

**THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE GREEK PAPYRI OF EGYPT  
ON THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICES  
AND EXPERIENCES  
OF CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH WOMEN  
FROM 100 CE TO 400 CE**

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## **SYNOPSIS**


The documentary papyri are an unparalleled source for the study of women in antiquity providing information about women's lives and relationships. Among the papyri are numbers of female-authored texts which allow women's own voices to be heard. The perspectives of the papyri nuance what is known about women from other sources.

This thesis identifies and analyses the papyri from 100 CE to 400 CE that contain information about the religious lives of Jewish and Christian women. As sources, the papyri function in distinctly different ways for the two religious groups. The choice of Jewish and Christian women reflects the communities' shared monotheism within a polytheistic though increasingly henotheistic background, and their shared literary and revelatory foundation in the Septuagint. The study of both communities is consistent with what is now understood of the complex interrelation between them in the first centuries of the Christian Era. To the extent possible in each text the women's religious identities, participation in their religious communities and personal religious practice are examined.

The thesis uses a methodology that allows the women's beliefs, practices and experiences to be embedded in their 'ordinary' lives. This approach makes possible the study of women while avoiding the historiographical problems of considering women's lives in isolation from men's lives and from the rest of history, and presuming a single entity 'woman'. It allows the women's religious status to be explored in relation to its expression in their concerns and behaviour.

## DECLARATION

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

 22 June 2006

Erica Mathieson

Date

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I have contemplated writing these acknowledgements at various times during the preparation of this thesis. Now I come to that moment and I find myself looking back over years of research and discovery, learning, reflection on history, life and myself, laughter, exhilaration and heartache, and plain hard work. I have received great encouragement and support from my family and friends whom I thank warmly. The kindly 'How's the thesis?', the bearing and forbearing of my distraction, the phone calls to check on me have all been much appreciated. I want to particularly thank my sister, Jane, for her reading and editing of the completed thesis. I thank too my supervisors, Professor Alanna Nobbs and Dr Malcolm Choat of the Ancient History Department of Macquarie University, for their reading and critiques of my work and Dr Greg Fox for checking the Greek. I acknowledge and thank all those scholars in relation to whose work I have formulated my own. Finally, I thank the women whose documents and lives form the basis of my research and I dedicate my thesis to them.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for papyri are according to S. R. Pickering, *Papyrus Editions* (Sydney 1984); *Papyrus Editions: Supplement* (Sydney 1984).

Abbreviations for inscriptions are according to generally used conventions.

<i>AP</i>	<i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i>
<i>BL</i>	<i>Berichtigungsliste der griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Code of Justinian</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Sirmondian Constitutions</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Code of Theodosius</i>
<i>DDBDP</i>	<i>Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri</i>
<i>LDAB</i>	<i>Leuven Database of Ancient Books</i>
<i>TLG</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>LH</i>	<i>Historia Lausiaca</i>
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell and Scott, revised and augmented with supplement by Jones (McKenzie and Barber)
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>ND</i>	<i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity</i>
<i>NT</i>	New Testament
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PGM</i>	<i>Papyri Graecae Magicae</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
<i>Suppl.Mag.</i>	<i>Supplementum Magicum</i>
<i>s.v.</i>	<i>sub voce</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>NTh</i>	<i>Novels of Theodosius</i>

Textual sigla used are as follows:

$\alpha\beta$	letters not completely legible
....	4 letters missing
$[\alpha\beta]$	letters lost from the document and restored by the editor
$[6]$	6 letters lost
$\langle\alpha\beta\rangle$	letters omitted by the scribe and added by the editor
$(\alpha\beta)$	abbreviation in the text resolved by the editor
$\{\alpha\beta\}$	letters wrongly added by the scribe and cancelled by the editor
$\llbracket\alpha\beta\rrbracket$	a (still legible) erasure by the scribe
$'\alpha\beta'$	letters written above the line

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The study of women in history derives much of its ideology from the articulation of women as Other in male-authored texts<sup>1</sup>. Feminist historians recognise that women are a largely invisible category in the historical record and in historiography to the twentieth century<sup>2</sup>. Since then scholarship has sought to recover the experiences and contributions of women<sup>3</sup>. This thesis is of such a type.

A methodological problem in the study of women in history lies in the nature of the sources. Ancient texts are almost exclusively written by men<sup>4</sup>. Thus most historical studies of women are analyses of representations of women in men's texts<sup>5</sup>. Authors sometimes acknowledge the methodological difficulties by entitling their work, for example, 'images of women' and 'author (male)'s attitude to women'<sup>6</sup>. In the study of Jewish and Christian women, the sources reflect clear ideological and theological agenda as can the studies themselves<sup>7</sup>.

In the study of women in antiquity, feminist scholars call for the primary focus to be on women and not on male attitudes to them<sup>8</sup>, with 'new types of questions (of the traditional canons of literature) and ... hitherto overlooked sources'<sup>9</sup>. The papyri are such a fresh source that offers information on the lives of 'ordinary' women<sup>10</sup>. Further,

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<sup>1</sup> de Beauvoir (1953).

<sup>2</sup> On the problem of invisibility, Kleinberg (1988), ix; Scott (1988).

<sup>3</sup> Initially using positivist and idealist techniques, then feminist critical methodologies. See eg Pomeroy (1975); Schussler-Fiorenza (1983, 1994); Dixon (1992).

<sup>4</sup> Exceptions include Sappho, *Poems* (C7/6 BCE); Egeria, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land* (c.390). See also Kraemer (1991); Lefkowitz (1994).

<sup>5</sup> 'The materials out of which (the history of Christian women) is constructed might well promote despair among many feminist scholars...the sources are exclusively literary – and to make matters worse, the literature is written by men about women. The literature, moreover, is propagandistic and rhetorical ...Far from hearing women's voices directly, we might reasonably question whether the male voices we hear can sound an authentic note', Clark (1986), 23.

<sup>6</sup> Radford-Reuther (1974a); Wahlberg (1978); Cameron and Kuhrt (1983, 1993); Clark (1992).

<sup>7</sup> For pioneering work in this area see, Radford-Reuther (1974a); (1974b); (1979); Radford-Reuther and McLaughlin (1979); Schussler-Fiorenza (1979); (1983, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Brooten (1985), 65, 80.

<sup>9</sup> Brooten (1985), 65.

<sup>10</sup> Elite women, including queens, the wives, mothers and daughters of emperors and other elite men, and certain women wealthy in their own right are occasionally included in ancient literary sources. These women have been the subjects of historical studies and particularly early feminist studies seeking to retrieve women's stories. The supposition that such representations of women in ancient

the papyri include numbers of female-authored texts and thus offer access to women's voices about their religious beliefs, practices and experiences<sup>11</sup>. Papyri written to and referring to women provide indirect but nonetheless useful information about women's religious lives. I include texts written to women on the basis that expressions of prayer and belief communicate meaningfully where there is a common religious understanding. Texts referring to women in a substantial way similarly contribute to the broad picture of women's religious practices and experience. Such texts, however, yield nothing of women's religious subjectivity.

The documentary papyri can refer to situations known to their author and addressee but obscure to modern readers. They can be damaged, making reconstruction of their meaning uncertain. The chance and uneven nature of the survival of papyri means that conclusions can only be drawn with caution and are necessarily provisional, awaiting more finds and further study. Nonetheless, the papyri are a rich source of social, linguistic and religious information.

## **AIM**

This thesis aims to explore the religious beliefs, practices and experiences of Christian and Jewish women as they are attested in the Greek papyri of Egypt from 100 to 400 CE<sup>12</sup>. The original vision was to examine the religious lives of all women. However, constraints of length have necessitated the exclusion of papyri referring to pagan<sup>13</sup> women, that is, 284 documents of which 128 are written by women, 117 by men, while the gender of 39 writers is unknown. I hope to analyse these in post-doctoral work which will then allow a comparative dimension not currently possible<sup>14</sup>.

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literature reflect the reality of the majority of women's experience has been widely criticised. See Lerner (1986), 4f; Blok (1987), 5; Davin (1988), 61, 70; Hallett (1989), 59.

<sup>11</sup> Schussler-Fiorenza (1983, 1994); McClure (2001). Skinner (1993), 127f, argues that even in texts authored by women the masculine structure of language precludes a female speaking subject.

<sup>12</sup> Subsequent date references are CE unless otherwise specified.

<sup>13</sup> 'Pagan' describes the cults of Egyptian, Greek and Roman divinities. The single term, unsatisfactory as it is, does not deny their complexity and variety but acknowledges a common principle: the practice of sacred rites to regulate the relationship of society with the divine. See Judge (1989), 402; (2001), 6; (2003), 518-520. No pejorative sense is intended.

<sup>14</sup> Eg initial impressions of pagan women in the papyri confirm the picture from literary sources that women are active participants in pagan religion in public roles as priestesses, as *κανηφόροι*, in public sacrifices, as well as in domestic rituals. Such public roles are absent from the texts of Jewish and Christian women. See Witt (1971); Kraemer (1992); Dillon (2002).

The inclusion of Jewish and Christian women accords with recent studies on the relationship between the early Christian and Jewish communities. These question 'the parting of the ways' model, recognising the complex convergences and divergences across time and place evident in the sources<sup>15</sup>.

## **DEFINING THE TOPIC**

'Women' are those who identify themselves, or are identified by others, as women by the use of feminine names, words for women such as γυνή, ἀδελφή, μήτηρ and θυγάτηρ and feminine grammatical forms. The difference between sex<sup>16</sup> and gender<sup>17</sup> is significant in this study. I use 'gender' recognising that women's sense of being women is determined by their relation to men and society<sup>18</sup>. Contemporary attitudes cannot be assumed in ancient texts<sup>19</sup>.

The phrase 'religious beliefs, practices and experiences' makes explicit that this thesis is an historical exploration of women's religious lives and not a theological study. The focus is on what 'real women' think and do in relation to God and religious institutions. The dimension of experience incorporates those areas of women's lives on which beliefs and practices impinge. It uses recent sociological findings on the multifaceted nature of identity, in particular in this thesis that being a Jew has ethnic, cultural and political dimensions as well as the theological, just as being Christian also has a political dimension. I use the adjectival 'religious' to avoid applying the modern concept of 'religion' founded in doctrine onto the ancient understanding of cult<sup>20</sup>, and, although 'religion' applies to Judaism<sup>21</sup> and Christianity in the period, avoidance of the term reflects more accurately the historical situation.

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<sup>15</sup> Markus (1980); Lieu (1996); (2002), 11-29; Boyarin (1998); (1999); Trebilco (1999); (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Sex refers to biology. See, however, Davin (1988), 74, citing J. Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: the Historical Construction of Femininity in Twentieth Century Australia*, 10, who argues that biology also is a cultural construct.

<sup>17</sup> Gender is product of culture. See eg Scott (1988, 1999), 25.

<sup>18</sup> Smith (1985), 10, 15, 46.

<sup>19</sup> See Kleinberg (1988), ix.

<sup>20</sup> See Judge (1989); (2003). There is no equivalent to the modern term 'religion' prior to 200. Such terminology begins to develop in C3 and particularly in C4, Judge (2003), 503. For a contrary opinion, see Betz (1994); (1991) who argues that Christianity is defined from the beginning as a religion alongside and comparable with other contemporary religions.

<sup>21</sup> I use 'Judaism' to denote Jewish beliefs and associated institutions. It is not to be equated with rabbinic Judaism that emerged in the second and third centuries although the broad term would include that development. See Boyarin (1999), 1, 11; Lieu (2002), 19.

The years 100-400 cover the period of religious transformation described as the change from paganism to Christianity, or the 'triumph of Christianity'. Such expressions, while generalised summaries, ignore the complexities of the religious scene: the substantial minority practice of Judaism in 100 and its re-emergence and continuation after 117; paganism as a continuing religious option to and beyond the sixth century<sup>22</sup>; and the broad mix of 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' theologies that Christianity encompasses in the period under discussion<sup>23</sup>. The fact that paganism becomes an 'option' points to its transformation through the influence of Christianity<sup>24</sup>, which it also influences<sup>25</sup>. The beginning and end of the study are associated with no particular events in recognition that traditional periodisation has little relevance to women's history<sup>26</sup>.

The thesis examines the Greek papyri of Egypt<sup>27</sup>. It therefore excludes Coptic papyri written by and to Christian women, of which, however, I have not found any in the period<sup>28</sup>, and Hebrew papyri written by and to Christian or Jewish women, of which, again, I have not found any in Egypt in the period. The thesis also excludes Greek papyri from elsewhere<sup>29</sup> although they serve comparative functions. Thesis length does not allow me to address cultural differences between Egypt and the Levant and simple comparison is unwise. My lack of expertise in Coptic makes close reading of the texts, essential to my methodology, impossible. The period to the end of the fourth century precedes that in which women's documents in Greek virtually disappear and those in Coptic assume a larger proportion of the total. The development reflects a gendered choice of language, with Egyptian preferred by women, mirroring their association with the private sphere, in linguistic patterns

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<sup>22</sup> MacMullen (1984); (1986); (1997); Wipszycka (1988); Borkowski (1990); Frend (1990); Trombley (1993).

<sup>23</sup> The terms are anachronistic but descriptive.

<sup>24</sup> It comes to be articulated doctrinally, following Christianity, and as a response to it.

<sup>25</sup> For the integration of pagan ritual and belief into Christianity, see Trombley (1993) 1.98-186; Frankfurter (1998).

<sup>26</sup> See Brooten (1985), 65; Kleinberg (1988), x.

<sup>27</sup> 'Papyri' denote texts written in ink on movable material, eg papyrus, parchment, potsherd, wooden tablets, leather and linen, as well as texts incised on wax tablets, Pestman (1990), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Of the texts in P.Kell.5.Copt., those written by and to women are: 42 from Louiapshai and Maria; 43 from Tehat; 29 to Maria from her son; 31 to the daughters from their father; 32 to the daughter from her father. The latter three are certainly Manichaean, and the remainder are arguably so. Cribiore (2002), 149, n.3, states that there are about 60 Coptic letters written by women but she gives no dates. The majority are almost certainly written after C4; see further this page.

<sup>29</sup> Eg the archives of Babatha and Salome Komaise, *Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (1989); Cotton (1993); (1994a); (1994b); (1995); Cotton and Greenfield (1994).



established by intermarriage with Greek men in the Hellenistic period<sup>30</sup>. The implications for this thesis might be that Greek letters written by women are dictated and translated, distancing the women's voices from the texts. However, there is no evidence of translation or difficulty in communication in the documents<sup>31</sup>, suggesting at least an oral bilingualism among women as among men<sup>32</sup>.

### **THE HISTORY OF STUDY ON THE TOPIC**

Scholars have increasingly recognised the papyri as sources for women's lives in late antiquity and a number of sourcebooks have resulted. Rowlandson's collection<sup>33</sup> covers a range of topics including family life, economics and religion, and includes several texts relevant to the study of Jewish and Christian women. Rowlandson provides a translated text with brief introduction but no analysis. Kraemer's<sup>34</sup> volume focuses on women's religions and includes literary, inscriptional and papyrological material, with one Christian and several Jewish papyri. Lefkowitz and Fant<sup>35</sup> include no Christian or Jewish papyri. These volumes are all selective and not analytical.

There are an increasing number of papyrological studies focussing on specific aspects of women's lives, religious, social and economic<sup>36</sup>. In relation to religious issues, studies have focussed on ascetic women. Elm's *Virgins of God*<sup>37</sup> explores the development of Christian women's asceticism in Syria and Egypt and includes the evidence of the papyri. Her methodology is descriptive of the ascetic elements in the texts without embedding them in a broader context. Emmett Nobbs' research in the papyri includes women's monasticism<sup>38</sup> among other studies of early Christianity<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Bagnall (2001b).

<sup>31</sup> As Bagnall acknowledges.

<sup>32</sup> Kraus (2000), 332, however, notes the occasional need for interpreters in courts. The significance of this evidence is uncertain, raising questions about fluency and levels of language.

<sup>33</sup> Rowlandson (1998).

<sup>34</sup> Kraemer (1988).

<sup>35</sup> Lefkowitz and Fant (1992).

<sup>36</sup> Eg Mondini (1917); Sijpesteijn (1965); Montevecchi (1981); Emmett (1982); (1984); Hobson (1983); (1985); Pomeroy (1983, 1985); (1984); Kraemer (1986); Beaucamp (1990-1992); (2002); Bassiouni (1992); Sheridan (1996); (1998); Barker (1997); El-Mosalamy (1997); Cribiore (2001a); Bagnall (2001b); Balconi (2001); Fikhman (2001); Parca (2002).

<sup>37</sup> Elm (1994, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Emmett (1982); (1984).

<sup>39</sup> Emmett (1982); (1984); (1985); Emmett Nobbs (1986); Nobbs (1998).

Wipszycka similarly examines women's asceticism<sup>40</sup> among her research<sup>41</sup>. Her study examines the forms of organisation for women's asceticism to the seventh century and notes the evidence of the papyri. It is not comprehensive of all the published documents. None of these studies includes non-ascetic women by definition.

A number of studies explore the papyri for information on early Egyptian Christianity<sup>42</sup>. Some include women's texts incidentally. The nine volumes of *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity (ND)* have produced invaluable scholarly material using papyrological and epigraphic sources. They include a number texts written by, to and referring to Christian women and some relating to Jewish women. They are not comprehensive of Christian or Jewish women's papyri.

Study of Christian women using literary sources has generated a vast bibliography with a variety of methodologies<sup>43</sup>. By definition they make little use of the perspectives of the papyri. A similar pattern appears in the study of Jewish women<sup>44</sup>. The paucity of Jewish papyri from Egypt makes them less ready sources but some scholars refer to the papyri as alternate sources offering different perspectives<sup>45</sup>.

No study that I have been able to find focuses on Christian or Jewish women in Egypt using the papyri as sources, embedding the women's religious beliefs, practices and experiences in the broader context of their lives and attempting a comprehensive coverage of texts written by, to and referring to Jewish and Christian women as this thesis does.

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<sup>40</sup> Wipszycka (1996b).

<sup>41</sup> Wipszycka (1972); (1974); (1983); (1984); (1986); (1988); (1993); (1994a); (1994b); (1996a); (1996c); (2001a); (2001b).

<sup>42</sup> Ghedini (1923); Cavassini (1954); Naldini (1968, 1998); Harris (1975); Youtie (1975b); (1978); Judge (1977); (1981); (1985); Judge and Pickering (1977); Tibiletti (1979); Bagnall (1982); (1987a); (1987b); (1995); (2001a).

<sup>43</sup> Eg relating to this thesis: Parvey (1974); Radford-Reuther (1974a); (1974b); (1979); Clark and Richardson (1977); Clark (1979); (1983); (1986); (1992); (1998); (2001); Pagels (1979); Radford-Reuther and McLaughlin (1979); Schussler-Fiorenza (1983, 1994); (1979); Evans (1984); Heine (1987); Cameron (1989); (1991); Massey (1989); Wire (1990); Witherington (1990b); Clark Kroeger and Clark Kroeger (1992); Clark (1993); Torjesen (1993); Jensen (1996); MacDonald (1996); Saunders (1996); Trevett (1996); Castelli (1998); Eisen (2000); Swan (2001); Davis (2002).

<sup>44</sup> Eg Radford-Reuther (1974a); Radford-Reuther and McLaughlin (1979); Neusner (1980); Archer (1983, 1993); (1990); Friedman (1987); Wegner (1988); (1991a); (1991b); Kraemer (1989); (1991); (1999); Sly (1990); Camp (1991); Levine (1991); Boyarin (1993); Ilan (1995); Zabin (1996); Peskowitz (1997); Bar-Ilan (1998); Goldstein (2003).

<sup>45</sup> Eg Brooten (1982); Kraemer (1986); Rajak (1992); (1996).

## METHOD AND METHODOLOGIES

I have identified papyri with religious references written by, to or referring to women using the *Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (DDBDP)* supplemented by the *Wörterlisten (WL)* and my own reading. Magical papyri initiated by women I have identified by searching the major volumes of published magical texts<sup>46</sup>.

In the process of gathering my database of texts I have examined more than 6000 papyri that include a reference to the divine, to prayer and worship, and to religious roles for men or women<sup>47</sup>. From these I identified 662 that have relevance to women but excluded 116 where the only religious term is in an address or dating formula.

The next stage of investigation required classification of the texts according to the religious belief of the writer. Much has been written on criteria for such classification from which I offer a brief summary and further exploration and critical comment in the appendix to this chapter.

### Classifying Christian texts:

- the author's self-identification as Christian or explicit expression of adherence to Christ
- use of *nomina sacra* and Christian symbols
- use of the Bible or other Christian work
- reference to the Christian community, its officials or liturgical practices
- use of particularly Christian language
- use of Christian names.

### Classifying Jewish texts:

- use of Ἰουδαῖος or Ἑβραῖος

<sup>46</sup> Magical papyri are not currently included in the *DDBDP* but the PGM are contained in the *TLG*. For a list, see 365, n.3 below.

<sup>47</sup> The keywords used to identify papyri are: ἀγάπη, ἀγία/ -ος, ἀειπάρθενος, Ἀθανασία, ἀθλοφόρος, ἁμαρτία, ἁμμά, ἀναγνώστης, ἄππα, διάκονος, διακόνισσα, διάκων, διδάσκαλος, Δωροθέα, Ἑβραῖος/ -α, εἰρήνη, ἐκκλησία, ἐλπίς, εὐχομαι, εὐχή, ζάκορος, θεάγισσα, θεῖος/ -α, Θεοδώρα, θεός, θυσία, Εὐδοκία, Εὐλογία, ἱέρεια, ἱέρισσα, ἱερατεύω, ἱερογραμματεὺς, ἱερόδουλος/ -η, ἱεροστολιστής, ἱερουργέω, ἱερόφωνος, Ἰησοῦς, Ἰωάννα, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἰσις, Ἰουδιθ, κανηφόρος, κύριος, λαϊκός/ -ή, λαμπτηρόφορος, λειτουργέω, λυχνάπτρια, Μακαρία, Μαρία, Μαριάμ, μοναχή, μοναχός, μονάζω, μυσταγωγός, παράπτωμα, παρθενεύω, παρθένος, παστοφόρισα, πίστις, πνεῦμα, πρεσβύτερα, πρεσβύτερος, πρεσβύτες, πρεσβύτες, πρόνοια, προσευχή, προφήτης, προφήτις, Ραχήλ, Σάραπις, Σουσάννα, στολιστής, σωτήρ, ὑποδιάκονος, χριστιανός/ -ή, Χριστός, ὠρολόγιος, ὠροσκόπος. The *DDBDP* was also searched for cognates where applicable.

- reference to events or technical terms related to Jews or Judaism
- papyri originating from places of exclusive Jewish settlement
- use of Jewish names.

I have excluded pagan texts on the following criteria:

- use of a pagan divine name
- use of the plural in relation to the divine
- reference to pagan officials or ritual practices.

I apply the criteria in chapters 2, 8, 9, 10 and 11, in all of which the difficulties of classification become apparent.

Sixteen texts can be classified as Jewish with varying degrees of certainty. A woman is the author of only one document, a petition. Four other texts take their origin from women, a census return and three receipts for the Jewish tax.

I identify 108 texts as arguably Christian and involving women. The number reduces to 86 since 22 texts dated 323-642 contain religious elements more suited to the fifth/sixth centuries<sup>48</sup>. Of these I classify 57 as involving Christian women. Women are the authors of 26 texts. In a further 9 the gender of the writer cannot be determined. Men write the remaining 22 texts. Of the 48 texts written to, by, or about women, where gender is known, 54% are written by women, a significantly large percentage. I consider the evidence for classifying the women as Christian in 29 texts to be insufficient. I include these texts in appendices to the relevant chapters.

