretical frameworks through which we can address the issue of disability in our ancient sources, we will now turn to an investigation of the way in which disability is represented in the Greco-Roman world.

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[68] M.D. Grmek, "The Concept of Disease," in *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (ed. M.D. Grmek; trans. A. Shugaar; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 242.

[69] Grmek, "Concept of Disease," 242.

[70] Pilch, *Healing in the NT*, 25.

[71] Grmek, "The Concept of Disease," 242.

[72] Pilch, *Healing in the NT*, 24-25. Pilch goes on to say that "Disease is the arena of biomedicine and the bio-medical model" (*Healing in the NT*, 25).

CHAPTER FOUR
THE LANDSCAPE OF DISABILITY: THE HEBREW BIBLE

§ 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we explored some of the ways that physical and sensory disability were represented in the literature of the Greco-Roman world. It was noted there that while it is not possible to recreate the lived experiences of people with physical and sensory disability in the Greco-Roman world,[1] it is possible to use our extant sources to gain insight into some of the ways our ancient authors employed disability as a means of narrating, interpreting, and representing physical difference.[2] In this chapter, we will use this same framework in which to assess representations of physical and sensory disability in the Hebrew Bible.[3] This chapter, in conjunction with chapter three, will then provide us with some framework upon which to make our assessment of representations of disability in the New Testament gospels.

In this chapter, we will examine some of the variegated ways that disability is represented throughout the Hebrew Bible as well as briefly addressing representations of disability in some additional Jewish source material of the Second Temple period. These additional sources include the Jewish pseudepigrapha and apocrypha, the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the rabbinic corpus. As with the Greco-Roman material examined in chapter three, the sources considered in this chapter also cover a wide range of literary genres as well as covering a vast historical period. So it is once again with broad brushstrokes we address some of the variegated ways physical and sensory disability has been used by the various authors of the Hebrew Bible. In this way, we will be considering the following questions. What are some of the ways that the Hebrew Bible presents physical and sensory

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[1] Saul M. Olyan contends regarding the HB that "our data (regarding biblical representations of disability) are exceedingly limited, and in the main, not conducive to reconstructing individual lives, regional or local ideological differences, or historical change over time" (Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 3-4).

[2] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 62.

[3] Throughout this chapter and the dissertation as a whole, we have employed the name "Hebrew Bible" rather than the more Christianised "Old Testament." The title "Hebrew Bible" thus acknowledges this set of books are in the Hebrew language and "come from Hebraic culture" (J. Barton, *The Old Testament Canon: Literature and Theology. Collected Essays of John Barton* [SOTSS; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007], 85) as well as recognising their place within all three of the world's three largest monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. For more on the discussions regarding the use of the title "Hebrew Bible," see Barton, *Old Testament Canon*, esp. chapter seven.

disability? To what extent do these texts represent people with physical and sensory impairments as experiencing stigma or marginalisation as a result of their disability? What were the cultic and community consequences for people with physical and sensory impairment? How did the cause of someone's impairment impact the way they were perceived within the various manifestations of Judaism?

In this chapter, we will begin by outlining some of the primary and secondary sources that have formed the basis of research for our examination of disability in the Hebrew Bible. As was done in chapter three, we will also address some of the methodological considerations for addressing disability in the Hebrew Bible. Following this, we include a preliminary examination of some general representations in the Hebrew Bible, such as the causes of disability and the available healing options. The majority of this chapter is then dedicated to the employment of two rubrics through which we examine a range of disability imagery present in the Hebrew Bible. The first rubric is based on the expression of the senses in the Hebrew Bible as outlined in the work of Yael Avrahami. The second rubric is based on the categories of 'defective' and non-'defective' disability as developed in the work of Saul M. Olyan. These two fields of examination allow us the opportunity to explore two different ways in which disability-related language is employed to categorise and assign value in the Hebrew Bible.[4] As part of these examinations, we will also briefly address the way these themes are developed in the Jewish sources of the Second Temple period including the rabbinic writings and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The chapter will conclude with some final thoughts on the variegated presentations of the physically- and sensory-impaired body in the Hebrew Bible and the way in which these assessments can contribute to our understanding of the representations of disability in the New Testament gospels.

[4] Thus Olyan contends that "representations of disability must have played a part in the creation and shaping of social categories and therefore, social differentiation in ancient Israel, the study of such representations is an urgent desiratum if we hope to develop a more nuanced understanding of both disability and inequality in the literary works under consideration and in the ancient contexts that produced them (*Disability in the HB*, 4).

§ 4.2 Source Material

§ 4.2.1 Secondary Sources

As was noted in chapter one, the topic of disability in the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish literature has been addressed in detail by a number of authors.[5] Most notable are Saul M. Olyan's *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*,[6] Rebecca Raphael's *Biblical Corpora: Representations of Disability in Hebrew Biblical Literature*, as well as Jeremy Schipper's *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant* and *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David Story*.[7] Another work that has been particularly helpful for this examination is Yael Avrahami's 2012 work *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible*. Although Avrahami's book does not specifically address the issue of disability, she closely examines the way in which the senses are represented throughout the Hebrew Bible including sensory deprivation. A number of other early works on Judaism and disability do address the representations of disability in the Hebrew Bible and/or later Jewish sources, however, their primary interest is in examining the later rabbinic works and, in particular, the implications of halakhic observance for people with disability. Two such works are Judith Z. Abrams' *Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli* and Tzvi C. Marx's *Disability in Jewish Law.* As with the growth of secondary work on disability in the Greco-Roman world, there has been an exponential growth in discussions of disability in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish writings also. While these studies have progressed the examination of disability in the Hebrew Bible itself, what is still under-represented are those works which connect presentations of disability in the Hebrew Bible with the expressions of disability found in the New Testament material. It is our hope that this chapter will assist with beginning to bridge the gap between those studies that have been done separately on the Hebrew Bible and New Testament material.

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[5] Dorman, *Blemished Body*, *passim*; Marx, *Disability in Jewish Law*, *passim*; Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, *passim*; Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, *passim*; Schipper, *Disability Studies*, *passim*; *idem*, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, *passim*. It is worth also noting the sections on Judaism and disability included in Ehud ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman (eds.), *Imagining the Other*, *passim*; Avalos, Melcher and Schipper (eds.), *This Abled Body*, *passim*; Moss and Schipper (eds.), *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature*, *passim*.

[6] Note also Olyan's more recent publication which addresses multiple categories of social classification including a section on disability (*Social Inequality in the World of the Text: The Significance of Ritual and Social Distinctions in the HB*).

[7] Also note the 2014 publication by Michael D. Fiorello, *The Physically Disabled in Ancient Israel According to the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Sources* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2014).

§ 4.2.2 Primary Sources

This chapter will focus primarily on depictions of disability found in the Hebrew Bible while also briefly addressing some representations of disability in Jewish writings of the Second Temple period. However, even limiting our field of enquiry to the corpus of the Hebrew Bible is a challenging enough task due to its collection taking place over an extensive period and incorporating numerous shifts in geography, religion, and culture. While many scholars see the Hebrew Bible, or the combined Hebrew Bible and New Testament, as revealing an over-arching metanarrative,[8] the diversity of authors, genres, and stages of Israelite/Jewish history reflected in these texts must also be acknowledged.[9] As such, it is not possible to outline a singular approach to disability expressed across the Jewish corpus.[10] Instead, we are faced with a diverse range of disability-related language employed both literally and metaphorically in historical narratives, the wisdom literature, the prophetic tradition, as well as the apocryphal literature. Therefore, it is not possible to explore all the variegated ways in which disability is represented throughout these Jewish sources, however, we hope that the methods employed herein will assist in contextualising some of the representations of disability found within the New Testament gospels.

§ 4.3 Methodological Considerations

As was noted in the previous chapter (§ 3.3), even though we have resolved on using the cultural model of disability for the current study, there are still difficulties in applying this model to our to ancient material without anachronism. For this reason, it is first necessary to determine what disability may have entailed within the context of the Hebrew Bible. Just as there was no word for disability in either Greek or Latin, neither did such a word exist in Biblical Hebrew. Despite the absence of an overarching term for disability, it is apparent that there was certainly a belief that someone could have a physical or mental deviation that might result in stigma, marginalisation, and/or a socially devalued state. Thus, Saul M. Olyan states that the Hebrew Bible does

> categorize persons on the basis of physical or mental condition, appearance, alleged vulnerability, and the presence or absence of certain diseases, and such classification may result in the text's demand for the exclusion of affected persons from many aspects of social,

[8] E.g., W.C. Kaiser, *Recovering the Unity of the Bible: One Continuous Story, Plan, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), *passim*.

[9] Cf. R. Bauckham, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story," in *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. E.F. Davis and R.B. Hays; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 38-53.

[10] E.g., Colleen Grant contends that the inclusive nature of Jesus' ministry overturns the "traditional Jewish view of disability" ("Reinterpreting the Healing Narratives," 80).

> economic, and religious life, (e.g. participation (2) in sacrificial rites, or living among others in community). Thus, disability as an analytic category has the potential to help us gain a deeper and more subtle understanding of the ways in which the biblical writers construct hierarchically significant difference and privilege certain groups (e.g., those with non-"defective" or "whole" bodies) over others (e.g., those with physical "defects"...).[11]

As previously noted (§ 3.3), writers of disability studies contend that while "disabled people have existed in all societies and at any given historical period...the kinds of disabling restrictions that existed and the experiences of disabled people, both individually and collectively, have varied from society to society and from age to age."[12] In this way, disability cannot be understood as a fixed ideal, but rather what is considered disabling is determined by any given culture's expectations of people's roles in the community.[13] In the same way that Martha L. Rose described the Greco-Roman world as basing expectations of the body on socially prescribed roles,[14] Neal H. Walls has argued that this principle is likewise at work through the literature of the ancient Near East. Walls endeavours to show that the Mesopotamians employed "a community model of disability, in which disability is defined or measured by one's capacity to fulfil socially prescribed tasks or functions rather than by medical or physical criteria."[15] It has been well established by scholars of the ancient Near East that in many ways the culture of the ancient Israelites was similar in its use of "expressions, practices and images that (were) common in the ancient Near Eastern cultural context."[16] As a result, scholars propose that ancient Near Eastern methods of health care are similarly represented in the Hebrew Bible.[17] It is for this reason that Walls' assessment of Mesopotamian views of disability is included in the edited work of Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper on disability in the biblical literature: the literature of the ancient Near East forms an important framework for studies of religion, culture, and practice in the Hebrew Bible.[18]

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[11] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 1-2.

[12] Oliver, *Politics of Disablement*, 17-18.

[13] Edwards [= M.L. Rose], "Women and Disability," 5. Italics original.

[14] See § 3.3.

[15] N.H. Walls, "The Origins of the Disabled Body: Disability in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* (ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; SS 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 15.

[16] A.M. Rodríguez, "Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Bible and the Question of Revelation and Inspiration," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12.1 (2001): 48.

[17] Esp. Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, *passim.*

[18] In the introduction, the editors refer to Walls' chapter as "provid(ing) the historical matrix" for assessments of disability in the HB (Avalos, Melcher, and Schipper, "Introduction," 5).

While the Hebrew Bible is replete with disability-related language, these references are by no means perspicuous. Indeed, many figures who have been 'read' as being physically or sensory impaired by disability scholars have not been considered so in traditional interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. Disability scholarship in the Hebrew Bible is thus contending with a long history of "normate" readings that do not recognise the use of disability as a literary device in the Hebrew Bible nor the possibility that the Hebrew Bible presents a number of key figures as experiencing physical or sensory impairment. One such example of this is the case of Moses. Although he is described as being "ineloquent" (לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים אָנֹכִי) in addition to being "slow of speech" (כְּבַד־ פֶּה) and "slow of tongue" (לָשׁוֹן וּכְבֶד; Ex. 4:10),[19] traditional scholarship has asserted that it is not disability but only Moses' reluctance that impedes his speech.[20] Disability readings, however, take the opposite stance, arguing that Moses' inability and reluctance to speak is attributed to some form of speech impairment.[21] It is the view of Jeremy Schipper that at least part of the motivation for reading Moses' inability as "reluctance" or "fear" stems from an unwillingness to consider Moses, such a prestigious figure of the Hebrew Bible, as having a disability.[22] Despite this, Jeffry H. Tigay maintains the language of "heaviness" employed in Exodus 4 – often translated as "slow" in English translations - can also be found in other ancient Near Eastern texts.[23] Tigay suggests that according to Akkadian and other ancient Near Eastern literature, the phrase "heavy of mouth" is situated "squarely in the repertoire of

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[19] All quotations from the HB are from the NIV unless otherwise stated. The LXX employs the phrase ἰσχνόφωνος καί βραδύγλωσσος ἐγώ εἰμί. This translation emphasises a weakness of speech (ἰσχνόφωνος) as well the "slowness" of tongue (βραδύγλωσσος).

[20] E.g., W.C. Kaiser, "Exodus" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis - Leviticus* (rev. ed.; gen. ed. T. Longman III and D.E. Garland; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 379; G.P. Miller, *The Ways of a King: Legal and Political Ideas in the Bible* (Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements Band 7; Oakville: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 2011), 113; D.K. Stuart, *Exodus* (vol. 2; NAC; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 133.

[21] Junior and Schipper, "Mosaic Disability," 428-441. Junior and Schipper contend that when in chapter 6 of Exodus Moses refers to himself as having "uncircumcised lips," that this too is an idiom referring to Moses' speech impediment. Junior and Schipper likewise propose that both phrases "slow of speech and slow of tongue" as well "uncircumcised lips" refer to "bodily organs that do not function as expected" (Junior and Schipper, "Mosaic Disability," 429). Other scholars also have come to the conclusion that Moses' issue was a speech impediment without necessarily using a disability reading of the text, e.g., S. Pollock, "The Speech Defect of Moses," *JBQ* 26 (1998): 121-128; J.H. Tigay, "'Heavy of Mouth' and 'Heavy of Tongue' on Moses' Speech Difficulty," *BASOR* 231 (1978): 57-67.

[22] According to the Mishnah, "the nature of the work which the Israelites had to perform in Egypt maimed many of them, but when they stood at the foot of Sinai to receive the Decalogue all were cured; there was not one of them either blind, deaf, lame, or with any other defect" (*Num. Rab.* 7). In contrast, Josephus refutes the claims to Apion that the Hebrews were "blind and lame and suffering from all kinds of disease" at the time of the Exodus (*AA* 2.1-2; Thackeray, LCL).

[23] Tigay, "'Heavy of Mouth,'" 57-67.

medical terminology."[24] In this way, the idiom "heavy of mouth/tongue" is almost certainly employed to refer to some form of speech impairment in the ancient Near East.[25] It is certainly possible that the author of Exodus describes Moses with the same idiom in order to denote a speech impairment in this case also despite the protestations of traditional scholars. Schipper proposes that "normate" readings have dominated interpretations of other passages of the Hebrew Bible also. Another such example is that of the "suffering servant" of Isaiah (Isa. 52:12-53:12). Schipper contends that, in this case, scholarship has subjugated the language of disability in this passage in favour of descriptions of a nondisabled servant with a temporary illness.[26] Readings of the "suffering servant" that imply the figure is experiencing a form of physical disability appear to be unappealing to most scholars irrespective of whether they consider the servant a foreshadowing of the Messiah or another Jewish historical figure.[27]

Despite the challenges with investigating the representations of disability in the Hebrew Bible, the frequency with which such imagery occurs warrants dedicated disability-related research. Not only this, but as Nyasha Junior and Jeremy Schipper have noted, such investigation is fruitful because "even in texts that do not deal with disability explicitly, the critical study of disability may help us to understand better the cultural expectations for human normalcy reflected in biblical literature."[28] Nuanced readings of disability in the Hebrew Bible are also beneficial as a means of dialoguing with those scholars who view the Hebrew Bible as the foundation of a Judeo-Christian anti-disability rhetoric. Henri-Jacques Stiker in his *A History of Disability*, for example, denounces the Hebrew Bible for promoting an anti-disability discourse through its stigmatisation of those with physical and sensory impairments.[29] G. Thomas Couser in his work on disability similarly notes that "In the Old Testament, being blind, deaf, crippled, sick, or diseased is a sign of having done something to incur God's disfavor; sin brings on disability."[30] While there are

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[24] Tigay, "'Heavy of Mouth,'" 57.

[25] Tigay, "'Heavy of Mouth,'" 57-67.

[26] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's*, 42-59.

[27] Due to space restrictions it is not possible to explore this account in detail in the current dissertation. For a detailed analysis of this account in light of disability studies, see Jeremy Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, *passim*.

[28] "Disability Studies and the Bible," 33.

[29] Stiker, *History of Disability*, *passim*.

[30] G.T. Couser, *Recovering Bodies: Illness, Disability, and Life Writing* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 181.

certainly passages in the Hebrew Bible that are challenging for disability scholars, statements that imply that the Hebrew Bible features a unilateral, determined discrimination against people with disability simply cannot be supported under close textual scrutiny. It is therefore important in assessing the references to disability in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish literature to ensure a nuanced reading of the texts which do not reduce what is a variegated representation of disability into one simplified discourse.

Once again, the nature of our ancient sources would make it difficult to recreate the lives of people with disability based solely on the evidence of the Hebrew Bible. Not only are we examining a corpus that includes multiple authors and genres but also spans various stages of Jewish history.[31] Even though there are a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible that afford greater insight into the life experiences of a person with disability than is witnessed in the New Testament, we still have no means of assessing whether these specific narratives are reflective of the real-life experiences of other people with disability. There is also the added complication that those with disability who are described in most detail in the Hebrew Bible are those of high status. Mephibosheth, for example, though described in detail regarding his mobility impairment, is still the son of a king and resides in the king's palace.[32] It cannot be assumed that Mephibosheth's experiences during the time of the Davidic kingdom would also reflect the experiences of Israelites of lower social status with physical or sensory impairments in the post-exilic period, for example. While this might prevent us from piecing together an accurate presentation of the lived experiences of someone with disability in the ancient Jewish communities, we can certainly assess the way that disability is represented in the Hebrew Bible. We can also gain insight into those things deemed "disabling and the potential social ramifications of those ideas."[33] Once again, as was noted in the previous chapter, disability is attested frequently enough throughout the Hebrew Bible for us to gain some insight into the meaning and value attributed to the impaired body in the various sources of the Hebrew Bible.

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[31] Note here the opening remarks of Michael D. Fiorello who defines the aim of his publication as an "attempt to understand community responses to disabled persons among the peoples of the ancient Near East. By examining the law collections, societal conventions, and religious obligations toward individuals who were physically disabled we acquire an understanding of the world a disabled person would enter" (*Physically Disabled*, 2).

[32] 2 Sam. 4:4, 9:1-13, 16:1f., 19:1f.

[33] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 1.

§ 4.4 Preliminary Examination

Examination of the Hebrew Bible reveals numerous attestations to physical and sensory impairment. This includes examples of more traditionally recognised impairments such as blindness, deafness, lameness, speech impairments, and paralysis,[34] as well as other illnesses that resulted in some level of social separation or marginalisation.[35] While the language of physical and sensory impairment is commonly attested throughout the Hebrew Bible, this language is most often employed as a collective term for a group of people with impairments. Thus, in the vast majority of instances, disability-related terminology is used to describe "the blind," "the lame," or "the deaf" and in many instances includes a number of these categories grouped together.[36] As a consequence of this, while disability-related imagery is prevalent throughout the Hebrew Bible, the presence of *people with disability* is not. Jeremy Schipper proposes that even in those accounts which feature actual embodied figures with disability, the tendency of traditional biblical scholarship has been to overlook such instances completely or to allegorise these accounts in search of "rhetorical and symbolic" meanings that can be applied to the nondisabled.[37] Schipper argues that this is particularly evident in the account of Mephibosheth which is included as part of the David Story; a portion of the Hebrew Bible that Schipper proposes "contains some of the Bible's most striking images of disability."[38] The result of this allegorising is it "flattens the complexities of disability by decontextualizing it from the actual experience of living with a disability."[39]

Jeremy Schipper suggests that the way disability-related terminology is used throughout the Hebrew Bible indicates that it is not simply employed to describe an individual's "particular traits" but rather, references to disability belong to "a larger conceptual category that helped organize and narrate physical differences."[40] Such categorisation can repeatedly be seen throughout the Hebrew Bible whereby different kinds of impairments are grouped together to indicate a shared social status. In Moses' dialogue with YHWH at

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[34] E.g., Isaac (Gen. 27:1); Jacob (Gen. 32; 48:10); Moses (Ex. 4:10); Eli (1 Sam. 3:2; 4:15); Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 4:4, 9:1-13, 16:1f., 19:1f); Ahijah (1 Ki. 14:4); Asa (1 Ki. 15:23).

[35] Some of these will be discussed below in § 4.6.2.

[36] Lev. 19:14; Deut. 27:18; 2 Sam. 5:6-8; Job 29:15; Ps. 146:8; Isa. 35:5; Jer. 31:8.

[37] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 64.

[38] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 3.

[39] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 62.

[40] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 65.

the burning bush in Exodus 4, as noted above, Moses says he cannot speak because he is "slow of speech" (כְּבַד־ פֶּה) and "slow of tongue" (וּכְבַד לָשׁוֹן; Ex. 4:10). YHWH responds to Moses by asking "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf (חֵרֵשׁ) or mute (אִלֵּם)? Who gives them sight (פִּקֵּחַ) or makes them blind (עִוֵּרוֹת)? Is it not I, the LORD?" (Ex. 4:11). In this case, these impairments are linked together as a means of displaying YHWH's control over physical and sensory impairment.[41] It is apparent that the references to the "mute," "deaf," and "blind" are not indicating that only these particular impairments are in YHWH's control, but these impairments act synecdochically to represent a larger, more comprehensive category of people with impaired bodies.[42]

In addition to semantic links between different kinds of impairments, the Hebrew Bible also draws literary connections between people with impairments and other groups of people who are described as weak and/or vulnerable or what Saul M. Olyan refers to as socially "devalued."[43] One such example of this can be seen in the Book of Job. In defending himself against the accusations of his friends, Job states that he was "eyes to the blind and feet to the lame" (עֵינַיִם הָיִיתִי לַעִוֵּר וְרַגְלַיִם לַפִּסֵּחַ אָנִי). I was father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger" (Job 29:15-16).[44] This same idea also appears in the Pseudepigraphal *Letter of Jeremiah* which features an extended discussion on the abilities, or rather, inabilities, of idols: "They cannot save anyone from death or rescue the weak from the strong. They cannot restore sight to the blind; they cannot rescue one who is in distress. They cannot take pity on a widow or do good to an orphan."[45] What is significant in this passage, and other similar ones that appear in the Hebrew Bible and Pseudepigrapha, is that not only are the "weak," the "blind," and the "widow" linked together in a way that emphasises their shared vulnerability,[46] but in addition, the idols themselves are described using disability-

[41] Avrahami notes elsewhere that there are numerous references throughout the HB that indicate that not only is YHWH in charge of the senses but also the absence of the senses: "It is God who decides on the existence of the senses, and he decides on their absence" (*Senses of Scripture*, 195).

[42] This category of "non-functioning" will be addressed in more detail below. See § 4.5.

[43] E.g., *Social Inequality*, 145.

[44] Olyan also notes that in cuneiform texts that words for physical and mental disability are sometimes used as synonyms for "'poor,' suggesting a close association between disability and impoverishment" (Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 7).

[45] *Letter of Jeremiah* 6:36-38 (NRSV). Such imagery is repeated on other occasions in the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha, e.g., *Jos. Asen.* 12:6, 8:5; *Sib. Or.* 4:9, 4:28, 5:84.

[46] Olyan suggests that in the HB, the "blind, lame, deaf and mute are often associated with devalued qualities such as weakness, dependency, helplessness, ineffectuality and ignorance" ("The Ascription of

related language. Saul M. Olyan suggests that this language of impairment is thus used negatively as part of a larger polemic against the worship of idols.[47] This can be seen in the example of Psalm 115: 5-8:

> They have mouths, but cannot speak,
> eyes, but cannot see.
> They have ears, but cannot hear,
> noses, but cannot smell.
> They have hands, but cannot feel,
> feet, but cannot walk,
> nor can they utter a sound in their throats.
> Those who make them will be like them,
> and so will all who trust in them.[48]

Therefore, while there are numerous references to physical and sensory disability throughout the Hebrew Bible, these references are often employed as a means of categorising groups of people rather than describing specific individuals with impairments. As a result of this, unlike the Greco-Roman sources assessed in the previous chapter, the Hebrew Bible features only a small number of references to the causes of impairment. These examples of causation will be briefly addressed here.

§ 4.4.1 Causation

While they are certainly limited in number, the Hebrew Bible does connect some physical and sensory impairments with particular causation. Impairment is thus attributed to congenital factors[49] as well as being the result of old age,[50] accidents,[51] war wounds,[52] human punishment,[53] and manual labour.[54] Impairment is also connected with

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Physical Disability as a Stigmatizing Strategy in Biblical Iconic Polemics," *JHebS* 9 [2009]: 7); cf. Isa. 6:9-10; 56:10; Ps. 38:14-15.

[47] "Ascription of Physical Disability," *passim*.

[48] Cf. Ps. 135:16-17.

[49] Olyan notes that while the text of Leviticus 21:17-23 does not explicitly differentiate acquired from congenital disability, he suggests that "some 'defects' (in Lev 21:17-23) are presumably congenital" (*Disability in the HB*, 28).

[50] E.g., Isaac (Gen. 27:1); Jacob (Gen. 48:10); Eli (1 Sam. 3:2; 4:15); Ahijah (1 Ki. 14:4); Asa (1 Ki. 15:23). It is worth noting here, however, that old age is a socially and culturally located issue. For more on this, see Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 22.

[51] E.g., Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 4:4).

[52] E.g., Samson (Judg. 16:21), Zedekiah (2 Ki. 25:7; Jer. 39:7; 52:11), Adoni-Bezek (Judg. 1:6).

[53] E.g., "So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron" (2 Sam. 4:12).

[54] There was a general understanding in the ancient world that manual labour led to injury and disability. According to the rabbis: "Said R. Tanhuma son of R. Abba...when Israel came out of Egypt the vast majority of them were afflicted with some blemish. Why? Because they had been working in clay and bricks and climbing to the tops of buildings. Those who were engaged in building became maimed through climbing to the upper layers of stone; either a stone fell and cut off the worker's hand, or a beam or some clay got into

supernatural factors. Disability is thus described as punishment for disobedience to YHWH or for the contravention of oaths.[55] One account where the antecedent of impairment is clearly outlined is in the case of Mephibosheth. According to 2 Samuel 4, Mephibosheth was five years old when news reached the royal residence at Gibeah that both Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle of Mount Gilboa. Upon hearing the news, Mephibosheth's nursemaid picked up the infant in order to flee, however, in the midst of the chaos Mephibosheth fell from his nursemaid's arms and became permanently impaired (2 Sam. 4:4).

Despite the fact that the causes of impairments are not always clearly established in the Hebrew Bible, in many instances impairment is connected, either directly or indirectly, with the governance of YHWH. The belief that illness and impairment were the result of unseen forces, especially divine beings, was common in the ancient Near East.[56] In some instances, these impairments or illnesses were understood to be a consequence for those who failed to fulfill the requirements of treaties or oaths.[57] At other times, the gods were seen as "fickle, and their anger...inexplicable,"[58] with people experiencing illness or hardship at the whim of capricious gods. While other ancient Near Eastern religious systems were polytheistic, Israel's monotheism meant that YHWH alone was considered the source, as well as the healer, of illness.[59] For this reason, the Hebrew Bible depicts impairments and illness as chastisement for failure to fulfil covenant stipulations,[60] and

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his eyes and he was blinded" (*Num. Rab.* 7:1). This belief is also expressed in the Egyptian text "The Satire on the Trades" which states that young boys who were learning to become scribes had to copy out texts to acquire their scribal skills. One of the popular models for the boys to translate was information that highlighted the wretchedness of professions other than being a scribe particularly anything involving physical labour. In the text, there are examples of different manual trades and the physical toll on the body. Both the "fashioner of costly stones" and the "builder of walls," for example, are both described as trades that destroy the arms while embalming is described destroying the eyes (trans. J.A. Wilson [*ANET*, 433]).

[55] E.g., Jacob's limp (Gen. 32:25); the Syrian's blindness (2 Ki. 6:18); Jeroboam's withered hand (1 Ki. 13:4). For a discussion on the causes of disability in the Mesopotamian literature, see Walls, "Origins of the Disabled Body," *passim*.

[56] E.g., Marten Stol refers to a Babylonian letter that describes a woman who blasphemes the gods and is subsequently punished with epilepsy-like symptoms (*Epilepsy in Babylonia* [Cuneiform Monographs 2, Groningen: Styx Publications, 1993], 5).

[57] E.g., "Treaty Between Ashurnirari V of Assyria and Mati'ilu or Arpad" (*ANET*, 533); "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," 35, 39, (*ANET*, 538); "The Code of Hammurabi" (*ANET*, 172).

[58] G.G. Dawson, *Healing: Pagan and Christian* (New York: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935), 90.

[59] Deut. 28:15.

[60] E.g., Lev. 26:25; Deut. 28:21, 27-28; 32:39; 2 Chron. 7:13, Ezek. 14:19; 28:23; Hos. 6:1. Michael L. Brown states "...as far as the perceived relationship between sickness and sin is concerned, the scriptural authors were selective in their use of material, choosing to speak primarily of people and events of spiritual

this occurs on both an individual[61] and a corporate level.[62] One such example is featured in the book of Deuteronomy. Here the details of the covenant between YHWH and Israel are recorded, outlining both the rewards for adherence to the covenant stipulations and the punishments for its contravention. Included among the curses for failure to meet the covenant stipulations were defeat in battle, fruitless toil in farming and agriculture, exile, and slavery.[63] In addition, those who were disobedient would be plagued with diseases and with "boils…and with tumors, festering sores and the itch from which you cannot be cured. The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind (וּבְעִוָּרֹון וּבְתִמְהֹון לֵבָב בִּשִׁגָּעֹון)" (Deut. 28:28).[64] Physical and sensory impairments were also enacted upon the Gentile nations as punishment for acting in opposition to YHWH and his people.[65] It is this connection between divine wrath and illness that apparently forms the basis of Elihu's advice to Job to "repent" for his wrongdoing in order to bring about his healing (Job 33:33-34). Despite this, the Hebrew Bible certainly does not present a univocal perspective on the causes of illness and impairment. For example, although there are occasions that the Psalmist laments that he has ill health because of his transgressions,[66] he also expresses his outrage in respect to those people who sin but remain completely nondisabled.[67] For this reason, it is not possible to attribute all illness and impairment to divine punishment in the Hebrew Bible.

This connection between physical and sensory impairments and divine punishment is also apparent throughout a range of Jewish texts from the Second Temple period. According to Tzvi Marx, blindness, deafness, mobility, and speech impairments are all on occasion deemed to be the result of individual transgression in the rabbinic literature.[68] Marx also

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import. Thus, most of the examples of sickness and fatal illness mentioned in the OT illustrate God's judicial punishment of sin. There doubtless were many other examples of sickness in the daily life of the people to which little theological import was attached" (*Israel's Divine Healer* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995], 40).

[61] E.g., Miriam (Num. 12:1-16); Azariah (2 Ki. 15:5; 2 Chron. 26:20); Jeroboam (1 Ki. 13:4); Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:18); Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

[62] E.g., the Philistines were struck with a plague as punishment for capturing the ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 5:6-12); seventy thousand Israelites were killed by God because of David's sins and his inability to choose between the punishments God offered (2 Sam. 24:10-25); when Elisha's servant Gehazi accepted a reward from Naaman, Gehazi and his descendants were struck with 'leprosy' (2 Ki. 5:25-27).

[63] Deut. 28:25-26, 38-42, 49-68; Lev. 26:16-20, 26-38.

[64] Cf. Deut. 28:21, 22, 27-28; Lev. 26:16, 25.

[65] E.g., the Sodomites were "struck" with blindness (Gen. 19:11).

[66] Ps. 38:3; 103:2-3; cf. Ps. 41:4(5).

[67] Ps. 73:2-5.

[68] For example, "Coupling in a mill, considered an improper mode of marital comportment, may lead to epileptic children" (Marx, *Disability in Jewish Law*, 60; cf. BT *Ket.*). Marx goes on to note that this is just one example from "a list of various temperaments and deviations that come about in children as a result of

adds that even those with congenital disability were believed to be experiencing punishment because of God's foreknowledge of their earthly sins.[69] In addition, Marx also suggests that the rabbis reinterpreted biblical stories to explain the origin of certain impairments mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. For example, although Isaac is simply referred to as having "dimmed eyes" due to ageing in Genesis,[70] the rabbis state that his blindness was actually the result of Sarah's deception from Abimelech regarding her relationship with Abraham.[71] Samson likewise is described by the rabbis as being blinded as punishment for transgressing with his eyes (i.e., lust).[72] Isaac's age-related blindness (Gen. 27:1) is also attributed to a vision-related transgression, in this case, lifting his eyes and gazing upon the Shechinah.[73]

§ 4.4.2 Healing – Therapeutic and Divine

What healing options were available for people with physical and sensory impairment according to the Hebrew Bible? While there is only scattered information in the Hebrew Bible regarding available healing options, Hector Avalos proposes that like other ancient Near Eastern people groups, the home was the first locus of health care for the ancient Israelite community.[74] Part of this care may have included homemade medicines and balms as well as the mending of wounds.[75] Minor injuries such as cuts and bruises were most likely the kinds of ailments cared for in the home because

> the origin of these complaints was not hidden and the basic treatment could largely be determined by outward observation. However, in the case of mysterious ailments such as

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their parents' prior sinful activity" (*Disability in Jewish Law*, 59 n. 59). Slander likewise was deemed to be punishable by 'leprosy' (Sifre Deut. 275.1.1; *Lev. Rab.* 16:1-7; *Deut. Rab.* 6:8).

[69] See *Tana de-vei Eliahu Zuta* (Ish Shalom) 23; also *Otzar Hamidrashim*, p. 319 (as cited in Marx, *Disability*, 65; A. Oepke, "ἰάομαι, ἴασις, ἴαμα, ἰατρός," *TDNT* 3:201).

[70] Gen. 27:1.

[71] *b. B. Qam.* 93a.

[72] *b. Sotah* 9b. The rabbis also believed that Nahum became blind, his hands and legs mutilated, and his body covered in boils as punishment for postponing giving food to a poor man (*b. Taan.* 21a).

[73] *Gen. Rab.* 65 on 27:1. The Shechinah was a symbol used to represent the presence of the divine in the temple.

[74] Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, 251-254. E.g., David and Bathsheba's child is cared for at home when he becomes ill (2 Sam. 12:15-18); the son of the widow of Zarephath is cared for by his mother in his home until he dies (1 Ki. 17). Avalos however notes that this would not have been the case with 'leprosy,' whereby those with 'leprosy' were forced to live in a special dwelling outside of the rest of the community (*Illness and Health Care*, 251-254; cf. 2 Chron. 26:20-21). As recompense for Jonathan's devotion to him, David sought out Mephibosheth whose mobility was impaired due to a childhood injury (2 Sam. 4:4), and brought him to his home to be cared for by his servants.

[75] Although not described specifically in relation to home care, there are references in the HB to medical therapies such as balms (Isa. 38:21; Jer. 8:22; 46:11; 51:8) and the binding of wounds (Isa. 1:5-6; 30:26; Jer. 6:14; Ezek. 30:21; 34:4; Zech. 11:16; Hos. 6:1).

> fevers, internal disorders, and severe pain, the primary emphasis was on spiritual means, since an outside, apparently hostile force was attacking the body.[76]

Hector Avalos states that "in contrast to modern Western medicine, religion and health care were intricately intertwined in most of the ancient world."[77] Avalos proposes that the polytheistic nature of the ancient Near East allowed people access to a range of healing options.[78] A supplicant could appeal to any number of healing deities or petition within any number of healing shrines[79] with no apparent penalty for doing so.[80] Furthermore, there were also many different kinds of physicians and conjurors who could offer healing to supplicants.[81] In this sense, Avalos suggests that there was no division between legitimate and illegitimate healing therapies in the religions of the Near East.[82]

In contrast, Avalos contends that for the ancient Israelites, whose religion was characterised by monotheism, there was a strong demarcation between legitimate and illegitimate healing options leaving only a small number of legitimate healing options available to the supplicant. According to Avalos:

> the principal effect of monolatry is, perhaps, the automatic bifurcation of a health care system into legitimate and illegitimate options. Since only one god can be approached for healing, all other gods, whether they are believed to exist or not, are automatically rendered illegitimate...At the same time, a monolatrous system theoretically simplifies the search for the healing deity and thus simplifies the liturgy as well. Since only one sender/healer of disease is possible, the liturgy is reduced to appeasing or contacting only one deity.[83]

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[76] Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 40.

[77] Avalos, *Health Care and the Rise*, 20.

[78] Avalos, *Health Care and the Rise*, 21.

[79] For details on the various healing gods available throughout the ancient Near East see Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, *passim*; B. Böck, *The Healing Goddess Gula: Towards an Understanding of Ancient Babylonian Medicine* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); G.S. Holland, *Gods in the Desert: Religions of the Ancient Near East* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009); W.A. Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations* (New York: New York University Press, 1962); D.C. Snell, *Religions of the Ancient Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[80] Avalos suggests that there was a tendency in the ANE to petition multiple gods in one supplication (*Illness and Health Care*, 160). This was done so as not to offend any deities or if the petitioner was unsure which god afflicted them with the disease. These multiple petitions, however, made the rituals extremely complex and labour intensive.

[81] The Egyptians expressed a great knowledge of medical practices (as revealed in the Egyptian medical papyri), for example, see J.H. Breasted, *The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus* [Oriental Institute Publications; 2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930]) and specialist doctors (Hom., *Od.* 4:231-32; Hdt., *Hist.* 2:84; 3:1, 132). In the temples of Babylonia and Assyria, Jayne suggests that some priests were specifically trained as physicians (*Healing Gods*, 94-95). *The Code of Hammurabi* also contains detailed information regarding the wages that should be paid to physicians (lines 215-217, 221-223), as well as the consequences incurred for those who injure or kill a patient during a medical procedure (lines 218-220; trans. T.J. Meek, [*ANET*, 175-176]).

[82] *Illness and Health Care*, *passim.*

[83] *Health Care and the Rise*, 22.

Ultimately, it was YHWH alone who was Israel's healer (רָפָא; Ex. 15:26).[84] This healing was not limited to physical healing, but the semantic range of רָפָא (*rôpē*) indicates that it carries a broader meaning of restoration and/or making whole.[85] For this reason, Michael L. Brown suggests that *rôpē* is used to describe "the 'healing' of a sick body (2 Ki. 20:5), the 'repairing' of a broken down altar (1 Ki. 18:30), the 'restoration' of a drought-stricken and locust–eaten land (2 Chron. 7:14), the 'making wholesome' of undrinkable waters (2 Ki. 2:21-22)" as well as numerous other indications of restoration.[86] This idea of a restoration to wholeness for the Israelites was, therefore, more than just the absence of illness and impairment but "the health of the human being in all its aspects."[87] This concept of health was characterised by the Hebrew word שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*). This *shalom* refers not only to both a state of well-being but also living in right relationship with YHWH.[88] In this way, the "health of a person is closely bound up with his relationship with God...Well-being (*shalom*) is only obtainable when (a person) achieves a harmonious relationship with God."[89] This is seen, for example, in the parallelism between *shalom* and healing (indicated by the root word רָפָא) in Jeremiah 8:15: "We look for peace (שָׁלוֹם) but find no good, for a time of healing (רָפָא), but there is terror instead."[90] *Shalom* thus represented the ultimate state of existence:[91] being in a state of physical health and right relationship with YHWH and his creation.[92]

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[84] The significance of Exodus 15:26 can be seen in the fact that it frequently occurs on Jewish amulets from late antiquity onwards. On one amulet from the sixth or seventh century C.E., a Hebrew amulet found at the ancient synagogue in Nirim cites Exodus 15:26 as a means of warding off evil spirits. "The same verse is also found in an Aramaic amulet from the Cairo Genizah" (M. Folmer, "A Jewish Childbirth Amulet from the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana" in *Tradition and Innovation in Biblical Interpretation: Studies Presented to Professor Eep Talstra on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* [SSN; ed. W.Th. van Peursen and J.W. Dyk; Brill: Leiden, 2011], 234).

[85] Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 29. In the LXX, *rôpē* is generally translated by the verb ἰάομαι and its cognates; a term employed in Greek to refer to a range of healers into medical doctors, folk, as well as religious healers.

[86] Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 29.

[87] J.J. Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9.

[88] J. Durham, "Shalom and the Presence of God," in *Proclamation and Presence: Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies* (ed. J.I. Durham and J.R. Porter; Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970), 272-293; G. von Rad, "εἰρήνη, εἰρηνεύω, εἰρηνικός, εἰρηνοποιός, εἰρηνοποιέω," *TDNT* 2:402-406.

[89] M.W. Yeung, *Faith in Jesus and Paul: A Comparison with Special Reference to 'faith that can remove mountains' and 'your faith has healed/saved you'* (WUNT II 147; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 99.

[90] NRSV.

[91] "No treasure is greater than a healthy body (*shalom*); no happiness than a joyful heart. Preferable is death to a bitter life, unending sleep to constant illness" (Sir. 30:16-17; NAB).

[92] The totality of this meaning can be seen in the number of ways this word is used throughout the HB. For example, it is used to mean peace between God and humanity (e.g., Num. 6:26) as well as peace between human parties (e.g., Judg. 4:17; Jer. 9:8).

The Israelites were directed against consulting mediums and sorcerers (e.g., Deut. 18:10-12), and most importantly, other gods,[93] in order to obtain healing. While the Hebrew Bible reveals a knowledge of ancient physicians, in general they are spoken of in disparaging terms. King Asa of Judah is criticised for seeking healing from foreign physicians as opposed to seeking healing directly from YHWH (2 Chron. 16:12). In his discussions of his own health, Job refers to physicians as untrustworthy and worthless (Job 13:4). It is worth noting that by the time of the Second Temple period, views towards physicians had apparently shifted. The second-century B.C.E. treatise *Ben Sira* discusses the merits of the physician at length. Here physicians are described as receiving "their gift of healing...from the Most High" (38:1-3).[94] Even so, *Ben Sira* directs the ill person first to pray for healing because consulting a physician would be fruitless if the supplicant hasn't first requested healing from God.[95]

Unlike other temples of the ancient Near East, the Israelite temple did not have a petitionary function.[96] Due to the regulations regarding purity as well as the belief that YHWH dwelt in the temple (1 Ki. 8:10-13), the Israelite temple was restricted to ritualistic functions.[97] Despite this, the Israelites were very much encouraged to appeal to YHWH for healing because YHWH was the root of illness and healing. [98] As a result, there are many examples in the Hebrew Bible of people appealing to YHWH through prayer for their illnesses to be healed.[99] There were also a range of figures to whom people could appeal for intercessory prayer such as prophets, and in later time, rabbis. These figures are also shown to give practical advice regarding illness, and on some occasions, even perform healing miracles. The prophet Elisha, for example, is credited with healing Naaman the

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[93] In 2 Kings 1:2-17, Ahaziah, after falling from a roof, sends his messengers to appeal to Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if he will recover from his illness. However, due to his appeal to foreign gods and his denial of God, Ahaziah dies.

[94] NRSV.

[95] "My child, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you...He who sins against his maker, will be defiant toward the physician" (38:9, 15).

[96] Avalos compares the Israelite temple with those of Asclepius as well as the petitionary function of the temple of Gula in Mesopotamia (see Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, 57-58, 193f.)

[97] However, Avalos suggests that the Israelite temple may have had some therapeutic function, if only short term, as is indicated through the use of the bronze serpent (2 Ki. 18:4), a therapeutic item often found in the vicinity of ANE temple remains (*Illness and Health Care*, 337f.).

[98] E.g., Ex. 4:6-7; Deut. 32:39.

[99] E.g., Hezekiah appealed to God to heal his 'illness' (2 Ki. 20:2-3), while Moses petitioned YHWH to heal Miriam of her 'leprosy' (Num. 12:13).

Syrian from *ṣāra'at*[100] in 2 Kings 5.[101] The rabbinical literature also refers to the healing miracles of Hanina ben Dosa who was able to enact healing through intercessory prayers.[102]

In this section, we have briefly addressed the kinds of physical and sensory impairments that are attested throughout the Hebrew Bible. It was noted that while narratives relating to people with disability are limited, the use of disability-related language is regularly employed throughout the Hebrew Bible as a means of categorising and assigning value to certain groups of people. As a consequence of featuring so few embodied characters with disability, the direct causes of impairment are only rarely described throughout the Hebrew Bible. Instead, causation is often linked directly or indirectly with YHWH himself. Unlike other people groups of the ancient Near East who could appeal to numerous gods in their search for healing, the monolatry of the Israelites restricted their search for healing to only a small number of legitimate options. In this way, YHWH alone was considered not only the source of, but also the cure for a range of illnesses and impairments. In the following section we will address the language of disability in more detail, assessing two ways in which disability-related terminology is employed to categorise and assign value in the Hebrew Bible.

§ 4.5 The Sensorial Body

Despite a multitude of references to various parts of the body throughout the Hebrew Bible, the word 'body' itself appears only infrequently in English translations. The reason

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[100] *Ṣāra'at*, or what has traditionally be translated as "leprosy," will be discussed in more detail in § 4.6.2.

[101] E.g., Isaiah advised Hezekiah to apply a poultice of figs to cure his boil (2 Ki. 20:7; Isa. 38:21) and Elisha is also depicted as advising Naaman, the Syrian army commander, to wash in the River Jordan to cure his 'leprosy' (2 Ki. 5:1-14). Abraham prays for Abimelech and his health is restored (Gen. 20:17) and Solomon prays for the future health of all Israel at the dedication of the temple (1 Ki. 8:22-61). The rabbinical literature and the DSS also feature numerous references to prophets of the HB performing healing miracles and exorcisms. On occasion, these are cited as occurring within their own lifetime, although the information does not appear in the HB. At other times, they are shown as healing posthumously through other rabbis, (e.g., Abram is described as exorcising a demon from Pharaoh (Abimelech) following Abimelech's withholding of Abram's wife Sarai [*1QapGen* 20:28-29]. Solomon is also accredited with exorcising demons [*T. Sol.*, *passim*). Indeed, C.A. Evans states that "The tradition of Solomon as exorcist *par excellence* was widespread in late antiquity" (*Jesus and his Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* [Leiden: Brill, 1995], 238). In the Pseudepigrapha, Solomon is even depicted as conversing with the king of the demons, Beelzebub (*T. Sol.* 6:1f.).

[102] E.g., *m. Ber.* 5:5; *b. Ber.* 34b. Honi the Circle Drawer and his grandsons Hannan ha-Nehba and Abbi Hilqiah, while all remembered for their ability to work miracles, are not credited with the healing of diseases (*m. Taan. 3.8*, *b. Taan* 23a-23b).

for this is that Biblical Hebrew had no specific term to denote the body. The word closest in meaning is גְּוִיָּה (*gĕviyah*), but this is only employed 13 terms in the Hebrew Bible and on only two occasions does it refer to a "living human body."[103] In general, when the word 'body' appears in English versions it usually translates references to specific body parts which have been employed synecdochically.[104] Despite this,

> the Hebrew Bible is a collection very much focused on bodies – bodies that have sexual relations, give birth, get sick, heal, eat and drink, get damaged, dance defecate, sing and die...Biblical characters, as embodied beings, interact with God; furthermore, their relationships with God is very much influenced by the multiple states and activities of their bodies.[105]

These "states and activities of the bodies" however, have not traditionally proven to be of great interest to biblical scholars. While numerous works have addressed the nature of the divine body in the Hebrew Bible, especially its anthropomorphic representations,[106] exploration of the human body has developed little beyond discussions of the *imago dei*.[107] A number of recent works centred on embodiment and epistemology in the Hebrew Bible address this deficit. Included among these works are the 2010 edited volume of S. Tamar Kamionkowski and Wonil Kim entitled *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, and in the same series, the 2012 work of Yael Avrahami entitled *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible*. It is worth acknowledging also the 2014 edited work of Joan E. Taylor, *The Body in Biblical, Christian and Jewish Texts*. Interestingly, while Taylor's work features numerous aspects of embodiment, the issue of disability is not addressed at all.[108] Despite the merit of Kamionkowski and Kim's work, as well as that of Taylor, we have selected Avrahami's monograph as a means of addressing embodiment, and thus by extension disability, in the Hebrew Bible. While Avrahami's work is primarily on the role of the senses rather than disability *per se*, she does briefly

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[103] J.J. Wilkinson, "The Body in the Old Testament," *EvQ* 63.3 (1991): 197; cf. Gen. 47:18; Neh. 9:37.

[104] John J. Wilkinson suggests they are words like "*beṭen*" (abdomen; Ps. 31:9), "*bāśār*" (muscle; Isa. 10:18), "*ʿeṣem*" (bone; Lam. 4:7; "Body in the OT," 197-198).

[105] S.T. Kamionkowski, "Introduction," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (ed. S.T. Kamionkowski and W. Kim; LHBOTS 465; New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 2.

[106] E.g, E.J. Hamori, *'When Gods were Men': The Embodied God in the Biblical and Near Eastern Literature* (BZAW 384; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008); B.D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[107] For an investigation into the anthropology of the *imago dei* in the HB, see H. Bosman, "Figuring God and Humankind: The *Imago Dei* in view of Anthropologies in the Old Testament" in *Fragile Dignity: Intertextual Conversations on Scriptures, Family, and Violence* (ed. L.J. Claassens and K. Spronk; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 39-56.

[108] J.E. Taylor (ed.), *The Body in Biblical, Christian and Jewish Texts* (LSTS; London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

address the social and cultic repercussions for people with non-functioning senses in the Hebrew Bible. In this next section, we will build upon the work begun by Avrahami in categorising bodies in terms of their sensory functionality or lack thereof. We will also explore in more detail the implications of this for those with functional limitations. It will be argued here that by building upon Avrahami's categorisations of the sensorial body we can develop a more contextual and nuanced assessment of sensory impairment, and by extension physical impairment, in the Hebrew Bible.

In *The Senses of Scripture*, Yael Avrahami proposes that throughout the Hebrew Bible, the senses are not described as merely perfunctory abilities of the body, but rather, the sensory organs are the means through which humanity experiences life.[109] In this way, knowledge of the world and of YHWH comes through the fullness of the sensory experience. More than this, the sensory experience works through an accumulative action of the senses as a means of understanding and responding to various stimuli. Various sensory abilities are thus clustered together in the Hebrew Bible in such a way as to reveal a "conceptual link" between them.[110] Hearing is paired with seeing, seeing with taste and so on, as a means of expressing the fullness of the sensorial experience. While ultimately Avrahami concludes that vision is given precedence over all of the sensory functions,[111] it is only in the combination of the senses that an individual can gain access to all the information available in any given environment and experience.

Avrahami proposes that in the modern West, we are conditioned to a Platonic pentasensory ideal, that is, that the senses are comprised of the five functions of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Avrahami, through detailed constructions of "associative patterns" and "paradigmatic and syntagmatic associative relations" argues that in contrast, the Hebrew Bible presents a septasensory model of the senses.[112] To our standard five senses, Avrahami proposes that the Hebrew Bible also adds speech and kinaesthesia, which refers to movement, especially, the way the body moves in its environment, as part of the

[109] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 127.
[110] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 75.
[111] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 223-276.
[112] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 55-56.

sensory experience.[113] Avrahami notes that while readers of the Hebrew Bible are generally aware of the associated links between hearing and sight, for example, that the Hebrew Bible also expresses the 'senses' of kinaesthesia and speech in a way that shows them to be semantically equal to the five traditional sensory functions of the modern West.[114] This is expressed in Deuteronomy 26:17, for example, where "hearing" God and obeying him are represented by the action of "walking": "You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws – that you will listen to him." On other occasions, it is vision that is associated with movement such as in Psalm 119:105, where the kinaesthetic action is expressed in terms of the movement of feet along a path: "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."[115] In Avrahami's sensorial framework, the inability to walk, defined as a physical disability throughout the current study, is thus recast as a form of sensory disability.

Throughout her monograph, Avrahami demonstrates the way in which the seven different sensory experiences are employed throughout the Hebrew Bible in various combinations revealing a significant interconnectedness between each of the sensory functions.[116] Avrahami suggests that this interconnectedness is appropriated through a range of "word pairs, parallels, metaphors, paradigmatic replacement" and other word combinations that highlight the semantic associations between each of the sensory experiences.[117] The connection between each of the sensory organs is not limited to a single set of vocabulary, but rather employs a range of semantic terms and images. As a result, the linguistic parallels are so apparent that they are evident even through the employment of less common sensory vocabulary. This can be seen in the example of Job 37:14 where the Hebrew words employed for "hearing" and "seeing" are words far more rarely attested in the Hebrew Bible. In the Book of Job, Elihu challenges Job's ability to understand by declaring "Hear (הֶאֲזִין) this, O Job: stop and consider (בִּין) the wondrous works of God."[118] Avrahami notes that the "seemingly abstract meaning of 'consider' (בִּין) is, in fact, a

[113] Avrahami argues that kinaesthesia may be represented through references to "walking" or references to the "leg." The non-functionality of the kinaesthesic sense is also represented through the inability to move or walk including references to being "lame" (*Senses of Scripture*), 75-84.

[114] See Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture* chapter 2 "Number our Senses," 65-112.

[115] These links can also be seen in Psalm 115 cited above (§ 4.4).

[116] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 65-112.

[117] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 60.

[118] ESV; cf. Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 70.

concrete meaning, 'to watch.'"[119] Despite the employment of more obscure sensory terminology, the conceptual link between "hearing" and "seeing" is still made apparent.

Ultimately, Avrahami's thesis is that the Hebrew Bible expresses an interconnected experience of what Avrahami refers to as the sensorium – the full multi-sensory experience. The senses are not merely tools through which the body sends and receives sensory signals as might be presented in modern epistemological thought, but rather, in the Hebrew Bible the *functionality of the senses* is also related to the overall *functionality of the body*. In this way, the sensory organs are "described as having (more than) a purely physical function."[120] The ability to know, to act, to interpret, to understand, to enjoy, to fear, to suffer, all of these human experiences only occur in the body through the combined actions of the senses.[121] For this reason, combinations of multiple sensory organs/experiences thus act to represent the fullness of the human experience.[122] In this way, the semantic link between sight and insight, as employed in the Hebrew Bible, is more than just a matter of metaphor, but rather, sight, in conjunction with the other senses, is the corporeal vehicle through which the body can gain insight and knowledge of the world.[123] This can be seen for example in Deutero-Isaiah 42:20: "You have seen many things, but you pay no attention; your ears are open, but you do not listen." Jeremiah 5:21 presents a similar sentiment: "Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear." Though the sensory organs can function as *sensory* devices, they are failing in their secondary (primary?) task of bringing insight and wisdom.

Avrahami thus proposes that it is in the full sensorial experience that humanity knows YHWH, each other, and itself. It is also in the full appropriation of the sensorium that the body acts in the fullness of its agency as created beings, acting with endowed sovereignty over the world.[124] For Avrahami, the Hebrew Bible expresses the senses as the means through which humans gain knowledge and understanding, thus to employ the senses is to seek and possess wisdom. This is apparent through multiple examples, she attests,

[119] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 70.
[120] Wilkinson, "Body in the OT," 196.
[121] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 185.
[122] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 91.
[123] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 185.
[124] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 130-188.

which express the sensory organs as pathways to comprehension. One such example is in Ecclesiastes 2:12b, 13-14b: "Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. And I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness."[125] It is only in the full functionality of the sensorium that the experience of humanity can be complete.

However, not all sensory organs meet these standards and thus the connection between the various senses can also be framed in terms of the non-functionality of the corresponding body part/s. This is expressed through the combination of non-functioning sensory organs throughout the Hebrew Bible. In particular, this is done through expressing that although one may be in possession of their sensory organs that these organs are not fulfilling the desired outcome. This is expressed in Isaiah 43:8: "Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf." This can also be expressed through the combination of sensory impairments, for example, in the semantic link between the "blind" and the "lame." Not only do the combination of the "blind" and the "lame" serve to highlight the shared social status of people with a diverse range of impairments, but often, such references are used as a synecdoche to represent all people with impairments. On occasion, it is possible that the synecdoche serves to represent not just people with sensory impairments but indeed all people in a position of weakness and/or vulnerability in the community.

Examples of the "blind" and "lame" appearing simultaneously are attested throughout the Hebrew Bible,[126] as well as in the later Jewish sources. The most well-known example outside of the Hebrew Bible is the parable of the lame and blind men in the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*. This parable contains a lame man and a blind man who "represent allegorically the soul and the body which can only think and act in co-operation with each other and therefore must both be resurrected and reunited for judgement at the end of days."[127] It will be noted in chapters five and seven of this thesis that this same topos is also used in the New Testament material where once again the combined reference to the "blind" and

[125] NAB.

[126] 2 Sam. 5:8; Deut. 15:21; Job 29:15; Jer. 31:8.

[127] M. Bregman, "The Parable of the Lame and the Blind: Epiphanus' Quotation from an Apocryphon of Ezekiel," *JTS* 42 [1991]: 126-127.

the "lame" acts synecdochically to represent a wider group of people with impairments (§ 5.9; § 7.4).[128] While the combination of the "blind" and the "lame" appears most frequently, other combinations are also common such as the "deaf" and "mute"[129] as well as the "deaf" and "blind."[130] Other combinations also appear with "infirmity of the leg" being coupled with the inability to speak such as in Isaiah 35:6's vision of eschatological healing: "Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute shout for joy."[131]

Avrahami suggests that because the fully-functional sensorium is representative of the fullness of the human experience, by extension, those who are lacking in sensory functionality are also lacking in this same experience and wisdom. Avrahami proposes that an example of this connection between non-functionality and a socially devalued state can be seen in Proverbs 26:7: "Like the useless legs of one who is lame is a proverb in the mouth of a fool."[132] The comparison between lameness and foolishness, Avrahami suggests, "places the lame person on the wrong side of the wisdom continuum."[133] It is for this reason Avrahami argues that both human and divine punishment is often enacted upon human bodies in the form of sensory deprivation.[134] According to Avrahami, this kind of punishment is a visual representation of a "loser's...inferiority"[135] bringing shame upon the bearer and relegating them to a lower social status.[136] In this way, Avrahami contends that even human punishment inflicted upon one's conquered enemies is representative of a "loss of authority," but more significantly, a "loss of divine support."[137]

This reality is made all the more poignant through Avrahami's observations that in the Hebrew Bible the human capacity for a complete sensory experience is reflective of YHWH's his own fully-functional sensorium. YHWH'S ultimate "creative power" is evidenced not

[128] On the use of the "blind" and "lame" as a topos in Jewish and Christian literature see Wolfgang Speyer, *Frühes Christentum im Antiken Strahlungsfeld* (WUNT I 50; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 264-268.

[129] *Senses of Scripture*, 90.

[130] *Senses of Scripture*, 70.

[131] *Senses of Scripture*, 83.

[132] *Senses of Scripture*, 213.

[133] *Senses of Scripture*, 213.

[134] *Senses of Scripture*, 196-206.

[135] *Senses of Scripture*, 202.

[136] For a detailed discussion of the shame associated with physical mutilation, see T.M. Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *JBL* 125.2 (2006): 225-241.

[137] Avrahami, *Senses of Scripture*, 201. Avrahami suggests that this is evidenced in the blinding of Zedekiah, king of Judah, when he is captured by the Babylonians (2 Ki. 25:7).

only in his fully-functional sensory abilities[138] but in his power over human sensory organs as well as in his ability to restore non-functioning human senses as seen on numerous occasions throughout the Hebrew Bible.[139] This link between YHWH's creative ability and his ability to heal (re-create?) is attested in Psalm 146: 6-8:

> 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
> the sea and everything in them—
> he remains faithful forever.
> 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed
> and gives food to the hungry.
> The LORD sets prisoners free,
> 8 the LORD gives sight to the blind,
> the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
> the LORD loves the righteous.
> 9 The LORD watches over the foreigner
> and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
> but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.[140]

For Avrahami, non-functionality, including the lack of speech and/or mobility is expressed in terms of not only weakness and vulnerability but also 'otherness.' To be without fully functioning sensorium and thus without the ability to represent YHWH's "creative power" results in a lack of agency. Avrahami contends that concepts like ability, independence, wisdom, and even life itself, are expressed with sensory vocabulary, thus, in contrast, concepts of inability, dependence, lack of knowledge, and by extension death, are represented through the language of temporary or permanent sensory impairment.[141] As a result, Avrahami argues that the language of non-functionality of the senses creates "a negative image of disabled people."[142] This "negative image" in combination with "the actual prohibitions or restrictions" placed upon people with impairments "places them in the margins of society together with the poor, the foreigner, and the widow."[143] Avrahami suggests that if a fully functional sensorium is part of "a human's ontological essence" then the outcome for those with non-functioning sensorium is likely to be that they are regarded as "essentially inferior, as almost "non-persons."[144] For Avrahami, such people are stripped

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[138] E.g., Isa. 59:1. This creative ability and sensory functionality is contrast with the *created* and non-functioning sensorium of idols (e.g., Hab. 2:18-20; Jer. 10:1-16).

[139] Ex. 4:11; Deut. 28:28; 2 Ki. 6:18; Isa. 29: 17-21

[140] Cf. 42:1-7.

[141] *Senses of Scripture*, 220.

[142] *Senses of Scripture*, 220.

[143] *Senses of Scripture*, 220.

[144] *Senses of Scripture*, 220-221.

of all power and "like all marginalized people, they are betwixt and between, part person, part non-person, between life and death, between society and the outside."[145]

Ultimately, Avrahami's studies on the ascendency of the senses in the Hebrew Bible lead her to suggest that non-functioning sensorium indicate not only "lack of ability and lack of independence"[146] but that absent senses can also be compared to "the absence of any real existence or power."[147] For Avrahami, those with non-functioning sensorium can only exist in a state of social devaluation and are therefore lacking in any form of independent agency. In Avrahami's view, the Hebrew Bible presents those with sensorial limitations as inevitably "cast to the margins of society."[148] The negative associations between other socially devalued states and the "prejudice against people whose senses have been damaged" were both equally stigmatising in Avrahami's assessment of the Hebrew Bible.[149] While Avrahami notes that the Hebrew Bible includes directives to ensure legal justice and ethical treatment of the sensorially impaired,[150] for Avrahami, these guidelines serve only to reinforce "the negative semantic correlation of blindness (and by extension, other impairments) as helplessness."[151]

Yael Avrahami's work on the senses is a helpful rubric through which to address physical and sensory impairment in the Hebrew Bible. Firstly, she addresses sensory functionality and non-functionality in language that is native to the Hebrew Bible. Rather than relying on modern terminology for impairments which is often biomedically driven, Avrahami has developed a means of assessing non-functioning senses – sensory impairment - within a framework that is rooted solely in the language and worldview of the Hebrew Bible. In addition, Avrahami's proposal that kinesthesia should likewise be considered a method of sensory input/output is also helpful for the research in this thesis in order to highlight the close physiological connections between the categories of physical and sensory impairment used throughout.

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[145] *Senses of Scripture*, 221.
[146] *Senses of Scripture*, 183.
[147] *Senses of Scripture*, 195.
[148] *Senses of Scripture*, 206.
[149] *Senses of Scripture*, 207.
[150] E.g., Lev. 19:14; Prov. 30:8-19.
[151] *Senses of Scripture*, 207 (parenthetical material mine) re: Deut. 27:18.

Despite this, while Avrahami addresses non-functioning senses throughout *The Senses of Scripture*, ultimately it is the senses themselves rather than impaired ones which are of primary concern in her work. As a result of this, while her investigations into the sense themselves are incredibly erudite, the lack of direct focus on sensory deprivation means that her assessment into non-functioning sensorium is not quite as nuanced as it ought to be. Avrahami is swift to conclude that because of the esteemed value of the senses in the ancient Israelite community, those with non-functioning senses would be relegated to a life of stigmatisation and marginalisation. In her summation, non-functioning sensorium are tantamount to a "non-person" without agency or power.[152] While Avrahami's assessments of the senses in the Hebrew Bible certainly provide evidence that stigmatisation and marginalisation were a very real possibility for people with non-functioning sensorium, Avrahami neglects to address the complexity with which disability is portrayed throughout the Hebrew Bible. Avrahami contends that those with non-functioning sensorium are cast as "socially-devalued" throughout the Hebrew Bible, semantically linked with other groups of people who are likewise considered "socially devalued" such as the poor, widows, and foreigners.[153] While certain texts in the Hebrew Bible indicate that such people may have experienced a reduced capacity within the ancient community, at the same time, there are numerous exhortations given that indicate that the sensory-impaired, as well as the poor and other marginal groups, are not "non-persons," but rather vulnerable persons in need of the assistance of the community.[154]

On numerous occasions, the Hebrew Bible includes exhortations to assist those with physical and sensory impairment, as well as other marginal figures,[155] and ensure such vulnerable members of the ancient community are not exposed to injustice. This includes directives against cursing the deaf (Lev. 19:14), placing a stumbling block in front of the

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[152] *Senses of Scripture*, 221.

[153] *Senses of Scripture*, 207.

[154] Although, it must be noted that some writers in the field of disability studies consider this view of 'compassion for' people with disability as a problematic in itself. Julia Watts Belser contends that the "very premise of 'compassion for' people with disabilities reinforces a mode of relationship that is marked by paternalism, charity, and pity" ("Reading Talmudic Bodies: Disability, Narrative, and the Gaze in Rabbinic Judaism," in *Disability in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions, and Social Analysis* [ed. D. Schumm and M. Stoltzfus; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011], 6-7). Rebecca Raphael likewise contends that despite the beneficent intensions, such passages highlight the lack of agency of people with disability in the HB (Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 22).

[155] E.g., Ex. 22:22; 23:10-11; Lev. 19:10; Deut. 10:18; 14:29; 15:11, 24:17-22; Ps. 82:3-4.

blind (Lev. 19:14),[156] or leading them astray (Deut. 27:18).[157] The author of Isaiah 58 recommends not merely avoiding acts that could be harmful for people with impairments but to instigate actions which will be of benefit to the weak and vulnerable who are part of their community. For example Isaiah 58:6-7:

> 'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

In the book of Job, in response to claims from Eliphaz that Job's wickedness was great and that he acted unjustly towards those in need, Job states that he was reputed as being a man of great ethical conduct. Job describes himself as an exemplary character among the people because of his care for the poor and needy,[158] as well as those who are blind and lame.[159]

However, the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible presents the tension that exists between exhortations for the benevolent treatment of the vulnerable and the belief that those with non-functioning sensorium are incomplete and require the restoration of their sensory capabilities. A number of texts in the prophetic literature use the imagery of physical and sensory disability in association with the anticipated restoration of Israel in the messianic age. In these texts, the entire exiled remnant are described with disability-related terminology and conform to the model presented by Avrahami by aligning non-

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[156] This admonition is expanded in the Rabbinical text although here it implies that people who are visually or hearing impaired should be looked after not because they warrant extra care but simply because they are human and this is the way all humans should be treated. Although it is a positive endorsement on the equality of all humanity, it does not seem to take into consideration the societal difficulties faced by people with disability (Sifra *Kedoshim* 3:13-14; see also *b. Tem.* 4a; *b. Sebu.* 36a). However, the rabbinic literature does state that "stones should be thrown in the middle of the road, not on the sides where blind people walk" (*t. B. Qam.* 2:13).

[157] Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.276.

[158] Job 29:13-17.

[159] Job 29:15. The *Testament of Job*, in connecting with what is written of Job in the HB, again confirms that Job was a worthy man because he gave to the poor and took care of those who are vision impaired. At the conclusion of the book Nereus, the brother of Job, states: "And I Nereus, his brother, with the seven male children accompanied by the poor and the orphans and all the helpless, we were weeping and saying:

Woe to us today! A double woe!
Gone today is the strength of the helpless!
Gone is the light of the blind!
Gone is the father of the orphans!
Gone is the host of strangers!
Gone is the clothing of widows! (*T. Job* 53:2-3, trans. Charlesworth).

Also, in the *Testament of Job* 17:3, Job recalls what "the devil" did to him in bringing about his downfall. Job says that the devil disguised himself as the king of Persians and began making accusations against him. Part of the accusation is that Job wasted money and "destroyed all the good things of the earth" by giving it "to the beggars, to the blind and to the lame" (trans. Charlesworth).

functioning sensorium with social marginalisation. This occurs in Micah 4:4-6, for example, where YHWH pledges to "gather the lame (and) assemble the exiles." Sarah J. Melcher proposes that the use of parallelism here sets the "lame" as equivalent to the "exiles," those who are outcast.[160] In one sense, the pericope emphasises the reversal of fortune for the marginalised as "those who are impaired and cast off will serve as the basis for a new Zion community under the rule of YHWH."[161] However, as Rebecca Raphael has noted, representations of future healing for those with sensory impairments wholly "depend on the stigma of disability" and the belief that living with non-functioning senses is entirely undesirable.[162]

On other occasions in the Hebrew Bible, while disability-related language renders an individual, or indeed Israel itself, as vulnerable and in need of YHWH's guidance, no such eschatological healing is envisaged. Indeed, rather than relegating the sensory-impaired person to an existence without agency and power as Avrahami proposes, in some instances disability-related imagery is coupled with wisdom and a position of influence. Semantic connections between disability-related terminology and desirable attributes can be seen in the example of the "suffering servant" of Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Here the "servant" is described as acting "wisely," being highly exalted (52:13), and having "a portion among the great" (53:12). While traditional scholarship has interpreted the "servant" here as experiencing a debilitating temporarily illness,[163] Jeremy Schipper argues that the "servant" is better interpreted as experiencing "a chronic but unspecified disability."[164] What is significant here is that there is no clear description of the removal of this disability. While the "servant" is depicted as socially marginalised and despised, he is ultimately not described as receiving physical healing. In this way, Schipper argues that the passage reveals an emancipation from "social oppression rather than (the servant being) cured of a defective body."[165] Consequently, the Hebrew Bible offers a portrait of the servant that is simultaneously one of physical disability and persecution and...expresses that physical

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[160] "'I Will Lead the Blind by a Road They Do Not Know': Disability in Prophetic Eschatology" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio, Texas, November, 2004), 5; cf. F.I. Anderson and D.N. Freedman, *Micah* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 430.

[161] Melcher, "I Will Lead the Blind," 8.

[162] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 128.

[163] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 42-59.

[164] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 58.

[165] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 58.

disability is not at odds with in the midst of persecution, *and* a bodily disability that the "servant" is attributed with fulfilling the purposes of YHWH. Ultimately, while there are certainly images that associate disability with negative attributes in the Hebrew Bible, it cannot be said that disability-related language is always employed in this way. Schipper's interpretation of the "suffering servant" indicates that the employment of disability-related terminology in the Hebrew Bible is far more polyvalent and complex than Avrahami allows in her analysis.

In this section we have used Yael Avrahami's assessment of the senses in the Hebrew Bible as a means to explore the consequences of what Avrahami calls non-functioning sensorium. Avrahami proposes that in the Hebrew Bible the senses are the means through which people gain wisdom and experience life. It is also through the combined action of the seven senses that people can understand and engage with YHWH, their environment, and each other. Not only this, but because YHWH himself is represented as having fully functioning senses, as well as having authority over the sensory functions of humanity, anyone experiencing sensory restrictions or limitations is represented as lacking in wisdom and lacking the ability to relate to YHWH and his creation. Avrahami thus contends that those with sensory disability would have experienced significant marginalisation and stigma as a consequence of their sensory impairments. While it can certainly be seen that the Hebrew Bible does depict sensory impairments as semantically connected with other vulnerable persons such as the poor, widows, and foreigners, these are not always represented as socially devalued roles but rather people whom the Israelite community ought to show compassion and care. Ultimately, this care for the vulnerable will be acted out by YHWH himself in the restoration of Israel in the messianic age. However, the Isaianic image of the "suffering servant" in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 reveals a sensory-impaired figure who is simultaneously marginalised by the community yet wise and exalted: the very characteristics that are aligned with bodily integrity in other passages in the Hebrew Bible. For this reason, rather than contending that disability is always emblematic of marginalisation, devaluation, and the loss of agency, more nuanced readings of the Hebrew Bible result in seeing disability employed in complex characterisations that simultaneously fulfil and resist traditional stigmatising interpretations.

§ 4.6 The 'defective' Body

§ 4.6.1 The 'defective' Body in the Hebrew Bible

In § 4.5 we examined the physically- and sensory-impaired body in the Hebrew Bible through the rubric of the sensorium. In this section, we will now examine the body through a second framework that is native to the language of the Hebrew Bible, that is, 'defective' versus non-'defective' bodies. Thorough analysis of 'defective' and non-'defective' anomalies has been explored in the work of Saul M. Olyan and a portion of that investigation will be explored and developed throughout this section of the current study.[166]

In his *Disability and the Hebrew Bible*, Olyan proposes that the binary classification of 'defective'/non-'defective' "is part of the operations of a number of native dual oppositions" that are represented in the Hebrew Bible."[167] In addition to the 'defective'/non-'defective' divide, Olyan suggests that other dichotomies in the Hebrew Bible include clean/unclean, holy/common, honoured/shamed, blessed/cursed, beautiful/ugly, and loved/hated. Olyan proposes that each of these "oppositional discourses function to create unequal categories of persons."[168] In this respect, "those whose bodies are understood by the text as lacking 'defects' are privileged in any number of ways over those whose bodies are cast as 'defective.'"[169] For Olyan, the Hebrew Bible presents those whose bodies fall on the 'wrong' side of the binary classification as "constitut(ing) a distinct, secondary, stigmatized, and, in part, marginalized category."[170] Like Avrahami, Olyan contends that those on the negative side of the classification are listed alongside "other categories of persons (depicted) as weak, vulnerable, and dependent."[171] Olyan argues that in some respects directives for the care of people lacking in somatic integrity were likely written "to challenge negative representations" toward people with physical and sensory disability.[172] Despite this, Olyan considers these directives as also "affirm(ing)...their weakness, vulnerability, dependence, and lack of agency, thereby stigmatizing them."[173] In this

[166] Olyan's discussions of 'defective' versus non-'defective' conditions are explored in *Disability and the HB*, 26-61 and *Social Inequality*, 117-156.
[167] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 5.
[168] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 5.
[169] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 5.
[170] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 5.
[171] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 5.
[172] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 7.
[173] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 7.

section, we will firstly examine those physical and sensory impairments that are rendered 'defects' in the Hebrew Bible. Following this section we will also briefly examine a number of other physical and sensory impairments in the Hebrew Bible but are not categorised as 'defective.'

According to the book of Leviticus, there are a number of physical anomalies, including a range of physical and sensory impairments, which are considered 'defects' (מוּם, *mūm*).[174] While being labelled 'defective' impacted any person's relationship with the Israelite cult, the most serious consequences were for priests who showed evidence of such a 'defect.' The Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26)[175] outlines a list of 'defects' that limit the functionality of the Levitical priest. Leviticus 21:16-23 thus states:

> 16 The LORD said to Moses, 17 "Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. 18 No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; 19 no man with a crippled foot or hand, 20 or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. 21 No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the LORD. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. 22 He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; 23 yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.'

The criteria by which a priest is labelled as 'defective' "remains obscure."[176] In Mary Douglas' reading of Leviticus 21, she contends that "the idea of holiness was given an external physical expression in the wholeness of the body seen as a perfect container."[177] Johanna Dorman thus contends that it is "the disability itself (that) causes a threat to holiness. In some way, the physical blemish has the ability to profane what is holy."[178] Judith Z. Abrams explains the necessity for non-'defective' priests by contending that the role of the priest was to "mediate between heaven and earth, between holy and profane.

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[174] On most occasions, the Hebrew *mūm* is translated by the Greek ἄμωμος (e.g., Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 4:3, 23, 28, 32 etc).

[175] On the identification of the Holiness Code as a unique source within the Torah, see A. Klostermann, *Der Pentateuch* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1893), 368-418.

[176] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 29.

[177] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 51-52; cf. Abrams likewise suggests that "In the most perfect of places – that is, the Temple – in the presence of the most perfect entity – that is, God – only the most perfect of persons, someone of unblemished priestly lineage and perfect physical form, may offer up sacrifices (which must also be unblemished)" (*Judaism and Disability*, 23).

[178] A. Dorman, "The Other Others: A Qumran Perspective on Disability" in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple* (LHBOTS 591; ed. E. ben Zvi and D.V. Edelman; Bloosmbury: London, 2015), 298; Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 31; Watts Belser, "Reading Talmudic Bodies," 8.

To survive in such a dangerous position, the priest had to be fit for the company of angels: blemishless, pure of lineage, and untouched by the taint of death (i.e., ritually pure)."[179] This issue of ritual purity with respect to 'defective' priests is by no means straightforward and as a result the purity status of those with 'defects' has been interpreted in various ways. Before addressing some of the proposals regarding the purity status of the 'defective' priest, we will first briefly address the system of classification with respect to ritual and moral impurity.

Although the terms "ritual" and "moral" purity are not native to the biblical texts, numerous scholars employ this language to differentiate between various purity issues in the Hebrew Bible.[180] While the concerns regarding ritual purity are developed primarily in the Priestly source (P), moral impurity remains the interest of the Holiness Code (H).[181] Ritual purity refers to "the sort of defilement...that results from direct or indirect contact with any one of a number of natural processes, including childbirth, certain skin diseases...genital discharges, the carcasses of certain impure animals and human corpses."[182] Thus, Jonathan Klawans notes that while "certain defiling substances are relatively avoidable (e.g., touching carcasses), discharge, disease, and death are inescapable"[183] and are an inevitable part of the human experience. Due to this inevitability, ritual impurity is not sinful itself and would only constitute a transgression

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[179] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 23. This idea is replicated in other ANE priestly systems. The Babylonian diviner (*baru*) was required to be "perfect to his appearance and limbs" and thus disqualified those who were cross-eyed, had chipped teeth, and those with leprosy (K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study* (SSN 22; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985), 29.

[180] For the history of scholarship on moral and ritual purity, see S. Haber, *'They Shall Purity Themselves': Essays on Purity in Early Judaism* (ed. A. Reinhertz; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 10-29. For a recent, alternative system of purity classification, see David P. Wright, "The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G.A. Anderson and S.M. Olyan; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 150-181. Wright, in contrast, refers to the two different forms of purity as "tolerated" versus "prohibited" impurities. For a critique of Wright's classifications, see Haber, *'They Shall Purity Themselves,'* 24-27. Christine E. Hayes, in contrast, contends that there are three different modes of purity: ritual, moral, and genealogical (*Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 12.

[181] On the development of the documentary hypothesis regarding the authorship and development of the Torah, see J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957; repr. of *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*; trans., J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies; Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885; trans. of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*; 2nd ed.; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1883). For alternative proposal to the documentary hypothesis see R.N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (JSOTSupS 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), *passim*.

[182] J. Klawans, "Moral and Ritual Purity," in *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton Readings in Religion; ed. A.-J. Levine, D.C. Allison Jr., and J.D. Crossan; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 268.

[183] Klawans, "Moral and Ritual Purity," 268.

if an individual allowed themselves to come into contact with the sacred while in a state of ritual impurity.[184]

Moral impurity, in contrast, is not the result of naturally occurring phenomenon but comes as the result of "sexual sins, idolatry, and bloodshed."[185] For this reason, moral impurity *is* considered "inherently sinful," the consequence of which is defilement.[186] In contrast, while ritual impurity can result in contagious defilement, that is, making other people or objects impure, no such contagion is associated with moral impurity except for the individual themselves. Due to the fluxing nature of ritual impurity, it can be ameliorated through various purification rites. By contrast, moral impurity is more permanent and can only be expunged through punishment or atonement.

For Mary Douglas, the Levitical purity system is characterised by "the idea of holiness (which) was given an external, physical expression in the wholeness of the body."[187] Consequently, only those who were whole could be considered holy.[188] This standard of purity was not limited to the priesthood but was a requirement of all persons and things presented to or appearing at the temple. However, while there are certainly overlapping categories of wholeness and holiness reflected in the Holiness Code, Douglas conflates the issues of impurity with that of somatic integrity as evidenced in her comparison of parturients and those with *ṣāraʿat* with those with 'defects' (*mūmīm*).[189] Saul M. Olyan is critical of this conflation stating that "though the 'leper' and parturient are unclean, their pollution does not render them 'defective' (= not whole), and therefore, they ought not to have been included in Douglas' discussion" of 'defects.'[190] Olyan thus notes that while Douglas' link between "holiness and physical wholeness is...evidenced" it is certainly "not to the degree and with the consistency that she claimed."[191]

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[184] Klawans, "Moral and Ritual Purity," 269.
[185] Klawans, "Moral and Ritual Purity," 269.
[186] Klawans, "Moral and Ritual Purity," 269.
[187] *Purity and Danger*, 51-54.
[188] *Purity and Danger,* 51-54.
[189] *Purity and Danger*, 51.
[190] S.M. Olyan, "Mary Douglas's Holiness/Wholeness Paradigm: Its Potential for Insight and its Limitations," *JHebS* 8 (2008): 5.
[191] Olyan, "Mary Douglas's Holiness," 2-9.

Mary Douglas' "paradigm of holiness/wholeness," as Olyan has labelled it,[192] has been exceedingly influential in scholarship on purity, with marked impact on studies of the Hebrew Bible as well as the New Testament. Jerome H. Neyrey, in appropriating the Levitical categories of purity to the New Testament, promulgates much of Douglas' work on purity is such an example. As such, Neyrey argues that according to Leviticus 21:16-20, "those with bodily defects such as the lame, the blind, and deaf are lacking wholeness according to Leviticus 21:16-20. Lacking bodily wholeness they lack holiness/purity. Such may not be priests nor may they bring offerings into the holy temple."[193] Not only does Neyrey list deafness among the 'defects' despite its absence from the Levitical text to which he refers, but he also suggests that due to a lack of purity, those with 'defects' are disqualified completely from even becoming priests.[194] This is in contrast to the actual requirements listed in Leviticus 21 which certainly limit a priest in their cultic duties but do not disqualify them completely.

Some similar notions are also put forth by John J. Pilch in his work in the New Testament. Pilch likewise proposes that "wholeness finds vivid expression in terms of the human body. One aspect of the 'holy/pure' body is that it must be bodily whole; blemished, maimed, or defective bodies lack wholeness and are disqualified from the presence of God."[195] Pilch then extrapolates this designation of impurity to those who receive healing from Jesus in the gospels, including the 'invalid' in John 5:6-15[196] and the man with the withered hand in Matthew 12:13.[197]

In addition to the implications for the 'defective' priest, scholars have also attempted to clarify the precise 'defects' that would disqualify the priest and why these particular 'defects' were of concern. Jacob Milgrom, in his commentary on Leviticus, proposes that the blemishes included in Leviticus 21 are entirely "arbitrary" and were developed merely to align the passage with the list of blemishes that disqualify animals from being sacrificed

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[192] Olyan, "Mary Douglas's Holiness/Wholeness Paradigm," *passim*.

[193] J.H. Neyrey, "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: "'They Turn the World Upside Down'" in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. J.H. Neyrey; Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 285.

[194] Neyrey, "Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts," 285.

[195] J.J. Pilch, *Introducing the Cultural Context of the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 205.

[196] The healing of the 'invalid' at the pool of Bethesda will be explored in more detail in § 7.3.

[197] Pilch, *Introducing the Cultural Context,* 205.

(Lev. 22:17-33).[198] Alternatively, numerous other scholars propose that visibility is the interpretive key to this pericope.[199] Saul M. Olyan refutes this position, maintaining that such a view cannot be envisioned by the text as the "crushed testicle" would "normally be covered by clothing, and therefore, will not be visible to the onlooker."[200] Scholars who consider that the taxonomy of defects is related to visibility counter this by proposing that these 'defects' would all be visible on the *unclothed* body.[201] This interpretation certainly accounts for the absence of conditions such as deafness, muteness, and intellectual disability which are not listed in Leviticus 21 as disqualifying conditions. If the determining criteria was merely visibility, however, Olyan questions why *ṣāraʿat* does not appear among the Levitical 'defects,' especially considering the virulence of the condition as it is described on other occasions in the Hebrew Bible.[202]

Ultimately, Olyan contends the list of 'defects' in Leviticus 21 consists primarily of those conditions which are "visible to the eye, long lasting or permanent in nature, and characterized by physical dysfunction, and more than a few share asymmetry as a quality."[203] Rebecca Raphael offers a similar conclusion, noting that while "a visual criterion appears to be operating, it cannot be the only factor."[204] Sarah J. Melcher proposes that "visual consistency" is of greater concern than the condition itself.[205] This is evident, she proposes, in the descriptions of *ṣāraʿat* in Leviticus 13-14. While the initial discolouration of the skin associated with *ṣāraʿat* does cause impurity, at the point the entire skin is completely white then the person is again considered clean.[206] Thus it is this "visual consistency" or lack of "rupture or mixture" that appears to be of concern in these physical descriptions.[207] Such classification explains the inclusion of dwarfs and hunchbacks on the list because they represent a lack of "correct stature and symmetry" when it is "a body with a smooth, symmetrical, unruptured surface on a frame of the right

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[198] J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1837.

[199] Dorman, *Blemished Body*, 36; R.S. Hess, "Leviticus" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis - Leviticus* (rev. ed.; gen. ed. T. Longman III and D.E. Garland; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 158.

[200] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 29.

[201] Dorman suggests that while all the other conditions are visible, the crushed testicle has to do with infertility (*Blemished Body*, 32).

[202] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 29.

[203] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 30; cf. Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 23.

[204] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 37.

[205] Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult," 36.

[206] Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult," 36; cf. Lev. 13-14. See also Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 785.

[207] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 37.

species, gender, and size"[208] that is most desirable. Thus Raphael argues that "in a cult that eschewed visual iconography, the visual representatives of God would be the sacred precincts and the priests."[209]

What has also been questioned is whether this list of 'defects' is complete in itself or whether it serves as a synecdoche for any kind of visible blemish. Some scholars contend that the presence of other conditions in the Hebrew Bible that are also considered 'defects'[210] indicates that this list is only emblematic in its presentation of disqualifying criteria.[211] In addition, the fact that these 'defective' conditions are coupled with non-'defective' conditions elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible also indicates a close connection between these conditions. This will be explored in a little more detail below (§ 4.6.2).

According to Leviticus 21, the consequences of a priest showing signs of a defect were that he was no longer able to "offer the food of his God." In this sense, while there are quite clearly repercussions, the defective priest is not entirely prohibited from his position as priest. Abrams states that "though disabilities disqualify a priest from officiating in the cult, he is still considered a priest in all other respects."[212] Melcher concludes that priests are thus profane but not impure.[213] According to Leviticus 21:17-23 "the cultic activity of priests with 'defects'" was restricted, although, it was not completely negated.[214]

§ 4.6.2 The 'defective' Body in Second Temple Judaism

§ 4.6.2.1 Rabbinical Literature

Judith Z. Abrams, in her work on Judaism and disability, outlines the shifting role of the priest in response to the changing needs of the Jewish community especially following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. According to the Mishnah, the development of more synagogal-based worship necessary after the destruction of the temple resulted in a more stringent list of conditions causing disqualification for the priest. The Mishnah

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[208] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 38; cf. Peckruhn, "Disability studies," 105.

[209] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 39.

[210] E.g., Olyan notes that Leviticus 24:19-20, which is also part of the Holiness Code, "adds the loss of an eye and loss of a tooth as 'defects'" (Olyan, *Disability and the HB*, 27).

[211] Dorman states that these disabilities are emblematic for "every possible bodily defect" (*Blemished Body*, 25).

[212] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 26.

[213] Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult," 36.

[214] Olyan, *Disability and the HB*, 28.

thus combines the priestly defects of Leviticus 21 with the list of 'defects' that disqualify animal sacrifices in Leviticus 22. The priestly 'defects' that limited functionally restricted those priests with "a wedge-shaped head or a turnip-shaped head or a mallet-shaped head or a sunken head...or a hunchback."[215] Abrams thus notes that the "Mishnah, here, seems to hew to the Torah's line about priests: almost any blemish disqualifies him from participating in the cult."[216] Ultimately, it is difficult to know how stringently these disqualifications were adhered to considering that the temple-based sacrificial system "did not operate during the era of the Mishnah."[217]

Following the destruction of the temple, the role of the priest diminished to a few limited functions. One of the few occasions that the priests still acted in a priestly capacity was in the benediction offered during synagogal worship. Here the priest would stand before the congregation with his hands raised in order to assist with the calling down of God's blessings upon the people. While Abrams notes that we might expect that the regulations about blemishes would be more stringent here than in Leviticus 21, this is not the case. According to Mishnah *Megillah* 4:7, restrictions for 'defective' priests were limited only to those conditions visible on the hands: "A priest whose hands are blemished may not lift up his hands, Rabbi Yehudah says: 'Also one whose hands are stained by woad or madder may not lift up his hands because the people might gaze at him.'"

Abrams, as well as Julia Watts Belser, thus argue that the Mishnah actually reduces the criteria for disqualification.[218] What is noted, however, is that it is the issue of gazing at the priest which is of greatest concern to the rabbis. This is expanded also in the Tosefta[219] where blemishes anywhere upon the body are raised as a concern, especially those that will cause the congregation to gaze: "A priest who has a blemish on his face, hands, or feet, lo this one should not raise his hands [in the priestly blessing], because the people will stare at him" (M. *Megillah* 4:7). But if he was "an associate of the town [and therefore well-known,] lo, this is permitted" (T. *Megillah* 3:29). Apparently, a close association with a

[215] *m. Bek.* 7:1

[216] *Judaism and Disability*, 28.

[217] *Judaism and Disability*, 28.

[218] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 31; Watts Belser, "Reading Talmudic Bodies," 10.

[219] The Tosefta is "a collection of statements to supplement the rules of the Mishnah" and dates to the 400s C.E. (J. Neusner, "Preface," in *The Tosefta Translated from the Hebrew: First Division Zera'im: The Order of Agriculture* (Hoboken: KTAV, 1986), ix.

blemished priest will counter the tendency of the congregation to stare at unusual physical characteristics. Thus, with respect to the role of the priest, the concern about visible conditions appears to have extended beyond the Second Temple period.[220]

Although these restrictions were limited to those involved in the priesthood, Abrams contends that the rabbinic writings promote "an extension of the priestly ideal that encompassed lay Jews."[221] The requirements regarding somatic integrity for travellers on the annual Jewish pilgrims offer one such example of this.[222] Three times a year, Israelites were obliged to travel to the temple: "Three times a year all your men must appear before the lord your God at the place he will choose; at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles" (Deut. 16:16).[223]

While the texts of the Hebrew Bible require "all males" to appear, the Mishnah qualifies this stipulation by including a list of those who are exempt from appearing before God or bringing an offering.[224] Thus according to Mishnah *Hagigah*:

> All are bound to appear [at the Temple] except a deaf man, an imbecile and a minor, a person of unknown sex, a hermaphrodite, women, unfreed slaves, the lame, the blind, the sick, the aged, and one who is unable to go up on foot.[225]

Participation in the pilgrimages and appearance at the temple, according to Abrams, is centred on the need to be inspected by God.[226] While it is apparent that some of the impairments listed in Mishnah *Hagigah* would have affected one's mobility, Abrams suggests that the greatest concern of the Mishnaic text is about aesthetics rather than

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[220] For more detailed discussion of the restrictions placed upon the priesthood beyond the Second Temple, see Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 30-45; Watts-Belser, "Reading Talmudic Bodies," 9-12.

[221] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 49.

[222] These priestly regulations were also reapplied in regard to marriage. The rabbis state that the same physical impairments that prevented one from becoming a priest could result in invalidation of marriage if they became evident in the woman (*t. Ketub.* 7:9). It is inconsequential whether these impairments were permanent or temporary (*t. Bek.* 7:1).

[223] Cf. Ex. 23:14-17, 34:23.

[224] Watts Belser, "Reading Talmudic Bodies," 16. Aaron Shemesh poses the question whether the Mishnah and other Rabbinical literature envisions these restrictions as exemptions or prohibitions. Shemesh argues that those with 'defects' are prohibited rather than being exempt from attending the annual pilgrimages ("'Holy Angels,'" 183-186).

[225] *m. Hag.* 1:1. The Talmud however also adds to this list the "unclean person" (*t. Hag.* 1:1), while those with blisters (*y. Hag.* 1:5, 76d) and the uncircumcised (*b. Hag.* 4b) are likewise excluded according to two separate baraita. *M. Bekorot* 7 also adds to the list of the exempt those who are baldheaded (7:2), someone whose limbs or appendages are disproportionate to the rest of his body (7:4), and someone whose eyelashes or teeth have fallen out (7:3; 7:5).

[226] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 51.

mobility.[227] Due to the close proximity to God that the temple provides, the Israelites were obliged to "be as close to the priestly ideal as possible."[228] Abrams, as well as Watts-Belser, propose that this close proximity affords not only the opportunity for God to inspect visually the people, but likewise for the people to inspect him. This is made explicit in the Sifre on Deuteronomy which states that "As one comes to see, so does he come to be seen."[229] Here again we note the significance of the visibility of one's 'defect.'[230]

§ 4.6.2.2 Dead Sea Scrolls

This idea of divine inspection also appears among the Dead Sea Scrolls. In a number of texts that also bear resemblance to the list of priestly qualifications in Leviticus 21, a number of texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls extend the priestly regulations to a range of situations within the context of their own community. This community at Qumran had rejected the authority of the Second Temple and the Hasmonean priesthood believing them to have been polluted.[231] Instead, the community at Qumran believed their own community had superseded the Temple and they themselves had become the dwelling place of God. This substitution resulted in the members of Qumran community insisting upon a high degree of purity to replicate that which was required at the temple. Adherence to this high standard of purity was achieved through the appropriation of the priestly restrictions in Leviticus 21 to all members of the Qumranite community. As a result, a number of the Qumran texts express restrictions on people with physical and sensory impairment. In the case of the Qumran texts, however, the gaze of the divine was expressed in the form of the "Angels of Holiness" who apparently represent the divine presence.[232]

According to *The Community Rule* (1QSa), those with physical and sensory impairments and other 'defects' were restricted from entering the "assembly of God." In a list of persons similar in style and content to Leviticus 21:16-23, *The Community Rule* forbids those with "human uncleanesses" from entering the "assembly of God"/"congregation." This includes

[227] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 51.
[228] Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 51.
[229] Sifre Deut. 143. The Sifre on Deuteronomy is a rabbinical commentary on the book of Deuteronomy in the HB.
[230] For more on this see Abrams, *Judaism and Disability*, 51; Shemesh, "'Holy Angels,'" 189, 201-202; Watts Belser, "Reading Talmudic Bodies," 9-12.
[231] CD 5.6, 7; 20.22; 1QSa 5.19-20.
[232] Cf. Shemesh, "'The Holy Angels are in their Council,'" 194.

"anyone who is afflicted in his flesh, crippled in the legs or the hands, lame or blind or deaf or dumb, or if he is stricken with a blemish in his flesh visible to the eyes; or a tottering old man who cannot maintain himself with the Congregation."[233] Despite being excluded from the "assembly of God," the passage states that if someone with one of these blemishes desires to speak they are permitted to do so privately.[234]

The link between exclusion and the presence of the "Angels of Holiness" is repeated in two additional texts from Qumran. The second occurrence is in the *Damascus Document* (CD) where people with intellectual as well as physical and sensory impairments are excluded from entering the congregation: "Any demented fool, any simple-minded or errant man, and one with dimmed eyes who cannot see, one who limps or is lame, the deaf, any young boy, none of these shall come into the midst of the congregation, for the holy angels are in their midst." [235] The third occurrence of the "Angels of Holiness" in respect to people with 'defects' appears in *The War Scroll* (1QM). In this instance, people with physical and sensory impairments, as well as other 'defects,' are restricted from participating with the "sons of light" in the eschatological battle between God and his enemies: "Anyone who is lame or blind, or limping or a man who has a permanent blemish in his flesh or a man afflicted with an uncleanness of his flesh – all these shall not go with them to the battle."[236]

There are two other important texts from Qumran that reflect upon the exclusion of people with physical and sensory impairment from the community. The first one appears in *The Temple Scroll* (11QT) and forbids people with vision impairments from entering the Holy City.[237] Despite only citing the blind here, Yigael Yadin proposes that the original version contained a list of other people with 'defects' who were likewise restricted.[238] As it stands, Yadin suggests that the blind are representative of all 'defects' which are forbidden from the holy city.[239] As Saul M. Olyan has noted, unlike the other Qumran texts, *The Temple*

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[233] 1QSa 2:5-9.

[234] v. 10.

[235] CD 15:15-18.

[236] 1QM 7:4-5.

[237] 11QT 45:12-14.

[238] *The Temple Scroll* (3 vols; Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society/The Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1983) 2:193; 3:291.

[239] Yadin suggests that the grammar of this text is unusual and proposes the possibility this prohibition is taken from a longer version which would have listed other forms of impairment and blemishes that were also restricted from the holy city (*Temple Scroll* 2:193; 3:291; cf. Dorman, *Blemished Body*, 236).

Scroll "understands the blind as potential polluters of Jerusalem who must be excluded from the holy city."[240] Olyan considers that this exclusion in *The Temple Scroll* is an extension of David's "hatred" of the blind and the lame found in 2 Samuel 5:8b. This proposal will be addressed in more detail below (§ 4.6.4).

One final text from Qumran worth addressing is that of the *Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah* (4QMMT).[241] Unlike any of the other restrictions on people with impairments and/or 'defects' in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4QMMT unequivocally restricts the participation on the basis of function rather than appearance:[242]

> ...[And concerning the blind who cannot see so as to beware of all mixture and cannot see a mixture that incurs [reparation]-offering; and concerning the deaf who have not heard the laws and the judgments and the purity regulations, and have not heard the ordinances of Israel, since he who has not seen or hears does not know how to obey (the law); nevertheless they have access to the sacred food.[243]

Olyan contends that as a result of the restrictions placed on Levitical priests with physical and sensory impairments, and especially as a result of the appropriation of these restrictions to non-priests in the Second Temple period, those with disability were stigmatised and marginalised in the ancient Jewish community. Evidence for this, Olyan proposes, is expressed most clearly in the Dead Sea Scrolls where participation in the cult was limited for those with physical and sensory impairments. Olyan maintains that this expectation of somatic integrity resulted in not only limited cultic access but also severe social consequences for people with physical and sensory impairments.

§ 4.6.3 Disability as non-'defect'

In his assessment of disability in the Hebrew Bible, Saul M. Olyan contends that in addition to those physical and sensory impairments that are considered 'defective,' the Hebrew Bible also reveals a range of impairments which are not considered 'defects' but generally also have various social and cultic consequences. While blindness and lameness

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[240] Olyan, "Exegetical Dimensions," 48.

[241] *Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah* is also known as 'Some Precepts of the Law.'

[242] "4QMMT places the profanation, not in the person or the disability, but in what it perceives to be the limitations that result from the disability. Those who are blind cannot see when they are mixing things that create impurity. Those who are deaf cannot hear the laws regarding what is profanation. Therefore, these two groups must be banned from the temple, not because they themselves profane the temple, but because their actions are likely to profane the temple" (Wynn, "Invisibility of Disability," n.p.).

[243] E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, "*For this you waited 35 years,*" *BAR* 20 (1994): 59.

are listed among those 'defects' in Leviticus 21:16-23 which restrict the role of the priest, deafness and the inability to speak are not listed among these 'defects.' However, Olyan notes that while those who are deaf and those unable to speak are

> not subject to the cultic restrictions attested in several texts for persons with 'defects,' they are nonetheless frequently associated with such persons in biblical texts, suggesting that according to our authors, they share common characteristics, and, to some degree, a common classification and stigmatization.[244]

Olyan notes in particular the absence of *ṣāra'at* from the list of disqualifying defects although the marginalising effects of this condition are addressed "with some frequency throughout the biblical anthology."[245] Though scholars long ago discontinued claiming an association between *ṣāra'at* and modern day leprosy (now called Hansen's disease), or even the illness called λέπρα attested in the New Testament,[246] many English translations still translate *ṣāra'at* as "leprosy."[247] Though attempts have been made through retrospective diagnostics to 'diagnose' *ṣāra'at* in terms of modern biomedical terminology, no consensus has been reached among scholars.[248] In any respect, as Jeremy Schipper has argued, it is not necessary for us to 'diagnose' the precise etiology of the disease in order to understand

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[244] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 48.

[245] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 47.

[246] Although the Hebrew term צָרַעַת (*ṣāra'at*) is usually translated "leprosy," Hector Avalos suggests that "there is now a consensus that צָרַעַת is not the modern disease denominated as leprosy and known as Hansen's Disease, nor is it the disease(s) denominated by the word λέπρα (*lepra*) in Greek. In fact, צָרַעַת, is probably a word that refers to a wide range of conditions which result in an abnormal disfigurement or discoloration of surfaces – including human skin" (*Illness and Healthcare*, 311-312). E.g., λέπρα is "a serious skin condition, poss. Including leprosy. Gk. medical writers include a variety of skin disorders under the term λέπρα. There is abundant evidence that not all the *ṣāra'at* (Lev. 13f.) and λέπρα of the Bible is true 'leprosy' caused by Hansen's bacillus as known in modern times; indeed, there are many...hold that Hansen's disease was unknown in biblical times, or known by a different name than leprosy. λέπρα in LXX and NT may at times refer to what is generally termed leprosy, but probability extends to such skin diseases as psoriasis, lupus, ringworm, and favus, and in the absence of more precise data it is best to use the more general term serious skin disease" (W. Bauer, F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 592).

[247] Despite the publication of numerous articles relating to the translation of *ṣāra'at* / λέπρα "the term is still found in the RSV, NASB, NKJV, NAB, NRSV, CEV, MSG, ESV, and NIV. Admittedly, there is often a note qualifying its use. The NRSV uses the term 'leprous' in Ex. 4:6, but attaches a note explaining that it is 'a term for several skin diseases; precise meaning uncertain.' he ESV note explains that 'leprosy was a term for several skin diseases." The NIV points out, 'the Hebrew word for leprous was used for various diseases affecting the skin'" (E.R. Clendenen and D.K. Stabnow, *The HSCB: Navigating the Horizons in Bible Translation* [Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2012], 103); cf. J.J. Wilkinson, "Leprosy and Leviticus: The Problem of Description and Identification," *SJT* 30 (1977): 153-169; J.J. Wilkinson, "Leprosy and Leviticus: A Problem of Semantics and Translation," *SJT* 31 (1978): 153-166; E.V. Hulse, "The Nature of Biblical 'Leprosy' and the Use of Alternative Medical Terms in Modern Translations," *PEQ* 107 (1975): 87-105; J.G. Andersen, "Leprosy in Translations of the Bible," *BT* 31 (1980): 207-212.

[248] R.K. Harrison, "Leper; Leprosy," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ed. G.W. Bromiley: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3:104-107. Although some scholars still make attempts to diagnose Job's actual illness (e.g., T. Appelboom, E. Cogan, and J. Klastersky, "Job of the Bible: Leprosy or Scabies?" *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine* 74.1 [2007]: 36-39).

the extent to which it impacted a person biologically and socially.[249] It is apparent from the attestations of *ṣāraʿat* throughout the priestly and non-priestly sources that the illness resulted in some degree of separation from the community.[250]

In Leviticus 13-14, *ṣāraʿat* is considered a serious breach of purity thus resulting in expulsion from the community. Beyond exclusion from the community, the person affected by *ṣāraʿat* must also alter their appearance in order to warn others of their impurity. Leviticus 13:45-16 thus states that the person with *ṣāraʿat* "must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out 'Unclean! Unclean!'" (Lev. 13:45). Such a community expulsion is demonstrated in Numbers 5:1-4 where YHWH directs Moses to "send away from the camp anyone who has a defiling skin disease (*ṣāraʿat*)...send them outside the camp so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell among them" (Num. 5:2-3). Olyan suggests that the impurity associated with the condition, in combination with social and cultic restrictions, ensured there was a significant stigma associated with *ṣāraʿat*.[251] Olyan also proposes that this stigmatisation is heightened because of the use of *ṣāraʿat* as a form of divine punishment and as an imprecation throughout the Hebrew Bible. In Numbers 12:10-15, Miriam is "struck" with *ṣāraʿat* for questioning Moses' privileged relationship with YHWH. In 2 Chronicles 26:16-21, King Uzziah's *ṣāraʿat* is described as the "direct result of his attempt to usurp the exclusive priestly privilege of incense presentation before the deity."[252] Joel Baden and Candida R. Moss refer to both of these cases of *ṣāraʿat* as punishment as examples of "blatant cultic sin."[253] Olyan also notes that *ṣāraʿat* is listed along with starvation, death in battle, and physical immobility as curses placed by David on Joab's family line.[254]

However, while Baden and Moss agree with Olyan that *ṣāraʿat* is depicted as punishment in the non-priestly tradition, the same cannot be said of the references to *ṣāraʿat* in the priestly tradition. Instead, they propose that in the priestly tradition *ṣāraʿat* "carries no

[249] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's*, 17, 18, 32.
[250] E.g., Lev. 13:45; Num. 5:2-3.
[251] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 54.
[252] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 56.
[253] Baden and Moss, "Origin and Interpretation of *ṣāraʿat*," 644.
[254] *ṣāraʿat* is also listed as an imprecation in 2 Kings 5:27 where Elisha curses his servant Gehazi and his male line with *ṣāraʿat*.

religious or moral guilt,"[255] but rather, is listed among the other impurities that are experienced as part of the natural human experience: that is, genital discharge (Lev. 15), childbirth (Lev. 12), and corpse contact (Lev. 11:24-28, 39-40).[256] Baden and Moss suggest that in the non-priestly texts people are required to petition God for healing and required to take measures to remove their guilt.[257] However, this same association between *ṣāraʿat* and personal sin is not replicated in the priestly source. Instead, the recommendations in the priestly tradition conclude that *ṣāraʿat* is an inevitable part of the human condition and like other naturally occurring conditions, one must simply wait until the symptoms pass. It is the view of Baden and Moss that social and cultic repercussions of *ṣāraʿat* vary between the priestly and non-priestly texts of the Hebrew Bible. As a result, using the non-priestly material to interpret the priestly material is inappropriate and thus inevitably ends with interpreting *ṣāraʿat* solely in terms of divine punishment. Such a methodology, they determine, "may be the result of the long-standing belief that physical anomalies in general, and this anomaly in particular, cannot have been, in the ancient world, viewed as natural and must have been seen as incurred by sin."[258] Ultimately, assessing *ṣāraʿat* in the Hebrew Bible must be done through close scrutiny of the texts and an awareness of the different representations of the condition across the various biblical traditions. While on occasion *ṣāraʿat* is presented as a form of divine punishment, in other presentations, *ṣāraʿat* is considered a natural part of the human experience similar to other states of temporary impurity. This disparity highlights the need for exegetes to pursue more nuanced readings of the various biblical traditions in respect to *ṣāraʿat* or indeed any illness or impairment.

A second disability attested throughout the Hebrew Bible but one which is not considered a 'defect' is that of female infertility. While a number of scholars propose that the reference to the "crushed testicle" in Leviticus 21:16-23 is restrictive for the priest on the grounds that it rendered him unable to bear children,[259] the issue of women's infertility is much

[255] Baden and Moss, "Origin and Interpretation," 645.
[256] Baden and Moss, "Origin and Interpretation," 645.
[257] Cf. Num. 12; 2 Sam. 3:29; 2 Kgs 15:5; 2 Chr. 26:20.
[258] Baden and Moss, "Origin and Interpretation," 661-662.
[259] See esp. S. Ackerman, "The Blind, the Lame, and the Barren Shall Not Come into the House" in *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* (ed. C.R. Moss and J. Schipper; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 29-46.

less frequently addressed in secondary scholarship.[260] Jeremy Schipper proposes this is in part due to modern readers not reading infertility as a form of disability in the Hebrew Bible.[261] However, examination of references to barrenness in the Hebrew Bible reveals that it was not only interpreted as having a biological element but it was a condition that had severe social consequences.[262] For women in the ancient world, whose primary role in the community was to bear children, the social consequences of barrenness cannot be underestimated. In this way, Schipper contends that "infertility is the most frequently discussed disability affecting women in the Hebrew Bible."[263] Likewise, Rebecca Raphael describes infertility as "the defining female disability in the Hebrew Bible."[264] The disabling consequences of barrenness are evident in sources from the ancient Near East which list infertility in tandem with forms of physical and sensory disability such as blindness, lameness, or other forms of disability.[265]

Jeremy Schipper has argued that within the context of the Hebrew Bible, infertility can be interpreted as a form of disability for a number of key reasons. Firstly, Schipper argues that barrenness is mentioned in close connection with illness, and as a consequence, is also described as a condition from which one must be "healed."[266] Hector Avalos thus notes in this respect that infertility "prevented the woman from fulfilling her role as a mother which was the most important aspect in her assignment to a sick role."[267] Secondly, Schipper proposes that barrenness is "under the control of a divine 'sender/controller.'"[268]

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[260] The development of disability and biblical studies has seen a number of scholars begin to address infertility/barrenness in the context of the HB and NT; e.g., Ackerman, "Blind, the Lame, and the Barren," 29-46; Baden, "Nature of Barrenness," 13-28; Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, 332; Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 57-63; J. Schipper, "Disabling Israelite Leadership: 2 Samuel 6:23 and other images of Disability in the Deuteronomistic History," in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* (ed. H. Avalos, S.J. Melcher, and J. Schipper; SS 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 104-113; C.R. Moss and J.S. Baden, *Reconceiving Infertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, *forthcoming*, 2015).

[261] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 21-22.

[262] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 21-22.

[263] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 21; e.g., Gen. 11:30; 16:2; 20:18; 25:21; 29:31; Exod. 23:26; Deut. 7:14; Judg. 13:2-3; 1 Sam. 1:5.

[264] Raphael, *Biblical Corpora*, 57-58.

[265] Cf. Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 21. See for example the Sumerian myth of Enki and Ninmah (*COS* 1.159:518) as well as a rabbinic commentary on Isaac's birth in Genesis 21:2 (*Gen. Rab.* 53:8); cf. Walls, "Origins of the Disabled Body," 16-19.

[266] Schipper, "Disabling Israelite Leadership," 105.

[267] Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, 248-249.

[268] Schipper, "Disabling Israelite Leadership," 105.

1 Samuel 1 features the narrative of the barren Hannah, one of the wives of Ramathaim of Ephraim. While Ramathaim's first wife Peninnah is described as having children, Hannah is described as "having none" (1 Sam. 1:2). The narrative describes Peninnah incessantly "provoking" Hannah due to her infertility to the extent that Hannah was so distraught that she could no longer eat (1 Sam. 1:6-7). Schipper proposes in this respect that the 'problem' of infertility is not so much the condition itself but in the failure to meet social expectations.[269]

§ 4.6.4 2 Samuel 5:6-8

In his discussions of 'defective' and non-'defective' disability, Olyan addresses at length an important pericope that appears in 2 Samuel 5:6-8. In this final section, we will briefly address the way that disability-related terminology is employed in this pericope as a means of categorising and defining various people. This narrative relates David's attack upon the Jebusites in order to claim the city of Jerusalem. As a means of taunting David, the Jebusites declare that even the "blind" and the "lame" could ward off David's armies.[270] In response, David is described as expressing his "hatred" for those "blind" and "lame" who are his enemies (2 Sam. 5:8):[271]

> The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, 'You will not come in here; but the blind and the lame will ward you off,' – thinking, 'David cannot come in here.' Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. And David said, on that day, 'Whoever would smite the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul.' Therefore, it is said, 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.'[272]

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[269] Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*, 21.

[270] 2 Sam. 5:6.

[271] E.g., the NRSV and NKJV use word "house," while the NASB and NIV use "palace."

[272] RSV. The NIV instead states in verse 8: "On that day, David said, 'Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies.' That is why they say, 'The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace." It is interesting to note that in the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 11:4-9 there is no mention of these restrictions regarding people with impairments. Instead, it is just the "inhabitants of Jebus" that say to David "'You shall not come in here!'" Ronald E. Clements suggests that the statement in 2 Samuel 5:8b ("That is why they say, 'The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace'") "has been added by a redactor who already at a very early stage was nonplussed by the negative attitude toward such unfortunately handicapped persons. This then would be wholly in line with the evidence provided by the Chronicler, who omits all references to people with disability (1 Chron. 11:6), undoubtedly because it already appeared strange and not susceptible of a ready explanation" ("Patterns in the Prophetic Canon: Healing the Blind and the Lame" in *Canon, Theology and Old Testament Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* [ed. G.M. Tucker, D.L. Peterson and R.R. Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 195).

There is much disputation regarding the interpretation of this passage[273] and this is made more complex by the number of technical difficulties in the passage.[274] A number of scholars propose that the presence of the blind and lame, and therefore David's subsequent hatred of them, is a "monitory imprecation," warning that a similar fate awaits those who choose to stand against the Jebusites.[275] Others propose the presence of the blind and lame was to taunt the Israelites thus pronouncing that the Jebusites were so certain of their victory that they only needed the blind and lame, their weakest members, to defend their city against the Israelites.[276] Still others propose that the blind and lame were considered impure and thus the Israelites were unwilling to risk their purity status by coming into contact with them. Thomas Hentrich, in this respect, proposes that "the Jebusite leaders positioned (the blind and lame) strategically, because they probably knew about the

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[273] The NIV assumes that the threat of the Jebusites means that they believed that their fortress was so strong that even those who were visually or mobility impaired would be able to ward off David and his army. P.R. Ackroyd offers an alternative, suggesting that the Jebusites were instead declaring their intention to fight so that once the army was destroyed those remaining, i.e., those with disability and those who would normally not participate in battle, would continue to fight (*The Second Book of Samuel* [CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977], 85). G. Brunet, on the other hand, suggests that the statement regarding the "blind and lame" is in reference to a previous alliance between David and the Jebusites assuring nonagression ("Les aveugles et boiteux jebusites," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (VTSup 30; ed. J.A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 65-72; *idem*, "David et le sinnor," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* [VTSup 30; ed. J.A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1979], 73-86). The "blind and the lame" therefore serve as reminders as the consequences of contravening such oaths. Finally, Edwards discusses those who were deemed the "useless" by Greek society ("Constructions," 40-41). Edwards contends that although many of these "useless" were not able to fight in battle they were still able to participate in the army by offering some assistance in protecting city walls. Although there are no specific examples of people with physical disability being involved in such action, there are examples in Homer (*Il.* 8.517-19, 18.514-15), Herodotus (4.135) and Diodorus (15.65.2) of women, children and elderly men all serving as garrisons for cities: "While we never hear directly that handicapped men took part in guarding walls, garrison duty was indeed an appropriate military task for men who could not take part in active battle" ("Constructions," 41). An Ugaritic text likewise includes the "invalid" and the "blind" among those called to go out into battle (KTU 1.14 ii 43-50 [= CTA 14 ii 96-103] as cited in T. Hentrich, "The 'Lame' in Lev 21,17-33 and 2 Sam 5,6-8," *Annual of the Japanese Bible Institute* 29 [2003]: 15).

[274] P.K. McCarter Jr. suggests that there are a number of textual difficulties that have caused much of the passage's interpretative problems (*2 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* [New York: Doubleday, 1984], 137). In verse 8, McCarter suggests the Hebrew word *sinnôr*, which is translated as "water shaft" in the NIV, should actually be translated as "windpipe": "But at this point the clause "for David hates the lame and the blind," originally an explanation of the command to deliver only fatal blows ("strike at the windpipe,") seemed inexplicable" (*2 Samuel*, 137). McCarter goes on to say that David was against the "blind and the lame" at this point because "it was they who had incited (*hēsîtû*) the Jebusites against him," which he suggests is the correct translation as opposed to the NIV (*2 Samuel*, 137). For an alternative view on the translation of *sinnôr* see J.C. Poirier, "David's 'hatred' for the Lame and the Blind," *PEQ* 138.1 (2006): 27-33.

[275] R. Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 221-222.

[276] This is reflected in the NIV translation which quotes the Jebusites as stating, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off" (2 Sam. 5:6). Josephus also makes mention of this account suggesting that the blind and lame were placed on the walls of the city "in way of derision of the king" and in "contempt of his power" (*Ant.* 7.61). However, Josephus omits David's "hatred" of the blind and lame.

Israelite religious practices and might have regarded their impurity laws as a possible 'weakness' that could be exploited to their advantage."[277] Hentrich, among others, contends that there is an important semantic connection between this passage in 2 Samuel 5 and the exclusion of those with various 'defects' in Leviticus 21. Indeed, Hentrich proposes that 2 Samuel 5:8b "represents an etiological justification of the non-admittance of disabled people in the temple."[278] Thus, Hentrich's view is that the exclusion of the blind and lame from the "house" is a metaphorical reference to the Israelite temple.[279]

Like Thomas Hentrich, Olyan likewise proposes 2 Samuel 5 serves as a directive against the blind and lame entering the temple, however, Olyan considers this restriction to apply beyond the Levitical priesthood.[280] Olyan contends that 2 Samuel 5 records an Israelite tradition which relegated all people with visible impairments as unclean and thus precluded them from entering the Israelite temple.[281] In this way, the blind and the lame in this passage serve as a synecdoche for all people with 'defects.'[282] In Olyan's view, this interpretation is appropriated in the *Temple Scroll* (11QT) from Qumran which excludes the blind from entering the holy city (Jerusalem).[283] Here, the limitations imposed on the priesthood in Leviticus 21:16-23 are now expanded to include all Jews. The scope of this exclusion was also expanded encompassing not only the Temple but the whole of the city of Jerusalem.[284] As noted above, Yadin suggests that the blind here are representative of all 'defects' which are forbidden from the holy city.[285]

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[277] Hentrich, "The 'Lame' in Lev 21,17-33," 17; cf. J. Heller, "David und die Krüppel," *Communio viatorum* 8 (1965): 256.

[278] Hentrich, "The 'Lame' in Lev 21,17-33," 12-13.

[279] Hentrich, "The 'Lame' in Lev 21,17-33," 12-13; cf. Ackroyd, *Second Book of Samuel*, 56-57; L.H. Schiffman, "Exclusion from the Sanctuary and the City of the Sanctuary in the Temple Scroll," *HAR* 9 (1985): 309.

[280] S.M. Olyan, "The Exegetical Dimensions of Restrictions on the Blind and the Lame in Texts from Qumran." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 8 (2001): 41.

[281] Olyan, "'Anyone Blind or Lame,'" 226; Ackroyd, *Second Book of Samuel*, 56-57; Avalos, *Illness and Health Care*, 319-320; McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 136, 140.

[282] Olyan, "'Anyone Blind or Lame,'" 226; *idem*, *Social Inequality*, 132; Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 2:193, 3:291; Dorman, *Blemished Body*, 236.

[283] 11QT 45:12-14; cf. Olyan, "Exegetical Dimensions," 41.

[284] F.G. Martinez, "The Problem of Purity: The Qumran Solution," in *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Writings, Beliefs and Practices* (ed. F.G. Martinez and J.T. Barrera; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 146.

[285] Yadin suggests that the grammar of this text is unusual and suggests that this prohibition is taken from a longer version which would have listed other forms of impairment and blemishes that were also restricted from the holy city (*Temple Scroll*, 2: 193; 3: 291. cf. Dorman, *Blemished Body*, 236; Schiffman, "Exclusion from the Sanctuary," 310).

In contrast, Jeremy Schipper proposes that only a small number of texts in the Hebrew Bible "hint at the exclusion of people with disabilities from the temple (Deut. 23:2; 2 Chron. 26:21), there is no biblical prohibition against the lame and blind in general."[286] It is Schipper's view that in the context of the narrative of 2 Samuel, the reference to the "house" here is better interpreted as the house of David.[287] Throughout 2 Samuel, "David's house and Jerusalem figure much more prominently...than the temple does."[288] For this reason, the significance of the blind and lame Jebusites is much more closely connected with the narratives of David and Mephibosheth. Schipper proposes that the first use of the word "lame" (נָכֶה) in 2 Samuel appears in relation to Mephibosheth in chapter 4. For Schipper, the close proximity of this passage to the attack on Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 5 means "it would be difficult" to overlook the repetition of the word "lame" in both accounts.[289]

For Schipper, 2 Samuel 5:6-8 forms part of "a larger rhetorical technique that uses imagery of physical disability and weakness to characterize both...the Saulide and Davidic dynasties."[290] Schipper sees in 2 Samuel a perpetual shifting in power and status between these dynasties that is made manifest in the language of "strength and weakness" found throughout the book.[291] Schipper contends there are semantic links throughout 2 Samuel which align the "lame" with the Saulide house, represented most pertinently in Mephibosheth,[292] and the "blind" with David's house, represented in Zedekiah, the last Davidic ruler.[293] However, Schipper proposes that the imagery of the blind and lame throughout 2 Samuel is actually "part of a more subtle and ironic depiction of the relationship between these two houses."[294] For Schipper,

> The imagery of physical disability and weakness initially seems to contrast David with parties from whom he wishes to distance himself during his solidification of power. Yet this imagery also surrounds him during his later years, especially during his exile from Jerusalem.[295]

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[286] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 105 n. 10.
[287] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 105 n. 10; cf. S. Vargon, "The Blind and the Lame," *VT* 46.4 (1996): 501.
[288] Schipper, *Disability Studies*, 105 n. 10; cf. Vargon, "Blind and the Lame," 499-500.
[289] Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery," 426.
[290] Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery," 433. Schipper acknowledges the work of Anthony R. Ceresko as foundational to his own research in this area (Ceresko, "Identity of 'the Blind and the Lame,'" *passim*).
[291] Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery," 424.
[292] 2 Sam. 4:4.
[293] 2 Ki. 25:7.
[294] Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery," 433.
[295] Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery," 433-434.

In this respect, Olyan notes the same associations between various physical and sensory disability that were outlined by Avrahami above. For Olyan, using somatic descriptors automatically results in the ascribing value throughout the Hebrew Bible. As a consequence, those lacking in somatic integrity are considered socially and cultically devalued and thus relegated to the margins of the Israelite cult.[296] Olyan, like Avrahami, argues that expressions of physical and sensory disability in close proximity to other socially devalued and vulnerable people such as widows and orphans, indicates the general perception of disability as a wholly negative experience. Such people are not only vulnerable but weak and deprived of all independence and agency.

§ 4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined a range of representations of physical and sensory disability in the Hebrew Bible. It has been noted that while it is apparent that disability-related language is frequently employed in the Hebrew Bible, that the representations of actual embodied figures with disability are much less widely attested. In addition, on those occasions when disability language does appear in the Hebrew Bible to describe particular historical figures, traditional scholarship has subverted disability readings in favour of more allegorical ones. This is seen in the example of Moses, who, though described as experiencing some form of speech impediment is instead generally interpreted by scholars as merely reluctant rather than speech impaired. This interpretation appears to be rooted in a reluctance of scholars to consider Moses, a significant character in the Hebrew Bible, as experiencing a form of disability.

In this chapter we employed two different rubrics through which we examined representations of physical and sensory disability in the Hebrew Bible. Firstly, this was done through Yael Avrahami's assessment of the sensorium. Avrahami contends that the senses are expressed in the Hebrew Bible as the means through which humanity know, understand, and respond to God, each other, and themselves. Avrahami maintains that it is through the employment of the senses that one gains wisdom and knowledge and as a consequence, those who have limited or impaired senses are restricted in their access to this wisdom and knowledge. Consequently, according to Avrahami, those with sensory

[296] Olyan, *Disability in the HB*, 47-48.

impairments are described in terms of social devaluation and experience marginalisation and stigmatisation as a result.

It was noted that Avrahami's assessment of the senses is helpful in cataloguing a range of language related to the embodied experience that is native to the Hebrew Bible. Avrahami's summation that the Hebrew Bible represents a septasensory model is also beneficial in recognising the close connection between bodily functions in the Hebrew Bible. It is through the combined workings of the senses that the body responds and engages to the world. However, as a consequence of limited senses, Avrahami equates the sensory-impaired with the expression of others who exist in a socially devalued state. In this way, Avrahami describes the sensory-impaired as 'non-persons' incapable of experiencing life in all its fullness.

However, it was argued that while the Hebrew Bible certainly depicts those with sensory limitations as facing practical challenges within the ancient community, not all sensory impairment is depicted as socially devalued. While it is certainly the case that those with sensory limitations are coupled with other groups such as widows and orphans, these are groups are presented not as people to be despised, but rather, as vulnerable members of the Israelite community whom they ought to treat with compassion and justice. In this way, while they certainly share a level of social vulnerability, this is not automatically equal to living in a state of social devaluation. Further, in dismissing all sensory-impaired people as non-persons, Avrahami neglects to address the nuances of the Hebrew Bible which express physical and sensory impairment in a diverse range of ways. Such a reading overlooks the complexities of a representation of a sensory-impaired figure such as that of the "suffering servant." While the "servant" is certainly described as experiencing social devaluation, he is at the same time represented as fulfilling a significant role in the community and in the plans of YHWH.

The second rubric through which we addressed physical and sensory disability in the Hebrew Bible was that of Saul M. Olyan's divisions of 'defective' and non-'defective' impairments. In this way, Olyan maintains that on occasion, disability is associated with certain conditions that render a person ritually impure. This is seen most pertinently in the restrictions outlined for the Levitical priest in chapter twenty-one of Leviticus. Here,

priests experiencing a range of illnesses and disabilities are limited in their priestly role. While not completely disqualified from serving as a priest, those presenting with any of the listed conditions were to be limited in their priestly capacity. While scholars debate the possible reasons that these conditions in particular were considered defiling, what is certain is that by the Second Temple period these conditions were being applied to non-priests as a means of limiting participation in other cultic activities such as participation in the annual pilgrimages. Indeed, the community at Qumran considered these conditions so defiling that people in the community experiencing these conditions were severely restricted in their cultic roles in the present and disqualified from participating in the future eschatological battle.

A range of other physical and sensory impairments are also attested throughout the Hebrew Bible but that apparently did not render the impaired person unclean. In this way, conditions such as deafness and the inability to speak are described as having social and even cultic consequences but are not considered 'defects.' One particular example is that of *ṣāraʿat.* While *ṣāraʿat* is described as having severe social and cultic consequences, including the removal of the person from the rest of the Israelite community, it is not listed among the conditions seen as 'defective' in Leviticus 21. The issue of female infertility was also briefly addressed and the social repercussions for women rendered barren.

The final text assessed in this chapter was that of 2 Samuel 5:6-8 which presents a textually and theologically challenging passage regarding David and "the blind and lame" of the Jebusites. Jeremy Schipper maintains that this passage is a significant part of the broader narrative of David and Mephibosheth. David's original expression of hatred for "the blind and lame" Jebusites is then contrast with his actions of hospitality towards the physically impaired Mephibosheth. David's care and hospitality toward Mephibosheth thus serve make void his earlier declaration that "the blind and lame" were unable to enter his house. Rather than being shunned, David places Mephibosheth in the esteemed seat with him at his table.

Others, however, have interpreted this passage as having far greater cultic implications. Saul M. Olyan and Thomas Hentrich posit that David's response to the Jebusites sets a precedence for the exclusion of "the blind and lame" from the Israelite temple. The house

thus mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:6-8 is representative of the house of YHWH, that is, the temple. Support for this interpretation appears to reside in later sources of the Second Temple period. The Qumran scrolls appear to interpret this passage as evidence that those with physical and sensory impairments are unclean and must not defile the temple. However, their concern for purity leads them to exclude those with 'defects' not just from the temple but rather, the entire holy city (Jerusalem). Indeed, it is possible that we see the implications of this interpretation reflected in a number of the healing narratives of the gospel healing accounts. This will be explored in more detail in the following chapters.

By using disability as a lens through which to assess physical and sensory disability in the Hebrew Bible we inevitably encounter biblical texts which pose challenges for disability readings of the Hebrew Bible. References to disability and divine punishment as well as cultic restrictions for people with disability certainly appear to represent disability as a wholly negative experience. However, looking beyond these texts to examine other representations of disability affords us the opportunity to gain a far more nuanced assessment of disability in the Hebrew Bible. In this way, a disability lens allows us to reconsider and reframe expressions of identity throughout the Hebrew Bible. As such, David's interaction with Mephibosheth is a complicated narrative of shifting power and attitudes replete with images of disability that transcend the monolithic ideal of the Hebrew Bible solely depicting disability as a negative experience. Again, the account of Moses, Israel's revered leader, is likewise described with disability language apparently expressing the belief that the original author of Exodus did not consider disability and Israel's leadership mutually exclusive. Such investigations are important in order to address those disability scholars who consider the Hebrew Bible the basis of a determined anti-disability rhetoric. While we certainly must contend with a range of difficult assessments of disability in the Hebrew Bible, it cannot be argued that disability is represented only in terms of punishment or as a means to disqualify people from the Israelite community. These presentations challenge us to delve further into the biblical texts to explore further the nuances of this disability-related language.

In the next section of this thesis, we will use this examination of disability in the Hebrew Bible in combination with the preceding chapter on the Greco-Roman background, as the basis upon which to assess representations of disability in a number of New Testament

gospel texts. Is the marginalisation and stigmatisation of people with disability posited by Avrahami and Olyan presented in the gospel material? In what ways do the New Testament texts affirm and/or subvert the presentations of disability expressed in the Hebrew Bible as well as in the literature of the Greco-Roman world? Are there any indications in the gospels that "the blind and lame" were regarded as unclean and forbidden entry to the temple? These questions, among others, will be addressed throughout the following chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE:
BANQUETING AND DISABILITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD: RECONSIDERING THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET (LUKE 14:15-24)

§ 5.1 Introduction

While there are deviations in interpretation, the traditional and most widely accepted approach to the parable of the great banquet (Lk. 14:15-24) is that it is an eschatological parable used by Luke[1] to emphasise to his first-century Gentile community the salvation and inclusion of Gentile Christians into the community of God. In this sense, the meal here follows a long Jewish tradition of using an elaborate meal as a metaphor for the entire messianic age to come. It is thus suggested that the parable represents God's outworking of salvation history and was written in order to "explain the inclusion of Gentiles in the present kingdom of God as God's response to Israel's refusal to 'enter.'"[2] However, such an interpretation relies on understanding "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" in Luke 14:15-24 as a metaphor for the Gentiles and therefore assuming an allegorical reading of the parable. Moreover, this interpretation relies on a metaphorical reading of "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" in Luke 14:15-24 despite the same phrase appearing in the preceding parable (14:7-14) where it clearly serves as a literal description of the marginalised. This chapter proposes that Luke envisioned a literal interpretation of "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" in both parables. In these parables, Luke employs and indeed subverts a range of imagery related to Greco-Roman banqueting and symposia practices, including a long-standing association between banqueting and disability in the ancient world. Through Luke's use of this imagery, the gospel writer emphasises Jesus' inclusion of the poor and those with physical and sensory impairment as part of the growing Jesus movement as well as envisioning these same marginalised members as also having a place at the future messianic banquet.

This chapter will begin with a brief introduction to the history of parable scholarship in general before proceeding with a summary of the traditional interpretations of the parable

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[1] Throughout this chapter we refer to both the gospel and the author/s of the gospel as 'Luke' for the sake of brevity without making a definitive statement about authorship of this gospel.

[2] P.D. Meyer, "The Gentile Mission in Q," *JBL* 89.4 (1970): 414.

in Luke 14:15-24. Following this, we will examine banqueting practices in the Greco-Roman world followed by an assessment of banqueting in the Hebrew Bible. Before addressing directly the issue of disability in connection with this theme, we will first outline Luke's general use of banqueting and symposium imagery throughout his gospel account. Once we have established Luke's particular interest in such imagery, we will investigate the more distinctive area of disability in association with banqueting imagery from antiquity. Following this survey, we will assess the text of Luke 14:15-24 in light of this connection between disability and banqueting in the ancient world. Through this assessment, it will be argued that Luke built upon the imagery of table fellowship commonly depicted in the literature and artwork of the ancient world. More than this, Luke specifically emphasises Jesus' ministry to the poor and marginalised in order to provide contrast with traditional images of Greco-Roman banquets where the poor and those with disability are cast as either servants or entertainers for the invited guests. For Luke, the poor and those with physical and sensory disability are depicted no longer as merely *akletoi*, uninvited guests, but rather the recipients of invitations to participate in the developing community of the Jesus movement. Luke emphasises that, unlike other meal practices of the ancient world, the Jesus movement is instead characterised by the inclusion of such marginalised figures as a foretaste of the inclusion manifested in the future kingdom.

§ 5.2 Interpretation of Parables

Before assessing the parable of the banquet in detail it is first worth a brief survey of parable scholarship. The earliest interpreters of the gospels, that is the church fathers, considered the parables to be a form of allegory. Charles W. Hedrick describes an allegory as "a narrative that tells one story on its surface but whose elements are ciphers, which, rightly understood, tell an entirely different story."[3] In this sense, the parables are stories which must be deciphered in order to be understood and interpretation thus begins with assigning meaning to almost every detail of the parable. One particularly well-attested example of allegorical interpretation is that of Origen and Augustine in their elucidation

[3] C.W. Hedrick, *Many Things in Parables: Jesus and his Modern Critics* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2004), 57.

of the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). Both writers contend that the parable is allegorical and therefore each element of the parable is imbued with theological significance. In this way, the ravaged man in the parable journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho is Adam and the human race who had fallen from God; Jerusalem thus represents heaven and Jericho the world; the robbers who attacked the man are the hostile powers of the world; the Samaritan is Christ, and the inn is the Church, to name but a few of the elements in the parable.[4]

While the Reformers expressed some reticence about allegorical interpretations, the great majority of Christian exegetes continued to allegorise the parables. Indeed this approach of allegorising the parables "was the primary method for the interpretation of Jesus' parables from at least the time of Irenaeus to the end of the nineteenth century."[5] The cessation of the allegorical approach as the dominant interpretive method at this time was connected primarily to the parable research of Adolf Jülicher,[6] as well as C.H. Dodd[7] and Joachim Jeremias.[8] Jülicher's influential two-volume work on the parables denied that Jesus used any form of allegory in his teaching and that any traces of allegory found in the gospels were embellishments of the gospel writers.[9] For Jülicher, Jesus' parables elucidated one general maxim rather than a series of theological comparisons.[10]

Following in the tradition of Jülicher, C.H. Dodd and Joachim Jeremias focused parable scholarship on understanding the parables within their historical and eschatological contexts, which, by extension, minimised any allegorical readings of the parables. Dodd and Jeremias also pioneered the use of form criticism in relation to the study of the parables. The aim of the form critical approach to the parables was to strip back the allegory, as well

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[4] Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 34.3; Augustine, *Quaest. Evang.* 2.19; *Sermon* 69.7.

[5] K. Snodgrass, "From Allegorizing to Allegorizing: A History of the Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus" in *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn and S. McKnight; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 249. Snodgrass notes that interpreting parables through allegory was not limited to the early Christian writers but was employed by various Jewish writers including those at the Dead Sea and Philo, as well as by Greek writers such as Homer and Plato ("From Allegorizing to Allegorizing," 249).

[6] *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (2 vols.; Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1886).

[7] *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet & Co, 1935).

[8] *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. S.H. Hooke; rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963).

[9] Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, *passim*.

[10] Contra C.L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1990).

as the additions of the early church, to find a parable's original form.[11] This process, according to Dodd, was about establishing "the general orientation of the teachings of Jesus"[12] within Jesus' own historical and cultural milieu with the aim of investigating the way the parables would have been interpreted by the earliest audiences.

The 1950s saw the development of redaction criticism as a method to understand the particular theological interests of each of the Synoptic authors. In this respect, Günther Bornkamm,[13] Hans Conzelmann,[14] and Willi Marxsen[15] were all highly influential. Other approaches to parable scholarship also developed and included the existentialist "new hermeneutic" approach including the likes of Ernst Fuchs,[16] Eta Linnemann,[17] and Eberhard Jüngel,[18] and the literary approaches of Robert Funk[19] and John Dominic Crossan.[20] Although there were early proponents of seeking the meaning of the parables in their Jewish origins,[21] this approach only truly developed with the works of J. Duncan M. Derrett[22] who drew attention to the importance of ancient Palestinian culture for the interpretation of Jesus' parables. Kenneth Bailey also drew on Jewish sources but combined this with assessments of current practices of modern peasant groups throughout the Mediterranean.[23] Despite various other shifts in parable scholarship, of particular note is the inclination of some modern scholars to once again propose allegorical interpretations of the parables. Most notably is Craig L. Blomberg's *Interpreting the Parables* whereby he

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[11] Cf. B.B. Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 12, which follows in the tradition of Jeremias.