A further 151 texts contain religious elements that cannot be securely classified. Of these, women are the authors of 41 and men of 104. Of the 145 texts written to, by, or about women, where gender is known, 28% are written by women.

Four texts are classified as magical. I include only those initiated by women since a shared belief in magic is not necessary for a charm to be effective from the writer's point of view.

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<sup>48</sup> Eg use of δέσποινα, ἀειπάρθενος and θεοτόκος of Mary, SB 1.4737; 1.4762; 1.4763; 1.4767; 1.4778; 1.4816; 1.4862; 1.4863; 1.4868; 1.4870; 1.5254; 1.5260; 1.5319; 2.680; 3.752; saints as ἁγία, ἅγιος in street and church names, SB 1.4890; 1.4892; 1.5127; 1.5129; 1.4854; 1.4856; 1.5306.

I examine the texts written by Christian women with a close reading of each and from this identify a number of themes that allow a synthetic analysis. The Christian texts written by men or persons whose gender cannot be identified I examine closely only insofar as they contain significant information about women's religious lives. My aim is not to explore men's religious beliefs, practices and experiences, and engage in a comparative study which would need a separate thesis and involve a different methodology. The Jewish texts are analysed with a close reading.

### **A Contextual Approach to Religious Expressions**

In each text I examine the overt religious references, their vocabulary, linguistic structure and theological content. I also examine the general content to embed the religious aspects of the women's lives within the broader framework of their relationships, occupations and concerns. Where possible I infer a sense of the women's religious experience, self-awareness and personal agency<sup>49</sup> in relation to the divine. I relate the women's religious sense to what is known of their social world. I use the tools developed by social-scientific and anthropological research that identify a developed patriarchy<sup>50</sup> with the gendered polarities of honour:shame, public:private and authority:power as providing a framework which gives insight into the values and behaviour of both modern and ancient Mediterranean societies<sup>51</sup>. These studies give the following definitions. Honour is the claim to worth and social acknowledgement of that worth. Shame is concern for reputation and sensitivity to the opinion of others. While both men and women seek to enhance honour and guard shame, they do so according to prescribed gendered means. Men's honour derives from their courage, authority and protection of the family. Women's honour is their shame, especially their reputation for chastity. The result is that men are associated with honour and women with shame. The gendered division of space associates men with the public world and women with the private, domestic sphere. It does not imply an absolute segregation, nor the strict seclusion of women, but is a complementary

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<sup>49</sup> See Schussler-Fiorenza (1983, 1994), xiv-xx; Lerner (1986), 1-13.

<sup>50</sup> 'Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalisation of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does *not* imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources', Lerner (1986), 239.

<sup>51</sup> Eg Rosaldo (1974, 1983); (1980); Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974, 1983); Malina (1981); (1990); Gilmore (1987); Wegner (1988); Cohen (1989); (1991); Kraemer (1992); Corley (1993); Richilin (1993); Torjesen (1993); MacDonald (1996).

separation of male and female spheres according to socially prescribed norms. The gendered allocation of space is an important means of enabling honour:shame to function. Power is 'the ability to gain compliance' and authority, 'the recognition that it is right'<sup>52</sup>. Both can be effective in a society and culturally recognised<sup>53</sup>. In Mediterranean societies, legitimate and illegitimate forms of power are distributed according to gender: men have authority; women have power.

Some scholars argue against the use of anthropological studies in historical analysis<sup>54</sup>. Bagnall argues that 'the themes of honor and shame do not play any crucial role' in Egypt except among the early Greek population. He bases his opinion on Egyptian women's greater legal and moral freedom<sup>55</sup>. Rowlandson counters that the legal changes brought by Greek settlement remain into the Roman period, and represent a greater containment of women's freedom and express Greek values<sup>56</sup>. As to the less strict attitudes to pre-marital sexual activity, the article which Bagnall cites in support of his statement<sup>57</sup> concludes the opposite, that while sexual activity by unmarried men is sanctioned, unchaste behaviour by young women brings dishonour to the family<sup>58</sup>, though perhaps not death. The evidence to which Bagnall alludes does not indicate Egypt's exclusion from the honour:shame system. Certainly women in Egypt enjoyed a greater legal freedom<sup>59</sup>, but the gendered allocation of space, power and honour is unaffected<sup>60</sup>. Philo uses the rhetoric of honour:shame in his condemnation of women's involvement in public activity<sup>61</sup>. The marital and divorce practices to which Bagnall alludes are not unique to Egypt<sup>62</sup> and do not exclude the

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<sup>52</sup> Rosaldo (1974, 1983), 21.

<sup>53</sup> J. Dubisch, *Gender and Power in Rural Greece* (1986) cited in MacDonald (1996), 42, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Judge (1980b), 213; Bagnall (1993a). For responses to the objections, see Rosaldo (1980); Cohen (1991), 38-41.

<sup>55</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 189. He does not address the gendered allocations of space and power.

<sup>56</sup> Rowlandson (1998), 156f. Some ease from the requirement for guardianship was allowed by the *lex Julia* and the *lex Papia Poppaea* for women with three or four children which came to apply to the majority of women in Egypt only from 212.

<sup>57</sup> Eyre (1984).

<sup>58</sup> Eyre (1984), 95.

<sup>59</sup> Eg in C5 BCE, Herodotus 2.35; also Diodorus Siculus 1.27.1f in C1 BCE. See also Rowlandson (1998), 3, 50f.

<sup>60</sup> Cohen (1991), 40.

<sup>61</sup> Philo, *The Special Laws* 3.169-175.

<sup>62</sup> Gardner (1986), 47, 81, 86. Even the consent of a daughter to her marriage was considered essential by Roman jurists though strictly the law allowed fathers with *potestas* to compel their children to marry, 42.

operation of the honour:shame value. Of greater significance is the enshrining of honour:shame values in marriage contracts from the Roman period where stipulation of women's behaviour regularly consists in one requirement only, that she not shame her husband<sup>63</sup>.

Recent scholarship has questioned the validity of studies of the 'position of women' type, arguing that such research separates the category 'women' from general history<sup>64</sup>. Particularly questioned are studies that reduce women to a single entity 'woman', as though gender is a sufficient category to represent all women without regard to the variety in women's social, economic, cultural, religious and political specificity. The texts that form the analysis in this thesis are official documents and private letters that locate women within their relationships with other women and with men who are husbands, brothers, sons, friends, spiritual advisors and government officials. The nature of the sources and the use of a contextual methodology mitigate a false detachment of women from their gendered milieu.

## ***WOMEN AND LITERACY***

A methodological problem using texts written by women in antiquity concerns women's literacy. 'Texts written by women' describes documents that arise at women's initiative but which may be penned by literate members of the family, friends, associates or professional scribes<sup>65</sup>, not necessarily by the women themselves. In official documents, women's and men's illiteracy or poor literacy is made explicit using ἀγράμματος, γράμματα μὴ εἰδέναι or βραδέως γράφων. In private correspondence the use of scribes is almost never acknowledged and is, with rare exceptions, impossible to discern<sup>66</sup>. Scribes, where their identity is known, are always men<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> Arnaoutoglou (1995), 12.

<sup>64</sup> Perrot (1984); Smith (1985); Blok (1987); Scott (1988, 1999); Fikhman (2001).

<sup>65</sup> Women frequently use their κύριος to sign documents although by no means all κύριοι are literate. The rules for the choice of a κύριος depend on the degree of relationship to the woman, Youtie (1975c), 213. Similar rules apply to the choice of a ὑπογραφεύς, Youtie (1975c), 215. The rules reflect a concern to protect the illiterate from fraud, Hanson (1991), 164. Trust of family did not always result in protection: eg P.Cair.Isid.62-64 (c.297/8) record two women's efforts to reverse their uncle's misappropriation of their inheritance; also P.Oxy.1.71 (303).

<sup>66</sup> But eg P.Giss.19 (116) from Aline to Apollonios is recognisably in the same scribal hand as a letter from Eudaimonis to Apollonios.

<sup>67</sup> No literate woman is attested as ὑπογραφεύς for a man, even for an illiterate husband, P.Oxy.12.1463 (215), see Youtie (1975c), 216, n.41.

The definition of literacy is debated and literacy itself is complex<sup>68</sup>. Literacy in reading need not co-exist with literacy in writing<sup>69</sup>. Levels of literacy range from fluency to 'slow writing' (βραδέως γράφων), from competence to write a paragraph, to the ability to write only a name and perhaps the ὑπογραφή of a document<sup>70</sup>. I adopt the definition 'a literate person is one who can write a simple message with comprehension'<sup>71</sup>.

A complication in assessing literacy in Egypt is that in some instances γράμματα μὴ εἰδέναι may refer to literacy in Greek and leave open the question of literacy in Coptic/Demotic<sup>72</sup>. However, political and religious considerations and the desire to conceal literacy may also be factors in claiming illiteracy<sup>73</sup>. There are also reasons related to health which may cause a literate person to be unable to sign and use the conventional ἀγράμματος<sup>74</sup>.

For this thesis literacy focuses on two issues: the likelihood that any particular text is penned by a woman and is, therefore, the expression of her subjectivity without the mediation of a male scribe; and the nature and extent of scribal interference in writing texts. The first issue concerns rates of women's literacy. The second issue, by the very nature of scribal 'hiddenness', allows only a partial resolution.

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<sup>68</sup> Harris (1983), 38 (1989), 3-7; Hanson (1991), 161f; Cribiore (1996), 4f.

<sup>69</sup> Cole (1981), 220, who notes that both reading and writing in the ancient world were awkward, expensive and laborious tasks. A limited ability to write, presumably one's name, preceded training in reading, Hanson (1991), 179-183; Cribiore (1996), 9, 45. Millard (2000), 154, understands reading to be primary and more widespread. He estimates for mid-C1, a papyrus roll (c.20 sheets) cost 4 dr., with a skilled person's daily wage 1 dr. Millard (2000), 164, notes a letter that cost 2 dr. but its nature and length are not known. On the cost of biblical texts, see also n.120 below.

<sup>70</sup> Literacy as the ability to read but not necessarily to write may have applied in the ancient world but is difficult to prove. The terms ἀγράμματος and γράμματα μὴ εἰδέναι occur in contexts of writing ability. The ability to sign one's name qualifies as literacy, eg P.Petaus 11. See Youtie (1973a); (1973d); (1975a); (1975c).

<sup>71</sup> Harris (1989), 4, based on a UNESCO definition. See also Hanson (1991), 162.

<sup>72</sup> Youtie (1973a), 612ff; (1975a). Eg P.Oxy.33.2673 (304), an 'illiterate reader' Ammonius who, Youtie (1975a), 104, argues, is literate in Demotic but not in Greek. In the same paragraph Youtie refers to Ammonius's literacy in Coptic. If Ammonius is literate, it is almost certainly in Coptic in 304. Demotic declines rapidly in use in C1 with virtually no documents surviving beyond that date, Bagnall (1993a), 237-240, who also argues at 241, nn.54, 55 that Youtie's hypothesis is theoretically possible but highly unlikely. But on Ammonius' literacy see immediately below. See also SB 1.5117 (55).

<sup>73</sup> Wipszycka (1983) counters Youtie, above, by arguing that Ammonius would know Coptic and be able to subscribe in Greek, but claims illiteracy to avoid signing his oath. See also Clarke (1984); Wipszycka (1996a), 421-426.

<sup>74</sup> Wipszycka (1996c), 131f, eg eye disease as in P.Oxy.6.911; trembling hands etc.



## Literacy in late antique Egypt

Use of scribes in Egypt is well documented, allowing the illiterate majority to function in an essentially literate society<sup>75</sup>, even in positions of administrative authority<sup>76</sup>.

Scholars argue that there is no social stigma attached to illiteracy in Egypt<sup>77</sup>. But the pride of Thaisous in her literacy<sup>78</sup>, of Aurelia Charite in her repeated εἰδυῖα γράμματα<sup>79</sup>, and the emphasis on ὑπογράφων ἰδίᾳ χειρί or ἰδίοις γράμμασιν<sup>80</sup> suggest that literacy is valued. A further complication is that literate men and women do not always write for themselves but use scribes<sup>81</sup>, particularly for official documents.

Scholars adopt pessimistic<sup>82</sup> and optimistic<sup>83</sup> assessments of literacy rates in late antique Egypt<sup>84</sup>. All agree that the majority of people living in Egypt in the period under discussion are illiterate, particularly among the rural population and lower artisan class<sup>85</sup> and that there are more illiterate women than men<sup>86</sup>. Duncan-Jones

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<sup>75</sup> The society is 'literate' in the sense that literate modes of communication are common and people function in them, eg using census and tax documents, registrations, contracts, Cribiore (1996). P.Oxy.34.2705 (275) and P.Yale inv.299 order copies of official letters to be displayed for the public to read. Similarly P.Lond.6.1912 (41). See also Bowman (1991), especially 121f; Thompson (1994).

<sup>76</sup> Youtie (1973a); Cribiore (1996), 3. Eg Aurelius Isidoros (C3/4), collector of taxes, supervisor of the state granary, komarch for 20 years is illiterate, P.Cair.Isid., pp.11-17.

<sup>77</sup> Youtie (1973a), 169f; (1973d), 261; Kraus (2000), 341.

<sup>78</sup> P.Oxy.12.1467 (263).

<sup>79</sup> P.Charite.1-44 (probably not 40; see 72 below) especially 8 (348), 33 (331/2 or 346/7). Charite's literacy statements may function to ward off defrauders, Sheridan (1998).

<sup>80</sup> P.Mich.10.585 (87); P.Oxy.16.1894 (573); 19.2237 (498).

<sup>81</sup> Youtie (1973a), 172. Eg Charite in Charite's archive, and Eudaimonis and Aline in the Apollonios archive, are literate but use scribes, Sheridan (1998); Cribiore (2001a).

<sup>82</sup> Eg Jones (1964), 2.996-998; Youtie (1973a); (1973d); (1975a); (1975c); Harris (1989) 17, 53, 67f, 104, 191, 256, 269f, 275; (1990), 98; Beard (1991), 39, n.6.

<sup>83</sup> Eg Marrou (1977); Cole (1981); Wipszycka (1984); Bowman and Thomas (1987); Bowman (1991); Horsfall (1991). Haines-Eitzen (2000) 7f adopts a mediating position.

<sup>84</sup> Recent synthetic treatments of literacy acknowledge the disparate evidence that makes synthetic analysis problematic, Harris (1989); Bowman and Woolf (1994). The difficulties have led scholars to more specific analyses, eg the chapters in Bowman and Woolf (1994): literacy in Judaea, late antique Syria, Christianity, Vindolanda etc.

<sup>85</sup> Youtie (1975c), 202; Harris (1983), 89; Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 312.

<sup>86</sup> Eg women sign less than men, Youtie (1975c), 213; even within one family, husbands, brothers, sons sign but the women are illiterate eg BGU 4.1107 (13 BCE); P.Mich.9.554 (C3/4); P.Fay.100 (99); P.Oxy.17.2134 (170); P.Amh.2.102 (180); P.Tebt.2.399 (C2). For a literate woman with an illiterate husband, see P.Oxy.12.1463 (215).

suggests a literacy rate for men of less than 30% for the Roman Empire, less among women<sup>87</sup>. The figure is confirmed for Egypt by other measures<sup>88</sup>.

The suggestion has emerged in recent research<sup>89</sup> that adding a subscription to a private letter<sup>90</sup> is a common epistolary courtesy<sup>91</sup>. Certainly some literate people subscribe to their private correspondence. I have examined the collections of letters in Naldini's and Tibiletti's volumes for the occurrence of subscriptions in a second hand<sup>92</sup>. Of Naldini's 97 letters, 30 are excluded because of damage. Of the remaining 67 letters, nine note a second hand in the final section<sup>93</sup>. Of Tibiletti's 34 letters, five are damaged. Of the remaining 29, three include a subscription<sup>94</sup>. Therefore, of 130

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<sup>87</sup> Duncan-Jones (1977), 334, from literacy's correlation with age-rounding. Duncan-Jones finds less age-rounding among the elite of a population and consistently more among women, 335. With women, there is more age-rounding in the provinces of the empire and, within them, more in rural areas. He notes that an age-rounding index of 30 in modern societies correlates with 70% illiteracy. The average index for the Roman Empire is 55. He does not address Egyptian literacy specifically.

<sup>88</sup> 66% of the male recipients for the corn dole (late C3) are illiterate, P.Oxy.50, pp.2-5, and given the date after the demise of Demotic and before the rise of Coptic, literacy in Coptic or Demotic is unlikely. The men are not poor as receipt of the dole is a privilege. Similarly 33% of returns with useful signatures from the census in 19/20 sign their own subscription, Youtie (1975c), 205.

<sup>89</sup> Early work on literacy focused on the formulae for illiteracy eg Majer-Leonhard (1913); Calderini (1950); Youtie (1966); (1973a); (1973d); (1975a); (1975c). These formulae are not attested in private letters which, therefore, are not included in the studies.

<sup>90</sup> Writing greetings, a prayer, the date, the author's name in his/her own hand.

<sup>91</sup> Writing a subscription is one of the 'crucial moments ... when those who could write were asked to do so and were expected to comply', Hanson (1991), 166; a way of authenticating 'personal documents', Corbier (1991), 106. Also Bowman (1994), 124; Cribiore (1996), 4.

<sup>92</sup> The sample does not attempt to be random. It is largely late C3 and C4.

<sup>93</sup> 49=P.Amh.2.145 (C4), Apa Johannes to Paul: greeting in Greek. A greeting in the first person in Coptic follows.

66=P.Oxy.14.1775 (C4), Plutarch to Theoninos: final prayer.

68=P.Mich.8.520 (C4) Kollouthos to Isidoros: final prayer.

73=P.New York 1.25 (C4), Kopres to Heron: final prayer.

77=P.Ross.Georg.3.9 (C4), Marcian to Isaac: final, elaborated, prayer.

88=P.Strasb.154=SB 5.8944 (C4), Anonymos to Ammonios: final prayer.

92=P.Ant.1.44 (C4/5), Longinus to Hermammon: request for mutual remembering, greeting, final prayer.

96=P.Strasb.1.35 (C4/5), Anonymos to Anonymos: date, address.

97=P.Giss.1.54 (C4/5), Kyros to Olympiodoros and Hermaion: second hand, greeting, final prayer formula; third hand, greeting, most probably a prayer; fourth hand, greeting.

<sup>94</sup> 11=P.Oxy.42.3067 (C3), Achillion to Hierakapollon: final prayer formula; third hand continues first hand's address.

26=P.Abinn.8 (C4), Apa Mios to Abinnaeos, greeting.

29=P.Strasb.3.286 (C4), Demetrios to 'the most honoured brother': final prayer.

letters<sup>95</sup> of which 95 include the closing greetings, prayer and address, twelve or 12.6% indicate a second hand. It is unclear what function subscribing has, whether to authenticate the letter<sup>96</sup>, as a courtesy or to fulfil some other function. If all literate people subscribe and subscribe on every occasion the figure would suggest a literacy rate of about 12-13%. However, a more comprehensive study is required and as yet subscription conventions remain unclear.

## Literacy of women

Any estimate from the papyri of the rate of women's literacy is impossible<sup>97</sup>. The number of letters written by and to women shows that women have a need for written communication. The papyri also provide numerous examples of requests to women to write<sup>98</sup>. However, literacy is not a necessary consequence and women are more likely to receive letters than to send them<sup>99</sup>. Although it is too large an interpretative leap to presume from these observations a more limited literacy among women, this is almost certainly the case. The following summary of research illustrates the complex picture that the papyri yield in relation to women's literacy.

Sijpesteijn's analysis of 83 women who use the *ius trium liberorum* finds five women are literate while 22 are ἀγράμματος<sup>100</sup>. Pomeroy finds that literate women in the papyri are a smaller proportion of the female population than are literate men of the male population<sup>101</sup>. But, while this is no doubt true, it is inevitable since, as Cole notes, women appear with less frequency in the papyri<sup>102</sup>. The same fact of women's under-representation in the papyri affects any superficial interpretation of Calderini's statistic that fewer women than men are described as βραδέως γράφουσα or

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<sup>95</sup> One text is common.

<sup>96</sup> Corbier (1991), 106. Elite Roman men subscribe to authenticate, McDonnell (1996). Similarly the apostle Paul, 2 Thessalonians 2.2, but he subscribes also to emphasise main points, 1 Corinthians 16.21; Galatians 6.11; 2 Thessalonians 3.17; Philemon 19. The same subscription, however, occurs in the contested Colossians 4.18. See Orr and Walthur (1976), 367; Bruce (1982), 216; Barth and Blanke (1994), 489; Martyn (1997), 560. On authorship, see Barth and Blanke (1994), 114-125.

<sup>97</sup> Wipszycka (1984), 112, warns papyrological evidence does not lend itself to statistical analysis; also (1996c), 129.

<sup>98</sup> Eg P.Mich.8.481 (C2); P.Oxy.10.1293 (C2); 6.937 (C3); 8.1157 (C3); 59.3994 (C3); PSI 8.899 (C3).

<sup>99</sup> This is my general observation based on the reading for this thesis.

<sup>100</sup> Sijpesteijn (1965), 176, 180-187.

<sup>101</sup> Pomeroy (1977), 64, n.16.

<sup>102</sup> Cole (1981), 237.

ἀγράμματος<sup>103</sup>. A possible explanation for the few female βραδέως γράφουσαι is that women are usually accompanied by a guardian who writes for them but who may use the stereotyped ἀγράμματος<sup>104</sup>. It is also possible that use of a guardian and the plea of illiteracy is a device to protect marginally literate women in the public arena. Slow-writing men are unaccompanied and sign. Calderini notes an increase in the ratio of illiterate women to men in the first and second centuries<sup>105</sup>, a fact which Pomeroy attributes to the increase in women's ownership of land in the Roman period<sup>106</sup>. Calderini also finds that the percentage of literate women in the second and third centuries increases while in the same period the percentage of literate men decreases<sup>107</sup>. One papyrus in the period refers to a female scribe<sup>108</sup>.

Literary sources shed occasional but significant light on women's literacy. Eusebius, for example, notes that among the copyists of Origen's works are 'girls trained for calligraphy' (κόραις ἐπὶ τὸ καλλιγραφεῖν ἡσκημέναις)<sup>109</sup>, with no indication that this is unusual<sup>110</sup>. Athanasius expects consecrated virgins to be able to read<sup>111</sup>. Studies outside Egypt indicate that meaningful numbers of women, always fewer than men, of all social classes but particularly the elite, are literate<sup>112</sup>.

## Christianity and Literacy

The influence of Christianity on literacy rates is debated. The 'Bible'<sup>113</sup> is authoritative for doctrine and morality, and forms Christian identity<sup>114</sup>. It is central to third- and

<sup>103</sup> Calderini (1950), 23, 34f. She records 1365 illiterate men, 373 illiterate women, and 21 slow-writing men, 5 slow-writing women.

<sup>104</sup> See also, Calderini (1950), 34f

<sup>105</sup> Calderini (1950), 22f.

<sup>106</sup> Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 313.

<sup>107</sup> Calderini (1950), 37.

<sup>108</sup> BGU 6.129 (C3). From a search of the *DDBDP*.

<sup>109</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 6.23. Analysis of Roman inscriptions suggests the women are likely to be slaves or freed, Haines-Eitzen (1998), 636, 639.

<sup>110</sup> Haines-Eitzen (1998).

<sup>111</sup> Athanasius, *On virginity* 8f. For other references to ascetic women's literacy, see 308, n.112 below.