[12] Dodd, *Parables*, 12.

[13] "Enderwartung und Kirche im Matthäusevangelium," in *Überlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium* (ed. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H.J. Held; WMANT 1; Neukirchen/Moers: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 13-47.

[14] *Die Mitte der Zeit: Studien zur Theologie des Lukas* (BHTh 17; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1954).

[15] *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Goettingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1959).

[16] *Studies of the Historical Jesus* (trans. A. Scobie; SBT 42; London: SCM Press, 1964).

[17] *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* (London: SPCK, 1966).

[18] *Paulus und Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zur Präzisierung der Frage Nach dem Ursprung der Christologie* (HUT 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1962).

[19] *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

[20] *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

[21] C.A. Bugge, *Die Haupt-Parabeln Jesu* (Giessen: Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903); P. Fiebig, *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904).

[22] *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1976); *idem*, *Studies in the New Testament* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1977, 1978).

[23] *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); *Through Peasant Eye: More Lucan Parables, their Culture and Style* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

suggests that Jesus' parables are meant to be read as allegories and that as a result each "parable may have more than one correspondence between an image and the reality depicted."[24] Significant also in the return to allegorical interpretation is the more recent work of John Dominic Crossan which proposes that the parables are polyvalent and therefore capable of carrying more than one meaning.[25] Despite these significant developments in the interpretation of the parables of Jesus, for the most part, the parable of the banquet in Luke 14:15-24 is generally still interpreted allegorically. In the following section we introduce the parable as well as locating the parable in the flow of Luke's argument. This will be followed by a summary of the primary interpretations of this particular Lukan parable.

§ 5.3 Introduction to the text of Luke 14:15-24

The parable of the banquet appears in the gospel of Luke as part of a larger section on banqueting etiquette which begins in 14:1 with Jesus eating in the home of a prominent Pharisee (ἀρχόντων τῶν Φαρισαίων). Luke notes that among those present at the meal was a man experiencing an "abnormal swelling of his body (ὑδρωπικός),"[26] or what is often translated as "dropsy."[27] Luke notes that despite the fact that it is the Sabbath, Jesus takes hold of the man, heals him, and sends him on his way (14:4). Stuart Love suggests that the healing is significant as the "man is an impure, dishonored, marginalized person, which situates him among those identified as 'the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind'" mentioned later on in the chapter.[28] Willi Braun agrees, suggesting that the presence of a sick or infirm person at a banquet was a kind of topos.[29] In this case, the condition itself is significant because, as was noted in chapter three (§ 3.5.2), ὑδρωπικός was used as a "Cynic metaphor for consuming passions," especially, greed and gluttony.[30] It was understood that just as "dropsy" is characterised by an unquenchable thirst, one's

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[24] Snodgrass, "From Allegorizing to Allegorizing," 261.

[25] J.D. Crossan, "Parable, Allegory, and Paradox," in *Semiology and the Parables* (ed. D. Patte; Pittsburgh: Pickwick Publications, 1976), 247-281. See also the work of Mary Ann Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables: An Approach to Multiple Interpretations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

[26] NIV.

[27] E.g., NKJV; NRSV; NASB; ESV.

[28] "The Man with Dropsy," *Leaven* 6.3 (1998): 137.

[29] W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14* (SNTSMS 85; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 31.

[30] Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 11 n. 13.

desire for fortune or honour is also not abated by indulgence in such things.[31] Thus according to Lucian, dropsy ("ὑδέρους"), along with gout and consumption, were considered to be the result of indulging in too many "extravagant dinners" ("τῶν πολυτελῶν ἐκείνων δείπνων ἀπόγονοι").[32] Braun suggests that Luke uses the story of the healing of the man with dropsy to parallel those indulging in banquets throughout the rest of chapter 14.[33]

According to Luke's timeline, following the healing of the man with dropsy, Jesus, upon noticing "how the guests picked the places of honour at the table," chose to tell them a "parable" ("παραβολή") regarding seating arrangements at a banquet (14:7-14).[34] The parable suggests that instead of choosing the places of honour at such a feast that it is better to take a lower place with the possibility of being later promoted by the host. It is generally agreed among scholars that this parable represents the language of the honour-shame dichotomy.[35] The dynamics of honour and shame have been addressed at length by social scientific scholars such as Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey. Social scientific criticism is an inter-disciplinary approach that addresses biblical studies through the lenses of sociology, anthropology, and even modern Mediterranean studies, as a means of understanding better the cultures and practices of the ancient world.[36] Social scientific scholars such as Malina and Neyrey suggest that honour-shame was one of the most

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[31] E.g., Ovid suggests that someone who has a "frantic lust for wealth" is similar to someone "whose belly swells with dropsy, the more he drinks, the thirstier he grows" (*Fasti* 1.215-216; Frazer, LCL), cf. Polyb. 13.2.2; Hor., *Ep.* 2.2.146-149.

[32] *Gallus* 23 (Harmon, LCL).

[33] Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 38-42.

[34] Braun suggests that while this story is described as a parable (14:7) it "lacks the formal characteristics of Jülicher's *Gleichnisreden*...nor are its stylistic features accounted for in other modern definitions of a parable" (*Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 43-44).

[35] J. Marshall, *Jesus, Patrons, and Benefactors: Roman Palestine and the Gospel of Luke* (WUNT II 259; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 257-264. That honour-shame is considered key to understanding Luke 14: 8-10 is even agreed upon by F.G. Downing, who in general is sceptical of the significance of the honour-shame motif in the gospels ("'Honor' Among Exegetes," *CBQ* 61 [1999]: 60-61).

[36] For a helpful summary of the movement and a bibliography of the most significant works in this area, see W.R. Herzog II, "Sociological Approaches to the Gospel," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. J.B. Green and S. McKnight; Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 760-766. For more recent works on the social scientific approach and the gospels, see P.F. Esler, *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 1994); K.C. Hanson and D. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998); B.J. Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); W. Stegemann, B.J. Malina, and G. Theissen (eds.), *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).

"pivotal values" in Mediterranean culture.[37] According to this social-scientific approach, it is apparent that Luke 14:7-14 addresses the concerns of honour-shame due to the particular terminology used throughout the passage. Jonathan Marshall thus suggests

> The double mention of first seats (πρωτοκλισία) introduces the topic of honor-shame. Selection of these seats may be unwise if someone more honorable (ἐντιμότερός) joins the dinner. Shame follows (μετὰ αἰσχύνης) the dishonored as he moves toward the last and least-honorable seat (τὸν ἔσχατον τόπον κατέχειν).[38]

At the conclusion of this parable, Jesus speaks specifically to the host, admonishing him, and by extension, all those present, that "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours...but...invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind (πτωχούς, ἀναπείρους, χωλούς, τυφλούς) and you will be blessed...(and) be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (14:12-14). In response to Jesus' mention of the resurrection, a guest at the banquet interjects shifting the focus from current banqueting etiquette to banqueting in the future resurrection: "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (14:15). It is in response to this makarism that Jesus offers this second "parable."[39]

Luke 14:15-24

> 15Ἀκούσας δέ τις τῶν συνανακειμένων ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Μακάριος ὅστις φάγεται ἄρτον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ
> τοῦ θεοῦ. 16ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἄνθρωπός τις ἐποίει δεῖπνον μέγα, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν πολλούς, 17καὶ ἀπέστειλεν
> τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δείπνου εἰπεῖν τοῖς κεκλημένοις· Ἔρχεσθε, ὅτι ἤδη ἕτοιμά ἐστιν. 18καὶ
> ἤρξαντο ἀπὸ μιᾶς πάντες παραιτεῖσθαι. ὁ πρῶτος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἀγρὸν ἠγόρασα καὶ ἔχω ἀνάγκην ἐξελθὼν
> ἰδεῖν αὐτόν· ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρῃτημένον. 19καὶ ἕτερος εἶπεν· Ζεύγη βοῶν ἠγόρασα πέντε καὶ
> πορεύομαι δοκιμάσαι αὐτά· ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρῃτημένον. 20καὶ ἕτερος εἶπεν· Γυναῖκα ἔγημα καὶ διὰ

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[37] B.J. Malina and J.H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. J.H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 25-65; H. Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. R. Rohrbaugh; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 20-40; J. Plevnik, "Honor/Shame," in *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook* (ed. J.J. Pilch and B.J. Malina; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 94-104.

[38] Marshall, *Jesus, Patrons, and Benefactors*, 258. Honour-shame was also a popular topic for discussion in the literary sources on banqueting, e.g., Plut., *Sept. sap. conv.* 148f-149f. For more on honour-shame in the Greco-Roman world, see N.R.E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992); D. Gilmore, (ed.), *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (AAASP 22; Washington: American Anthropological Association, 1987).

[39] Unlike the first of Jesus' stories in this section (Lk. 14: 7-14) which is described as a "parable" (14:7), the second is not referred to as a παραβολή by Jesus or Luke. Arthur A. Just says "While this story is not labeled a 'parable,' it appears to be another illustrative story that functions as a parable, and so, like the Good Samaritan story...it is commonly called a parable" (*Luke 9:51-24:53* [ConcC; Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997], 575). Willi Braun, in contrast, suggests that this account is not a parable but simply a story about a person in the Lukan community who has a change of heart about including the marginalised members of his community into his banquets (*Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 64).

τοῦτο οὐ δύναμαι ἐλθεῖν. [21]καὶ παραγενόμενος ὁ δοῦλος ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα. τότε ὀργισθεὶς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἶπεν τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ· Ἔξελθε ταχέως εἰς τὰς πλατείας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς καὶ ἀναπείρους καὶ τυφλοὺς καὶ χωλοὺς εἰσάγαγε ὧδε. [22]καὶ εἶπεν ὁ δοῦλος· Κύριε, γέγονεν ὃ ἐπέταξας, καὶ ἔτι τόπος ἐστίν. [23]καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος πρὸς τὸν δοῦλον· Ἔξελθε εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς καὶ ἀνάγκασον εἰσελθεῖν, ἵνα γεμισθῇ μου ὁ οἶκος· [24]λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κεκλημένων γεύσεταί μου τοῦ δείπνου.

[15] When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." [16] Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. [17] At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' [18] "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' [19] "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' [20] "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'[21] "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' [22] "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' [23] "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. [24] I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"[40]

§ 5.4 Scholarly Interpretations of Luke 14:15-24

As with other parables in the canonical gospels, the parable of the banquet in Luke 14:15-24 was interpreted allegorically by many of the church fathers. Augustine, Jerome, and Bede, for example, all interpreted the parable allegorically determining that the parable represented God's act of including the Gentiles in his call to salvation.[41] This allegorical reading of the text is still favoured by many exegetes and commentators of Luke 14:15-24.[42] It is argued that the interpretation of the parable lies in understanding those who were originally invited to the banquet as Israel itself and in particular the Jewish hierarchy,

[40] NIV.

[41] E.g., Augustine (*Letters* 93.5; Sermon 1120); Jerome (*Comm. Matt.* 3.22); Bede (*Luc. Exp.* 4.14).

[42] M.F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (LNTS 331; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 81-82; A.J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 336-337; L.T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP; Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991), 232; A.A. Just, *The Ongoing Feast: Table Fellowship and Eschatology at Emmaus* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 179; B. Keach, *Exposition of the Parables in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1978), 544; S.J. Kistemaker, *The Parables: Understanding the Stories Jesus Told* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 197; H. Lockyer, *All the Parables of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 276; A.W. Martens, "Salvation Today: Reading Luke's Message for a Gentile Audience," in Reading the Gospels Today (ed. S. Porter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 119; Meyer, "Gentile Mission," 414; R. Schippers, *Gelijkenissen van Jezus* (Kampden: Kok, 1962), 41; J.L. Story, "All is Now Ready: An Exegesis of 'the Great Banquet' (Luke 14:15-24) and 'the Marriage Feast' (Matthew 22:1-14)" *ATI* 2.2 (2009), 77; W.M. Swartley, "Unexpected Banquet People (Luke 14:16-24)," in *Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus* Today (ed. V.G. Shillington; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 177; C.H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: The Crossroad Publication Co., 1982), 197-198; J. Timmer, *The Kingdom Equation: A Fresh Look at the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1990), 57.

who according to Luke, are the ones seen as being most culpable for the nation's disobedience and sinfulness.[43]

An allegorical interpretation of any text implies not only that there are metaphorical aspects to the story but that "meanings can be assigned to all the major details" in the narrative.[44] Those scholars who see the parable of the great banquet as an allegory thus consider the dispatching of the servant to be theologically significant. In this way, the second sending of the servant to gather in the "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame'" (14:21) is representative of the marginal members of Jewish society. This is apparent through the Lukan Jesus' reference to the "streets and alleys." Just as the "streets and alleys" are located *within* the walls of the city, so also are the people indicated here located *within* Judaism.[45] The third and final sending sees the servant directed to the "the roads and country lanes" (14:23) which are *outside* of the city. These people located on "the roads and country lanes" are interpreted as those outside Judaism, that is, the Gentiles.[46] The parable then, according to this interpretation, suggests that due to Israel's sinfulness and disobedience that God has rescinded his original invitation to the messianic banquet, and by extension the entire eschaton, instead emphasising that the kingdom of God has been reserved for a new community: a reconstituted Israel composed of a faithful remnant but now also including Jewish outcasts as well as faithful members of the Gentile community. Advocates of this interpretation suggest it is consistent with Luke's interest in Jesus' mission to the Gentiles which is alluded to throughout Luke's gospel and brought to

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[43] E.g., K.R. Snodgrass, "Common Life with Jesus: The Parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14: 16-24" in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder* (ed. J.V. Hills; Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998), 186-201.

[44] Hultgren suggests that it is clear Luke 14:15-24 fits into the category of allegory (*Parables*, 331).

[45] A.W. Martens, for example, states "The parable serves as an allegory of Jewish refusal and Gentile acceptance of the banquet of salvation" ("Salvation Today," 119); cf. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 100; Hultgren, *Parables*, 336-337; Keach, *Exposition of the Parables*, 544; Lockyer, *All the Parables*, 276; T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus: As Recorded in the Gospels According to St. Matthew and St. Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1949), 130; Schippers, *Gelijkenissen*, 41; R.H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Publications, 1981), 85; Swartley, "Unexpected Banquet People," 177; Timmer, *Kingdom Equation*, 57.

[46] E.g, Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 101; T.W. Manson, *Sayings*, 130. A small number of scholars see the third sending as another invitation to the marginalised (e.g., J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 561; J. Nolland, *Luke* [3 vols.; WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1989-1993], 2:757-758). Peter-Ben Smit suggests that both the second and third callings are to the Gentiles'" (*Fellowship and Food in the Kingdom: Eschatological Meals and Scenes of Utopian Abundance in the New Testament* [WUNT II 234; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 165).

fruition in the book of Acts.[47] Proponents of this view see Luke as seeking to allay the concerns of those in his community by confirming the place of both Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of salvation (Lk. 2:31-32; 4:4-21).[48]

This allegorical approach to the parable of the banquet has been prolific amongst exegetes of the Lukan gospel. However, a small number of interpreters have utilised other methods of interpretation for this parable. A number of scholars have proposed that the key to understanding the parable is in comparing it to the versions that appear in Matthew (22:1-10) and the Gospel of Thomas (Logion 64).[49] This method, it is argued, can help to reveal the particular theological emphases as well as the possible *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel writer's first-century C.E. community.[50] A number of scholars have attempted to re-

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[47] E.g., Manson suggests that the reference to compelling the poor and those with physical disability to attend the host's banquet is evident of the interest in the Gentiles in the Q material (*Sayings of Jesus*, 130). On the representation of the Gentiles in Luke-Acts, see E.V. Dowling, "'To the Ends of the Earth': Attitudes to Gentiles in Luke-Acts," in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. D.C. Sim and James S. McLaren; LNTS; London: Bloosmbury/T&T Clark, 2013), 191-208.

[48] D.L. Bock, *Luke* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 1:14-15; R.L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 155-159; Esler, *Community*, 210-219; Green, *Luke*, 21; W.J. Harrington, *Gospel According to St. Luke: A Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 20-21; Hultgren, *Parables*, 331-340; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 36; J.T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 149-154.

[49] Numerous scholars see a literary reliance between Luke's parable, Matthew's parable of the wedding feast, and Logion 64 in the Gospel of Thomas (G.W. Forbes, *The God of Old: The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke's Gospel* [JSNTSup 198; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 96; Story, "All is Now Ready," 69), with some proposing that Thomas' is the earliest version (Crossan, *In Parables*, 72; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1051; Jeremias, *Parables*, 176; N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* [NTL; London: SCM Press, 1967], 113). Others consider that these parables have a common theme but originate from two separate parables told by Jesus during his earthly ministry (Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 237; B.H. Gregg, *The Historical Jesus and the Final Judgement Sayings in Q* [WUNT II 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 290; Snodgrasss, *Stories with Intent*, 310; Stein, *Introduction*, 83; E.R. Wendland, "'Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the Kingdom of God' [Lk 14:15]: Internal and External Intertextual Influence on the Interpretation of Christ's parable of the Great Banquet," *Neot* 31 [1997]: 171). For a summary of the scholarship regarding the redaction of Luke 14:15-24, see G.E. Sterling, "'Where Two or Three Are Gathered': The Tradition History of the Parable of the Banquet (Matt 22:1-14//Luke 14:16-24//Gos.Thom. 64," in *Das Thomasevangelium im Kontext der Frühchristlichen und Spätantiken Literatur- und Religionsgeschichte* (ed. J. Schröter, J. Frey, and E.E. Popkes; BZNW 157; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 95-121 and E. van Eck, "When Patrons Are Patrons: A Social-Scientific and Realistic Reading of the Parable of the Feast (Lk 14:16b-23)," *HTS/TS* 69.1 (2013): 1-14, Online: http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ hts.v69i1.1375. van Eck's article also features a helpful summary of the history of the social scientific approach to this parable ("Patrons," 6-9).

[50] E.g., R.H. Stein, "What is Redaktiongeschichte?" *JBL* 88 (1969): 54.

establish the parable as it may have appeared in the Q source[51] while others still have attempted to determine the form of the parable as it was taught by the historical Jesus.[52]

Willi Braun has proposed that Luke 14:15-24 features neither the descriptor of "παραβολή" nor the language of comparison in expressing an abstract ideal, either one of which is necessary for a story of Jesus to be called a "parable."[53] Consequently, Braun contends that calling "this story a parable is to bow to convention more than to make a precise form-critical judgement."[54] For Braun, Luke 14:15-24 recounts a fictional story about the conversion of a wealthy householder. Through the experience of being snubbed by those he considered social equals he turns instead to those of lower status in his community.[55] Braun suggests that this story would have been challenging to members of the Lukan community who, despite their alignment with the Jesus movement, had continued to overlook those who were poor and needy.[56] The benefit of this interpretation is that it

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[51] Those who consider the parable to be from the Q tradition, or at least a common source, include H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1960), 111; J.R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 140-141; van Eck, "Patrons," 5; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (2 vols.; AB; New York: Doubleday, 1979), 2:1052; A.D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1992), 220; R.A. Horsely, "The Renewal of Israel Over Against its Rulers" in *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (ed. R.A. Horsley and J.A. Draper; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 284; Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 129-130; Myer, "Gentile Mission," 413; Schippers, *Gelijkenissen*, 41; Story, "All is Now Ready," 68. Those who consider Luke and Matthew's parables as coming from two separate traditions include W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (vol 3; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 3:194; Dodd, *Parables*, 95; J. Gnilka, *Das Mattäusevangelium* (vol 2.; 3rd ed; Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 235; Hultgren, *Parables*, 334-335; Jeremias, *Parables*, 63; Kistemaker, *Parables*, 164-165; Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus*, 166 n. 20; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 310; Stein, *Introduction*, 83; B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1930), 242-246.

[52] A number of scholars suggest that the twist in the parable is what proves that this is a genuine story of the historial Jesus (e.g. J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* [New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991], 262; R.W. Funk and R.W. Hoover, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus: New Translation and Commentary* [New York: Macmillan, 1993], 353; R. Rohrbaugh, "The Pre-Industrial City in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* [ed. J.H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991], 96-131). Others consider any allegorical implications related to the inclusion of the Gentiles as Lukan redaction (e.g. Stein, *Introduction*, 90-91).

[53] Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 64.

[54] Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 64

[55] This view was originally proposed by Richard L. Rohrbaugh ("The Pre-Industrial City," 137-147) but has been greatly expanded and developed in the work of Braun. This interpretation has also been accepted, with different nuances, by D. Dormeyer, "Literarische und theologische Analyse der Parabel Lukas 14,15-24," *BibLeb* 15 (1974): 206-219; Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 554-563; L. Schrotroff, "Das Gleichnis vom großen Gastmahl in der Longienquelle," *EvT* 47 (1987): 204-209; Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, 173.

[56] Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 64-65.

removes the "unflattering portrait of God as one who extends invitations originally in a way consistent with the social elite of Luke's world and only turns to the poor when rebuffed by the rich."[57] Klyne R. Snodgrass, however, is critical of this approach suggesting that there is nothing in the text of Luke 14:15-24 that indicates that the banquet host "changed his mind."[58]

The parable has also been assessed through the social scientific method in an attempt to understand how the parable would have been heard by the original auditors of Luke's gospel. Social scientific studies of the Lukan banquet have drawn attention to the use of the honour-shame motif,[59] as noted above, as well as that of the benefactor-client relationship.[60] In addition, social scientists have also addressed the social and cultural importance of meals and the etiquette associated with such meals in Greco-Roman antiquity.[61] It has long been understood that the gospel of Luke has a particular interest in expressing Jesus' ministry as presented through 'table talk,' but that this imagery "is drawn from the life and customs of first-century Palestinian Judaism"[62] has only more recently been appreciated. This growing awareness of the relationship between the gospel narratives and the cultures and practices of Greco-Roman antiquity has been the catalyst for numerous new assessments of the meal practices of the early Christians.[63] As a result,

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[57] Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 688 n. 217. This "distortion of Grace" had earlier caused Ernst Haenchen to reject the parable as a work of the early church (*Die Bibel und Wir* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968], 153-155).

[58] Snodgrass, "Common Life with Jesus," 193-194.

[59] E.g., On honour-shame specifically in the parables of Luke 14, see Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 130; M.A. Getty-Sullivan, *Parables of the Kingdom: Jesus and the use of Parables in the Synoptic Tradition* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 145; Marshall, *Jesus, Patrons and Benefactors*, 258; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 311; R.A. Streett, *Subversive Meals: An Analysis of the Lord's Supper under Roman Domination during the First Century* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 154.

[60] E.g., Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts," *passim*; Marshall, *Jesus, Patrons, and Benefactors*, *passim*; H. Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relationships and the New Community in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (ed. J.H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 241-268.

[61] P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Response to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); *idem*, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), *passim*; E. Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); J. Wilkins, D. Harvey, and E. Dobson (eds.), *Food in Antiquity* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993); J.M. Wilkins and S. Hill, *Food in the Ancient World* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

[62] Stein, *Introduction*, 85.

[63] C. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (NSBT; Leicester: Apollos/IVP, 2005); E. Kobel, *Dining with John: Communal Meals and Identity Formation in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); J. König, *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); A. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists:*

this parable, as well as the larger section of Luke 14:1-24, has also begun to be addressed in terms of its relationship to Greco-Roman banqueting and sympotic practices. The most significant work in this respect is that of Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*. Though the connection between Luke 14 and the Greco-Roman symposium had been addressed earlier by Xavier de Meeûs,[64] as well as by Joël Delobel,[65] Smith was the first to suggest that sympotic practices were a "prominent literary motif" that undergird Luke's entire presentation of Jesus' ministry.[66] For Smith, the "Jesus tradition is permeated with rich usages of the banquet motif, from its metaphorical use in the parables to stories about meals in which Jesus took part."[67]

In contrast, Willi Braun suggests that Luke was certainly aware of the "first-century dinner party world,"[68] but that Luke "clearly censured and rejected"[69] the "values, norms and hopes"[70] often associated with it. For Braun, Luke's gospel draws a greater comparison with the Cynic sophist tradition and in particular the satires of second-century Cynic philosopher Lucian of Samosata.[71] Braun suggests that the gospel of Luke presents an "anti-sympotic" ideal that questioned social roles and the place of the poor and expressed a general reversal of fortunes in the afterworld.[72] For Braun, while Luke certainly reveals a "familiarity with Greco-Roman symposiastic conventions, both social and literary, Luke

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Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals (OECS; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); D.E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); D.E. Smith and H. Taussig, eds., *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Smit, *Fellowship and Food*; B.D. Spinks, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: The Eucharist from the Early Church to the Present Day* (SCM Studies in Worship and Liturgy; London: SCM Press, 2013); H. Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

[64] "Composition de Luc, XIV et Centre Symposiaque," *ETL* 37 (1961): 847-870. E. Springs Steele likewise explored the connection between the gospel of Luke and Greco-Roman sympotic literature ("Luke 11:37-54 - A Modified Hellenistic Symposium," *JBL* 103.3 [1984]: 379-394). While these two approaches see the theme of symposium just in certain sections of Luke, Smith contends that table fellowship undergirds all that happens in the gospel ("Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke" *JBL* 106.4 [1987]: 615; *ibid*, *From Symposium*, 219-277, esp. 253-272).

[65] de Meeûs' article was followed shortly by Joël Delobel's analysis of Luke 7:36-50 in light of sympotic literature ("L'onction par la pecheresse," *ETL* 42 [1966]: 415-475).

[66] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 638. This article was reworked into the chapter on symposium in Luke in his book, *From Symposium*, 253-272.

[67] Smith, *From Symposium*, 21.

[68] W. Braun, "Symposium or Anti-Symposium," *TJT* 8.1. (1992): 75.

[69] Braun, "Symposium or Anti-Symposium," 75.

[70] Braun, "Symposium or Anti-Symposium," 75-76.

[71] Braun, "Symposium or Anti-Symposium," 76-78.

[72] Braun, "Symposium or Anti-Symposium," 76-78.

presents Jesus as a Cynic-like preacher…urging a feasting ethos as anti-sympotic as that which rules Lucian's feast of Cronos."[73]

Despite the more recent proposals of Smith and Braun, interpretations of Luke 14:15-24 are primarily located in the realm of allegory. In order to assess the influence of Greco-Roman banqueting practices on the gospel of Luke in general and the parable of the banquet specifically, we will now address some of the key themes and conventions associated with Greco-Roman banqueting practices in our ancient literary sources followed by a brief assessment of the implementation of these practices in Second Temple Judaism. As has been previously noted,[74] scholars of the New Testament are becoming increasingly more aware that the line between the gospel writers' Greco-Roman and Jewish influences cannot be drawn too starkly. For this reason, while we are differentiating between Greco-Roman and Jewish meal practices in the following section, we recognize that this differentiation is not always easily made. Indeed, Dennis E. Smith has suggested that Greek banqueting and symposium practices were so ubiquitous in antiquity that contemporary Jewish communities also incorporated some aspects of these practices into their own traditions and liturgy.[75] Consequently, Smith suggests that "the banquet as a social institution is practiced in similar ways and with similar symbols or codes by Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Egyptians" as each group was drawing on "a common set of banquet customs, symbols, and codes that were the same throughout the Mediterranean word."[76] While there were certainly strong similarities, Smith also suggests that each group appropriated these traditions and symbols in various ways particular to their own social and cultural milieu. As such, we are still afforded the opportunity to investigate the variations in style and tradition appropriated within each of these groups.[77]

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[73] Braun, "Anti-Symposium," 78.

[74] See § 3.1 n. 1.

[75] Smith, From Symposium, 14, 48. Contra Nathan MacDonald who suggests that it is unnecessary to "collapse Jewish meal traditions into Graceo-Roman traditions" (*Not Bread Alone: The Use of Food in the Old Testament* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 222). MacDonald claims that Smith over-emphasises the importance of the Greco-Roman meal traditions in Luke (*Not Bread Alone: Uses of Food in the OT*, 220-222). This is likewise the view of Craig Blomberg (*Contagious Holiness*, 32-64).

[76] Smith, *From Symposium*, 14.

[77] Smith, *From Symposium*, 14.

§ 5.5 Banqueting and Symposia Practices in Greco-Roman Antiquity

For the purposes of this investigation, it is impossible and unnecessary to give a detailed history of banqueting and symposium practices in the Greco-Roman world. The reader may, however, consult numerous works from the growing field of sympotic scholarship, with works specialising in banqueting and symposium in the literary sources,[78] artwork,[79] and architecture of Greco-Roman antiquity.[80] There are also numerous works which address particular regional and ethnic variations,[81] as well as other specific elements of the symposium.[82] While some early scholars on banqueting and symposia differentiated

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[78] See in particular the seminal edited work of Oswyn Murray, *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); cf. F. Hobden, *The Symposion in Ancient Greek Society and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); A. Lill, "The Social Meaning of the Greek Symposium" in *Studien zu Ritual und Sozialgeschichte im Alten Orient / Studies on Ritual and Society in the Ancient Near East* (ed. T.R. Kämmerer; BZAW 374; Berling: De Gruyter, 2007), 171-186; J.R. Ribeiro et al. (eds.), *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch* (Coimbra: HumSup 6; Coimbra: Classica Digitalia, Centro de Estudios Clássicos e Humanisticos da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009); W.J. Slater (ed.), *Dining in a Classical Context* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); M. Węcowski, *The Rise of the Greek Aristocratic Banquet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[79] On sympotic artwork, see the seminal work of François Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet: Images of Wine and Ritual (Un Flot d'Images)* (trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), *idem*, "Around the Krater: An Aspect of Banquet Imagery" in *In Vino Veritas* (ed. O. Murray and M. Tecusan; British School at Rome: London, 1995), 196-209; cf. K.M.D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); N.F. Hudson, "The Archaeology of the Roman 'Convivium,'" *AJA* 114.4 (2010): 663-695; E. Kistler, "The Encoding and Decoding of Satyr-Symposiasts on Vases in Archaic and Classical Athens," in *The World of Greek Vases* (ed. V. Nørskov et al.; ARIDSup 41; Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2009), 193-204; A. Seeberg, *Corinthian Komos Vases* (BICSSup 27; London: University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, 1971); K. Topper, "Primitive Life and the Construction of the Sympotic Past in Athenian Vase Painting," *AJA* 113 (2009): 3-26; *idem*, *The Imagery of the Athenian Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[80] E.g., E.P. Baughn, *Couched in Death:* Klinai *and Identity in Anatolia and Beyond* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); K.M.D. Dunbabin, "*Ut Graeco more biberetur*: Greeks and Romans on the Dining Couch" in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (ASMA 1; ed. I. Nielsen and H.S. Nielsen; Oxford: Aarhus University Press, 1998): 81-101; K.M. Lynch, "More Thoughts on the Space of the Symposium" in *Building Communities: House, Settlement and Society in the Aegean and Beyond. Proceedings of a Conference held at Cardiff University 17-21 April 2001* (ed. R. Westgate, N. Fisher and J. Whitely; London: British School at Athens, 2007), 243-250.

[81] E.g., J.H. D'Arms, "The Roman *Convivium* and the Idea of Equality," in *In Vino Veritas* (ed. O. Murray and M. Tecusan; London: British School at Rome, 1995), 308-320; W.J. Henderson, "Aspects of the Ancient Greek Symposion" *Akroterion* 45 (2000): 6-26; P. von der Mühll, "Das griechische Symposion" in *Ausgewählte kleine* Schriften (SBA 12; ed. P. von der Mühll and B. Wyss; Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1975), 483-505; A.J. Nijboer, "Banquet, Marzeah, Symposion and Symposium during the Iron Age: Disparity and Mimicry," in *Regionalism and Globalism in Antiquity: Exploring Their Limits* (ed. F. de Angelis; Colloquia Antiqua 7; Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 95-126; A. Rabinowitz, "Drinking from the Same Cup: Sparta and Late Archaic Commensality," in *Sparta: Comparative Approaches* (ed. S. Hodkinson; Oxford: The Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 113-192; P. Schmitt-Pantel, "Banquet et cité grecque [Quelques questions suscitées par les recherches récentes]" *Antiquité* 97.1 (1985): 135-158; *idem*, *La cité au banquet, histoire des repas publics dans les cités grecques* (CEFR 157; 2nd ed.; Paris: Roma École française de Rome, 2011).

[82] M.B. Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: Bodies, Values, and Status* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); L.E. Rossi, "Il simposio greco arcaico e classico come spettacolo a se stesso," in *Spettacoli conviviali dall' antichità classica alle corti italiane del '400. Atti del VII Convegno di Studio* (ed.

between public and private events,[83] or secular and religious ones,[84] more recent scholarship proposes that such precise demarcations are almost impossible to make. Dennis E. Smith,[85] as well as Matthias Klinghardt,[86] in light of the work of scholars such as Pauline Schmitt-Pantel,[87] propose that instead of attempting to distinguish too severely between specific sympotic types, it is better to acknowledge that there was "a common meal tradition throughout the Greco-Roman Mediterranean that lay at the basis of all active meals of the Greco-Roman era, whether they be gentile, Jewish, or Christian."[88] So while there was clearly a "diversity in venues (as well as a) diversity in occasions"[89] for which the symposium was connected, there are also common themes among the variations. For the purposes of this study, it is not possible to address banqueting and sympotic culture in all its different manifestations and so we have resolved upon limiting our investigation to those "recurring features"[90] of sympotic culture in Greco-Roman

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Centro di studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale; Viterbo: Agnesotti, 1983), 41-50; T.J. Smith, "Dancing Spaces and Dining Places: Archaic Komasts at the Symposion," in *Periplous: Papers on Classical Art and Archaeology Presented to Sir John Boardman* (ed. G.R. Tsetskhhladze, A.J.N.W. Prag, and A.M. Snodgrass; London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 309-319.

[83] For more on public versus private banquets, see K.M.D. Dunbabin and W.J. Slater, "Roman Dining," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (ed. M. Peachin; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 455-458.

[84] Smith suggests that one of the reasons early studies of the symposium differentiated between secular and religious was because of the work of Emile Durkheim whose assessment of the sociology of religion clearly differentiated between these apparently disparate realms (*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* [London: Allen and Unwin, 1976] as cited in Smith, *From Eucharist*, 7, 297 n. 10). For additional arguments against the sacred/profane dichotomy, see P. Schmitt-Pantel, "Collective Activities and the Political in the Greek City," in *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander* (ed. O. Murray and S. Price; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 200; *idem*, "Sacrificial Meal and Symposion: Two Models of Civic Institutions in the Archaic City?," in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion* (ed. O. Murray; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 14-33. For more on the 'religious' context of the symposium, see F. Hobden, "Enter the Divine: Sympotic Performance and Religious Experience" in *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion: Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World* (vol. 8; ed. A.P.M.H Lardinois, J.H. Blok, and M.G.M. van der Poel; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 37-57.

[85] E.g., Dunbabin who states "boundaries between public and private (banquets) were fluid" (*Roman Banquet*, 36).

[86] M. Klinghardt, "A Typology of the Communal Meal," in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (ed. D.E. Smith and H. Taussig; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 9-22.

[87] Schmitt-Pantel, "Sacrificial Meal and Symposion."

[88] H. Taussig, "Introduction," in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (ed. D.E. Smith and H. Taussig; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1. Taussig refers to this as the "Smith-Klinghardt Meal paradigm" (Taussig, "Introduction," 1); cf. Smith, *From Symposium*; M. Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft: Soziologie und Liturgie Frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* (TANZ 13; Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1996).

[89] Hobden, Symposion *in Ancient Greek Society*, 10.

[90] König, *Saints and Symposiasts*, 6.

antiquity and especially those that impact on our investigation of the parable of banquet in Luke 14:15-24.

§ 5.5.1 Introduction to Banqueting and Symposia

While the act of eating is an essential daily requirement, the practices and traditions associated with eating are often imbued with social and cultural meaning. Not only do meals assist with creating certain cultural expectations and norms but they also serve to maintain them. For this reason, John H. D'Arms in his discussions on Greco-Roman dining practices considers that:

> Far from being frivolous or trivial, the food habits of any society are fundamental aspects of culture, and so are socially expressive: they can be guides to social proximity and social distance; to ritual fraternity and to status; to political superiority and subordination."[91]

In this sense, "food codes embody and replicate social codes":[92] namely, that a society's social values, expectations, and boundaries are all represented through the institution of meals.[93] Far from simply supplying nourishment, meals are an expression of a society's views on acceptable behaviour, gender roles, socio-economic status, and more.

Documentary evidence from antiquity indicates that meal practices in the ancient Mediterranean world were twofold events. The first course of the meal was for eating and was generally referred to as the δεῖπνον (Latin: *cena*). The meal proper was thus followed by the drinking party or symposium (συμπόσιον; Latin: *convivium*).[94] At the conclusion of the eating course, the clearing away of plates or the entry of entertainers would thus mark the transition into the second course. Despite the separation of the courses both semantically and temporally, as will be addressed in more detail below, the term symposium, and the imagery associated with it, were used synecdochically to represent the

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[91] J.H. D'Arms, "Control, Companionship and Clientela: Some Social Functions of the Roman Communal Meal," *EMC* 28 (1984): 327.

[92] J.H. Elliott, "Household and Meals vs. Temple Purity Replication Patterns in Luke-Acts," *BTB* 21.3 (1991): 103. For a more detailed analysis of this, see Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings*, *passim*.

[93] P. Schmitt-Pantel refers to banqueting as a "civic institution" ("Collective Activities and the Political in the Greek City," 201).

[94] E.g., Klinghardt, "Typology," 10. Although it is worth noting the proposals of Roller, and in particular of Dunbabin, who challenge the view that the Roman *cena/convivium* is equivalent to the Greek *deipnon/symposion* (Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, *passim* and Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome*, *passim*).

whole combined event, that is, both the meal proper and the subsequent drinking party.[95] Unless it is stated to the contrary, references throughout this chapter to banqueting or symposia are used to describe both portions of the two-fold meal event.

Scholars suggest that the practice of symposium in ancient Greece dates back to at least the seventh century B.C.E.[96] when "the Greeks changed from the normal practice of sitting at table to the far more distinctive practice of reclining on couches."[97] It is apparent that already by the fifth century B.C.E., architecture had come to reflect the new model of eating with both public and domestic venues including rooms solely for symposia.[98] This began with the Greeks and, as with many aspects of the symposium, the practice spread to the Romans[99] and was firmly set in Roman banqueting culture by the second century B.C.E.[100] Evidence also suggests that while the symposium was originally limited to the wealthy and elite in the Greek world, the cultural phenomenon of reclining at meals was eventually embraced by those of the lower classes also. Fiona Hobden contends that this is evidenced in the discovery of specially-built dining spaces as well as other specific sympotic paraphernalia among the remains of houses in Athens and other locations belonging to those of the lower classes.[101] This proposal also finds credence in Plutarch's *Table Talk* whereby he comments that "after the meal even ordinary and uneducated people permit their thoughts to wander to those other pleasures which are far-removed from the concerns of the body."[102]

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[95] E.g., Smith tends to use the word "banquet" also to refer to the combined two-part meal, "Greco-Roman Banquet as Social Institution," 24.

[96] Oswyn Murray suggests this was possibly as early as the eighth century B.C.E. ("Sympotic History," 6). Albert J. Nijboer proposes that it began in the seventh century B.C.E. ("Banquet, *Marzeah*," 102).

[97] O. Murray, "Sympotic History," in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion* (ed. O. Murray; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 6; cf. Matthias Klinghardt suggests that "Reclining during meals, originally a privilege of nobility, became an expression of civic freedom and equality among free men, and quickly spread vertically through society" ("Typology," 9).

[98] Hobden, Symposion *in Ancient Greek Society*, 9. The name *andron* to describe the room dedicated to banqueting and symposia originates with Herodotus' reference to Polycrates of Samos and the poet Anacreon reclining together in the 'men's room' (Hdt. 3.121 as noted by Hobden, Symposion *in Ancient Greek Society*, 9).

[99] J.F. Donahue, *The Roman Community at Table during the Principate* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 43.

[100] Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 18.

[101] *Symposion*, 12; cf. Klinghardt "Typology," 9.

[102] Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 673a (Clement & Hoffleit, LCL).

These specialised dining rooms or *andrones* (ἀνδρῶν) are reflected in both archaeology and iconography from antiquity. Some of the best archaeological examples have been unearthed in the remains of domestic dwellings in Pompeii (see figs. 5.1 and 5.2) and Herculaneum[103] as well as in Olynthus,[104] along with larger *andrones* in public spaces unearthed at sites such as the Asclepian sanctuary at Corinth.[105] In each case, "the location for the couches is indicated by a slightly raised platform area along the wall."[106] These couches, called *kline* (κλίνη; Latin: *lectus*), were low-lying couches upon which the diner would recline on their left side, propped on their elbow, for the duration of the meal and into the subsequent symposium. *Kline* were sometimes built in stone directly into the *andron* (see figs. 5.1 and 5.2) or could also be made of timber to be more portable (see fig. 5.3).[107] In either case, the most common formation was to place the *kline* into the shape of a letter Π, stationed around a central table.[108] Small domestic *andrones* may have only housed three couches, but generally *andrones* were built to accommodate seven or eleven couches around the outside walls.[109] As the size of the dining space increased, archaeological and literary evidence suggests that instead of creating one large arrangement, the rooms were "designed in such a way that dining couches could be arranged in clusters of small groups."[110] This was done in order to maintain the intimacy and conviviality generally associated with the symposium.[111]

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[103] P.M. Allison, "Domestic Spaces and Activities," in *The World of Pompeii* (ed. J.J. Dobbins and P.W. Foss; New York: Routledge, 2007), 269-278.

[104] Hobden, Symposion *in Ancient Greek Society*, 12.

[105] Hobden, Symposion *in Ancient Greek Society*, 12.

[106] D.E. Smith, "Hospitality, the House Church and Early Christian Identity," in *Mahl und Religiöse Identität im Frühen Christentum/Meals and Religious Identity in Early Christianity* (ed. M. Klinghardt and H. Taussig; Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2012), 103-118.

[107] P.M. Allison, *Pompeian Households: An Analysis of the Material Culture* (Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California, 2004), 131.

[108] Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 38.

[109] Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 38.

[110] Smith, *From Symposium*, 25. Smith cites the example of the Corinthian Asclepieion which features "three dining rooms side-by-side, each with eleven couches constructed from stone" (Smith, "Hospitality," 104). For more on dining spaces, see B. Bergquist, "Sympotic Space: A Functional Aspect of Greek Dining Rooms" in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the* Symposion (ed. O. Murray; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 37-65.

[111] Plutarch notes that a large dining space will be divided into smaller *triclinia* because if a group is too large it will naturally subdivide and spoil the feeling of conviviality (*Quaest conv.* 5.5).

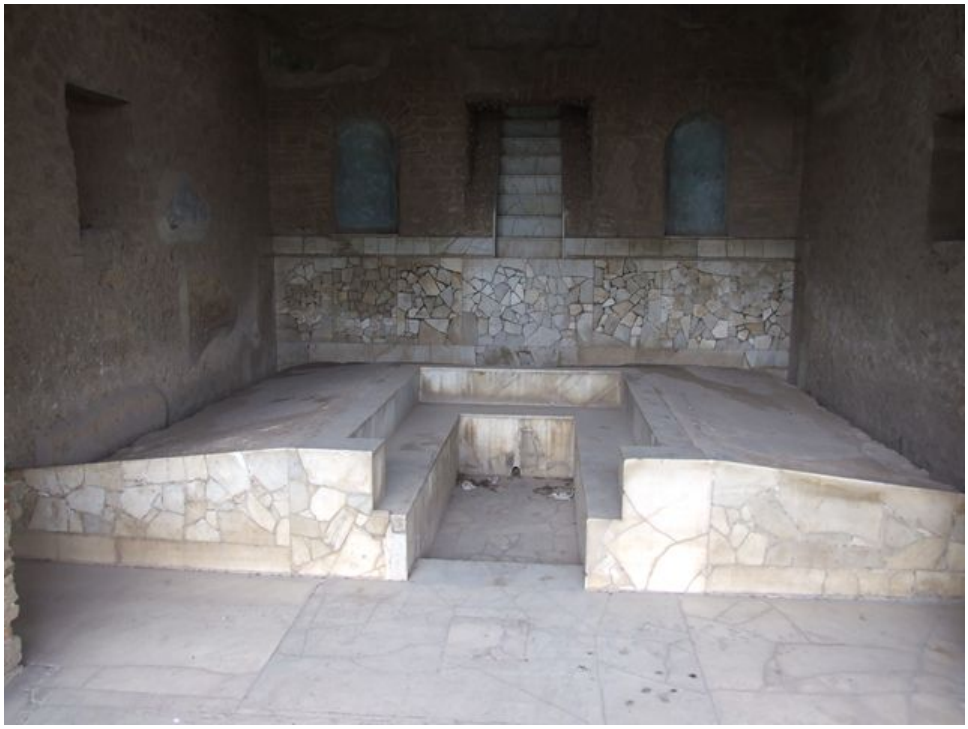

Fig. 5.1 Summer *triclinium*
1st century B.C.E.
House of Julia Felix, Pompeii
Photo by ©Jackie and Bob Dunn. Used with permission.

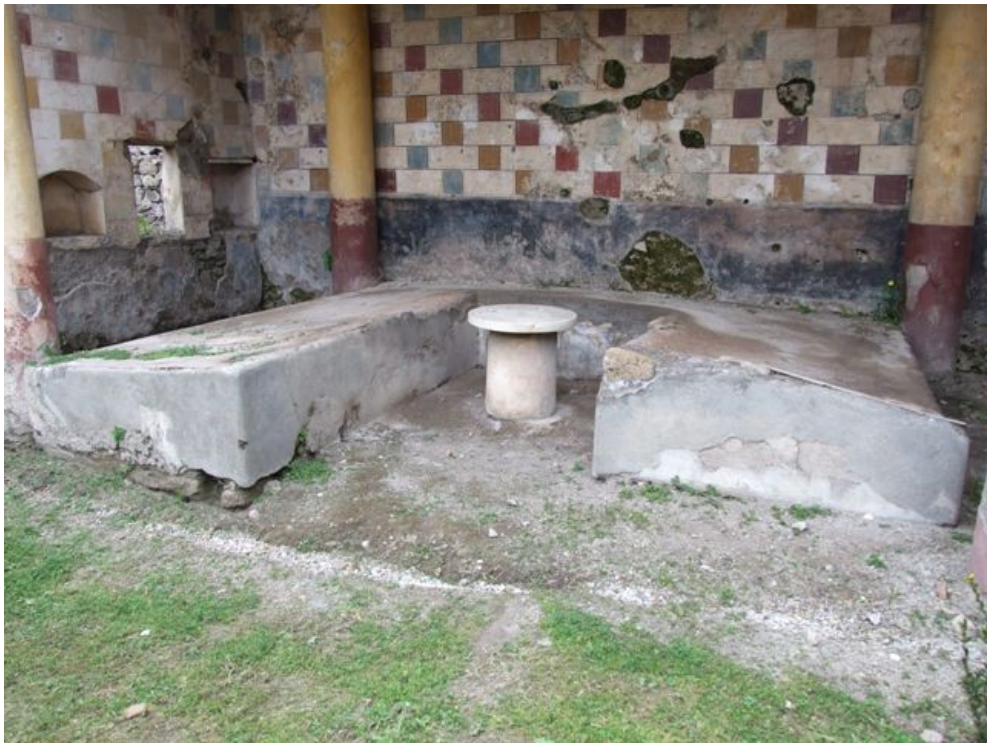

Fig. 5.2 Summer *triclinium*
2nd century B.C.E.
House of Aulus Trebius Valens, Pompeii
Photo by ©Jackie and Bob Dunn. Used with permission.

This Π-shaped formation was known as a *triclinium* (τρικλίνιον),[112] the purpose of which was to reflect the egalitarian ideals of the symposium. The *triclinium* formation ensured each guest had equal access to food, entertainment, and conversation and that no one diner was in a position of greater prominence than the others. François Lissarrague says of the *triclinium*

> everyone (was) positioned so as to see all the others and to be on the same level as his companions, within range of sight and speech, so that conversation may flow easily. The couches (were) set up along the walls (so that) nothing...(took) place behind the drinkers; the whole visual space (was) constructed to make sightlines converge and to ensure reciprocity.[113]

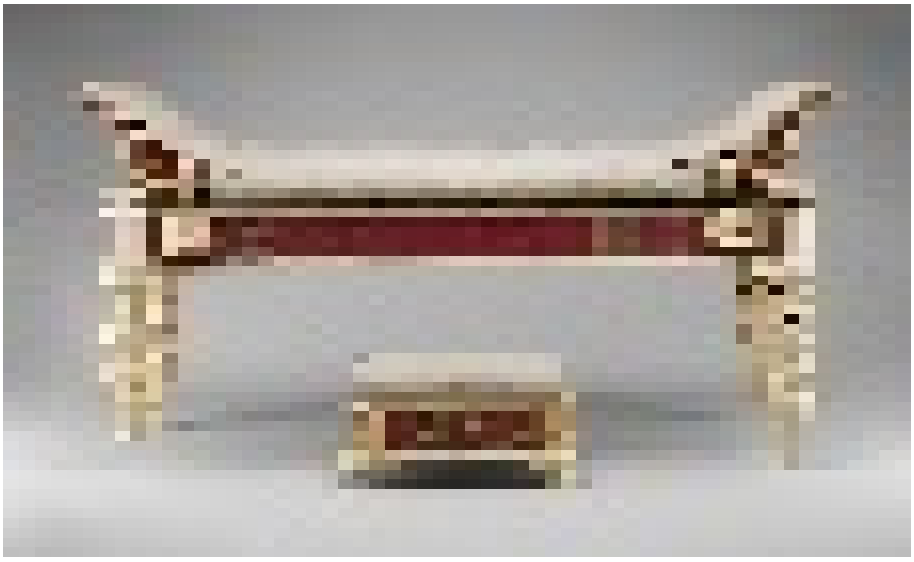

Fig. 5.3 Roman Couch (*lectus*) and footstool
with bone carvings and glass inlays
1st - 2nd century C.E.
New York Metropolitan Museum

Despite differences in social status that may have existed beyond the confines of the symposium, at table, those differences were believed to be overlooked with each symposiast thus considered equal. One way this equality was expressed was through the use of a communal wine krater that resided in the middle of the room (see fig. 5.4).[114]

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[112] By the fourth century C.E., the most common arrangement had developed from the *triclinium* to the *stibadium* which was semi-circluar seating arrangement (Smith, "Hospitality," 105). See fig. 5.8.

[113] Lissarrague, *Aesthetics*, 19. "The symposion is often actually and metaphorically a political occasion; in the *Banquet of the Seven Sages* (*Septem Sapientum Convivium*) Mnesiphilos of Athens, friend and admirer of Solon, observes: 'In my opinion, Periander, conversation, like wine, should not follow the rules of plutocracy or aristocracy; rather, like democracy, it should be equally shared among all and belong to them in common'" (Lissarrague, *Aesthetics*, 46).

[114] A krater was an earthen vessel designed for the mixing of wine and water, (see fig. 5.4). The Greeks and Romans believed that it was only barbarians that drank their wine neat/unmixed. For this reason, Athenaeus reports that when Spartans want to drink stronger wine they ask for the Symposiarch to "make it Scythian" (ἐπισκύθισον) associating such unacceptable behaviour with foreigners (Athen., *Deip.* 10.427c-d;

From the krater, wine was shared by the symposiarch "to the right,"[115] ensuring that each symposiast shared equally in the wine just as they all shared in other forms of sympotic conviviality.[116] In this way, the drinking of wine was seen as a "communal act" as a means of "establish(ing) a setting of shared pleasure."[117] As a vessel shared by all the drinkers, the krater became an emblematic symbol of the symposium, representing the ideals of conviviality, shared pleasure, and equality.[118]

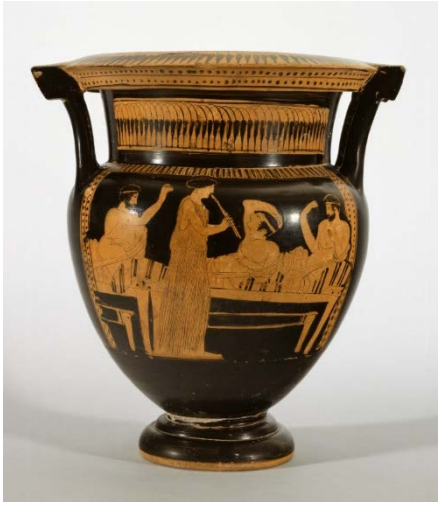

Fig. 5.4 Red-figure column Krater,
attributed to the Naples painter
c. 440 B.C.E.
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

Just as the symposiasts shared wine, they likewise shared in other aspects of the festivities such as in one's contribution to the overall commensality and ambience of the event.[119] Rather than private conversation, each symposiast was expected to contribute toward the collective conversation.[120] Likewise, each symposiast was also called upon to contribute towards the evening's entertainment with the recitation of poetry or participation in

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trans. Olson). Likewise, Athenaeus also quotes a long passage from Poseidonius' *Histories* where the Stoic philosopher presents the banqueting practices of the Celts. Again, the 'otherness' of the Celts is emphasised through their drinking of unmixed wine and their failure to separate their evening into clearly differentiated eating and drinking sessions (*Deipn.* 151e-152d).

[115] E.g., Plato, *Symp.* 177d, 214b-c. It is the act of passing wine "to the right" that Marek Węcowski considers to be one of the defining features of the symposium ("Towards a Definition of the Symposion," in *Εὐεργεσίας Χάριν: Studies Presented to Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka by Their Disciples* (ed. T. Derda, J. Urbankik, and M. Węcowski; JJPSup 1; Warsaw: Sumptibus Auctorum, 2002), 337-361.

[116] *Quaest. conv.* 4.660 (Clement & Hoffliet, LCL); cf. Klinghardt "Typology," 13.

[117] Lissarrague, *Aesthetics*, 19.

[118] Lissarrague, "Around the *Krater*," 197.

[119] Plutarch says "just as the wine must be common to all, so too the conversation must be one in which all will share" (*Quest. conv.* 614e; Clement & Hoffliet, LCL).

[120] Klinghardt, "Typology," 13.

sympotic games. The sympotic literature thus expresses "a clear expectation that all participants would contribute their share to the common entertainment or learning: Each individual 'input' is part of the collective gift that everybody 'throws together' and shares."[121] The ideals of the symposium were thus encapsulated in three main tenets: *koinōnia*, friendship, and pleasure.[122]

However, despite presenting the symposium as a place of egalitarian ideals, scholars posit that such equality could only have been tenuous at best. While the *triclinium* was depicted as an emblem of equality, associated with the *trinclinium* was also a ranking system. Each position at table was assigned a place and each person present at the meal immediately knew their rank in relation to the other guests at table by where they were directed to sit.[123] The issue of rank was of such importance that it features often in the sympotic literature.[124]

John D'Arms, in addressing Roman banqueting conventions, contends that while many of the ancient writers asserted the egalitarian ideals of the symposium, ultimately this was "an idealized view of social conditions in Roman dining rooms."[125] D'Arms suggests that on closer inspection, a number of the ancient writers intimate disparity in the form of unequal portion sizes[126] as well as hosts ensuring those of lower status were restricted to the seats of lowest rank at table.[127] D'Arms notes also that while Martial and Statius describe the symposia of Domitian as being marked by social diversity and equality, Suetonius' observations are not so favourable. Suetonius records that at a large feast to celebrate the festival of the *Septimontium*, Domitian had large baskets of choice fare distributed to the senators and *equites*, while smaller and "presumably more socially

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[121] Klinghardt, "Typology," 13.
[122] For more on this, see Smith, *From Symposium*, 54-55.
[123] Cf. Smith, *From Symposium*, 33-34.
[124] Plato, *Symp.* 177d-e; Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 616f-617e; Xen. *Symp.* 1.8.
[125] D'Arms, "Roman Convivium," 314.
[126] D'Arms, "Roman Convivium," 318; Donahue, *Roman Community*, 50. D'Arms thus compares this issue with that of the Lord's Supper in Corinth in Paul's writings and the unequal distribution of food that was occurring there (D'Arms, "Roman Convivium," 318; cf. 1 Cor.11:23-26).
[127] D'Arms, "Control, Companionship and Clientela," 346.

appropriate ones" were distributed to the *plebs*.[128] In this sense, the commensality of the symposium only reinforced and "confirmed the membership of solidarity of the group."[129]

One such example is that of one Thales present at Plutarch's *Symposium* who advocates that a diner should be willing to enter into convivial conversation with the person to their left and right at table irrespective of their social status.[130] Yet, it is possible that Thales' recommendation was rooted in a precedent of precisely the opposite.[131] Indeed, Thales' commendations for equality in this way must be read in light of his insistence that it was wise to request the names of other attendees at a symposium prior to accepting the invitation oneself. It was not possible, D'Arms notes, that one should "trust to luck with regard to those one is expected to associate with at table" as this was simply "not a sign of a man with sense."[132] While the sympotic writers maintained that symposia were characterised by an egalitarian comradery, in reality this equality was not extended beyond those of similar social status. This can be observed in descriptions of public feasts, for example, where symposiasts were faced with reclining among a far more diverse representation of the populace than one would choose to invite to his own banquet.[133] In this setting, equality was not revered but rather the disparity between the social status of each of the symposiasts was seen to compromise the convivial ambience as well as the balance and order normally associated with symposia. This is apparent in an observation of the younger Seneca who questions how the guest at a civic feast can receive the appropriate acknowledgement and honour when there are no clear divisions in status among the guests.[134] What is of greatest concern to Seneca, according to Matthew B. Roller, is that "any good or service distributed promiscuously to many people without distinction or discrimination cannot bind its recipients, and thereby sort them into relationships of greater or lesser obligation, of higher or lower status, relative to the giver."[135]

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[128] D'Arms, "Roman Convivium," 309, cf. Suet., *Dom.* 5.
[129] Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 128.
[130] Plut., *Sept. sap. conv.* 148a.
[131] Cf. D'Arms, "Roman Convivium," 316.
[132] D'Arms, "Roman Convivium," 316 re: Plut., *Sept. sap. conv.* 148a.
[133] Sen. *Ben.* 1.14.1.
[134] Sen. *Ben.* 1.14.1.
[135] Roller, *Dining Posture*, 93.

Thus, the desire for equality, while promoted as an important element of symposia, was an equality sought and expressed only within the stringent limitations of one's own social order. It was only in the maintenance of this social order in the symposium that *koinōnia* could be enjoyed by the symposiasts. In this respect, symposia reflected "complex, hierarchical relationship(s) between host and guests (which were) constructed through the offering and acceptance of invitations, food, entertainment, conversation, and the like."[136] As such, symposia actually represented a social contract, a "convivial exchange...in the realm of 'gift exchange,' which creates social obligations among the transactors."[137] It was only those who could financially and socially afford to enter into such a social contract could expect to receive invitations for most symposia. The only other opportunity came through a potential guest having skills or talents they were willing to perform in exchange for inclusion in the symposium. This will be explored in more detail below.

§ 5.5.2 Sympotic Literature

The earliest sympotic literary sources are the *Symposia* of Plato and Xenophon dated to the fourth century B.C.E., however, the genre continued to be produced for many centuries with Plutarch and Philo's works on symposia serving as contemporary examples of the genre in the New Testament era.[138] Dennis E. Smith suggests that the primary emphasis of the sympotic literature was "on the description of banquets, especially philosophical banquets, utilising a traditional format and traditional themes, with an emphasis placed on the philosophical discourse that took place during the drinking party."[139] The popularity of symposia as a topos in Greco-Roman literature is evidenced through its appearance in literature outside of the specialised sympotic literature. In particular, symposia are frequently attested in the works of the Roman satirists such as Horace and Petronius who "utilize(d) the banquet scene as a favorite device for illustrating the foibles of society."[140]

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[136] Roller, *Dining Posture*, 93.
[137] Roller, *Dining Posture*, 93.
[138] E.g., Plut. *Quaest. conv.*; Philo, *Cont.* 57-64.
[139] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 615.
[140] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 616.

However, while these literary sources are detailed in their descriptions of sympotic practice, there are challenges in the way we interpret these texts. In reading the sympotic literature, it can be difficult to differentiate between "social reality and literary idealization."[141] Even those events which are described as being genuine historical accounts must be viewed with care and read as part of the broader sympotic genre. Plutarch, for example, writes his *Septem Sapientum Convivium* from the perspective of an eye-witness while at the same time recording the presence of Socrates who had lived centuries before Plutarch's time.[142] Plutarch's recollections indicate that the sympotic literature served a dual purpose: while on one hand the sympotic literature acted as an historical record of 'real' symposia, at the same time, the literature also shaped sympotic practice by representing an idealised form of symposia to which people should strive to achieve. This tension can again be seen in Plutarch's sympotic writings whereby he claims to be recalling events that took place at actual meals while at the same time acknowledging his awareness of his own contributions to the sympotic genre.[143] Thus Plutarch writes:

> ...to consign to utter oblivion all that occurs at a drinking party...has the most famous philosophers to bear witness against it – Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Speusippus, Epicurus, Prytanis, Heironymus, and Dio of the Academy, who all considered the recording of conversations held at table a task worth some effort.[144]

Dennis E. Smith suggests that some scholars have been critical of using the term "banquet" to refer to the bipartite meal tradition as it places too much emphasis on the "upper-class luxury" of the event and implies all symposia were symbolised by excess.[145] Smith, however, argues that the emphasis on the extravagance of symposia is actually significant because "no matter what the social class of the group that was dining at such a meal, what they aspired to was the symbolism of this special meal as an event of leisure and luxury."[146]

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[141] Smith, *From Symposium*, 6.

[142] 5th-4th century B.C.E.

[143] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 615.

[144] *Quaest. conv.* 612d-e (Clement & Hoffleit, LCL).

[145] D.E. Smith, "The Greco-Roman Banquet as a Social Institution," in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (ed. D.E. Smith and H. Taussig; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 23, 33.

[146] Smith, "Greco-Roman Banquet," 23, 33 n. 3 speaking in particular of the criticism of Dunbabin in *Roman Banquet*, *passim*.

Josef Martin in his 1931 work *Symposion, die Geschichte einer literarischen Form* traced the development of the symposium as a distinct literary genre.[147] Included as part of his discussion are a number of themes and characters he surmises make frequent appearances throughout the various sympotic texts. Indeed, it is the presence of these specific topoi that indicate a text is considered part of the sympotic genre. Some of these motifs include disputations and quarrels, and especially those which arise from the issue of seating arrangements, and discussions regarding the transition from the banquet to symposium proper[148] as well as numerous other sympotic conventions. Another common element of the symposium is that which Martin labelled *fait divers* which are those events which give pretext for the initiation of a particular topic of conversation.[149] An example of this can be in Trilmachio's banquet described by Petronius whereby the removal of a platter of food which had been arranged by the signs of the zodiac leads into a discussion on astrology.[150]

In addition to a range of standard sympotic topoi, Martin also proposed a number of stock characters who make regular appearances in the sympotic literature. Included among these characters were the host, the merry-maker, the doctor, the late guest, the weeper, the guest who goes home sick, the heavy drinker, and a pair of lovers.[151] One other additional and significant stock character important for this study is that of the *akletos* (ἄκλητος), the uninvited guest. On occasion, the *akletoi* are depicted as sharing the same ideologies and respect for sympotic conventions as others present at meals, however, in most instances are presented as outsiders unfamiliar with proper symposium etiquette.[152] As outsiders, the behaviour of the *akletoi* is usually juxtaposed with that of the invited guests thus emphasising and reinforcing the standards of behaviour expected of the 'insiders' present at the meal. The idea of outsiders unwilling or unable to conform to correct banqueting etiquette merely serves to emphasise the marked distinction between the invited and uninvited guests and why it is necessary to reinforce such divisions.[153] This theme is

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[147] Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 1931.

[148] Martin, *Symposion*, 34-36.

[149] For a summary of *fait divers*, see Steele, "Luke 11:37-54," 381.

[150] Petronius, *Sat.* 35.1.

[151] Martin, *Symposion*, 33-115; cf. Delobel, "L'onction," 459; Smith, *From Symposium*, 49-50; Steele, "Luke 11:37-54," 380-381.

[152] E.g., B. Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*: The *Akletoi* in the Archaic Period," in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the* Symposion (ed. O. Murray; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 186.

[153] E.g., Węcowski, *Rise of the Greek Aristocratic Banquet*, 35.

explored in numerous Greco-Roman satires. Aristophanes, for example, tells the tale of Philokleon at one particular symposium who is carefully instructed regarding suitable sympotic behaviour only to act in precisely the opposite manner.[154] Not only does Philokleon consume too much wine, but as a consequence, he insults each of the guests and draws attention to himself through the narration of convoluted and meaningless stories.

The first presentation of a literary character fulfilling the role of an *akletos* is that of Odysseus. Homer's narrative depicts Odysseus in role of an ugly, old beggar who is forced to request food from a feast hosted by his swineherd Eumaeus.[155] This association between the *akletos* and the desire for food is also present in Athenaeus' *Symposium.* Here Athenaeus recalls a conversation between the guests regarding the use of the word κνισοκόλαξ ("fat-licker"). Citing a line of poetry from Asius which describes a *knisokolax*, Myrtilus declares:

> Lame (χωλός), tattooed, extremely old, no different from a beggar,
> a *knisokolax* came, when Meles was celebrating his wedding;
> he was uninvited (ἄκλητος) but wanted some broth. And he stood
> in their midst like a hero risen from the muck.[156]

The inappropriate behaviour of *akletoi* is attested throughout numerous literary sources. In *The Deipnosophiastae*, Athenaeus recites a fragment of text by Archilochus the poet which refers to one Pericles who was known for "bursting into drinking parties uninvited" ("...ὡς ἀκλήτου ἐπεισπαίοντος εἰς τὰ συμπόσια").[157] According to Archilochus' poem, Pericles not only "consume(d) a large quantity of unmixed wine" but that he "did not contribute to the cost" and that his "belly led astray (his) mind and wits to shamelessness."[158]

The poor behaviour of the *akletoi* is representative of the demarcation that exists in the sympotic literature between insiders and outsiders. Deviancy is expressed in terms of

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[154] *Wasps* 1122-1537.
[155] *Od.* 13.430ff.
[156] Athen., *Symp.* 3.125e (Olson, LCL).
[157] Athen., *Deipn.* 1.7f (Olson, LCL).
[158] Athen., *Deipn.* 1.8b (Olson, LCL). Plato describes three groups of uninvited guests. Firstly, he refers to those uninvited guests who are brought by another (*Symp.* 174e); second, those who politely ask to join the symposium (*Symp.* 212e-213a); third, those he refers to as *akletoi* are those that sneak in and cause havoc among the legitimate symposiasts (*Symp.* 223b).

opposition to the ideals of the symposium; drinking unmixed wine, the absence of order and turn-taking, drunkenness, one-on-one conversations or games which drew the attention from the communal nature of the symposium, lack of familiarity with seating conventions, and arriving at the meal late or uninvited were all indications of the ethnic or social outsider.[159] Many of these elements can be seen in Plato's *Symposium* through the actions of Alcibiades who arrives late and uninvited and interrupts the sympotic revelry by nominating himself symposiarch.[160] Not only does Alcibiades partake of unmixed wine, but he does so from the psykter[161] rather than from the wine krater,[162] as well as completely disregarding the process of drinking "to the right."[163] In addition, Alcibiades challenges Socrates to a one-on-one drinking bout thus ignoring the communal conversation usually upheld at such meals.[164] Through his aberrant behaviour, Alcibiades undermines the egalitarian nature of symposia. In this way, the figure of the *akletos* thus "explores the boundaries between the participant/non-participant and insider/outsider."[165] The behaviour of an *akletos* or any outsider is thus employed as a kind of "antitype,"[166] as a foil for the behaviour of the real symposiasts. Ultimately, it is precisely this deviant behaviour which acts to reinforce what is considered appropriate and acceptable sympotic behaviour.[167] Thus, the *akletos* will

> firstly...display his ugliness, weakness, voracity, or whatever has been occasioned by chance and unintentionality, thus making the invited guests laugh as they feel their superiority. Secondly, the physical and moral inferiority of the *akletos* is revealed consciously and on purpose: the *akletos*, as it were, *performs himself*.[168]

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[159] Among the literary sources on sympotic practices, stories of the complete erosion of decorum are often associated with "ethnographic stereotypes of the 'other' in order to present a frightening picture of the dangerous or alien anti-association" (P.A. Harland, "Banqueting Values in the Associations: Rhetoric and Reality," in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (ed. D.E. Smith and H.E. Taussig; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 74; cf. Schmitt-Pantel, *La cité au banquet*, 435-438.