<sup>112</sup> Pomeroy (1975), 137; (1977); Treggiari (1976), 78, 90, 93; Cole (1981); Kraemer (1991), 226. Haines-Eitzen (1998), 637, notes Suetonius, *Vespasian* 3 and Juvenal, *Satires* 6.475-485 refer to female scribes.

<sup>113</sup> Inverted commas acknowledge that the canon in this period is not yet finalised. See 79f below.

<sup>114</sup> Evidence attests the spread of biblical and other early Christian literature throughout Egypt from the early second century confirming its importance in the life of Christian communities, Roberts (1977), 6. Roberts notes that biblical papyri are found with lectional aids indicating their use in community worship, 21.

fourth-century services in public reading and explanation, and in singing doctrinal statements as hymns which enable memorisation<sup>115</sup>.

Evidence for the church's attitude to literacy is ambivalent. Church leaders urge believers to undertake spiritual reading<sup>116</sup>, but the meaning of the statements to illiterate people is uncertain. Possibly they are meant only for the literate elite<sup>117</sup>, but this seems unlikely. Possibly 'Scripture'-reading aloud by literate family members is intended<sup>118</sup>. The extent to which ordinary Christians have access to 'biblical' texts is unknown but almost certainly limited<sup>119</sup>. Nonetheless, the importance of 'Scripture' and reading can only have encouraged at least reading literacy<sup>120</sup>. This has practical expression in monasteries where the acquisition of literacy is a priority<sup>121</sup>. The church also opposes education based on Greek literature<sup>122</sup> and illiteracy becomes a trope for virtue in the hagiographies of the fourth and later centuries<sup>123</sup>, although God commonly intervenes to allow the illiterate saint to read<sup>124</sup>. The primary importance of literacy remains.

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<sup>115</sup> For example Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.50; Athanasius, *Oratio II Contra Arianos* 7, 8. The centrality of Scripture reading is also attested elsewhere, eg Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.27.2. Horsfall (1991), 74, lists methods of communicating biblical material including repetition and hymn-singing which 'carry a mixed literate/semi-literate/illiterate congregation regularly over a large but limited corpus of written material'. See also Lane-Fox (1994), 145f.

<sup>116</sup> Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition* 36.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Le Pédagogue* 2.10.96; Athanasius *On virginity* 8f; *First Letter to Virgins* 25-27; Cyprian *De zelo et livore* 16. For an extensive list of exhortations, see Harnack (1912). Also Harris (1989), 304, n.91.

<sup>117</sup> Harris (1989), 304, 319.

<sup>118</sup> This is the apparent intention in Clement of Alexandria, *Le Pédagogue* 2.10.96.

<sup>119</sup> 'Biblical' codices were expensive, Roberts and Skeat (1982), 45; Skeat (1982), 175; Lane-Fox (1994), 139, and limited in number. Skeat calculates a copy of 2 Thessalonians in C3 cost 27 dr. 5 ob. as a papyrus roll. The same book in a codex cost 20 dr. 3 ½ ob. See 126f, 301, n.48 below. Rough copies of 'scriptural text' on the verso of papyri may represent personal copies, eg P.IFAO 2.31 (C2/3); PSI 8.921 (C3). Literary sources and papyri refer to books in people's homes, eg P.Tebt.2.422; also P.Lips.1.43; P.Oxy.63.4365 in this thesis; Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St John* 32, 272, states books are a better alternative to dice; Eusebius, *HE* 6.2.7-10 attests books in Origen's family home. P4=P.Oxy.13.1597 (C3), with fragments of Luke's gospel, was found in a private home, Roberts (1977), 8. See also Lane-Fox (1994), 146.

<sup>120</sup> Lane-Fox (1994), 141. Clergy are almost universally literate, Wipszycka (1984), 117-123; (1996c), 132.

<sup>121</sup> See n.111 above.

<sup>122</sup> Eg Tertullian, *De idololatria* 10.

<sup>123</sup> Eg Antony is an illiterate taught directly by God, Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 72f; Sozomen *HE* 1.13.

<sup>124</sup> *HM*, Hor.

## Scribal influence on letters

Analysis of the dictated letters in the Apollonios archive indicates that the women's original voices can be heard even with use of a scribe, in individual expressions and vocabulary evidently dictated word by word<sup>125</sup>. I consider it most likely that dictation word by word is the norm for women's letters which are generally to family and friends dealing with immediate concerns, matters of relationship and personal information<sup>126</sup>. It is unlikely that a woman would have regular access to a single scribe whom she could expect to understand her purposes and produce a letter expressing them<sup>127</sup>.

Scribal influence is argued<sup>128</sup> but is difficult to discern in single texts. Scribal influence has been suggested in the multi-text Paniskos archive as the explanation for variations in address to God, with a Christian scribe writing *παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ* in P.Mich.3.216 and 219, and *ὁ θεός* in P.Mich.218, and a pagan scribe writing *παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς* in P.Mich.3.214. Farid considers that Paniskos 'relates – not "dictates" – what he wishes to communicate ... The job of the professional writer is not only to write, but to put in writing, to express by words and phrases, what his client relates to him in an illogical syntax; the result is; the content is the client's, the form is the writer's'<sup>129</sup>. The attribution of 'illogical' to the non-writer seems unwarranted and while Paniskos' formulae may represent scribal interference<sup>130</sup>, other variations, such as the inclusion or exclusion of Ploutogenia's name, may reflect the state of Paniskos' relationship with her, which Farid acknowledges<sup>131</sup>. Further, Farid classifies as 'form' what is in reality 'content', including the inclusion or exclusion of Ploutogenia's name, language for God and the articulation of greeting. I consider that scribes would be bound to reflect the opinions of the author of a letter rather than their own.

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<sup>125</sup> Cribiore (2001a), 233. For the role of scribes in producing literary texts, see Haines-Eitzen (2000).

<sup>126</sup> Cole (1981), 235.

<sup>127</sup> Elite Roman women sometimes have amanuenses, Treggiari (1976), 78, but it is not attested in Egypt.

<sup>128</sup> Eg McClure (2001), 6, who warns that 'authentic women's voices' heard in inscriptions commissioned by women and letters dictated by women are not 'pure representations of female subjectivity'.

<sup>129</sup> Farid (1977), 116.

<sup>130</sup> Particularly in the address.

<sup>131</sup> Farid (1977), 111.

My own sense in reading the eighteen letters of Christian women and the 128 letters of pagan women is that individual personalities are apparent in many of the texts and that they allow a genuine insight into the woman's own religious belief and experience whether penned by the woman or not. There is positive evidence in only two texts among those in this thesis that the woman was able to sign her own name.

While the content of a letter can be taken to be a woman's own, its appearance on a papyrus sheet may well reflect the scribe's knowledge and preference. Use of *nomina sacra*, for example, may more often express scribal knowledge of the convention than the woman client's. Having said this, it would make sense for a scribe to use *nomina sacra* only where the form is meaningful to the writer<sup>132</sup>. *Nomina sacra*, then, remain a valid criterion for classification of a Christian letter.

## **OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

Following this Introduction, chapter 2, 'Texts Written by Christian Women', gives a detailed reading of each of the 26 texts written by Christian women, outlining the criteria for Christian classification, significant vocabulary and syntax, any debated issues, the women's statements about their religious beliefs, practices and experiences, their relationships and concerns. This chapter does not analyse the information on the religious aspects of the women's lives but is analytical at the linguistic level and attempts to locate the text historically where this is possible. Women whose names are unknown are given the name Anonyme. Men whose names are lost are called Anonymos. The following five chapters offer a synthetic analysis of the religious themes evident in the texts.

In chapter 3, 'Christian Women's Use of 'Biblical' Vocabulary and Imagery', I examine the texts where vocabulary or content suggests the 'Bible' as a source. The use of inverted commas with 'Bible', 'biblical' and 'Scripture' signals the broader corpus of texts regarded as authoritative in the period<sup>133</sup>. Identification of 'biblical' material is often a matter of probability that ranges from the certain to the possible.

Analysis of the interactions between the women's Christianity and their daily lives is the focus of chapter 4, 'Christian Women's Theological Positions'. This chapter

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<sup>132</sup> On *nomina sacra* as criteria for classifying the religious identity of an addressee, see 279ff below.

<sup>133</sup> See 79f below.

identifies and explores those aspects of the documents that express a theological position.

In chapter 5, 'Christian Women's Practice of Prayer', I analyse the statements of prayer and about prayer, and the requests for prayer in the texts, noting the topics about which the women pray, any specifically Christian content of the prayers, the models that provide the background to the prayers and the women's theologies of prayer.

Chapter 6, 'Christian Women's Interactions with Clergy, Ascetics and the Church', examines the women's interactions with, participation in and contributions to the institutional dimension of their Christianity. The chapter analyses the evidence from the women's documents about the roles played by clergy and ascetics in the period, along with the women's attitudes to them and participation in the structures they represent. Evidence from the women's documents about the nature of the church in fourth-century Egypt is presented, including the women's involvement in, and influence on, its development.

The Christian women's documents frequently refer to marriage and family life and provide evidence for the marital and familial status of the women and their attitudes to and experience of marriage and family in the light of their Christian beliefs. Chapter 7, 'Christian Women, Marriage and Family', examines this complex interrelation and nuances the 'ideal' of Christian literary sources with the 'real' of the Christian women's writings.

Chapter 8, 'Documents Written to Christian Women and Referring to Christian Women', identifies and examines evidence for Christian women's religious lives from documents written by men or by authors whose gender cannot be determined. The criteria for Christian classification of the women addressees or referents are given. The chapter then analyses the content and vocabulary of the texts and the evidence the texts provide for the Christian women's practice of prayer, theology and relationships as these witness to their religious beliefs, practices and experiences.

In chapter 9, 'Ascetic Christian Women', I examine the texts in which reference is made to ascetic Christian women. These texts are mostly written by men or by authors whose gender cannot be determined. They form a subset of the chapter



above, with the exception of one text written by a man and a woman. Their particular character warrants separate examination.

Chapter 10, 'Jewish Women in the Papyri', examines the texts that refer to the religious beliefs, practices and experiences of Jewish women. The documents in this chapter differ significantly in kind as sources from those pertaining to Christian women and, while not yielding the same kinds of information, contain valuable evidence for the lives of Jewish women and illustrate their social, political, economic and religious contexts. Criteria for classifying the women as Jewish are given. The chapter examines the evidence for the women's participation in Jewish community life and their attitudes to Judaism.

To provide a complete examination of the religious lives of Jewish and Christian women I explore these women's practice of magic in chapter 11, 'Jewish and Christian Women and Magic'. The chapter considers the magical texts in which the women authors can be classified as Jewish or Christian. The criteria for religious classification are given, and the women's practice of prayer and theology are examined.

In the 'Conclusion' the analyses of the previous chapters are synthesised into a series of conclusions that summarise the perspectives of the papyri on the religious lives of Jewish and Christian women.



## APPENDIX

### CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFYING TEXTS AS CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH

The criteria summarised in the Introduction<sup>1</sup>, while clear to state, are not always clear in application with the result that often the acceptance of a text as Christian or Jewish is a judgement of probability.

#### ***CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING A TEXT AS JEWISH<sup>2</sup>***

- use of Ἰουδαῖος or Ἑβραῖος
- reference to events or technical terms related to Jews or Judaism
- papyri originating from places of exclusive Jewish settlement
- use of Jewish names

#### **Use of Ἰουδαῖος or Ἑβραῖος**

In the Byzantine period the meaning of Ἰουδαῖος is fluid. It can refer to an inhabitant of Judea, a person of Jewish beliefs or ethnicity, or to a Samaritan although it generally carries a religious sense<sup>3</sup>. Ἑβραῖος indicates more ethnicity.

#### **Reference to events or technical terms related to Jews or Judaism**

This criterion is sometimes used negatively to identify those who are not Jews because of events and technical terms which Jews are assumed to eschew. Used this way, the criterion prejudices behaviour using ideals from Jewish literature<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Papyri originating from places of exclusive Jewish settlement**

Evidence indicates that while Jews might live in quarters and streets identified as Jewish, they did not live in exclusive communities<sup>5</sup>. This criterion therefore is not useful.

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<sup>1</sup> 7f above.

<sup>2</sup> See CPJ 1.xvii; Horbury and Noy (1992); Bohak (1997); Llewelyn, 'Ammonios to Apollonios (*P. Oxy.* XLII 3057): The Earliest Christian Letter on Papyrus?' in *ND* 6.169-177, here 175.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen (1999), 70; Fikhman (1996), 224.

<sup>4</sup> Bohak (1997), 108f.

<sup>5</sup> Bohak (1997), 105f, finds no evidence in the cemeteries of Alexandria and Tell-el-Yahoudieh for exclusive Jewish areas or exclusive Jewish use.

## Use of Jewish names

This criterion is the most frequently used and the most problematic in that 'Jewish' names are difficult to identify. In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods Jews used Greek and Egyptian names and so cannot be identified by name<sup>6</sup>.

Prior to 115-117 biblically derived names indicate a text is Jewish. Following the revolt the Jewish population almost disappears from the papyri. Names from the LXX do not reappear until 245<sup>7</sup>. LXX names then occur with increasing frequency. However, Christians as well as Jews call themselves by names found in the LXX, and it is difficult to determine when Christians began the practice or the rate of appropriation of the names. The first clearly attested Christian use of a name from the LXX in the papyri is Isaak, a μοναχός, in 324<sup>8</sup>.

To provide a simple and workable criterion for classification Tcherikover proposes a cut-off date of 337, the death of Constantine, before which names from the LXX would be regarded as Jewish<sup>9</sup>. The proposal has a number of difficulties<sup>10</sup> but especially that it fails to allow for the increased conversion of the population of Egypt to Christianity during the early Byzantine period. Applying the rule leads to the situation where the Jewish population appears to increase up to 337, and then instantaneously almost vanishes.

Bagnall suggests that all LXX names after 117 be considered Christian because the Jewish population was all but exterminated in the revolt<sup>11</sup>. His solution ignores limited but significant evidence of a continuing Jewish presence in Egypt after that date, for example P.Harr.1.142=CPJ 451 (126), P. Würzb.14=CPJ 453 (132), PSI 8.883=CPJ

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<sup>6</sup> Ostraca from the Jewish quarter of Apollinopolis Magna (Edfu) in C1 include Jewish and Semitic names: Abdous, Abramos, Barnabis, Jakoubos, Jasikos, Jesus, Johannes, Josepos, Joudas, Maria, Marous, Sarra, Sambathion, Selemon, Simon; Greek names: Aischylos, Alexander, Alexion, Antipatros, Apollon, Chaireas, Damion, Demas, Didymos, Diogas, Diophanes, Dosas, Jason, Nikon, Philon, Teuphilos, Thaumasio, Thedetos, Theodotos, Tryphas; Egyptian names: Apion, Bokchoris, Pates, Pesouris, Petays, Psilychion, Thermauthos, Thermouthion; Roman names: Achilles Rufus, Akietos (=Quietus?), Marcus Anni(us), Antonius Rufus, Q. Caecilius, Marcus Verrius, CPJ 2.116. Similar names appear in papyri from Alexandria including the Jewish delta quarter; see BGU 4; CPJ 2.1f.

<sup>7</sup> Chr.Wilck.206, Moses, a three-year-old slave, is registered in the census, see Williams (1997).

<sup>8</sup> P.Col.7.171 identified in Judge (1977). See also the discussion of the text in Wipszycka (2001a).

<sup>9</sup> CPJ 1.xviii.

<sup>10</sup> See eg Bagnall (1993a), 276; Horsley (1987), 8-10.

<sup>11</sup> Bagnall (1982), 110. Wipszycka (1986), 174, in her critique of Bagnall's paper, does not question this assumption.

455 (137) and P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 (291) in this thesis<sup>12</sup>. The use of LXX names by Jews cannot be ruled out.

Bagnall uses the occurrence of biblical names to plot the rate of conversion to Christianity in Egypt. He concludes that by 325 more than 50% of the population was Christian and by 350 about 75%. Wipszycka suggests a slower rate of conversion but offers no alternative figures<sup>13</sup>, and Bagnall maintains that her criticisms tend rather to increase his proposed rate of conversion than decrease it<sup>14</sup>. Even if Bagnall is incorrect by a factor of 100% which is unlikely and 25% of the population was Christian by 325, Tcherikover's solution is ruled out. Fikhman proposes a cut-off date of 300 as more realistic before which LXX names be accepted as Jewish<sup>15</sup>. While still an arbitrary date, his proposal is generally adopted in this thesis although each text is evaluated individually. In relation to use of patriarchal names<sup>16</sup>, Judge suggests that Christians used the names of the authors of books and major figures of the LXX while Jews opted for the names of non-authors and minor figures<sup>17</sup>.

#### **CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING A TEXT AS CHRISTIAN<sup>18</sup>**

- the author's self-identification as Christian or explicit expression of adherence to Christ
- use of *nomina sacra* and Christian symbols
- use of the 'Bible' or other Christian work
- reference to the Christian community, its officials or liturgical practices
- use of particularly Christian language
- use of 'biblical' names
- use of Christian ideas and sentiments

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<sup>12</sup> For a list of Jewish papyri in this period see also Fikhman (1996), 226.

<sup>13</sup> Wipszycka (1986).

<sup>14</sup> Bagnall (1987a), 243.

<sup>15</sup> Fikhman (1996).

<sup>16</sup> CPJ 1.83, 84.

<sup>17</sup> Judge (2006). See also Williams (1997).

<sup>18</sup> Ghedini (1923); Naldini (1968, 1998); Wipszycka (1974); Tibiletti (1979); Horsley, 'Cannibalism at Alexandria?' in *ND* 4.57-63, here 58-63; Llewelyn, 'Ammonios to Apollonios (P. Oxy. XLII 3057): The Earliest Christian Letter on Papyrus?' in *ND* 6.169-177, here 175.

## Use of *nomina sacra* and Christian symbols

*Nomina sacra* refer to the abbreviated form of a limited group of sacred words.

Abbreviation is usually by contraction, and occasionally in early texts by suspension.

A horizontal line above the word signals that it is abbreviated and cannot be pronounced as written<sup>19</sup>. Roberts identifies three classes of words<sup>20</sup>:

1. words frequently contracted: Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, Κύριος, θεός
2. words contracted with relative regularity: πνεῦμα, ἄνθρωπος, σταυρός
3. words contracted irregularly: πατήρ, υἱός, σωτήρ, μήτηρ, οὐρανός, Ἰσραήλ, Δαυεῖδ, Ἱερουσαλήμ.

*Nomina sacra* are not exclusively Christian but occur in pagan magical papyri, Manichean texts and, rarely, in Jewish sources. Their appearance in pagan magical texts constitutes a borrowing from Christian usage. Jewish use is attested after the beginning of the Christian Era<sup>21</sup>, most frequently with κύριος and Θεός. *Nomina sacra* are not attested in certainly Jewish documentary papyri<sup>22</sup>. *Nomina sacra* occur in Manichean texts<sup>23</sup>. The use is consistent with Manichean claims to be Christian<sup>24</sup>. While the occurrences of *nomina sacra* in non-Christian documents indicate the need for caution in accepting a Christian classification, *nomina sacra* remain an almost certain criterion for Christianity and are accepted as such except where a text contains clearly Manichean elements.

To this criterion can be added the use of Christian monograms, acrostics and isopsephisms. A distinctly Christian<sup>25</sup> isopsephism is the symbolic use of ϕθ, 99,

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<sup>19</sup> Roberts (1977), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Roberts (1977), 27.

<sup>21</sup> Abbreviations occur in copies of the LXX before the period CE but neither κ(ύριος) nor θ(εός) is used for the Tetragrammaton, Bedodi (1974); Horsley, 'Some recently published fragments of the Greek Old Testament' in *ND* 2.111-122 here 112; Kraft (2001). A mosaic text in Palestine dated C6 is published as B. Lifshitz (1974), *Euphrosyne* 6, 27-29, and in Horsley, '*Nomina sacra* in synagogue inscriptions' in *ND* 1.107-112, here 107f, includes κ(ύριος). See also Horsley, 'The Greek OT – new fragments' in *ND* 3.95ff, here 96.

<sup>22</sup> Kraft (2001).

<sup>23</sup> Eg P.Kell.5.Copt.15; 16; 22; 25; 29; 32.

<sup>24</sup> P.Kell.5.Copt., Introduction, 73.

<sup>25</sup> Isopsephisms occur in pagan texts eg P.Oxy.45.3239 (late C2) which has been identified as a table of isopsephisms. See also Skeat (1978).

which expresses the numerical value of ἀμὴν (1+ 40 + 8 + 50) and is a certain indicator of a Christian document.

The significance of ΧΜΓ is debated<sup>26</sup>. The formula occurs in Syria from the third and perhaps the first century to the seventh century. It appears in the papyri from the early fourth century mostly in commercial documents<sup>27</sup>. The letters are understood either as an acrostic or an isopsephism. As an acrostic the letters may stand for χειρός μου γραφή or Χριστὸς Μιχαὴλ Γαβριήλ, both now generally rejected for the preferred Χριστὸν Μαρία Γεννᾶ<sup>28</sup>. As an isopsephism, ΧΜΓ has a value of 643 and may represent θεὸς βοηθός<sup>29</sup>. A further suggestion is the visual likeness of the letters to the Hebrew for 'One', but such a doctrinal statement appears unlikely<sup>30</sup>. While the meaning of ΧΜΓ is still uncertain, its Christian association is not questioned.

Christian monograms, the cross, the chi-rho monogram, and the 'cross monogram' or modified 'anhk' symbol are less reliable as criteria since they occur in pagan texts<sup>31</sup>.

### **Use of the 'Bible' and other Christian work**

'Biblical' references and citations of other Christian works generally provide uncertain criteria. Harris suggests three categories of biblical references: "'biblical" citations' are quotations of the LXX and 'NT'; 'verbal echoes' recall scriptural vocabulary; 'biblical reminiscences' involve 'conjecture'<sup>32</sup>. The 'biblical' references are generally reminiscences of texts rather than quotations<sup>33</sup> and vary in clarity.

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<sup>26</sup> For summaries see Horsley, 'The origin of the abbreviation ΧΜΓ: a Christian cryptogram?' in *ND* 2.177-180; Llewelyn, 'The Christian Symbol ΧΜΓ, an Acrostic or an Isopsephism?' in *ND* 8.156-168; di Bitonto Kasser (1998).

<sup>27</sup> P.Mich.6.378 and 8.519 are lists of payments in kind; P.New York 8 and PSI 13.2.1342 (all C4) are receipts relating to grain.

<sup>28</sup> The form χριστου μαρια γεννα is found in later texts. See di Bitonto Kasser (1998).

<sup>29</sup> Llewelyn, 'The Christian Symbol ΧΜΓ, an Acrostic or an Isopsephism?' in *ND* 8.156-168, here 168 following G. Lefebvre, 'Receuil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Égypte', cited in Horsley, 'The origin of the abbreviation ΧΜΓ: a Christian cryptogram?' in *ND* 2.177-180, here 178.

<sup>30</sup> See the comments on P.Oxy.6.940.

<sup>31</sup> For examples see Naldini (1968, 1998), 23-26.

<sup>32</sup> Harris (1975).

<sup>33</sup> For example P. Oxy 45.3314 discussed below. See Harris (1975).

## Reference to the Christian community, its officials or liturgical practices

Identifying specifically Christian officials and liturgical practices generally provides certain criteria for classification. However, the early church used the language of the surrounding secular rather than religious society so that common Christian words, for example διάκονος, πρεσβύτερος, ἐπίσκοπος, ἀναγνώστης and ἐκκλησία, had secular meanings which were gradually displaced by Christian use.