[160] Plato, *Symp.* 213e.

[161] "The psykter served as a wine cooler: the wine-and-water mixture was placed inside the psykter, and the psykter was placed inside a bowl, usually a krater, filled with ice or cold water" (K.M. Lynch, *The Symposium in Context: Pottery from a Late Archaic House Near the Athenian Agora* [Hesperia Supplement 46; Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2011], 131).

[162] See esp. Lissarrague, *Aesthetics*, 19-46; *idem*, "Around the Krater," 206-207.

[163] Plato, *Symp.* 214b-c.

[164] Plato, *Symp.* 213e-214e.

[165] L.E. Mawhinney, *Sympotic and Rhapsodic Discourse in the Homeric Epics* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2012), 76.

[166] Harland, "Banqueting Values," 74.

[167] E.g., the example of Philokleon noted above (Arist., *Wasps* 1122-1537).

[168] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 186.

Another important feature of symposia mentioned throughout the literary sources, and one that is in direct connection with the *akletoi*, is that of entertainment. According to the sympotic literature, there was a deliberate transition that took place between the two parts of the formal meal. This transition might be marked by the packing away of tables,[169] a libation,[170] pouring of wine,[171] lighting of lamps,[172] or the entrance of entertainers.[173] It was only with the commencement of the symposium proper that drinking would take place.[174] The significance of this demarcation is represented in satires of Petronius who describes the impropriety of Trimalchio for serving wine during the meal.[175] The beginning of the drinking party also marked the beginning of the evening's entertainment. This is described in Xenophon's *Symposium*:

> When the tables had been removed and the guests had poured a libation and sung a hymn, a man from Syracuse joined them to supply some revelry. He had with him a fine piper girl, a dancing girl—one of those skilled in acrobatic tricks,—and a very handsome boy, who was very good at playing the kithara and at dancing; the Syracusan made money by exhibiting their performance as an amazement.[176]

Entertainment, was one of the most, indeed, Matthias Klinghardt suggests, "*the most* important feature of the symposium."[177] The literary sources attest to various forms of entertainment such as musical performances, dance, or theatrical displays such as *mimus* or *pantomimus*.[178] However, entertainment was an anticipated role of the banquet guests

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[169] Xen., *Symp.* 2.1.

[170] Athen., *Deipn.* 665b-d; Xen., *Symp.* 2.1; Apul., *Met.* 4.22.

[171] Lucian, *Symp.* 14-15.

[172] Lucian, *Symp.* 14-15.

[173] Ach. Tat., *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.5.4.

[174] E.g., Smith, "Greco-Roman Banquet," 24. However, Smith notes that while this is the general consensus of "most classic scholars down to the present," this view has recently been challenged by scholars such as Katherine M.D. Dunbabin and Matthew B. Roller who do not consider the Roman convivium as directly representative of the Greek symposium. Dunbabin and Roller instead propose that unlike the Greeks who did strictly divide between the courses that this was not the case with Roman meal practices. Smith, however, counters the evidence of Dunbabin and Roller that indicate the drinking of wine throughout both courses as "exceptions" rather than a reflection of general practice. Smith contends that the image of the Greek banquet/symposium model is the one replicated throughout the first century including in the NT material (Smith, "Greco-Roman Banquet," 24-25; Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl*, *passim;* contra Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 21; Roller, *Dining Posture*, 181). For example, Klinghardt proposes that the division of the banquet/symposium into the eating and drinking portions forms the basis of the imagery of the Lord's Supper (bread and wine; Klinghardt, "Typology," 10).

[175] Petronius, *Sat.* 34.

[176] Xen., *Symp.* 2.1 (Marchant & Todd, LCL).

[177] Klinghardt, "Typology," 12-13. Italics mine.

[178] Xen. *Symp.* 9.2-7; Pliny, *Ep.* 9.17. Plutarch speaks of entertainers at table as including mime-actors and impersonators" (*Sympotic Questions* 5 proem = *Moralia* 673B). On sympotic entertainment in general, see Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 185-195; C.P. Jones, "Dinner Theatre" in *Dining in a Classical*

also. The participation of the guests may have taken the form of drinking games (including the well-known *kottabos*; see fig. 5.5),[179] the singing of *skolia* (drinking songs),[180] the recitation of poetry, as well as 'table-talk,' which included lively discussion and banter, as well as philosophical discussions.[181] Common among the themes of sympotic discussions were elements of etiquette and behaviour associated with symposia.[182] Plutarch, in his *Table Talk*, includes a discussion that allegedly took place at a symposium hosted by his brother Timon regarding seating allocation. On this occasion the discussion is focused on whether guests should be free to choose their own places at table. The discussion is introduced by an anecdotal account of Timon's symposium whereby he decided to break with tradition and allow guests to recline wherever they chose. Unfortunately, when a foreigner arrived late to the symposium and wished to be seated, on looking around the room "he refused to enter...(because) he saw no place left worthy of him."[183] Disputations or controversies such as this were also another standard motif in the sympotic literature.[184]

Pliny the Younger, in an epistle addressed to Julius Genitor, writes concerning his friend's offence about the entertainment he witnessed at a recent dinner party (*cena*). Among the evening's entertainment to which Genitor has taken offence were "*scurrae cinaedi moriones mensis inerrabant*" ("mimes, and clowns and the male 'dancers' going the round of the tables").[185] While Pliny attests he likewise finds "nothing novel or amusing" in such festivities, he implores Genitor to be "tolerant of other people's pleasures so as to win indulgence for our own."[186]

Context (ed. W.J. Slater; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 190; Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl*, 111-129.

[179] For a detailed description of the game, see B.A. Sparkes, "Kottabos: An Athenian After-Dinner Game," *Archaeology* 13 (1960): 202-207.

[180] Arist., *Wasps* 1222-1249.

[181] E.g., Athen. 15.694c-696a; Plut., *Quaest. conv.* 4.660.

[182] E.g., Arist., *Wasps* 1219-1248.

[183] Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 615d (Clement & Hoffleit, LCL).

[184] E.g., Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 138.

[185] Pliny, *Ep.* 9.17.2 (Radice, LCL).

[186] Pliny, *Ep.* 9.17.4 (Radice, LCL).

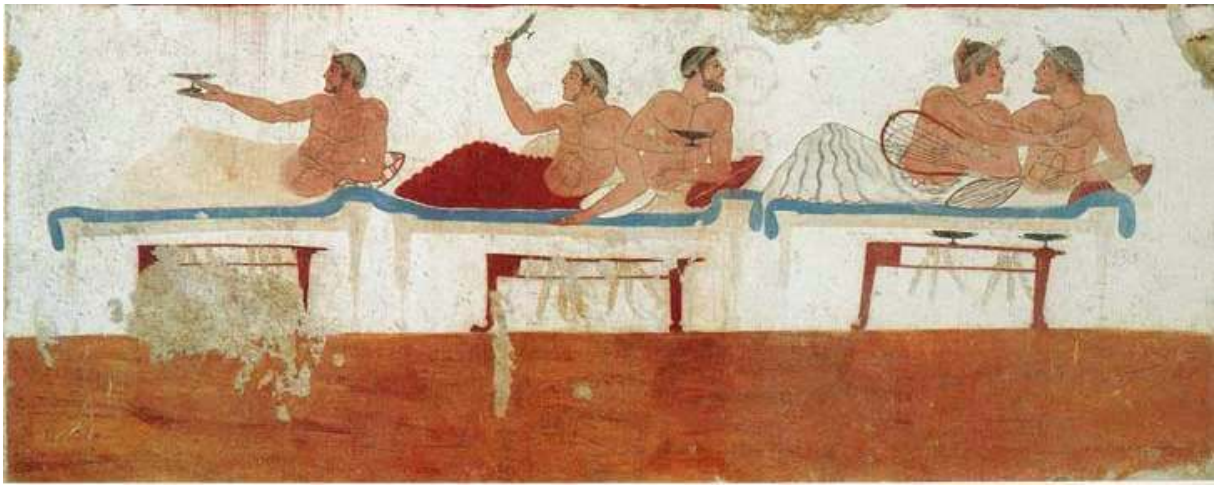

Fig. 5.5 Greek wall painting from the
"Tomb of the Diver" in Paestum, Italy
Detail of symposiasts playing *kottabos*
c. 475 B.C.E.
Paestum Archaeological Museum, Italy

§ 5.5.3 Visual Representations of Symposia

Just as the depictions of symposia in various literary sources helped to promote ideal sympotic behaviour and etiquette, these values were also presented and reinforced in visual representations of symposia also. Bettina Bergmann in her work on ancient spectacle suggests that because the level of literacy was so low in the ancient world that "images played a powerful role" in educating.[187] Bergmann contends that the art and architecture of the ancient world served in three ways. Firstly, they were props for the event; secondly, they were "documentary records of the event," and thirdly, they served "as mimetic agents that recreated the event in the mind of the beholder."[188] In this sense, domestic interiors, the elaborate sympotic furniture and symposia-related pottery, the excesses of food, the various forms of entertainment, and other elements decorated with the images of symposia would also reinforce the societal expectations as well as to help create what Bergmann

[187] "Introduction," 9.
[188] Bergmann, "Introduction," 14.

refers to as a "meta-spectacle."[189] This, she argues, is reinforced also by the "language of viewing, of show, of marvelous display" which dominates discourses on symposia.[190]

Iconographic representations of symposia have been found on dining room walls and among mosaics and funerary friezes, but are most widely represented on Greek pottery.[191] Images of symposia were first utilised on Corinthian vases in the late seventh century B.C.E. by the beginning of the sixth century, they began appearing on Attic vases also.[192] The wine krater, as the symbol of the symposium, appears frequently in images of symposia on Greek pottery. This is likewise the case for images of reclining symposiasts as well as various forms of sympotic entertainment such as musicians playing the aulos (see fig. 5.4) or other instruments, actors, and dancers.[193] However, it is the *komast* or padded-dancer that appears most frequently as the sympotic entertainer on Greek pottery. The role and identity of the *komast* will be addressed in more detail below (see § 5.8.1).

In her assessments of Roman iconographical representations of *convivia*, Katherine M.D. Dunbabin has argued that some visual depictions reflect people of high and low status eating together but with a marked difference in their meal experience. This, she suggests, is evident in the depiction of guests in different meal positions.[194] One such example is a

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[189] Bergmann, "Introduction," 15; cf. J. D'Arms, "Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (ed. B. Bergmann and C. Kondoleon; Studies in the History of Art 56; Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts Symposium Papers 34; Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1999), 301. This element of spectacle in association with the symposium can be seen in Suetonius' account of Caligula who, at a public banquet, had the hands cut off a slave who had been caught stealing a strip of silver from the *kline*. Caligula ordered for the man's hands to be hung around his neck and that he be paraded in front of all the guests with a placard that explained the reason for his punishment (Suet. *Calig.* 32).

[190] D'Arms, "Performing Culture," 302.

[191] For examples, see Hudson, "Archaeology," 663-695.

[192] T.H. Carpenter, "A Symposion of Gods?," in *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion* (ed. O. Murray; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 145-163.; T.J. Smith, "The Corpus of Komast Vases: From Identity to Exegesis" in *The Origins of Theater in Ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama* (ed. E. Csapo and M.C. Miller; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 49.

[193] On the sympotic entertainment depicted on Greek pottery, see K.M. Lynch, "Drinking and Dining" in *A Companion to Greek Art* (ed. T.J. Smith and D. Plantzos; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. 2 vols.; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 2:525-542; T.J. Smith, "Dances, Drinks and Dedications: The Archaic *Komos* in Laconia" in *Sparta in Laconia: Proceedings of the 19th British Museum Classical Colloquium held with the British School and Athens and Kings and University Colleges, London 6-8 Dec, 1995* (BSA Studies 4; ed. W.G. Cavanagh and S.E.C. Walker; London: British School at Athens, 1998), 75-81; *idem*, "Dancing Spaces and Dining Places, 309-319; *idem*, "The Corpus of Komast Vases, 48-75.

[194] Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 90-91.

Roman sarcophagus lid dated to the third century C.E. which reproduces in detail a sympotic scene. Here, some guests recline on *kline* while others are seated at a table (fig. 5.5).[195] Dunbabin thus asserts that it is the guests of low status who sit on chairs while the symposiasts of high status recline and as a consequence are reliant on servants to bring their food and wine.[196]

Fig. 5.6 Roman sarcophagus lid,
Third century C.E.
Vatican Museum, Rome

Lissarrague asserts that for the Greeks and Romans, the symposium was "a social ritual in its broadest sense."[197] This was not only the case with the pouring of libations or other cultic associations in the symposium, but rather, in the carefully constructed ideals and expectations applicable to anyone entering into the social contract of symposium participation. In this sense, symposia "were not just drinking parties, but fundamental institutions for education (and) social definition, testing boundaries of acceptability and instituting cultural norms."[198]

In this section we have briefly outlined a number of important elements from Greco-Roman sympotic practices. It was noted here that one of the central aims of the symposium was to present and enjoy the equality and conviviality of all the symposiasts. This was achieved, according to our sympotic sources, through the use of the *triclinium* as well as the central wine krater which was shared by all. The focus on mutual pleasure meant that each of the symposiasts was expected to participate in, and contribute to, the evening's

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[195] Dunbabin also refers to the Amiternum Relief (50 C.E.) which likewise features both seated and reclining banqueters (*Roman Banquet*, 79-85).
[196] Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 90-91.
[197] Lissarrague, *Aesthetics*, 25.
[198] T. Whitmarsh, *Ancient Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 53.

festivities through the recitation of poetry, involvement in post-dinner discussions and/or participating in sympotic games. The symposium was thus recognised a place of shared pleasure, conviviality, and entertainment.

§ 5.6 Banqueting Practices in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism

In addition to Greco-Roman meal practices, many scholars also see Jewish meal practices as influencing Luke's presentation of Jesus' table fellowship throughout his gospel account. For this reason, it is worth briefly surveying some examples of meal practices recorded in the Hebrew Bible and the texts of the Second Temple period. Dennis E. Smith suggests that by the Second Temple period, "meals functioned within Judaism in ways quite similar to...(the) Greco-Roman society at large."[199] That is, that Jewish meals were also divided into courses (the eating course followed by the symposium), and that meals were "characterized by rules of etiquette and ethical values" in much the same way as in the Greco-Roman society in general.[200] The Jewish practice of *marzeah*, which originated in the ancient Near East, appears to have similar characteristics to that of the Greek symposium.[201] Albert J. Nijboer, for example, suggests that *marzeah* were limited to upper-class males and were associated with the sharing of food and wine as was the practice of reclining for the meal.[202] Also of significance are the meal practices associated with the Jewish Seder (Passover), however, as has been noted by Siegfried Stein, "no fixed Seder liturgy was in existence before the second third or the second century C.E.,"[203] therefore these practices are secondary to the major interests of this investigation.

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[199] Smith, *From Symposium*, 133. Jason König notes the example of the Jewish *Letter of Aristeas* written around 100 B.C.E. It discusses the process of the HB being translated into Greek. The scholars doing the translating are repeatedly asked questions in the context of symposia and have philosophical discussions similar to those that appear in the Greco-Roman sympotic literature (*Saints and Symposiasts*, 134-135).

[200] Smith, *From Symposium*, 134. For comparisons between Greco-Roman banqueting practices and the Jewish seder, see König, *Saints and Symposiasts*, 134; Smith, *From Symposium*, 147-150; S. Stein, "The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the *Pesah Haggadah*," *JJS* 8.1-2 (1957): 13-44.

[201] Nijboer asserts that the "Levantine *marzeah* (was) a social institution with upper-class male meetings, music and the consumption of meat and wine" ("Banquet, *Marzeah*," 95).

[202] Nijboer, "Banquet, *Marzeah*," 99. For more on Jewish meals see, S. Marks and H. Taussig (eds.), *Meals in Early Judaism: Social Formation at the Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[203] Stein, "Influence of Symposia," 13-44.

The book of Esther describes in some detail a banquet hosted by Queen Esther. It is interesting to note the description of the event as being divided into separate eating and drinking sessions (Esther 7:2).[204] It is also the *marzeah* that Nijboer proposes is what is taking place in Amos 6. Here, the prophet Amos critiques the Israelite leaders for eating meat and enjoying entertainment while the rest of the nation is taken into captivity.[205]

> You lie on beds adorned with ivory
> and lie on your couches.
> You dine on choice lambs
> and fattened calves.
> You strum away on your harps like David
> and improvise on musical instruments.
> You drink wine by the bowlful
> and use the finest lotions,
> but you do not grieve over the ruin of
> Joseph.
> Therefore you will be among the first to go
> into exile; your feasting and lounging
> will end.
>
> Amos 6:4-7

The Jewish philosopher Philo speaks of both the Greek practice of symposia as well as similar practices among the Jews. Maren R. Niehoff suggests that in Philo's earlier works he is "positive" about the Greek practices and extols the "pleasant feelings and pleasant talks" associated with the Greek symposia.[206] In contrast, by the time of writing his *De vita contempletiva* about the Jewish Therapeutae,[207] Philo is much more critical of Greek sympotic practices and emphasises a marked distinction between Greek and Jewish practices. While Philo describes Greek symposia as being characterised by ostentatious displays of wealth, drunkenness, insults, and violence,[208] he considers this behavior in contradistinction to the meal practices of the Jews which were defined instead by abstinence from wine and the consumption of little food.[209] Philo describes those participating in the Jewish Passover as assembling "for the banquet...not as in other festive

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[204] For more on banqueting in the book of Esther, see P. Altmann, "Everyday Meals for Extraordinary People: Eating and Assimilation in the Book of Ruth," in *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature* (ed. N. MacDonald, L.S. Rehmann, and K. Ehrensperger; LNTS 449; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 15-26.

[205] Nijboer, "Banquet, *Marzeah*," 99.

[206] M.R. Niehoff, "The Symposium of Philo's Therapeutae: Displaying Jewish Identity in an Increasingly Roman World," *GRBS* 50 (2010): 104-105; cf. Philo, *Ebr.* 91; *Somn.* 2.167-168.

[207] The Therapeutae were a group of Jewish philosophers living near Alexandria in the final years of the Second Temple period (e.g., Philo, *Contemp*, *passim*).

[208] *Contemp.* 40.

[209] *Contemp.* 2, 34-35, 73-74.

gatherings, to indulge the belly with wine and viands, but to fulfill with prayers and hymns the custom handed down by their fathers."[210] Thus Niehoff proposes that the "Jewish symposium emerges as a frugal feast, recapturing the early stages of humanity 'before pleasure took hold.'"[211]

The apocryphal Ecclesiasticus, dated to the third-second centuries B.C.E., includes numerous images of symposia again emphasising this contradistinction between Jewish and Greco-Roman practices. Ecclesiasticus includes exhortations against greed and excessive consumption of food as well as expressing the need for equality among the banqueters:

> If you are sitting down to a lavish table, do not display your greed, do not say, 'What a lot to eat!' Remember, it is bad to have a greedy eye...Do not reach out for anything your host has his eye on, do not jostle him at the dish. Judge your fellow-guest's needs by your own, be thoughtful in every way. Eat what is offered you like a well brought-up person, do not wolf your food or you will earn dislike. For politeness' sake be the first to stop; do not act the glutton, or you will give offence, and if you are sitting with a large party, do not help yourself before the others do.[212]

Through his contrasts of Greek and Jewish meal practices, Philo reveals some significant features of Jewish meal practices in the first century C.E. Firstly, he recalls that like the Greek and Roman traditions, the Jews also had a demarcation between the eating and drinking sections of the meal.[213] Secondly, Philo refers to the practice of reclining as being a feature of Jewish meals also.[214] In addition, he notes that both music as well as different forms of discussion take place during Jewish meals.[215] Ultimately, despite the differences that Philo espouses between Greek and Jewish banqueting practices, he still envisions the

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[210] *Spec.* 2.148 (Colson, LCL).

[211] Niehoff, "Symposium," 107 citing Philo, *Spec.* 2.160. For more on banqueting practices in the HB, see Peter Altmann, "Sacred Meals and Feasts in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and its Environment: A Treasure Chest for Early Christian Reflection," in *Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship, and the Eucharist – Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming, 2015), 15-26.

[212] Sir. 31:12-18 (JB). For more on banqueting in Ecclesiasticus, see U. Rapp, "You are how you eat: How Eating and Drinking Behaviour Identifies the Wise According to Jesus ben Sirach" in *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature* (ed. N. MacDonald, L.S. Rehmann, and K. Ehrensperger; LNTS 449; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 42-61.

[213] *Contemp.* 53-54.

[214] *Contemp.* 67.

[215] *Spec.* 2.193.

symposium as a significant socio-cultural institution nurturing and displaying the particular values of a community.

Josephus also includes references to the practice of banqueting and symposia.[216] In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus outlines a symposium held by Herod I (and Hyrcanus). In Josephus' recollection of the event, only males participated in the event until the transition between the meal proper and the symposium. At this time, Herod's daughter is allowed to enter in order to take up her role as flute player.[217] This same event is recorded in the gospel of Mark where Herod's guests are described as being those of high status.[218] Josephus' inclusion of this banquet as part of his *Antiquities* again confirms the practice of dividing the meal into separate stages was carried over into Jewish meal practices also.

§ 5.6.1 Eschatological Banquet Imagery in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism

As well as Jewish meal practices themselves, what is also significant for the current study are associations between meal imagery and the messianic age. While E.P Sanders is sceptical of viewing Jewish eschatological imagery as the intertext for New Testament meal practices,[219] numerous other scholars assume that such a connection does exist.[220] For this reason, we will now examine briefly a number of examples from the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism which employ the language of meals in association with messianic expectations.

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[216] *Ant.* 15.175; *Ant.* 18.289-301.

[217] *Ant.* 15.175; *Ant.* 18.289-301.

[218] Mark notes the presence of "high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee" in attendance (Mk. 6:21).

[219] E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin), 1993, 185.

[220] E.g., D.C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth:* Millenarian Prophet (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 143-144; J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 425-427; Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 89; B. Pitre, "Jesus, The Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God," *Letter & Spirit* 5 (2009): 145-166; E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 307; D.E. Smith, "Messianic Banquet," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols.; ed. D.N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:789; G. Theissen and A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 254; N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 308-309, 328-329.

Numerous scholars suggest that the origins of the messianic banquet can be traced to Isaiah 25:6-8:

> On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the LORD God will wipe away the tears from all faces and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.[221]

According to this Isaianic image, at the time that YHWH appoints, not only will there be the cessation of death, but the people of YHWH, and indeed the nations, will celebrate together by sharing in a sumptuous feast.[222]

This theme of a messianic banquet is developed throughout the Second Temple period. The book of 1 Enoch, speaks of the arrival of the "elect one" at which point "the kings and the mighty and the exalted and those who rule the earth will fall down before the son of man...After (the) destruction of sinners the righteous and the elect shall eat with the son of man forever and ever."[223] The pseudepigraphal text 2 Baruch likewise speaks of the revealing of the messiah and an endless supply of food for the righteous.[224] Similar imagery of an abundance associated with the end-times is also expressed in a number of texts from the Second Temple period including the Sibylline Oracles and the books of Enoch.[225] In addition to explicit descriptions of the messianic banquet, this motif was also expressed in more generally in descriptions of abundant food and festivities in the end time.[226]

Some of the most explicit attestations to the messianic banquet can be found among the Qumran scrolls. While it has been acknowledged that the Dead Sea Scrolls "present a

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[221] NRSV.

[222] Note here the proposal of Brant Pritre that the imagery of "food filled with marrow" and "well-aged wine strained clear" connects this banquet with the imagery of a liturgical feast (e.g., Deut. 32:37-38). Thus, Pritre proposes that the Isaianic author envisages this messianic feast taking place in the Temple ("Jesus, The Messianic Banquet," 136).

[223] 1 Enoch 62:1-16 (trans. Charles).

[224] 2 Baruch 29:1-8.

[225] The more general motif of a return to Eden and a time of plenty is found in other literature of this period without specific reference to banquet imagery (e.g., *T. Levi* 18:10-11; *Sib. Or.* 5:260-285; *1 En.* 25:5; *3 En.* 23:18; *Apoc. Mos.* 28:4; *Apoc. Elij.* 5:6, *Pss. Sol.* 14:2-3, 10; *4 Ezra* 8:52).

[226] Smith, *From Symposium*, 166.

diverse corpus of eschatological doctrines,"[227] it is the view of Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint that "such diversity does not preclude the existence of central ideas or a common core."[228] As such, they consider one of the central themes presented in the Dead Sea Scrolls to be "the imminent arrival of a day of judgment and restoration"[229] which is, at times, expressed in terms of a messianic feast. The imagery is made explicit in *The Messianic Rule* (1QSa). According to this text, in the last days

> When God engenders (the Priest-) Messiah, he shall come with them [at] the head of the whole congregation of Israel...the men of renown...shall sit [before him, each man] in the order of his dignity...And then [the Mess]iah of Israel shall [come], and the chiefs of the [clans of Israel] shall sit before him, [each] in the order of his dignity. And [when] they shall gather for the common [tab]le, to eat and [to drink] new wine, when the common table shall be set for eating and the new wine [poured] for drinking, let no man extend his hand over the firstfruits of bread and wine before the Priest; for [it is he] who shall bless the firstfruits of bread and wine...[230]

Not only does *The Messianic Rule* describe the consummation of the age as taking place in the context of a banquet, but at this banquet, particular attention will be paid to seating arrangements to ensure the congregation are seated "each in the order of (their) dignity."[231] Geoffrey Wainwright suggests that although there is no literary connection between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the gospels of the New Testament, the inclusion of eschatological banqueting imagery in both traditions indicates "the notion of an anticipation of the messianic banquet was conceivable in contemporary Jewish thought."[232]

Despite the infrequency of messianic banqueting imagery in the rabbinic writings, George Foot Moore proposes that there is little doubt that the messianic banquet was "part of popular expectation" in the rabbinic period."[233] The Mishnaic *Aboth* states that "All is forseen, but freedom of choice is given; and the world is judged by grace, yet all is according to the excess of works...the judgment is a judgment of truth; and all is made

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[227] J.J. Collins, "Patterns of Eschatology at Qumran," in *Traditions and Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. B. Halpern and J. Levenson; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 351-375.

[228] C.A. Evans and P.W. Flint, "Introduction," in *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. C.A. Evans and P.W. Flint; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 5.

[229] Evans and P.W. Flint, "Introduction," 5.

[230] 1QSa 2:11-17 (trans. Vermes).

[231] 1QSa 2:13 (trans. Vermes).

[232] G. Wainwright, Eucharist and Eschatology (London: Epworth Press, 1971), 25.

[233] G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1927), 2:365.

ready for the banquet."[234] The Midrash on the book of Numbers also states that "In the hereafter the Holy One, blessed be he, will prepare a feast for the righteous in the Garden of Eden...The Holy One, blessed be he, will therefore in the hereafter give them to drink of the wine that is preserved in grapes since the six days of Creation."[235]

Although Jewish meal practices are primarily expressed in terms of the Passover (seder) meal, due to the late dating of these texts they do not appear as part of this survey of meals in the Jewish tradition. Instead, we have instead drawn attention to the relationship between Jewish meals practices and that of the Greco-Roman symposium. Although there certainly were differences in the way these meal practices were appropriated across different cultures, Dennis E. Smith has argued that "the form taken by Jewish meals in the Greco-Roman period on any particular occasion or in any particular setting was that of the Greco-Roman banquet."[236] More than this, Smith has argued that just as the meal functioned in the Greco-Roman world to shape and define group identity, meals functioned in the same way in Judaism in the Second Temple period.[237]

In this section we have also briefly outlined a range of passages that continued to support the image of an abundant banquet as a symbol of the messianic age. While the image of the messianic banquet appears most vividly in the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, numerous Jewish texts from the Second Temple period also include an array of images associated with an abundance of food and end-time celebration. While a small number of scholars do not see this Jewish banquet imagery as an intertext for our parable in Luke 14, in general, scholars contend that by the time of the Second Temple period the image of the banquet had become a central ideal associated with the future kingdom encompassing the abundance of God's salvation and provision.

§ 5.7 Banqueting in Luke

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[234] *m. Aboth* 3:16-17.
[235] *Num. Rab.* 13:2.
[236] Smith, *From Symposium*, 171.
[237] Smith, *From Symposium*, 171.

Before moving on to specifically discuss disability in association with banqueting in the ancient world, it is best to locate Luke's gospel overall in relation to these meal practices. It is apparent that Luke, more than any of the other gospel writers, presents Jesus' table-fellowship as being of theological consequence.[238] Luke depicts not only physical healings,[239] but also the didactic element of Jesus' ministry, that is preaching and parables,[240] taking place within the context of table fellowship. It is while Jesus is at table that many social and theological issues are brought to the fore in Luke such as the forgiveness of sins, clean versus unclean food, the role of the Sabbath, and the expression of the future kingdom, among others. In Luke, Jesus is represented as not only eating with the socially acceptable and those of high status,[241] but he is also accused of eating with "tax collectors and sinners" (5:30, 7:34), and those considered inappropriate dinner guests by Jesus' social and cultural counterparts. Indeed, despite opposing views in many other aspects of Jesus' ministry and self-identification, N.T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan both agree that one of the most legitimate and historically reliable traditions we have regarding the historical Jesus is that he ate in the presence of "people normally on or beyond the borders of respectable society."[242]

As noted earlier (§ 5.5.1), a society's meal traditions represent far more than the perfunctory act of eating. Instead, meal practices offer a means through which a society's social norms and values can be enacted and reinforced. It is for this reason that the meal practices retained by Luke regarding the ministry of Jesus are important not only in

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[238] Throughout Luke, Jesus is often described as participating in meal traditions over the course of the narrative (5:27-32; 7:36-50; 9:10-17; 11:37-52; 14:1-24; 22:14-38; 24:28-32; the contexts of meals are also implied in 10:38-42; 19:1-10), with a portion of these meal scenes unique to Luke's narrative.

[239] E.g., 14:1-6.

[240] E.g., 5:27-32; 11:37-54; 22:7-38.

[241] E.g., 11:37-54; 14:1-24.

[242] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory*, 149; cf. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 344. Numerous scholars are likewise convinced that Jesus' ministry was categorised by his eating with social outcasts, e.g., Bird, *Jesus and the Origins*, 104; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 599-605; J. Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 105; S. McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 41-49; J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (3 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 3:250; Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 107; Pitre, "Jesus, The Messianic Banquet," 145; G. Vermes, *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 2003), 403. It is worth noting here that this view is criticised by Craig L. Blomberg, however, is critical of the work of both Smith and Klinghardt in this area claiming that scholars who draw parallels between Jesus' table fellowship and Greco-Roman symposia are undermining the authentic ministry of Jesus to sinners and outcasts ("Jesus, Sinners, and Table Fellowship," *BBR* 19.1 [2009]: 35-62).

developing the plot of the narrative[243] but in expressing the way that Luke understands the role of Jesus within his own socio-cultural milieu.[244] The meal scenes in Luke thus play "pivotal social functions" within the narrative of the gospel,[245] and serve as opportunities "to illustrate the contrast between the perspectives and praxis of Jesus and his followers"[246] with those who are seen to be in political and theological opposition to him. In this way, Jesus' table fellowship has been described as "an acted parable" of the kingdom, visually representing the inclusive nature of the future messianic banquet.[247]

The proposal that Luke employs the language of "table-talk" throughout this gospel was first explored by French scholar Xavier de Meeûs but has subsequently been expanded and developed by a number of scholars but especially Dennis E. Smith.[248] Smith contends that the meal scenes in Luke's gospel, and particularly those in 14:1-24, are significant in expressing a relationship between Luke's gospel and Greco-Roman sympotic literature. As noted (§ 5.5), the sympotic genre subscribed to traditional formats and themes that were replicated in varying extents across the breadth of sympotic literature. Smith argues that some of the elements of sympotic literature are likewise presented in Luke's gospel indicating a close relationship between them.[249] Smith suggests that while Jesus is depicted as partaking in "table-talk" throughout all four of the canonical gospels,[250] "Luke's gospel has made much broader use of this theme."[251] While Smith suggests that

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[243] E.g., Robert Karris suggests that Luke uses the escalating conflict at meals to express that Jesus was put to death for the way in which he ate (*Luke: Artist and Theologian* [New York: Paulist Press, 1985], 47.

[244] "Luke gives more attention to eating and table fellowship than the other gospel writers; in fact, almost every chapter in Luke has some mention of eating" (Snodgrass, "Common Life with Jesus," 186-187).

[245] Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 540.

[246] Elliott, "Household and Meals," 102.

[247] Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*, 102; cf. S.S. Bartchy, "The Historical Jesus and Honor Reversal at the Table," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. W. Stegemann, B.J. Malina and G. Theissen; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 175; Karris, *Luke*, 58. Bruce Chilton says on this, "Meals in Jesus' fellowship became practical parables whose meaning was as evocative as his verbal parables (which have consumed much more scholarly attention). To join in his meals consciously was, in effect, to anticipate the kingdom as it had been delineated by Jesus' teaching. Each meal was a proleptic celebration of God's kingdom" (*Pure Kingdom: Jesus' Vision of God* [SHJ; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 86).

[248] E.g., Smith, "Table Fellowship," *passim*; *idem*, *From Symposium*, cf. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, *passim*; Just, *Ongoing Feast*, *passim*; König, *Saints and Symposiasts*, *passim*.

[249] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 615.

[250] Mk. 14:1-11, 12-26; Mt. 26:6-13, 17-30; Jn. 12:1-11, 13:1-17.

[251] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 616.

imagery is woven into Luke's entire narrative,[252] we will limit our assessment to chapter 14 of Luke's gospel.

In his assessment of Jesus' table fellowship in Luke, Smith outlines a number of literary motifs commonly represented in the sympotic literature which are likewise represented to some extent throughout Luke's gospel. The first motif is that of seating allocations and ranking at table. In both Plutarch's *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* and his *Table Talk*, discussions regarding seating arrangements directly follow a particular incident involving guests' places at table.[253] Likewise, Luke 14 also features a discussion regarding seating arrangements at table (14:7-14). In Smith's view, not only is the parable expressing a truth about the future kingdom through employing "a recognized custom in the culture,"[254] but there is a strong similarity between the overall arrangement of the content in each of the passages. According to Smith, in both Plutarch's banquets as well as that of Luke, "the subject of the discourse is introduced with a brief anecdote relating to the actual choosing of position by the participant."[255]

In addition to the specific motif of seating at table, Smith observes that Luke, as with the sympotic traditions before him, includes conversations about a range of sympotic etiquette and related topics.[256] Smith recalls that in Plato's *Symposium*, he includes a list of topics worthy of discussion at table which included "meal etiquette, discourses on the types of food eaten...the 'friend-making' character of the meal and so on."[257] In addition, de Meeûs proposes that an important feature of Plato's *Symposium* is the controversy that takes place at table regarding the difference of opinions between Socrates and the Sophists.[258] This opposition depicted between Socrates and the Sophists is paralleled in Luke's narrative in the guise of Jesus' disputations with the Pharisees.[259] In addition to parallels

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[252] Smith asserts that the sympotic genre is most apparent in Luke 7:36-50, 11:37-54, and 14:1-24 but that "Luke enriches his Gospel story with references to meal symbolism" throughout his gospel account (Smith, *From Symposium*, 614.

[253] *Sept. sap. conv.* 148f-149f; *Quaest. conv.*

[254] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 619.

[255] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 619.

[256] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 619-621

[257] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 621.

[258] de Meeûs, "Composition de Luc," 852, 855-856.

[259] de Meeûs, "Composition de Luc," 858.

in conversational topoi, Luke likewise utilises a number of the stock characters outlined by Josef Martin as belonging to the institution of the symposium (§ 5.5.2). While chapter 14 certainly does not contain all of these characters, it is apparent that a number of them do appear, for example, the host, the guests, and possibly the *akletos* in the form of the man with dropsy in 14:1-6.[260] Thus for Smith, chapter 14 of Luke "is a highly structured unit" that has been deliberately crafted in such a way as to create a "clear reference to the sympotic genre."[261]

§ 5.8 Banqueting and Disability

Now we have established, to some degree, that Luke was aware of, and most likely building upon, the genre of sympotic literature, it is worth asking what relevance, if any, this banqueting imagery has to do with the depictions of "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" that appear in chapter 14 of Luke.

As was noted in chapter three (§ 3.8), by the time of the Imperial period, there had developed a general interest in people, as well as animals, that had unusual physical characteristics as part of a more general interest in the *spectaculum*. Not only did people enjoy the gruesome spectacle of gladiatorial battles and the inverted world of the theatre, but also the non-hegemonic forms of the deviant body. This general interest in the unusual and unique seems to be have been shared by the ruling class and lower social rankings alike. As a result, many people with physical anomalies were placed on display in order to satisfy the curiosity of eager onlookers. Both Greek and Roman philosophers include examples of people with unusual physical characteristics being displayed in both private and public settings.

Pliny the Elder recounts the story of a wealthy woman named Gegania who, when purchasing an expensive Corinthian chandelier, also received for free a hunchbacked (*gibber*) slave named Clesippus who was "also of a hideous appearance" (*foedus*

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[260] E.g., Bartchy, "Historical Jesus," 180; de Meeûs, "Composition de Luc," *passim*; Smith, "Table Fellowship," 621-623; also Steele, "Luke 11:37-54," 382-386.

[261] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 621.

aspectu).[262] Pliny records that Gegania hosted a *convivium* in order to "show off her purchases," both the chandelier and Clesippus who she made appear naked "for the mockery of the guests."[263] Others too are shown to display people with disability and unusual characteristics in the context of banquets to pique the curiosity and/or entertain those present. According to the *Historia Augusta*, the emperor Elagabalus:

> Habuit et hanc consuetudinem, ut octo calvos rogaret ad cenam et item octo luscos et item octo podagrosos, octo surdos, octo nigros, octo longos et octo pingues, cum capi non possent uno sigmate, ut de his omnibus risus citaret.
>
> had the custom, moreover, of asking to a dinner eight bald men, or else eight one-eyed men, or eight men who suffered from gout, or eight deaf men, or eight men of dark complexion, or eight tall men, or, again, eight fat men, his purpose being, in the case of these last, since they could not be accommodated on one couch, to call forth general laughter.[264]

The *Historia Augusta* also recalls Commodus' general fascination with the *monstrous* including a narrative recounting the events of a private banquet where alongside the evening's meal Commodus also presented to his guests two hunchbacks covered in mustard and served on a silver platter.[265] The motivation for Commodus' spectacle may reside in an ancient superstition that rubbing the hump of a hunchback was considered good luck.[266] Whether Commodus' intention was to entice people to touch them is unclear, but in any case it was not the intention that they should be genuinely eaten, but rather, it seems the whole situation was simply for comedic effect.

Despite clearly established expectations regarding sympotic behaviour, it was still possible for the evening's entertainment to degrade into a hurling of insults whereby marginal participants became the most likely target of derision. What might begin with light-hearted quips could quickly denigrate into abuse. It was for this very reason that Plutarch promotes the necessity of a symposiarch in order to co-ordinate the evening's events.[267] The symposiarch must, according to Plutarch, also "caution the guests, lest scoffing and

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[262] Pliny, *HN* 34.6 (LCL, Rackham).
[263] Pliny, *HN* 34.6 (LCL, Rackham).
[264] HA *Helio.* 29.3 (LCL, Magie).
[265] HA, *Comm.* 11.1
[266] "Deformity in the Roman Imperial Court," *G&R* 58.2 (2011), 205.
[267] Klinghardt suggests that "symposiarchs are reported not only for the banquets of organized associations where they are listed among the club officials, but also for private and informal symposia" (Klinghardt, "Typology," 13).

affronts creep in (and) lest in their questions or commands (the guests) grow scurrilous and abusive."[268] Plutarch states that such attitudes may entice guests to make requests that are inappropriate. Such requests might have been to petition "stammerers to sing, or bald men to comb their hair, or the lame to dance on a greased wine-skin."[269] Such things, he suggests, are prone to occur with the absence of proper instruction from the symposiarch. As evidence for such degradation, Plutarch cites the example of one Agapestor the Academic who was thus abused in the context of a symposium. Plutarch states:

> Thus, by way of rudely mocking Agapestor the Academic, who had a weak and withered leg, his fellow-banqueters proposed that each man of them all drain off his cup while standing on his right foot, or pay a penalty. But when it came the turn of Agapestor to give the order, he commanded them all to drink as they saw him drink. Then he had a narrow jar brought to him, put his defective foot inside it, and drained off his cup; but for all the others, since it was manifestly impossible for them to do so, though they tried, (they) paid the penalty. Thus (says Plutarch), Agapestor showed himself an urbane gentleman; and, following his example, one should make his ripostes good-natured and merry.[270]

Plutarch, in this particular case, seems to commend Agapestor for his good-natured attitude and yet, we can only imagine the shame and embarrassment Agapestor might have experienced had he not been so quick-witted.

While it is evident that being an invited guest did not make one immune to mockery and derision, what is also evidenced in our ancient sources is that there were a range of people who attended symposia specifically in order to play the role of the entertainer by becoming the brunt of people's jokes. Many people took on professional roles of entertainment as the buffoon (*scurra*) or jester/laughter-maker (γελωτοποιός). Many of our literary sources describe these entertainers as ridiculed but simultaneously fulfilling a central role in the ideals and conviviality of the symposium.

Roman poet Horace describes in his satires the banter that took place during a *convivium* between one Messius Cicirrus and a buffoon (*scurra*) and former slave Sarmentus. While Cicirrus mocks Sarmentus for his low birth, Sarmentus censures Cicirrus for a disfiguring scar on his forehead claiming that Cicirrus could play the Cyclops without requiring a

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[268] *Quast. conv.* 621e (Clement & Hoffleit, LCL).
[269] *Quast. conv.* 621e (Clement & Hoffleit, LCL).
[270] Quast. conv. 621E.

mask.[271] Lucian refers on several occasions to dwarf entertainers at table including an Alexandrian dwarf who recited Ionic poetry.[272] In his *Symposium*, Lucian describes one particular event where guests are entertained by a misshapen (ἄμορφος) dwarf (ἀνθρώπιον) named Satyrion who dances and twists himself into awkward poses "to cut a more ridiculous figure."[273] In addition, Satyrion begins to "poke fun at the guests" and is then challenged to a fight by Alcidamas the Cynic philosopher who was insulted by Satyrion's quips. Lucian states that it was

> delicious to see a philosopher squaring off at a clown (γελωτοποιός), and giving and receiving blows in turn. Though some of the onlookers were disgusted, others kept laughing, until finally Alcidamas had enough of his punishment, well beaten by a tough little dwarf.[274]

While such stories appear frequently in the fiction of the Greco-Roman world there are examples from historical texts also. Suetonius, for example, notes that the Emperor Tiberius allowed himself to be mocked by a dwarf as part of the evening entertainment.[275] A fragment from the Greek historian Priscus reveals the experience of one Zerkon, a dwarf who was acquired as a slave in Africa in the 430s C.E. Zerkon rose to the role of comic entertainer

> because of his bodily deformity, and because he provoked merriment at his stammering speech and at his very appearance (for he was short, hunchbacked, with misshapen feet, and surprisingly flat-nosed, so that you could barely make out the protruding beyond the nostrils.[276]

Tacitus and Seneca both describe the Roman statesman Vatinius as one known throughout the Empire for being the "butt for ridicule and hate."[277] But because of his "vulgar wit"[278] and willingness to "jest at the expense of his own feet,"[279] Vatinius rose in status in Nero's court. Tacitus describes Vatinius as

> one of the most conspicuously infamous sights in the imperial court, bred, as he had been, in a shoemaker's shop, of a deformed person and vulgar wit, originally introduced as a butt. After a

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[271] Horace, *Sat.* 1.5.50-70; cf. Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 85. Thomas Habinek suggests that the *scurra* is seen to be in opposition to the satirist who critiques elite status from the inside, unlike the lower-class scurra who insults for entertainment and in order to be paid ("Satire as Aristocratic Play" in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* [ed. K. Freudenberg; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 183).

[272] Lucian, *Merc. cond.* 27.

[273] Lucian, *Symp.* 18 (Harmon, LCL).

[274] Lucian, *Symp.* 18-19 (Harmon, LCL).

[275] Suet., *Tib.* 61.6.

[276] Priscus, fr. 11, FHG (trans. Bury).

[277] Sen., *Constant.* 17.2-3 (Basore, LCL); § 3.4.2.

[278] Tac. *Annals* 15.34.2 (Jackson, LCL).

[279] Sen., *Constant.* 17.2-3 (Basore, LCL).

time he grew so powerful by accusing all the best men, that in influence, wealth, and ability to injure, he was pre-eminent even in that bad company.[280]

Fig. 5.7 "Vaudeville Performers on the Aventine"
Mosaic from the garden of the Santa Sabina
on the Aventine Hill in Rome.
late second-early third century C.E.
Vatican, Rome.

Dwarfs in particular were closely associated with the realm of entertainment in the ancient world and appear in a range of literary,[281] iconographic[282] and epigraphical[283] evidence as musicians, athletes, gladiators or dancers at public events including symposia. One significant depiction of a dwarf in the context of a symposium is in a mosaic found in the garden of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill in Rome (see fig. 5.8). Here, a group of dancers are playing musical instruments and dancing. In the centre of the group is a man usually identified as a dwarf. The context of the symposium is clearly evident in this image through the representation of a *stibadium*, a later development of the *triclinium* which was a semi-circle rather than in the shape of the letter Π. Behind the dwarf is also "circular four-footed table and further to his left stands an amphora supported on a tripod."[284]

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[280] Tac. *Annals* 15.34.2 (Jackson, LCL).

[281] E.g., Cass. Dio, 67.8.4; Statius 1.6.57-65.

[282] While dwarfs rarely feature in artwork of the classical and archaic periods, they are common from the time of the Empire as the interest in the "unusual" grew (§ 3.8). Stephen Brunet suggests that because coroplastic art was "intended for common consumption" that its subject matter was closely connected with the everyday lives of the people in the ancient world, in particular, the world of entertainment. Thus images that are commonly depicted are gladiators, musicians, dancers, pugilists (boxers), and actors which included dwarfs and others with physical anomalies (S. Brunet, "Dwarf Athletes in the Roman Empire," *AHB* 17.1-2 [2003]: 23; Garmaise, *Studies in the Representation of Dwarfs*, 48).

[283] An early Egyptian document from the 6th dynasty (2322-2153) tells of transporting a dancing dwarf who was "the heart of his majesty's pleasure" (W. Decker, *Sport und Spiel im Alten Ägypten* [Munich: C.H. Beck, 1987], 97).

[284] Garmaise, *Studies in the Representation of Dwarfs*, 51. For a more detailed examination of this mosaic, see M.E. Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire in Rome and Vicinity," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 81-130.

Dwarfs also appear in literary sources depicted as various public performers. Lucian's *Symposium* tells of the dwarf Satyrion who was not only a dancer but also pankratiast[285] who could be hired to demonstrate his skills.[286] As noted (§ 3.8), Elegabalus' penchant for deviant bodies was such that, according to the *Historia Augusta*, he kept a collection of such among those at the imperial court including "all kinds of entertainers at table and actors of pantomimes."[287] The Roman poet Propertius describes the entertainment at a *convivium* where the reclining guests enjoyed

> An Egyptian piper, and we all tossed roses
> At pretty Phyllis, clacking the castanets;
> Magnus the dwarf hopped to the flute music
> On his shrunken stumps of legs like a clumsy ox.[288]

It was noted in chapter three (§ 3.8.1) that due to economic changes that occurred throughout Greece in the Archaic period, that many people were forced into difficult financial circumstances. As a result, many of the more vulnerable members of society were forced into finding new means of employment. In this way, many people with physical and sensory impairment and other physical anomalies made the most of their marginal status and took on the role of entertainers at social events. Burkard Fehr proposes that while some of these entertainers may have been professionals, a far greater number were *akletoi*: uninvited guests at the banquet.[289] In this way, the *akletoi* would be able to partake of meals in exchange for entertaining the invited guests.[290] However, such an association also ensured the *akletoi* had a reputation for being greedy and gluttonous and having indefatigable appetites.[291]

In *The Odyssey*, Homer recalls the comments of one Eumaios the swineherder during a meal regarding *akletoi*: "Who calls or constrains a stranger to his board, unless he happens to be some creative man, a prophet or healer or worker in wood, or perhaps some

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[285] Pankration was a sport played in the original Greek Olympic games that was a blend of boxing and wrestling but apparently devoid of rules.

[286] Lucian, *Symp.* 18-19.

[287] HA*, Alex. Sev.* 34.2 (Magie, LCL).

[288] 4.8.41-42. Michael Garmaise, notes the "oxymoronic levity" of the dwarf carrying the name "Magnus" (*Studies in the Representation of Dwarfs*, 45).

[289] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 185-195.

[290] Węcowski, *Rise of the Greek Aristocratic*, 35.

[291] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," *passim*.

surpassing musician with power to give joy by song?"[292] The implication is that the only reason to have an *akletos* or stranger at a banquet was for the purpose of entertainment.

One of the primary things that makes one an *akletos* is not simply that they appear uninvited but they cannot repay the guests by hosting their own meal. It is for this reason that the *akletoi* are "also technically called *asymboloi*, 'the ones without contribution [sc. to the feast].'"[293] Marek Węcowski says that for the aristocratic groups present at symposia, "the bottom line...is the ability to contribute on an equal footing and to reciprocate with feasts and symposia."[294] This ideal is represented in Xenophon's *Symposium* which includes an account of Philip the buffoon who attends the symposium as an *akletos* with the intention of eating and drinking in exchange for entertaining the guests. Philip tells the porter at the door to announce his presence and that he had an empty stomach and was ready to dine on someone else's food. Phillip refers to himself as a jester (γελωτοποιός) and that he has come uninvited (ἄκλητος) to the symposium in order to entertain the guests.[295] However, when Philip attempts to amuse the guests he is unable to make them laugh. Mournfully, Philip casts himself upon a couch declaring that

> in times past, the reason I got invitations to dinner was because I might arouse laughter among the guests and put them in a good mood; but why will anyone want to invite me now? For I could no more turn serious than I could become immortal; and certainly no one will invite me in hope of a return invitation, since everyone knows it's simply never been customary at my house even to send out for dinner.[296]

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[292] *Od.* 17.382-383 (Lawrence LCL); cf. Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 185.
[293] Węcowski, *Rise of the Greek Aristocratic*, 62.
[294] Węcowski, *Rise of the Greek Aristocratic*, 62.
[295] Xen. *Symp.* 1.13 (Marchant & Todd, LCL).
[296] Xen. *Symp.* 1.15 (Marchant & Todd, LCL).

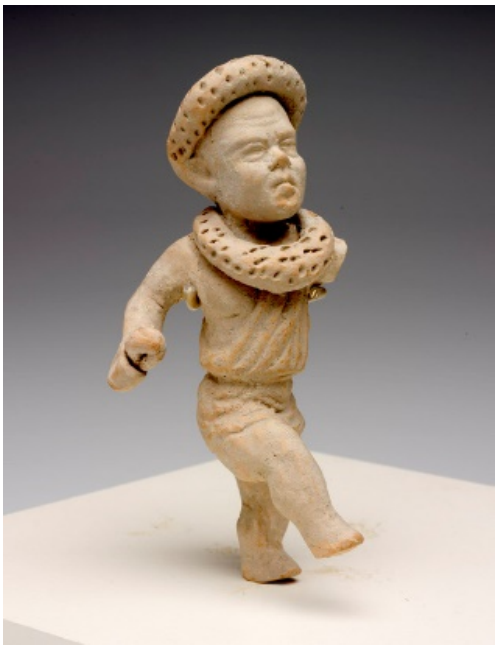

Fig. 5.8 Dancing dwarf
Greek Terracotta figurine
late third century B.C.E.
RISD Museum, Rhode Island, USA [297]

Fig. 5.9 Musicians (including dwarf) playing the *salpinx* (trumpet)
and the *hydraulis* (water organ).
Greek Terracotta figurine from Alexandria
first century B.C.E.
Louvre, Paris

[297] Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock writes of this dwarf, "The thick wreaths worn by this figure give him a festive air as he kicks his leg to the beat of his rattle" ("Dancing Dwarf" in *The Coroplast's Art: Greek Terracottas of the Hellenistic World* [ed. J.P. Uhlenbrock; New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1990], 159).

Philip knows that his presence at symposia is only tolerated because of his ability to entertain the guests. Without this talent he is certain that he will no longer be able to participate in such meals. The language of reciprocity is significant here. Philip knows he would not be invited as a true guest at a symposium because he is unable to host his own meals in return. Upon witnessing Philip's melancholy, the guests begin to laugh which is enough for Philip to be once again assured of his position as *akletos* and he returns to his meal.[298]

§ 5.8.1 Komasts and Symposia

While the literary sources on symposia are replete with the imagery of *akletoi*, there are indications that these representations also appear in a visual format on Greek pottery also. In his article, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*: The *Akletoi* in the Archaic Period," Burkhard Fehr discusses at length a range of Greek pottery referred to as Komos vases.[299] During the Archaic period, the depiction of komasts or padded-dancers on black-figure pottery was widespread with examples being found throughout Corinth, Athens, and Laconia.[300] While komasts have long been associated with the worship of Dionysos, as well as with the origins of Greek comic theatre,[301] Fehr contends that it is possible komasts also served as a visual representation of the *akletoi* known from the sympotic literature.[302] Axel Seeberg describes the typical komast as

> A male profile figure of squat proportions dressed in a belted sleeveless chiton...A big swelling fold of stuff overhang(ing) the belt in front. The dance...is not (necessarily) obscene or particularly boisterous, but in conjunction with (the rest of his) appearance it gives him a grotesque and incongruous air...He may carry a horn, and a wine-bowl may be at hand."[303]

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[298] Xen. *Symp.* 1.16.

[299] Seeberg, *Corinthian Komos Vases*, *passim*; T.J. Smith, *Komast Dancers in Archaic Greek Art* (Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), *passim.*

[300] Smith, "Competition, Festival and Performance," 554.

[301] The word "κῶμος" is the root of the verb "κομάζω" - "to revel" or "to stage a feast" (Lissarrague, *Aesthetics of Greek Banquet*, 31). There is understood to be such a long-standing connection between the komasts of Greco-Roman iconography and the beginnings of comedic drama, that the English word "comedy" has its etymological roots in the Greek term "κῶμος" (Lissarrague, *Aesthetics of Greek Banquet*, 31). For a variety of perspectives regarding the komasts in recent scholarship, see Smith, *Komast Dancers*, *passim.*

[302] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 185-195; cf. Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 180; Weiler, "Inverted *Kalokagathia*," 20. Contra C. Isler-Kerenyi, "Komasts, Mythic Imaginary, and Ritual" in *The Origins of Theatre in Ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama* (ed. E. Csapo and M.C. Miller; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 85-92; J.R. Green, "Let's hear it for the Fat Man: Padded Dancers and the Prehistory of Drama" in *The Origins of Theatre in Ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama* (ed. E. Csapo and M.C. Miller; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 96-107.

[303] Seeberg, *Corinthian Komos Vases*, 1.

Fehr proposes that the depictions of the komasts on Greek pottery share "a series of characteristics with the negative image of the *akletoi*" found in the sympotic literature.[304] This is most vividly represented in the physical body of the komasts. As noted (§ 5.5.2), drunkenness as well as gluttony were common charges made against *akletoi* in the sympotic literature. As uninvited guests unable to offer meals in return, the *akletoi* were characterised by the excessive consumption of food and wine at another's expense.[305] For those uncertain about when their next opportunity to dine might be, it seems they were intent on capitalising on those opportunities for feasting that did arise. Fehr proposes that it is the image of the *akletos* as greedy and eating and drinking to excess that is replicated in the bloated bodies of the komast, thus the moniker, padded-dancers.[306] Such gluttony in visually represented by placing komasts in close proximity to wine kraters or drinking horns.

Close parallels can be drawn between the unruly behaviour of both the literary *akletoi* and the visual representations of the *komasts*. Just as the *akletoi* are presented as ignoring socially acceptable behaviour during symposia, the *komasts* are likewise depicted as flagrantly casting off social decorum. The *komasts* are portrayed as "lascivious and shameless...displaying their phalluses with spread-eagle legs"[307] as well as urinating, vomiting, and partaking in all manner of overt sexual activity.[308]

Another important connection between the *akletoi* of the sympotic literature and the komasts of Greek pottery is that both appear often in the context of symposia. The sympotic context is evident through the presentation of reclining symposiasts and/or a wine krater, as well as other symposia-related iconography.[309] François Lissarrague describes a fragmentary

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[304] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 189.
[305] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 189.
[306] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 189.
[307] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 190.
[308] R.F. Sutton, Jr, "The Good, the Base, and the Ugly" in *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 108-202; H.P. Foley, "The Comic Body in Greek Art and Drama" in *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 275-311.
[309] Indeed, Francois Lissarrague contends that the inclusion of even one specific element of the symposia, such as that of the wine krater, would be enough to indicate that these images should be understood as

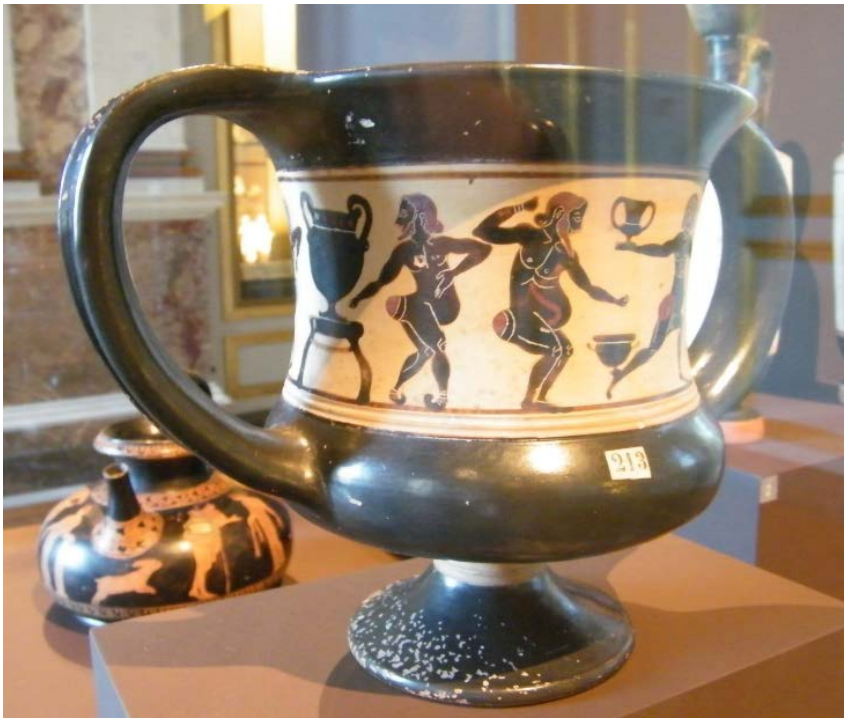

Fig. 5.10 Black-Figure Laconian Kantharos with Komast
5th century B.C.E.
Louvre, Paris
Photo by Louise Gosbell

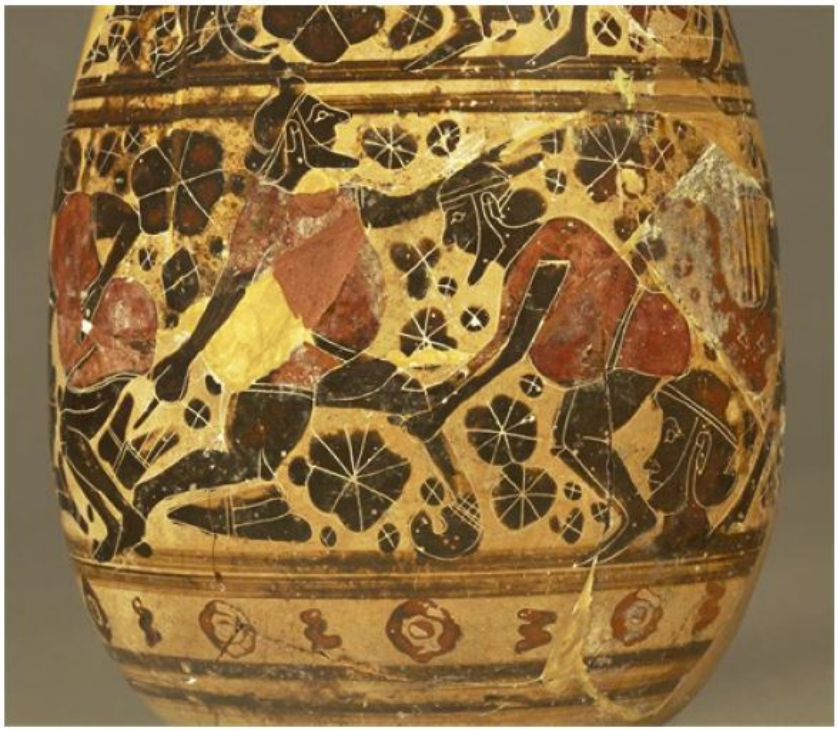

Fig. 5.11 Corinthian alabastron with Komast
7th century B.C.E.
Louvre, Paris

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taking place in the context of a symposium (Lissarrague, "Around the Krater," 196 -209); cf. Smith, "Dancing Spaces," 309.

cup in Erlangen that depicts a young man holding both a lyre and a wine krater and who appears to be singing.[310] From his opened mouth comes the inscription "I go making the *komos* to the sounds of the flute." This is one specific example which clearly connects the imagery of *komasts* with symposia and in particular sympotic entertainment.[311]

What is particularly significant for this investigation is that in many cases the komasts are represented with twisted feet apparently indicating a physical impairment. Fehr posits that "it is not always easy to decide whether they twist their feet on purpose to imitate a limp or whether they are actually physically disabled."[312] While some scholars consider the twisted feet an artificial prop,[313] Fehr argues that whether the impairment is real or merely representative is virtually inconsequential because in either case the artists have deliberately made this feature visible in the artwork and part of their overall expression of the komasts.[314]

§ 5.8.1.1 Komasts and Hephaistos

Tyler Jo Smith proposes that the physical impairment occasionally represented on komasts finds its intertext in the mythology of the Greek god Hephaistos who is presented in literature and as art as having a physical disability in his legs.[315] Hephaistos was the god of the forge and metal-working and is often depicted wearing a workman's hat or carrying the tools his trade such as tongs, a hammer, or an anvil which clearly mark him as a manual labourer (βάναυσος).[316] While Hephaistos is attributed with being a talented artisan,[317] his status as a manual labourer, as well as his physical impairment,[318] rendered him an

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[310] Lissarrague, "Around the *Krater*," 199

[311] Lissarrague, "Around the *Krater*," 199

[312] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 189-190.

[313] Eric Csapo and William Slater, for example, describe the komasts as wearing costumes and thus being "dressed as padded dancers" (*The Context of Ancient Drama* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994], 90).

[314] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 189-190.

[315] T.J. Smith, "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'? Visions of Comic Parody in Archaic Greece," *BICS* 52 (2009): 71-72.

[316] Cf. § 3.4.2 n. 168.

[317] Smith, "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'? 72.

[318] It was noted in § 3.4.2 that for some people with physical disability, sedentary manual labouring positions would have been an alternative to more mobility-reliant positions such as those in agriculture. However, because manual labouring was considered repugnant by the elite, a person with an impairment would have been doubly despised.

outsider among the gods. Not only is he mocked by the other Olympians because of his physical impairment but also because of his chosen profession.[319]

One particularly significant account of Hephaistos is given in *The Iliad* where Hephaistos is called upon to act as the wine-pourer at a banquet to the gods. The narrative is meant to be humorous on different levels. Firstly, the gods themselves laugh, just as the original audiences would have laughed, at the juxtaposition made between the beautiful young Ganymede who normally played the role of the wine-pourer, and the clumsy, awkward image of Hephaistos limping through the room attempting to do the same task. Secondly, Robert Garland asserts that "by prompting comparison with that graceful and perfect-limbed youth (Ganymede), the ungainly Hephaistos becomes a natural vehicle for parody."[320] Homer describes this banquet scene in the following way:

> Then he (Hephaistos) poured wine for all the other gods from left to right, drawing sweet nectar from the bowl. And unquenchable laughter arose among the blessed gods, as they saw Hephaestus puffing through the palace. Thus the whole day long till sunset they feasted, nor did their hearts lack anything of the equal banquet, nor of the beauteous lyre that Apollo held, nor of the Muses that sang, replying one to the other with sweet voices.[321]

While Hephaistos is not himself described as an *akletos*, his marginal status is apparent in both literary and visual representations. Burkhard Fehr emphasises the parallels between Homer's descriptions of Hephaistos at the Olympian banquet with those of Odysseus as an *akletos* in *The Odyssey*.[322] It is especially in this narrative of the divine banquet that Hephaistos' 'otherness' is most apparent. The other Olympians, renowned for their *kalokagathia* – their beauty and goodness[323] – are contrast with the marginalised Hephaistos. Here, Hephaistos is like the sympotic jester (γελωτοποιός) or buffoon (*scurra*), paralleling the role of the *akletoi* in entertaining those at table and becoming the brunt of derision and the source of amusement at the divine banquet.

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[319] Pipili, "Wearing an Other Hat," 154; B. Cohen, "Introduction," in *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* (ed. B. Cohen. Leiden: Brill, 2000), 56

[320] Garland, *Eye of the Beholder*, 84.

[321] Hom., *Il.*, 1.598 (Murray, LCL).

[322] Fehr, "Entertainers at the *Symposion*," 185-186.

[323] See § 3.4.1

Images of Hephaistos on Greek pottery often emphasise his mobility impairment by placing his feet either facing in opposite directions (see figs. 5.12 and fig. 5.13) or twisted back underneath themselves (see fig. 5.14). One account of Hephaistos more than any other is represented on Greek pottery: Hephaistos' return to Olympos. In some traditions Hephaistos' impairment is attributed to a fall to earth from Olympos; a punishment wrought upon Hephaistos by his father Zeus for interjecting in an argument between he and his wife Hera.[324] In other traditions, Hephaistos' physical disability is congenital.[325] In this case, it is Hera who casts Hephaistos from Olympos out of shame for giving birth to an impaired infant. In both expressions of the story, Hephaistos attributes his impairment and his literal and figural lowly-status on earth as the result of Hera's maltreatment.

In order to seek revenge on his mother, the artful Hephaistos designs a throne for Hera under the guise of reconciliation. However, once Hera sits on the throne, she is immediately bound in place by invisible cords. The gods thus hold a council in order to devise a strategy to ensure Hephaistos' return in order to free Hera from her bondage. While Ares attempts to bring Hephaistos back by force, eventually Hephaistos is lured by Dionysos into consuming large amounts of wine and it is in his intoxicated state that Dionysos is eventually able to lead Hephaistos back to Olympos. Only then does Hephaistos accede and free Hera from her throne. In response, Hera rewards both Dionysos and Hephaistos by having them accepted among the Olympian gods.[326]

Although the account is primarily only reserved in fragmented form throughout the literary sources, visual representations of Hephaistos' return were popular on Greek wine kraters around the eighth to sixth centuries B.C.E. The earliest and most detailed

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[324] Hom. *Il.* 1.590-594

[325] E.g., Hom. *Il.* 18.394–418; *Homeric Hymn 3 to Pythian Apollo* 310f.