The language and practice of Christian prayer and worship are only rarely useful as criteria. While sometimes distinguished by the use of *nomina sacra* the common words for prayer εὐχομαι, εὐχή are found regularly in both Christian and pagan texts. The less frequent προσευχή tends to be used by Christians, although the word occurs in the certainly pagan BGU 4.1080 (C3).

A statement προσκύνημα ποιεῖν παρὰ τῷ θεῷ has been taken in the past to exclude the possibility of a letter being Christian<sup>34</sup>. Recently published papyri, SB 14.12173<sup>35</sup> and P.Oxy.59.3998<sup>36</sup>, indicate that the *proskynema* formula was used by Christians in the fourth century before falling into disuse<sup>37</sup>.

The wish for protection against the evil eye, ἀβάσκαντος, occurs frequently in pagan letters and has been found also in Christian papyri such as PSI 8.972= SB 12.10841 (C4) and P.Mich.8.519 (C4). The word appears to be part of people's cultural vocabulary, virtually robbed of its religious significance, and to denote protection from evil<sup>38</sup>.

## Use of particularly Christian language

Research in papyrology reveals a common linguistic framework for referring to the divine and worship across Christian and pagan texts in the third and fourth centuries and rejects the hypothesis that there were distinct Christian language and vocabulary in the period of this thesis and that Christians defined themselves by them.

References to god in the singular are common in pagan as well as Christian and

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<sup>34</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 55. On *proskynema*, see 150 below; also Geraci (1971).

<sup>35</sup> See 323f below.

<sup>36</sup> See 263f below.

<sup>37</sup> P.Oxy.33.2682, P.Alex.30, PSI 7.825 and P.Oxy.14.1775 use the phrases παρὰ τῷ θεῷ and παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ with *proskynema* statements and could arguably be Christian but contain no reference to women and are not discussed here.

<sup>38</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 46.



Jewish texts<sup>39</sup>. The phrases ἐν θεῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ, ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ were once regarded as certainly Christian until the discovery of ἐν θεῷ in several Manichean texts from Kellis<sup>40</sup>. The phrase has not been found in certainly pagan texts<sup>41</sup>. In light of the relationship between Christianity and Manicheism<sup>42</sup>, ἐν θεῷ can be taken to be confined to these groups. Ἐν κυρίῳ and ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ are attested only in Christian papyri but the occurrence of ἐν θεῷ in Manichean texts suggests a need for caution. Θεός and κύριος θεός with or without the article and phrases such as σὺν θεῷ, θεῷ χάρις, θεοῦ θέλοντος, ἡ θεία πρόνοια, and παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ have been identified in pagan documents<sup>43</sup>. Similarly designations of god as 'most high' (ὑψιστος) or 'almighty' (παντοκράτωρ) occur in texts of Christians, Jews and pagans<sup>44</sup>.

### Use of 'biblical' names

As noted in relation to this criterion for Jewish texts, Christians, Jews and those of pagan religion draw on a largely common stock of names. Following the work of Tcherikover<sup>45</sup>, Bagnall<sup>46</sup>, Wipszycka<sup>47</sup>, Horsley<sup>48</sup> and Fikhman<sup>49</sup> 'biblical' names after 300 are generally accepted as Christian. Theophoric names derived from pagan gods retain religious significance in some instances at least into the third and fourth centuries<sup>50</sup>. However, the bearer of a theophoric name may be a Christian convert and there is little evidence for name-change as a result of conversion. Local saints and martyrs with pagan theophoric names may be the origin of naming customs.

<sup>39</sup> See Versnel (1990); Athanassiadi and Frede (1999).

<sup>40</sup> See on P.Harr.1.107 at 286f below.

<sup>41</sup> Epp (2004), 24f, considers ἐν θεῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ, ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ written without *nomina sacra* to be uncertain criteria of Christianity because of their occurrence in texts with *abaskanta* and *proskynema* formulae in fourth-century texts. It is more likely that the presence of the formulae reflects a period of linguistic transition and/or derives from a recent convert.

<sup>42</sup> Lieu (1985,1992), 51-69 and 26 especially n.24 above.

<sup>43</sup> See the discussions in the chapters of this thesis. Also Naldini (1968, 1998); Wipszycka (1974); Tibiletti (1979).

<sup>44</sup> S. Mitchell, 'The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews and Christians' in Athanassiadi and Frede (1999), 81-148.

<sup>45</sup> CPJ 1.xvii-xix.

<sup>46</sup> Bagnall (1982); (1987a).

<sup>47</sup> Wipszycka (1986).

<sup>48</sup> Horsley (1987).

<sup>49</sup> Fikhman (1996).

<sup>50</sup> Frankfurter (1998), 106f.

## **Christian ideas and sentiments**

Winter suggests that from the end of the third century the papyri begin to give evidence of 'a tone or point of view' that may favour a Christian classification<sup>51</sup>. For example in P.Oxy.12.1492 he notes a 'resignation in affliction and trust in the efficacy of prayer' that would suggest a Christian authorship. Sentiments of this type are uncertain criteria, suggest a romantic ideal of Christianity and ignore the commonalities in attitude and language among Christians, Jews and pagans in the period.

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<sup>51</sup> Winter (1933), 146.

## CHAPTER 2

### TEXTS WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN WOMEN

The 26 papyri that I examine in this and the following five chapters are those that offer the most immediate insight into Christian women's religious subjectivity in being written by women. They contain women's own voices unmediated by male authors except perhaps for the influence of a male scribe<sup>1</sup>.

The corpus includes different types of documents. There are eighteen private letters<sup>2</sup> dealing with topics related to family life, health, commerce, requests for help and supplies, and one official letter seeking leave for a son<sup>3</sup>. There are four petitions, two demanding justice against abusive husbands<sup>4</sup>, one seeking justice for loss of property<sup>5</sup> and one seeking the payment of monies owed on agricultural land<sup>6</sup>. There is a lease agreement<sup>7</sup>, a manumission<sup>8</sup> and an adoption document<sup>9</sup>. One text is dated to the third/fourth century, two to the fourth/fifth century and the others to the fourth century. While certainly Christian documents exist from the early third century<sup>10</sup>, none is by a woman, although possibly two out of six arguably Christian third-century letters are written to women<sup>11</sup>.

In addition to the 26 texts analysed in detail, I note 20 additional texts written by women which are not included within the definitions of this thesis, but are considered in the appendix to this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> On scribal influence, see 18f above.

<sup>2</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Bour.25; P.Grenf.1.53; P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1, 18; P.Oxy.8.1161; 12.1592; 14.1774; 48.3407; SB 8.9746; 12.10840; 14.11588; 14.11881; 18.13612.

<sup>3</sup> P.Abinn.34.

<sup>4</sup> P.Oxy.6.903; 50.3581.

<sup>5</sup> P.Abinn.49.

<sup>6</sup> Stud.Pal.20.86.

<sup>7</sup> P.Kell.1.Gr.32.

<sup>8</sup> P.Edmonstone.

<sup>9</sup> P.Lips.1.28.

<sup>10</sup> P.Bas.1.16 (early C3, c.200), see Judge and Pickering (1977).

<sup>11</sup> PSI 14.1412; P.Oxy.20.2276. The other Christian letters written to men are P.Bas.1.16; P.Vind.Sijp.26; P.Amst.1.93; P.Alex.29, excluding letters dated C3/4.

Of the 26 texts, in 22 women are the sole authors<sup>12</sup>. Two letters are from 'Didyme and the sisters'<sup>13</sup>. In two texts the authors are a woman with a man, the woman's husband<sup>14</sup>, and the woman's son<sup>15</sup>.

Essential to the methodology I am adopting is a close reading of each text, setting each woman's religious life in the context of her broader life. This avoids two dangers: that of abstracting a woman's religious life from its complex of connections with her relationships, health and work; and that of presuming a category 'woman' by grounding the analysis in the lives of individual women. At the same time this approach allows a level of generalisation that permits common themes to be identified. I therefore outline each text, presenting them in a format that enables the most salient features to be readily noted without losing the more general context. The siglum of the papyrus, date and provenance are given in bold type; the author, addressee, reasons for classification as Christian and any other religious elements in twelve-point type, and other aspects in ten-point type indented.

The nature of the Greek in these texts reflects developments in the koine<sup>16</sup>. The spellings are frequently phonetic.

### **TEXTS WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN WOMEN**

#### **BGU 3.948, C4/5, Provenance: Herakleopolis; BL 3.15; 6.13f; 7.16; 8.37; 9.24**

Kophaena writes this letter to her son Theodoulos (τῷ υἱοῦ (= υἱῷ) μου Θεοδούλοῦ (= Θεοδούλῳ) παρὰ τῆς μητρός σου Κοφαίνας καὶ Ζήνωνος χαίριν (= χαίρειν)), ll. 1f. She includes Theodoulos' son, Zenon, in the prescript although he has no part in composing the letter<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.34, 49; P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Bour.25; P.Grenf.53; P.Herm.17; P.Kell.1.Gr.32; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.18; P.Oxy.6.903; 8.1161; 12.1592; 14.1774; 50.3581; SB 12.10840; 14.11881; 16.12673; 18.13612.

<sup>13</sup> P.Oxy.14.1774; SB 8.9746.

<sup>14</sup> P.Neph.1.

<sup>15</sup> P.Lips.1.28.

<sup>16</sup> Gignac (1981, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Zenon is identified as Theodoulos' son in ll.16f, but receives no other mention in the letter. Kophaena uses first person singular forms throughout. It is likely that he is a child for whom Kophaena cares.

Kophaena's Christian belief is evident in the decorative threefold χμγ<sup>18</sup> across the top and the cross on the verso beneath the address<sup>19</sup>. The name 'Theodoulos' strengthens the Christian classification. The name occurs in possibly pagan texts but becomes expressive of Christian piety in the fourth century<sup>20</sup>.

Kophaena's prescript uses the rare formula τῷ δεῖνι παρὰ τοῦ δεῖνος χαίρειν found here and in P.Berl.Zill.12 (C3/4) below, combining the common ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι χαίρειν of private letters with τῷ δεῖνι παρὰ τοῦ δεῖνος of official documents. It indicates Kophaena's knowledge of the form and suggests adoption of a high tone.

Kophaena begins her letter with the common πρὸ μὲν πάντων formula and a prayer, 'I pray to the almighty God about your health and on account of your well-being' (εὐχομαι τὸν παντοκράτορα θεὸν τὰ περὶ τῆς ὑγιείας σου καὶ ὁλοκληρίας σου χάριν)<sup>21</sup>, ll.2-4. She closes with the standard prayer, ἐρρῶσθε (= ἐρρῶσθαί) [σε ε]ὔχομε (= εὐχομαι) modified by πολλοῖς χρόνοις, l.21.

Kophaena uses the letter to rebuke Theodoulos for his lack of care. She is ill, to which she alludes twice using ἀσθενέω and νοσέω. The latter term suggests that her illness is severe<sup>22</sup> as may her statement that she will make her son a garment 'as I am able' (πρὸς τὸ δύνομε (= δύναμαι), ll.13f. The agent (πραγματευτ[ής]), l.5 has informed Theodoulos of his mother's illness over thirteen months and he 'has not had the heart'<sup>23</sup> (οὐκ ἐτόρμηκας (= ἐτόλμηκας)), l.7, to contact her, a rebuke she repeats twice, ll.9, 10. If the reconstruction of the damaged l.9 is correct, ὅτι καλλιόττερεν (= καλλιότερον) τῶν ἄ[λ]λων (ὁ π[άν]των) υἱ[ε]ῖών μου ἐποίησα μετὰ σοῦ, Theodoulos' behaviour is the more reprehensible as he has received better treatment than Kophaena's other children<sup>24</sup>. The only other child mentioned is a sister, Kyrilla, greeting Theodoulos.

The second matter in the letter is Kophaena's request for supplies. She asks for flax so that she can make a garment for Theodoulos 'because I have nothing that I can do for you'

<sup>18</sup> See 27 above.

<sup>19</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 359, reads a chi rho symbol. O'Callaghan (1963), 32f, reads a cross with 's' above the top right-hand quadrant.

<sup>20</sup> Foraboschi (1967-1971), s.v.; Preisigke (1967), s.v. A possible pagan use, given the date, is SB 6.9615 (C2/3), but the text includes an Ἰωάννης and may be Jewish.

<sup>21</sup> In the papyrus: εὐχομε τὸν παντοκράτορα θεὸν τὰ περὶ τῆς ὑγίας σου καὶ ὁλοκληρίας σου χαίριν. For the accusative παντοκράτορα with ν, see Gignac (1981, 2002), 142. On χαίριν and this translation, see 154 below; BL 9.24.

<sup>22</sup> Νόσος/νοσέω tends to be used of severe disease, ἀσθένεια/ἀσθενέω of less severe illness. See P.Lond.6.1926; P.Oxy.6.939; 8.1161. Also Barrett-Lennard (1994), 23f.

<sup>23</sup> On τολμάω meaning 'have the heart to', see LSJ, s.v., ll.

<sup>24</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), no.93, 360; Winter (1933), 154; Ghedini (1923), no.44.

(ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔχω τί ποιήσω σοι), l.13<sup>25</sup>. Kophaena asks for a 'small provision' (μεκὴν (= μικρὰν) σιταρχίαν), l.14 for which she will send μεκ.....αι.μα[6] in return, possibly 'small loaves of cheese cake' (μεκ[ᾱ (= μικρὰ) βλωμι]αῖ[α] μα[γίδος]), l.15<sup>26</sup>. Kophaena asks further that Theodoulos buy black wool so that she can make a cloak for herself<sup>27</sup>. She will send him the money whatever the cost<sup>28</sup>. Kophaena appears to be a widow or divorced. No male name apart from Zenon's occurs in the text, and her request for σιταρχία, l.14<sup>29</sup>, suggests that she is in need. Kophaena does not mention Theodoulos' father or any husband.

Kophaena includes greetings to Theodoulos from 'your mother, even I, Kophaena (ἄμμᾶ σ[ου] καὶ ἐγὼ Κοφήνα)<sup>30</sup>, your son, Zenon, and your sister Kyrilla and her children' ll.16ff. This is largely a family of women.

### **P.Abinn.34=P.Lond.2.410, 342-351, Provenance: Philadelphia**

This official letter opens, 'to my master and patron, the *praepositus*, the mother of Moses' (τῷ δεσπότη μου καὶ πάτρωνι πραιποσίτῳ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Μουσή), <sup>31</sup>, ll.1-3. The unnamed *praepositus* is Flavius Abinnaeus, a military official, known from his archive of 82 documents<sup>32</sup>.

Moses' name, being biblical, indicates that the mother is Christian or Jewish, the name reflecting her and her husband's beliefs. Names from the LXX that occur after 300 are generally regarded as Christian<sup>33</sup>, context depending. Therefore, the mother is taken to be Christian.

<sup>25</sup> O'Callaghan (1990) argues that οὐδὲν functions as οὐ; τί as a synonym for ὅτι, ὅ; BL 3.15.

<sup>26</sup> J. O'Callaghan, *Studia Hierosolymitana*, 1.379-381, cited in *Note di Aggiornamento*, Naldini (1968, 1998), 456; BL 6.13; 7.16. Naldini (1968, 1998), no.93, 361, n.15, also reads μεκὴν as μικρὰν. Winter (1933), 154, n.3, suggests μη(νια)κὴν, but this requires considerable reconstruction and is less likely; BL 3.15.

<sup>27</sup> Reading ματῇ = ἐμαντῇ, Ghedini (1923), no.44.

<sup>28</sup> Accepting ἀγορᾶ not ἀγορά, O'Callaghan (1963), 35; Winter (1933), 155, n.2.

<sup>29</sup> Ποιήσεν μοι μεκὴν (= μικκὴν = μικρὰν) σιταρχίαν, Winter (1933), 154; BL 3.15.

<sup>30</sup> Following the pattern of the other greetings, Winter (1933), 154, n.4. This reading is accepted in Naldini (1968, 1998), 361, no.93. I also adopt it. O'Callaghan (1963), 32, 34, no.1 interprets ἄμμα σου as a different person.

<sup>31</sup> The form 'to B ... A' was thought to occur only in letters to officials, Exler (1923), 56-58, but this applies only in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, with the form also attested in private letters from C4, Rea (1996), 189. Rea places the Abinnaeus examples in the latter category, although P.Abinn.34 fits the former. Other examples from this thesis of the form 'to B ... A' in official letters are P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; SB 18.13612; in private letters, P.Ben.Mus.5; P.Bour.25; P.Neph.18; P.Oxy.14.1774; SB 8.9746; 12.10840; 14.11881.

<sup>32</sup> For details of Abinnaeus' career, see the editor's summary, pp.6-12.

<sup>33</sup> Fikhman (1996), 227ff. See 24f, 29 above. On Jewish use of the name Moses, see Derda (1997); Williams (1997).

The woman does not name herself but styles herself only by her relationship with her son, Moses<sup>34</sup>. It is likely that she is widowed or divorced since she makes no reference to a husband, she a woman writes the request to the *praepositus*, and Athioeis, who is apparently not her husband, will represent her. She acts without an assistant or guardian.

The titles the mother gives to Abinnaeus convey respect. She uses *δεσπότης* which takes up the honorific sense *κύριος* tends to lose in the fourth century<sup>35</sup>. It implies her submission. *Δεσπότης* occurs frequently with *πάτρων*<sup>36</sup>, conveying as here the sense of deference appropriate to a patron/client relationship.

Moses appears the older of the sons. He is already serving in 'the army' (*τὸν βάρβαρον* (= τῶν βαρβάρων)), l.6. Heron has now been called up and the mother writes requesting leave for a 'few days' (*τὰς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας*), l.17<sup>37</sup>. The reason for the leave is not given. Either Abinnaeus is expected to know it, or Athioeis may explain. Whatever its nature the request is urgent, 'I ask your feet, lord patron' (*ἄξιῶ τοὺς πόδας σου, κύριε πάτρωνι*), ll.11f, a form of petition that appears not to be attested elsewhere in the papyri of the period<sup>38</sup> and no doubt formulated to convey humility<sup>39</sup>.

The mother asserts her powerlessness and dependence on Abinnaeus in claiming, 'after God we have no help but yours' (*μετὰ τὸν θεὸν οὐδίναν* (= οὐδένα) *ἔχομεν ἡμῆς* (= ἡμεῖς) *βοηθὸν ὑμῶν*)<sup>40</sup>, ll.7f<sup>41</sup>.

The letter introduces Athioeis. His relationship with the mother is not given nor the reason why she does not present the petition herself<sup>42</sup>. He carries the letter to Abinnaeus and acts as the mother's representative<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Similarly SB 18.13612, below. For *teknomyny*, see 224, n.138 below.

<sup>35</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 33.

<sup>36</sup> Eg P.Oxy.47.3339 (C2); PSI 9.1081 (C3/4); P.Abinn.31; P.lond.6.124; P.Oxy.48.3420; P.Ross.Georg.3.8; SB 8.9683; 24.16282=P.Lond.3.982 (all C4). The combined terms have a spiritual sense in P.Heid.1.6=SB 1.2266 (C4). *Πάτρων* is not listed in Dinneen (1927).

<sup>37</sup> Using what appears a proverb, 'since you know that five days are a whole year' (*ἐπιδὴ οἵδης καὶ σὺ ὅτι ἡ πέντη ἡμέραι ὁ ἐνιαυτὸς ὅλος εἰσί*), ll.12-15. The five-day period referring to a week is regular, eg SB 18.13977; P.Mich.8.478 (C2).

<sup>38</sup> From a search of the *DDBDP*.

<sup>39</sup> See also P.Lond.6.1926.17-19. Monks ask Pambo, 'By your feet, we implore you ...', *HL* 14.5, an invocation of uncertain significance.

<sup>40</sup> Interchange of singular and plural forms is common although only here in this letter.

<sup>41</sup> For a similar statement expressed positively, see P.Herm.17 below; expressed negatively as here, P.Ant.2.93 at 245f below. Also P.Giss.68 (117), certainly pagan; PSI 10.1161 (C4).

<sup>42</sup> Travel in Egypt was difficult, especially for women. The mother's location is unknown. See Horsley, 'Letter promising money' in *ND* 2.61-63, here 62, for a brother's reluctance to visit though in close proximity.

<sup>43</sup> He will speak for her and receive orders. The papyri indicate letter-bearers read letters, interpret them, give additional news and carry goods, eg P.Oxy.59.3996 (C3); 3997 (C3/4); 14.1679 (C3);

The letter closes with the standard ἐρρωσθαί σε εὖχομαι, l.20, with κύριε πάτρωνι, l.21.

**P.Abinn.49=P.Lond.2.403, 5 July 346, Provenance: Philadelphia**

This is a petition 'to Flavius Abinnaeus *eparchos* of the troop of soldiers of the camp of Dionysias from Aurelia Maria, sister-in-law of Akiar, one of the soldiers' (Φλαουίῳ Ἀβινναίῳ ἐπάρχῳ εἵλης στρατιωτῶν κάστρων Διονυσιάδος παρὰ Αὐρηλίας Μαρίας γαμβρᾶς Ἀκιᾶρ στρατιωτῶν), ll.1ff. Maria acts without a male assistant and signs the petition herself.

Maria seeks justice against two men, John and Elias (Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἠλείαν), l.14, following the removal of three of her sheep and the shearing of another nine. She labels the men 'evildoers' (κακοῦργοι), l.8, 'acting like robbers' (ἐν [λη]στρικῷ τρόπῳ), l.7. Maria asks Abinnaeus to capture the men, force (καταναγκάσης), ll.17f, them to confess, and then take the matter to the Prefect (τοῦ κυρίου μου δουκός), l.20, for him to bring the accused to judgement (ἐκδικῖν (= ἐκδικεῖν)), l.22<sup>44</sup>. She appeals to Abinnaeus' 'human kindness' (σου τῆς φιλανθρωπίας), l.16f and promises her thanks (χαριτὰ σοι), l.22.

The men's names suggest that they are Christian. They may be Jewish but both names are rare in Jewish papyri and given the date, a Jewish classification is unlikely<sup>45</sup>. Maria's name also suggests Christian rather than Jewish belief at this date. It is possible that Maria is Manichean<sup>46</sup> but there are no Manichean elements to support the classification. Similarly there is a slight possibility that she is pagan<sup>47</sup> with 'Maria' derived from the name of the Roman *gens*, but this appears unlikely given the circumstances of the letter. While Maria's name by itself is insufficient to allow classification of the text as Christian, its conjunction with 'Elias' and 'John'

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14.1677 (C3); 14.1770 (C3); SB 14.11881 (C4); P.Col.Teeter 7 (C4). On the postal system in Egypt, Llewelyn, 'The Official Postal Systems of Antiquity' in *ND* 7.1-25.

<sup>44</sup> The spelling suggested by the editor reflects the regular use in the archive. The phrase appears to be formulaic in P.Abinn.44; 47; 48; 51; 52; 53; similarly 28. 'Bring to judgement' is likely to be the meaning of ἐκδικεῖν which refers to legal action rather than revenge in papyri of this period. See *LSJ*, s.v.; G. Schrenk 'ἐκδικέω' in *TDNT* 2.442-444.