[326] The most detailed account of Hephaistos' return is found in Libanius, *Narrations* 7 (from Foerster, vol. 8, p. 38) with a number of shorter and fragmented accounts also appearing in a range of other literary sources (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 18.394–418; Hesiod, *Theog.* 924, 927–28; the *Hymn to Apollo* 118, 314–17; the poems of Alcaeus [349 a–b] and Pindar [fr. 283 SM]. Two other late traditions are preserved in Pausanias [1.20.3] and Hyginus [*Fab.* 166]).

representation of the Return of Hephaistos is that of the François Vase dated to 580-570 B.C.E.[327] Here, as well as in other visual representations of this story,

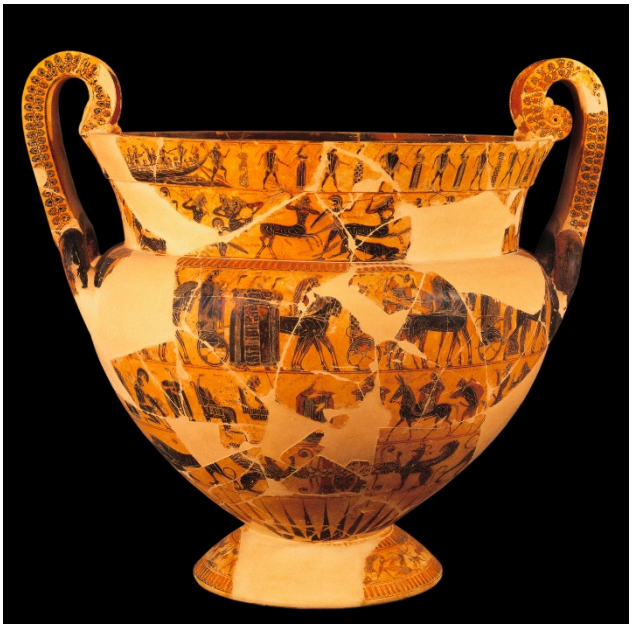

Fig. 5.12 François Vase
Attic Black Figure Volute Krater
Kleitias Painter
c. 570-560 B.C.E.
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze, Florence, Italy

[327] E.g., G.M. Hedreen, *Silens in Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painting: Myth and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 14.

Fig. 5.13 François Vase – Detail of Hephaistos' Return to Olympos
Attic Black Figure Volute Krater
Kleitias Painter
c. 570-560 B.C.E.
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze, Florence, Italy

Hephaistos' marginal status is accentuated by his mode of travel. While Hephaistos' Olympian counterparts travel on horses, or indeed, in processions of horse-drawn chariots, Hephaistos himself is depicted as riding on the undignified mule or donkey usually reserved for labour (see fig. 5.12 and fig. 5.13).[328] In other representations of Hephaistos' return to Olympos, he is depicted as riding in the feminised side-saddle position (see fig. 5.14).[329]

Tyler Jo Smith proposes that there is a close connection between the image of the lame and marginalised Hephaistos with that of the komasts of Greek pottery. Smith contends that the twisted feet of the komasts act as a synecdoche to represent the image of Hephaistos, especially the image as immortalised in the depictions of his return to

[328] J.M. Padgett, "The Stable Hands of Dionysius: Satyrs and Donkeys as Symbols of Social Marginalization in Attic Vase Painting" in *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* (ed. B. Cohen; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 50.

[329] S. Fineberg, "Hephaestus on Foot in the Ceramicus," *TAPA* 139.2 (2009): 295.

Olympos.[330] While the imagery of the symposium is often abbreviated to single elements such as *kline* or wine kraters so too is the story of the return to Olympos represented visually on Greek pottery by its "two most vital visual elements": Hephaistos' lame feet and his excessive consumption of alcohol.[331] While Smith agrees that there is certainly a connection between the komasts and the origins of Greek theatre, especially that of comic theatre, she proposes the basis for these comedic elements lies in their association with the impaired and marginalised Hephaistos.[332] The lameness of the komasts, as well their excessive consumption of alcohol, thus serve as a tribute to Hephaistos, embracing his outsider status in a most theatrical and spectacular manner.

In this way, Tyler Jo Smith views the komasts as, to some extent, playing the role of Hephaistos as a part of formalised theatrical performances presented as sympotic entertainment.[333] This proposal not only accounts for the frequency of sympotic-related imagery represented on the komos vases, but also explains why in some images of the komasts they appear to be utilising costumes and props.[334] However, Tyler Jo Smith argues that while there is certainly this element of formalised theatrics associated with the komasts, ultimately

> we should imagine first and foremost a simple reveller, who likes his wine, at times even pours it for others, and supplies spontaneous comic relief or uncouth entertainment reminiscent in every way of the buffoonery of Hephaistos in *The Iliad* book 1.[335]

In this respect, the komasts are not merely playing the role of the lame Hephaistos, but the komasts are banquet revellers, most likely uninvited, spontaneously and indecorously entertaining the dinner guests. It is not merely that these entertainers have taken on the guise of the lame Hephaistos, but rather, Tyler Jo Smith proposes that the very role of the impaired god was likely filled by people who were themselves marginalised and

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[330] "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 86.
[331] "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 86
[332] "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 86.
[333] "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 87.
[334] While numerous scholars suggest that the "padding" of the komasts is artificial (e.g., A.D. Trendall and T.B.L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London: Phaidon Press, 1971), I,3; Csapo and Slater, *Context of Ancient Drama*, 90). Smith has argued that this is not necessarily the case (Smith, "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 78).
[335] "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 87.

impaired.[336] The *komasts* then are not merely an homage to the impaired Hephaistos but are likely themselves to be genuine marginalised and possibly physically-impaired *akletoi* engaging in a social exchange trading food and wine for the guests' entertainment. These images of the lame komasts thus reinforce and propel the already long-standing tradition of the physically-impaired in the role of sympotic jester and entertainer in existence throughout antiquity.

While the images of the komasts pre-date the New Testament material by some time, the image of the physically-impaired entertainer remained popular right through Greco-Roman antiquity and indeed carrying on into the medieval period. Not only were representations of impaired entertainers popular in Greco-Roman literary sources, but they were also popular on vases, terracottas, and mosaics in the form of grotesque musicians, actors and dancing dwarfs such as has been presented throughout the current study. Thus, while interest in the komasts themselves waned at the end of the Archaic period, the image of the physically-impaired entertainer was one that remained popular and retained a long-term pervasive influence in representations of disability in Greco-Roman antiquity and beyond.

§ 5.8.2 Summary of Banqueting and Disability

In this section on banqueting and disability, we have examined in some detail the close connection that existed between Greco-Roman banquet/symposium practices and the role of people with physical disability. While images of physically- and sensory-impaired entertainers are known in many forms in the Greco-Roman sources, there is certainly a portion of these images that highlight the particular role of impaired entertainers in the context of the symposium. In some instances, people with physical and sensory disability appear as the companions of symposiasts, in many other cases, the impaired persons are described as fulfilling the roles of sympotic entertainers. While the manner in which the impaired person might entertain the invited guests certainly varied, what is commonly attested is that much of their entertainment value resided in mockery and derision and the source of the audience's amusement resided in watching their non-hegemonic forms attempt to fulfill the roles of dancers, boxers, or musicians.

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[336] "Komastai or 'Hephaistoi'?" 88.

The image of the impaired entertainer appears in close connection to that of the *akletos* of the literary sources. The *akletos* as the uninvited guest while occasionally embracing the same ideals as the rest of the symposiasts present, very often represented the ethnic and/or social 'other,' embracing and performing unacceptable sympotic behaviour. In this way, the *akletos* served as a kind of antitype that acted as a foil for the ordered and socially acceptable behaviour of the legitimately-invited guests. It was through the expression of such indecorous and deviant behaviour that the *akletos* would both fulfil and indeed perpetuate his social unacceptability.

It has been argued in this section that in addition to the literary accounts, representations of *akletoi* likewise appear on Greek pottery in the form of komasts. While the komasts have long been associated with Greek comic theatre, recent studies posit a close relationship between the komasts and both the Greek god Hephaistos as well as the *akletoi* of the literary sources, both of which are presented, on occasion, as being physically impaired. The komasts are often presented as performing the same inappropriate behaviours described of the *akletoi* in the sympotic literature. Not only does this deviant behaviour serve to reflect the marginal status of Hephaistos as the impaired-entertainer *par excellence*, but indicates that the actions of the komasts are also driven by the desire, and indeed, the necessity, to take up the role of the uninvited guests at symposia in exchange for meals and wine. While depictions of komasts decreased in popularity at the end of the Archaic period, the representation of physically- and sensory-impaired entertainers remained observable throughout Greco-Roman antiquity including the literary and visual sources of the first-century C.E.

§ 5.9 Re-reading the Parable of the Banquet (Luke 14:15-24)

The parable of the banquet in Luke 14:15-24 relates the story of a banquet host who is shunned at the last moment by his originally invited guests. When those who had been invited are called to attend, "they all alike began to make excuses" (14:18-20).[337] Though

[337] Scholars debate the validity of the excuses. While a number of scholars see the excuses as "ludicrous" (e.g, Bailey, *Through Peasant's Eyes,* 97; Kistemaker, *Parables of Jesus*, 196; Wendland, "'Blessed is the man,'" 180). Others consider the excuses valid (e.g., Crossan, "The Historical Jesus," 261; Linnemann,

the banquet is imminent, the host seeks to find alternative guests with whom to dine. In order to do this, the banquet host directs his servant to go out a second time, this time going out "into the streets and alleys of the town" in order to "bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" to come and attend the host's banquet (14:21). While the servant obeys, he observes that there is still room available (14:22) and thus the host sends out his servant a third time, directing him to "go out to the roads and country lanes and compel (the people) to come in" in order that the host's banquet "will be full" (14:23).

According to traditional interpretations, the parable of the banquet is an eschatological parable used by Luke to emphasise to his first-century audience the inclusion of Gentile-Christians into the community of God. Those who were originally invited should be understood as Israel itself but through their refusal to accept the claim of Jesus' messiahship, they have now been excluded from the messianic banquet. However, in an interesting twist, the banquet will still go ahead with the invitations now being extended to the most unexpected of recipients, those the Lukan Jesus refers to as "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." This reference to the poor and marginalised is considered by many interpreters to encompass two separate groups of people. Firstly, Luke's reference to "the streets and alleys" are those *within* the confines of the city and are therefore representative of the marginalised members from *within* Judaism who had previously been shunned and disenfranchised. However, the final search for guests which takes place among "the roads and country lanes" is to be interpreted as those who reside *outside* of the city and is thus representative of those *outside* of Judaism, that is, the Gentiles.[338] Consequently, the parable is interpreted to mean that while Israel had long been expecting God's anticipated messianic feast, due to their sinfulness and disobedience, God has rescinded his original invitation instead emphasising that the kingdom of God has been reserved for a new community: a reconstituted Israel composed of a faithful

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Parables of Jesus, 89), and possibly even related to the list of excuses for exemption from service outlined in Deuteronomy 20:5-8; 24:5 (e.g., J.A. Sanders, "The Ethic of Election in Luke's Great Banquet Parable," in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics* [ed. J.L. Crenshaw and J.T. Willis; New York: Ktav 1974], 245-271; Swartley, "Unexpected Banquet People," 130-145 and D.P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* [Harrisburg, Trinity Press, 1989], 280-285).

[338] Just, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 576; D.L. Bock, *Luke*, (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 395; J.M. Creed, *The Gospel according to Luke* (London Macmillan, 1930), 192; Fitzmeyer, *Luke*, 2:1053; Keach, *Exposition of the Parables*, 544; Kistemaker, *Parables of Jesus*, 197; Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 130; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 585-586; Schippers, *Gelijkenissen*, 41; Stein, *Luke*, 394; Timmer, *Kingdom Equation*, 57.

remnant but primarily populated by marginalised Jews and the faithful members of the Gentile community.

For those scholars who have questioned the traditional interpretation, a number of common objections have been raised. Firstly, a number of scholars are critical of the allegorical interpretation because it promotes a belief that the Gentiles were only invited into the kingdom as a result of Israel's refusal to enter.[339] This sentiment appears inconsistent with the rest of the Luke's gospel and the expression of universal inclusion contained therein. For Luke, the inclusion of the Gentiles is not predicated on the exclusion of the Jews but was part of God's original plan. While Luke certainly expresses that there are some members of the Jewish community who are resistant to Jesus' ministry, he by no means envisions this as encompassing all Israel. In this way, Luke does not consider the Gentiles a substitution for the whole of the nation of Israel, but rather, through Jesus both Jews and Gentiles will celebrate together in the messianic feast.[340] This inclusion, however, while certainly anticipated in Luke's gospel is not seen as being fully appropriated until the mission of the apostles in Luke's second account, that is, the book of Acts.[341] If Luke's intention was to express that the Jews were now excluded from the kingdom from this point in Jesus' ministry in chapter 14, then this exclusion would have been reflected in the rest of Jesus' earthly ministry in Luke. However, this is not the case. Instead, following on from the parable of the banquet until the end of his gospel account, Luke emphasises Jesus' primary focus is on the Jewish community while all the time anticipating the inclusion of the Gentiles. It is only in the book of Acts that a concerted mission to the Gentiles is initiated.

Secondly, other scholars are critical of the traditional interpretation because of the "unflattering portrait of God" that it presents. According to the allegorical interpretation,

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[339] E.g., Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 554-563.

[340] J.B. Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988), 56; B. Witherington III, "Salvation and Health in Christian Antiquity," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (ed. I.H. Marshall and D. Peterson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 163; P. Mallen, *The Reading and Transformation of Isaiah in Luke-Acts* (LNTS 367; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 68; M.L. Strauss, "The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and its Fulfilment in Lukan Christology," *TB* 44.2 (1993): 387.

[341] E.g., Acts 15.

God only extends invitations to the marginalised and Gentiles *after* he has been shunned by his original invitees. Thus, God is seen to be "extend(ing) invitations originally in a way consistent with the social elite of Luke's world and only turns to the poor when rebuffed by the rich."[342] This is the view of Joel B. Green, for example, who states that "in this reading, the inclusion of the 'poor' would be for God a kind of afterthought, an alternative course of action forced upon him by his need to have his house full."[343] It is for this reason that a number of scholars including Green, as well as Willi Braun and Luise Schrotoff, have proposed that rather than a parable, this is merely a story of a wealthy follower of Jesus who embraces the inclusion of the marginalised promoted in Luke 14:7-13.[344] While this interpretation is compelling, there is nothing in the text of Luke 14:15-24 that indicates that the banquet host "changed his mind."[345]

Thirdly, a number of scholars have expressed concern with the process of allegorisation itself in relation to this parable. Any allegorical interpretation relies on seeing each element in the parable as a signifier for greater theological meaning. However, as Charles W. Hedrick has noted, the challenge with any allegorical interpretation is knowing which elements should be considered those of importance:

> How do readers or auditors know precisely what elements inside the narrative deliberately reference certain specific elements outside the narrative? Or put another way, how does the inventor of the allegory control the narrative so the audience, or reader, will make the associations intended by the allegorist?[346]

According to Craig A. Blomberg, the means for understanding any allegorical elements in Jesus' parables can be found in the Hebrew Bible and/or rabbinic parables of Jesus' day. Blomberg proposes that the meaning of the parables is reliant on a collection of stock images that would easily be recognisable to Luke's first-century audience through their use in other Jewish literature.[347] Such imagery included references to vineyards and wine,

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[342] Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 688 n. 217.
[343] Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 556.
[344] Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, *passim*; Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 556; "Das Gleichnis vom großen," 204-209.
[345] Snodgrass, "Common Life with Jesus," 193-194.
[346] Hedrick, *Many Things in Parables*, 59.
[347] *Interpreting the Parables*, 37.

sheep and shepherds, kings and kingdoms, and Blomberg argues, this stock imagery also included the image of an elaborate banquet.[348]

While Blomberg is likely correct in assuming that an image of a banquet would have had particular theological significance for a Jewish audience of the first century,[349] it cannot be said that all the elements in the parable are quite so perspicuous. Indeed, despite Blomberg's own interest in allegorical interpretations of the parables, even he concedes that interpreting the parable of the banquet in relation to the Gentiles is problematic because there is no precedent for using the phrase "highways and byways" (Lk. 14:23) as a symbol for Gentile territory.[350] Indeed, Blomberg asserts that in the context of this parable, the "highways and byways" while outside the city walls are still "entirely within Israel."[351] In this way, Blomberg concludes that "there is nothing in the parable's imagery to suggest that any non-Israelites are in view."[352]

However, Blomberg's proposal can be developed further. Not only is there no precedent for considering the "highways and byways" as a referent for the Gentiles, there is no precedent for interpreting "the poor" and those with disability as a referent for the Gentiles either. While it possible that some references to the blind in Deutero-Isaiah could be interpreted as referring to Gentiles, this is not the most common use of this terminology in Isaiah or anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible.[353] In general, references to the "poor" (πτωχός)[354] and those with disability in the LXX describe members of the Israelite community rather than the nations.[355]

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[348] *Interpreting the Parables*, 37.

[349] See § 5.6.1.

[350] C.L. Blomberg, "When is a Parallel really a Parallel? A Test Case: The Lucan Parables," *WTJ* 46 (1984): 87.

[351] Blomberg, "When is a Parallel," 87.

[352] *Interpreting the Parables*, 234.

[353] E.g., Isa.42:7. Although James P. Ware has noted in the Targum of Isaiah 42:7, that the "blind" here are considered to be only those from within the house of Israel rather than the Gentiles (*The Mission of the Church: In Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism* [NovTSup 120; Leiden: Brill, 2005], 109).

[354] References to the "poor" (πτωχός) in the HB consist of references to those who are facing financial difficulties (e.g., Lev. 19:15; 2 Ki. 24:14; Ezek. 16:49) as well as those who are described as the "afflicted" or "weak" (e.g, Job 36:6; Ps 82:4; Isa 29:19; Isa 61:1) which is a possible combination of those experiencing financial difficulties as well as spiritual or physical afflictions.

[355] While there are times that disability-related language is used metaphorically in the HB, for the most part, the language of disability is employed literally rather than metaphorically.

In Luke's gospel, there are four occasions where a description of the "poor" (πτωχός) appears in close connection with references to people with physical and/or sensory disability. The first occurrence is in Jesus' synagogue appearance in Luke 4:14-28. Here, the Lukan Jesus uses a combination of verses from Isaiah to indicate his identity as a prophet of God:[356]

> 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
> because he has anointed me
> to proclaim good news to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
> and recovery of sight for the blind,
> to set the oppressed free,
> 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

At the conclusion of his reading, Jesus announces that "this scripture (had been) fulfilled" in their presence (Lk. 4:21). While it is certainly possible that the "poor" and the "blind" could be interpreted metaphorically at this point in Luke's narrative, the following events indicate that he has a far more literal interpretation in mind. Indeed, Luke presents Jesus' announcement in the synagogue as central to the commencement of his public ministry. From this point in the narrative, Luke highlights the ways in which Jesus fulfills this criteria in a demonstrative way through his preaching and healing. For this reason, when John the Baptist asks Jesus, "Are you the one to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Lk. 7:20), Jesus' evidence of his identity is in the physical representation of the Isaianic texts:

> καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Πορευθέντες ἀπαγγείλατε Ἰωάννῃ ἃ εἴδετε καὶἠκούσατε: τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν, χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται, πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται.
>
> Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

In this way, Luke's references to the "poor" (πτωχός), "blind" (τυφλός), "lame" (χωλός), and "deaf" (κωφός) are literal rather than metaphoric.

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[356] Isa. 58:6; 61:12.

Additional evidence that Luke's reference to "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" in Luke 14:21 should be interpreted literally rather than metaphorically is in the fact that in the preceding parable in Luke 14:7-14, Luke employs this precise phrase in a literal way.[357] In this first parable, Jesus, upon noticing "how the guests picked the places of honor at the table," tells the guests a parable about a wedding feast. Rather than inviting those who are your social equals, Jesus exhorts those present to instead to invite "the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind" (ἀλλ' ὅταν δοχὴν ποιῇς, κάλει πτωχούς, ἀναπείρους, χωλούς, τυφλούς; Lk. 14:13). While clearly Jesus' reference to the inclusion of the "poor" and those with disability is to be understood as a literal directive here, proponents of the allegorical interpretation of Luke 14:15-24 consider this same phrase to be interpreted allegorically only eight verses later. As Kyoung-Jin Kim has posited, "Is it really possible that Luke intends his readers to read almost identical verses in a different way one after another?"[358] This seems highly unlikely. Lyle J. Story likewise concurs, observing that while

> Luke does reveal a concern for the concentric movement of the gospel from the Jewish to the Gentile recipients, but here in this chapter, such allegorical nuance is untenable. The gospel as a whole is concerned with the poor and unfortunate and does not spiritualise or allegorise these persons."[359]

While it is certainly likely that a first-century Jewish audience would have interpreted Luke's references to a banquet as having theological import, it seems far less likely that references to the "poor" and those with disability would have been interpreted as referring to Gentiles by Luke's auditors. Firstly, there is no precedent for interpreting the 'poor' or those with disability as Gentiles in the Hebrew Bible[360] or in Luke's gospel. Nor, as Blomberg asserts, was there any precedent for using the designation "highways and byways" as a reference to Gentiles. It is for this reason, we consider that in the context of this particular parable that Luke is highlighting the place of the poor and those with disability in the Jesus' movement and in the future kingdom. This is not to say that Luke

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[357] This phrase is identical to the one that appears in 14:21 with the exception that the references to the "blind" and "lame" are transposed.

[358] K.-J. Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology* (JSNTSup 155; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2012), 188.

[359] J.L. Story, "One Banquet with Many Courses (Luke 14:1-24)," *JBPR* 4 (2012): 91.

[360] It has been noted by numerous scholars that the "poor ones" or "afflicted ones" was a common self-designation for the DSS community rather than a phrase associated with Gentiles (e.g., M.D. Matthews, *Riches, Poverty and the Faithful: Perspectives on Wealth in the Second Temple Period and the Apocalypse of John* [SNTSMS 154; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 119).

does not consider the inclusion of the Gentiles as a fundamental consequence of Jesus' earthly ministry, but this is a consequence that while intimated in Luke is not fully realised until the book of Acts.

This interpretation is given further weight, however, through an examination of banqueting and symposia practices in antiquity. Dennis E. Smith has convincingly argued that the gospel of Luke relies heavily on Greco-Roman symposium imagery. Smith argues that Luke writes his account of Jesus in such a way as to parallel his gospel account with the sympotic literature popular in the first-century. Smith observes that while "the motif of Jesus at table is a firm part of the Jesus tradition prior to Luke...Luke's Gospel has made much broader use of the theme than any other."[361] Not only does Luke's gospel highlight that much of Jesus' ministry took place in the context of table fellowship but that many of the stock themes and characters popular in the sympotic literature are reproduced throughout Luke's gospel.

The most salient example of this is in expressed in the form of seating arrangements at table. As was noted, popular among sympotic discussions were elements of sympotic etiquette, that is, while at table guests would discuss either real or hypothetical events that have or could potentially take place at table. The theme of seating arrangements thus became a popular topic of conversation with sympotic guests recalling real events or proposing possible scenarios where guests were insulted by who they were seated next to or where they were positioned in relation to the other guests. This topic is replicated in the parable that appears in Luke 14:7-14 noted above. Smith contends that "the parable functions to symbolize how rankings will be assigned in the kingdom by reference to a recognized custom in the culture."[362] However, rather than simply alluding to a sympotic theme, Smith proposes that the entire framework of the banquet parables in Luke 14 parallels that of other sympotic texts. Just as other sympotic texts featured a *faits divers* that would lead into a discussion of a particular theme, so this is likewise seen to occur in chapter 14 with the healing of the man in Luke 14:1-6 leading into a discussion of the

[361] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 616.
[362] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 619.

marginalised at table. Smith also argues that "another prominent feature of symposium literature was its use of the table as a setting for philosophical discourse."[363] In the same way, Jesus is likewise seen throughout Luke 14:1-24 as participating in similar philosophical debates commonly represented in the sympotic literature.

In Smith's view, chapter 14 of Luke's gospel "is a highly structured literary unit with clear reference to the symposium genre."[364] Luke thus draws on a rich tradition of sympotic literature that not only contributes to the "literary organization of Luke's gospel but also to its central theological themes."[365] However, while Luke composes his gospel in such a way as to parallel Jesus' table fellowship with that of the philosophers of the traditional sympotic literature, Luke also subverts this imagery indicating that the ideals and values of the Greco-Roman symposium are at odds with those of the Jesus movement. Rather than vying for seats of honour, Jesus exhorts his followers to take the lowest seats, those of the least honour. Rather than limiting invitations to those of similar social status to ensure reciprocity, Jesus' followers are encouraged to instead invite the poor and marginalised who have no way offering such hospitality in return. In this way, the actions of Jesus' followers act to highlight the inclusion and acceptance available to all in the future kingdom.

This subversion is seen most pertinently in those Jesus prioritizes for places at table in Luke, that is, "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame." Although other scholars have drawn attention to the parallels between the gospel of Luke and Greco-Roman symposium literature, to date, no scholar has drawn attention to this particular aspect of the symposium. That is, that according to Luke, those seen as receiving banquet invitations are the very people seen to be excluded from them in Greco-Roman sympotic practice. If indeed we can argue that the sympotic literature and culture of antiquity permeated the rational of the ancient world in such a way that Luke could employ and indeed subvert this literature, it also seems possible that in his mention of "the poor, the crippled, the blind

[363] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 620.
[364] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 621.
[365] Smith, "Table Fellowship," 638.

and the lame" that Luke is likewise referring to a specific element of Greco-Roman sympotic practice evident in the literature and artwork of antiquity.

While the Greco-Roman symposium was idealised as a place of mutual enjoyment and egalitarianism, on closer inspection, it became apparent that this celebration of equality was only extended to those within one's own social sphere. This *koinōnia* and friendship of the symposium could only be maintained through the strict adherence to sympotic regulations and thus rather than a genuine inclusive egalitarianism, Greco-Roman symposia were actually more reflective of "complex, hierarchical relationship(s) between host and guests (which are) constructed through the offering and acceptance of invitations, food, entertainment, conversation, and the like."[366] While the symposium model certainly had room for those of the lower classes and those unable to offer hospitality in return, these positions were limited only to those who were willing and able to provide a service in exchange, usually, the role of the sympotic entertainer.

What is apparent through our artwork and literary sources is how often people with physical and sensory disability were connected with the role of the entertainer at table. While on occasion these entertainers were described as professionals who had permanently taken on the role of actors or dancers, what is also apparent is that numerous others came to symposia in the form of *akletoi*, uninvited guests who would offer philosophical discussion or other forms of entertainment in exchange for a meal. While *akletoi* were seen to play an important role in the symposium, they were by no means considered of equal status as the genuinely invited symposium guests. And yet, these people who are clearly depicted as *akletoi*, as uninvited guests, in the Greco-Roman sympotic tradition, are precisely those envisioned as being included as fully-fledged invitees in the Jesus movement and in the future kingdom.

§ 5.10 Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:15-24) in light of Greco-Roman sympotic practices. Studies in the Lukan banquet parable have been

[366] Roller, *Dining Posture*, 93.

dominated by allegorical interpretations. The parable has been interpreted as indicating that due to Israel's rejection of Jesus that God has likewise rejected Israel, with the beneficiaries of the gospel now being the marginalised of the Jewish community but especially the faithful members of the Gentile community. While Luke certainly does envision an inclusion of the Gentiles into the community, it has been argued in this chapter that the parable of the banquet does not envision this inclusion but is instead aimed at highlighting a reversal of fortunes for the marginalised members of the Jewish community.

While the literature of the symposium is primarily limited to the Greco-Roman world, it has been noted throughout this chapter that the customs associated with the symposium permeated ancient meal practices to such an extent that many of the key customs were replicated across cultures. For this reason, it is likely that the same disparity with guests would also have been replicated in Jewish banqueting practices also. Indeed, proof of this is in the parables of Luke 14 where Jesus criticises the Jewish leaders he is dining with as they argue over their places at table.

In this way, the message of the Lukan parable is one of reversal of fortunes. Greco-Roman sympotic practices reveal a connection with symposia and disability that is entirely negative. People with physical and sensory disability are certainly depicted in association with the symposium, but in general, they are the *akletoi*, the uninvited guests at the banquet. They are the ones subjected to mockery and derision at the hands of those wielding power and wealth. However, the parable highlights that in contrast to these practices, the Jesus movement is characterised by the inclusion of all those who choose to accept and follow Jesus. Rather than being present as *akletoi*, Luke highlights that the poor and those with physical and sensory disability are now genuine recipients of the banquet invitations and have an important place within the Jesus' movement as a foretaste of the inclusion manifested in the future kingdom.

CHAPTER SIX
THE WOMAN WITH THE FLOW OF BLOOD: AN EXAMPLE OF A 'DISABLED' WOMAN IN ANTIQUITY (MARK 5:25-34)

§ 6.1 Introduction

The Synoptic account of the woman with the long-term "flow of blood" has been addressed at length in both academic and popular writing. Indeed, the story was deemed so important within the context of the early church as a means of highlighting Jesus as a liberating healer, that it is depicted on numerous sarcophagi and throughout catacombs of the early Christian era.[1] The woman in the story, who became known as the Haemorrhoissa,[2] came to represent the breach between the *ekklesia* and the synagogue,[3] between the alleged freedom of the Jesus movement and the purity requirements of the Torah. This polemic was grounded on the belief that by allowing the unclean woman to touch his garments Jesus was announcing the abrogation of the Jewish law and the supersedence of the entire purity system.[4] In more recent scholarship, the passage has caused a stir among Jewish and Christian feminist scholars alike who have debated the extent to which Jesus is depicted as liberating women from the allegedly oppressive rituals of first-century Jewish torah observance.

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[1] For a detailed discussion of the woman with a "flow of blood" in the early church, see numerous chapters in the recent edited work of Barbara Baert (ed.; with the collaboration of N. Schalley), *The Woman with Blood Flow (Mark 5:24-34): Narrative, Iconic, and Anthropological Spaces* (AR 2; Leuven: Peeters, 2014). Unfortunately, as this book was only published just prior to the submission of this dissertation it was unable to be included among the research for this chapter. See also B. Baert (with the collaboration of E. Sidgwick), "Touching the Hem: The Thread between Garment and Blood in the Story of the Woman with Haemorrhage (Mark 5:24b-34parr)," *Textile* 9.3 (2011): 308-351; B. Baert, L. Kusters, and E. Sidgwick, "Issue of Blood: The Healing of the Woman with the Haemorrhage (Mark 5.24b-34; Luke 8.42b-48; Matthew 9.19-22) in Early Medieval Visual Culture," *J Relig Health* 51 (2012): 663-681; C.E. Joynes, "Still at the Margins?: Gospel Women and their Afterlives," in *Radical Christian Voices and Practice: Essays in Honour of Christopher Rowland* (ed. Z. Bennett and D.B. Gowler; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 117-136; L. Kusters and E. Sidgwick, "A Motif and its Basal Layer: The Haemorrhoissa (Mark 5:24-34) and the Interplay of Iconological and Anthropological Research" *J Art Hist SAS* 44.2 (2011): 144-158.

[2] See Baert, Kusters, and Sidgwick, "Issue of Blood."

[3] A. Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke: Insights of Ancient Medical Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 61.

[4] This view was popular among the Church Fathers who interpreted the intercalated account as an allegory whereby Jairus was representative of Judaism and the synagogue and the bleeding woman represented the gospel and the church, e.g. Ambrose of Milan (*Exp. Luc.* 6.5-64, CCSL 14:1-400) and Augustine (27, NPNF6 731).

This chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly, we will introduce the text of Mark 5:25-34 and provide a summary of the key interpretations of this pericope. Secondly, we will explore the Markan reference to the woman's bleeding (ῥύσει αἵματος) as well as regular and irregular gynaecological bleeding in general in both its Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. Finally, following this survey, we will assess the text of Mark 5:25-34 in light of this investigation into the woman's "flow of blood" (ῥύσει αἵματος), as well as connecting the passage with the studies developed throughout this dissertation regarding physical and sensory impairment. While not traditionally considered a physical or sensory disability, the woman's protracted illness will be reinterpreted in light of the impact of her condition on her ability to fulfil her socially prescribed roles.

§ 6.2 Introduction to the text of Mark 5:25-34

While the account of the woman with the "flow of blood" occurs in all three Synoptic gospels,[5] this study will focus primarily on the Markan version of the healing noting at times any significant redactional changes made by Matthew and Luke in their respective versions. In Mark,[6] the healing of the woman with a "flow of blood" appears as part of an intercalated miracle story which also features the revivification of Jairus' daughter. Although the account of the woman with the "flow of blood" is framed by the account of Jairus and his daughter and to some extent must be read within that context, this chapter will primarily focus on the illness and its ramifications for the woman with bleeding. However, since it is apparent that the two healings are meant to be read together and thus interpret each other, we will also address some issues of the healing of Jairus' daughter in so far as they impact our understanding and interpretation of the woman with a "flow of blood." It is also worth noting that exegetes of this passage often question the origin of the conjoined stories. While a small number posit that the story was a genuine historical event,[7] most commentators of this pericope argue that the merging of the stories was

[5] Lk. 8: 40-56 // Mk. 5:21-43 // Mt. 9:18-26.

[6] Throughout this chapter we refer to both the gospel and the author/s of the gospel as "Mark" for the sake of brevity without making a definitive statement about authorship of this gospel.

[7] E.g., C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 182; R.T France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 234; V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1952), 289.

orchestrated by Mark,[8] or that it possibly took place during oral transmission.[9] In any case, for the purpose of this study we will be addressing the passage canonically, that is, dealing with the text as it appears in its intercalated form in the gospel of Mark without any attempt to delineate the pericope's formative processes.

Mark 5:25-34

> 25καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη 26καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα
> τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα, 27ἀκούσασα περὶ τοῦ
> Ἰησοῦ, ἐλθοῦσαἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὄπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ: 28ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὅτι Ἐὰν ἅψωμαι κἂν τῶν
> ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι. 29καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔγνω τῷ σώματι ὅτι
> ἴαται ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος. 30καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπιγνοὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν
> ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐν τῷὄχλῳ ἔλεγεν, Τίς μου ἥψατο τῶν ἱματίων; 31καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ,
> Βλέπεις τὸν ὄχλον συνθλίβοντά σε, καὶ λέγεις, Τίς μου ἥψατο; 32καὶ περιεβλέπετο ἰδεῖν τὴν τοῦτο
> ποιήσασαν. 33ἡ δὲ γυνὴφοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδυῖα ὃ γέγονεν αὐτῇ, ἦλθεν καὶ προσέπεσεν αὐτῷ
> καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. 34ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε: ὕπαγε εἰς
> εἰρήνην, καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιὴς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου.
>
> **25** And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. **26** She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. **27** When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, **28** because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."**29** Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. **30** At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" **31** "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" **32** But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. **33** Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. **34** He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."[10]

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[8] A number of commentators propose that the conjoined account is a Markan composition as this is a feature commonly used throughout this gospel (e.g., 3:20-35; 6:7-32; 11:12-26; 14:1-11; 14:54-72). Paul J. Achtemeier suggests that there is good evidence to support the theory that the stories were combined at either the Markan or pre-Markan stage stating: "Whereas the narrative material concerning Jairus' daughter uses the historical present almost exclusively and is written in short sentences with relatively few participles, the story of the woman with the haemorrhage is told in the more usual aorist and imperfect tenses, with longer sentences and a higher frequency of participial use" ("Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae," *JBL* 89.3 [1970]: 277); cf. J.R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolation in Markan Narratives," *NovT* 31.3 (1989): 203. Ultimately, Achtemeier suggests that the stories were intercalated by Mark ("Towards the Isolation," 278-279); cf. M.A. Getty-Sullivan, *Women in the New Testament* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 54; M.D. Hooker, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St Mark* (London: A&C Black, 1991), 147; Joynes, "Still at the Margins?," 118; C.D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative* (SNTSMS 64; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 92; J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (vol. 2: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:708; M.-E. Rosenblatt, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Legal Considerations in the Haemorrhaging Woman's Story (Mark 5:25-34)," in *Transformative Encounters: Jesus and Women Re-Viewed* (ed. I.R. Kitzberger; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 141; E.M. Wainwright, *Women Healing/Healing Women: The Genderization of Healing in Christianity* (London: Equinox, 2006), 113.

[9] E.g., H. Kühn, *Ältere Sammlungen im Markusevangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971), 191-213; cf. R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (2nd ed; trans. J. Marsh; New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 228-230; W. Cotter, "Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles: The Healing of the Woman with the Hemorrhage and the Raising of Jairus's Daughter (Mark 5:21-43)," in *A Feminist Companion to Mark* (ed. A. Levine with M. Blickenstaff; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 56.

[10] NIV.

§ 6.3 Scholarly Interpretations of Mark 5:25-34

As has been noted by Mary Rose D'Angelo, "the double miracle account in Mark 5:21-43 has become an important locus in feminist interpretation of the gospel of Mark."[11] Not only does the conjoined healing account centre on the healing of two women, but the woman with the "flow of blood" appears to be suffering from a gender-specific illness, thus eliciting the interest of a number of scholars wishing to explore gender issues in the gospels. Though some scholars have studied the pericope in light of Hellenistic healing motifs[12] and others have drawn comparisons with Hellenistic magical practices,[13] the most widely proffered interpretation of this passage relates to ritual purity. For numerous scholars, the issue of purity/impurity is central to the narrative; indeed, it is often considered the rubric through which the entire pericope ought to be interpreted.[14] Advocates of this view claim that according to the Levitical purity regulations, the woman with the "flow of blood" would have been deemed ritually impure at the time of her healing because of her long-term uterine bleeding.[15] Despite the woman's failure to adhere to the

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[11] "Gender and Power in the Gospel of Mark: The Daughter of Jairus and the Woman with the Flow of Blood," in *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth* (ed. J.C. Cavandini; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 83.

[12] V.K. Robbins, "The Woman Who Touched Jesus' Garment: Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Synoptic Accounts," *NTS* 33 (1987): 502-515; G. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (trans. F. McDonagh; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 130-133.

[13] John Meier, for example, notes that "those who wish to classify Jesus as a magician find this story a star witness. Conservative scholars, caught in exegetical straits, must maintain the story's historicity while trying to downplay or explain away the magical element" (Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:709). John Hull, in speaking of the Lukan version, suggests that the woman in the account is not interested in Jesus at all but only in the magical power she believes he possesses (*Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* [London: SCM Press, 1974], 109). See also D.E. Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity* (WUNT 199; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 368-420. It is also interesting to note that Luke and Matthew both appear uncomfortable with the magical undertones which leads each of them to make particular redactional decisions. Luke, for example, changes the text from "who touched my clothes" to "who touched me?" to highlight that it is not magic but Jesus (Lk. 8:45). Matthew changes the account so that the healing does not take place until after Jesus speaks to the woman (Mt. 9:22).

[14] T. Holmén, "Jesus and the Purity Paradigm," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (ed. T. Holmén and S.E. Porter; vol. 3; Leiden: Brill, 2011), esp. 3:2716; M.J. Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations," *JBL* 103.4 (1984): 619-623; *idem*, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital: A Redactional Critical Investigation on Mark 5:24-34* (London: Associated University Press, 1990), *passim*.

[15] Most commentators and exegetes agree that the woman was ritually unclean/impure as a result of the long-term "flow of blood"; e.g. Baert, Kusters, and Sidgwick, "Issue of Blood," 666; M.E. Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 159; B. Byrne, *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 100; N. Calduch-Benages, *Perfume of the Gospel: Jesus' Encounters with Women* (trans. P. Nau; Theologia 8; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012), 27; Cranfield, *Gospel*, 184; R.A. Culpepper, *Mark* (SHBC; Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2007), 171; W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (vol. 2; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 2:130; J. Dewey, "Jesus' Healings of Women: Conformity and Nonconformity To Dominant Cultural Values as Clues for Historical Reconstruction," *BTB* 24.3 (1994): 127; J.R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 163;

Levitical purity laws that imposed restrictions on menstruating women, Jesus was willing to overlook her aberrant behaviour and her uncleanness in order to bring about the woman's healing and restoration.[16] Although the woman had jeopardised the purity of the crowd, not to mention Jesus himself, Jesus does not chastise her but rather commends the woman's faith. Jesus' apparent disregard for Levitical purity laws in this pericope is considered by some scholars as representing Jesus' abrogation of the entire purity system.[17] According to this interpretation, Jesus was recommending that his followers should adopt "radical" faith, such as that shown by Jairus and the bleeding woman. Indeed, this interpretation is so ubiquitous that the vast majority of commentators not only state definitively that the woman was experiencing "menstrual"[18] or "uterine" bleeding,[19] although it is not explicitly stated in the text and that such bleeding would have rendered

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France, *Gospel of Mark*, 235; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 297; Holmén, "Jesus and the Purity," 2716; Hooker, *Commentary*, 148; C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 302; Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 80; S. Love, "Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. W. Stegemann, B.J. Malina, and G. Theissen; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 91; C.S. Mann, *Mark* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1986), 284; Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 93; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:709; S. Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 57; F.J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 107; J.L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 139.

[16] Culpepper, *Mark*, 171; Marcus, *Mark*, 364.

[17] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, *passim;* H. Kinukawa, "The Story of Hemorrhaging Woman (Mark 5:25-34) Read from a Japanese Feminist Context," *BI* 2 (1994): 283–293.

[18] Some scholars seem confused between menstrual (i.e., regular uterine) bleeding and the condition experienced by the woman in the healing story which is clearly *irregular* uterine bleeding. For this reason, some commentators simply refer to the woman's condition as "menstrual" bleeding, e.g., R.G. Branch who states that the woman has an "ongoing menstrual cycle" ("A Study of the Woman in the Crowd and her Desperate Courage [Mark 5:21-43]," *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 47.1 Art. #649 (2013): n.p., Online: http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v47i1.649); J. Kopas, "Jesus and Women: Luke's Gospel," *TT* 43.2 (1986): 197; Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 55. The woman's problem is not a "menstrual cycle"; almost every woman of childbearing age has a "menstrual cycle." The woman's condition is *non-menstrual* or inter-menstrual bleeding.

[19] Uterine - Baert (and Sidgwick), "Touching the Hem," 311; A.Y. Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 280; D.W. Geyer, *Fear, Anomaly, and Uncertainty in the Gospel of Mark* (ATLA 47; London: Scarecrow, 2002), 161-162; I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 344; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:709. Vaginal – Boring, *Mark*, 159; J.D.M. Derrett, "Mark's Technique: The Hemorrhaging Woman and Jairus' Daughter," *Biblica* 63 (1982): 478; J. Dewey, "The Gospel of Mark," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza; vol. 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 470; J.R. Donahue and D.J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (SP; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 180; H.J. Hodges and J.C. Poirier, "Jesus as the Holy One of God: The Healing of the Zavah in Mark 5.24B-34," *JGRChJ* 8 (2011-2012): 164; Love, "Jesus Heals," 85; F.S. Spencer, *Dancing Girls, Loose Ladies and Women of the Cloth: The Women in Jesus' Life* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 69; C. Wassen, "Jesus and the Hemorrhaging Woman in Mark 5:24-34: Insights from Purity Laws from the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (ed. A. Voitila and J. Jokiranta; JSJSup 126; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 643; B. Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 187. John J. Wilkinson posits the possibility it is "uterine fibroid tumours," although it is impossible to confirm this (*The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 70).

the woman "ritually impure."[20] Though both points can be legitimately argued from the text, for many scholars this information is assumed rather than devised from the linguistics or literary form of the text.

Marla Selvidge's 1990 monograph, *Woman, Cult, and Miracle Recital: A Redactional-Critical Investigation on Mark 5:24-34*, has proved influential amongst biblical scholars addressing the conjoined healing account in Mark 5. For Selvidge, the story of the woman with the "flow of blood" hinges on the issue of purity. Selvidge suggests that one of the primary reasons Mark chose to include this account in his gospel is because "it stood as a definitive answer to the purity laws that historically had attempted to control women in their cultic and social expression within the community."[21] According to Selvidge, the intercalated healing account in Mark 5:24-34 then became an important story in the early church because it represented the "early Christian community's break with the Jewish purity system, which restricted and excluded women from cult and society."[22] Selvidge posits that the Levitical purity regulations "restricted a woman's movement in cult, society, and the home" and ultimately resulted in the marginalisation and ostracism of Jewish women.[23] These restrictions are clearly demonstrated, she suggests, in the laws regarding menstruation. Selvidge cites as proof of these restrictions the text of Leviticus 15:19-30 which outlines the cultic obligations for Jewish women experiencing both regular and irregular uterine bleeding. Selvidge maintains that the Levitical stipulations regarding regular and irregular uterine bleeding branded a woman ἀκάθαρτος ("unclean"),[24] or "infectious," for the duration of the bleeding. These "unclean" women were then "banished" from the community until seven days after the bleeding had ceased[25] as a means of limiting the risk of contagion to others (Lev. 15:21).[26]

Selvidge suggests that it is this passage in Leviticus 15 that serves as the key to understanding and interpreting the account of the woman with bleeding in Mark 5:25-34. Selvidge claims that because "no other major Greek writer employs these phrases as normal

[20] Supra n. 14.
[21] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 47.
[22] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619.
[23] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619.
[24] According to the LXX translation. Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619.
[25] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619.
[26] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619.

euphemisms for *menstruation*,"[27] the only framework we have for interpreting this passage is the Levitical purity code.[28] Although the precise nature of the woman's bleeding is not specified by Mark, Selvidge states that the linguistic similarities between the Markan text and Leviticus 15 in the Septuagint indicate that the bleeding is uterine.[29] Selvidge notes that according to Josephus, Jewish purity laws were still normative in the first century C.E. in Palestine[30] with the result that a woman experiencing an irregular ῥύσει αἵματος ("flow of blood") would not only have been considered perpetually unclean[31] but would also have been restricted in her domestic and familial roles and extremely limited in her ability to travel beyond the confines of her home.[32] Furthermore, Selvidge suggests that according to the Markan narrative, the woman with bleeding undoubtedly experienced "discrimination because of her physical otherness,"[33] a discrimination that led to her being physically abused. This, Selvidge opines, is made apparent through Mark's use of the word μάστιξ to describe the woman's condition which conjures an image of one "being beaten to the point of no resistance."[34] This beating, Selvidge suggests, is not metaphorical but refers to the woman experiencing a literal, physical beating as a result of her condition.[35]

According to Selvidge, the woman's desperation and suffering (μάστιξ) eventually drove her to seek out various healing options. Instead of easing her suffering these physicians, whose priority was "money-seeking" and not healing, only made her condition worse.[36] Finally, her desire for healing became so overwhelming that she was prepared to defy the

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[27] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 48. Italics original.

[28] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619 n. 3. This view has likewise been presented by T. Vogt, *Angst und Identitat im Markusevangelium: Ein Textpsychologischer und Sozialgeschichtlicher* (NTOA 26; Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 1993) as cited in Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 230 n. 17.

[29] Mark 5:25 and Leviticus 15:25 both use the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος (cf. Lev. 15:19 ῥέουσα αἵματι). Selvidge also lists a number of other linguistic similarities between Mark 5 and Leviticus 15 (*Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 48-49). Thomas Kazen also supports this view stating that there is a "presence of words and expressions belonging to the key terminology of Lev. 12 and 15" that link it with the account of the hemorrhaging woman in Mark 5. He goes on to suggest "these phrases show some kind of dependence on the language of Leviticus, and reveal an awareness of the purity issue involved in the story of the woman touching Jesus, at some stage in the tradition" (*Jesus and Purity* Halakhah [ConBNT 38; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiskell, 2002], 133-134).

[30] See Josephus *Wars* 5.227; *Ant.* 3.261; *AA* 2.103.

[31] Supra n .14.

[32] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 47-90, 83-91; cf. K.A. Barta, "'She Spent All She Had...But Only Grew Worse': Paying the Price of Paternalism," in *Where Can We Find Her?* (ed. M.-E. Rosenblatt; New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 24–36.

[33] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 87.

[34] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 87.

[35] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 87-88.

[36] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 85.

purity regulations and seek healing from Jesus. While she was willing to contravene the purity laws by jeopardising the purity status of both Jesus and others in the crowd, she was still aware of her transgression; it was for this reason that she approached Jesus from behind. When Jesus asked for the woman to identify herself from amongst the crowd, the woman eventually came forth but was "trembling with fear" (φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα). Selvidge proposes that the woman was afraid that she was going to be chastised for threatening the purity of others.[37] Jesus responded not by condemning the woman but by marvelling at her faith and declaring her inclusion amongst his followers, indicated in his use of the term Θυγάτηρ ("daughter").

Selvidge suggests that the entire Jewish religious system was, at the time of Jesus, "androcentric" and resulted in the restriction of women in all aspects of their lives.[38] Under this system, a "woman's life was controlled from birth until death. She had virtually no control over her social life, her body, or her cultic associations and responsibilities."[39] For Selvidge, Judaism of the first century C.E. "attempted to control women in their cultic and social expression within the community."[40] In contrast, the author of Mark retains a tradition of Jesus that highlights his disregard and disapproval of the entire purity system and its domination over women.[41] In this sense, Selvidge suggests that the "miracle story about the woman with the 'flow of blood' subtly shatters the legal purity system and its restrictive conditioning."[42] This healing account of Jesus was thus retained by the Synoptists in order "to free early Christian women from the social bonds of...'banishment' during a woman's menstrual period."[43] The story of the woman with the "flow of blood," reinforced by its placement within the story of Jairus and his daughter, is emblematic of radical faith that should be encouraged among the members of the Jesus movement and represents the final breaking away from the restrictions and legalism of the Jewish religious system.

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[37] Cf. Calduch-Benanges states that the woman is afraid because she is "conscious of having transgressed the system by touching Jesus' cloak" (*Perfume of the Gospel*, 27).

[38] E.g., Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 623.

[39] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 49.

[40] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 46.

[41] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 88.

[42] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 622.

[43] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 30.

Selvidge's proposal that the passage hinges on the issue of purity affirmed and encouraged a view that was already prevalent among commentators and exegetes. However, Selvidge's monograph also provoked a new wave of feminist scholarship that questioned this perennial link between Mark 5, Leviticus 15, and ritual impurity. Mary Rose D'Angelo, for example, is critical of Selvidge's interpretation of Mark 5, suggesting that her approach is problematic in numerous ways, which include "inappropriate generalization, extravagant rhetoric, and naïve or specious use of language."[44] D'Angelo, in contrast to Selvidge, has argued that the focus of the narrative is not on the abrogation of purity laws but instead is centred around the miraculous healing; for D'Angelo the issue of purity is virtually irrelevant to the narrative.[45] Likewise, Charlotte Fonrobert in her examination of Mark 5 states that even though the woman with bleeding may have been impure, previous scholars have exaggerated the extent to which this impurity would have impacted the woman's life.[46] She also believes that previous scholars have overstated the repercussions had Jesus become unclean after touching this woman.[47] Such an act was not unlawful, Fonrobert says, and simply would have rendered Jesus unclean until the evening of that day and, therefore, was easily remedied.[48]

Susan Haber has noted that in their analyses of Mark 5 and Leviticus 15 numerous scholars have conflated Jewish purity issues with regular and irregular uterine bleeding.[49] While the Masoretic text distinguishes clearly between a woman experiencing regular uterine bleeding (*niddah*) and the one experiencing bleeding outside of the regular menstrual cycle

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[44] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 84.

[45] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 91; cf. A.Y. Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 283.

[46] C. Fonrobert, "The Woman with a Blood-Flow (Mark 5:24-34) Revisited: Menstrual Polemics in Christian Feminist Hermeneutics," in *Early Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigation and Proposals* (ed. C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders; JSNTSup 14; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 131. Brigette Kahl, on the other hand, says that there is no hint of purity language in the intercalated healing account ("Jairus und die Verlorenen Töchter Israels: Sozioliterarische Überlegungen zum Problem der Grenzüberschreitung in Mk 5,21-43," in *Von Der Wurzel Getragen: Christlich-Feministische Exegese in Auseinandersetzung Mit Antijudaismus* [ed. L. Schotroff and M.-T. Wacker; Leiden: Brill, 1996], 69).

[47] Fonrobert, "Woman with a Blood-Flow," 131.

[48] Fonrobert, "Woman with a Blood-Flow," 134.

[49] Haber notes that "although many scholars recognize (the) distinction (between regular and irregular bleeding), there is still a tendency to conflate the two categories through generalization and the inappropriate application of menstrual law to the haemorrhaging woman of Mark. Selvidge (*Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 53-57, 86-91), for example, separates the two categories in her summary of Lev. 15, only to use her synopsis to justify the 'biological differences' of all women, and especially the woman in Mark" ("A Woman's Touch: Feminist Encounters with the Hemorrhaging Woman in Mark 5.24-34," *JSNT* 26.2 [2003]: 174-175 n. 10).

(*zavah*), the same phrase, ῥύσει αἵματος, is used to describe both manifestations in the Septuagint. The only demarcation between these conditions are the phrases "in (the time of) her menstruation" (ἐν τῇ ἀφέδρῳ αὐτῆς; Lev. 15:19) and "*not* in the time of her menstruation" (οὐκ ἐν καιρῷ τῆς ἀφέδρου αὐτῆς; Lev 15:25). As a result of this, Haber claims that Selvidge, among others, has combined regular and irregular bleeding in Leviticus, universalising the conditions into one homogenous category.[50] In the Masoretic text, the menstruant is unclean for seven days and anyone who touches her will also become unclean including any item upon which she sits or lies during this time (15:19-20). Anyone who comes into contact with these unclean items will also become unclean until the evening (15:22). In addition, anyone who has sexual intercourse with her during this time will be impure for seven days (15:24). For the *zavah* though, the woman with an irregular flow, the restrictions, according to the Masoretic text, are a little different. Although the *zavah* is considered unclean all the days of her bleeding (15:25), it does not state that anyone who touches her will become unclean nor does it have the regulation regarding sexual intercourse. While the Masoretic text of Leviticus implies that as a *zavah* the woman in Mark 5 would have been impure, it does not explicitly state that she will make others impure through touching her. Indeed, Fonrobert suggests that the woman in Mark 5:25-34 as a *zavah* would only have made someone else impure if they touched the items upon which she had sat/lay and, therefore, would not have been risking the purity of Jesus or the members of the crowd.[51]

Mary Rose D'Angelo contends that the scholarly tendency to see Mark 5:25-34 "as a critique or rejection of purity codes is appealing to feminists and sometimes to others as a way to present Jesus or the gospel writers as offering a programmatic challenge to systemic oppression of women."[52] However, D'Angelo, among others, considers that there is very little within the passage which indicates that its focus is on purity.[53] Firstly, unlike other passages in Mark which specifically use the language of purity and cleansing, this is not

[50] Supra n. 48.

[51] Fonrobert, "Woman with a Blood-Flow," 130; cf. Wainwright, *Women Healing*, 117.

[52] "Gender and Power," 102.

[53] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 84; cf. S.J.D. Cohen, "Menstruants and the Sacred in Judaism and Christianity," in *Women's History and Ancient History* (ed. S. Pomeroy; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1991), 279; Collins, *Mark*, 283; Kahl, "Jairus und die Verlorenen," 66.

the case in either of the healing accounts in Mark 5:21-43.[54] The woman with bleeding seeks and receives healing (σῴζω/ἰάομαι) not cleansing (καθαρίζω), such as in the case of the man with leprosy in chapter one of Mark's gospel.[55] In addition, there is no mention of purity or cleansing in relation to the revivification of Jairus' daughter. While the rituals of purity are certainly addressed in Mark's gospel, for example in chapter seven in relation to Jesus' disciples eating bread with unwashed hands (Mk. 7:2), they are absent from Mark 5:21-43. While D'Angelo does not deny the possibility that the woman herself may have been deemed ritually impure, she states that this is not the concern of the passage.[56] D'Angelo also suggests that as the healing of the woman takes place in Galilee it "makes the issue of contracting ritual impurity, whether from the dead girl or the woman, more or less irrelevant."[57] Whether the woman is unclean, or even if Jesus himself were to become unclean throughout his encounter with the woman and/or the dead girl, it would only have been relevant if they intended to enter the temple which was several days' journey from the site of the healing in Galilee.[58] In this respect, Shaye J.D. Cohen considers that restoring or maintaining purity was essential for those "in the Temple and in proximity to persons and objects bound for the Temple," however, in all other circumstances "the purity laws could be ignored."[59]

In addition to this, D'Angelo, Fonrobert, and Cohen also question the belief that the Levitical purity regulations were seen as normative within the various manifestations of first-century Judaism. Many scholars who see purity as the critical issue in Mark 5:25-34

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[54] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 91; *idem*, "(Re)Presentations of Women in the Gospels: John and Mark," in *Women and Christian Origins* (ed. R.S. Kraemer and M.R. D'Angelo; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 140-141; Kahl, "Jairus und die Verlorenen," 61-78; Spencer, *Dancing Girls*, 60.

[55] D'Angelo "Gender and Power," 91. She also notes that "no mention is made of the offering prescribed for men and women who have been cured of genital discharges" ("Gender and Power," 91).

[56] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 87.

[57] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 91; *idem*, "(Re)Presentations," 140; cf. Spencer, *Dancing Girls*, 69; Wassen, "Jesus and the Hemorrhaging Woman," 651.

[58] Supra n. 55 plus R.A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 209; S. Ringe, *Luke* (Louisvile: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 125.

[59] S.J.D. Cohen, "Purity and Piety: The Separation of Menstruants from the Sancta," in *Daughters of the King: Women and the Synagogue* (ed. S. Grossman and R. Haut; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 106; cf. D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 91; D'Angelo, "(Re)Presentations," 140; Wainwright, *Women Healing*, 117-118. Contra J.C. Poirier, "Purity Beyond the Temple in the Second Temple Era," *JBL* 122.2 (2003): 254.

cite Josephus,[60] and on occasion the Dead Sea Scrolls,[61] as evidence for the stringent appropriation of Jewish purity regulations in the first century. However, in doing so, they often do not take into account the various manifestations of Judaism, or what has been referred to throughout this thesis as the various "Judaisms,"[62] that are being represented in these texts.[63] While the *Temple Scroll* certainly outlines restrictions on women and men with regular and irregular discharges,[64] it cannot be assumed that these restrictions are representative of other Jewish communities throughout the diaspora. While it was certainly possible for a separatist group like those of the Dead Sea community to enforce restrictive practices regarding menstruating women, it is much more difficult to conceive that this was enacted across all forms of Judaism in the first century C.E.[65] Indeed, some scholars consider the recommendations of the *Temple Scroll* to be utopian in nature and not representative of first-century practices.[66] In *Jewish Wars*, Josephus recalls that menstruants were restricted in their temple access, however, he does not mention a ban on the *zavah*.[67] Interestingly, in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus records that those who were unclean, such as the λεπρός, menstruants, and others with "contagious disease," were not just restricted from the temple but were also "banished from the city."[68] Ultimately, there is no uniformity between the writings of Josephus and the Dead Sea Scrolls regarding menstruants and the *zavah* in the first century C.E. and it is impossible to determine the extent to which the woman with a "flow of blood" in Mark 5 might have experienced exclusion from her community as a result of protracted bleeding.

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[60] Edwards, *Gospel*, 163; H.K. Harrington, *The Impurity Systems of Qumran and the Rabbis: Biblical Foundations* (SBLDS143; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 89; Marcus, *Mark*, 357; Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 53; E.P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 158.

[61] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 357.

[62] Rosenblatt, "Gender, Ethnicity," 150.

[63] Wassen notes that "since Josephus is summarizing the prescriptions in Numbers 5, rather than describing current practices, it is doubtful whether these laws were observed" ("Jesus and the Hemorrhaging Woman," 651).

[64] 11QTemple 45.7-17.

[65] T. Kazen, "Jesus and the *Zavah*: Implications for Interpreting Mark," in *Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Memory of Susan Haber* (WUNT 305; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 119.

[66] Cohen, "Menstruants and the Sacred," 278 contra Sidnie White Crawford who argues that women did live among the community ("Not According to Rule: Women, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. S.M. Paul et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2003), esp. 135-136.

[67] 5.227; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.102.

[68] 3.261.

As such, D'Angelo espouses that there is "no evidence that the touch of a woman's hand or brushing up against her in a crowd would have been considered a pollution in the first century."[69] Cohen adds that there is also very little indication that any Jewish woman experiencing a regular or irregular "flow of blood" "suffered any degree of isolation as a result of her affliction."[70] D'Angelo surmises that even if we assume that the woman with the "flow of blood" is Jewish, and not all scholars agree on this,[71] it is impossible to know to which branch of Judaism she belonged and the extent to which purity regulations would have been adhered to by this group.[72]

Instead of concentrating on purity, D'Angelo considers the primary focus of research on this pericope needs to be "relocated in the context of miraculous and medical healing in antiquity and the literary and theological project of the gospel of Mark."[73] She proposes that the key emphasis of this pericope is on Jesus' power and ability to heal illnesses and raise the dead to life. In this sense, the story of the woman with a "flow of blood" is not focused on the woman's "Jewish illness" and the need to be freed from both the illness and the purity system that controls her,[74] but it is simply on Jesus' power to bring an end to physical sufferings. D'Angelo contends that the use of the term μάστιξ is not a reference to physical abuse as Selvidge maintains but is simply a reference to the physical suffering experienced by the woman over the twelve years of her condition.[75] Ultimately, she suggests that it is not purity but rather "touch and the transfer of power that are foregrounded in the unique features of Mark's healing of the woman with the flow of blood."[76]

Overall, we have two opposing sets of voices regarding the issue of purity in Mark 5:25-34. On one hand, we have those scholars, such as Selvidge, who believe that the

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[69] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 87.

[70] Cohen, "Menstruants and the Sacred," 279.

[71] In his allegorical interpretation of this pericope Ambrose of Milan refers to the woman with a "flow of blood" as being a Gentile (*Exp. Luc.* 6.5-64, CCSL 14:1-400). Modern scholars who suggest that the woman could be a Gentile include Wendy Cotter ("Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles," 59), Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt ("Gender, Ethnicity," *passim*), and Elaine M. Wainwright (*Women Healing*, 117).

[72] Cf. Fonrobert, "Woman with a Blood-Flow," 129.

[73] "Gender and Power," 85.

[74] Fonrobert states that the woman's condition is described in terms of being a "'Jewish sickness.' It is not only a physical ailment from which she suffers, but she also suffers from the (*mastix*) of her own Jewish culture. Jesus then comes to heal her from both" (Fonrobert, "Woman with Blood-Flow," 129).

[75] Fonrobert, "Woman with Blood-Flow," 129; D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 83.

[76] D'Angelo, "(Re)Presentations, 141.

interpretive key to this passage is to be found in Leviticus 15. For these scholars, the main focus of the passage is Jesus' willingness to overlook the impurity of the woman, as well as the dead girl, in order to bring about healing for both of these women. Instead of berating the unclean woman for putting the purity of others at risk, Jesus instead commends her faith, not only bringing healing to the woman but also freeing all women from the stringent purity obligations of the Jewish faith. In contrast are those scholars who posit that the passage has no interest at all in the issue of purity. These scholars not only question the extent to which Levitical purity regulations were normative within the various manifestations of Judaism in the first century but also disagree that purity is the interpretive key to this passage.

Susan Haber, in her article on the woman with the "flow of blood," has commented on these polarised views and on the extent to which purity issues are vital to the interpretation of this pericope. Haber states:

> The first position correctly identifies the woman's impurity, but misinterprets the...text when it finds its focus of interest in the abrogation of supposedly oppressive purity laws. The second...position rightly rejects this polemic against Jewish law, but goes too far in its critique when it dismisses any possibility that the impurity generated by the woman's physical condition contributes to the understanding of the narrative.[77]

Haber argues instead for a position which she deems is "in between the two opposing feminist readings,"[78] which have been outlined above. Haber argues that the woman with the "flow of blood" is described "solely in terms of her physical affliction,"[79] and it is this affliction, rather than her impurity, that is the focal point of the woman's story. However, she also notes that while the text is clearly centred around the health of the woman with the "flow of blood" that one "cannot dismiss the significance of (the woman's) impurity within the narrative."[80] In the second section of this chapter, we will investigate in more depth the woman's condition of a ῥύσει αἵματος and how this condition would have been interpreted in the first century C.E. in relation to both the Jewish purity system on one hand and the health regime of Greco-Roman antiquity on the other.

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[77] "Woman's Touch," 173; cf. Kazen, "Jesus and the *Zavah*," 112-113.
[78] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 173.
[79] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 173.
[80] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 173.

§ 6.4 ῥύσει αἵματος and Irregular Uterine Bleeding

As was noted in the previous section, the vast majority of scholars writing on Mark 5:25-34 tend to agree with the supposition that the woman with the "flow of blood" would have been considered ritually impure as a result of her prolonged bleeding.[81] Although the precise location of the woman's bleeding is not stated by Mark or his redactors, it is generally assumed that her bleeding was uterine due to the similarities between Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:25. Those commentators who interpret the passage in terms of the woman's purity status have generally relied solely on Leviticus 15 as the intertext for this passage. As a result, many have failed to investigate further how a ῥύσει αἵματος may have been interpreted in the first century C.E. in relation to the views of the body and health as were popular in Greco-Roman antiquity. While many scholars have argued that the woman with the "flow of blood" would have experienced some level of disenfranchisement or ostracism as a result of being *ritually impure*,[82] very few scholars have assessed this social isolation in relation to the woman's *illness*.[83] In this second section, we will explore in more depth the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος in the extant medical literature of the ancient world as well as survey examples of women experiencing various uterine conditions as related in this literature. Before doing this, it is first worth examining briefly the use of ῥύσει αἵματος, as well as examples referring to either regular or irregular uterine bleeding in the Second Temple Period. These surveys will thus lead into the final section of this chapter which assesses the woman with the "flow of blood" in Mark 5:25-34 in light of this information.

§ 6.4.1 ῥύσει αἵματος, Irregular Uterine Bleeding and Purity Regulations in the Second Temple Period

Although Mark does not specify the precise location of the woman's ῥύσει αἵματος, he does use terminology that would have resonated with his audience and identified for them the location of the woman's bleeding. Indeed, Susan Haber suggests that in his discussion of the woman with a "flow of blood" "Mark presumes that his intended audience was familiar with the legal aspects of purity legislation and would understand the narrative in light of

[81] Supra n. 14.

[82] E.g., Byrne, *Costly Freedom*, 83; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole*, 209; Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 303; G.H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 74; Witherington, *Gospel*, 185.

[83] This is mentioned only by D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 91; Haber, "Woman's Touch," 173; C.R. Moss, "Man with the Flow of Power: Porous Bodies in Mark 5:25-34," *JBL* 129.3 (2010): 507-519; Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 229-256.

those laws."[84] Firstly, as was noted in section § 6.3, there is a linguistic similarity between the text of Mark 5:25-34 and the text of Leviticus 15. This chapter of Leviticus outlines the regulations concerning both women and men with various regular and irregular discharges. According to these regulations, the woman with a "flow of blood" in Mark 5 would have been designated as a *zavah*, that is, a woman with irregular uterine bleeding/discharge.[85] This link is made apparent through Mark's inclusion of the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος which is used in the LXX translation of Leviticus 15 to describe the purity status of a *zavah*.[86]

In addition to the linguistic link between Mark 5:25 and Leviticus 15:25 and the use of the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος, Mark also uses a second significant phrase from Leviticus though it is often overlooked by commentators of Mark 5.[87] Chapter twelve of Leviticus discusses impurity associated with childbirth. Here the LXX refers to this postpartum "flow of blood" as ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς; a phrase which Mark repeats verbatim[88] in 5:29 to describe the woman's "fountain of blood." This same phrase is also used in the LXX translation of Leviticus 20:18 which speaks generally of menstruation. Gerburgis Feld, in a discussion on Leviticus, suggests that the "Hebrew formulation *māqôr dāmêhā* (in Leviticus 12:7 and 20:18), frequently rendered "flow of blood," should be translated literally as "source/fountain of blood"[89] as *māqôr* is used throughout the Hebrew Bible to designate a fountain or a spring.[90] In this sense, *māqôr* is used metaphorically in Leviticus 12:7 and 20:18 to refer to the uterus as not only the source of the bleeding but also the source of life.[91] The translators of the LXX have kept the metaphorical language of Leviticus 20:8 by

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[84] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 174.

[85] Fonrobert is sceptical about designating the woman in Mark 5 as a *zavah* because she states that it is not clear in the text that the woman in the passage is Jewish ("Woman with a Blood-Flow," 129).