<sup>45</sup> Fikhman (1996), 227ff, gives 300 as the latest date for acceptance of 'biblical' names as Jewish. See 24f, 29f above. A search of the *DDBDP* attests the name Ἠλείας/Ἠλίας 6 times before C4, in CPR 13.6.4 (C3 BCE) with Ἠλίας Σαμβάτος; P.Berl.Leihg.2.43FrA (C2); P.Oxy.22.2338 (261/2-288/9); PSI 12.1268 (290); P.Laur.3.98 (C3); O.Mich.1.91 (C3). The name occurs also in SB 14.10940 (C3/4); P.Cair.Isid.23 (303/4). The name Ἰωάννης is attested 6 times before C4, in P.Tebt.3/2.882Fr1 (155/144 BCE) with Ἰωάννης Ἀντιπάτρου; P.Strasb.5.361 (C1); O.Edfou 1.165 (1/2); CPR 13.4 (C3); SB 6.9157 (C3); O.Fay.39. It also occurs in texts dated C3/4, P.Cair.Isid.114, 115; P.Erl.114; P.Select 2; SB 6.9438; O.Mich.1.623. Both names become frequent in C4.

<sup>46</sup> See P.Harr.1.107 at 286f below.

<sup>47</sup> See 363 below for the religious classification of Pollia Maria as possibly pagan.



strengthens the likelihood of a Christian status. There are no religious elements in the text beyond the three names.

#### **P.Ben.Mus.4, C4, Provenance: Fayum**

This letter from a woman to 'my lord, most holy son' (κυρίῳ μου ἁγιωτάτῳ υἱῇ (= υἱεῖ or υἱῶ)[ ), l.1, occurs on the recto of a papyrus sheet<sup>48</sup>. A second letter, from a son to his mother, is on the verso, P.Ben.Mus.5. The addressee of one letter is almost certainly the sender of the other<sup>49</sup>. The content and tenor of the letters suggest that mother and son are natural kin<sup>50</sup>. Unusually, the mother does not identify herself in the opening greeting.

P.Ben.Mus.4 does not provide sufficient evidence to identify the mother as Christian. She uses ἁγιώτατος of her son, a title of respect that occurs in pagan and Christian texts<sup>51</sup>. The mother also uses σὺν θεῷ, without *nomen sacrum*, in her statement 'with God's help, I came back quickly for your sake' (σὺν<v> θεῷ δι' ἐσὲ ἐσπούδασα ἐρθ[ῖν (= ἐλθεῖν)) l.2. Σὺν θεῷ also is not exclusive to Christian texts<sup>52</sup>. Both terms are consistent with Christian belief but not certain indicators of it. The son in P.Ben.Mus.5 is certainly Christian. He greets his mother ἐν κυρίῳ, l.2, using the *nomen sacrum*, writes 'thanks to Christ and glory to God' (ἡ χάρις τῷ Χ(ριστ)ῷ καὶ ἡ [δό]ξα τῷ θ(ε)ῷ), ll.3f, 22f, using *nomina sacra*, and uses a biblical quotation, ἡ [χά]ρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ μετὰ τοῦ πν(εύματος) ὑμῶν<sup>53</sup>, and a cross monogram at ll.33-35. The son's Christian belief does not necessarily require that the mother also be

<sup>48</sup> The editor classifies the writer as 'slow' (βραδέως γράφουσα). It may be the mother or a scribe.

<sup>49</sup> This appears unique among papyri, ed.pr., 95. The features that suggest it are: the styles of address, υἱῇ, 4.1; μητρὶ 5.1; ὁ σο[ῦ] υἱός, 5.2; the honorific ἁγιωτάτῳ corresponding to the son's use of biblical majuscule and 'NT' vocabulary and citation; the contents which suggest P.Ben.Mus.5 answers 4. Biblical majuscule appears in late C2/early C3 and is most formalised during 330-370. It is the script of the codices *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*. Its use strengthens the son's proposed status as bishop or monk, ed.pr., 114f.

<sup>50</sup> It is suggested by use of υἱός and μήτηρ without names as identifiers in the prescripts; use of υἱός and μήτηρ between a woman and a church official; her instructions about food, 4.3-9; his possible visit, 4.9; reference to other letters and gifts, 4.10f; his concern for his mother and χαρά at her safety, 5.11; his reference to τὸν [ ] γ μου [πα]τέρα = τὸν [κ(ύριό)γ μου [πα]τέρα 5.13f, (ed.). The editor understands the relationships as spiritual but gives no reason, noting only the use of familial titles for 'respectful address' in the period, 102. Dickey (2004), 142, accepts the spiritual relationship without further comment, noting that kinship terms in an address are almost always literal, these texts being exceptions.

<sup>51</sup> See 98f below.

<sup>52</sup> On σὺν θεῷ, see 123f below.

<sup>53</sup> See Galatians 6.18; Philippians 4.23; Philemon 25. A similar prayer occurs in SB 14.11532 (C4). The expanded expression of Christ's name is unusual in C4.

Christian but his Christian vocabulary and formulae, *nomina sacra* and biblical quotation suggest that these are meaningful to her and that she shares his belief.

Unusually among the papyri, no names are used in either letter<sup>54</sup>, which, together with the vague place references<sup>55</sup>, led the editor to propose that the correspondents aim at secrecy and, therefore, write prior to 325. The editor finds confirmation of a 'dangerous' situation in the son's relief at his mother's safe return, P.Ben.Mus.5. 3-10. However, these features are regular and do not require a context of persecution. In favour of a later date is the cross monogram which comes into common use only in the second half of the fourth century<sup>56</sup>. The mother's letter gives no suggestion of a dangerous environment.

The content of the mother's letter includes instructions to her son about various food items she has sent<sup>57</sup>, mention of a possible visit by the son, reference to other letters and gifts, and a request for acknowledgement of them.

### **P.Berl.Zill.12, C3/4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 6.23; 7.29**

This letter is from Athanasias<sup>58</sup> to 'my lady mothers' (ταῖς κυρίαις μου μητέραις (= μητράσιν)), l.1. Κυρία for the 'mothers' illustrates the trend in the fourth-century papyri for κύριος and κυρία to lose their honorific sense and become terms of affection<sup>59</sup>, although they also continue to designate persons with power<sup>60</sup>. Athanasias styles herself θυγάτηρ on the verso.

Athanasias' Christian belief is indicated by her prayer τῷ [...] κ<υ>ρίῳ ἡμῶν θεῷ<sup>61</sup>, l.3, without *nomen sacrum*. While prayer τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ is not necessarily Christian, the

<sup>54</sup> The end of 4.1 is damaged and may have contained the son's name. There is no address for either letter suggesting the letter-bearer/s knew the addressees/senders, with no need for names for identification.

<sup>55</sup> κάτω, 4.9; ἐνταῦθα, 5.6; αὐτόσε, 5.9.

<sup>56</sup> Eg P.Oxy.56.3871.

<sup>57</sup> Parsley root, wheat and raisins. See 190, n.95 below.

<sup>58</sup> Ἀθαγγασίας, ll.1f, proposed by Youtie (1974), 41, n.25, rather than Ἀθα(να)σίου ed.pr. Similarly Ἀθαγγασία[ς] not Ἀθα(να)σίου[υ], verso. BL 6.23. Ἀθαγγασίας is accepted in *Note di Aggiornamento*, Naldini (1968, 1998), 434.

<sup>59</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 29. Dinneen (1927), 78, notes the use of κυρία for women of high rank, and for older and younger family members. Examples of affectionate use in this thesis are P.Kell.1.Gr.71; P.Oxy.14.1774; SB 12.10840; 14.11588; 14.11881; P.Wisc.2.74; possibly P.Bour.25.

<sup>60</sup> Eg from this thesis, P.Abinn.34; P.Herm.17; P.Oxy.12.1952; SB 18.13612. Also P.Abinn.32 (C4); P.Lond.3.981 (C4).

<sup>61</sup> See *Note di Aggiornamento*, 434, in Naldini (1968, 1998).

phrase with the personal pronoun occurs only in Christian texts<sup>62</sup>. Ἡμῶν signals that the mothers also are Christian.

Athanasias prays for the mothers' health to the Lord our God, πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομε (= εὐχομαι) τῷ [...] κ<υ>ρίῳ ἡμῶν θεῷ ὀλοκληρεῖν (= ὀλοκληρεῖν) καὶ ὑένεν (= ὑγιαίνειν) σε, ll.3f; and again with the closing prayer formula, ἐρῶσθέ σε εὐχομε (= ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι), l.20, with κυρία μου μήτηρ (= μήτηρ). She also writes, 'we give thanks to the Lord our God' (εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ κυρίῳ [ἡμῶν] θεῷ), l.7, again without *nomina sacra*. To whom 'we' refers is not known. No other person is named with her. It may be an example of Athanasias' fluid use of singular and plural forms. The thanks are offered for God's protection until now (τὰ ὡς ἄρτι συντηρεῖ), l.8<sup>63</sup>, and are given as the reason that the mothers should not be anxious (μὴ ἀγωνᾶ (= ἀγωνία) οὖν ἐπ' ἐμου), l.6<sup>64</sup>.

The appeal against anxiety and an extensive series of greetings<sup>65</sup> form the content of the letter.

Youtie notes that in l.5 there is insufficient space for the nine letters of the first editor's reconstruction 'I kiss your feet' (προσσκυγῶ τοὺς πόδας ὑμῶν)<sup>66</sup>. He proposes προσσκυγῶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (= ὑμῶν), perhaps 'I bow down in worship on behalf of you'. Προσκυνέω is only rarely attested in the papyri and does not appear to be equivalent to προσκύνημα ποιέω<sup>67</sup>. Its construction with ὑπὲρ is not otherwise attested in the papyri from the second century BCE to the fifth century AD<sup>68</sup> and makes the proposal unlikely. The verb occurs most frequently in

<sup>62</sup> The *DDBDP* attests only 2 references to 'the Lord our God', this text and P.Abinn.5 (342-351) written by a Christian. 'Our gods' appears only in the phrase 'our ancestral gods', BGU 2.362 (215); P.Laur.2.41 (C3); P.Mich.3.212 (C2/3); P.Oslo 3.159 (C3); P.Strasb.5.464 (210-231); Stud.Pal.20.61 (C3). P.Oxy.59.3993 (C2/3) refers to 'your god'. See also Tibiletti (1979), 51.

<sup>63</sup> Youtie (1973c), 898, proposes συντηρε<ι> for συ<ν>απῆρε, ed.pr., the latter verb not attested elsewhere, corrected to συντηρεῖ, Youtie (1974), 41; BL 7.29; Youtie (1973c), 898, also suggests τὰ ὡς ἄρτι (= ἕως ἄρτι) for Ταῶς ἄρτι, ed.pr.

<sup>64</sup> Youtie (1974), 41; BL 7.29. Naldini (1968, 1998), 147, no.26, reads μὴ ἀγων<ι>α οὖν περὶ μου, BL 6.23, corrected to μὴ ἀγων<ι>α οὖν ἐπ' ἐμου, in *Note di Aggiornamento*, 434.

<sup>65</sup> Athanasias greets 18 people by name, plus unnamed children and ὄρους (= ὄλους) τοὺς ὑμῶν κατ' ὄνομα, ll.21f. Youtie (1974), 41, n.25, from a photograph, accepts Ψαῖσια rather than his proposed πατέρα in Youtie (1973c), 383, n.35, although he considers it still possible.

<sup>66</sup> Youtie (1974), 41, n.25 (my translation). Naldini (1968, 1998), 147, no.26, accepted the first editor's reading. The action ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας προσκυνέω is rejected in Acts 10.25

<sup>67</sup> It occurs absolutely in the sense 'worship' in P.Oxy.7.1070 (C3); P.Ross.Georg.5.27 (C4). Absolute use meaning 'bow in adoration' occurs in P.Tebt.2.416 (C3). P.Oxy.7.1070 (C3) has ἡ ... εὐχὴ ... προσκυνεῖ, ll.4-8, of prayer being offered. CPR 2.19 (C1/2) uses both expressions: προσκυνέω of greeting, προσκύνημα ποιέω of an act of worship. On *proskynema*, see 150 below.

<sup>68</sup> From a search of the *DDBDP*. The construction is not in *LSJ*, s.v.

relation to people, meaning 'greet' or 'kiss'<sup>69</sup>. Naldini without explanation proposes 'I greet you' (προσκυνῶ ἡμῶν (= ὑμῶν))<sup>70</sup> but προσκυνέω is not attested with the genitive<sup>71</sup>. A photo of the papyrus indicates a gap between προσκυνῶ and ἡμῶν. Another possible reading may be προσκυνῶ ὄψιν ἡμῶν (= ὑμῶν), 'I kiss your face'<sup>72</sup>. The phrase is addressed explicitly to 'my lady mother' but uses the plural ἡμῶν (= ὑμῶν). It is an example of the linguistic confusions of the text.

The opening formula τῷ δεῖνι παρὰ τοῦ δεῖνος χαίρειν uses a construction common to official documents and occurs elsewhere only in BGU 3.948<sup>73</sup>. Athanasias closes her letter with 'farewell' (διευτύχει), l.22, a word that occurs regularly in petitions to people with authority and high status but which is replaced by ἔρρωσο or ἔρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι in letters. Athanasias uses both. She, then, knows public documentary conventions and appears to adopt a consciously elevated tone in her letter. The circumstances that give rise to her knowledge are not indicated. It may be that her scribe interpolated these forms, but such a confusion of epistolographic conventions would be unusual.

The letter is dated to the late third or early fourth century on the basis of the handwriting and names, a number of which are attested for the first time in this text<sup>74</sup>. The editor concludes from the unskilled handwriting, the unconventional formulae and 'crude language' that the letter is penned by Athanasias herself and not by a professional scribe<sup>75</sup>. This is possible but not necessary. The most that can be said is that the person physically writing the letter is unskilled. The unconventionality may be by design, an expression of Athanasias' creativity or the adopting of a particular position in relation to the mothers.

Athanasias moves from plural to singular forms<sup>76</sup>. She writes ταῖς κυρίαῖς μου μητέραις (= μητράσιν), l.1, but in l.4 κυρία μου μήτηρ (= μήτηρ), and on the verso τῇ κυρίᾳ μου μητρὶ παρ' Ἀθαγασίᾳ[ς] τῆς θυγατρὸς, l.23. Ὑμῶν occurs at ll.5, 19, 22 and σε at ll.4, 20. The interchange of singular and plural forms may reflect shifts in Athanasias' conscious address. It is common in the papyri. The nature of the maternal relationships cannot be determined, but the mother in the address may be literal and certainly the relationship is distinctive such that no

<sup>69</sup> P.Giss.22 (C2); SB 5.8091 (C3); P.Oxy.12.1592 (C3/4); P.Herm.8 (C4); P.Lond.6.1929 (C4); P.Lond.3.1244 (C4). A search of the *DDBDP* indicates that of 84 uses of the verb, 80 are in relation to people, almost always with the accusative.

<sup>70</sup> *Note di Aggiornamento*, Naldini (1968, 1998), 434.

<sup>71</sup> From a search of the *DDBDP*.

<sup>72</sup> The phrase occurs in P.Mil.Vogl.1.24 (117); P.Giss.22 (98-138); P.Lund.2.4 (C3); SB 6.9636 (136).

<sup>73</sup> See on the text above.

<sup>74</sup> Ὠριγενία is attested from C3/4; Δευκίλα occurs only here; Κάλοπος appears from C4; Ἠλλάλιβεν first occurs here, with Ἠλάλ found in C4 and C5.

<sup>75</sup> Also Naldini (1968, 1998), 146, no.26.

<sup>76</sup> Ed.pr. suggests the plurals are expressions of respect but notes that such use is unique to this text. Similarly Naldini (1968, 1998), 148, note to l.1 who suggests a parallel to πατέρες which, however, is not a 'plural of respect' but a masculine noun including the feminine; .

accompanying name is required for identification<sup>77</sup>. Clearly not all uses are literal but whether they refer to spiritual relationships is unclear<sup>78</sup>.

**P.Bour.25=P.Sel.Pap.1.65, C4 or C5, Provenance: Apameia; BL 2.2.35; 3.32; 7.31**

This letter 'to my lady and longed-for aunt' (κυρία μου καὶ ἐπιποθήτη θεία), l.1, whose name on the verso is Horeina, sister of Apollonios, is from 'Tare, daughter of your sister Allous' (Τάρη θυγάτηρ ἀδελφῆς σου Ἀλλοῦτος), l.1f.

Tare's ἐν θ(ε)ῷ χαίρειν, l.3, with *nomen sacrum*, indicates that she is Christian. She also reckons time by a Christian festival, ἀπὸ τῶν Πάσχω(ν)<sup>79</sup>, l.7. The implication of the greeting 'in God', use of a *nomen sacrum* and Christian time reference is that Horeina is also Christian. A shared belief alone renders the communications meaningful.

Tare opens with a common variation of the standard opening prayer, for health and good cheer (πρὸ παντὸς εὐχομαι τῷ θ(ε)ῷ ὑγιαίνουσάν σε καὶ εὐθυμοῦσαν ἀπολαβεῖν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα)<sup>80</sup>, ll.4-6. She adds an emphatic 'for this is my prayer' (αὕτη γάρ μου ἐστὶν εὐχή), l.6. Tare closes with a variation of a prayer formula that appears from the fourth century, ἐρρωμένην σε ὁ κύριος διαφυλάττοι μακροῖς καὶ εἰρηνικοῖς χρόνοις, ll.16-18, using the *nomen sacrum*.

The date of the letter is debated. On palaeographical grounds, the original editor dates it to the fifth century. Schubart, on the same grounds, dates it to the fourth century<sup>81</sup> as do Naldini<sup>82</sup> and Tibiletti<sup>83</sup>. O'Callaghan dates it again to the fifth century but gives no reason<sup>84</sup>. Given the uncertainty of palaeographical dating and until more certainty is achieved, the letter is included for completeness.

<sup>77</sup> Kinship terms without names in prescripts and addresses are almost always literal to the end of C3, occurring for identification. From C4, particularly in Christian letters, 'rules' for the use of kinship terms are less certain, Dickey (2004), 165. Given that 'mother' and 'daughter' are more frequently literal than 'father' or 'brother', and given the need for identification, a literal sense is likely.

<sup>78</sup> On the use of familial terms for non-kin, see Dickey (2004); Arzt-Grabner (2002); Naldini (1968, 1998), 15f; Tibiletti (1979), 31f; Judge (1982). For discussion, see 224f, 229, 233, 235f below.

<sup>79</sup> On τὸ πάσχα, see 196, n.127 below. The genitive plural is not attested elsewhere and may allude to the multiple days of the festival.

<sup>80</sup> In the papyrus: πρὸ παντὸς εὐχομε τῷ θεῷ ὑγιένουσάν σε καὶ εὐθυμοῦσαν ἀπολαβῖν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα.

<sup>81</sup> Schubart (1928), 222.

<sup>82</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 307-309, no.78.

<sup>83</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 17.

<sup>84</sup> O'Callaghan (1963), 88, no.16.

The content of Tare's letter is to inform Horeina of Allous' death and Tare's subsequent circumstances. Allous had been 'my whole family' (ὅλον τὸ γένος μου αὕτη ἦν), l.10<sup>85</sup>. Tare now is 'desolate'<sup>86</sup>, having no one in a strange land' (ἔμινα (= ἔμεινα) ἔρημος, μ[η]δένα ἔχουσα ἐπὶ ξένοις τόποις), ll.11f. She asks her aunt to remember her and, if she finds anyone, to send to her.

Tare sends one greeting to her family as a group, προσαγόρευε πᾶσαν τὴν συγγένειαν (= συγγένειαν) ἡμῶν, ll.14f. She includes no greetings from anyone with her.

**P.Edmonstone=Chr.Mitt.361, 12 January 355, Provenance: Elephantine; BL 7.123; 11.137**

This text is classified as a *manumissio per epistulam*<sup>87</sup> but also has features of a *manumissio inter amicos*, particularly with its five witnesses. The document is from Aurelia Terouterou, daughter of Pasmes and Tsenpachnoumis, to Aurelius Sarapammon, whose mother is Tapamon, and to Tkales, whose mother is Thaesis, and to her daughter, Aurelia Lousia<sup>88</sup> who have been her slaves on the basis of a part share (γενομένοι<ς> μοι δούλοι<ς> ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐπιβάλλοντος μέρους, ἀφικέναι ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρους τοῦ ἐπιβάλλοντός μοι μέρους), ll.5f, 7. Terouterou acts with an assistant, her husband, Aurelius Dorotheos, who writes for her as she is illiterate.

The part ownership of slaves is attested in Egypt from Ptolemaic times and is frequent in the Christian Era<sup>89</sup>. The use of Aurelius/a for Sarapammon and Lousia suggests that they were at one time free citizens<sup>90</sup>. The manumission of the three further suggests that they are a family group<sup>91</sup>. The age of Lousia is unknown. The text does not indicate the owner/s of the other

<sup>85</sup> On this punctuation, and reconstruction in the previous phrase of μεθ' [ἐ]αυτῆς as μετ' ἐμαυτῆς, see Schubart (1928), 222; O'Callaghan (1963), 90.

<sup>86</sup> In Christian thought ἔρημος connotes a place of desolation and testing, G. Kittel, 'ἔρημος' in *TDNT* 2.657ff. On Christian ξενιτεία, see 91f below.

<sup>87</sup> Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 2.143f. Roman manumission was either formal or informal, Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.72. Formal manumission involved a ransom and the 5% tax, resulted in citizenship and took different forms: *manumissio censu*, *manumissio vindicta*, *manumissio testamento* the most frequent, and, in C4, *manumissio in ecclesia*. In Egypt, manumissions before the *agoranomos* were subject to Graeco-Egyptian law and also frequent, eg P.Oxy.1.48; 49, Taubenschlag (1955), 97f. Informal manumission, *manumissio per epistulam*; *manumissio inter amicos*, or by inviting a slave to dinner, did not result in citizenship.

<sup>88</sup> The naming of all 3 slaves by their mothers contrasts with Terouterou's identification by her father and mother. Identification by the mother's name is common also in magical texts.

<sup>89</sup> Eg P.Oxy.4.722 (91 or 107), the manumission of 1/3 part of a slave, the other 2/3 being already freed; PSI 5.452 (C4); P.Lips.1.26 (C4); P.Oxy.44.3197 (C3). See also Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 1.139; 2.123f.

<sup>90</sup> People became slaves through poverty, kidnapping, warfare, piracy and infant exposure, Harrill (1995), 30. Self-sale is infrequent.

<sup>91</sup> On the family life of slaves, their vulnerability to separation and economic benefit to slave-owners, see Bradley (1987), 47-80.

share/s but they are likely to be member/s of Terouterou's family since her share came through her mother's will, l.8<sup>92</sup>. The slave or free status of the other portion/s of the slaves is not indicated. Their religious belief is unknown.

Terouterou's Christian belief is suggested by her reference to the all-merciful God in her statement, 'under Earth and Sky in accordance with the godliness of the all-merciful God' (ὑπὸ Γῆν καὶ Οὐρανὸν κατ' εὐσεβίαν (= εὐσέβειαν) τ[ο]ῦ πανελεήμονος θεοῦ), ll.7f, without *nomen sacrum*, who, she implies, sets the standards for her behaviour. 'All-merciful' appears to be attested only in Christian texts<sup>93</sup> and makes a Christian classification most likely. It is noteworthy that Terouterou frees her slaves calling on Earth and Heaven<sup>94</sup>. This formula of manumission is common and appears to have largely lost its religious content<sup>95</sup>.

Terouterou gives two reasons for her decision to free the slaves. The first is as a reward, for 'the good will and love and, in addition, service, good will and affection' the slaves have shown her over time, to which she refers twice (καὶ ἀνθ' ὧν ἐνεδείξωσθέ (= ἐνεδείξασθε) μοι κατὰ χρόνον εὐνοίας καὶ στοργῆς ἔτι τε καὶ ὑπηρεσίας, αὐτοὶ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐνέδειξόν (= ἐνέδειξαν) μοι εὖνοιαν καὶ φιλοστοργεῖαν), ll.9, 16. Freedom in exchange for loyalty, compliance and outstanding service is frequent in manumission documents<sup>96</sup> and appears as a powerful tool in the control of slaves<sup>97</sup>. Terouterou also uses the language of recompense and exchange, καὶ ἀνθ' ὧν ἐνεδείξωσθέ (= ἐνεδείξασθε) μοι, καὶ αὐτοὶ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐνέδειξόν (= ἐνέδειξαν) μοι εὖνοιαν καὶ φιλοστοργεῖαν, κα[ὶ] αὕτη ἀμοιβόμενος (= ἀμειβομένη) τὰς ἀμοιβὰς ἐκὼν (= ἐκοῦσα) καὶ πεπισμένη ἦκον εἰς τήνδε τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, ll.9, 16f. Terouterou's second reason is that she has been persuaded by the slaves to free them, εὐδοκεῖν γὰρ καὶ πείθεσθαι ἐμὲ τὴν ἐλευθεροῦντα (= ἐλευθεροῦσαν) τοῖς ἐλευθερουμένοις εἰς τήνδε [τ]ὴν ἐλευθέρωσιν ἦκειν τοῖς ἐλευθερουμένοις, ll.11f. Explicitly included in the freedom are any future female children, l.13.

Terouterou does not refer to a ransom. Such payments are regular in manumission documents to compensate the owner for the loss of labour<sup>98</sup>. Terouterou grants her slaves freedom also without *operae* and *obsequium* common in Roman manumissions and

<sup>92</sup> See also P.Oxy.3.491 (126); 3.492 (130); BGU 7.1654 (after 133).

<sup>93</sup> See 106f below.

<sup>94</sup> A similar invocation is in the Christian manumission, P.Kell.1.Gr.48 (C4), ὑπὸ Δία Γῆν Ἥλιον, l.5, 284 below. See also P.Oxy.4.722 (91 or 107).

<sup>95</sup> Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 2.144. The formula is regular in manumissions before an *agoranomos*.

<sup>96</sup> Bradley (1987), 83, who notes 2 other reasons that occur regularly: the owner's desire for esteem; and generosity for its own sake, the latter being least frequent.

<sup>97</sup> See Bradley (1987), 81-112.

<sup>98</sup> Stipulations of ongoing service to heirs and payment of money appear regularly in wills, eg *Digest of Justinian* 40.7.3.1; 40.7.4.2, 4. See also Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 2.147; Bradley (1994), 160. Testamentary manumissions regularly contain no ransom clause.

expressed in Egypt as παραμονή contracts<sup>99</sup>. Freedom without compensation generally is a reward for a particularly meritorious act<sup>100</sup>. Terouterou does not refer to a specific deed, but to long-standing service. It is noteworthy that Terouterou anticipates criticism from her heirs, l.15.

**P.Grenf.1.53=Chr.Wilck.131, C4, Provenance: Unknown<sup>101</sup>; BL 3.70; 6.46; 7.62**

This papyrus includes two letters written by Artemis, the first to her husband Theodoros, a soldier away from home<sup>102</sup>, the second, within the first, to Sarapion also called Isidoros, a fellow-soldier.

Artemis greets Theodoulos, ἐν θεῷ, l.1<sup>103</sup>, without *nomen sacrum*. 'Εν θεῷ identifies her as Christian<sup>104</sup>. Her use of the Christian phrase suggests that Theodoros is also Christian<sup>105</sup>. Additional evidence for a Christian milieu occurs in the letter to Sarapion in Artemis' reference to 'the presbyters of the church' (τ[ο]ῦ[ς] πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας), ll.22f, as authorities respected by Sarapion and herself. It suggests that Sarapion also is Christian.

Artemis opens her letter with a variation of the standard prayer for health to the Lord God, πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ, ὅπως ὀλοκληροῦντά σε ἀπολάβωμεν (= ἀπολάβωμεν), ll.3-5, without *nomina sacra*. It is consistent with Christian belief but not an indicator of it. Artemis uses the standard closing prayer, ἐρρῶσθαί (= ἐρρῶσθαί) σε εὐχομαι, ll.7f, though in the middle of her letter.

<sup>99</sup> Eg P.Oxy.3.494 (C2). Other examples are found in Wiedemann (1981, 1988), 3, 42-44, 46-49, 105, 120. On παραμονή contracts, see P.Oxy.9.1205 at 357 below. Whether payment of a ransom exempted a freed person from obligations to an ex-owner is debated and depends on a legal question about the slave's *peculium* and its use in the payment, Harrill (1995), 164.

<sup>100</sup> *Digest of Justinian* 40.2.15.1.

<sup>101</sup> Winter (1933), 156-158; BL 3.70, proposes extensive corrections based on a photograph. A number are standard corrections of spelling and grammar. Those that bear critically on my study are: l.12 [Ἄλλ]οὺς not ἄρα; l.17 γράφ[εις] not γράφει; l.21f συγάζειν; l.24 αἱ δύο not αἶδε; l.29 Σουχάρω not σου χάρω; l.38 δη[λῶσαι] verso π(αρά) τοῦ υἱοῦ not πα[ρά τῆς συμ][β]ίου. Further corrections appear in Naldini (1968, 1998), 241-244; BL 6.46: l.12 Ἀλλοῦς; l.15 ἐὰν ἥς (= ἦσθα) not Ψανῆς; l.28 ἐαντῇ<ν> γα<δ>ειτάναν. They are adopted.

<sup>102</sup> This letter is evidence of Christians in the military in C4. See P. M. Brennan, 'Jupiter Dolichenus and religious life in the Roman army' in ND 4.118-126 with bibliography.

<sup>103</sup> Eg also from this thesis, P.Harr.1.107 (C3); P.Bour.25 (C4); P.Wisc.2.76 (C4); P.Oxy.31.2109 (C4); 34.2731 (C4); 63.4365 (C4); 56.3862 (C5).

<sup>104</sup> The phrases ἐν θεῷ and ἐν κυρίῳ occur in Christian and Manichean texts. Where there are no Manichean elements, the phrases are taken to indicate Christian belief. See the Introduction to P.Kell.5.Copt., p.73; Tibiletti (1979), 29f; Wipszycka (1974), 205. See also 28f above.

<sup>105</sup> On marriage within the Christian community, see 206f below.



The overt content of Artemis' letter is the sending<sup>106</sup> of the letter and a cloak to Theodoros through a fellow-soldier, Apon, perhaps Apion. The real content is the letter to Sarapion which Theodoros is intended to read.

The structure of Artemis' letter to her husband is unusual. The closing prayer is followed by greetings from Theodoros' children, then a statement that a certain Allous threatens Theodoros because he does not greet her in letters. Allous' relationship with Theodoros is unknown but her reaction illustrates the meaningfulness of greetings and their importance in maintaining relationships<sup>107</sup>. Despite Theodoros' neglect, Allous greets him, l.12. After the greeting is the letter to Sarapion, followed by an appeal to Theodoros for his help, urging him to show the letter 'to him', Sarapion (καὶ δεῖ τὰ γράμματα αὐτῷ δη[λῶσαι]) l.36. The letter to Theodoros acts as an *inclusio* to the second letter. Its nature is uncertain. It appears embedded<sup>108</sup> rather than copied, given Artemis' command that it be shown. However, while Artemis addresses Sarapion, she does not greet him or pray for him, as occurs in the letter to Theodoros. This seems to follow the pattern of quoted letters which omit or abbreviate greetings and prayer<sup>109</sup>, or it may be a function of the anger she displays in the text. Embeddedness seems more likely.

The text of Sarapion's letter is obscure<sup>110</sup>. Artemis rehearses what apparently is common knowledge, 'how the two (daughters) burst out saying, "We want husbands" and how Loukra was found with her lover making herself a harlot', (ἄνδρες θέλομεν καὶ πῶς εὐρέθη ἡ Λούκρα παρὰ τὸν μοιχὸν αὐτῆς ποιοῦσα ἑαυτὴν <ν> γαιετάναν (= γα<δ>ειτάναν)), ll.24-27. Artemis calls on Sarapion to confirm the story from 'the presbyters of the church'. Whether Artemis is responsible for the girls is unclear. Sarapion has written accusing Artemis and possibly others, γράφ[εις] δὲ ἡμῖν ὡς ἐχθαμβῶν ἡμᾶς, ll.17f, of being a 'seductress' (οἰκοφθέρους (= οἰκοφθόρους)), ll.19f<sup>111</sup>. Artemis counter-accuses him of 'madness' (ἀπόνοια) twice, ll.15, 17. The church presbyters also are indignant with Artemis because of her charge against Soucharos<sup>112</sup>, and she proceeds to cast aspersions on his birth and status.

The trading of recriminations in strong language, 'madness' (ἀπόνοια), ll.15, 17, 'harlotries, prostitute' (τὰ πορνεύματα, τὸν μοιχόν, γαιετάναν (= γα<δ>ειτάναν)), ll.20f, 27, 28, 'seducers' (οἰκοφθόρους), l.19, and the insinuations of ll.30-36 with their arrogance and denigration of

<sup>106</sup> ἔπεμψε is read as an epistolary aorist.

<sup>107</sup> See also Aline's distress when her daughter, Heliodora, does not greet her, P.Giss.78 (116). Numbers of private letters are little more than a series of greetings, eg P.Berl.Zill.12, above.

<sup>108</sup> For the category, White (1981b), 12.

<sup>109</sup> White (1981b), 12.

<sup>110</sup> 'Im einzelnen bleibt von dem Kauderwälsch der Artemeis noch vieles unklar', ed., 157.

<sup>111</sup> A feminine form is not attested in *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>112</sup> Following the reconstruction in Winter (1933), 157, n.4, by which the presbyters are the subjects of φθονοῦσιν, l.29. The name Σούχαρος is unattested but makes sense of the difficult σου χάρψ and provides the antecedent for εὐγενόστερος, l.33. Montserrat (1966), 116, makes the daughters the subject of φθονοῦσιν but offers no subsequent translation, 116. It leaves εὐγενόστερος without referent.

slaves speak of relationships between Christians and of attitudes that are unsurprising but far from the ideals of 'Scripture'<sup>113</sup>.

The daughters of Sarapion are likely to be Christians given their father's belief. A standard of behaviour is expected of the daughters that does not include demanding, ἄνδρες θέλομεν, l.25, or being παρά τὸν μοιχὸν αὐτῆς ποιούσα ἑαυτὴν <ν> γαιετάναν (= γα<δ>ειτάναν), ll.27f. A sexual connotation is clear in παρά.

Winter notes that the same hand writes both the recto and verso of the letter, ending with π(αῤ) τοῦ υἱοῦ. Artemis then is known not to have written the letter with her own hand. It is not known whether she is illiterate<sup>114</sup>.

### **P.Herm.17, C4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 10.85f**

This is a letter from Leuchis, daughter of Malamos, 'to my lord, the devout Apa Johannes' (τῷ κυρίῳ μου θεωσεβῇ (= θεοσεβεῖ) Ἄπα Ἰωάνην (= Ἰωάννη)), l.1. The epithet Ἄπα/Ἀππα appears in the fourth century as a title of respect for monastics and clergy, particularly in their role as 'spiritual father'.

Leuchis' approach to Apa Johannes, a Christian ascetic, and her attitude of respect for him make it highly likely that she is Christian. Her references to God, μετὰ τὸν θεόν, διὰ τὸν θεόν, ll. 3, 6<sup>115</sup>, without the *nomen sacrum*, are consistent with Christian belief but θεός is also common in pagan texts. Leuchis' letter contains no opening or closing prayer, but their use declines in the late fourth and fifth centuries<sup>116</sup>.

The date of this text has been debated. The original editor dated it palaeographically to the fifth century<sup>117</sup>. The text on the recto, written prior to Leuchis' letter<sup>118</sup>, is dated palaeographically to the sixth century. The compromise date for Leuchis' letter became C5/6. Dating on the basis of handwriting alone is notoriously uncertain. C. Zuckerman argues that the handwriting of P.Herm.17 'could just as well be of the fourth (century)'<sup>119</sup>. He also considers a fourth-century date for the recto text 'palaeographically possible'. J. Gascoigne likens the script to P.Neph.3 (C4)<sup>120</sup>. A fourth-century date allows this letter to be included in the

<sup>113</sup> Eg Matthew 18.15-35; Philippians 2.1-4; James 2.1-7.

<sup>114</sup> See 11-19 especially 15f above for women's literacy.

<sup>115</sup> In the papyrus, μετὰ τὸν θεόν, διὰ τὸν θεόν.

<sup>116</sup> Harding (1985).

<sup>117</sup> Accepted in Wolff (1966), 412.

<sup>118</sup> The text takes up a larger papyrus sheet.

<sup>119</sup> Zuckerman (1995), 188.

<sup>120</sup> From a letter dated 23 April 1989, cited by Zuckerman (1995).

archive of Apa Johannes dated to the end of the fourth century<sup>121</sup>. It was originally excluded solely on the basis of its palaeographical dating. I accept Zuckerman's argument.

Leuchis uses effusive terms of esteem for Apa Johannes, more common in the fifth and later centuries but also found in the late fourth century, including the other texts of the archive<sup>122</sup>. Johannes is θεοσεβής, l.1. Her request that 'your compassion reach to me too' (καὶ ἐμὲ) φθάσι (= φθάσῃ) ἢ ἐλεημοσύνην (= ἐλεημοσύνη) σου), l.3, arises from Leuchis' conviction that 'your kindness embraces all who are powerless' (ἡ χρηστότητά (= χρηστότης) σου κατέλαβεν πάντας τοὺς μὴ (= μὴ) δυναμένους), l.2, among whom Leuchis reckons herself on the basis of her marital status and gender, 'for I am a widow and a woman' (ἐπὶ (= ἐπεὶ) χήρα γυνή εἰμι), l.6<sup>123</sup>.

In a further statement of her powerlessness, Leuchis says, 'after God I look for your help' (μετὰ τῶν (= τὸν) θεὸν τὴν σὴν βοήθειαν (= βοήθειαν) προσδοκῶ (= προσδοκῶ)), ll.3f. Such appeals occur in Christian and pagan papyri<sup>124</sup>.

Leuchis appeals to Apa Johannes to ask the tribune, Gounthos, to have certain women removed from her house (ἵνα ἀξιώσῃς τὸν τριβούνον τὸν Γοῦνθον καὶ ἄρῃ αὐτάς ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας μου<sup>125</sup>), ll.4f. The editor suggests the women are licensed ἐταίραι whom Leuchis has been forced to billet.

Leuchis closes her letter with the urgent imperative, 'my lord, do this for God's sake' (κύριέ μου, διὰ τῶν θεῶν πύει (= τὸν θεὸν ποίει)), l.6, also found in Christian and pagan texts<sup>126</sup>.

### **P.Kell.1.Gr.32, 28 October 364, Provenance: Kellis**

This text is a lease taken by Aurelia Marsis for 'one room' (κέλλαν μίαν), l.11, in the house of Aurelius Psais.

<sup>121</sup> The archive consists of P.Herm.7-10 and 7, Coptic letters edited by W. Crum and listed in n.22, Zuckerman (1995), 189. Possibly also SB 18.13612=P.Lond.3.1014 below; P.Lond.3.981; P.Amh.2.145. Zuckerman outlines Apa Johannes' role and argues for his identity with John of Lycopolis. On the archive, see also van Minnen (1994).

<sup>122</sup> For similar appeals to ascetics, see P.Herm.7 (C4); 10 (C4); PSI 13.1342 (330-350); SB 18.13612 (C4); by ascetics to secular authority, see P.Abinn.32 (C4).

<sup>123</sup> For similar statements of women's disadvantage, see P.Neph.18; SB 14.11881 below.

<sup>124</sup> For other examples, see P.Abinn.34 above.

<sup>125</sup> In the papyrus: ἵνα ἀξιώσῃς τῶν τριβούνων τῶν Γοῦνθον. Γοῦνθος is attested in Preisigke (1967) and Foraboschi (1967-1971), s.v., eg P.Oxy.1.120 (C4); SB 5.7621 (324). Rémondon (1972) translates, 'that you request the tribune of the Goths', with no reason for his alterations which are not obviously related to phonetic spellings or other shifts in Koine use. Zuckerman (1995), 188, notes that a Gothic army unit was in Egypt under Theodosius I (c.379).

<sup>126</sup> The phrase is frequent in demotic appeals to Zenon from C3 BCE. Other examples include P.Abinn.19 (C4) at 244f below; P.Giss.54 (C4/5); P.Cair.Masp.1.67070 (C6).

The lease specifies that Marsis pay two artabas of wheat for the year<sup>127</sup>. Rent paid in kind is usually for a room for storage, here of wheat, rather than for living<sup>128</sup>. It suggests that Marsis owns or leases agricultural land<sup>129</sup>. Marsis and Psais, though both from Kellis, are resident in Aphrodite, possibly among those who migrated among villages and towns in the fourth century for financial reasons<sup>130</sup>. Marsis acts without a guardian or assistant.

The text ends 'I, Aurelius Jacob<sup>131</sup> son of Basis the presbyter, reader of the catholic church<sup>132</sup> wrote for her since she is illiterate' ('Αυρήλιος Ἰακῶβ Βήσιος πρ(εσβυτέρου) ἀναγνώστης καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας (= ἐκκλησίας) ἔγραψα ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς γράμματα μὴ εἰδυίης) ll.20-23<sup>133</sup>. The involvement of the reader suggests that Marsis is a Christian and a member of the 'catholic church' of Aphrodite<sup>134</sup>. Kellis had both a catholic Christian<sup>135</sup> and a Manichean community<sup>136</sup>. It is unlikely that Marsis is a Manichee.

#### **P.Lond.6.1926, mid C4, Provenance: Kynopolis; BL 9.149**

This letter from Valeria to Appa Paphnouthios, a Christian ascetic, ll.9-11, is one of seven in the archive of Paphnouthios<sup>137</sup>.

Valeria is a Christian. She greets Appa Paphnouthios ἐν Χριστῷ, l.4, without *nomen sacrum*, a rare phrase in greetings in the papyri<sup>138</sup>, as is her description of

<sup>127</sup> About 0.25 solidus, ed.pr., 95.

<sup>128</sup> H. –J. Drexhage, *Preise, Mieten/Pachten, Kosten und Löhne im römischen Ägypten* 78, 90, 92-96, 106 cited by the editor, 95.

<sup>129</sup> Other women who own and lease agricultural land appear in P.Col.7.176 (325); P.Charite 7, 8 (347, 348); P.Neph.18; P.Oxy.6.903; 48.3406; Stud.Pal.20.86 (all C4). On women owning land, see P.Lond.3.1119a at 336ff below.

<sup>130</sup> Keenan (2001), who notes that most migration is in and out of cities, rather than between villages, and involves people of all classes.

<sup>131</sup> Jacob is an example of Hebrew scriptural, including patriarchal, names used by Christians in C4 for their children, Williams (1997).

<sup>132</sup> On καθολικός, see 176, n.8 below; on the role of readers, see 176f below.

<sup>133</sup> For women and literacy see 11-19 especially 15f above.

<sup>134</sup> A church in Aphrodite is known at least from early C4. A bishop of the city is cited in Athanasius' 'twelfth festal letter', so-called although Athanasius did not issue a twelfth letter. See his *Festal Epistles*. Also Harnack (1908), 2.174, n.1.

<sup>135</sup> P.Kell.1.Gr.24; 58.

<sup>136</sup> Lieu (1994), 87-89. Some 3000 Coptic and Greek Manichean fragments from House 3 indicate a Manichean community from late C3 to the 380s.

<sup>137</sup> P.Lond.6.1923-1929. On the community, see Goehring (1997), 68-73. Bell, ed.pr., concludes that Paphnouthios is an 'orthodox Catholic', 100-103. Goehring considers the community Melitian, as do Kramer and Shelton, editors of P.Neph.; also Bagnall (1993a), 308. But the classification is not certain, Vivian (2004), 242. Paphnouthios is known for his prayer, healing and holiness, especially 6.1926, 1928 and 1929. His circle includes an Athanasius, possibly bishop of Alexandria, P.Lond.6.1929.

<sup>138</sup> See 112f below.

Paphnouthios, 'Christ-bearing' (χρηστοφόρῳ (= χριστοφόρῳ)), I.1<sup>139</sup>. She alludes to the 'NT' in II.17-19, 'even if in body I have not come to your feet, in spirit I have come to your feet' (εἰ καὶ ἐν σώματι οὐκ ἦκα παρὰ τοὺς πόδας σου ἐν πνεύματι ἦκα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας σου)<sup>140</sup>, recalling 1 Corinthians 5.3 and Colossians 2.5. Alongside the language of 'father' ([τ]ιμιώτατε πάτηρ (= πάτερ), τιμιοτάτῳ (= τιμιωτάτῳ) πατρί), II.27, 28, Valeria calls herself 'daughter' (παρὰ τῆς θυγατρὸς Οὐαλερίας), I.28. This is almost certainly a spiritual relationship.

Valeria asks Paphnouthios to pray 'to Christ that I may receive healing' (ἐτήσης (= αἰτήσης) μοι παρὰ τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ εἴασιν (= ἱάσιν) λάβω), I.7, 'for I am beset with a severe illness in a breathing difficulty' (μεγάλη γὰρ νόσῳ περίκειμαι δυσπνοίας δεινῆς), II.11f<sup>141</sup>. She sees Paphnouthios as someone with spiritual power: 'by those practising and observant of religious discipline revelations are shown' (τῶν γὰρ ἀσκούντων καὶ θρησκευόντων ἀποκαλύμματα δεικνύοντε (= ἀποκαλύμματα δεικνύονται)), II.9-11. It is noteworthy that the immediate object of Valeria's trust is not God and God's healing power but Paphnouthios and his spiritual power: 'thus I believe that through your prayers I may receive healing' (οὕτως π[ι]στεύω διὰ τῶν σῶν εὐχῶν εἴασιν (= ἱάσιν) λαμβάνω), II.8f, and οὕτως γὰρ πεπίστευκα καὶ πιστεύω ὅτι ἐὰν εὕξῃ ἐπάνω μου εἴασιν (= ἱάσιν) λαμβάνω, II.13-15<sup>142</sup>. Valeria also asks that Paphnouthios 'mention them (her daughters, Bassiana and Theoklia) in your holy prayer' (μνήσθητι αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ), II.21f. Similarly Paphnouthios is to pray for her husband who is not named (εὐχ[ου] ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ), I.24. There is no specific content to these requests.

Valeria prays for Paphnouthios the standard closing, ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι, τιμιώτατε πάτερ<sup>143</sup>, I.26f.

Bell notes that the letter exhibits the poorest orthography and grammar in the archive, that the same hand writes the body of the letter and the final greeting, and that Valeria is the only woman writer and therefore likely to be less educated. He concludes that Valeria herself writes

<sup>139</sup> See 97 below.

<sup>140</sup> In the papyrus: εἰ κὲ ἐν σώματι οὐκ ἦκα παρὰ τοὺς πόδας σ[ο]υ ἐν πνεύματι εἴκα πρὸς τοὺς πό[δ]ας σου.

<sup>141</sup> In the papyrus: μεγάλῳ γὰρ νόσῳ περίκειμε δυσπνήας δινῆς. On νόσος as severe illness; ἀσθένεια as less severe illness, see BGU 3.948 above. On healing, see 124-128 below.

<sup>142</sup> Use of the perfect tense suggests Paphnouthios' reputation as a healer, evident in other requests for healing, P.Lond.6.1926; 1928; 1929.