[86] Selvidge notes a number of other similarities she suggests are apparent between the texts (*Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 50-51).

[87] A small number of scholars refer to the phrase ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς in Leviticus 12:7, e.g. Cranfield, *Gospel*, 184; Guelich, *Mark*, 297; Hodges and Poirier, "Jesus as the Holy One," 164; Taylor, *Gospel*, 291; Wainwright, *Women Healing*, 117. While Selvidge notes that the phrase ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς is used in both 12:7 and 20:18 and that it refers to a "spring of blood" she adds no additional information ("Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619).

[88] Guelich, *Mark 1-8:16*, 297.

[89] G. Feld, "Leviticus: The ABC of Creation," in *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature* (ed. L. Schottroff and M.-T. Wacker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 62.

[90] E.g., Ps. 36:9; Prov. 10:11; 14:27; Jer. 2:13.

[91] E.g, Julius Preuss who says in relation to Leviticus that "fountain" is a euphemism for the uterus (*Biblical and Talmudic Medicine* [trans. F. Rosner; New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1977], 115).

translating *māqôr dāmêhā* as ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς. When Mark then uses this same phrase in 5:29, it is not simply a general reference to a flux of blood but identifies the woman's bleeding as gender-specific.[92]

This linguistic connection with the text of Leviticus offers reasonable evidence that Mark is interpreting this story in light of the Levitical purity code and thus considers the woman to be ritually impure.[93] The difficulty arises in understanding the limitations that such a woman would have incurred as a result of her purity status. While Marla Selvidge, among others, has suggested that as a result of being ritually impure that the woman in Mark 5 would have been "restricted (in her) movement in cult, society, and the home,"[94] other scholars are not convinced that this is the case. Charlotte Fonrobert, for example, suggests that while Leviticus 15 states that a menstruant passes on her impurity to anyone who *touches* her, this stipulation is not clearly designated for the *zavah*. The *zavah* will make objects unclean, and anyone who touches these objects will also become unclean, but Leviticus does not explicitly state that she passes on impurity by touching others. Fonrobert notes that neither the menstruant nor the *zavah* are described as passing on impurity when they are *touched*; only when they *touch* others: "the difference between *being touched and touching* is more significant than it seems."[95] The implication is that neither as a *zavah* or a menstruant that the woman would not have passed on her impurity by touching Jesus' cloak.[96]

Thomas Kazen, in his monograph *Jesus and Purity* Halakhah: *Was Jesus Indifferent to Impurity?*, disagrees with Fonrobert's approach stating that the passage in Leviticus 15 must be read systemically. Leviticus 15 first lists the purity restrictions imposed on the *zab*

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[92] Cf. Lk. 8:44: "ἔστη ἡ ῥύσις τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς."

[93] Cf. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity*, 133-134.

[94] Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619.

[95] Fonrobert, "Woman with Blood Flow," 130. Italics original. Both Fonrobert and Amy-Jill Levine, in her work on the bleeding woman in Matthew, note that there is no prohibition against the woman touching anyone and both cite the commentary of Jacob Milgrom on Leviticus where he states that while someone would become unclean by touching the woman's bedding, that that "can only mean that in fact her hands do not transmit impurity" (*Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991], 936 as cited in Fonrobert, "Woman with a Blood-Flow," 130; A. Levine, "Discharging Responsibility: Matthean Jesus, Biblical Law, and Hemorrhaging Woman," in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew* (ed. A. Levine; FCNTECW 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 78. Contra Selvidge who states "If a menstruating (infectious) woman touches anyone, or anyone touches her, that person is banished until evening (Lev. 15:21)" ("Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20," 619).

[96] Fonrobert, "Woman with Blood Flow," 130.

(that is the male with a discharge) followed by the restrictions imposed on the *niddah* (the menstruant) and the *zabah*. Kazen contends that each subsequent category of impure persons includes the restrictions placed on the previous category in addition to additional criteria appropriate for each of the subsequent categories.[97] Horace Jeffery Hodges and John C. Poirier likewise assert this scaffolding of mean referring to it as a "logical progression."[98] Thus, Kazen suggests that while it is apparent that there is a difference in Leviticus 15 regarding *touching* and *being touched*, these designations were "read systemically and harmonized towards the end of the Second Temple period; touching and being touched were apparently seen as equally contaminating."[99]

As noted above,[100] scholars are divided as to whether menstrual purity laws were normative in first-century Palestine. To begin with, there are two separate traditions regarding the purity status of the *zavah*. Just as we saw in chapter four (§ 4.6) with respect to the disease *ṣāra'at*, the priestly and non-priestly narratives record two separate responses to the *zavah*. The priestly narratives in Leviticus 15, as we have seen, outline certain limitations for the *zav* and *zavah* and indicate that although they transmit "impurity by touch, they may still live at home and lead relatively normal lives (for) the duration of their illness."[101] However, the non-priestly tradition expressed a far more stringent application of the purity restrictions for the *zavah*. According to Numbers 5, anyone impure from a skin disease,[102] anyone impure from a corpse as well as the *zav* and the *zavah* are to be isolated from the rest of the community. It is this second tradition that seems to form the basis of Josephus' attestations regarding the *zavah* as he also recommends that those with severe impurity "should not come into the city."[103] As was noted above, Josephus offers two opposing traditions regarding the social ramifications of impurity. While in *Jewish Wars* he recalls the *zavah* is restricted from entering the temple, in *Antiquities of the Jews* he states that

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[97] Kazen, *Jesus and Purity*, 140.

[98] Hodges and Poirier, "Jesus as the Holy One," 155.

[99] Kazen, "Jesus and the *zavah*," 116. Kazen states as evidence for this *M. Zabim* 5.1, 6; 4QTohorota; cf. Hodges and Poirier, "Jesus as the Holy One," 154.

[100] Supra § 6.3.

[101] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 176.

[102] See § 4.6.2.

[103] *Ant.* 3.261. Although Kazen suggests that because Josephus does not agree clearly with either Leviticus or Numbers then this seems to indicate that these laws were reflective of current practice (*Jesus and Purity*, 156-157) though Kazen is aware that both Hyam Maccoby (*Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 36) and E.P Sanders (*Jewish Law*, 160) both disagree with this view. Wassen likewise disagrees that Josephus was referring to current practice ("Jesus and the Hemorrhaging Woman," 651 n. 34).

the *zavah* needed to reside outside the boundaries of the city. It is possible that Josephus' dual representations of purity regulations are based on the two separate traditions presented in the priestly and non-priestly source material.

As previously noted, some scholars also cite the Dead Sea Scrolls as an evidence for a contemporary Jewish group whose practices regarding purity may have been indicative of those practices in other Jewish communities of the first century C.E. According to the *Temple Scroll*, special quarantine areas were necessary for menstruants, post-parturients, and others who were deemed impure.[104] Other scholars have responded to this by claiming that the purity regulations in the *Temple Scroll* are utopian and are not reflective of current practice within the community. This is apparent, they argue, as women were not among those who resided at the Qumran site.[105] Recently, however, Sidnie White Crawford has refuted this, giving evidence that women were included among the members of the Qumran community.[106] Included in this evidence is a reference to *4QPurification Liturgy* (4Q284) which contains a purification ritual for women following menstruation.[107] While this is significant in terms of research on the Qumran community, this must be considered a moot point in relation to interpreting purity issues in the New Testament. As stated above, whatever restrictive practices were in place among the Qumran community can hardly be considered representative of all forms of Judaism in the first century C.E.[108]

Susan Haber, in response to these various interpretations and applications of the purity rituals, notes that

> Although this literary evidence regarding the status of the *zab/zabah* is inconsistent, the existence of a variety of interpretations is in and of itself informative…These varied

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[104] 11QT 48:14-17: "In each and every city you shall set aside places for those afflicted with *ṣāraʿat*, with plague, or with scab so that they do not enter your cities and defile them; and also for gonorrheics, and for women when they are in their period of impurity and when they have given birth, so that they not defile in them during their period of impurity" (trans. Vermes).

[105] E.g., Shaye J.D. Cohen states the regulations regarding menstruants in the *Temple Scroll* are utopian and that for the "nonutopian present, the men of Qumran lived in an exclusively male community far removed from any contact with the pollutions of the world, especially women" ("Menstruants and the Sacred," 278). For more on the issue of women at the Qumran community see the recent publication of Paul Heger (*Women in the Bible, Qumran and Early Rabbinic Literature: Their Status and Roles* [Leiden: Brill, 2014]); cf. D.W. Kim, "*Hearing the Unsung Voice*: Women in the Qumran Community" *IJHSS* 2.19 (2012): 275-282.

[106] Crawford, "Not According to Rule," 127-150.

[107] Crawford, "Not According to Rule," 136. In response to Crawford see Heger, *Women in the Bible*, esp. 212.

[108] Supra § 6.3.

> discussions indicate that issues of purity and impurity were central to Jewish life both in Judea and the Diaspora.[109]

Thus, the purity regulations were interpreted and applied to each of the various Jewish groups in their own context as they applied these provisions to their own daily lives.[110] Haber also contends that archaeology from the Second Temple period offers support for considering the purity issues as a concern for Jewish people of the time. She suggests that the presence of *mikvaot* in

> diverse places such as Gamla, Sepphoris, Herodium and Massada suggests that in Palestine the removal of impurity was not a rite reserved only for approaching the sacred precincts of the Temple, but was common practice for Jews of all walks of life.[111]

Overall, there is no uniformity regarding the restrictions applied to women with regular and irregular uterine bleeding throughout the various forms of Jewish literature. While it is clear that a woman with a protracted uterine bleed would have been rendered a *zavah*, it is not clear how this designation would have been appropriated within the first century C.E. in Galilee. Not only are our sources from this period limited in respect to attestations of regular and irregular bleeding, but the few sources that are available do not demonstrate a consistent application of these laws.[112] It is, therefore, necessary to be cautious in suggesting that "women were practically excluded from social life as impure and the cause of impurity," as some scholars have proposed.[113] Not only do such summations ignore the various interpretations of the Levitical material presented in the Jewish sources of the Second Temple period, but they also overlook the restrictions placed on Jewish men. Purity regulations were not reflective of gender "discrimination within the Hebrew cult,"[114] but assisted both men and women with understanding the boundaries between purity and impurity and the appropriate responses to both.[115] Being unclean, or even passing on that uncleanness, were not moral or ritual transgressions but formed a natural part of the human experience.[116]

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[109] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 178.

[110] Cf. Haber, "Woman's Touch," 178; Holmén, "Jesus and the Purity," 2710; T. Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 103-105.

[111] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 178.

[112] Wassen, "Jesus and the Hemorrhaging Woman," 658.

[113] Calduch-Benages, *Perfume of the Gospel*, 25.

[114] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 83.

[115] M.A. Beavis, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 98.

[116] As Jonathan Klawans has noted, "it is not sinful to be ritually impure, and ritual impurity does not result from sin" ("The Impurity of Immorality in Ancient Judaism," *JJS* 48.1 [1997]: 3). Deborah Ellens, however, suggests that while a woman's discharge is described as *dawah* and connects the condition with illness, the "neutral (*hazzabh*) meaning 'the one flowing' signifies the man. Thus, *dawah* polarizes the

Nevertheless, it is apparent through the discussions of purity in the later Jewish literature, as well as the existence of *mikvaot* throughout Palestine, that purity continued to be a concern for some Jewish groups, even those not directly connected with the temple. To dismiss entirely any purity concerns in Mark 5 is indeed hasty,[117] and ignores the linguistic parallels thus presented between Mark's text and that of the Levitical purity code.

§ 6.4.2 ῥύσει αἵματος, irregular uterine bleeding and Greco-Roman medical literature

But what of the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος in the Greco-Roman world? What would protracted uterine bleeding have meant in the Greco-Roman context of Palestine in the first century C.E.? In this section, we will first examine some aspects of Greco-Roman medicine that may assist us in understanding better the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος. This will be followed by a brief investigation of the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος in the Greek and Roman medical sources. Following this, we will then widen our inquiry into other phrases used to describe both menstrual and non-menstrual bleeding.

§ 6.4.2.1 The humoural theory in Antiquity

One of the most influential ways systems of categorising health and illness in antiquity was the humoural theory developed initially by the Hippocratic writers in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.[118] Although the humoural theory is often discussed in terms of rigid definitions, in its earliest representations in the Hippocratic Corpus the humoural theory was much more nebulous in its discussions of balance and fluids in the body.[119] While in the second century C.E. Galen solidified the humoural theory into four distinct categories, throughout the Hippocratic works there was no single uniform humoral theory endorsed the Hippocratic writers. Instead, as Paul Carrick has aptly surmised, "one finds variations and elaborations of a recurring number of limited diagnostic, prognostic, and therapeutic

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problem of genital discharge" ("Menstrual Impurity and Innovation in Leviticus 15," in *Wholly Woman Holy Blood: A Feminist Critique of Purity and Impurity* [ed. K. de Troyer et al.; Menstrual Impurity; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003], "Menstrual Impurity," 30).

[117] Hodges and Poirier, "Jesus as the Holy One," 152.

[118] "The Greek *ikmas,* humour, simply means moisture, and is something plants need to sprout; it is not, in origin, a medical term but instead relates to a widespread analogy between the human body and the world of plants" (H. King, "Female Fluids in the Hippocratic Corpus: How Solid was the Humoral Body?," in *The Body in Balance: Humoral Medicines in Practice. Epistemologies of Healing* [ed. P. Horden and E. Hsu; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013], 25).

[119] See King, "Female Fluids," 26.

principles that are often systematically linked."[120] However, in general, the humoural theory was built primarily on the premise that "health is the result of a proper balance or equilibrium within the body, whereas illness is caused by humoral imbalance."[121] According to the Hippocratic work *The Nature of Man*, and Galen's subsequent commentary on this work, there are four humours that make up the body; that is, phlegm, blood, yellow bile and black bile.[122] According to this Hippocratic text, good health was achieved through the equilibrium of the four humours.[123]

According to Galen, "Health is a sort of harmony...For in every instance, health in us is a due proportion of moist, dry, warm, and cold...but always we function in our parts through their due proportion."[124] The healthy body then is understood as having the perfect balance with the right proportion of humours and the right temperature and moisture. The body becomes ill, however, when there is an over-abundance or deficit of one of these elements. In order to restore health, the abundance or deficiency must be addressed through the application of the opposing element. In this way, a body that was too dry would be restored through the introduction of additional moisture.[125] When the body produced unusual symptoms, it was not simply that there was a problem with that particular part of the body as we might consider in the modern world, but instead the whole body was ill and thus suffered "a dysfunction involving the entire person."[126]

The Hippocratics also expressed a construction of gender that was closely related to the image of balance espoused in the humoural theory. In antiquity, gender was not understood in the limited sense of one's sex (i.e., male or female genitalia),[127] but rather

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[120] Carrick, *Medical Ethics*, 28; cf. Vivian Nutton who adds that "there was a variety of competing humoral theories, and competing humoral interpretations, not only in the fifth century B.C. but also for a considerable time to come in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds" ("Galen: The Fatal Embrace," *Sci Context* 18.1 [2005]: 119).

[121] Carrick, *Medical Ethics*, 28.

[122] Hippoc. *Nat. hom.* 5. An earlier version exists in the Hippocratic work *On Diseases* where the four humours are described as phlegm, blood, bile, and water (4.35); cf. Galen, *In Hipp. De nat. hom. comm.*, 1 *prooem.* 11: CMG V as cited in, 338.

[123] Hippoc. *Morb.* 4.

[124] *San Tuend.* 1.3 (trans. Green).

[125] R. Flemming, "The Invention of Infertility in the Classical Greek World: Medicine, Divinity, and Gender," *Bull Hist Med* 87.4 (2013): 577–578 e.g., "Diseases caused by repletion are cured by depletion; those caused by depletion are cured by repletion..." (Hippoc., *Aph.* 2.20; Jones, LCL); cf. Hippoc., *Mul.* 11.

[126] Carrick, *Medical Ethics*, 35.

[127] The idea of the difference between sex (that is biological) and gender (which is about the socially constructed behaviour and expectations of each sex) has been questioned by modern feminists (i.e., the now-

gender was understood to exist on a sliding scale with male and female existing at opposite ends of the scale.[128] In this sense, females were considered to be 'undercooked' versions of the male,[129] having not received enough heat in the womb to become a male embryo.[130] As was noted in chapter three, Aristotle believed that women were thus "deformed males,"[131] having "never achieved the heat, dryness or impermeability that make up healthy bodies."[132] Women were then characterised as being cold, soft, wet and porous.[133] While these attributes were believed to be a part of the female's nature (φύσις) and were thus pathological, these characteristics were heightened by the lifestyle of the woman which was considered naturally sedentary.[134] While the male body, through exercise and activity, was able to transfer excess fluids into semen, the female body was forced to release surplus fluids through menstruation.[135] A regular menstrual cycle was considered a necessity for the female body as a means of evacuating excess fluids and maintaining humoral equilibrium. For this reason, a menstrual cycle that was erratic or releasing too much or not enough moisture was deemed a serious health risk and measures needed to be taken in order to prevent worsening symptoms or even death.

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classic text of Judith Butler (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* [New York: Routledge, 1989]) but seems to reflect aptly the views of antiquity regarding sex and gender (e.g., W. Detel, *Foucault and Classical Antiquity: Power, Ethics, and Knowledge* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], especially chapter 6, "Gender, Nature and Reference").

[128] E.g., Hippocrates, *Epidemics IV* relates the story of a woman whose husband has been absent and as a result she fails to menstruate. The Hippocratic author states that the woman's failure to menstruate meant that she began to develop into a male including the growth of a beard. He states that they did all they could to draw the menses down but to no avail, and eventually the woman died (8.32). For more on the construction of gender roles in antiquity, see L. Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[129] According to Aristotle there is a scale of hot to cold – men, women, animals and then plants. See *Hist. an.* 588b4-589a9; *Part. an.* 681a12-28; *Gen. an.* 732a12-733a18; *Metaph.* 1058a29.

[130] Even in utero women were wetter than men with the result that the female embryo is slower to take shape; 42 days versus 30 days for a male embryo (*Nat. puer.* 15).

[131] Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 737a26-30.

[132] Moss, "Man with the Flow of Power," 513.

[133] Hippoc., *Mul.* 1.1: "I say that a woman is more porous in her flesh and softer than a man: since this is so, a woman's body draws up more moisture from the belly and faster than a man's" cf. *Nat. puer.* 15: "The body of a woman is wetter than a man's, and when the blood is agitated and the veins are full, it comes out, and this is due to her original nature"; cf. Hippoc., *AWP.* 10; *Gland.* 16; *Epid.* 2.6.19.

[134] *Mul.* 1.1.

[135] E.g., "...the female, in fact, is female on account of inability of a sort...it lacks the power to concoct semen out of the final state of the nourishment...because of the coldness of its nature" (*Gen. an.* 728a; Peck, LCL).

§ 6.4.2.2 ῥύσει αἵματος in the Greek and Roman medical sources

Annette Weissenrieder has suggested that one of the difficulties with studying the story of the woman with a "flow of blood" in the twenty-first century is that "an issue of blood no longer exists as an image of illness in modern medicine."[136] As a result of this, the majority of scholars have overlooked the significance of a long-term blood flow as it relates to the woman's illness, "attach(ing) no importance whatsoever to the etiology and pathogenesis[137] of the illness."[138] The small number of scholars who have addressed the issue of illness in the context of this passage have generally focused not on the impact the condition would have caused the woman in her social and familial contexts, but rather, have resorted to mere retrospective diagnostics. Illnesses that are suggested by scholars are usually limited to "gender-specific illness"[139] and include such conditions as menorrhagia[140] and metrorrhagia.[141] However, as has already been stated in previous chapters, this process of retrospective diagnostics does little to help us understand better the status of the ill person within their own social and cultural milieu.[142] Instead, this section will address the specific condition of the woman, a ῥύσει αἵματος, in the Greco-Roman medical literature in order to determine how such a condition would have been understood therein.

While Marla Selvidge is correct in suggesting that the precise phrase ῥύσει αἵματος is not used specifically to refer to uterine bleeding in the extant Greek literature,[143] the phrase is used to describe other forms of blood loss in the ancient world. As Annette Weissenrieder has noted, "the etiology of the issue of blood is not very specific,"[144] meaning that the

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[136] Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 229.

[137] Pathogenesis refers to "(t)he ways in which a disease or disorder starts and develops" (Marcovitch, *Black's Medical*, 539).

[138] Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 230.

[139] Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 229.

[140] Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 303.

[141] F. Fenner, *Die Krankheit im Neuen Testament, Eine Religions- und Medizingeschichtliche Untersuchung* (UNT 18; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1930), 45ff. as cited in Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 229.

[142] King, in discussing the Hippocratic text *On the Disease of Virgins* and the scholars who attempt to diagnose the conditions subscribed therein, states that "such a 'diagnostic approach', which attempts to diagnose disease across two and a half millennia and through a text of this kind, is deeply unconvincing and takes us away from the text and the cultural values which it carried" (H. King, "Bound to Bleed: Artemis and Greek Women," in *Images of Women in Antiquity* (ed. A. Cameron and A. Kurht; Abingdon: Routledge, 1983), 117; *idem*, *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 79-80.

[143] Supra § 6.3.

[144] Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 242.

phrase ῥύσει αἵματος on its own did not indicate a uniquely female condition. Throughout the medical sources, the Greek phrase "ῥύσει αἵματος," as well as the Latin equivalent (*flux sanguinis*)[145] are used to describe any number of blood flows from the body. Caelius Aurelianus describes an issue of blood (*flux sanguinis*), as any "flow of blood from a part of the body."[146] Aurelianus notes that a "flow of blood" can be caused by "a blow or a fall, crying out loudly, carrying a heavy load, severe vomiting, or the result of chronic hemorrhoids."[147] A "flow of blood" could also be the result of an injury or wound,[148] or could have been a necessary evacuation of fluids as the body's way of purging itself of excess fluids and restoring balance.[149] In addition to this, the Greek word ῥόος, which is generally translated as "flux" or "flow," is one that is used throughout the medical literature to refer to menstrual bleeding, postparturient bleeding, and irregular gynecological bleeding.[150]

§ 6.4.2.3 Regular and irregular uterine bleeding in the Greek and Roman medical sources

Due to the belief that menstruation was a means of maintaining balance in the female body, this topic is addressed on numerous occasions throughout the extant medical literature of Greco-Roman antiquity. These medical writers were aware that in general women menstruated monthly,[151] but the duration of menses was variable and not uniform for all women.[152] Soranus notes that menstruation usually began around the age of 14[153] and continued until the age of 40-50.[154] It is also noted in these medical texts that on occasion women did not menstruate and this was due to pregnancy or menopause, or on

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[145] Weissenrieder notes that this phrase is used in the Vulgate to translate ῥύσει αἵματος (*Images of Illness*, 241).

[146] *Cael. Aur.* TP II,IX,117 (trans. Drabkin) as cited in Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 242.

[147] Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness*, 242.

[148] One Hippocratic text states that "if you injure a man, blood will flow from him (ῥυήσεται αὐτῷ αἷμα)" (*Nat. hom.* 5; Jones, LCL). Galen refers to a patient who had a "flow of blood" which did not cease until Galen "cut the entire artery through" (*On Treatment by Venesection* K315; P. Brain, *Galen On Bloodletting: A Study of the Origins, Development and Validity of His Opinions, with a Translation of the Three Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[149] Hippoc., *Coac.* 125 (αἵματος ῥύσιος ἐκ ῥινῶν πολλῆς), 138 (αἵματος ῥύσις), 156 (αἵματος ῥύσιν), and *Aphorisms* 3.27 refers to bleeding from the nose in conjunction with a fever (ῥινῶν αἵματος ῥύσιες).

[150] Aphorisms 5.56 uses the phrase ῥοῦς γυναικείω for menstruation; Soranus 4.43 refers to a ῥοῦς γυναικείου.

[151] Sor., *Gyn.* 1.4.19-20; Hippoc., *Septim* 9.

[152] *Gyn.* 1.4.21.

[153] Sor., *Gyn.* 1.4.20; cf. Aristotle suggests 13 (*Hist. an.* 581a-b).

[154] *Gyn.* 1.4.20.

occasion, menses were restricted due to one's lifestyle.[155] The ancient medical sources refer both to cases of menstrual suppression as well as that of excess menstruation and intermenstrual bleeding and considered each of these conditions a sign of imbalance and illness in the body.[156] However, the issue of menstrual suppression is addressed with far greater frequency in the extant medical literature of antiquity as they believed it indicated "the presence of a dangerous reservoir of unshed blood"[157] which would accumulate throughout the body.[158] It was believed that this retained blood could escape the body through other orifices, such as the nose,[159] but, for those women who did not experience this evacuation, the Hippocratics recommended numerous methods designed to draw the menses out.[160] The retention of the menses was connected in the Hippocratic corpus with bodily pain,[161] headaches,[162] and gout,[163] and could eventually result in death.[164] Throughout the Hippocratic corpus, menstrual suppression and the 'too dry' uterus are often associated with the movement of the womb throughout the body. This 'wandering

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[155] Soranus notes for example the case of those women who are "journeying away from home" (*Gyn.* 1.4.22), those who are "engaged in singing contests" (1.4.23) and those "whose bodies are of a masculine type" (1.4.23) as examples of those women who may experience decreased, or the complete absence, of menstruation (trans. Temkin). Galen also notes that sometimes menstruation is restricted for various reasons (*Caus. Symp.* III XI.4 = K.VII.266K).

[156] It is worth noting that it is not always clear if the suppression of menses is the *cause* of illness or the *result*. For example, according to the Hippocratic work *Diseases of Women*, "whenever in a woman who has never given birth the menses are suppressed, and cannot find a way out, illness results" (1.2; trans. Hanson). This sentiment is also repeated in *On Generation*, "if the menses do not flow, women's bodies become prone to sickness" (4.3; trans. Lonie). Aristotle says that suppressed menses could also cause serious illness (*Gen. an.* 773a16-20).

[157] H. King, "Once Upon a Text: Hysteria from Hippocrates," in *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (ed. S.L. Gilman et al.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 14.

[158] Lesley Dean-Jones states that "the cases of a woman menstruating too abundantly are rare in comparison with the number of occasions on which the Hippocratics find cause to suspect suppression of menses" (*Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 135). Dean-Jones suggests that it is possible the Hippocratics were less concerned about excess menstruation because what they considered an average blood loss is substantially higher than what is considered 'normal' in modern medicine. Both the Hippocratics and Soranus suggest that the approximate blood loss for each menses was two cotyles, which is approximately 250mls and "therefore seven to eight times what is considered the normal amount today" (Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 89). As a result, it would have taken an extremely heavy bleed for the ancient medical writers to consider it problematic. Dean-Jones suggests that as a result many women may have been treated for the "suppression of menses when the woman was in fact perfectly healthy" but simply did not menstruate as much or as often as was expected (Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 135).

[159] *Aph.* 5.33 (Jones, LCL). Aristotle likewise confirms the belief that the menstrual blood flow decreases if one is experiencing blood loss from the nose (*Gen. an.* 727a).

[160] E.g., *On the Diseases of Women* recommends the insertion of pessaries made from "two draughts of squirting cucumber and suet from the kidneys of a sheep" as well as numerous other recipes (74).

[161] Hippoc., *Nat. mul.* 59.

[162] Hippoc., *Mul.* 18, *Epid.* 5.12.

[163] Hippoc., *Aph.* 6.29.

[164] Hippoc., *Mul.* 2.

womb,' as it was labelled by Plato,[165] was believed a response to a lack of moisture in the body and thus the womb was forced to wander the body in search of additional moisture.[166] As the condition was believed to be common among young girls prior to menarche – the onset of menstruation at puberty – curative measures included "marriage and/or pregnancy, scent therapy, irritant pessaries, and various herbal concoctions administered by mouth, by nose, or direct to the vulva."[167] The condition was deemed severe and symptoms were believed to increase with each passing month. Symptoms may have included fevers, bodily pain, loss of appetite, urine retention, and slurred speech.[168] After six months of menstrual suppression, it was believed that death was inevitable. This condition is explored in detail in the Hippocratic text *The Diseases of Virgins*.

These medical writers were also aware that an increase in blood loss, or intermenstrual bleeding, was also the result of illness and imbalance in a woman's body.[169] Galen, for example, refers to "abnormal fluxes"[170] and relates a story of healing a woman from her "female flux" following the failure of her midwives to do so.[171] Soranus in his *Gynecology* includes a section entitled "On the Flux of Women," where he differentiates between two different forms of irregular menstrual discharge; one he calls a "haemorrhage of the uterus" and the other a "menstrual flux." He considers a "haemorrhage of the uterus" to be the "result of difficult labor, or miscarriage, or erosion by ulceration, or a porous condition, or from the bursting of blood vessels."[172] He notes that this kind of bleeding is a "sudden and excessive rush of blood" and the results are that "the patients become weak, shrunken, thin, pale, and if the condition persists, suffer from anorexia."[173] In comparison, he also notes that women can experience a "menstrual flux" which he describes as "a chronic

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[165] Plato *Tim.* 91b-d. Plato describes the womb as an irrational animal that moves throughout the body. The Hippocratic corpus refers to the womb as "turning" or "shifting" throughout the body rather than "wandering" though it is clear that "the movements of the womb in the Hippocratic gynaecological treatises are therefore conceived of as very violent and directed, and there is no doubt but that it was thought to relocate physically" (Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 36).

[166] *Mul.* 2.

[167] King, "Once Upon a Text," 14.

[168] Hippoc., *Mul.*

[169] Aristotle notes that even when menses are 'normal' that the loss of blood caused a woman to be pale with an "obvious deficiency in physique as compared with males" (*Gen. an.* 727a; Peck, LCL).

[170] Galen, *Caus. Symp.* III XI.4 = VII.265K (trans. Johnston).

[171] Galen, *Praecog.* 8 (XIV.641-647K) as cited in S. Mattern, *The Prince of Medicine: Galen in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 165.

[172] *Gyn.* 3.40 (trans. Temkin).

[173] Sor., *Gyn.* 3.43 (trans. Temkin).

rheum of the uterus where the secreted fluid is perceptibly increased."[174] He notes that there are different kinds of flux[175] but that in general "the patient is pale, wastes away, lacks appetite, often becomes breathless when walking, and has swollen feet."[176] Soranus goes on to outline the treatment for both the "haemorrhage" and the "flux."[177] The Hippocratic text *The Diseases of Women* also notes the physiological effects of a prolonged menstrual flow suggesting that the woman "will become pallid," can also have a fever and loss of appetite and become "emaciated and weak (and)...exhausted by time and the disease."[178] The author of this Hippocratic text also notes that prolonged menstrual bleeding can eventually lead to sterility[179] and notes that if "some other disease should attack her at the same time, she could die."[180]

While it was possible for a menstrual flux to be the result of physiological factors,[181] the Hippocratics also believed that the condition was exacerbated by indulging in large meals as well as participating in frequent intercourse.[182] As Lesley Dean-Jones has succinctly observed, "Indulging in intercourse too often is attributed to the woman's own desires, not to her simply acceding to her husband's desires as a dutiful wife should – behaviour against which the Hippocratics pronounce no health sanctions."[183] Other medical writers also outline a range of cures for women experiencing "excessive menstruation."[184] Pliny, in his *Natural History*, outlines numerous herbal remedies he believes would "arrest menstruation when in excess,"[185] while several Hippocratic works exhort "cupping of the breasts" as an effective means of restraining an irregular uterine flux.[186] As Mary Rose

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[174] *Gyn.* 3.43. Soranus also refers to the work of contemporary physicians and their different opinions on what constituted a flux. He notes, for example, that Alexander Philalethes says that a flux is "an increased flow of blood through the uterus over a protracted period" (Sor., *Gyn.* 3.11.43; trans. Temkin).

[175] Sor., *Gyn.* 3.11.43.

[176] *Gyn.* 3.11.43 (trans. Temkin).

[177] Sor., *Gyn.* 3.10.40, 43.

[178] *Mul.* 5.

[179] *Mul* 1.6. Aristotle also notes that if menstruation is "too abundant...or more putrid than it should be" he recommends that women with such conditions "should receive attention" because these symptoms can be "preventive of child-bearing" (trans. Cresswell).

[180] *Mul.* 1.5 (trans. Whiteley).

[181] E.g., this could be due to a woman's body being "naturally disposed to flux or that the mouth of the uterus was placed close to the vulva" (Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 134, regarding Hippocrates *Mul.* 1.5).

[182] *Mul.* 1.6.

[183] Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 134.

[184] E.g., Pliny, *HN.* 24.2 (Jones, LCL).

[185] Pliny, *HN.* 24.2, 5, 34, 55, 65, 67, 72 (Jones, LCL).

[186] *Epid.* 2.6.16 (Smith, LCL); cf. *Aph.* 5.50. Patricia A. Baker describes a cupping vessel as a "rounded, hollow object with a single opening that is placed over the diseased area of the body to draw out blood, pus, or an infected humour. A burning piece of cloth was placed in it to create suction when it was placed on the

D'Angelo has noted, among the Demotic papyri are several recipes for stopping the flow of menstrual blood.[187] Christopher A. Faraone also refers to a number of hematite (literally: "bloodstone") gemstones from the Roman imperial period that feature short incantations also aimed at stemming the "flow of blood" from the womb.[188]

Throughout these medical sources, numerous phrases are used to describe both regular and irregular menstrual bleeding including καταμήνια,[189] γυναικείων ἀγωγόν,[190] as well as the phrase ῥοῦς γυναικείω,[191] which is most similar to the phrase employed in Mark 5. While technically Selvidge is correct in suggesting that the exact phrase ῥύσει αἵματος does not appear to be used for regular or irregular menstrual bleeding in the extant medical literature, it is quite apparent through this brief analysis that the Greek and Roman medical writers were certainly acquainted with irregular uterine bleeding and its physiological impact on a woman's health. While in general menstruation was considered a sign of health and evidence that the body was ridding itself of excess moisture, these medical writers also understood that either too much or too little blood was a sign of poor health. Thus the case of a woman with a long-term irregular "flow of blood" would have been understood in ancient medical terms as evidence of a serious illness.

Finally, it is worth observing that although the association between menstruation and impurity is generally ascribed as being uniquely Jewish,[192] there are indications that menstrual purity restrictions were also a concern for other religious traditions in antiquity. While examples are much more rarely attested and do not compose such a substantial part of other purity codes, Mary-Rose D'Angelo notes that Greco-Roman concerns about menstrual purity did exist and appear to be rather symmetrical with those of Judaism of

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body" (P.A. Baker, *The Archaeology of Medicine in the Greco-Roman World* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 74).

[187] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," 93.

[188] "Magical and Medical Approaches to the Wandering Womb in the Ancient Greek World," *CA* 30.1 (2011): 19 n. 92; cf. A.E. Hanson, "Uterine Amulets and Greek Uterine Medicine," *MedSec* 7 (1995): 281-299. Interestingly, the story of the haemorrhaging woman was later used upon Christian amulets and gemstones for women seeking healing from various gynaecological issues (see J. Spier, "Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets and their Tradition," *JWI* 56 (1993): 25-62; *idem*, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2007).

[189] Hippoc., *Mul.* 1.1; *Aph.* 5.33, 35, 50.

[190] Hippoc., *Aph.* 5.61.

[191] Hippoc., *Aph.* 5.56.

[192] E.g., Cohen, "Menstruants and the Sacred," 287.

the same period."[193] Not only this, but there also existed a belief that menstrual blood in itself was imbued with certain magical properties and could assist with both creating and ending life.[194] Pliny the Elder, for example, posits that menstrual blood is a powerful abortifacient and has various apotropaic and healing properties.[195] While Pliny notes that menstrual blood can thus cause miscarriage in women and animals and can cause the destruction of crops, but he also observes that "blood applied on door posts would protect the inhabitants of a house from any magical interference"[196] because menstrual blood was believed to be indestructible.[197]

Through this brief survey of the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος and the Greco-Roman medical views towards faulty menstrual cycles, it is apparent that a ῥύσει αἵματος was not generally considered problematic as it was likely a sign of the body attempting to balance out the humours. However, while the phrase ῥύσει αἵματος is not used throughout the Greek and Roman medical sources specifically to refer to regular/irregular uterine bleeding, the language of ῥόος and "flux" was certainly employed in relation to both. For the ancient medical writers, a woman's body was by nature (φύσις) softer and moister than a man's and it needed to purge itself of excess fluids through the process of menstruation. However, both excessive menstruation and suppressed menstruation were deemed to be problematic and could lead to even greater health concerns such as breathlessness, lack of appetite, weight loss, and physical exhaustion. However, one of most serious concerns with those with faulty menstrual cycles was their failure to bear children.

The foregoing section has drawn attention to a number of ancient medical writers' views of the woman's body in the Greco-Roman world and the consequences of a faulty menstrual cycle. We have to bear in mind that these medical texts about women's bodies were written by men and that the daily experiences of women were just as likely to have informed their interpretations of their own bodily functions as much as the views of male

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[193] "Gender and Power," 85-86; J.J. Lennon, "Menstrual Blood in Ancient Rome: An Unspeakable Impurity," *C&M* 61 (2010): 71-87; *idem.*, *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 81-88.

[194] On the issue of the magical properties of menstrual blood see J.-J. Aubert, "Threatened Wombs: Aspects of Ancient Uterine Magic," *GRBS* 30 (1989): 421-449.

[195] Pliny, *HN* 28.78f.

[196] Aubert, "Threatened Wombs," 433.

[197] Pliny, *HN* 28.80.

doctors. However, as Lin Foxhall has noted, "there is reason to think that these texts regularly drew upon beliefs about gendered bodies embedded in the wider culture, which were accepted at least to some extent by women as well as by men."[198] In this sense, while the medical literature of the ancient world may reflect the learned and trained upper classes (supra § 3.6), some of the Hippocratic and other medical sources were written in order to advise the *paterfamilias* (δεσπότης or οἰκοδεσπότης)[199] on how to respond to various health conditions that might arise within his *domus* (οἶκος)[200] Not only then would the works themselves have been *informed by* the illnesses and experiences of those in the general populace, but to some extent the texts were also aimed at *informing* the general public. In this sense, these views were representative of the elite and common classes alike.

§ 6.5 Re-reading Mark 5:25-34

How does this survey of regular and irregular uterine bleeding in Second Temple Judaism and the Greco-Roman medical literature assist us with better understanding the account of the woman with the "flow of blood" in Mark 5:25-34? In this final section, we will now reassess the text of Mark 5:25-34, as well as the framing story of Jairus' and his daughter, in light of this research regarding a ῥύσει αἵματος. In addition, we will also address the passage in light of ancient views toward disability, healing, and one's social role in the community.

The placement of the story of the woman with the "flow of blood" within the framework of the story of Jairus and his daughter is very significant. Indeed, Susan Haber suggests that the purpose of placing one story within the other is purely interpretive on the part of Mark, "enabling the framing story to be understood against the background of the inside narrative, and vice versa."[201] A study of the pericope in Mark unearths a number of thematic and semantic similarities between the stories. The most apparent similarity is the repetition of the number twelve in relation to both of the women: the woman with the "flow of blood" had experienced her illness for twelve years (5:25) while at the time of her

[198] *Studying Gender*, 72-73.

[199] Mk. 14:14: "...owner of the house (οἰκοδεσπότης)."

[200] J. Jouanna, "The Birth of Western Medical Art," in *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (ed. M. Grmek; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 32.

[201] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 186; cf. Moloney, *Gospel*, 107.

illness Jairus' daughter was twelve years of age (5:42).[202] Haber suggests some additional similarities include "the presence of the crowd, obstacles to healing and the transfer of power through touch."[203] Other similarities include the fact that both accounts express a belief "in the efficacy of Jesus' touch" (5:23, 28),[204] both ill women are referred to as θυγάτηρ ("daughter"; 5:23, 34) and in both cases their healing is described in terms of the verb σῴζω (5:23, 28, 34). Numerous scholars also suggest that both stories are linked by the fact that both women are ritually unclean at the time of their interaction with Jesus: the woman is unclean due to her gynaecological "flow of blood" and the daughter due to death.[205]

As noted above, Jesus' interaction with the woman with the "flow of blood" begins as he is on his way to attend to Jairus' daughter (θυγάτριον) who is "at the point of death" (ἐσχάτως ἔχει).[206] Jairus is not only described as the leader of the synagogue (ἀρχισυνάγωγος) but he is also introduced by name; one of only two occasions in Mark's gospel where names are given for people seeking healing from Jesus.[207] The combination of the man's name and the reference to his status as the ἀρχισυνάγωγος appears to identify Jairus as a man of status[208] and possibly of wealth.[209] This information is significant as it is while Jesus is on his way to visit a Jewish male of high status that he pauses to assist in the healing of the woman with a "flow of blood." The woman is described by Mark not only as poor, having spent all she has on physicians (5:28), but also alone in her search for healing. As has been noted in chapter three (§ 3.6), it was the duty of the *paterfamilias*, the head of the

[202] While Luke retains the age of the girl (8:42), Matthew omits it.

[203] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 187.

[204] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 81.

[205] Culpepper, *Mark*, 171; France, *Gospel*, 235: Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 139.

[206] It is worth noting that in Matthew's version that the daughter has already died thus there is no urgency for Jesus to get there (Mt. 9:18).

[207] The only other occasion is Bartimaeus in chapter 10. John Meier has noted that the inclusion of Jairus' name is significant. Jairus is the only person in the synoptic gospels who is named as a petitioner for healing or exorcism of another person (*Marginal Jew,* 2:784-785).

[208] Mary A. Beavis states that the ἀρχισυνάγωγος was an official who was "responsible for the financial and physical oversight of the building" (*Mark*, 95). Others agree that whatever the official role of the ἀρχισυνάγωγος that it would have afforded Jairus status in the community; cf. Collins, *Mark*, 279; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:845 n. 30; Moloney, *Gospel*, 106 n. 181; C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Twentieth Anniversary edition; New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 200-201.

[209] A number of scholars suggest that the role of synagogue ruler may have meant that the Jairus was someone of wealth as well as status (e.g., Guelich, *Mark*, 295). Others are uncertain about whether the role of the ἀρχισυνάγωγος would have been a role of wealth. Horsley suggests that the word synagogue in Mark "refers to a local village assembly, not 'the synagogue' as a synonym for 'Judaism.' And an ἀρχισυνάγωγος was thus not a Jewish "ruler" but a leader of a local Galilean village assembly, a community leader, but not wealthy or powerful. The twelve-year-old's father is thus not a representative of the elite" (*Hearing the Whole Story*, 211).

household, to seek healing on behalf of anyone in the *domus* who required medical intervention.[210] Throughout the gospel of Mark, those in need of healing are brought to Jesus for healing by others,[211] while on only two occasions in the gospel do people seek healing on their own behalf: that is, the case of Bartimaeus the blind man (10:45-52), and in the instance of the woman with the "flow of blood."[212] In all other healing incidences in Mark, healing occurs following the request for healing by an individual or a group on behalf of someone else.[213] Most significantly, the woman's solo request for healing is contrast with Jairus' "earnest pleading" for his daughter (5:23). Indeed, the gospel writer appears to stress the paradox between the two protagonists in the conjoined story by emphasising that Jairus' daughter has not only her father, her *paterfamilias*, making the appeal on her behalf, but also a crowd of mourners at her home who are also concerned about the girl's welfare.[214] The woman with the "flow of blood," however, appears to be alone, despite the crowd, seeking healing for herself.[215] The contrast between the two petitioners is stark, as Ched Myers notes

> Mark also portrays the two main characters in this episode as archetypical opposites in terms of economic status and honor. On the one hand, the synagogue ruler, Jairus (one of the rare named characters in Mark's story), makes an assertive approach to Jesus, as befits male social equals.[216]

In comparison to the boldness of Jairus in requesting healing for his daughter, the woman with a "flow of blood" approaches Jesus in stealth. In addition to this, Mark notes that

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[210] See § 3.6.

[211] E.g., "some people." On Mark's use of the third person plural without a nominative subject see R.J. Decker, "Markan Idiolect in the Greek New Testament," in *The Language of the New Testament: Context, History, and Development* (ed. S.E. Porter and A.W. Pitts; vol. 3: *Early Christianity in its Hellenistic Context*; LBS 6; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 53-54.

[212] Wendy Cotter notes that nowhere in the canonical gospels does a woman *ask Jesus* for a healing for herself. Even in the case of the woman with bleeding while she desires to be healed she does not make a verbal request ("Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles," 59).

[213] E.g., in the account of the deaf and mute man in Sidon, Mark states that "some people brought to (Jesus) a man who was deaf and could hardly talk" (Mk. 7:32); in the account of the blind man at Bethesda, Mark states that "some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him (Mk. 8:22); in chapter 9 of Mark Jesus heals a boy who had a "mute spirit" (ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον). In this instance the boy is brought to Jesus' disciples by the boy's father (Mk. 9:17).

[214] James L. Resseguie suggests that "the young girl must rely on a male character to intercede, whereas the hemorrhaging woman takes the initiative to arrest her suffering" (*Narrative Criticism*, 139). However, while Mark records that the woman is proactive in her search for healing the contrast between the two women in the story highlights her deficit as much as her active faith; she needs to be active as she apparently has no *paterfamilias* to seek healing for her.

[215] She "appears to be a single, unattached woman" (Spencer, *Dancing Girls*, 58).

[216] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 200. Numerous scholars note this stark contrast between Jairus and the woman with bleeding, e.g., Beavis, *Mark*, 96; Culpepper, *Mark*, 171-172; France, *Gospel of Mark*, 236; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 366; Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 104; Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 107; Witherington, *Gospel of Mark*, 185.

while the woman with "flow of blood" seeks to gain her healing in secret Jesus makes her healing publicly known; in contrast, while Jairus vociferously requests healing for his daughter (5:23), once the cure has been wrought Jesus exhorts the girl's family to keep silent (5:43). In this sense, Mark's weaving of the two stories cleverly offers a series of commonalities as well as a number of juxtapositions between the two protagonists.

As noted, although Mark does not specify the precise location of the woman's ῥύσει αἵματος both the phrases ῥύσει αἵματος and ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς link Mark's text with that of Leviticus. According to Mark's account, there are two intertextual echoes of Leviticus indicating that Mark understands the woman with bleeding as a *zavah*, and apparently, ritually unclean. What is unclear is the extent to which this uncleanness would have impacted the woman's social, domestic, and cultic duties. While Marla Selvidge has suggested that the woman's condition would have meant that she was oppressed and ostracised as a result of her condition (supra § 6.3). The texts regarding menstrual purity are not consistent and make it difficult to state unequivocally, as Selvidge has done, the precise nature of the woman's isolation.

While numerous scholars have suggested the woman with a "flow of blood" would have been ostracised in her community as a result of her ritual impurity, Mark's version of events indicates that the woman's suffering is connected to her illness rather than her impurity. As was noted (§ 3.3; § 4.3), the "socially prescribed role" of a woman in the first century C.E. was to fulfill the duty of a γυνή. Though the word γυνή is often translated simply as "woman," Helen King suggests that there is much more at play here. To be a γυνή, she insists, was not simply a matter of transitioning from a child to an adult; a young woman's metamorphosis into a γυνή in its fullest sense was also closely connected with the acts social of marriage and childbirth.[217] King suggests that while the change from childhood into womanhood coincided with "a biological event or series of events," the shift into becoming a γυνή was only complete by fulfilling the roles of wife and mother.[218] Any woman who was unable to fulfil any or all of these elements was not only considered ill[219]

[217] "Bound to Bleed," 112.

[218] "Bound to Bleed," 112.

[219] Rebecca Flemming suggests that the connection between infertility and disease is "implicit…(and) arises from things like the opening line of *Diseases of Women 1*, which says that the subject is just that –

but also to some extent not even a complete woman/γυνή. In this respect, the inability to bear children relegated a woman to a permanent state of ill health.

The consequences then, for the woman in Mark 5, would have been striking. Not only was she experiencing a significant health issue that her body was attempting to counter through excessive bleeding, but it was well known to the medics of antiquity that this faulty menstrual cycle would also result in infertility.[220] Without the ability to bear children, it appears that the woman in Mark 5 could not have been considered a complete γυνή. In essence, her status as a 'woman' would have been downgraded from that of a γυνή to that of the infertile/barren παρθένος.[221] While the παρθένος was 'infertile' simply because she had not yet reached menarche, the woman who was unable to bear children, as a result of suppressed menses or extreme bleeding, could also be reverted to this previous status of a παρθένος as a symbol of her incompleteness as a woman.[222] This slippage of a mature γυνή back into the category of the παρθένος was considered a great concern by the Hippocratics.[223] As Rebecca Flemming has succinctly noted, "the pathology of non-procreation is writ large across Hippocratic gynecology."[224]

Mark indicates that the woman was alone in the crowd without a *paterfamilias* who could seek healing on her behalf. While it is impossible to know if the woman had been unable to marry, or if she had been divorced as a result of her illness, both options are certainly plausible. It was seen in chapter four (§ 4.6.2) that along with other forms of physical and sensory disability, barrenness is also represented as a form of disability in the Hebrew Bible. Rebecca Raphael, for example, states that

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female diseases (*nousoi*) – so suggesting that all the conditions then described come under that heading, not to mention being implied (determined even) by the therapeutic processes" ("Invention of Infertility," 575).

[220] The issue of infertility as a result of the woman's condition has only been noted by a small number of commentators and exegetes e.g. F.T. Gench, *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 29; Ringe, *Luke*, 125; Rosenblatt, "Gender, Ethnicity," 153; Wassen, "Jesus and the Hemorrhaging Woman," 644.

[221] C. Chandezon, V. Dasen and J. Wilgaux propose that "the unmarried girl and the widow are subcategories, which implies that a married woman is the expected norm" (C. Chandezon, V. Dasen, and J. Wilgaux, "Dream Interpretation, Physiognomy, Body Divination," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities* (ed. T.K. Hubbard; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 307.

[222] Cf. King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 88.

[223] Cf. King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 92.

[224] Flemming, "Invention of Infertility," 577.

> an understanding of disability as bodily impairment in the context of social environment reveals that female infertility, seldom viewed as a disability in modern post-industrial societies, is the defining female disability in the Hebrew Bible.[225]

This assertion that infertility is a form of disability is integral to understanding the status of the woman in the Markan narrative. While scholars have debated the extent to which the woman would have been isolated as a result of being ritually unclean, it seems more apparent that it is her illness and the social and familial implications of this illness that would have been the real cause of her stigma. It was not simply that she was unclean and could pass on her uncleanness to others – a condition that is quickly remedied – but that her protracted illness prevented her from participating in her role as a γυνή; she was perpetually existent as a παρθένος.

While all three Synoptic gospels recall that the woman had experienced the bleeding for twelve years,[226] only Mark and Luke mention previous attempts at healing[227] and only Mark records that she had suffered much (πολλὰ παθοῦσα) and spent all she had (δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα) in the process (5:26). Some exegetes of the Markan text consider Mark's commentary on the woman's physicians as a polemic against the entire medical profession.[228] Some even opine that Mark's comments express not only the doctors' inefficacy but also their fraudulence as though Mark considers the physicians to have deliberately misled the woman in order to procure her payments.[229] Such critiques of medical professionals are not unknown in our ancient sources. The Hippocratics, for example, are sceptical of those physicians who attempt to do manipulative therapies on ladders in public spaces only in order to draw a crowd.[230] Galen also comments on the difficulty in finding a good physician stating:

> We come across rich men who have been cheated by the tricks of charlatans and those who claim to be diviners...Wicked men who take up medicine are aware of this, and by coaxing the rich seek – among other things – to deceive them and to extort money.[231]

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[225] *Biblical Corpora*, 57-58.

[226] Mk. 5:25 // Lk. 8:43 // Mt. 9:20.

[227] Mk. 5:26 // Lk. 8: 43.

[228] Joynes, "Still at the Margins," 120; cf. Calduch-Benages, *Perfume of the Gospel*, 19; Collins, *Mark*, 281; Culpepper, *Mark*; France, *Gospel*, 236; Witherington, *Gospel*, 186.

[229] Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 85; cf. Myers who suggests that the woman was a "victim of exploitation" (Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 201).

[230] *De art.* 42-44.

[231] Galen, *On Physicians* 45 as cited in Avalos, *Health Care and the Rise*, 92.

The inefficacy of medical practitioners was not caused solely by fraudulence, however. As was outlined in chapter three (§ 3.6), there were also other factors that impacted a physician's effectiveness. Lack of institutionalised medical training was certainly an issue in antiquity as was the absence of any medical accreditation which did not appear in the Empire until the second century C.E.[232] Literary and inscriptional evidence from antiquity also indicates that such a dizzying array of professional and folk healers existed that at times it was difficult for a supplicant to know to whom they should make their appeal.[233] As such, healers were forced to convince the ill that they alone could offer the required panacea.[234] In addition, Celsus, writing in the first century C.E., promotes the view that in order to find the right cure for an ailment, a patient must be willing to try all available options.[235] For a woman experiencing excessive or protracted menstruation, the list of possible remedies was extensive. As noted above, various recipes for stemming the flow of uterine bleeding are preserved in Pliny, the Hippocratics, and Galen.[236] Although it is certainly possible that the woman in Mark 5 was the victim of charlatans peddling faulty health advice,[237] it is also possible the physicians were genuine in their desire to assist but with limited medical knowledge that they were simply unable to stem the flow of her bleeding.[238] It is also possible that Mark intends to contrast the failure of the physicians with the miraculous healing ability of Jesus.[239] In either case, the woman, despite the expense, had only grown worse (5:26).

In general, those commentators and exegetes who see the pericope being focused on purity see in the woman's stealthy approach an awareness that she is contravening purity

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[232] L. Cilliers, "Public Health in Roman Legislature," *AClass* 36 (1993): 3.

[233] See § 3.6.

[234] King, "Bound to Bleed," 115; Mann, *Mark*, 285.

[235] *De med.* 3.14.

[236] Pliny, *HN* 24.2, 34, 29.11.44-46.

[237] As noted in chapter 3 (§3.6), the language of "charlatans" (ἀγύρται) and "imposters" (ἀλαζόνες) was used by Hippocrates to describe those healers that were not only ineffective but also fraudulent (*Morb. sacr.* 2).

[238] Frederick J. Gaiser has suggested that Mark's description of the physicians is not meant to deride them but simply to emphasise that in seeking Jesus the woman has been forced to seek healing "outside the realm of 'respectable' medicine to the margins of society where only miracle workers remain to provide remedies" ("In Touch with Jesus: Healing in Mark 5:21–43," *WW* 30.1 [2010]: 10). However, this is a rather anachronistic reading of the text. It is generally acknowledged that medicine in the ancient world was essentially a "pluralism" with healers overlapping in their methods and approach (Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience*, 295-296). In this way, there was not the same binary view of medicine as there is in the modern world which distinguishes between mainstream and alternative medicines (see § 3.6).

[239] Moss, "Man with the Flow of Blood," 508 n. 2; cf. Collins, *Mark*, 280-281.

regulations.[240] Ched Myers, for example, describes the manner in which the woman approaches Jesus as "ashamed and (a) covert attempt to gain healing."[241] Those scholars advocating a purity reading generally propose that the woman herself flagrantly ignored the purity regulations in order to bring about her healing.[242] In contrast, those scholars who consider the pericope to be centred on illness rather than purity suggest the woman is aware of breaking social taboos rather than purity related ones.[243] It is also plausible, according to Mark's version of events, that such a gender-specific illness would have been difficult to address with a male healer. Her desire to remain hidden and only touch Jesus from behind may have been motivated by a sense of discomfort with discussing her issue with a male healer especially considering the public location; the reluctance of a woman to discuss her health issues with a male doctor is addressed in the Hippocratic text *The Diseases of Women*.[244]

Unlike the version that appears in Luke, both Mark and Matthew include the woman's inner thoughts as she attempts to touch Jesus in the crowd.[245] Both Mark and Matthew note that the woman touches only Jesus' garments (ἱμάτιον; Mk 5:28; Mt. 9:21). This occurs not only because she was "unable to reach Jesus,"[246] but also because this was her original intention: she wished to touch Jesus' garments (Ἐὰν ἅψωμαι κἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ) in order that she might be "made whole" (σῴζω).[247] This association between healing and touch is addressed on other occasions in the gospel of Mark.[248] Some proponents of the purity reading of this pericope see the woman's desire to touch only Jesus' cloak as an attempt to

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[240] Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 357.

[241] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 201.

[242] Haber, "Woman's Touch," 182.

[243] E.g., Kahl, "Jairus und die Verlorenen," 71. Mary Rose D'Angelo suggests that the woman's indirect approach "does not really need to be explained by psychological or social constraints." She suggests instead that it serves to highlight other aspects of the story, for example, Jesus' power as well as faith over fear ("Gender and Power," 99).

[244] 1.62.

[245] While Matthew retains the reference to the woman's intention to only touch the hem of Jesus' cloak (9:21), Luke omits this reference, noting only that this was the outcome of her actions (ἥψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου; Lk. 8:44).

[246] Moss, "Man with the Flow of Power," 508.

[247] As Haber has noted, "her intent is clearly established: she believes that the act of touching his clothes will cure her affliction" ("Woman's Touch," 182).

[248] On some occasions Mark relates that Jesus touched people in order to heal them (1:41; 7:33). On other occasions it is members of the crowd wishing to touch *him* in order to be healed (Mk. 3:10; 8:22). Mark also relates an account of people wishing to touch "even the edge of his cloak" (κἂν τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ἅψωνται; Mk. 6:56) in order to be healed. It is also interesting to note that both Matthew and Luke state that the woman touches only the *hem* of his garment (τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ; Mt. 9:20; Lk. 8:44).

protect Jesus from her impurity,[249] although opinions are divided as to whether such a measure would be effective.[250] Gerd Theissen draws a comparison between this passage and an anecdote that appears in Plutarch's *Life of Sulla* whereby a woman draws a thread out of Sulla's garment.[251] While the *Life of Sulla* has overt sexual undertones that are not present in the Markan narrative, Theissen suggests that a woman's touch can still be interpreted as δεινόν, that is, fearful or terrible.[252] According to Theissen, it is for this reason that Mark includes the woman's own reflections on the motivation behind touching Jesus; that is, that she wished to be "made whole." Theissen suggests that the ancient audience would already have an expectation that power can be transferred through touch.[253]

Mark notes that when the woman touches Jesus' cloak that she immediately (εὐθύς) feels, or indeed "knows in her body" (ἔγνω τῷ σώματι), that the bleeding had ceased and she was "free from her suffering" (ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔγνω τῷ σώματι ὅτι ἴαται ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος; Mk. 5:29). Mark describes this as the woman's "flow of blood" not just as stopping or ceasing, as it usually translated, but specifically as drying up (ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆ; 5:29).[254] As Candida Moss has noted, on other occasions where the word ξηραίνω is used in Mark's gospel it is usually translated as "scorched" or "hardened" (Mk. 3:1; 4:6; 9:18; 11:20-21).[255] In this respect, the mode of healing appears to represent

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[249] D.P. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 193-195.

[250] Hodges and Poirier ("Jesus as the Holy One," 166) as well as Wright (*Disposal of Impurity*, 194) argue that Jesus would not have been made impure from the contact. Other scholars suggest that the contact with the woman would have made Jesus unclean, e.g., T. Hentrich, "The Forgiveness of Sins as Healing Method in the New Testament," in *Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen / Disability and Impairment in Antiquity* (ed. R. Breitwieser; SEM 2; BARIS 2359; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 112; Keener (*Gospel of Matthew*, 303), in discussing the version in Matthew's account, suggests that Jesus would have been made impure through the woman's touch.

[251] Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 133-134; cf. Collins *Mark*, 282.

[252] Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 133-134.

[253] Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 133-134.

[254] In comparison to Luke who just recalls that the bleeding "stopped" (ἵστημι).

[255] Moss, *Flow of Power*, 515. Jozefa Artimová, in his article on the use of verb ξηραίνω and the adjective ξηρός in the NT, notes that these terms are used figuratively to describe a range of health conditions. He notes that while most English translations maintain the language of drying or withering that it would be best to translate these terms differently to make more sense of the figurative use of language in relation to health ("Figurative Usages of the Verb Ξηραίνω and Adjective Ξηρός in the NT Health Conditions," *GLO* 33-34 [2012]: 57–68). For example in relation to the man with the ξηραίνω hand (Mk. 3:10). While most English version of the text translate this as "a man with a withered hand," Artimová suggests it would be better to render ξηραίνω as "limp" ("Figurative Usages," 64). However, while he suggests that in general ξηραίνω and ξηρός should be treated more figuratively, in the case of the woman with a "flow of blood" he suggests that

the traditional Hippocratic model of seeking balance and treating one sign of illness with its opposite;[256] in this case, the woman with the "flow of blood" is too wet and thus has to be cured through the process of drying out. Kevin Wilkinson has suggested that the drying out of the woman's womb relegates it as essentially menopausal in anticipation of the genderless existence of the future kingdom.[257] Such a proposal assumes that the drying of the womb transfers the woman's body from one that is *too moist* to one that is *too dry* and that this shift is permanent.[258] While Mark does use the word ξηραίνω to refer to spiritual barrenness,[259] and there are examples of ξηραίνω being used to describe an "incapacity to produce what is expected"[260] in various body parts,[261] it seems unlikely that Mark is implying that the woman has been healed through menopause. Both conditions, that is, the womb that is too wet and the one that is too dry, are associated with infertility in Aristotle and Hippocrates.[262] Indeed, in many respects, it is the uterus that is too dry that is considered a greater cause of concern as it could lead to the womb wandering throughout the body in search of moisture.[263] It seems unlikely then that Mark is advocating that Jesus healed one form of bodily imbalance only to relegate her to another. It seems much more likely that the drying out is about bringing the woman to a state of balance.[264]

The mode of the woman's healing has also intrigued exegetes and commentators of this passage. Unlike any other healing in Mark, or indeed in the canonical gospels, scholars attest that this one happens without Jesus' "knowledge or consent."[265] It is often suggested

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the cessation of the blood flow should maintain the language of "drying" as it "is not the verb itself but the euphemistic expression for an abnormal gynaecological condition" ("Figurative Usages," 61).

[256] See § 6.4.2.1.

[257] Cf. K. Wilkinson, "'The Fount of Her Blood has Dried Up': Desiccation, Gender, and Eschatology in Mark 5:24-34" (unpublished paper 2001) as cited in Collins (*Mark*, 282 n.149). See also Collins, *Mark*, 282. This idea was developed further by Candida Moss in a presentation entitled "Blessed are the Barren: Infertility in the New Testament and Early Church" (paper presented at the Stavanger International Conference on Disability, Illness, and Religion. Stavanger, Norway, 7-9 May 2014), n.p.

[258] Moss, "Blessed are the Barren," n.p.

[259] ξηραίνω is used in Luke 23:31 to describe spiritual barrenness. Isaiah 56:3 in the LXX uses ξηρός figuratively to describe the eunuch.

[260] "Figurative Usages," 59.

[261] E.g., the man with the withered/shrivelled hand (ἐξηραμμένην ἔχων τὴν χεῖρα; Mk. 3:1).

[262] Hippoc., *Aph.* 5.62.

[263] See § 6.4.2.3.

[264] "Women who have the uterus cold and dense do not conceive; and those also who have the uterus humid, do not conceive, for the semen is extinguished, and in women whose uterus is very dry, and very hot, the semen is lost from the want of food; but women whose uterus is in an intermediate state between these temperaments prove fertile" (Hippoc., *Aph.* 5.62; Jones, LCL).

[265] Joynes, "Still at the Margins?," 118; cf. Hodges and Poirier, "Jesus as the Holy One," 17; Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 94; E.S. Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," *Semeia* 62 (1983): 36.

that the woman's fervent desire to be healed, and her faith in Jesus' ability to do so, are what enables her to become "the active agent in her healing."[266] Such a reading, while acknowledging the agency of the woman in proactively seeking out her cure, underrepresents the role of Jesus in the broader sense of the woman's healing. It is worth noting here the work of Adam Miller regarding multiple agency and the tendency of biblical scholars to interpret the New Testament texts from a unilateral perspective.[267] Miller, building on the work of Bruno Latour, suggests that Latour's principle of irreduction[268] reminds interpreters of the biblical material to avoid such unilateral readings instead focusing on an agent-based, object-oriented approach.[269] In this sense, rather than interpreting Mark's account of the woman with the "flow of blood" solely in terms of Jesus' loss of power and control, that both Jesus *and* the woman are actively involved in the woman's progression from illness to health. Such an interpretation accounts for a significant semantic shift that takes place in the passage in relation to the woman's healing. At the outset, Mark notes that the woman is desirous of being made whole (σῴζω), however, at the moment she touches Jesus and the bleeding ceases, it is not σωτηρία she receives but she is ἴαται ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος ("healed from her suffering"; 5:29). While ἰάομαι generally indicates a physical cure,[270] σῴζω has a wider semantic range being used throughout the synoptic gospels to refer to salvation as well a physical cure.[271] This shift in language implies that though the bleeding had ceased and she received a physical release from her condition, her healing in the form she desired it was yet to be realised. Mark indicates that it is only once the woman had publicly declared "the whole truth" (πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν) that Jesus announced that she received the complete healing she sought and is thus made whole (σῴζω; 5:34).

Just as the woman immediately felt in her body (ἔγνω τῷ σώματι) that her bleeding had ceased (5:29), Jesus felt in his body (ἐπιγινώσκω) that power had begun to flow from him

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[266] Moss, *Flow of Power*, 519; cf. Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 94.

[267] A. Miller, *Speculative Grace: Bruno Latour and Object-Oriented Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), *passim*.

[268] E.g., the principle of irreduction states that "nothing is, by itself, either reducible or irreducible to anything else" (B. Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* [trans. A. Sheridan and J. Law; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988], 158).

[269] Miller, *Speculative Grace*, *passim*.

[270] ἰάομαι is a hapax legomenon for Mark; on other occasions the gospel writer uses the word θεραπεύω (1:34; 6:5, 13; 3:1) as well as σῴζω (6:56; 10:52).

[271] σῴζω is used to refer to being saved/salvation throughout Mark (e.g. Mk 3:4; 8:35; 10:26; 13:20; 15:30; 16:16).

(5:30). Candida Moss suggests that there is a significant exchange that takes place here. It is now Jesus who is "porous" and "leaking" except that he is hemorrhaging his power (to heal).[272] Moss notes that the "narrative parallels between the body of Jesus and the body of the woman...are unmistakable."[273]

According to Mark, it is following this transferal of power that Jesus turns to the crowd and asks "who touched me?" (5:31). While some scholars consider this an indication of Jesus' human limitations,[274] it is just as likely that it is Jesus' method of invoking the woman to confess publicly in order to complete the healing process.[275] Unlike many of the other healing narratives that appear in Mark, this woman's illness is invisible; there is nothing of her illness that would be seen by others. While Mark records that the woman was cured at the moment of contact with Jesus, it was possible that the woman could have left the scene without being identified. Although she would have been physically cured, the stigma of her extended illness would have been difficult to remove. The woman's public proclamation is thus significant in Mark's account. By coming forward and telling the "whole truth," the news of her healing is announced publicly allowing her to not only be "freed from her suffering" (5:29) but aids in the removal of the associated stigma. The long-term nature of the condition, as well as the gender-specific nature of her condition, would have made it difficult for the woman to discuss her healing publicly and thus difficult to remove the stigma. However, by announcing her healing in a public format, these obstacles are removed and the message can begin to circulate of the woman's healing. In this sense, her healing is in two stages; first, the physical cure of her condition which occurs at the moment she touches Jesus' cloak. Second, her healing begins the process of being reintegrated into her community and to reconnect with those roles and responsibilities she had been prevented from fulfilling. Her faith and her desire thus brought about her physical transformation, designated by the term (ἰάομαι) but according

[272] Moss, "Man with the Flow of Power," 516.

[273] Moss, "Man with the Flow of Power," 518-519.

[274] France, *Mark*, 237-238. It appears that even Matthew was concerned with Mark's depiction of Jesus' apparent limitations; in the Matthean version the woman is only healed *after* Jesus identifies her from among the crowd (9:22).