<sup>143</sup> In the papyrus: ἐρ<ρ>ῶσθέ σε εὐχομε, [τ]ιμιώτατε πάτηρ

the letter but that she is a wealthy, educated woman who is unpractised<sup>144</sup>. Bell's conclusion is possible but not necessary. The quality of scribal hands varies as does the scribe's status from being professional to being family or a friend.

**P.Neph.18, C4<sup>145</sup>, Provenance: Unknown; BL 9.173; 11.139**

This is a letter from Taouak 'to my lord brother Eudaimon and my beloved sister Apia your wife' (κυρίῳ μου ἀδελφῷ Εὐδαίμωνι καὶ τῇ ἀγαπητῇ ἀδελφῇ μου Ἀπία συμβίῳ (= συμβίῳ) σου), ll.1-3.

Taouak indicates her Christian belief in her greeting ἐν κυρίῳ, l.4, using the *nomen sacrum*. Ἀγαπητῇ ἀδελφῇ, found most frequently in Christian texts, supports the classification<sup>146</sup>. The text was purchased with the rest of the Nephros archive suggesting that Eudaimon, Apia and/or Taouak are associated with the monastery. The epithets ἀδελφός and ἀδελφή, ll.1, 2, verso, imply that they are family or members of the same community, most probably Melitian<sup>147</sup>.

Taouak opens her letter with a variation of a conventional prayer formula for health and good cheer, εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς μου ὑμᾶς ἀπολαβεῖν ....ω ὑγιαίνοντας καὶ εὐθυμοῦντας ἀπολαβεῖν δια ... εντα<sup>148</sup>, ll.5-9. The tautology, 'I pray in my prayers' (εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς)<sup>149</sup> and use of προσευχή<sup>150</sup> are unusual in the papyri. The letter closes with a greeting that is substantially lost ἐρρ[ , and may have been ἐρρωσθε or the conventional final prayer, ἐρρωσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι, l.28.

<sup>144</sup> The first editor considers that ὁλος ὁ οἶκός μου, ll.25f, implies wealth with access to scribes. For women's literacy see 11-19 especially 15f above.

<sup>145</sup> Most letters of the archive are undated. Dated letters are from 336/7?, 329, 335, 344. From the costs of commodities, P.Neph.8 is dated 352 or after, Bagnall (1989), 74f. The editors suggest undated texts most likely derive from after 344, which Bagnall supports, BL 9.173.

<sup>146</sup> See 109ff below.

<sup>147</sup> Kinship terms in a prescript, being for the addressee/s' eyes, act as politeness terms. Their non-literal use increases in C4 with the Christian practice of using them to denote fellow-Christians. Taouak's use of κυρίῳ μου ἀδελφῷ and τῇ ἀγαπητῇ ἀδελφῇ of a husband and wife favours a non-literal meaning, since brother/sister marriage was banned in 212 and there is no evidence of kinship terms being especially used for in-laws, Dickey (2004), 163.

<sup>148</sup> In the papyrus: εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς μου ὑμᾶς ἀπολαβῖν ....ω ὑγειένο(ν)τας καὶ εὐθυμοῦντας ἀπολαβῖν δια ... εντα.

<sup>149</sup> The *DDBDP* indicates no other uses of εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς and ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς. To the end of C4, ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς appears only in P.Neph.10.14f; P.Lond.6.1929 and Chr.Wilck.130 (all C4). Each refers to prayer of another. Of 12 occurrences of ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς, 7 are in the Nephros archive, also referring to the prayers of others. P.Oxy.6.939 refers to [ταῖς εὐ]χαῖς ἡμῶν, l.8; see 253f below.

<sup>150</sup> See 84f below.

Damage to the text makes its content unclear. It concerns an aroura that Taouak wants to sell or lease to Eudaimon and Apia. She has also issued them with six artabas of wheat which she wants returned because of the wheat price, but, she says, she is at a disadvantage, 'I am a woman (and) not able to buy (wheat)' (γυνή εἰμι, οὐ δύναμαι ἀγοράσαι), l.17<sup>151</sup>. Her meaning is unclear since women in the fourth century were legally able to buy wheat. The letter does not give sufficient information to determine Taouak's wealth. The one aroura for lease or sale is a small holding if this is Taouak's total land ownership, but there is no indication that it is<sup>152</sup>. Six artabas of wheat, 60% of the harvest from one aroura in a year and about three months' food supply<sup>153</sup>, which she has advanced to Eudaimon and Apia, imply a more substantial amount of property. If Taouak is a woman of the landowning class whose harvest is sufficient to allow her to trade in grain, the limitation because of her gender may be real but is relative rather than absolute.

Taouak states, ἐὰν ἀποστερήτέ με δηλώσατέ μοι καὶ ὄψεστε πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ll.24-26. The editors understand this as, '... if you defraud me, make plain to me (your response about the aroura) and you will see God', alleging fraud and connoting threat<sup>154</sup>, which the letter's affectionate tone makes unlikely. The word ἀποστερήτε may be a phonetic misspelling of ἀποστελλήτε<sup>155</sup> with the sentence to be understood as, '... if you send (them = the six artabas of wheat) to me, tell me and you will see God', connoting blessing.

The reason Taouak is confident about seeing God is 'for we are the treasure/treasury of God' (ὁ γὰρ θησαυρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμεῖς (= ἡμεῖς)), ll.26f. Neither the phrase nor the idea occurs in the 'Bible'.

### **P.Oxy.6.903, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 3.133; 11.145**

This text is a statement made by an unnamed woman, Anonyme, perhaps for an adjudication of her marital dispute with her husband, Anonymos<sup>156</sup>.

Anonyme is a Christian. She attends the church on the Sabbath, ἀπελθοῦσα [εἰ]ς τὸ κυριακὸν ἐν σαμβάθῳ (= σαββάτῳ)<sup>157</sup>, l.19. She also closes her statement with an attestation of truthfulness, 'God knows' (ταῦτα δὲ οἶδεν ὁ θεός), l.37. The statement

<sup>151</sup> For other statements of women's disadvantage, see P.Herm.17 above; SB 14.11881 below.

<sup>152</sup> 1 aroura=0.27ha. The Hermopolite register attests holdings of 1 aroura and less.

<sup>153</sup> It is estimated that 10 arourai supported a family of 4/5 people, Bagnall (1993a), 68, 116.

<sup>154</sup> Ἐὰν ἀποστερήτε με could be read with the previous statement, but makes little sense and leaves the following phrase disconnected.

<sup>155</sup> See 92ff below.

<sup>156</sup> Arnaoutoglou (1995), 26. The hand is 'elegant' indicating this is not a draft, Montserrat (1996), 91.

<sup>157</sup> For the contested reading ἐν σαμβάθῳ (ed.pr.), see 195, n.115 below; for Christian sabbath observance, see 195, n.116 below; for the meaning of τὸ κυριακόν, see 194f below.

is consistent with Christian belief but occurs in both Christian and pagan texts<sup>158</sup>.

Anonyme also calls on Anonymos' mother to attest Anonyme's truthfulness, l.31.

Anonyme's statement is made without a guardian or assistant. It relates to the mistreatment, including imprisonment and torture, by her husband of herself, her foster-daughters, her slaves, Anonymos' slaves, his assistant Chooous, his agent, the agent's son and a certain Zoilus' foster-son. Anonymos suspects his wife of stealing his property, a fact denied by those he questions even under torture. When Anonyme attends church without him, Anonymos objects and shuts the doors of the house against her. He insists that she pay her own corn taxes<sup>159</sup>, contrary to custom<sup>160</sup>. Anonyme clearly thinks her husband should pay the tax.

There is an attempt at reconciliation. Anonymos swears 'in the presence of the bishops and of his own brothers' (ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ τῶν ἐπισκόπων καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ), l.15, to give his wife access to the household keys, a right the husband had allowed to his slaves but not her. He promises also he will 'no longer insult her' (οὔτε ὑβρίζω αὐτήν ἀπεντεῦθεν), l.17. As a result 'a marriage contract is drawn up' (γαμικὸν γέγονεν), l.17, suggesting that theirs had been an ἄγραφος γάμος<sup>161</sup>. The contract no doubt commits to writing Anonymos' promises. Reference to Anonyme's attendance at church is an interesting possibility.

Both Anonyme and Anonymos own slaves, indicating that they are sufficiently wealthy to afford them. Two women are named. Zoe is a personal slave to Anonyme (τὴν ἐμὴν δούλην Ζωὴν) l.5. Anilla is a slave of Anonymos whom he asks Anonyme 'cast out' (ἐκβαλε), l.34. If Anonyme refuses to dismiss her Anonymos says he will acquire 'a mistress' (πολιτική), l.37, contrary to any marriage contract. The threat implies that Anilla has been a sexual partner to Anonymos<sup>162</sup>. Anonyme states that her husband 'persisted in vexing my soul' about her and Anilla seems to have acquired goods from Anonymos, perhaps in return for sexual favours although sexual intercourse with a slave required no such compensation<sup>163</sup>. Anonyme refuses to cast her out.

<sup>158</sup> Eg P.lond.2.11 (C3); PSI 8.895=SB 22.15560 (C3/4); P.Strasb.1.35 (C4/5). Explicit reference to God as μάρτυς occurs in P.Lond.3.1244 (C4); P.Oxy.14.1683 (C4). See also Nobbs (1998), 235f; Tibiletti (1979), 110.

<sup>159</sup> The land belongs to Anonyme, perhaps part of her dowry. Land as dowry becomes possible in the Roman period, Pomeroy (1983, 1985), especially 304.

<sup>160</sup> Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 309 argues that given the gendered division of labour, a woman needed her husband's co-operation in managing the agricultural labour and associated taxes.

<sup>161</sup> See 209 below.

<sup>162</sup> For slaves, male and female, as sexual partners to owners, see Brown (1991), 23f; Pomeroy (1975), 192. On πολιτική, see 250 below.

<sup>163</sup> κτάομαι does not imply stealing, LSJ, s.v.



Anonymos' religious belief is difficult to determine. The practice of marriage within a religious community<sup>164</sup> and his undertakings and oath before the bishops suggest he may be Christian. His attitude to his wife's church attendance, general behaviour to her and possible sexual relationship with the slave Anilla suggest otherwise<sup>165</sup>.

### **P.Oxy.8.1161, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 6.100**

This letter is fragmentary. The names of both sender and receiver are lost, although the address on the verso indicates the writer is τῆς ἀδελφῆς Σ...<sup>166</sup>, and the final greeting suggests the recipients are plural ὑμᾶς, left margin.

The surviving text opens '... and to our good Saviour and to his beloved Son' (...ας καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἡμῶν σωτῆρι καὶ τῷ οἱ[ι]ῷ (= υἱῷ) αὐτοῦ τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ), ll.2-4<sup>167</sup>. The reference to God in terms of 'his beloved Son' establishes the writer as Christian.

Anonyme's prayer concerns help with physical and spiritual dimensions, 'that they all may help our body, soul and spirit' (ὅπως οὗτοι πάντες β[ο]ηθήσωσιν ἡμῶν τῷ σώματι, τῇ ψυχῇ, τῷ πν(ευματ)ι πν(εύματ)ι), ll.4-7, incorrectly using the *nomen sacrum*, although the extension of its use to the spiritual dimension of the human person is understandable. Nonetheless, it suggests that Anonyme only partially understands its significance<sup>168</sup>. Unusually, Anonyme includes herself and possibly 'all those here' (πάντες οἱ ἐνταῦθα), left margin, in the prayer.

Anonyme 'is ill' (νοσοῦσα)<sup>169</sup>, ll.7f, to which she refers five times in the surviving thirteen lines of text, νοσοῦσα, l.8, δε[ιν]ῶς<sup>170</sup> ἔξουσα, l.8, πάνυ μὴ δυναμένη ἀναστῆναι ἐκ τῆς κοίτης μου, ll.8-11, πάνυ δινῶς (= δεινῶς) ἔχω, l.11, νοσήσω<sup>171</sup>, 1.14. Anonyme seems anxious to communicate the gravity of her situation. The nature of the illness is unknown.

<sup>164</sup> See 206f below.

<sup>165</sup> Although caution needs to be exercised in presuming a strong link between behaviour and a person's status as a Christian. See 143ff below.

<sup>166</sup> A literal or extended meaning is unclear.

<sup>167</sup> The editor also suggests θ(ε)ῷ καὶ is possible instead of ἡμῶν with a suggested parallel in Luke 1.47.

<sup>168</sup> Similarly P.Coll.Youtie 2.91 (C5/6), a Christian amulet asking healing for ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα καὶ πν(εῦμ)[α].

<sup>169</sup> For the sense as severe illness, see BGU 3.948 at 33 above.

<sup>170</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), no.60; BL 6.100.

<sup>171</sup> The editor proposes ἐνόσησα 'should strictly be read'. O'Callaghan (1969) retains νοσήσω, ed.pr., with the aorist subjunctive referring to her current illness. I adopt the latter.

The content of the letter, signalled by *περὶ δὲ οὗ μοι ἔγραψας*, ll.11f, opens with reference to an illness Menis, bearer of the addressee's letter to Anonyme, had for a period of twenty days before Anonyme herself became ill<sup>172</sup>. The remainder of the letter is lost.

**P.Oxy.12.1592, C3/4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 7.140**

This fragmentary letter is from a woman to 'my lord father' (*κύριέ μου π(ά)τερ*), l.3, incorrectly using the forms of the *nomina sacra* for him<sup>173</sup>. Both the woman's name and her father's are lost.

Anonyme's Christian belief is indicated by her allusion to the 'NT'. She greatly exults and rejoices (*καὶ πάνυ ἐμεγαλύνθην καὶ ἡγαλλίασα* (= *ἡγαλλίασα*)), ll.4f. The verbs occur together in the opening of the Song of Mary<sup>174</sup>. Her inappropriate use of the *nomina sacra* nonetheless confirms a Christian classification, as does her use of *ἀγαλλιάω*<sup>175</sup>. The reason for Anonyme's joy is that her father has remembered her (*ὅτει* (= *ὅτι*) *τοιοῦτός μου π(α)τήρ τὴν μνήμην ποιεῖται*), ll.5f, in sending the letter.

Anonyme uses 'holy' (*ιερόν*)<sup>176</sup> of the father, *αὐτὰ γὰρ δεξαμένη τὸ ἱερόν σου* [c.11] *υνησα*, ll.7f. Naldini suggests *τὸ ἱερόν σου* is a title of respect, 'your holiness'<sup>177</sup>. Tibiletti proposes *τὸ ἱερόν σου* [*πρόσωπον προσεκ*] *ύνησα*<sup>178</sup>, since kissing the face, hands or feet occurs in other letters<sup>179</sup>.

Anonyme does not pray for her father but the statement may be lost. The content of the letter beyond the expression of joy is unknown.

<sup>172</sup> Following the reconstruction in O'Callaghan (1969), 324; BL 6.100.

<sup>173</sup> See 111f, 189f, 230 below.

<sup>174</sup> Luke 1.47.

<sup>175</sup> See 80f below.

<sup>176</sup> *ἱερός* is frequent in pagan texts but rare in the 'NT' and LXX, which prefer *ἅγιός*, G. Schrenk in TDNT 3.221-230.

<sup>177</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), no.31, 160 who cites Augustine, *Letter* 78.88 with 'sanctitas tua', but the phrase is not a title. The neuter form would be unlikely in a title. It does not occur among the titles listed in Dinneen (1927).

<sup>178</sup> BL 7.140.

<sup>179</sup> SB 5.8091 (C3); P.Lond.3.1244 (C4). See Tibiletti (1979), 57. Possibly also P.Herm.8.6.

**P.Oxy.48.3407, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 8.270; 9.202; 10.153**

This is a letter 'from the landlady', (π(α)ρὰ τῆς γεούχου)<sup>180</sup>, l.1, to Papnouthis 'steward' (προ(νο)ητή)<sup>181</sup> and Hatres 'foreman' (φρ(ον)τιστή)), and is part of the Papnouthis and Dorotheos Archive, P.Oxy.48. 3384-3429 (331-c.376).

The landlady instructs Papnouthis and Hatres about urgent work on her land because her 'brothers' will take rocks away 'on the Lord's Day' (ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ (= κυριακῇ) ἡμέρᾳ), ll.15f. The landlady marks time by the Christian day of worship. Her use of κυριακή with ἡμέρα indicates κυριακή is not yet a substantive. Κυριακόζ/ -ή/ -όν meaning 'the Lord's', is rare in the papyri to the end of the fourth century<sup>182</sup>, and it is unlikely that such a title would be used outside Christian circles, and hence it is probable that the landlady is Christian.

The landlady's Christianity does not imply that Papnouthis and Hatres are Christians. Indeed, Anonyme clarifies the term, 'that is, tomorrow, the 11<sup>th</sup>' (τουτ' ἐστὶν αὔριον 11), ll.16f. Anonyme calls Nepotianos and Diogenes whose stones will be hauled, and her employees, Papnouthis and Hatres, ἀδελφοί, ll.10, 18, but the meanings are uncertain<sup>183</sup>.

The landlady does not open or close her letter with prayer or make any other overt reference to God or matters of belief. Her letter is unusual in having no concluding formula.

**P.Oxy.50.3581, C4/5, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 11.170**

This is a petition from Aurelia Attiaena to the tribune<sup>184</sup>, Flavius Marcellus, seeking financial and legal redress for herself and punishment for her husband, Paul, whom she cites as Παῦλος τις, l.2<sup>185</sup>.

Attiaena documents Paul's abuse. He abducts her 'with violence ... and lived with me in marriage'<sup>186</sup> ll.3f. He subsequently leaves for another woman, taking Attiaena's property. After intervention on Paul's behalf by the presbyters, Attiaena takes him back, whereupon he

<sup>180</sup> Possibly the Klematia in P.Oxy.48.3406, but this is uncertain.

<sup>181</sup> Not caretaker, BL 10.153.

<sup>182</sup> On use of κυριακόζ/ -ή/ -όν and the earliest papyrological reference to κυριακή as the Lord's day, see 196 below.

<sup>183</sup> See 145f below.

<sup>184</sup> τριβο[ύνω ἐπιτεταγμέ]νω, BL 11.170.

<sup>185</sup> The omission of 'Aurelius' may be a mistake or an expression of disrespect. There is no indication that Paul is clergy to account for the omission of the civil status marker as a religious marker. See Worp (2005).

<sup>186</sup> On abduction, cohabitation and marriage, see 211f below.

'ravaged my property' and leaves her to face the wrath of soldiers billeted in her home whom Paul has robbed. Attiaena states that in this he 'despised my orphanhood' (καταφρονήσας τῆς ὀρφανίας μου), l.12. Attiaena issues him with a *repudium*, through the *tabularius* according, she says, to imperial law<sup>187</sup>. Paul again kidnaps, imprisons her and makes her pregnant. Attiaena is silent about the circumstances. Paul leaves her again for the other woman and threatens to spread malicious rumours about her. At this point Attiaena petitions the tribune for redress. Both the divorce and the petition are within her legal capacity. She lodges her petition without a guardian or assistant.

Of interest to this thesis is Attiaena's statement, 'again he beguiled (me) through presbyters' (πάλιν (= πάλιν) ἐξηπά[της]εν διὰ πρεσβυτέρων), l.8, so that she takes him back into her home. The presbyters are church officials, given a late fourth- or early fifth-century date<sup>188</sup>. Attiaena's compliance suggests that she is a Christian for whom the presbyters are authority figures. It is likely that Paul is also Christian, given his name, the date<sup>189</sup> and his use of the presbyters and their willingness to press his case. Paul's marriage to the Christian Attiaena, which might imply he shares her belief, need not do so given that Paul abducted Attiaena, ruling out choice on her part.

Attiaena signs the petition herself, 'Αυρηλία Ἀττίενα ἐπιδέδωκα, l. 24, although she has not written the body of the text. She is at least minimally literate.

**SB 8.9746=SB 3.7243, early C4, Provenance: Unknown; *BL Supplement*; 2.2.131; 6.159; 11.209f**

**P.Oxy.14.1774, early C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus**

These two letters are from 'Didyme and the sisters' (Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί)<sup>190</sup>, 'to Sophias, my beloved sister' ([Σοφιάτι μ]ου ἀγαπητῇ [ἀ]δελφῇ), SB 8.9746.1, (κυρία

<sup>187</sup> On women and divorce, see 138f, 215 below.

<sup>188</sup> For the date, see ed.pr., 201, 203. For the meaning of πρεσβύτερος, see P.Kell.1.Gr.32; Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.; Tomsin (1952).

<sup>189</sup> While 'Paul' could be a Roman name, it is most frequent among Christians in late C4. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (247-264) notes, 'Paul and especially Peter are favourite names for the children of believers', Eusebius, *HE* 7.25.14. Strictly the name signals that Paul's parents were Christian, but given the patterns of inherited belief, it is likely Paul is Christian. See Salzman (2002), 146f, 147-150, 155-157, 158-161.

<sup>190</sup> Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί, SB 8.9746.2; Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί, SB 8.9746.verso; Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί, P.Oxy.14.1774.2f; Διδύμη σὺν ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς, P.Oxy.14.1774.verso.

ἀδελφῇ Σωφιάτι (= Σοφιάδι?)<sup>191</sup>), verso, and 'to the lady sister Atienateia' (κυρεία (= κυρία)<sup>192</sup> τῇ (= τῇ) ἀδελφῇ Ἀτιενατείῃ), P.Oxy.14.1774.1<sup>193</sup>.

Didyme and the sisters are Christian. They greet Sophias ἐν κυρίῳ, SB 8.9746.2<sup>194</sup>, using the *nomen sacrum*. *Nomina sacra* also occur in the closing prayer ἐρρῶσθαί σοι (= σε) ἐν κυρίῳ, ὁ κύριός σοι (= σε) διαφυλάξαι ἡμῖν, SB 8.9746.34. Didyme (and the sisters?) express the prayer as two infinitives, omitting εὐχομαι/εὐχόμεθα with the first, and using the second as a third person imperative. Ἀγαπητή, while not exclusive to Christian texts, is, in combination with ἀδελφή, most likely to indicate a Christian authorship<sup>195</sup>. Didyme and the sisters greet Atienateia ἐν κυρίῳ, using the *nomen sacrum*, P.Oxy.14.1774.3.

In SB 8.9746, there is no opening prayer, rather a second greeting, 'first, we considered it necessary to greet you' ([προηγουμ]ένως ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησά[μεθα προ]σαγορεύειν σοι (= σε)), ll.3f<sup>196</sup>. While an argument from silence is always problematic, the lack of prayer is noteworthy when considering the possibility that Didyme, the sisters and their addressees are part of an ascetic community<sup>197</sup>. A similar greeting opens P.Oxy.14.1774, προηγουμένως ἀναγκῆον (= ἀναγκαῖον) ἡν προσαγορεύειν σοι (= σε), l.4f, with prayer added, εὐχόμεναι ὑγιένιν σοι ἡμεῖν (= ὑγιαίνειν σε ἡμῖν), l.5. Didyme explicitly includes the sisters in the offering of the prayer, suggesting a corporate exercise. The papyrus is broken at the point where a closing prayer might occur.

The main sections of both letters contain no religious references. They concern matters of small business. SB 8.9746 speaks of the exchange of money and goods, sandals, grapes, wine, an ostrich egg<sup>198</sup>, cloth, a basket, a scarf, cakes. The quantities are small and

<sup>191</sup> BL 2.2.131.

<sup>192</sup> In the papyrus: κυρεία with α corrected to read κυρεῖ.