[275] Some scholars have noted the use of the feminine form of ποιέω (5:32) and suggested that this indicates that Jesus knew that it was a woman who had touched him (Marcus, *Mark*, 359; Selvidge, *Woman, Cult and Miracle Recital*, 50). Other scholars have said that we cannot make too much of this, but that Mark's knowledge of the event means he uses the feminine pronoun (Cranfield, *Gospel*, 186; Culpepper, *Mark*, 175; C. Focant, *The Gospel according to Mark: A Commentary* [trans. L. Robert; Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012], 211).

to Mark, it is only through Jesus' public declaration of this healing that she receives what it is that she originally desired, that is, wholeness (σῴζω). It is in receiving the fullness of healing that the woman is called "daughter" indicating reinforcing her reintegration back into a community.[276] In this sense, "Jesus functions as a 'healer' of both physical and social bodies."[277]

§ 6.6 Re-Reading the intercalated healing account in Mark 5:21-43

As noted at the outset, the story of the woman with a "flow of blood" is embedded in the account of Jairus and his ill daughter. The numerous semantic and thematic similarities between the two healing accounts indicate that the stories were placed together to illuminate each other. One story, that of the woman with a protracted "flow of blood," is an example of a woman who is too moist and too porous. Her body is "leaking" as a result of "a disturbance in the equilibrium of fluids."[278] Although she is a woman, a γυνή, her uterus is apparently faulty and she has been relegated to the status of a παρθένος as a result of a failure to produce an adequate menstrual cycle, and by extension, a failure to produce offspring. She is in a perpetual state of ill health. The second story is that of Jairus' daughter. Unlike the first woman, there is no indication of the condition of which she is suffering, only that she is "at the point of death" (5:23). The only significant detail Mark offers regarding Jairus' daughter is that "she was twelve years old" (5:42).[279] Mary Rose D'Angelo has proposed that what connects these two accounts is that both women are suffering from opposing gender-specific imbalances; while the woman with a "flow of blood" is too wet, evidenced by her profuse bleeding, the second woman, D'Angelo suggests, could likely represent the other extreme; that of the uterus that is too dry.[280] As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, while a porous uterus was seen as problematic in the medical works of antiquity, what was of greater concern was the case of the 'too closed' or 'too dry' uterus.[281] This was deemed a serious condition because an ailing uterus was likely to depart from its proper location and instead wander the body in search of moisture.

[276] Byrne, *Costly Freedom*, 101; Marshall, *Faith as a Theme*, 107.
[277] Weissenrieder, "Plague of Uncleanness," 207.
[278] Weissenrieder, "Plague of Uncleanness," 212.
[279] It is worth noting here that while many commentators draw a comparison between this healing and Philostratus' account of Apollonius of Tyana's healing of the dead girl (4.45), we have not drawn attention to the parallels as it secondary to primary concerns of this chapter. For more on this comparison see Collins, *Mark*, 278-279.
[280] D'Angelo, "Gender and Power," esp. 95-96.
[281] § 6.4.2.3.

Numerous remedies and methods were suggested by the medical sources as a means of drawing down the menses. If, however, this wasn't achieved, a patient could develop

> aphonia, labored breathing, a seizure of the senses, clenching of the teeth, stridor, convulsive contraction of the extremities (but sometimes only weakness), upper abdominal distention, retraction of the uterus, swelling of the thorax, bulging of the network of the vessels of the face. The whole body is cool, covered with perspiration, the pulse stops or is very small.[282]

It was believed that after six months of such symptoms that the patient would die.

While a woman of any age could experience a closed womb, in the ancient medical sources it was suggested that the condition was most often experienced by young girls on the cusp of womanhood.[283] It was believed that menarche would begin at around the ages of 12-14[284] and would represent a girl's transition into womanhood. However, in some cases, a girl's menarche would not commence and the uterus would remain 'closed,' allowing a disproportionate amount of fluid to remain in the body.[285] As Lesley Dean-Jones observes, according to the Hippocratic text *On Virgins*, "a woman's menstrual difficulties begin, if she is not married, around the age of marriage, or puberty, or a little later. These difficulties coincide with the descent of the menses to the womb."[286] This period of time was considered one of great volatility in a woman's body with the possibility that the body would not expel those excess fluids that were believed to be particularly abundant at this stage of life. Indeed, Nancy Demand writes, when it came to women's health in the ancient world, "in practice doctors pursued a womb-centered approach...attributing many ailments of the body in general to the womb and failure of reproduction."[287] This is evidenced in the Hippocratic text *Places of Man* which suggests that the womb is the origin of all the diseases of women.[288] In this way, an ancient reader, on hearing an account of a young girl on the brink of womanhood, suffering from an unspecified illness, would very likely have associated the girl's condition with menstrual suppression.

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[282] Sor., *Gyn.* 3.26.
[283] Hippoc., *Virg.*; *Mul.* 249b-d.
[284] Aristotle says menstruation begins at 13 (*Hist. an.* 581a-b).
[285] Hippoc., *Mul. 2.*
[286] *Women's Bodies*, 48.
[287] N. Demand, "Women and Slaves as Hippocratic Patients," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (ed. S.R. Joshel and S. Murnaghan; Abingdon: Routledge, 1998), 80.
[288] 47.

We would like to build on Mary Rose D'Angelo's proposal and take another close look at the language that Mark uses in this pericope. Mark's reference to the girl's age is not simply to parallel the duration of the woman's bleeding but indicates to Mark's audience that the girl is in the "perilous transition"[289] from child to adult. Unlike the majority of healing accounts in Mark, in this instance he offers no specific details of the girl's illness. Elsewhere in Mark, illness is either expressly stated, for example, a person is "sick" (κακῶς),[290] "diseased" (νόσος),[291] or even "demon-possessed" (δαιμονίζομαι),[292] or they are described in terms of specific physiological markers such as "blind" (τυφλός),[293] "deaf" (κωφός),[294] or even with "fever" (πυρέσσω).[295] Jairus' daughter, on the other hand, is simply described as being "at the point of death" (ἐσχάτως ἔχει). With no clues in the narrative to indicate the reason for the girl's poor health, it is very likely that a first-century audience would have read in this account an example of poor health related to menstrual suppression. Through her revivification, the status of the girl shifts; while she is originally described by Mark as a "little girl" (θυγάτριον; 5:23) and then a "little child" (παιδίον; 5:39), following her cure she is specifically referred to as a "maiden" (κοράσιον; 5:42). Mark indicates that the girl's status shifts in the moment of her healing from that of a "child" to that of a "maiden." Perhaps this semantic shift may have been noticed by previous scholars if Mark had employed the term παρθένος here rather than κοράσιον. As such, we have found no scholars who have acknowledged the change in language thus allowing this significant element in the Markan narrative to be overlooked. While the term παρθένος is employed by the Hippocratic authors to define a young girl on the brink of womanhood, the term κόρη is "scarcely different" in its meaning, indicated in the "corresponding verb for 'deflower' *diakoreuein*."[296] However, Ken Dowden in his work on initiation rites for Greek women, notes that unlike the term παρθένος,

> *kore* also denotes a relationship: to be somebody's *kore* is also to be their daughter (*thygater*); its contrast with *gyne* is therefore rather more specific than that of *Parthenos*

[289] A.E. Hanson, "The Hippocratic *Parthenos* in Sickness and Health," in *Virginity Revisited: Configurations of the Unpossessed Body* (ed. B. MacLachlan and J. Fletcher; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 40.

[290] 1:32, 34; 6:55.

[291] 1:34.

[292] 1:32; 5:15, 16, 18.

[293] 8:22, 23; 10:46, 49, 51.

[294] 7:32, 37; 9:25.

[295] 1:30, 31.

[296] K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology* (Routledge Revivals; Abingdon: Routledge, 1989), 2.

> and the contrast reveals the transfer of authority over the woman: once her father's *kore*, she now becomes her husband's *gyne*.[297]

Mark's use of the term κοράσιον here is significant as he is noting that through her cure that not only is she restored as her father's daughter but she has passed through the difficult transition from child to "maiden." In this way, these women would have been read as experiencing two extreme examples of bodily imbalance that have been brought back to equilibrium through their encounter with Jesus.

§ 6.7 Conclusions: The woman with a "flow of blood" as a 'disabled' woman in antiquity

In the opening chapters, we discussed various definitions of disability. It was suggested there that although the ancients did not possess an overarching word for disability such as exists in the modern world, they would have been acquainted with illnesses that limited one's ability to perform their socially prescribed roles. Although a protracted uterine bleed may not be classified as a 'disability' by modern readers of the biblical text, such an illness would have had a dramatic impact on the woman's ability to fulfil her socially prescribed roles. The Hippocratic texts describe weakness from blood loss that can occur in connection with a regular menstrual cycle but that this fatigue is dramatically increased for those women experiencing a prolonged uterine bleed. Such ongoing blood loss undoubtedly would have impacted the woman's ability to function within her social and domestic capacities. In addition, the woman's perpetual bleeding would also have rendered her infertile for the duration of the condition. As noted, for a γυνή, her roles were to marry, look after the home, and bear children. In this respect, the faulty uterus of the woman with a "flow of blood" would have meant she was unable to fulfil these culturally defined expectations of a γυνή.

Although it is unclear the extent to which purity issues would have impacted the woman's social and cultic experience, in any respect it appears the woman herself has internalised these purity concerns and imposed upon herself a measure of limited interaction. Louise Lawrence has suggested that the narrative reveals an

> internalized sense of 'pollution' on the part of the woman. She creeps around surreptitiously and anonymously in the crowd and does not want to draw attention to herself or her plight. Her covert approach would seem to indicate a tacit acceptance of some sort of social marginality based on her disordered bleeding.[298]

[297] *Death and the Maiden*, 2.
[298] Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 94-95.

Whether these social limitations were clearly defined through the cultural group with which was she aligned or whether they were self-imposed, it seems apparent that the woman herself considers her own presence in the crowd as risky and possibly even a transgression. Her "fear" about being in the public space and her attempt to touch only Jesus' clothes is perhaps evidence that she was afraid of passing on her impurity. In this sense, the woman is sensorially limited, a limitation which is emphasised by Mark's repeated references to touch. In the conjoined healing account in Mark the verb ἅπτω ("touch") appears four times. This deliberate emphasis on physical contact by Mark seems to be juxtaposed with the woman's desire to limit her touch solely to Jesus' cloak.

Within her own particular circumstances then this woman with the "flow of blood" was most certainly 'disabled.' She possessed a physical condition that impeded her social interactions, and, to some extent, complete her domestic responsibilities. Her condition, therefore, parallels other disabilities addressed throughout this dissertation in that she experienced a physical illness or limitation in her body which impacted on her ability to fulfil her socially prescribed role as that of a γυνή. In this case, this particular healing account emphasises more than any other in the Synoptic gospels both the physiological and social aspects of an illness/disability.

In response to these two factors, Mark presents the woman's healing as occurring in two stages. Firstly, at the moment of contact with Jesus, the woman's bleeding ceases and she receives the physical release from her ailment. However, Mark describes this stage of her cure as (ἰάομαι). It is not until the moment that Jesus exhorts the woman to come forth and declare her cure amongst the crowd that the woman actually received the healing and wholeness (σῴζω) which she sought. Having received the physical cure of her condition it would have been possible for her to re-enter anonymously the crowd. However, while the bleeding itself had ceased, due to the duration of the woman's condition, the social stigma associated with her illness would have been very difficult to remove. For those with other forms of disability in Mark's gospel, such as those who had vision or mobility impairments, their restoration of sight (ἀναβλέπω) or mobility could be publicly witnessed. For the woman with the "flow of blood," the cessation of her illness had no visible manifestations and thus her change in condition and purity status would not have been apparent to those

around her.[299] By coming forward on Jesus' prompting and declaring her physical healing amongst the crowds the woman was able to announce the end of her condition publicly in a way not available to her otherwise. While those with *ṣāra'at* were required to see a priest and be publically declared "clean," this woman would have had no means of being declared "whole."

While previous scholars have used various social, cultural, and purity rubrics to assess the account of the woman with the "flow of blood," re-reading the account in light of critical disability theory is beneficial in drawing out aspects of the text which have been overlooked. While scholars have generally focused on the woman's illness as rendering her ritually impure, many scholars have neglected the social experiences and limitations connected solely with the woman's illness. While Mark certainly indicates that purity issues are an element in the woman's story, indicated by his allusions to the Levitical purity code, it appears that what is of greater concern is the social disconnect that the woman experiences as a result of her illness. This is emphasised through Mark's deliberate contrasting of the woman's illness with that of Jairus' daughter. Looking beyond the issue of purity in this account is beneficial not only in gaining an understanding of gender-specific illnesses in first-century antiquity, but it also allows us to move beyond interpreting this text as anti-Jewish polemic. Mark's account of the woman with the "flow of blood" thus represents Jesus as a complete healer; not only does he have the ability to bring an end to physical suffering but he is also able to restore people to fullness of life in its broadest sense. For Mark, this woman's healing and social restoration are depicted as a foretaste of the complete and permanent healing available through Jesus in the eschaton.

[299] Despite the woman's blood flow ceasing, according to the stipulations regarding a *zavah* the woman would still have had to wait an additional 7 days after the bleeding and then "she will be ceremonially clean" (Lev. 15:28).

CHAPTER SEVEN
PHYSICAL AND SENSORY DISABILITY IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: EXEGESIS OF JOHN 5:1-18 and 9:1-41

§ 7.1 Introduction

In this final case study, we are going to address the two major healing accounts that appear in the Gospel of John: that is, the healing of the lame[1] man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5:1-18 and the healing of the "man born blind" in John 9:1-41. We will argue that the writer of John's gospel built upon an existing literary motif which coupled together the blind and the lame with the intention that these healing narratives would be read and interpreted together. In addition to this motif, the two healing narratives also feature a large number of significant literary parallels. Both stories feature a healing of a man with a long-term, non-urgent physical or sensory impairment that was healed by Jesus at his own instigation on the Sabbath. Both stories also feature a healing pool, extended dialogue following the healing proper, a discussion of sin, a disputation with Jesus' religious opponents, and both narratives feature Jesus and the healed person at a second encounter subsequent to the healing. However, the stories differ in the responses of each of the men to their new able-bodiedness. Though the man in 9:1-41 openly declares his faith in Jesus following his healing, John depicts the formerly lame man as ending his interaction with Jesus without such a response. In this way, John uses a long-standing literary motif in combination with a range of literary parallels not only to compare the two accounts but also to contrast them, re-establishing what it means to be included and excluded in the newly developing Jesus movement.

This chapter will begin with a brief introduction of the two healing accounts that will be addressed in this case study. Following this, we will examine each of the healing stories separately, addressing some of the key exegetical elements of each account. Following a survey of each of the healing narratives in their own right, we will then compare and contrast the two accounts to highlight both the similarities and differences between the

[1] Although the Greek refers to this man as ἀσθενείᾳ ("weak"/"ill") rather than as χωλός ("lame"), the nature of the man's illness and the long history of connecting the blind and the lame in literary sources indicate that "lame" is probably the best translation of ἀσθενείᾳ in this case. This will be explored in more detail throughout this chapter.

narratives. This chapter will finish with a synthesis of the two healing accounts addressing issues of inclusion and exclusion as they are presented in the two healing accounts.

§ 7.2 Background: The Gospel of John

The gospel of John[2] differs significantly from the synoptic gospels in that it features only a small number of healing accounts. Unlike the synoptic gospels, the gospel of John does not attribute any illnesses to demonic causality and, therefore, does not feature any exorcisms.[3] The healing narratives in this gospel appear as part of the author's Christological emphasis on "signs" (σημεῖα).[4] These signs highlight Jesus' identity[5] and are designed to bring people to faith in him.[6] For this reason, each sign is usually accompanied by a lengthy discourse interpreting the sign and emphasising its Christological meaning.

Despite the limited number of healing narratives found in the gospel of John,[7] there are two extended accounts featuring people with physical and sensory impairments: namely, the healing of the lame[8] man at Bethesda (5:1-18)[9] and the healing of the man "blind from

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[2] Throughout this chapter we refer to both the gospel and the author/s of the gospel as 'John' for the sake of brevity without making a definitive statement about authorship of the fourth gospel.

[3] The only references to demons in John are the occasions where Jesus himself is accused of being demon-possessed (7:20; 8:48f.; 10:20-21).

[4] This is the term employed by John to describe the miracles performed by Jesus (2:11; 2:23; 4:54; 6:2; 6:14; 6:26; 12:18; 12:37; 20:30). "In classical Greek σημεῖα means a distinguishing mark, a token, or signal" (C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978], 75). Throughout the LXX it carries this meaning as well as referring to the miraculous (Ex. 4:8). In the synoptic gospels, σημεῖα is used most often for the type of "signs" that people wrongfully seek from Jesus (i.e., Mt. 12:38-39; 16:1, 4; Mk. 8:11-12; Lk. 11:16, 29; 23:8). Significantly, σημεῖα is not used in relation to Jesus' miracles in the synoptic tradition.

[5] On the issue of the "signs" as an indicator of Jesus' identity, see G. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 81; H.C. Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 225; C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:275; S.S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (NTP; Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 89, 208.

[6] E.g., 20:30-31.

[7] John features a total of three healing accounts: two of these are included as part of this study and the third is the healing of the official's son in 4:46-54.

[8] Greek = ἀσθενείᾳ (weakness). While many English versions translate ἀσθενείᾳ here as "invalid" (e.g., NIV, ESV) this same word is often translated "weakness" or "infirmity" in other places in the gospels and Pauline epistles (e.g., Jn. 11:4: "infirmity" or "sickness"; Rom. 8:26: "infirmity"; 2 Cor. 11:30: "infirmity.")

[9] Translators and commentators alike are divided regarding the confines of this pericope. The NA[26] divides this pericope following verse 18 as do a number of English translations (e.g., CEV; GNB; NRSV) and commentators (Barrett, *Gospel*, 249; R.A. Culpepper, "John 5.1-18: A Sample of Narrative Critical Commentary," in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives* [ed. M.W.G. Stibbe; NTTS 17; Leiden: Brill, 1993], 193-207; W. Hendriksen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* [2nd ed.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1961], 187-196; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* [NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972], 219; J.R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 285-305; F.J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* [SP 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998], 166-175; H.N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 184. Others

birth" (9:1-41).[10] What is so striking about these accounts is the extended dialogue and character development that accompanies each healing, particularly in the case of the "man born blind" (9:1-41). While the healing narratives included in the synoptic gospels feature only a physical cure, these two healing accounts recall not only the healing proper but also the healed person's response to it.[11]

There is also a significant parallelism between the two healing narratives.[12] Firstly, both accounts portray men with physical/sensory impairments who are depicted as socially marginalised;[13] indeed, Mark W.G. Stibbe suggests that these two men represent the only two socially marginalised characters in the whole of John.[14] In addition, both men are shown to be experiencing a long-term, non-urgent illness which Jesus cures on the Sabbath.[15] Further, in comparison to the synoptic gospels where the crowds often petition Jesus, in both of these accounts in John it is Jesus himself who instigates the interaction.[16] Each account also features a healing pool, a disputation with "the Jews"[17] regarding Sabbath observation,[18] as well as a subsequent meeting between Jesus and the healed person where Jesus offers the person a chance to complete the "healing" process by coming

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maintain the pericope finishes with verse 15 (e.g., NIV; NKJV; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII* [AB; New York: Doubleday, 1966], 205-211; others at verse 16 [Keener, *Gospel*, 1:634-645]).

[10] See § 3.3 n. 55.

[11] In the synoptic gospels there are some brief insights into a person's life following their cure but these accounts are rare, and usually quite brief (e.g., the tenth man with 'leprosy' [Lk. 17:11-19]).

[12] While the parallelism between the two pericopae has been noted by numerous scholars (e.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 255; R.A. Culpepper, *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983]; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:639; D.A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning* [JSNTSup 95; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 105-106; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 190; J.L. Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Character in John 5 and 9," *Semeia* 53 [1991]: 55-80; Yong, *Bible, Disability, and the Church*, 57) the extent to which this parallelism plays out has only been noted by a very small number, for example R. Alan Culpepper who states that the "blind man serves as a counterpart and contrast to the lame man" (*Anatomy*, 140; cf. Keener, *Gospel*, 1:638-639).

[13] Cf. Robert J. Karris states that John parallels these two narratives in order to "contrast two marginal persons" (*Jesus and the Marginalized in John's Gospel* [Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990], 52).

[14] M.W.G. Stibbe, *John: A Readings Commentary* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 75. This is also suggested by J.L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (BIS 56; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 134-143. However, we would also add to this the account of the woman at the well (Jn. 4:1-42), as does Jacobus Kok ("The Healing of the Blind Man in John," *JECH* 2.2 [2012]: 43).

[15] 5:5, 10; 9: 1, 14.

[16] Apart from these two healing accounts in John there are only three other healings in the canonical gospels which are instigated by Jesus (Lk. 6:6-11//Mt. 12:9-14//Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 13:10-17; Lk. 14:1-6). It is interesting to note that in all six cases (three in John and three in the synoptic gospels) Jesus instigates healing for people with long-term, non-urgent conditions on the Sabbath.

[17] For recent discussions on the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, see R. Sheridan, "Issues in the Translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 132.3 (2013): 671-695; cf. Law and Halton, eds., *Jew and Judean*, *passim*.

[18] 5:10-15; 9:13-41.

to faith in him.[19] This, however, is where the stories reach their point of divergence. While the healed man in the second account openly responds to Jesus and declares his belief in the "son of man,"[20] the man in the first account offers no spiritual response to his healing or Jesus' words of warning.[21] In this sense, Craig S. Keener suggests that the "miracle story (in 5:1-18) provides a direct foil for the miracle story in 9:1-14, together coupling a positive and negative example of response to Jesus."[22]

It is worth noting that over the course of the twentieth century it became common to assume the existence of a "signs source" that predated the composition of John's gospel and was adapted by the author of the gospel.[23] In discussing the existence of a "signs source," form critics have attempted to delineate the original signs and miracles from the later Johannine additions. While such study is valuable in attempting to recreate the original Johannine community,[24] the form-critical approach has not been used in this survey. Instead, this investigation of the Johannine material is to be done canonically, that is, accepting the completed form of the gospel accounts and assessing them as we have received them. In keeping with the foci of the previous chapters, the aim of this chapter is not to recreate the lives of the two men, but rather to address the way in which the gospel depicts their physical and sensory impairment. Even though these two extended healing accounts include more detail about the lives of these impaired men than any other healing

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[19] 5:14; 9:35-38.

[20] 9:35-38.

[21] 5:14-15.

[22] *Gospel*, 1:639. Keener notes that this suggestion was first put forth by Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 139). This view is likewise espoused by Barrett (*Gospel,* 255), Karris (*Jesus*, 52) and J.L. Martyn (*History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968], 71).

[23] Development of the theory of a "signs source" lay originally in the work of literary criticism whereby scholars attempted to supply an answer for the discrepancies between the narrative and discourse sections of the Fourth Gospel. This preliminary work was completed by J. Wellhausen (*Das Evangelium Johannis* [Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1908], 102) and E. Schwartz ("Aporien im Vierten Evangelium" in *Nachrichten v.d. Kön. Gesells. Der Wiss. Zu Göttingen: Phil.-Hist. Kl.* [Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1908], 559) followed closely by H.H. Wendt (*Die Schichten im Vierten Evangelium* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911], 36, 42). Independently of these German scholars was English scholar J.M. Thompson who observed a similar tension throughout the Fourth Gospel ("The Structure of the Fourth Gospel," *Exp* 10 [1915]: 512-526). The development of the "signs source," however, is attributed to the work of R.K. Bultmann (*The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971]) whose work has gained wide acceptance amongst scholars of the Johannine literature (cf. R. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* [Philadelphia: Polebridge Press, 1988]; D.M. Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965]; W. Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction* [Leiden: Brill, 1972]; H. Teeple, *The Literary Origin of the Gospel of John* [Evanston: Religion and Ethics Institute, 1974]).

[24] See in particular Martyn, *History and Theology*, *passim*.

recipients in the gospels, it is still not possible to recreate the lived experiences of either man. For this reason, we will once again focus on the way that the gospel writer employs and indeed subverts traditional disability language and topoi. Using disability as a lens through which to assess these narratives results in uncovering details of the narratives that have been previously overlooked by traditional historical-critical approaches.

§ 7.3 John 5:1-18

[1]Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. [2]ἔστιν δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά, πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα. [3]ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν. [[ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν. [4]ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρὸν ἐλούετο ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὕδωρ. ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβάς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατας ὑγιὴς ἐγίνετο οἵῳ δήποτ' κατείχετο νοσήματι]] [5]ἦν δέ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα [καὶ] ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ αὐτοῦ· [6]τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει, λέγει αὐτῷ, Θέλεις ὑγιὴς γενέσθαι; [7]ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν, Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγὼ ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. [8]ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν, Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα ὅταν ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγὼ ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. [9]καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἦρεν τὸν κράβαττον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιεπάτει. Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. [10]ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, Σάββατόν ἐστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔξεστίν σοι ἆραι τὸν κράβαττόν σου. [11]ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν, Ἆρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. [12]ἠρώτησαν αὐτόν, Τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπών σοι, Ἆρον καὶ περιπάτει [13]ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ᾔδει τίς ἐστιν, ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν ὄχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. [14]μετὰταῦτα εὑρίσκει αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἴδε ὑγιὴς γέγονας· μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χεῖρόν σοί τι γένηται. [15]ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀνήγγειλεν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὸν ὑγιῆ. [16]καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ. [17]ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτοῖς, Ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι. [18]διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεόν, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ.

[1] Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.[2] Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. [3] Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed — and they waited for the moving of the waters. [4] From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had. [5] One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.[6] When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"
[7] "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." [8] Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." [9] At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, [10] and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." [11] But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" [12] So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" [13] The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. [14] Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." [15] The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. [16] So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. [17] In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." [18] For this reason they tried all the

> more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.[25]

The healing narrative in John 5:1-18 begins with Jesus going to Jerusalem to attend "one of the Jewish festivals" (5:1).[26] The gospel writer here describes a pool near the "sheep gate"[27] which in Hebrew is named "Bethesda" (Βηθεσδά).[28] While some commentators have considered the author's description of the pool as poetic license,[29] Joachim Jeremias' 1966 work entitled *The Rediscovery of Bethesda: John 5:2* proposed that far from a literary creation, the pool mentioned in chapter five is a genuine site currently located under St

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[25] NIV. All biblical quotes are from the NIV unless otherwise stated.

[26] This is the only time in John that the specific festival is not named. Some scholars suggest this unnamed feast was the Passover (e.g., Bultmann, *Gospel*, 240; Nicol, *Semeia*, 32; J.N. Sanders, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* [HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1968], 158); some suggest it was the feast of Pentecost (e.g., R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to John* [3 vols.; London: Burns & Oates, 1980], 2:93) while others still suggest the feast of New Year's (e.g., A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960], 69-91). Despite the fact that the actual feast is not specified, this information "serves to explain Jesus' presence in Jerusalem" (J.C. Thomas, *The Devil, Disease, and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought* [JPTSup 13; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 95; B. Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995], 136-137). Some scholars have suggested that part of the reason for the uncertainty of the feast is due to the transposition of chapters 5 and 6 of John's gospel (cf. Bultmann, *Gospel*, xiii, 111-112; Sanders, *Commentary*, 158).

[27] Translation issues have arisen in relation to the adjective προβατικῇ ("sheep"). Some scholars argue that this adjective qualifies the noun "pool" that follows, thus translating the text as "sheep pool" (Moloney, *Gospel*, 171). However, this translation involves "taking κολυμβήθρα ("pool") as a dative, which leaves the verb 'is' without a subject and makes rather odd Greek" (F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 122. The vast majority of scholars consider that the author has (deliberately?) omitted the noun which should be qualified by this adjective possibly "because at the time of which the Evangelist is thinking everyone knew it" (Bruce, *Gospel*, 121). Many of these scholars thus insert the noun "gate" here due to the references in Nehemiah which refer to a sheep-gate in the north wall of the city (Neh. 3:1, 32; 12:39; CEB; ESV; NASB; NLT; NIV; NRSV; Barrett, *Gospel*, 251; Brown, *Gospel*, 206; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 240; D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* [Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991], 241; C.A. Evans, *John's Gospel, Hebrews-Revelation* [Bible Knowledge Background Commentary; Colorado Springs, 2005], 65; E. Haenchen, *John* [trans. R.W. Funk; Hermeneia; 2 vols; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980], 1.244; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:636; Lindars, *Gospel*, 212; Michaels, *Gospel*, 288; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 300; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 184; Sanders, *Commentary*, 159; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2.94). For a good summary of the textual issues, see U.C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John: Volume 2: Commentary on the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 216) and D.J. Wieand, "John v.2 and the Pool of Bethesda," (*NTS* 12.04 [2009]: 394).

[28] The exact name of the pool has also caused a great deal of discussion. While the name of pool is given as "Bethesda" in the vast majority of English translations, there are a number of variations that appear in the manuscripts. While the reading "Bethsaida" appears to have the best attestation among the manuscripts (e.g., Michaels, *Gospel*, 289), some scholars have suggested that this rests simply in a scribal confusion with the town of Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee (e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 206). Supporters of the name "Bethesda" often refer to the witness of *The Copper Scroll* (3Q15 XI 12f.) with its reference to *Beth'eshdāthain* as confirmation of this translation (cf. Barrett, *Gospel*, 253; Brown, *Gospel*, 206f.; Bruce, *Gospel*, 122; Carson, *Gospel*, 241; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:636; A.J. Köstenberger, *John* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 178 n. 14; Morris, *Gospel*, 301; Wieand, "John," 392-404; cf. NIV; NASB; NKJV; NLT; NEB). Other scholars consider "Bethzatha" to be the better reading due to wider textual attestation (e.g., Sanders, *Commentary*, 159; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:94).

[29] E.g., J. Marsh, *The Gospel of Saint John* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 245-246.

Anne's monastery in Jerusalem.[30] While there are a small number of critics,[31] in general, this proposal has been almost universally accepted by commentators.[32]

John states that amongst the porticoes at the pool of Bethesda there were *κατέκειτο πλῆθος πολὺ τῶν ἀσθενούντων τυφλῶν χωλῶν ξηρῶν ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν* ("lying there a multitude of those who were sick – blind, lame and withered.")[33] Some later manuscripts also give an explanation for the multitude at the pool stating that the people were

> waiting for the stirring of the water; [4] for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well from whatever disease that person had.[34]

Despite the unreliability of this textual variant, there is still good internal and external evidence for considering the pool at Bethesda to be some form of healing sanctuary. The primary evidence rests in the fact that, according to John, many people with various physical and sensory impairments were gathered at the site. Even without the inclusion of 5:3b-4, it would still be possible to interpret the crowd at the pool as motivated by a search for healing. This is confirmed in a number of details. Firstly, when Jesus questions the ill man about whether he wants to be healed, the man responds by stating that he has no one to help him into the pool when the water is stirred up (5:7).[35] Secondly, healing pools such

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[30] Jeremias contends that it is "now established beyond reasonable doubt that the ancient Jerusalem tradition identified the twin pool near St Anne's as the Sheep Pool of John 5:2" (*Rediscovery of Bethesda John 5:2* [NTAM 1; Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966], 12).

[31] For example, John A.T. Robinson states that Jeremias' "entire theory is a construct of the imagination" (*The Priority of John* [London: SCM Press, 1985], 54).

[32] For example, Barrett, *Gospel*, 253; Brown, *Gospel*, 207; Bruce, *Gospel*, 122; Carson, *Gospel*, 240; Evans, *John*, 65; Haenchen, *John*, 1.244; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:636; Köstenberger, *John*, 178; Lindars, *Gospel*, 213; Michaels, *Gospel*, 288; Moloney, *Gospel*, 172; M. Parmentier, "The Lasting Sanctity of Bethesda," in *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity* (ed. A. Houtman, M.J.H.M. Poorthuis, and J. Schwartz; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 73-93; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 185; Sanders, *Commentary*, 160; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:93.

[33] 5:3. Ernst Haenchen notes here that some manuscripts add in the word "paralytics" (παραλυτικοί) as a fourth group of "sick" people, however, it is not very well attested (*John*, 1:244).

[34] For a summary on the key issues regarding vv. 3b-4, see B.M. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [London: UBS, 1971], 209 and J. Klinger ("Bethesda and the Universality of the Logos," *SVTQ* 27.3 [1983]: 179–89). While it is almost universally considered a later addition, a small number of scholars argue for its inclusion (e.g., A. Duprez, *Jesus et les dieux guerisseurs: a propos de Jean V* [CahRB 12; Paris: Gabalda, 1970], 128-130; Z. Hodges, "The Angel at Bethesda – John 5:4," *BibSac* 136 [1979]: 25-39).

[35] Antoine Duprez argues that verse seven only really makes sense with the inclusion of 3b-4 (*Jesus*, 142-143).

as this were commonly associated with Asclepius as well as other healing gods in the Greco-Roman world and the ancient Near East.[36]

The proposal that the pool of Bethesda was a healing site is also attested in external evidence. If Joachim Jeremias' proposal is correct, archaeological evidence found at the site under St Anne's monastery also confirms the pool as a healing site. Inscriptions and votives found at the site indicate that after 135 C.E., when Jerusalem was rebuilt as the Roman city Aelia Capitolina, the pool was associated with the healing gods Serapis and especially Asclepius.[37] Indeed, a small number of scholars suggest that the site may have been a dedicated Serapeum or Asclepion even earlier than this, possibly pre-dating the first-century C.E., which would suggest that the site was associated with Greek healing gods during Jesus' lifetime.[38] Jerzy Klinger, for example, proposes that while Jesus was willing to enter the pagan healing site in order to bring about a miracle that this detail was simply too shocking for John's original auditors.[39] Klinger suggests that it was this discomfiture that was the motivation behind the insertion of vv. 3b-4, namely to disassociate the shimmering of the water from any pagan or magical association and instead connect it with the "angel of the Lord,"[40] thus crediting the site with Jewish undertones rather than pagan ones. However, other scholars are skeptical of this hypothesis claiming that the evidence regarding the dating of the healing center is inconclusive.[41]

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[36] Indeed, this particular healing site apparently had a long association with Asclepius following the destruction of the Jewish temple.

[37] Martien Parmentier suggests that Bethesda only became an Asclepion after 135 C.E. when Jerusalem was rebuilt as the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina ("Lasting," 76; Evans, *John*, 65; Yeung, *Faith in Jesus and Paul*, 76).

[38] For example, Antione Duprez (*Jesus*, 95-176) suggests that during Jesus' lifetime the pool was actually located outside of the city of Jerusalem. He suggests that while it is difficult to believe a pagan sanctuary might be located within the city of Jerusalem at this time, it is not impossible to accept that one existed outside of the city walls. This is the view also of W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974], 312) as well as C.R. Koester (*Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* [2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003], 53-54) and R.M. Mackowski (*Jerusalem, City of Jesus: An Exploration of the Traditions, Writings, and Remains of the Holy City, from the Time of Christ* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 79-83).

[39] "Bethesda," 174-175. Jerzy Klinger states that it should not surprise us that it was a pagan healing site during Jesus' time because "it was outside the walls of the holy city and Jewish orthodoxy could close its eyes to the cult, especially if it was itself trying to adopt these practices, in a somewhat purified form" ("Bethesda," 174).

[40] "Bethesda," 174.

[41] Cf. Maureen W. Yeung who says that "It is stretching the archaeological evidence to claim that there was already an Asclepius shrine in Jerusalem before 70 A.D." (*Faith in Jesus*, 78). Robinson also states that there is no suggestion at all from the text of John 5 that "the significance of Jesus' action lay in his association with such a 'gravely unorthodox' spot" (Robinson, *Priority*, 56).

In either case, it seems that the pool of Bethesda offered the possibility of healing for many with long-term physical and sensory impairments.[42] Lack of access to healing options is an issue that has already been addressed in previous chapters where it was noted that available healing options were limited in the ancient world.[43] In addition, it was observed that the Jewish temple did not offer a petitionary or therapeutic function, unlike other temples in the Greco-Roman world and the ancient Near East.[44] It is possible that the pool of Bethesda offered the hope of healing unavailable to the various Jewish communities connected with the temple.

It is also significant to note that while Jesus and his disciples had come to Jerusalem for the feast (5:1), John indicates here the presence of this particular crowd (πλῆθος) who are gathered at the healing pool rather than at the temple. Although we are uncertain about which particular festival was taking place in Jerusalem in John 5, it is worth recalling that, at least in relation to the three major festivals of the Jewish calendar, all Jewish males were required to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and make a sacrifice at the temple.[45] This is significant because, as noted in chapter four,[46] while the Torah requires the presence of "all males," the Mishnah specifies a list of males who were exempt from participating in these pilgrimages which included "the lame, the blind, the sick, the aged, and one who is unable to go up on foot."[47] If the gospel writer has this exemption for the impaired in mind, his point could well be to emphasise the marginal status of those present at the pool, especially the man who is introduced in this passage. His impairment was such that he lay in wait at the pool even though there was only a small possibility of healing. This disconnect is further reinforced by the fact that whereas other Jewish males are on their way to offer sacrifices at the temple he cannot participate in this cultic ritual.

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[42] John A.T. Robinson, for example, though critical of Jeremias' work on the location of the Bethesda pool and Duprez's suggestion that the Bethesda site was possibly an Asclepion in Jesus' day, still says that the site of Bethesda was quite clearly a site connected with healing (*Priority*, 57).

[43] § 3.6, § 4.4.2.

[44] § 4.4.2.

[45] "Three times a year – on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths – all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that he will choose" (Deut. 16:16; cf. Ex. 23:17; 34:23).

[46] § 4.6.1.1.

[47] *m. Hag.* 1:1.

John recalls that while Jesus is making his way to the temple he notices one man, in particular, who was "lying there" (at the pool; 5:6). Despite the fact that, according to the text, many people with physical and sensory impairments frequented the pool (5:3), John states that it is Jesus himself who instigates the conversation and the subsequent healing with this particular man (5:6). Indeed, of all the ill people present, Jesus approaches only one man from the crowd to offer healing with no explanation for this choice apart from the fact that he "saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time" (5:6).[48] While Andreas J. Köstenberger proposes that Jesus "takes pity" on the man and it is this that motivates the healing this is certainly not stated in the text.[49] Rather, as Donald A. Carson surmises, "The sovereign initiative is with Jesus; no reason is given for his choice."[50]

Jesus' instigation of the healing in John 5:1-18 is also significant because it takes place on the Sabbath. According to rabbinical law, healing on the Sabbath was only permitted under three circumstances: if someone's life was in direct and immediate danger; in the case of the birth of a baby (whereby lack of involvement could affect the life of the mother and/or child) or, in the event of circumcision.[51] That John has such legal concerns in mind as he relates this story of Jesus becomes apparent in chapter seven. Here, Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem at the time of the feast of the Tabernacles and is caught in a disputation with the crowds regarding the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus responds to the crowds by stating "Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body on the Sabbath?" (7:23). John's reference to the man's age (τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ αὐτοῦ; "been an invalid for thirty-eight years"; 5:5)[52] not only serves to highlight

[48] Some commentators have speculated over the statement that Jesus "learned" about the man's condition. While some scholars suggest that Jesus came about this information naturally, perhaps through his own enquiry (Lindars, *Gospel*, 215; Michaels, *Gospel*, 88; Morris, *Gospel*, 303); others suggest that it is more likely that Jesus' knowledge of the man's condition was supernatural (Barrett, *Gospel*, 254; Brown, *Gospel*, 207; Carson, *Gospel*, 243; Haenchen, *John*, 1.245).

[49] *John*, 179.

[50] *Gospel*, 243.

[51] *b. Sabb.* 132a; *m. Sabb.* 6.3; 12.1; 18.2-3. David Instone-Brewer maintains that these rabbinical laws regarding the *Shabbat* were already in place before 70 C.E. (*Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament*; vol 2a: *Feasts and Sabbaths: Passover and Atonement* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011], 57).

[52] Some scholars have linked the reference of 38 years to the duration of Israel's wilderness wanderings (Deut. 2:14; e.g., C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953], 319-320; P.F. Ellis, *The Genius of John: A Composition-Critical Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* [Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1984], 88; L.P. Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], 127-128; M.-J. Pierre and J.-M. Rousée, "Sainte Marie de la

Jesus' miracle-working abilities but also emphasizes to John's audience the very long-term nature of the man's illness. Not only does John record that Jesus healed on the Sabbath but also that Jesus instigated this healing in the case of a man whose life was not in immediate danger.

While John does not explicitly state that the man had been present at the temple for the duration of his illness, there is some evidence to suggest that this was certainly a possibility.[53] We have seen that healing sites were often used not only to dispose of unwanted infants,[54] but also to abandon slaves who had become too weak or incapacitated to work.[55] The edict of Claudius, for example, granted freedom to any slave who had been abandoned at the temple of Aesculapius due to poor health.[56] In addition to this, there is also documentary evidence to suggest that some abandoned infants were not only abandoned at but also reared within religious sanctuaries,[57] a tradition that carried on into the first few centuries of the Christian era.[58] While we can only speculate about the status of the man at the pool of Bethesda, it is certainly plausible that as an exposed infant or slave, he may have indeed spent the entire thirty-eight years of his illness within the confines of the healing site.[59]

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probatique, état et orientation des recherches," *POC* 31 (1981): 23-42). Other scholars disagree that the 38 years is symbolic (cf. Barrett, *Gospel*, 253; Brown, *Gospel*, 207; Bruce, *Gospel*, 123). What is more likely is that the reference to 38 years is simply to express the long-term nature of the man's condition (cf. Brown, *Gospel*, 207; Haenchen, *John*, 1:245; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:640; Morris, *Gospel*, 302 n. 17; Ridderbos, *Gospel,* 185). John C. Thomas suggests that because the man had been ill for so long, it is apparent that only a miracle could effect such change ("'Stop Sinning Lest Something Worse Come Upon You': The Man at the Pool in John 5," *JSNT* 18.3 [1996]: 8; cf. Lindars, *Gospel*, 214; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2.95).

[53] John Painter, for example, suggests that the man had been at the pool for the entire 38 years ("Text and Context in John 5," *ABR* 35 [1987]: 28-34; cf. Bruce, *Gospel*, 123; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 241).

[54] § 3.7.1.

[55] § 3.7.

[56] Suet., *Claud.* 25.2.

[57] On the specific issue of θρεπτόι, infants who were raised by someone other than their own parents, including children raised within sanctuaries, see M. Ricl, "Legal and Social Status of Threptoi and Related Categories in Narrative and Documentary Sources," in *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East* (ed. H.M. Cotton et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 93–114.

[58] The Emperor Justinian, in 529 C.E., ruled that all *expositii* (exposed infants) would be considered freeborn regardless of their status at birth. The aim of this ruling was to prevent families exposing their infants and attempting to reclaim them later as well as limiting the enslavement of exposed infants. However, even the threat of penalties did not completely eradicate the problem and there is evidence that churches continued to be considered a suitable place to abandon unwanted infants. For more on this issue, see Boswell, *Kindness of Strangers*, *passim*; Evans Grubbs, "Church State and Children," 119-131.

[59] The Greek text is vague and while the phrase πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει ("much time he had already spent") could be referring to the time spent in that place it may simply reflect the duration of his illness (e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 207; Bruce, *Gospel*, 123; Haenchen, *John*, 1:245).

While the man is described as having an infirmity (ἀσθένεια), the nature and extent of his condition is uncertain due to the ambiguity of the Greek word used.[60] Although the man states he is unable to reach the water quickly enough to be healed (5:7), he is not described as being completely immobile[61] as is often assumed by many commentators who refer to the man as a "paralytic" or "having paralysis" or "lame."[62] Despite the absence of the specific word χωλός to refer to the man being mobility impaired, it is still likely that a first-century auditor of the gospel of John would have considered this man to have been "lame." As was noted in previous chapters, semantically linking people with different physical and sensory impairments was a commonly employed trope in the ancient world, especially the use of the "blind and lame."[63] In hearing the gospel of John, it seems likely that a first-century audience would not only have been aware of a large number of parallels between the two major healing accounts, but it is also likely that they would have recognised the widely used motif of "the blind and the lame." The combination of the story of a man with mobility issues (lame) with one who is blind would only have further enhanced this parallel

[60] The Greek word ἀσθένεια is used often in the gospels as a general term for sickness (Mt. 8:17; Lk. 5:15; 8:2) and does not specifically refer to mobility impairment. Indeed, this same term is used in relation to the woman with spinal curvature in the gospel of Luke, who though impaired, is not described as being unable to walk (Lk. 13:11). In the Pauline literature the word ἀσθένεια is used in relation to both bodily and spiritual weakness (Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 12:9). Throughout the LXX, ἀσθένεια is employed most often to refer to general bodily weakness and feebleness as opposed to paralysis (cf. Judg. 6:15; 1 Sam. 2:4; Job 4:3; Ps. 30 [31]:10 etc). If John did mean to describe this man in chapter five as being completely immobile, it is more likely he would have employed the word παραλυτικός ("paralytic") which is used in the synoptic gospels to describe the man who is unable to walk (Mk. 2:3 // Lk. 5:18 // Mt. 9:2). Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of this man's impairment in John 5. Köstenberger suggests that the word ἀσθένεια "represents the general expression for disabled" (*John*, 179), but as noted in previous chapters, the ancients did not possess an overarching term for disability and thus Köstenberger's interpretation appears rather anachronistic (§ 3.3, § 4.3). Interestingly, Karris is the only commentator who draws a connection between ἀσθένεια and poverty. Karris states that on a few occasions in the LXX (e.g., Prov. 21:13; 22:22; 31:5, 9) words relating to poverty are translated with the word group of ἀσθένεια (*Jesus*, 44). There are examples of this connection also in other literature of the ancient world where ἀσθένεια is clearly used to describe lack of wealth (e.g., Hdt. 2.47; 8.51). This also appears to be the case in Acts: "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak (ἀσθενούντων), remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

[61] The only indication given by the text that he may have been mobility impaired is the reference to Jesus seeing him "lying there" (5:6). However, this is still not a definite reference to an inability to walk.

[62] "paralytic"/"paralysis" - Barrett, *Gospel*, 254f.; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC; Texas: Word Publishers, 1987), 73-74; Brown, *Gospel*, 208f.; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 185. Others suggest that the man's ailment was either "paralysis or lameness" - Morris, *Gospel*, 302; cf. Bruce, *Gospel*, 123; Carson, *Gospel,* 242; Köstenberger, *John*, 179. Craig A. Evans describes the man as "paraplegic, having lost the ability to use his legs" (*John*, 65) and R. Alan Culpepper refers to him as "the cripple" ("John 5.1-18," 193-207). Barnabas Lindars rightly criticises the use of the terms "paralysis" and "lameness" by some scholars: "In fact John does not tell us what the man's illness was, and it is only the similarity to the synoptic story (Mk. 2:1-12) which makes us assume paralysis" (*Gospel*, 214).

[63] § 3.3, § 4.5.

irrespective of the fact that the man at the pool of Bethesda is not directly referred to as lame.[64]

After discovering the details of the man's condition, Jesus approaches him and asks θέλεις ὑγιὴς γενέσθαι, which is usually translated something to the effect of "Do you want to get well?"[65] but could also be translated as "Do you want to be made whole?" (5:6). Some commentators consider this question to be a device by which Jesus was assessing the man's faith or desire to be healed.[66] According to these commentators, this question is necessary because the man appears to show no real interest in his healing.[67] William Barclay even suggests that after experiencing his illness for thirty-eight years he had probably "grown so accustomed to his disability...(that he) might be well content to remain an invalid."[68] Indeed, Kerry H. Wynn suggests that the man in this narrative had been looking for a miracle cure for so long that his life had passed him by and as a consequence had become a victim of his own circumstances: "He has bought into the role of the helpless dependent, and the normate society has affirmed him in this role."[69] While this is certainly possible, such a suggestion assumes that all people with physical impairments such as this were relegated to the role of a "dependent." Yet, in chapter three (§ 3.4.2), it was seen that in the Greco-Roman world people with various physical and sensory impairments were still able to work in various, military, leadership, and employment positions. It was noted there that it was only when someone's disability prevented them from fulfilling their socially prescribed roles that it was considered problematic. If, as John describes, the man's condition is such that he is unable to walk without assistance then it is very likely that within his first-century context there really was very little alternative available to him.[70] It

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[64] It will be remembered here that Yael Avrahami noted the semantic ties between references to the senses was such it was not necessary to rely only on one set of vocabulary in order to draw this comparison. For this discussion, see § 4.5.

[65] NIV: NASB; NLT; RSV; CEV: "Do you want to be healed?"

[66] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 74; Bruce, *Gospel*, 123. C.H. Dodd, states that Jesus (the author of John?), by asking about the man's desire to be healed, is simply making explicit what it is implied in the healing accounts throughout the synoptic gospels (*Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963], 177). In contrast, Michaels states that the question is "straightforward" and "carries no hidden rebuke or psychological analysis" (*Gospel*, 292).

[67] T.L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 236; Brown, *Gospel*, 209; Culpepper, "John 5.1-18," 204; Bruce, *Gospel*, 123.

[68] *The Gospel of John* (rev. and updated; 2 vols.; NDSB; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), 1:209.

[69] "Johannine Healings," 65.

[70] While the impact of the "normate" view of humanity is certainly an issue for many people with disability in the modern world, however, Wynn's interpretation is rather anachronistic. This man was clearly

is more likely that his presence at the pool is occasioned by a lack of options rather than a lack of determination. As D. Moody Smith has noted, "Obviously the man wants to be healed, or he would not be at this pool."[71] A more likely proposal has been put forth by Rudolf Schnackenburg, who instead suggests that Jesus' question is aimed more at revealing himself as an alternative source of healing.[72]

The man's response to Jesus has attracted various explanations from commentators. Some scholars have suggested the man's comments are merely the grumblings of a "crotchedy" old man[73] while others consider the man's response an excuse because he had become accustomed to his condition and no longer had a strong desire to be cured.[74] However, rather than a complaint or excuse,[75] the man's answer can be interpreted as a simple misunderstanding[76] or indeed, just an honest answer to a stranger.[77] At this point, John recalls that the man did not know the identity of the person he was speaking with[78] and so it is possible he was still envisioning his healing as coming from the movement of the water;[79] he did not understand that Jesus had the ability to offer him healing through a

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experiencing a substantial physical impairment that impacted his ability to participate within his society. The extent of this disconnect is apparent in the fact that he himself says he has no one to assist him into the water (5:7). While it was noted in chapter three that many people with physical and sensory impairments were still able to participate in employment, it was also seen that for those with severe or profound conditions that there were limited options available to them (§ 3.4.2). Wynn implies that this man, despite his condition, could have overcome the stigma, as well as his own limitations, to find meaning within his society. Wynn seems to be saying that the man should not have allowed himself to be a "helpless dependent" but should have taken a different path. We question, however, what alternatives Wynn suggests were available to the man?

[71] *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 132.

[72] *John*, 2:95; cf. Haenchen, *John*, 1:245; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 185.

[73] Carson, *Gospel*, 243; cf. Brown, *Gospel,* 209.

[74] C.H. Dodd, for example, refers to the man's response as a "feeble excuse" (*Historical*, 176); cf. M.S. Beates, *Disability and the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 55; P. Bruce, "John 5:1-18: The Healing at the Pool. Some Narrative, Socio-Historical and Ethical Issues," *Neot* 39.1 (2005): 44; J. Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 100; Witherington, *Wisdom*, 137.

[75] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 74; Beates, *Disability*, 55; B. Milne, *The Message of John: Here Is Your King!* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 95.

[76] Cf. Keener, *Gospel*, 1:640; Thomas, "'Stop Sinning,'" 10; L.T. Witkamp, "The Use of Traditions in John 5:1-18," *JSNT* 25 (1985): 19–47. Thomas goes on to say that he finds it surprising that while there are works dedicated solely to the issue of misunderstanding in the Fourth Gospel that not one of these works refer to this particular statement in John as being a misunderstanding (e.g., D.A. Carson, "Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel," *TB* 33 [1982]: 59–91; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 160-162).

[77] J. Ramsey Michaels, for examples, suggests that the question is an offer of help from a kind stranger (*Gospel*, 293).

[78] Cf. 5:13.

[79] Cf. Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 185.

different means.[80] In response to the man, Jesus commands him to pick up his mat and walk (5:8)[81] at which point the man is physically healed and does exactly as Jesus orders.[82]

It is only at this point in the narrative that John informs his audience that the healing had taken place on the Sabbath.[83] It is this detail which represented as acting the catalyst for the controversy that follows.[84] While Jesus silently disappears into the crowd (5:13), the healed man is confronted by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ("the Jews")[85] not about the healing that had taken place[86] but about carrying his mat on the Sabbath which the Jewish authorities here claim is forbidden.[87] In response to the accusation of Sabbath violation made against him, the healed man responds by stating that the "man who made (him) well" had directed him to

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[80] Haenchen, *John*, 1:245; Morris, *Gospel*, 33; Pilch, *Healing in the NT*, 129.

[81] There is an obvious similarity between the language attributed to Jesus here in John with what appears in the Markan account of the healing of the paralysed man (i.e., ἐγεῖραι ἆρον τὸν κράββατον σου καὶ περιπάτει [Jn. 5:8]; cf. Ἔγειραι καὶ ἆρον σου τὸν κράββατον καὶ περιπάτει [Mk. 2:9 cf. Mt. 9:6]). It is due to this similarity in language that some scholars have suggested a literary reliance on the Markan text (e.g., Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 323-324; Lindars, *Gospel*, 209; Michaels, *Gospel*, 298). However, most scholars do not believe that such a literary reliance exists (e.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 209; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:635; R. Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles* [trans. M.J. O'Connell; New York: Paulist Press, 1988], 218; Meier, *Marginal Jews*, 2:680; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:96). As Rene Latourelle asserts, the similarity in language is probably related to stereotypical formulae used of certain healing genres. People with 'leprosy,' for example, are described as being "cleansed," while those with mobility impairments are told to "get up and walk" (*Miracles*, 218; cf. Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 186).

[82] J. Ramsey Michaels suggests that Jesus' directive to the man (i.e., "pick up your mat") is a "deliberate challenge to the religious authorities in Jerusalem and their Sabbath laws" (*Gospel*, 295). Herman N. Ridderbos suggests that Jesus encouraged the man to pick up his mat not to antagonise the Pharisees but rather as a symbol of the man's healing and "as a sign of victory over suffering and death and thus glory of God" (*Gospel*, 188; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 74; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 336).

[83] The fact that we learn that it is the Sabbath only after the completion of the miracle makes this healing, along with the healing account in John 9, "unique among the New Testament Sabbath day miracles. In every other case the miracle stories begin with someone (either the narrator or characters) noting that the day is a Sabbath" (Staley, "Stumbling," 60). However, as a result of this Sabbath information being withheld until verse 9, some scholars have suggested that it is a Johannine addition and not a part of the original oral tradition (e.g., I. Broer, "Knowledge of Palestine in the Fourth Gospel," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* [ed. F.T. Fortna and T. Thatcher; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001], 84; Lindars, *Gospel*, 209-210; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:97; von Wahlde, *Gospel*, 219).

[84] Jerzy Klinger suggests that while the reference to the Sabbath in John 9 fits with the overall narrative, he suggests the reference to the Sabbath in John 5 seems orchestrated in order to heighten the intensity and thus he considers it an "addition to the text" ("Bethesda," 177).

[85] It is apparent that in John's use of the term "the Jews" here he does not simply mean those who are Jewish people but rather those who are considered to be in positions of authority. It is for this reason that the healed man himself is Jewish though apparently not counted as one of "the Jews." John C. Thomas suggests that this reference to "the Jews" is significant because up until this point, all references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι had been neutral but that this interaction "marks the beginning of a period of growing hostility to Jesus" ("'Stop Sinning,'" 12).

[86] The text here is unclear here about whether "the Jews" are even aware of the healing at this point.

[87] Carrying things from one domain to another on the Sabbath was forbidden as part of the emerging Sabbath regulations of the Pharisees (*Sabbath* 7:2). D.A. Carson, for example, refers to the thirty-nine works forbidden on the Sabbath according to *m. Shabbat* (*Gospel*, 244; cf. Morris, *Gospel*, 271 n. 28; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 335).

carry his mat (5:11), a rebuttal considered by most commentators to be a ploy to divert blame from himself.[88] Apparently not interested in the man's excuse, or indeed his healing, the healed man continues to be interrogated (ἐρωτάω)[89] by "the Jews" in regards to the identity of the one who healed him, information which John records was as yet unknown to the man (5:12-13).[90]

Some time later, following the discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus finds (εὑρίσκει) the man at the temple (5:14).[91] It is during this second encounter that Jesus engages with the man regarding his sin: ἴδε ὑγιὴς γέγονας μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε ἵνα μὴ χεῖρόν τι σοί γένηται ("See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you"; 5:14). There has been much dispute among scholars as to the exact meaning of Jesus' directive to μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε ("stop sinning"). Unlike the synoptic gospels, in John 5 the man's physical healing is not the outward manifestation of the forgiveness of sins.[92] As a result, many scholars have suggested that while Jesus refutes a link between impairment and sin in regards to the "man born blind" (9:3), in this instance the man's infirmity *is* the result of his personal sin.[93] Despite the popularity of this view, it seems difficult to substantiate such an interpretation from the text of John 5. If the man's sins were of prime importance to Jesus, or to the gospel writer, it seems more likely that the issue would have been addressed at the initial meeting at the pool rather than waiting until a second, and indeed

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[88] E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 209; Carson, *Gospel*, 244; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 138; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 188; Sanders, *Commentary*, 162. Wynn describes it as responding "defensively" (Wynn, "Johannine," 70).

[89] This Greek word is used in both of the two healings accounts addressed in this chapter (5:12 and 9:15, 19) and is also used on other occasions throughout John referring to the manner in which Jesus is questioned by the Jewish authorities (e.g., 1:19, 21, 25; 18:19).

[90] George R. Beasley-Murray states that it is "extraordinary (he) had no idea of the identity of his benefactor" (*John*, 74). R. Alan Culpepper makes the unusual statement that "...after 38 years by the pool, he did not even know his healer's name" as though these two things were somehow inextricably linked (*The Gospel and Letters of John* [IBT; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998], 151).

[91] Craig S. Keener asserts that it is unlikely that the healed man went to the temple "to offer a sin offering for the sin from which his malady stemmed" (*Gospel*, 1:641, n. 83), however, he does suggest that the healed man did go to the temple in order offer thanks for his healing (*John*, 1:643). However, there is no evidence for such a suggestion (cf. J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928], 1:234).

[92] E.g., Mt. 9:2/Mk. 2:5/Lk. 5:20.

[93] E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 208; Bruce, *Gospel*, 126; Carson, *Gospel*, 245-246; Evans, *John*, 66; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:643; Michaels, *Gospel*, 298; Morris, *Gospel*, 307; Smith, *John*, 133; Thomas, *Devil*, 106. John C. Thomas actually states "the connection between sin and illness is so strong that future suffering is viewed as a real possibility if the sinful activity continues" ("'Stop Sinning,'" 17). However, this interpretation is extremely problematic. It seems unlikely that Jesus would tell the man to "stop sinning" without clarifying either the sin or the possible punishment. Haenchen suggests that Jesus rejects the idea that illness is retribution for sin (i.e. Jn. 9:3), and so this saying regarding sin must be "taken over" from John's original source without amending it (*John*, 1:247).

"chance encounter"[94] with the man at the temple. Moreover, considering the life expectancy of men in the ancient world, it is probable that this man was not much older than the thirty-eight years he had experienced his infirmity.[95] If John wanted to draw attention to the man's sin as the cause of his illness it seems unlikely that he would include the information about the longevity of the man's condition. If indeed this man's impairment was the result of his personal sin, he must have committed a very severe transgression at a very young age to have experienced such a prolonged illness;[96] this seems unlikely. As a result, there is little in John's account that suggests he sees the man's sin as a factor in his impairment.[97]

A second group of scholars propose that John's reference to sin refers to any sins committed by the man subsequent to his healing at Bethesda. This view suggests that while the man's sins were forgiven at the time of his cure that Jesus' directive was an exhortation to remain without sin from that point onwards.[98] Jeffrey L. Staley, for example, proposes that the man's sins may have included such things as the man continuing to carry his mat longer than necessary to prove his healing or perhaps entering the temple when he was forbidden from doing so.[99] However, it is difficult to conceive that after instigating healing

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[94] It is uncertain whether Jesus specifically sought the man out or whether it was a "chance encounter" as Rudolf Schnackenburg has suggested (*John*, 2:98; Köstenberger, *John*, 182). Michaels suggests that it is not a "chance encounter" but rather that Jesus quite intentionally seeks the man out (*Gospel*, 297; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:639). It is worth noting that in both healing accounts in John, Jesus "found" (εὑρίσκω) the men on a second occasion (5:14; 9:35). On the other hand, Joseph N. Sanders says that "Jesus seeks out the man" here and in chapter nine (*Commentary*, 244).

[95] Tim G. Parkin suggests that "there is every reason to believe that the average life expectancy at birth of the population of the Roman Empire as a whole was in the range of 20-30 years" (*Demography and Roman Society*, 84).

[96] Haenchen (*John*, 1:247) also makes this suggestion. Indeed, while some scholars mock the disciples' query regarding the sins of an in-utero baby in John 9, these same scholars are quick to attribute impairment to sin in relation to the man at Bethesda. F.F. Bruce, for example, suggests while there could be a link between impairment and sin in some cases, "it is not usually so, and it seems particularly inept to suggest that congenital blindness could be due to the infant's own sin" (*Gospel*, 208). However, in relation to the man in John 5, he says that Jesus' word of advice "suggest(s) that in this case the man's disability had resulted from his own sin" (*John*, 126). John Phillips too suggests that the man's sin had "overtaken him in his youth" (*Exploring*, 102).

[97] A small number of scholars claim that Jesus' statement in John 9 meant that he had universally denounced a link between sin and illness (9:3) and therefore it is impossible that he was attributing the man's impairment to sin in this case. While this interpretation is appealing it seems unlikely as Jesus' response seems to address only the situation of the man born blind. See § 7.3.

[98] Barrett, *Gospel*, 255; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:97; Thomas, *Devil*, 104-105. There is nothing in the text to indicate that Jesus forgave the man's sins at the time of healing and therefore this suggestion is doubtful.

[99] Staley, "Stumbling," 62; cf. Patricia Bruce who likewise considers the man's sin to be going to the temple ("John 5:1-18," 45). However, these suggestions seem unlikely. It is difficult to believe that Jesus would firstly advise the man to carry his mat and then later chastise him for doing so. Further, at no point

on the Sabbath and thus ignoring rabbinical regulations himself that the Johannine Jesus would then consider this man's breach of Sabbath laws such a serious offence.

An alternative proposal is that the directive to "stop sinning" was not in relation to any specific sins the man had committed prior to or following his healing but rather the man's sin in general.[100] Throughout his gospel, John emphasises that those who are most guilty of sin are those who have seen and witnessed Jesus but who had not subsequently proclaimed him to be the "Messiah."[101] The danger for this man, and thus the reason for Jesus' warning, was that to this point the man had shown no response at all to Jesus. He had witnessed and experienced for himself a sign of Jesus and therefore had a responsibility to believe and respond, and yet, to this point, he had shown no evidence of doing so.[102] This interpretation seems to explain the author's use of the present imperative form of the phrase μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε warning against not only future sins but those which he had already committed.[103] In this sense, the "something worse" is not another impairment or illness, as some scholars have suggested,[104] but rather judgement and eternal death,[105] a theme that is common throughout John's gospel.[106]

Despite Jesus' words of warning, the narrative comes to a close without the healed man making a public declaration of his faith. Although the man's presence at the temple could be seen as an indication of "good will"[107] or gratitude,[108] there is certainly very little in the

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in either John or the synoptic gospels is Jesus shown to be concerned with such matters of the law, except to criticise his opponents for their legalism and stringency (e.g., Mk. 7).

[100] The Johannine Jesus often speaks about sin in this general way as something people are guilty of and need to repent from (8:11; 15:22, 24).

[101] 8:21, 24, 34; 9:41; 15:22, 24.

[102] According to the author of John's gospel, Jesus' presence brought about a revelation of people's sin (9:39-41). He also stated that because people had heard his message of salvation (15:22) and had seen his miracles/signs (15:24), that people had "no excuse for their sin" (15:22).

[103] A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), 890.

[104] Note the comment of John J. Pilch: "Jesus seems to be threatening another disease if the man should sin again" (*Healing in the NT*, 129).

[105] E.g., Barrett, *Gospel*, 255; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 74; Bruce, *Gospel*, 126; Carson, *Gospel*, 246; Köstenberger, *John*, 182; Morris, *Gospel*, 307; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 189; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:98.

[106] 8:21, 24, 34; 9:41; 15:22; cf. 15:24: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

[107] Brodie, *Gospel*, 238.

[108] William Hendriksen, on the other hand, believes that it is with "gratitude in his heart" that the man told "the Jews" the name of his healer (*Commentary*, 195). Likewise, Evans suggests that the man does not know Jesus but in regards to being questioned he "simply points to his own healing and no doubt with joy that matched his inquisitors' zeal, he says that a man with the authority to heal told him to do this" (*John*, 66).

text to indicate that this is the case. John describes no confession of thanksgiving or faith, which he most certainly would have included if he wished to indicate a positive outcome following this man's healing.[109] This man's response thus stands in stark contrast to the healing of the official's son in the previous chapter (4:43-54) where the outcome of that healing is that "he and all his household believed" (4:53). Indeed, the healed man's final appearance in chapter five is a visit to the Pharisees where he informs them of the name of his healer, an act seen by many commentators as a cowardly betrayal of Jesus.[110]

At this point in the narrative, there is an apparent shift in the focus of the Pharisees' accusations. Where in verse ten "the Jews" were focused on the healed man and his act of carrying his mat on the Sabbath, in verse sixteen John emphasises that now their attention focuses on Jesus because ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ ("he was doing these things on the Sabbath.") Although John does not specify what exactly in Jesus' actions was considered to be violating the Sabbath, he does state that as a result of these alleged violations that there is a rapid development in hostility from "the Jews" and that they began ἐδίωκον Jesus. While most English versions translate this word as "persecute"[111] Francis Moloney translates it as both "persecuting and prosecuting" emphasising "both the notion of an ongoing conflict...and the forensic nature of the conflict."[112]

In answer to these accusations of Sabbath violation, Jesus responds by stating "My father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (5:17). In this statement, Jesus reveals a "rather sophisticated acquaintance with the rabbinic discussion of whether or not God abstains from work on the Sabbath and thus keeps his own laws."[113] As with

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[109] Other scholars who likewise agree that the healed man does not come to faith include Barrett, *Gospel*, 255; Culpepper, *Gospel and Letters*, 151; Moloney, *Gospel*, 169.

[110] R. Kysar, *John's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 34; Morris, *Gospel*, 307; J.H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 175; Smith, *John*, 41. Donald A. Carson, however, suggests that the man was "guilty of dullness rather than treachery" (*Gospel*, 246). John Phillips suggests that by naming Jesus here the man was "giving honor to his new-found Lord" (*Exploring*, 103). Patricia Bruce likewise suggests that the term used here for "told" (ἀναγγέλλω) is used 4 other times in John and on all other occasions is used in a positive sense of telling ("John 5:1-18," 45).

[111] E.g., NIV; NASB; KJV; NRSV

[112] *Gospel*, 174. For more on translating διώκω in these terms, see A.E. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial: A Study in the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1976), 50-51. Jerome Neyrey states that following the healed man's declaration, "Far from resulting in any praise of Jesus, hostility follows...(and) we find ourselves in the midst of a trial" (*Gospel*, 175).

[113] H. Weiss, "The Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 110.2 (1991): 315; cf. Barrett, *Gospel*, 213; Brown, *Gospel*, 216; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 246; Lindars, *Gospel*, 218; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:101.

Sabbath miracles in the synoptic gospels, the Johannine Jesus reinforces that doing the "work" of the father takes precedent over rabbinic regulations against healing on the Sabbath.[114] This connects with what the Johannine Jesus understands is the purpose of God's works: that people will come to "believe in the one he has sent" (6:29). The final verse of this section describes the outrage of the "the Jews" not only with Jesus' "breaking the Sabbath" but also for "making himself equal to God." The narrative comes to a close with the indignation of "the Jews" being such that they were "seeking all the more to kill" Jesus (5:18).

Overall, this healing account is an intriguing one. As with a number of characters depicted in the synoptic healing accounts, John here emphasises that this man is of marginal status. Though it certainly cannot be said that the mere presence of a physical infirmity would have led to marginalisation in first-century Palestine, factors in the text certainly indicate this might be the case for this particular man. While in most instances in the canonical gospels we see healing take place following the petition of a *paterfamilias* or other family member or friend, in this case, this man is alone in the crowd with the Johannine author noting that he had no one to assist him into the water. Unlike the official's son whose father petitioned for healing on his behalf,[115] this man had no one to assist him in seeking healing; indeed, he did not even have anyone who would help him to get into the healing pool at the appropriate time. The extent of his illness is indicated not only by its duration but also in the man's willingness to frequent the healing pool when there was only a slim chance of receiving healing.

While Jesus was confronted with a multitude of people with physical and sensory impairments among the crowd at Bethesda, John recalls that he chose but one man to heal. This was not a man shown to be of great faith like the nobleman in the preceding chapter (4:43-54), instead, this man did not even know the identity of his healer. Despite the man's fervent desire to be healed, once he was healed he made no attempt to offer thanks to his healer. Even after the name of his healer was made known to him, he still made no offer of thanks or sign of repentance. His behaviour then stands in stark contrast to others already depicted in John. Those who had witnessed the two previous signs in John are

[114] E.g., Lk. 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6.
[115] 4:43-54.

shown to respond by coming to faith in Jesus (2:21; 4:53). However, following this "sign," the healed man showed no indication at all of a growing faith in Jesus.

§ 7.4 John 9:1-41

1Καὶ παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς. 2καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες,
Ῥαββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ; 3ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Οὔτε οὗτος
ἥμαρτεν οὔτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. 4ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ
ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρα ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νὺξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι. 5ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,
φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου. 6ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔπτυσεν χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος, καὶ ἐπέχρισεν
αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς 7καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ὕπαγε νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ
ὃ ἑρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος. ἀπῆλθεν οὖν καὶ ἐνίψατο, καὶ ἦλθεν βλέπων. 8Οἱ οὖν γείτονες καὶ οἱ
θεωροῦντες αὐτὸν τὸ πρότερον ὅτι προσαίτης ἦν ἔλεγον, Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ καθήμενος καὶ προσαιτῶν;
9ἄλλοι ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὗτός ἐστιν ἄλλοι ἔλεγον, Οὐχί, ἀλλὰ ὅμοιος αὐτῷ ἐστιν. ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγεν ὅτι Ἐγώ
εἰμι. 10ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ, Πῶς ἠνε χθησάν σου οἱ ὀφθαλμοί; 11ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος, Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ λεγόμενος
Ἰησοῦς πηλὸν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπέχρισέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὅτι Ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν Σιλωὰμ καὶ
νίψαι· ἀπελθὼν οὖν καὶ νιψάμενος ἀνέβλεψα. 12καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ποῦ ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος; λέγει, Οὐκ οἶδα.
13Ἄγουσιν αὐτὸν πρὸς τοὺς Φαρισαίους τόν ποτε τυφλόν. 14 ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ᾗ ἡμέρᾳ τὸν πηλὸν
ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἀνέῳξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. 15πάλιν οὖν ἠρώτων αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πῶς
ἀνέβλεψεν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Πηλὸν ἐπέθηκέν μου ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐνιψάμην καὶ βλέπω.
16ἔλεγον οὖν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων τινές, Οὐκ ἔστιν οὗτος παρὰ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι τὸ σάββατον οὐ
τηρεῖ. ἄλλοι [δὲ] ἔλεγον, Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς τοιαῦτα σημεῖα ποιεῖν; καὶ σχίσμα ἦν ἐν
αὐτοῖς. 17λέγουσιν οὖν τῷ τυφλῷ πάλιν, Τί σὺ λέγεις περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἤνέῳξέν σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; Ὁ
δὲ εἶπεν ὅτι Προφήτης ἐστίν. 18Οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἦν τυφλὸς καὶ
ἀνέβλεψεν, ἕως ὅτου ἐφώνησαν τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος 19καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτοὺς λέγοντες,
Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμῶν, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη; πῶς οὖν βλέπει ἄρτι; 20ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν
οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπαν, Οἴδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ ὅτι τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη· 21πῶς δὲ νῦν
βλέπει οὐκ οἴδαμεν, ἢ τίς ἤνοιξεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἡμεῖς οὐκ οἴδαμεν· αὐτὸν ἐρωτήσατε, ἡλικίαν
ἔχει, αὐτὸς περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λαλήσει. 22ταῦτα εἶπαν οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐφοβοῦντο τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, ἤδη γὰρ
συνετέθειντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα ἐάν τις αὐτὸν ὁμολογήσῃ Χριστόν, ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται. 23διὰ τοῦτο οἱ
γονεῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπαν ὅτι Ἡλικίαν ἔχει, αὐτὸν ἐπερωτήσατε. 24Ἐφώνησαν οὖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ δευτέρου
ὃς ἦν τυφλὸς καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Δὸς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ· ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλός ἐστιν.
25ἀπεκρίθη οὖν ἐκεῖνος, Εἰ ἁμαρτωλός ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδα· ἓν οἶδα, ὅτι τυφλὸς ὢν ἄρτι βλέπω. 26εἶπον οὖν
αὐτῷ, Τί ἐποίησέν σοι; πῶς ἤνοιξέν σου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; 27ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Εἶπον ὑμῖν ἤδη καὶ οὐκ
ἠκούσατε· τί πάλιν θέλετε ἀκούειν; μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε αὐτοῦ μαθηταὶ γενέσθαι; 28καὶ ἐλοιδόρησαν
αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπον, Σὺ μαθητὴς εἶ ἐκείνου, ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐσμὲν μαθηταί· 29ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν ὅτι
Μωϋσεῖ λελάληκεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον δὲ οὐκ οἴδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν. 30ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,
Ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν ὅτι ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἐστίν, καὶ ἤνοιξέν μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς.
31οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἀκούει, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις θεοσεβὴς ᾖ καὶ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιῇ τούτου
ἀκούει. 32ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἠνέῳξέν τις ὀφθαλμοὺς τυφλοῦ γεγεννημένου· 33εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος
παρὰ θεοῦ, οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιεῖν οὐδέν. 34ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ἐν ἁμαρτίαις σὺ ἐγεννήαης ὅλος
καὶ σὺ διδάσκεις ἡμᾶς; καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω. 35Ἤκουσεν Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω, καὶ εὑρὼν
αὐτὸν εἶπεν, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; 36ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν, καὶ τίς ἐστιν, κύριε,
37ἵνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν; εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Καὶ ἑώρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν.
38ὁ δὲ ἔφη, Πιστεύω, κύριε καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ. 39καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Εἰς κρίμα ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν κόσμον
τοῦτον ἦλθον, ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέποντες τυφλοὶ γένωνται. 40Ἤκουσαν ἐκ τῶν
Φαρισαίων ταῦτα οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες, καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ, Μὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς τυφλοί ἐσμεν; 41εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ
Ἰησοῦς, Εἰ τυφλοὶ ἦτε, οὐκ ἂν εἴχετε ἁμαρτίαν· νῦν δὲ λέγετε ὅτι Βλέπομεν· ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν μένει.

1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who
sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents
sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.
4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one
can work.5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 After saying this, he spit on
the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him,
"wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came
home seeing. 8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this

the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only
looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." 10 "How then were your eyes opened?"
they asked. 11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He
told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." 12 "Where is
this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said. 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man
who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's
eyes was a Sabbath.15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.
"He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the
Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked,
"How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. 17 Then they turned again to the
blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied,
"He is a prophet." 18 They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight
until they sent for the man's parents. 19 "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say
was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" 20 "We know he is our son," the parents
answered, "and we know he was born blind. 21 But how he can see now, or who opened his
eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this
because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who
acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23 That was why
his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 A second time they summoned the man who had
been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."
25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind
but now I see!" 26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"
27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it
again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" 28 Then they hurled insults at him and said,
"You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses,
but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Now
that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know
that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. 32 Nobody
has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he
could do nothing." 34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you
lecture us!" And they threw him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he
found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked.
"Tell me so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the
one speaking with you." 38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus
said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see
will become blind." 40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What?
Are we blind too?" 41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that
you claim you can see, your guilt remains.[116]

The healing account in John 9:1-41 is unlike any other that appears in the New Testament. Firstly, it has been suggested that the healing and subsequent discourse is divided into seven separate scenes[117] through which the blindness of the main character is contrasted with the symbolic 'blindness' of the Pharisees.[118] The seven scenes are divided as follows:

[116] NIV.

[117] For example, J.L. Resseguie, "John 9: A Literary-Critical Analysis," in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives* (ed. M.W.G. Stibbe; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 115; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 152; Bultmann, *Gospel*, 329-342; Culpepper, *Gospel and Letters*, 174. Other scholars suggest eight scenes (e.g., Brodie, *Gospel*, 239; Lee, *Symbolic*, 164; Painter, "Text," 31-61; Witherington, *Wisdom*, 180). As the miracle proper occurs in the first scene, this scene will be discussed in more detail than the subsequent scenes.

[118] For detailed discussions on the use of symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, see Lee, *Symbolic*, *passim*; cf. Jones, *Symbol*; Koester, *Symbolism*; J.G. van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), *passim*.

Scene 1: Jesus, the disciples and the man (9:1-7)
Scene 2: The man born blind and the neighbours (9:8-12)
Scene 3: The Pharisees and the healed man (9:13-17)
Scene 4: The Jewish authorities and the healed man's parents (9:18-23)
Scene 5: The Pharisees and the healed man (9:24-34)
Scene 6: Jesus and the "man born blind" (9:35-39)
Scene 7: Jesus and the Pharisees (9:40-41).[119]

Also, unlike any other New Testament healing accounts, "the characterization of the healed man is fully developed."[120] In comparison to the healed man in John 5:1-18 who speaks only two short sentences,[121] the healed man in John 9:1-41 is credited with substantial portions of dialogue[122] through which is revealed his growing awareness of the identity of Jesus as the Christ.[123] For this reason, numerous scholars consider the man in this healing account to be one of the pivotal characters in the fourth gospel.[124]

Unlike the account in 5:1-18, there is no geographical or temporal information given as an introduction in the opening scene of 9:1-41. According to John, as Jesus and his disciples "went along" (9:1) they came across a man who was "blind from birth" (ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς).[125] As with the previous account, it is unclear how Jesus knew the duration of the man's illness,[126] although in this instance it appears to be a shared knowledge between Jesus and the disciples. John recalls that in response to seeing the blind man, the disciples were prompted to enquire of Jesus the origin of the man's impairment: ῥαββί τίς ἥμαρτενοῦτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ ("'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"; 9:2).[127] It is very likely the disciples are here responding

[119] Resseguie, "Strange Gospel," 140.
[120] Resseguie, "John 9," 295.
[121] 5: 7, 11 and (indirectly) v. 15.
[122] 9:9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 25, 27, 30-33, 36, 38.
[123] The man began by referring to Jesus as "a man called Jesus" (9:11) and progressed to calling him a "Prophet" (9:17) and then a man of God (9:33) and finally he declared his belief in the Son of Man (9:38).
[124] Lee, *Symbolic*, 161-187; Martyn, *History*, 35-66; J. Painter, "John 9 and the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 9.28 (1986): 31–61.
[125] Felix Just suggests that the reference to the condition being congenital is an addition of the evangelist (*Tobit*, 263-264). John Painter agrees suggesting that the proof for this is in the fact that the phrase "blind from birth" is Hellenistic and different to the Semitic phrase "blind from the mother's womb" ("John 9," 34).
[126] As in John 5:1-18, it is not specified how Jesus and his disciples knew that the man was blind from birth. Jeffrey L. Staley, however, suggests that this knowledge was "supernatural" on Jesus' behalf ("Stumbling," 65).
[127] The later rabbinical literature identifies a number of blessings that rabbis would say on encountering people with various impairments. For example, if a rabbi encountered a person who was blind, mobility impaired, had an amputated limb or was covered with boils, he was to state: "Blessed be the true Judge" (*b. Ber.* 58b); however, as noted in chapter three, it is difficult to date the rabbinical texts and be certain we are doing so without anachronism. Kerry H. Wynn suggests that the basis of this question is Jesus' own statement in John 5 about sin ("Johannine Healings," 62).

to a rich tradition of associating impairment with divine punishment that existed throughout the ancient world. As we established in chapter three (§ 3.5.3), in the Greco-Roman world physical and sensory impairment were often understood as appropriate punishment for those humans who contravened the boundaries between humanity and divinity with blindness being the punishment enacted most frequently upon transgressors.[128] In response to this, Chad Harstock suggests that

> In a world where one is conditioned to think physiognomically, to encounter a blind character would inevitably cause the reader (and might I add, observer) to make assumptions about the moral character of the blind person...and there is little doubt that an auditor in the first century might suspect that a blind character is being punished for something. Given the pervasiveness of blindness as punishment (in the Greco-Roman sources), such an assumption would certainly be a part of the *topos* of the blind character assumed by an auditor in a physiognomically-conscious world.[129]

In addition, it was established in chapter four (§ 4.5.1) that this association between impairment and divine punishment was not limited only to Greco-Roman literature. While Kerry H. Wynn proposes "there is little support for linking disability with sin within the Hebrew Bible and the early Jewish tradition,"[130] a view Hector Avalos considers an example of the "redemptionist approach,"[131] it was seen throughout chapter four that such a tradition does exist within a number of biblical texts. While it is certainly true that the Hebrew Bible and subsequent Jewish literature do not "present a univocal perspective"[132] on the issue of impairment as divine punishment, we must acknowledge that this association does exist.[133] As a consequence, such narratives would have informed the worldview of not only Jesus' disciples who John recalls posed the original question, but also those within the Johannine community to whom John was addressing his gospel account. Included as part of this tradition are texts that suggest that it was possible for the

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[128] § 3.5.3.

[129] *Sight and Blindness*, 61, 72; cf. Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light*, esp. 57-93.

[130] Wynn, "Johannine Healings," 62; cf. P. Bruce, "John 5:1-18," 49.

[131] Avalos, "Redemptionism," 92; cf. § 1.3.

[132] J.L. Koosed and D. Schumm, "Out of the Darkness: Examining the Rhetoric of Blindness in the Gospel of John," in *Disability in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions and Social Analysis* (ed. D. Schumm and M. Stoltzfus; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 84. While blindness is listed as a potential punishment for sin in the HB, there are also occasions when the HB says that children will not be punished for their parents' sin (e.g., Deut. 24:16; cf. 2 Ki. 14:6; Ezek. 18:19-20; Jer. 31:29-30).

[133] The Sodomites were struck with blindness as punishment (Gen. 19:11). Blindness was also commonly used as a threat of punishment for those who failed to meet covenantal stipulations (Deut. 28:28), however, the only time in the HB that someone is actually punished with blindness is the case of King Zedekiah (2 Ki. 25:7; Jer. 39:7, 52:11). Also, the later rabbinical literature claimed that many biblical characters with blindness had become blind as a means of punishment. For example, the blindness of Isaac, Abraham, Nahum and Samson are all attributed to divine punishment in the rabbinical literature (cf. *b. Qam.* 93a; *Gen. Rab.* 65 on 27:1; *b. Sotah* 9b; *b. Taʿan.* 21a).

sins of a parent to visit on their following generations.[134] In addition to this, there are also examples from the later rabbinical literature that interpret congenital impairments as a form of punishment for acts committed either by the child or its parents during its time in utero.[135] There are also examples of people being punished with congenital impairments because of God's foreknowledge of their earthly sins.[136]

It is in the light of these variegated depictions of impairment as divine punishment that the disciples ask Jesus about the origin of the man's impairment.[137] Jesus responds by telling his disciples that this man's impairment was not caused by his own sin, nor his parents,' but "this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (9:3). Although a number of commentators have made the argument that the Johannine Jesus here categorically denying a link between sin and impairment,[138] it is generally agreed that Jesus only denied a connection between sin and illness in this particular instance.[139] This saying of Jesus thus proves exceedingly problematic for many disability advocates. Jennifer L. Koosed and Darla Schumm respond to this by stating

> John presents several different reasons why people have disabilities, but God is behind them all. Never is the condition simply an expression of the various possibilities inherent in the

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[134] Ex. 20:5; Deut. 5:9. Koosed and Schumm are right to point out that while there are some Jewish texts that link disability with divine punishment (such as those stated here) there are also texts which refute such a theology. Examples of this are Jeremiah 31:29-30 and Ezekiel 18:2-4 ("Out of the Darkness," 84). They are also right to be critical of statements such as that made by Colleen Grant whereby she states that there is a "traditional Jewish view of disability" ("Reinterpreting," 80; refuted by Koosed and Schumm, "Out of the Darkness," 84). Interestingly, Beauford H. Bryant and Mark S. Krause suggest that the disciples might be implying that the man was "conceived as a result of the sin of his parents" (*John* [CPNIVC; Joplin: College Press, 1998], 214) although it is unclear if they are implying that the man was conceived out of wedlock or from an adulterous relationship or whether their intentions lie elsewhere. Perhaps this is also what is meant by Hendriksen when he comments that blindness "was rather common among the ancients, just as it is even today among those who do not use the necessary precautionary measures in connection with childbirth" (*Commentary*, 71).

[135] E.g., *Lev. Rab.* 27; Str-B 2:257-259. Parents who procreated in the shine of a light or with a handmill in the room, were believed to have children with epilepsy (*b. Pesah.* 112b; *b. Ketub.* 60b; Targum on Ezekiel 23:20). This was also the case if copulation occurred immediately following defecation (*Git.* 70a) or after blood-letting (*Lev. Rab.* 16:1). There was also a belief that if a woman worshipped pagan gods while pregnant, then the in-utero baby was likewise deemed to be sinning and would also be punished (*Songs Rab.* I, 6, § 3).

[136] See Tana de-vei Eliahu Zuta (Ish Shalom) 23; also *Otzar HaMidrashim*, p. 319 (as cited in Marx, *Disability in Jewish Law*, 65). This view was also prevalent amongst some Greco-Roman writers also (e.g., Soph., *OT* 269-271; Aeschylus, *Eum.* 937-87; *Suppl.* 625-709). Indeed, Thomas suggests that it is this belief in God's foreknowledge of sins that the disciples have in mind when asking Jesus about the man's sin (*Devil*, 115).

[137] John C. Thomas likewise suggests that one of the motivations for this question is Jesus' own connection between sin and disability in the previous healing account (Jn. 5:1-18; *Devil*, 112).

[138] § 7.2.

[139] E.g., Brown, *Gospel*, 208; Bruce, *Gospel*, 208; Carson, *Gospel*, 245-246; Haenchen, *John*, 2:37; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:778; Lindars, *Gospel*, 342. Bruce Milne states that Jesus "disavows any universal law of cause and effect" (*Message*, 96).

> human body. Never is the condition an accident. And never is the condition seen as a positive gift of God. Rather, the disability is always present for some other reason or purpose. In John 9, the implication is that God is using the man's blindness (which is characterized as an undesirable state that brings the man suffering) for God's own show of power. We question whether any link between God's will and human suffering is helpful, especially when God seems to be using the person for God's own (selfish?) purposes.[140]

In response to what appears to be a negative representation of God's sovereignty, other disability advocates have attempted to "redeem" the text, as argued by Hector Avalos,[141] attempting to provide alternative methods of interpreting this passage. John C. Poirier, for example, proffers an alternative reading of the text by simply altering the way it is punctuated. Poirier maintains that it is possible to translate Jesus' words as: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned so that he was born blind. But in order that the works of God might be made manifest in him, we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work."[142] However, we are inclined to agree with Amos Yong when he states that he is sympathetic to Poirier's intentions, but he does not believe that this interpretation "produce(s) a liberating theology of disability from the Fourth Gospel."[143] An alternative suggestion is that made by Craig R. Koester who proposes that a

> better way to approach the passage is to follow the Greek wording, recognizing that the sentence begins in 9:3 and continues in the next verse: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but in order that the works of God might be revealed in him we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day." Jesus does not explain the cause of the blindness. He simply accepts it as a given and declares that he will deal with it in order to do God's work of healing.[144]

While many disability advocates find Jesus' unwillingness to deny categorically a link between impairment and sin as problematic,[145] other scholars have proposed that one of the things that is significant in this passage is that while the Johannine Jesus "does not disavow the generalizing connection between sin and suffering, he completely disavows a universalizing of particular connections."[146] In addition to this, John depicts Jesus as shifting the disciples' question from focusing on causality to concentrate instead on the

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[140] Koosed and Schumm, "Out of the Darkness," 80 (parenthetical material is part of the original quotation).

[141] § 1.3.

[142] "Another Look at the 'Man Born Blind' in John 9," *J Religion Disabil Health* 14.1 (2010): 61.

[143] *Bible*, 52 n. 4.

[144] C.R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 58.

[145] E.g., K. Black, *A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 110; Eiesland, *Disabled God*, 71; Grant, "Reinterpreting the Healing Narrative," 75.

[146] Carson, *John*, 362; cf. Witherington "there is no one-to-one correspondence between sickness and sin" (*Wisdom*, 139).

way in which the works of God are manifest in humanity. In this sense, "the works of God" are not limited to the miraculous restoration of the man's sight, but rather, this "sign" is part of God's greater work of redeeming humanity through Jesus; an act appropriated in the healed man's declaration of faith further on in the narrative.[147] Murray Rae, in his article on the imagery of work in John, associates Jesus' works with the ultimate goal of creation:

> The work that Jesus does is the work of creation…and it is through his work, executed in obedience to and in union with the Father, that creation attains its twofold goal – abundant life for God's creatures in fellowship with the Creator and the manifestation of the glory of God.[148]

It is not the miracle of bringing vision to blind eyes that is key in this "sign" of Jesus, but rather, for John, it serves as a manifestation of God's creative works and the ultimate "sign" of God redeeming humanity through Jesus. This connection between works and creation is reinforced in the following section regarding the mode of the man's healing.

Following his response to the disciples' question, Jesus makes a compound from saliva and dirt with which to anoint the man's eyes (9:6). Although there are other occasions in the synoptic gospels when Jesus uses spittle in the healing process,[149] this is the only occasion where it is used indirectly.[150] The vast majority of commentators address the issue of spittle only superficially with many attesting that Jesus was simply following the conventions of his day that attributed "enormous superstition (to) the spittle of a renowned person."[151] While there are certainly examples in both the Jewish[152] and Greco-Roman[153] literature of spittle being used to heal the eyes of disease or even blindness, these examples are far more infrequent than scholars imply. The most commonly cited example is that of Emperor Vespasian. Suetonius and Tacitus both describe Vespasian's miracle cure of a blind man

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[147] This discipleship is evident in that he refers to himself as a disciple of Jesus (9:27) and then acknowledges his faith in the son of man (9:38)

[148] M. Rae, "The Testimony of Works in the Christology of John's Gospel," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (ed. R. Bauckham and C. Mosser; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 296.

[149] Mk. 7:31-37; 8:22-26.

[150] On other occasions Jesus put spittle directly onto the affected area (Mk. 7:31-37; 8:22-26).

[151] Evans, *John*, 94. Moloney suggests that "Jesus adapts a traditional practice as he forms mud from the dust of the earth and places it on the man's eyes" (*Gospel*, 292). However, it is uncertain how exactly this can be considered a "traditional practice." Schnackenburg says the inclusion of spittle highlights the "primitive character of the story" (*Gospel*, 2:242; cf. Painter, "John 9," 31-61).

[152] *Lev. Rab.* 9.9; *Num. Rab.* 9.20; *Deut. Rab.* 5.15; cf. *B. Bat.* 126b states that "There is a tradition that the spittle of the firstborn of a father is healing, but that of the firstborn of a mother is not healing."

[153] Pausanias makes mention of the case of Ophioneus, who is also described as being healed from congenital blindness (4.12.10). However, Felix Just notes that Ophioneus' vision is restored only temporarily and "…it also came about unexpectedly, inexplicably, and without the aid of any miracle worker or god" (Tobit, 267). See also Pliny (*HN.* 28.7.36-39).

(*luminibus orbatus*) through the application of spittle into the eyes.[154] A number of commentators even see John's healing account here as directly responding to Vespasian's miracles as a means of drawing attention to Jesus' superiority as healer.[155] There are other examples from the Greco-Roman and Jewish literature of spittle serving other apotropaic and curative functions, although in general, most examples of spittle being used in relation to healing functions are used magically as a charm to ward off evil rather than directly as a healing agent.[156] Felix Just, in comparison, proposes that throughout this chapter all of the details of the man's healing are repeated numerous times, except for the mention of the spittle.[157] He considers this repetition as theologically significant and acting to emphasise "the complexity and integrity of the whole process."[158] In this sense, the spittle itself was not imbued with magical or curative powers it was simply part of a larger more complicated process instigated by the power and authority of Jesus, which ultimately resulted in the man's vision being restored.[159]

Rudolf Bultmann considers the spittle a deliberate action of the Johannine Jesus in order to highlight the healing act as one that unquestionably constituted a breach of Sabbath law.[160] Bultmann argues that Jesus' act of making clay (ἐποίησεν πηλὸν) would have contravened laws forbidding kneading of dough on the Sabbath.[161] Other scholars see Jesus' actions as contravening rabbinic regulations prohibiting the use of spittle on eyes on the Sabbath.[162] And yet, the fact that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and healed a

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[154] Tac., *Hist.* 4.81; Suet., *Vesp.* 7.

[155] Cf. E. Eve, "Spit in Your Eye: The Blind Man of Bethsaida and the Blind Man of Alexandria," *NTS* 54 (2008): 1-17. Felix Just makes the point that in relation to the healings Vespasian wrought, these healings "serve primarily as legitimizations of Vespasian's ascendency to the office of emperor. There is no interest in the Alexandrian blind person as an independent figure, in contrast to the highly developed characterization of the blind person in John 9" (*Tobit*, 299).

[156] Pliny, for example, comments that "it is the practice in all cases where medicine is employed, to spit three times on the ground, and to conjure the malady as often; the object being to aid the operation of the remedy employed" (*HN* 28.7; Rackham, LCL). Pliny also says that spitting can help with preventing snakebite and warding off witchcraft and the evil eye (*HN* 28.7.35-36, 39); cf. Pliny, *HN* 28.2.8; Petron., *Sat.* 131.

[157] He suggests that there are a total of eight elements that are combined to bring about the healing. Felix suggests "Jesus spits, makes mud, anoints the eyes, and issues the verbal command; the man goes, washes, returns, and is able to see" (*Tobit*, 282). Each of these elements is repeated again in the passage as the man tells and retells the story of his healing; all, that is, except for the mention of spittle.

[158] Just, *Tobit*, 282-283.

[159] L. Morris: "...it is impossible to think that it was spittle itself as a medical method that brought about the cure" (*Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986], 351).

[160] *Gospel*, 332.

[161] Cf. *m. Shab.* 7.2; cf. von Wahlde, *Gospel*, 425.

[162] E.g., *y. Shabb.* 14, 14d, 17f.; cf. Just, *Tobit*, 286.

condition that was once again long-term and non-urgent with no immediate danger,[163] highlights that Jesus would have been interpreted as contravening the Sabbath laws even without the additional element of spittle.

While there may be merit in these claims of deliberate Sabbath violation, we would also appeal to the interpretation of Irenaeus who reads the act of smearing clay on the man's eyes as a symbolic representation of the original creative act in Genesis (2:7).[164] While a small number of scholars make an appeal to Irenaeus' interpretation,[165] it is usually dismissed as "improbable."[166] A recent article by Daniel Frayer-Griggs, however, addresses Irenaeus' interpretation anew in light of references in the Dead Sea Scrolls that attest to both spittle and clay in connection with creation.[167] In response, Frayer-Griggs explores the possibility "that John and the authors of these scrolls may have been drawing on a shared tradition that understood both elements as the materials of creation."[168] In this sense, the use of the spittle and the clay form part of John's particular interest in the creation motif which is demonstrated throughout the gospel and especially so in chapter nine.[169] In this way, the man's healing is another one of the Johannine Jesus' works that reveal him to be God's divine agent of creation.[170] However, it is not the view of this thesis that this healing represents Jesus as completing or fixing a specific example of God's

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[163] As noted in chapter four, according rabbinical law, healing on the Sabbath was only permitted under three circumstances: if someone's life was in direct and immediate danger (*b. Sabb.* 132a); in the case of the birth of a baby (whereby lack of involvement could affect the life of the mother and/or child; *m. Sabb.* 6.3; 12.1; 18.3); or in the case of circumcision (*m. Sabb.* 18.2).

[164] Irenaeus, *Ad. haer.* 5.15.2.

[165] Brown, *Gospel*, 372; Culpepper, *Gospel and Letters*, 175; Morris, *Gospel*, 480-481; Sanders, *Commentary*, 238-239. Lindars suggests that John has added in the detail of the clay so as to be able to compare the account with that of creation (*Gospel,* 343).

[166] Michaels, *Gospel*, 545-546; cf. Barrett, *Gospel*, 358.

[167] "Spittle, Clay and Creation in John 9:6 and Some Dead Sea Scrolls," *JBL* 132.3 (2013): 659-670. Frayer-Griggs describes a number of texts from the DSS that make this connection. For example, the *Rule of the Community* (1QS), he says "emphasizes the inadequacies of the human being when compared to the glory of God by calling attention to the substances from which people are created" ("Spittle," 664). The portion of text Frayer-Griggs cites from 1QS states: "As what shall one born of woman be considered in your presence? Shaped from dust he has been, maggots' food shall be his dwelling; he is spat saliva, moulded clay, and for dust is his longing. What will the clay reply and the one shaped by hand? And what advice will he be able to understand?" (1QS XI, 21-22 [4Q264 8-10]; trans. Martinez). Frayer-Griggs also cites additional references from both the DSS and the ANE. It is also worth noting the work of J.D.M. Derrett who also addresses possible creation imagery in the book of Isaiah ("John 9:6 Read with Isaiah 6:10; 20:9," *EvQ* 66.3 [1994]: 251-254).

[168] Frayer-Griggs, "Spittle," 660.

[169] Rae, while considering the clay "too meager" a referent on its own, understands that in light of the entire gospel's focus on creation that this passage is to be understood as part of Jesus' work of creation ("Testimony," 306).

[170] Just, *Tobit*, 288.

creation that is incomplete (i.e., impaired). Rather, the healing of the "man born blind" is another representation in John's gospel of Jesus working to bring all of God's creation to fullness; an act which is fulfilled in the healed man as he responds to Jesus and shifts from unbelief to belief in the "son of man."[171]

There is no direct dialogue with the "man born blind" nor is there any discussion of healing prior to Jesus' anointing of the man's eyes.[172] Indeed, Jesus' actions have been interpreted by some disability advocates as being "unsolicited"[173] and presumptive, although, John does not indicate any reticence or objection on behalf of the man being healed. After the man's eyes had been anointed, Jesus directed him to "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,"[174] which he did and he ἔρχομαι βλέπω ("came home seeing"; 9:7).[175]

While it is the view of many Johannine scholars that the pool of Siloam merely served as the most convenient body of water available in which to wash,[176] the text itself, with the inclusion of the editorial note ὃ ἑρμηνεύεται ἀπεσταλμένος ("which means sent"), indicates that the gospel writer attributes a greater symbolic element to the pool. A number of commentators understand this symbolism in terms of Elisha's healing of Naaman the Syrian in 2 Kings. Jesus' directive to wash in the pool of Siloam is thus considered to be an echo of Elisha's healing instruction to Naaman to "Go, wash yourself seven times in the

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[171] Rae suggests that this move from unbelief to belief is one of the key elements of Jesus at work among God's creation (*Testimony*, 297-298).

[172] Even if the man had heard the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples there still would have been no indication of what was to follow.

[173] C.M. Webster, "Paradox in the Development of the Non-Disabled Church: Reflection on John 9:1-41," *J Religion Disabil Health* 11:3 (2007): 27.

[174] As with the pool of Bethesda in John 5, the pool of Siloam has been uncovered in recent archaeological excavations. See U.C. von Wahlde, "The Pool of Siloam: The Importance of the New Discoveries for our Understanding of Ritual Immersion in the Late Second Temple Judaism and the Gospel of John," in *John, Jesus and History Volume 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. P.N. Anderson, F. Just and T. Thatcher; ECL 2; Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 155-173.

[175] John employs the word βλέπω in regards to the restoration of the man's eyesight (i.e., ἦλθεν βλέπων). This was a common term used when people's sight was restored (i.e., Mk. 8:24; 10:51-52; Mt. 11:5; Acts 9:12-18; 22:13). Although this man was born blind it might be suggested that his eyesight wasn't actually *re*-stored as he had have never actually been able to see. However, considering the fact that people in the ancient world believed that congenital blindness was impossible to heal, there was no specific term for coming to have vision after being born blind. As a result, in the only other example in the extant Greco-Roman literature of someone coming to see after being congenitally blind, this same Greek word is also employed (Paus. 4.12.10: "It happened also that Ophioneus, the seer who had been blind from birth, received his sight in the most remarkable way. He was seized with a violent pain in the head, and thereupon received his sight [ἀνέβλεψεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ]"; Jones and Ormerod, LCL).

[176] Bruce, *Gospel*, 210. The pool of Siloam was located near the temple, however, for the suggestion that the pool would have been a substantial walking distance from the original location of the man born blind, see W.H. Mare, "Siloam, Pool of," *ABD* (ed. D.N. Freedman; 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:24-26.

Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."[177] Others see an etymological link between Siloam and the Hebrew word *Shiloh*. Considering the Jewish use of *Shiloh* as a name for the Messiah, Craig R. Koester contends that John's reference to this particular pool is of messiological import.[178]

While such allusions may well have been part of John's intention in this passage, there is also a deeper symbolism to be recognised here. Bruce Grigsby suggests that the original auditors of John's gospel would have understood something more significant in Jesus' directive to wash in the pool of Siloam because they would have known that this particular pool was a *miqveh*; a pool used specifically for ritual cleansing.[179] Urban C. von Wahlde builds upon this argument offering that Siloam was not simply a *miqveh,* but the only *miqveh* in Jerusalem comprised of free-flowing water;[180] water that was thus called "living water" and considered of the highest grade for ritual purity.[181] The pool of Siloam also played a vital role in the Feast of Tabernacles whereby water from the pool was brought daily into the temple and placed into a special libation bowl near the altar.[182] von Wahlde maintains that the man's blindness would have rendered him unclean which necessitated ritual cleaning prior to entering the temple.[183] It is likely that sending the man to the Pool of Siloam was more than simply proximity or convenience, but rather, sending him specifically to the site that was considered "par excellence for cleansing."[184] However, the purity status of the blind as well as others with physical and sensory impairments in the first century C.E. is uncertain. While the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls certainly indicates that those who were blind were restricted in their cultic rituals due to being unclean,[185] this does not necessarily reflect other forms of Judaism that were closely aligned with the temple in the first century C.E.[186] Even those rabbinical texts that suggest people

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[177] 2 Ki. 5:10-14; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 155; Brown, *Gospel*, 372; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:243.

[178] Koester, *Symbolism*, 108. For more on this, see Grigsby, "Washing," 227-235; Just, *Tobit*, 256-257.

[179] "Washing in the Pool of Siloam - A Thematic Anticipation of the Johannine Cross," *NovT* 27 (1985): 227-235.

[180] "Pool of Siloam," 163-165.

[181] von Wahlde, "Pool of Siloam," 173.

[182] *m. Sukk.* 4.9.

[183] von Wahlde, "Pool of Siloam," 173.

[184] von Wahlde, "Pool of Siloam," 173.

[185] Just sees confirmation for this in the literature of the DSS which do consider people with blindness to be ritually unclean (Just, *Tobit*, 289). Camille Focant says that the blind were considered unclean according to the DSS but is not convinced that this reflects Palestine in the first century (*Gospel According to Mark*, 436).

[186] Camille Focant says that the blind were considered unclean according to the DSS but is not convinced that this is reflective of Palestine in the first century (*Gospel According to Mark*, 436).

with physical and sensory impairments are exempt from appearing at the temple for the pilgrimages are unclear regarding the impaired person's purity status.[187] In any respect, what it is of greater significance here is that according to John, Jesus sends the man to the source of the "living water" as a prelude to the man coming to faith in the true "living water": Jesus himself. [188]

The second scene begins with the man's return from washing his eyes at which point he was seen by his neighbours who disagreed over his identity (9:8-9). There are two important observations to be made in relation to his neighbours' failure to recognise the healed man. Firstly, it is evident that John is contrasting the man's newly restored vision with the neighbours' visual acuity but lack of perception; a theme that is commonly attested in the Hebrew Bible.[189] Here John recalls "His neighbours and those who had formerly *seen* (θεωροῦντες) him begging ask 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, but he is like (ὅμοιος) him'" (5:8-9a).[190]

The second observation is in regards to the man's identity as a beggar. According to John, the reason the man's neighbours were unable to recognise him was because the man's identity, as far as his neighbours were concerned, was solely connected with the fact he was a beggar. These neighbours (γείτονες) do not refer to him by name nor do they recognise him when he is no longer in the position of begging.[191] The neighbours then question the man regarding his healing asking πῶς οὖν ἠνεῴχθησάν σου οἱ ὀφθαλμοί ("how then were your eyes opened?").[192] The healed man then responds by recalling the details

[187] Supra n. 46.
[188] 4:10,11; 7:38.
[189] Ps. 135:16; Jer. 5:21.
[190] Italics mine.
[191] Louise J. Lawrence, in her recent work on sensory impairment in the gospels, draws a comparison between this man and the Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:50). Lawrence observes that in the case of Bartimaeus that he was "a destitute beggar, decked with the apparel of blindness including a beggar's cloak. The man born blind in John's Gospel also indirectly assumes the appearance or posture of congenital blindness" (*Sense and Stigma*, 40). And yet, the verse to which she refers (9:1) features no physical description of the man at all, nor is his physical appearance described in the text except in relation to his neighbours' inability to recognise him. We are therefore uncertain exactly what Lawrence means by the phrase he assumed "the appearance or posture of congenital blindness" as though there existed a specific stereotype or *topos* limited only to people with congenital conditions. It can certainly be argued that the man born blind had his whole identity connected with his status as a beggar, yet, we are unclear if this is actually the point that Lawrence is attempting to make here.
[192] Urban von Wahlde says that the "opening" of the eyes is not literal as though his eyes were closed but rather "it is a Semitic idiom for being cured of blindness" (*Gospel*, 427; cf. Lindars, *Gospel*, 345).

of his healing by "a man called Jesus" (9:11).[193] The neighbours then question the healed man about Jesus' whereabouts, but the healed man is unable to tell them (9:12).[194]

Apparently confused by the situation and wishing some authority to explain it, the third scene begins with the man's neighbours taking him to the Pharisees (9:13).[195] It is at this late stage, as with the former healing account (5:9), that John informs us that this healing occurred on the Sabbath (9:14).[196] Although John does not reveal the conversation between the neighbours and the Pharisees, it seems that they must have explained at least part of the situation to the Pharisees because the first question they ask the healed man was how he regained his sight (9:15).[197] In an abbreviated retelling, the man informs the Pharisees of his healing (9:15) and the Pharisees argue amongst themselves about Jesus' identity[198] and the belief that the healing had contravened the Sabbath laws.[199] The third scene closes with the healed man responding to the Pharisees' uncertainty about Jesus' identity by declaring "he is a prophet" (9:17).

The fourth scene reveals "the Jews" beginning to question the legitimacy of the man's claim to healing and they seek to find the man's parents to verify that he really had been blind (9:18). The parents, however, while willing to confirm their son's identity and his former blindness (9:20), state that they do not know how he came to be healed (9:21)[200] and,

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[193] It is significant that this is the way that the healed man referred to Jesus, indicating he knew nothing of Jesus apart from his name.

[194] This is because at this stage he hadn't even seen Jesus.

[195] F.F. Bruce questions why it is that the man has been brought to the Pharisees. He suggests that perhaps they realised there was a legal issue at hand (*Gospel*, 211).

[196] The late intrusion of this detail once again inspires some scholars to suggest that this is a Johannine addition (cf. Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:247 and Lindars, *Gospel*, 345).

[197] Note here again the use of the word ἐρωτάω to describe the questioning of the Pharisees.

[198] Some of the Pharisees are concerned with Jesus' breaking of the Sabbath (9:16), although it is not specified which particular element they are concerned with (that is, the non-urgent healing or the making of clay). What is interesting is that the healed man himself did not state that Jesus *made* clay to the Pharisees; he only mentions this to the neighbours (9:11; cf. 9:15). Therefore, the Pharisees' concern may have only been the non-urgent healing that occurred on the Sabbath. Alternatively, this could also affirm that the Pharisees heard the story from the neighbours, although it is not included in our text, and therefore they have been informed of Jesus' making clay.

[199] Apparently there were several Pharisaic laws that could have been considered to be contravened here – the kneading on the Sabbath mentioned above; carrying enough water to wash off an eye-ointment was also forbidden (*m. Shab.* 8:1); anointing an eye on the Sabbath (*b. ʿAbod. Zar.* 28b); putting fasting spittle on the eyes on the Sabbath (*y. Shab.* 14, 14d, 17f); cf. Pilch, *Healing*, 135.

[200] There is nothing in the text to indicate that the parents were present at the healing nor does John record the moment when the man's parents were informed of his healing. There is therefore no reason to doubt the parents' sincerity about not knowing how their son was healed.

therefore, encourage the Pharisees to question again the healed man himself.[201] Although John expresses that the healed man's parents have a legitimate reason to be afraid of speaking with the Pharisees (9.22), their overall fear and reluctance to speak with the Pharisees stands in stark contrast to the fearless and bold responses of the healed man himself.[202]

The fifth scene again reveals the Pharisees interrogating the healed man. By this time, John describes the Pharisees as attempting to force the man to "Give glory to God" (9:24), a phrase that Craig S. Keener opines can mean "give glory to God by confessing you're wrong."[203] The healed man professes to not knowing whether Jesus was a sinner, but to knowing only that Jesus healed him (9:25). As the questioning continues, the healed man responds by stating "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" (9:27). A number of scholars interpret the man's response here as sarcastic,[204] or in the least "ironical."[205] While this may well be true, we suggest what is of greater significance here is that the man seems to count himself among Jesus' disciples: "Do you want to become his disciple *too*?" (9:27). The healed man's growing revelation of Jesus is thus further confirmed by his self-identification as a disciple of Jesus and the certainty he has that Jesus is a man of God

[201] The healed man's parents informed the Pharisees that their son was of age and could therefore be questioned directly (9:21). John then makes the editorial comment that the man's parents were reluctant to speak with the Pharisees out of fear, because the Pharisees had threatened to expel anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ (9:22). Some scholars suggest that the parents were lying (Bruce, *Gospel*, 215; Carson, *Gospel*, 369; Lindars, *Gospel*, 347) and others posit that the parents were actually believers but out of fear did not acknowledge what they knew and believed (Beasley-Murray, *John*, 157). If the parents were believers in Christ and yet unwilling to declare it publicly then this would be a very significant element of the story. However, John makes no such comment. What seems apparent is that they were afraid because they knew the power and authority of the Pharisees in general and therefore did not want to risk being expelled from the synagogue. The parents are also interesting characters in this story in that they show no excitement or gratitude for their son's healing which seems to reveal a lack of care for their son. This is further emphasised by the fact that they left their son to beg in public.

[202] Cf. Resseguie, "John 9," 299. R. Rohrbaugh suggests that in a collectivist community such as this the fear of the man's parents is understandable. In this context being thrown out of the synagogue would "effectively serve as an expulsion from the community" and social group ("Ethnocentrism and Historical Questions about Jesus," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* [ed. W. Stegemann, B. Malina and G. Thiessen; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], 31).

[203] E.g., *John*, 1:790; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 151; Bruce, *Gospel*, 216; Culpepper, *Gospel and Letters*, 177; Haenchen, *John*, 2:40; Köstenberger, *John*, 289; Lindars, *Gospel*, 347; Michaels, *Gospel*, 558; Sanders, *Commentary*, 242.

[204] Bryant and Krause, *John*, 222; Culpepper, *Gospel and Letters*, 177; Staley, "Stumbling," 68. Francis J. Moloney however disagrees stating that he does not believe this form of sarcasm fits the way his character is portrayed in the narrative (*Gospel*, 298).

[205] Lindars, *Gospel,* 348.

(9:33). This scene closes with the man being put out (ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω) of the synagogue (9:34).

This reference to being "put out of the synagogue" has been the focus of much discussion among scholars (9:34).[206] Some consider this reference to be anachronistic claiming the practice of excommunicating Christians from the synagogue is related to the *Sitz im leben* of the author rather than Jesus' earthly ministry.[207] Much of this accusation of anachronism rests on the belief that the excommunication being referred to here is a permanent measure by the synagogue. In this respect, John L. Martyn's suggestion that this excommunication was in connection with the *birkat ha-minim* ("the benediction of the Heretics") has been highly influential.[208] Martyn claims that these benedictions could be dated to approximately 95C.E. which he considers the approximate date of John's gospel. If the practice of excommunication referred to in chapter nine is connected to the *birkat ha-minim* then it is a reasonable assumption that John is including this information in his gospel as a means of comforting those within his own community who have experienced such separation. In comparison, other commentators interpret John's reference to being "put out of the synagogue" was not connected to the excommunication experienced following the fall of Jerusalem but rather it described temporary bans imposed prior to 70 C.E. It is possible that these temporary expulsions allowed the expelled member to return after thirty days.[209] If this is the case, then there is no reason to interpret the text as being anachronistic as our evidence regarding such temporary bans is inconclusive.[210]

The sixth scene marks the reappearance of Jesus (9:35).[211] On hearing of the healed man's expulsion from the temple, Jesus not only seeks him out but gives him the opportunity to confess his developed faith: "'Do you believe in the son of man?'" (9:35). The man responds

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[206] Excommunication is also mentioned earlier in the passage in 9:22 as well as in 12:42 and 16:2.

[207] Martyn, *History*, 37-62; Painter, "John 9," 31-61; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:250; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 448.

[208] James L. Martyn stated that the 12th of the 18 benedictions which were recited as part of the synagogue liturgy, were intended to root out heretics, including followers of Jesus (*History*, 37-62).

[209] Michaels, *Gospel*, 556.

[210] Sanders suggests that if it was certain that John is referring to a "formal excommunication" this would certainly be anachronistic (*Commentary*, 242).

[211] The last time that Jesus was present was verse seven. James L. Resseguie suggests that "Jesus keeps to the margins of this text, and after the man is expelled from the center of the narrative, he too joins Jesus at the margins. Not only does Jesus minister to the marginalized; he also identifies with them by occupying *their* space" (*Strange Gospel*, 140).

by asking Jesus who it was he was speaking of, and Jesus replies by stating: "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you" (9:37). Although the man had not physically seen Jesus prior to this point in the story, it appears that John is highlighting here not the man's physical sight, but his spiritual insight. The man, even without seeing Jesus, would have been able to recognise the voice of the man who healed him. It is not that the healed man does not know who Jesus is, but rather it is the identity of the son of man that he needs to clarify.

It is following the healed man's declaration of faith that Jesus turns the conversation into a discussion about spiritual blindness.[212] John reveals that while Jesus was healing those who were physically blind,[213] his ultimate role as the "light of the world" (8:12) is to bring sight to those who are spiritually blind (9:39). The final two verses of the chapter comprise the final scene of the account and reveal the ignorance of these particular Pharisees in regards to Jesus' identity. While some people are willing to accept the new sight being offered, such as the healed man, others like the Pharisees depicted in this encounter with Jesus, choose to reject it, making themselves blind (9:40). As a result, the Pharisees ask "Are we also blind?" (9:40) without comprehending the irony of their words. The Johannine Jesus' response to the Pharisees serves as a bookend to the whole of chapter nine. While the pericope began with a question regarding the sinfulness of the "man born blind," it finishes with a discussion of the blindness of the Pharisees; but unlike the man's physical blindness, the Pharisees' spiritual blindness, according to John, is indeed connected with personal sin.[214]

The contrast between the healed man and the Pharisees is very significant here. While the healed man had been physically blind, through his encounter with Jesus he gains not only physical sight but also spiritual sight and insight. However, the formerly blind man's spiritual insight serves as a foil for the great lack of sight and understanding from those who claimed to be able to see. As Raymond E. Brown astutely observes,

> The care with which the evangelist has drawn his portraits of increasing insight and hardening blindness is masterful. Three times the former blind man, who is truly gaining knowledge, humbly confesses his ignorance. Three times the Pharisees, who are really

[212] Blindness is often used metaphorically to describe spiritual ignorance throughout the HB (e.g., Isa. 42:16, 18; 43:8) as well as in later Judaism (Wis. 2:21).

[213] Both here and in the synoptic gospels (Mk. 8:22-26; Mk. 10:46-53 // Lk. 18:35-43 // Mt. 20:29-34).

[214] The result of having witnessed Jesus and yet rejected him made them culpable (cf. Jn. 15:22, 24).

> plunging deeper into abysmal ignorance of Jesus, make confident statements about what they know of him.[215]

This chapter is, therefore, one of contrasts. Physical blindness is contrasted with spiritual blindness; assumptions about personal sin are contrasted with true sin; claims to spiritual wisdom and insight are contrasted with true wisdom and insight; the boldness of the healed man and his willingness to publicly acknowledge Jesus is contrasted with the fear and reluctance of his parents; and the growing faith and spiritual insight of the healed man is likewise contrasted with the spiritual ignorance of the Jewish authorities.

§ 7.5 Comparison and Synthesis of John 5:1-18 and 9:1-41

The gospel of John features a total of only three healing narratives. While John does also include the healing of the official's son in chapter four, there are a large number of literary connections between the healings in chapters five and nine that differentiate them from the healing of the official's son. The healing of the official's son is brief and the healing occurs at a distance without Jesus interacting with the cured person. The other two healing accounts addressed in detail in this chapter feature a number of significant parallels. Both accounts feature Jesus instigating healing of a person with a long-term, non-urgent illness on the Sabbath. Both accounts feature healing pools, disputations with the Jewish authorities as well as a second encounter with the healed person. The texts also feature thematic similarities in the discussion of sin, transgression of Sabbath requirements, and the ongoing work of the Father and the Son. This extensive number of parallels between the two healing accounts indicates that the gospel writer crafted his stories of Jesus' healings in such a way as to imply that the two accounts ought to be read and interpreted together.

However, the list of parallels between the accounts also highlights the marked difference between the two main characters and the way in which they respond to Jesus. Both men, through their second encounter with Jesus, are given the opportunity to respond to, and publicly declare, their belief in Jesus, and yet, only one does so. While the healed man in the second account is more than willing to declare his belief, the healed man in the first account gives no response to Jesus at all. While both had witnessed a miracle of Jesus and had therefore become obliged to respond, it is only the second man who does so. In this

[215] *Gospel*, 377.

sense, the two characters represent "both a positive and negative paradigm of initial discipleship."[216]

In addition to the paralleling of themes in these two healing accounts, there is a second important connection between these narratives which is likely to have drawn the interest of the Johannine auditors: the literary connection of the lame and blind. It was noted in both chapters three and four that the linking together of various physical and sensory impairments was a device commonly employed in both Greco-Roman as well as Jewish literature (§ 3.3, § 4.5). It is certainly possible that in addition to paralleling themes and vocabulary that the gospel writer was also employing a well-known literary topos, that of the blind and lame, to reinforce the semantic links between the healing narratives. John may have employed this topos synecdochically as a means of representing all those with physical and sensory impairment who are being healed by Jesus.[217] One particularly well-attested account featuring the blind and the lame, and one that could possibly have had a bearing on attitudes towards people with physical and sensory impairments in the first century C.E., is the account in 2 Samuel 5:8. If scholars such as Saul M. Olyan and Yael Avrahami are correct in interpreting the "house" in this passage as the "temple,"[218] then it is certainly possible that John is using the healing of the blind and lame men to highlight a reversal of fortunes; through the ministry of Jesus those who were excluded from the temple are now to be reconnected with the temple community. References to the blind and the lame that occur in both the rabbinic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that this passage was still influential in attitudes towards people with physical and sensory around the time of the first century C.E. Considering this, it is certainly plausible that John likewise employed the language of 2 Samuel 5, but in this case, doing so as a means of further accentuating the divergence in the responses of the two healed men.[219]

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[216] Keener, *Gospel*, 1:639; cf. Carol M. Webster says that Jesus' statement about the man born blind was to show God's works shows the "prototype of discipleship" ("Paradox,") 36.

[217] Such synecdoches appear throughout the synoptic gospels, e.g., Mt. 15:30-31 "Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others"; Lk. 14:13 "when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." This is even seen in the introduction to the healing of the lame man in chapter five: "Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralysed" (5:3).

[218] § 4.8.1.

[219] On the connections between the gospel of John and the DSS, see M.L. Coloe and T. Thatcher, eds., *John, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Sixty Years of Discovery and Debate* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011).

After thirty-eight years of illness the man in chapter five is shown to be a recipient of Jesus' healing ministry. Through Jesus' directive to pick up his mat and walk, the man found his illness had left him. And yet, despite this healing, the man appears to have made no attempt to express gratitude or even identify his healer. It is only at a second encounter within the temple precincts that the man discovers the identity of his healer. It is during this second encounter that Jesus gives the man another directive: "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." In comparison to the official's son in the previous chapter (4:43-54) where the outcome of the healing is that "he and all his household believed" (4:53), in this instance there is apparently no such response to his healer. Felix Just summarises this encounter by stating that:

> according to the Fourth Evangelist, the main sin which people can commit is giving a negative response to the choice presented by Jesus, and the consequences which they bring upon themselves thereby is not merely some punishment in the form of physical ailments, but in eternal judgment and death.[220]

It is significant that this second encounter takes place within the temple precincts, the centre of the Jewish faith in first-century Palestine. While the man had experienced the physical weakness associated with his illness, he had apparently also experienced a certain level of marginalisation from the temple and its cultic community. It is possible that this disconnect occurred because people with physical and sensory impairments were considered unclean in the Second Temple period, however, this detail is inconclusive. It is likely that it is merely the man's physical impairment that restricts his movement and thus his access to the temple. Following his cure at Bethesda the man is depicted as moving directly to the temple. The implication is that after such a lengthy removal from the temple because of his impairment, because of his physical healing, he once again had the opportunity to be connected, possibly reconnected, with the temple community. And yet, it is here, in the midst of this newly restored relationship with the temple, that Jesus offers him an alternative: the possibility, as others in John's gospel have done before him, to repent of his sins and follow after the Messiah. However, the narrative ends with the healed man confessing not faith in Jesus, but simply confessing Jesus' name to his critics.

Chapter nine reveals Jesus' encounter with another marginalised figure, the "man born blind." John describes this man as a "beggar" (*προσαίτης*) and someone who had to rely on

[220] Just, *Tobit*, 276-277.

the generosity of others in order to survive (9:8). While begging was not the only option available to a blind person in the ancient world,[221] it certainly cannot be said that the "man born blind" "had found meaning in his life" through his begging.[222] Like the man in chapter five, the "man born blind" is depicted as a marginalised figure – in contrast to the man in chapter five, this man does have family members who could assist him and yet, they apparently leave him to beg for his living and they express reluctance to answer on his behalf when they are approached by the Jewish authorities. Like the man in chapter five, this man is also given a directive by Jesus in order to bring about his healing, in this case, to go to the pool of Siloam and wash. As with the previous account, the man's healing results in questioning from the Jewish authorities. While the man in chapter five "said nothing in (Jesus') defence,"[223] the healed man in chapter nine grows in confidence and conviction, fearlessly defending the Pharisees' accusations. In contrast to the inclusion in the temple community experienced by the healed man in chapter five, the man in chapter nine is ultimately depicted as not only excluded but indeed excommunicated from the synagogue and its community; the very thing that his parents feared. And yet, despite this exclusion from the synagogue, this man is also shown to be part of a new community being forged in the name of Jesus.

There has been much attention given to the various forms of dualism used throughout the gospel of John. The gospel writer contrasts light with darkness, day with night, flesh with spirit, and belief with unbelief. In regards to these two healing accounts, much attention has been given to the metaphorical language of disability used, especially in the case of chapter nine where the gospel writer contrasts the cured man's new-found sight with the figurative 'blindness' of the Jewish authorities who see Jesus but apparently do not "understand with their hearts" (Jn. 12:40). However, in addition to these contrasts, the two healing accounts, when addressed together, also represent another form of dualism, that is, the contrast between inclusion and exclusion. While both men experience some form of marginalisation and exclusion as a result of their impairment, John highlights that a change in their physical bodies does not automatically result in their social restoration. While some scholars suggest that Jesus brought people with illness and impairment both

[221] See also Kok who suggests that "Sick people, like the blind, were socio-religious fringe figures, who usually had to beg in order to survive" ("Healing," 49).

[222] Wynn, "Johannine," 65.

[223] Sanders, *Commentary*, 241.

a physical cure as well as healing, that is, social restoration and the return of social value, John does not show social restoration as being the natural bi-product of receiving a physical cure. While the man in chapter five certainly appears to find social restoration following his cure, as evidenced in his immediate return to the temple, the man in chapter nine, by contrast, is "thrown out" of the synagogue as a result of his public declarations regarding Jesus. In this respect, this man's cure from his sensory impairment does not bring him restoration but rather further exclusion. In this sense, the gospel writer expresses the reality that social exclusion is a genuine possibility for those willing to publicly declare allegiance to the growing Jesus movement. John's emphasis then is perhaps less on the contrast between the disability/abledbodiedness of each of the men, whereby physical wholeness can be interpreted as a necessary precursor to salvation and/or social restoration, but rather, seen together these two healing accounts explore the nuances of the dualism of inclusion/exclusion.

§ 7.6 Conclusion

The healing of the lame man in John 5:1-18 and the blind man in John 9:1-41 offer a unique perspective of Jesus' healing ministry. Unlike the healing accounts that appear in the Synoptic gospels, these two healing narratives in John feature not only the healing proper but also the healed person's response to it. The large number of parallels between the narratives, as well as literary motif of connecting the blind and lame, indicates that it was the author's intention to read and interpret these stories together. Through this comparison, it is stark contrast of the men's responses to Jesus that becomes apparent. While the man in chapter nine openly declares his faith in Jesus following his healing, John depicts the formerly lame man as ending his interaction with Jesus without such a response. In this way John uses the literary parallels not only to compare the two accounts but also to contrast them. For John, the aim of Jesus' "signs," and indeed Jesus' entire earthly ministry, was not to cure those with physical impairments or to offer people social restoration but rather to lead people to belief in him. For John this issue of inclusion/exclusion hinges ultimately not on physical wholeness or even social restoration but on one's willingness to be included amongst those who he describes in chapter twenty; those who "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

CHAPTER EIGHT:
CONCLUSION

§ 8.1 Introduction

The gospels of the New Testament feature numerous social exchanges between Jesus and people with various physical and sensory disabilities. Despite this, traditional biblical scholarship has considered these exchanges as merely incidental. For many scholars addressing the gospels, the people with disability described therein have not been considered agents in their own right but exist only to highlight the actions of Jesus as a miracle worker. Consequently, while these texts have been assessed at length by biblical scholars, as yet, they have only rarely been brought into dialogue with the implications and concerns that have been raised by disability studies.

In contrast, it has been the aim of this study to use disability as a lens through which to explore a number of these passages anew. Using the recent developments of the cultural model of disability as the theoretical basis for this examination, we have argued that the gospel writers, along with other biblical and ancient writers, have employed the language of disability as a means of understanding, organizing, and interpreting the experiences of humanity. Disability, along with race/ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, is part of the way a society frames its understanding of the body both individually and corporately. Regardless of the absence of an over-arching term for disability, every body, whether deemed nondisabled or 'deviant', is assigned meaning within the framework of its social, cultural and religious milieu. In light of this, the purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which the physically- and sensory-impaired body is assigned meaning within the context of the canonical gospels. Rather than a systematic approach to the gospels analysing every reference to physical and/or sensory impairment, this study selected three distinct gospel passages to investigate in detail. These case studies thus assessed the parable of the banquet (Lk. 14:1-24), the woman with a "flow of blood" (Mk. 5:25-34), and the healing of the impaired man and blind man in the gospel of John (Jn. 5:1-18; Jn. 9).

The aim of this study was to employ the traditional methods of biblical scholarship but with a particular focus on the representations of physical and sensory disability found in

gospels. It was noted throughout this study that while it would be almost impossible to recreate the lives of people with physical and sensory disability in first-century Palestine, we are able to assess the way in which people with disability are *represented* in the gospel texts. Consequently, the current study has addressed the way in which the gospel writers reinforced and reflected, as well as subverted, culturally-driven constructions of disability in the ancient world.

In chapter one of the current study, we gave an outline of the progress of disability studies within the larger framework of biblical studies. It was observed that while disability studies is still only in its formative stages, that to date there are no comprehensive monographs available that address disability in the gospels in light of their Jewish and Greco-Roman background. While a small number of works have attempted to assess disability across the breadth of the biblical material, these works are primarily edited compilations which lack a systematic investigation of disability in the biblical material. It was thus resolved that an historical assessment of disability in the gospel texts would be a valuable contribution to the growing field of disability studies.

Chapter two of the current study was dedicated to issues of definition and the various models used to understand and interpret disability. While noting the historical significance of both the medical and social models of disability, we determined that it was the cultural model which was best suited to the current assessment. The cultural model while employing the principles of the social model – that is, that disability is both a biological and social phenomenon – focuses on analysing the way in which disability-related language is used to represent the phenomenological experience of disability. For this reason, the cultural model allowed us the opportunity to analyse the way in which the gospel writers employ the language of disability without making any attempts to recreate the lived experiences of people with disability in first-century Palestine.

Chapters three and four then served as the foundation for our assessments of disability in the gospels by placing the gospel narratives within their socio-historical context. In chapter three we addressed the way in which physically-and/or sensory-impaired bodies were represented across a broad range of ancient sources from the Greco Roman world. Here we investigated a variety of materials including historical, mythological, and medical

literary sources from the ancient world, as well as addressing a range of visual representations of disability also. Following this, in chapter four, we investigated depictions of disability within the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism. In this investigation we employed two rubrics to the Hebrew Bible as a means of assessing some of the references to disability contained within. In this way, we employed the language of the sensorial body developed by Yael Avrahami and we thus explored the way in which the sensorially limited body functioned within the narratives of the Hebrew Bible. Secondly, we used the work of Saul M. Olyan to address disability in terms of the classification 'defective'/non-'defective' and the social and cultic repercussions of these disabilities. These assessments were then utilised as the framework for our investigations into physical and sensory disability as they are depicted in three selected portions of the New Testament gospels.

In chapter five we featured an assessment of the parable of the banquet found in chapter 14 of Luke's gospel. Building upon the work of scholars such as Dennis E. Smith, we outlined a number of the parallels between the sympotic literature of the Greco-Roman world and the gospel of Luke. While Smith, among others, has isolated a range of parallels between the gospel of Luke and the sympotic literature of the Greco-Roman world, what has not been previously assessed is the long-standing association between banqueting and disability in the Greco-Roman world. In this chapter we thus proposed that as well as building upon and subverting this Greco-Roman sympotic literature, Luke was also acknowledging this association between banqueting and disability by emphasising the place of "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" in the messianic banquet. Such an approach indicates that rather than the traditional allegorical interpretation, it is far more likely that in this particular parable, the gospel writer was emphasising Jesus' ministry to the poor and marginalised of the Jewish community. In this way, Luke can be seen to be subverting the traditional image of people with disability as the uninvited guests instead emphasising that the poor and those with disability are considered to have an important place both in the developing Jesus movement as well as in the future messianic feast.

In chapter six we then assessed the account of the woman with a "flow of blood" in Mark's gospel (5:25-34). Although the woman with the "flow of blood" is not generally interpreted

as a person with a physical and/or sensory disability, through our investigation, it was argued that the woman's physical condition, along with the social stigma she experienced in response to this condition, could certainly be interpreted as a form of disability. While traditional interpretations of this passage have focused almost solely on the woman's purity status, re-reading the account with a disability lens was helpful in drawing out aspects of the text which have been previously overlooked. This could be seen in the parallels Mark draws between the woman and Jairus' daughter especially in light of the Hippocratic theory of the humours. In addition, it was also observed that there are significant shifts in language that take place throughout the pericope that highlight not only the woman's physical and spiritual health but also her familial status. It was noted that Mark's account of the woman with the "flow of blood" represents Jesus as healer in its fullest sense, addressing both the woman's physical condition as well as the social stigma associated with it. For Mark, this woman's healing and social restoration are depicted as a foretaste of the complete and permanent healing available through Jesus in the eschaton.

Finally, chapter seven featured a more traditional exegetical approach to the two major healing accounts that occur in the gospel of John, that is, the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda (Jn. 5:1-18) and the healing of the "man born blind" (Jn. 9:1-41). It was argued that the large number of parallels between these two narratives, as well as the literary motif connecting the blind and the lame, indicates it was likely that it was the author's intention to read and interpret these stories together. Through this comparison, the stark contrast of the two men is made apparent. While the man in chapter nine openly declares his faith in Jesus following his healing, John depicts the formerly physically-impaired man as ending his interaction with Jesus without such a response. While the man in chapter 5 found social restoration following his healing evidenced in his return to the temple, the formerly blind man is "put out of the synagogue" as a result of his public declarations regarding Jesus. In this respect, this man's cure does not bring him restoration but further exclusion. In this way, the gospel writer uses these two healing accounts to highlight that neither inclusion nor exclusion is predicated on one's physical wholeness or lack thereof but rather on one's willingness to respond to Jesus.

The aim of this study was to employ the tools of traditional biblical studies but doing this with the deliberate goal of addressing disability issues in the gospels. What we have seen

is that by utilising a disability lens throughout this study, we have not only addressed the particular ways that disability itself is represented in the gospels but such an approach has also afforded us the opportunity to gain new insights into each of these texts that have been overlooked by previous scholars. In each case, by bringing the issue of disability to the fore, we have been able to draw out new and illuminating insights from each of the texts examined. These insights will not only assist in our knowledge about representations of disability in antiquity but they also allow us to formulate a far more nuanced approach to representations of disability in the gospels. In this way, it is our hope that the current study has assisted with highlighting the importance of a disability studies approach to the biblical material and that we have offered a substantial contribution to the growing field of disability and biblical studies.

§ 8.2 Future Studies

As with most projects of this kind, we are certain that some of the insights developed throughout this study have illuminated other possible areas of research in this area. While we have addressed three particular passages in the gospels, there are numerous other pericopae which could likewise be examined using such a disability lens. For example, what insights can we gain into first-century views towards disability by examining the Synoptic instruction to cut off one's hand in order to prevent sin (Mk 9:43//Mt. 18:8)? To what extent would such a directive have been interpreted within its first-century context? What were first-century Christian, Jewish, and Greco-Roman expectations regarding a bodily resurrection? In addition, how is such an interpretation informed by the image of the resurrected Jesus still carrying the scars of the resurrection upon his flesh (John 20:19-31)? Indeed, it is in the scarred body of the crucified and resurrected Jesus that the ultimate paradox is represented: Jesus at once crucified, deformed, and limited, yet simultaneously, resurrected and empowered.

It is apparent that this paradoxical representation of Jesus was one that did not go unnoticed in the first-century. This is evident in that in the earliest days of the Jesus' movement, the role of Jesus in theatrical performances was often taken up by the *stupidus*, the fool in the mime. Not only is this significant in itself, but as has been addressed throughout the current, there was a close association between the mime and street

performer and people with physical and intellectual disability.[1] Can such an observation assist us with gaining insight into Roman responses to Jesus in the first few centuries of the Common Era? It is certainly possible. In this way, Brooke Holmes has observed, "Christianity gives a jolt to the signifying potential of the diseased and disabled body, which becomes the site where the new religion's power is authenticated."[2] The crucified and resurrected body of Jesus thus presents the ultimate paradox: it is at once victorious, brutalized, powerful, despised, and in all these things 'disabled'. And it is therefore in this very paradox that disability studies must take up residence in the future of biblical studies.

[1] Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 181; Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, 168.
[2] Holmes, "Marked Bodies," 181.

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