<sup>193</sup> These letters were originally published separately but the identity of their authors was proposed by Manteuffel (1927), BL 2.2.102. It has been accepted by later scholarship, eg Naldini (1968, 1998), nos 36; 37; Emmett (1984); Elm (1994, 2000), 236ff. Manteuffel, 213, considers the handwriting may be the same but that it is uncertain.

<sup>194</sup> The phrase ἐν κυρίῳ most frequently modifies χαίρειν.

<sup>195</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 44f; Wipszycka (1974), 214.

<sup>196</sup> The formula signals that a letter-bearer is available. See 2 Corinthians 9.5; Philippians 2.25.

<sup>197</sup> See 235, 321f below.

<sup>198</sup> In the Byzantine period, ostrich eggs were hung in churches as symbols of light. They were also used as vessels, caps and food, Galavaris (1978); Emmett (1984), 83. The context favours a domestic reference.

personal<sup>199</sup>. Didyme expects acknowledgement, complaining on two occasions of failure to write, ll.19, 23. Didyme's business operates with clients' credit. Loukilos has money left with Didyme from which she purchases goods for him, SB 8.9746.15-18. P.Oxy.14.1774 deals with certain orders (τά ἐντολικά), ll.10, 13, that Atienateia has placed with Didyme to be paid from her 1300 denarii credit.

Didyme shifts between first person singular and plural forms in both letters<sup>200</sup>, suggesting that she writes alone, but at times consciously associates the sisters with her.

The relationships among those referred to in the letters are clearly close and evidence of an extensive network, with seventeen people including men and a married couple giving and receiving greetings.

P.Oxy.14.1774 includes greetings to 'the lady sister blessed Asous' (τὴν κυρείαν (= κυρίαν) ἀδελφὴν μακαρείαν (= μακαρίαν) Ασοῦν), ll.17f, almost certainly Asous' biological mother. The adjective μακαρία is to be understood in its religious sense of 'blessed (by God)'<sup>201</sup>.

**SB 12.10840=PSI 7.831, 27 March C4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 8.362; 9.270**

The prescript of this letter reads 'my lady mother, Syras, Euthalios and Mikke' (κυρία [μο]ν μητρί (= μητηρ) Συρατι (?) Εὐθάλις (= Εὐθάλιος) καὶ Μίκης)<sup>202</sup>, ll.1f. It is written entirely in the first person singular by Euthalios, except for a personal greeting from Mikke 'to the *epistates*<sup>203</sup> and his children and wife' (καὶ ἐγὼ Μίκη ἀσπάζομαι τὸν ἐπιστάτην σὺν τοῖς τέκνοις καὶ τῇ συμβίῳ αὐτοῦ)<sup>204</sup>, ll.22-24. Euthalios consistently refers to Mikke as his sister in the third person, ll.7, 10. She is most probably his natural sister, given the reference to 'our mother' (πρὸς τὴν μητέρα ἡμῶν), l.8, and Mikke's proposed visit. It is unlikely that Mikke is Euthalios' wife<sup>205</sup>. Mikke's embedded portion of the letter contains no religious references. However, Euthalios'

<sup>199</sup> For an amended reading of ll.20-24, see Gonis (1997), 142-144. The issues do not affect this thesis.

<sup>200</sup> SB 8.9746.1, 15, 17, 19; P.Oxy.14.1774.7, 14.

<sup>201</sup> See 102f below.

<sup>202</sup> In the papyrus: κυρία [μο]ν μήτηρ Συρατι...[.]. Εὐθάλις καὶ Μίκης πολλὰ χαίριν. Ed.pr. proposed Συρατιν[α] = Συρία, but Rea (1970), 360, finds Συρατι. Rea's corrected version is followed here. Μίκη occurs in ll.2, 7, 22; Μίκκη in l.15. The latter is more frequent, Preisigke (1967), s.v. See also Horsley, 'A unique mention of Lent in a papyrus letter' in *ND* 1.132f.

<sup>203</sup> The identity of this *epistates* is unknown and his function uncertain. 'Επιστάτης is used of various officials, Rea (1970), 362.

<sup>204</sup> In the papyrus: καὶ ἐγὼ Μίκη ἀσ[π]άζομαι τὸν αἰπιστάτην σὺ τοῖς τέκνυς καὶ τῇ συμβίῳ αὐτοῦ. Neither the original editor nor Rae refers to a second hand.

<sup>205</sup> On brother/sister marriage, see 217, n.102 below.

letter suggests that Mikke is Christian and provides information on some of her Christian practice.

The letter was originally dated to fifth/sixth century but has been re-dated, on the basis of palaeography and style, to the fourth century<sup>206</sup>.

The letter opens with prayer 'to the Lord God' (παρὰ τῷ κυ(ρί)ῳ θε(ῷ)), ll.4f<sup>207</sup>, using early and unusual *nomina sacra* by suspension<sup>208</sup>, and establishing Euthalios as a Christian. He makes time references, 'the end of the fast' (πρὸς τὴν λύσιν τῆς νηστείας)<sup>209</sup>, l.9, and 'the festival' (πρὸ τῆς ἰορτῆς (= ἑορτῆς), πρὸς τὴ ἰορτή (= τὴν ἑορτήν), ll.6, 12, which, given the date of 27 March, are almost certainly Lent and Easter<sup>210</sup>. Euthalios includes greetings from a Nonna, l.17. The name is most frequent in Christian texts although not exclusive to them. Its occurrence here suggests a Christian circle. The letter closes with a standard prayer, ἐ[ρρω]σθαί σε εὐχομαι πολλοῖς χρόνοις, l.31. The content concerns proposed visits by Euthalios and Mikke to their mother.

Mikke and Syras are almost certainly both Christian women. Both observe the church calendar of Lenten fast and Easter festival, Mikke, regulating her brother's travel to accord with the end of the fast, Syras, from her children's care for her practice. Syras also is the recipient of Euthalios' statement of prayer, which is meaningful where Syras and Euthalios share a common belief.

#### **SB 14.11588=P.Mich.inv.337, late C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This is a letter from Aria to 'my lord, son' (κύριέ μου υἱέ), l.1, Δωροθέω Φιλίππου, verso. Aria styles herself ἡ μήτηρ, l.2. The terms, the content of the letter, are undoubtedly literal.

The letter opens with prayer to divine providence for Dorotheos' health and well-being (προηγουμένως εὐχομαι τῇ θεῖᾳ προνοίᾳ παρὰ τῷ θε(ῷ) σοι ὑγιαίνουντι καὶ ὁλοκληροῦντι δοθῆναι τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα)<sup>211</sup>, ll.3-6, using the early form of the

<sup>206</sup> Rea (1970).

<sup>207</sup> For εὐχομαι with παρὰ, see 253, n.80 below.

<sup>208</sup> Other examples, PSI 8.921 (C2/3)=Psalm 77; SB 14.11588; Paap nos 21; 33; 53 (all C3); 123; 161; 233; 251 (all C4); 259 (C4/5). See Roberts (1977), 27; Youtie (1976b), 66; Paap (1959), 100-113. See also SB 14.11588 below.

<sup>209</sup> In the papyrus: πρὸς τὴν λύσιν τῆς νηστείας.

<sup>210</sup> See 197, nn.130, 131 below.

<sup>211</sup> In the papyrus: π[ροη]γουμένος εὐχομε τ[ῇ] θε[ί]ᾳ προ[ν]οία παρὰ τῷ θε[ῷ] σοι ὑγι[έ]νοντι καὶ ὁλοκληροῦν[τ]ει δο[θ]ῆναι τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμμ[α]τα.

*nomen sacrum*,  $\overline{\theta\epsilon}$ , abbreviated by suspension<sup>212</sup>, and indicating that Aria is a Christian. Prayer to divine providence is most frequent in Christian texts and strengthens the Christian classification<sup>213</sup>, as does mention of 'my (Dorotheos') sister Maria', l.19. Maria's name suggests that she is a Christian, and that this is a Christian circle<sup>214</sup>. Whether Maria is Dorotheos' natural sister who need not be Aria's daughter, or his wife, a friend and/or a member of the church, is unclear. Whatever the relationship, Maria fails to give Aria what she wants, eliciting the comment 'for what goes right for me' (τεί (= τί) γὰρ ὀρθοποδεῖ ἐν ἐμοί), l.21f.

Aria rebukes her son for his neglect (θαυμάζω πῶς (= πῶς) ἡμέλησάς μου), l.31, refers to an orphan who is with her and her need of expenses (ἵνα καὶ τοῦτο καὶ οἶδας (= εἰδῆς) ὅτι τὸ παιδίον τὸ ὀρφανικὸν παρ' ἐμοί ἐστὶν καὶ χρεῖαν ἔχω ἀναλωμάτων αὐτῇ)<sup>215</sup>, ll.23-25, and alludes to commercial matters about which she seeks Dorotheos' help. Aria does not explain her or Dorotheos' relationship to the orphan.

#### **SB 14.11881, C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This letter is from Allous to 'lady mother Faustina' (κυρία μου μητρα (= μητρί) Φαυστίνα), ll.1f. The papyrus is illegible at its central fold, ll.11-17.

Allous greets Faustina ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ, l.3, using the *nomen sacrum*. It indicates that Allous is Christian and implies that Faustina too is Christian<sup>216</sup>. Allous also greets 'Kyriake, the mother' (Κυριακῇν τῇ[ν] μητέρα), l.30. The name first appears in the papyri in the first half of the fourth century<sup>217</sup> and signals a shift from κυριακός/ -ή/ -όν, 'a thing belonging to the Emperor', to 'a thing belonging to the Lord (Christ)', to use as a name. Kyriake's name suggests that she is Christian but this is uncertain.

<sup>212</sup> See SB 12.10840 above.

<sup>213</sup> See 120-123, 162, 165 below.

<sup>214</sup> The name can also be Manichean, pagan or Jewish but given the other evidences of Christianity in this text, it is almost certainly Christian. See also 363 below, and P.Abinn.49 at 36 above.

<sup>215</sup> In the papyrus: εἶνα καὶ τοῦτο καὶ οὔδας, ὅθει τὸ πεδεῖον τὸ ὀρφανεικὸν παρ' ἐμ[οί] ἐσθῆιν καὶ χρεῖαν ἔχω ἀναλωμάτων αὐτῇ. For ἵνα with the subjunctive as an imperative, see Moulton and Turner (1906, 1976), 1.177-179.

<sup>216</sup> On the use of *nomina sacra* to determine the beliefs of an addressee, see 279ff below.

<sup>217</sup> P.Abinn.51, 52 (both 346); O.Douch 2.140 (C4), Preisigke (1967), s.v. None indicates the woman's belief. Other occurrences are dated C7, C8. The name is not listed in Forabaschi (1967-1971). The masculine form Kyriakos is most frequent in C6-8.



Allous closes her letter with the standard prayer, [ἐρρ]ῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι, l.31. There is no other religious reference and no opening prayer<sup>218</sup>.

Allous addresses Faustina and Kyriake as μήτηρ, l.1, ll.30f. The nature of these relationships is uncertain<sup>219</sup>. The definite article used of Kyriake τὴν μητέρα, acts as a possessive in phrases of relationship<sup>220</sup>. She is the only person whom Allous greets and presumably is part of Faustina's household. Κυρία is not used of Kyriake, which may indicate no more than a linguistic awkwardness, or that Faustina is the recipient of the letter. Allous also salutes Faustina's 'maternal disposition' (τὴν μητρικὴν σο[υ] διάθεσιν), ll.7f, an unusual phrase in the papyri<sup>221</sup>.

Allous informs Faustina that 'the young children' (τὰ νήπια παιδιά), l.29, greet her. The children most probably are those at ll.18f, 'the orphan children of my brother' (τῶν ὀρφανῶν παίδων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου), and minors<sup>222</sup>. Allous declares (μὴδυνα[μ]ένῃ αὐτοῖς ἐπαρκεῖν γυνή οὖσα), ll.20f. The nature of the assistance is not indicated but the inability being due to her gender is clear. Allous asks Faustina to send her hemp through the letter-bearer so that Allous may sell it εἰς ἀντά, l.27, for the orphan's benefit.

#### **SB 18.13612=P.Lond.3.1014, C4, Provenance: Lykopolis?; BL 10.85, 221**

This is a letter 'to my lord, father, benefactor, Apa Johannes<sup>223</sup>, (from) the mother of Philadelphos the apotactic' (κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ εὐεργέτῃ ἅπα Ἰωάννη ἢ μήτηρ Φιλαδέλφου ἀποτακτικοῦ), ll.1-3. It is likely that Apa Johannes is to be identified with the ascetic known from P.Herm.7-10, 17<sup>224</sup>.

The mother is almost certainly Christian. She uses vocabulary frequent in 'biblical' texts, 'you both have mercy and save' (καὶ ἐλεεῖς καὶ σώσεις), ll.6f; refers to (divine) providence (τὴν πρόνοιαν), l.4, most frequent in Christian texts; and appeals to Apa Johannes, an ascetic, as 'my lord father' (κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ), l.1. She is mother of an apotactic, and while it may be that Philadelphos was converted independently, it is

<sup>218</sup> See P.Herm.17 above on the tendency to omit prayer in late C4, C5.

<sup>219</sup> Kinship terms with a name can be either literal or extended, Dickey (2004).

<sup>220</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 91.

<sup>221</sup> See 233 below.

<sup>222</sup> Νήπια implies the children are minors, *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>223</sup> Parassoglou (1987), 249, notes the suggestion of J. D. Thomas that Apa Johannes is to be identified with the ascetic in P. Herm. 7-10, 17, but comments that it is unprovable. The identity of the men is presumed rather than argued in Zuckerman (1995), 188f, who cites the dates of the acquisitions of the documents as evidence.

<sup>224</sup> Their identity is suggested by J. D. Thomas in Parassoglou (1987), 249, who regards it as possible but unprovable. The hypothesis is accepted in Zuckerman (1995), 188.

more likely that this is a Christian family. The letter lacks χαίρειν<sup>225</sup> and an opening prayer<sup>226</sup>. The papyrus is broken where a closing prayer might occur.

The text, originally dated sixth century, has been re-dated, on the basis of its references to an ἀποτακτικός and an ἐξάκτωρ, and on palaeographical grounds, to the fourth century<sup>227</sup>.

The mother does not name herself but styles herself solely by her relationship with her son, ll.2f, verso<sup>228</sup>. She claims to be a 'widow' and connects herself with 'the orphans' (κάμε (= καὶ ἐμέ) τὴν χήρα[ν] καὶ τοὺς ὁ[ρ]φανοὺς [ ], ll.10f, perhaps Philadelphos' brothers and sisters, or her grandchildren<sup>229</sup>.

The mother appeals to Apa Johannes for his mercy so as to honour her son, (κάμε (= καὶ ἐμέ) ἐλέησον εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ ἀποτακτικοῦ μου υἱοῦ), ll.7-9<sup>230</sup>. She cites as precedent his response of mercy and deliverance to others who approach him (πάντας τοὺς εἰς σὲ καταφεύγοντας καὶ ἐλεεῖς καὶ σώζεις), ll.3-7. In her assessment, Johannes stands 'next to providence' (μετὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν)<sup>231</sup>, l.4, in showing mercy.

The reason for Anonyme's appeal is not specified but concerns Theognostos, the *exactor*, that is, it is about taxation<sup>232</sup>, and Anonyme most probably seeks Apa Johannes' mediation with the civic authorities. The papyrus is broken at this point.

**Stud.Pal.20.86=Chr.Mitt.69=CPR 1.19, 31 January 330, Provenance: Hermopolis Magna; BL 1.451; 2.2.51; 7.260; 10.271**

This text is submitted by Aurelia Demetria also called Ammonia, daughter of Polydeukos, an ex-councillor of Hermopolis, to the προπολιτευόμενος, l.1,

<sup>225</sup> The word is increasingly omitted from letters from C4, ed., 102, n.16; Tibiletti (1979), 31. Koskeniemi (1956) notes that the prescript and address overlap in function, giving the names of writer and addressee, and that they differ in the inclusion of χαίρειν in the prescript. With χαίρειν omitted and the prescript no longer a greeting, the prescript also tends not to be used.

<sup>226</sup> See P.Herm.17 above, on the tendency to omit opening prayers.

<sup>227</sup> Parassoglou (1987), 247. The script is unusual in being punctuated.

<sup>228</sup> On teknomyny, see on P.Abinn.34 above. The most likely reconstruction of the address uses a similar description: παράκλησις τῆς μη[τρὸς Φιλαδέλφου ἀποτακτικοῦ, possibly in a second hand, Parassoglou (1987), 249. It suggests the mother may be literate. The final greetings, where her hand is most likely, are lost. See 11-19 especially 15f above on literacy.

<sup>229</sup> 'Orphan' can denote loss of both or either parent, Horsley, 'ὀρφανός' in ND 4.162ff. A possible reconstruction is: τοὺς ὁ[ρ]φανοὺς [μου υἱοῦ]ς τ[ι], Parassoglou (1987), 250.

<sup>230</sup> Εἰς τιμὴν τινός, 'for someone's honor = that he might be honored', W. Arndt and F. Gringrich, A *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, 1957, s.v., τιμή, cited in Parassoglou (1987), 250. For similar appeals, see P.Herm.17 above.

<sup>231</sup> Almost certainly ἡ πρόνοια, l.4, is equivalent to ἡ θεία πρόνοια. The more usual phrase is μετὰ τὸν θεόν, eg P.Abinn.34 (346); P.Herm.17; P.Lond.3.1244; P.Oxy.56.3859 (all C4); P.Giss.68 (117), a certainly pagan text. On ἡ θεία πρόνοια, see 120ff below.

<sup>232</sup> Thomas (1959); Lewis and Short (1879, 1980), s.v.

Salloustios<sup>233</sup> Olympiodoros. It is a memorandum, or possibly a counter-petition<sup>234</sup>.

Demetria acts without a guardian or assistant<sup>235</sup>.

The memorandum concerns a conflict between Demetria and Eus, wife of Saprikios, over payments associated with land Demetria sold her. The sale agreement took place 'in the presence of Dioskouros, presbyter of the church in the region' (ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ Διοσκοουρίδου πρεσβυτέρου τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ ὅροις), ll.7f. Both women accept Dioskouros as a trustworthy witness<sup>236</sup>. Demetria refers to other witness figures: an intermediary witness can give instructions about implementing the contract (ἀκολούθως οἷς ἐὰν προσφωνήσῃ ὁ μεταξὺ μάρτυς)<sup>237</sup>, ll.13f; an intermediary can witness that no deposit has been received (ὁ μεταξὺ δύναται μαρτύρασθαι), l.16<sup>238</sup>; a mediator can advise the προπολειτενόμενος, (ὁ μεταξὺ μεσίτης προσφωνήσῃ παρὰ τῇ σῇ ἐπιεικίᾳ), l.23. This may be the same person as ὁ μεσίτης, l.10, who with Demetria presses Eus to honour the agreement. The relation of these mediating figures to one another and to Dioskouros is unclear. It seems probable, given that Dioskouros is named and that he was the original witness, that he would be approached about this dispute and is to be identified with one or all of ὁ μεταξὺ μάρτυς, ὁ μεταξὺ, ὁ μεσίτης, and ὁ μεταξὺ μεσίτης. Whatever his role, Eus does not respond.

Demetria claims that Eus has lied in her own submission; in particular, she 'inserted in the documents an illegality, namely that our son must join with me in selling my inheritance' (ἐνεχάραξεν τοῖς αὐτοῖς βιβλίοις πρᾶγμα παράνομον, ὥς δεῖν τὸν ἡμέτερον υἱὸν συνχρηματίζειν μοι πιπράσκουσάν (= πιπρασκούση) μου τὰ τῶν γονέων), ll.18f, which she denies<sup>239</sup>.

Given the date, when the role of clergy as secular functionaries was still being established, the cumulative probabilities suggest that Demetria, at least, is Christian. Where clergy act in secular roles and religious belief can be established, at least one of the parties is always Christian<sup>240</sup>, and Demetria appears aligned with Dioskouros. The text, however, gives no information on the nature of her beliefs. The beliefs of Eus are less certain. Being in dispute does not clarify the situation. While yielding

<sup>233</sup> Σα[λ]λουστίῳ not Α[ὐ]ρηλίῳ, see BGU 12.2135 (340-350) note to ll.1f; *BL* 7.260.

<sup>234</sup> This is suggested by Demetria's ἀντεπιστάλματα, Steinwenter (1924), 56ff; *BL* 2.2.51.

<sup>235</sup> SB 16.12673 (324/5) is a loan submitted by Aurelia Demetria, also called Ammonia, daughter of Polydeukos. The text survives only as a fragment but refers to Demetria's rights under the *ius liberorum*.

<sup>236</sup> See 177 below.

<sup>237</sup> ὁ μεταξὺ μάρτυς = ὁ μεταξὺ μάρτυς, l.14; ὁ μεταξὺ μεσίτης = ὁ μεταξὺ μεσίτης, l.23, Diethart (1992), 226; *BL* 10.271.

<sup>238</sup> The substantive use of μεταξὺ is not attested in *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>239</sup> For the possible implications of this, see 234 below.

<sup>240</sup> Eg in C4 P.Lond.2.417 (346); P.Grenf.1.53; P.Herm.17; P.Lips.1.43; P.Oxy.6.903; P.Oxy.50.3581. Also P.Oxy.7.1026 (C5).

even when wronged<sup>241</sup>, maintaining peaceful relationships<sup>242</sup> and settling disputes within the community<sup>243</sup> are Christian ideals, the realities of conflict remain<sup>244</sup>.

The church of which Dioskouros is a presbyter covers an area sufficient to be called ὁποι and probably includes a number of villages. Dioskouros' occupation is most probably presbyter; that is, he is paid by the Christian community<sup>245</sup>.

### **TEXTS WRITTEN BY A CHRISTIAN WOMAN AND A MAN**

**P.Lips.1.28 = Chr.Mitt.363, 31 December 381, Provenance: Hermopolis; BL 8.170; 9124**

This text is written by Aurelia Teeus and her son, Aurelius Silvanos, an apotactic<sup>246</sup>. The document is the registration of the adoption by Silvanos of Paesis<sup>247</sup> his nephew and Teeus' grandson, who is about ten 'more or less'. The voices of both Teeus and Silvanos are heard in the first person, with Teeus 'handing (Paesis) over' (π[αρ]αδεδοκέναι), l.13, to Silvanos who agrees to the adoption and its conditions. Teeus acts μετὰ συνεστῶτος, the κώμαρχος, Aurelius Proous, whom she has voluntarily engaged and who writes for her since she is illiterate (οὐ ἐκο[ύσ]α ἐμαντῇ παρήνεγκα τοῦ καὶ γράφοντος ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ μὴ εἰδυίης γράμματα), ll.4f. Teeus gives her age as 60 years<sup>248</sup>.

It is likely that Teeus is a widow or divorced. If she were married, her husband would most probably assist her, although she notes that the assistant will write for her and it may be that her husband is illiterate. Nonetheless, no mention is made of a husband in the document. Rather, Teeus, a woman, gives the child in adoption.

Teeus' Christianity is suggested by the Christian belief of her son, Silvanos an apotactic. While Silvanos may have converted independently, in the late fourth

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<sup>241</sup> 1 Corinthians 6.7.

<sup>242</sup> Philippians 2.1-4.

<sup>243</sup> 1 Corinthians 6.1-6.

<sup>244</sup> Eg 1 Corinthians 3.3; Philippians 4.1. The constant injunctions towards good relationships suggest realities were otherwise.

<sup>245</sup> A full-time professional priesthood is known in Egypt from the period of the Pharaohs, Jones (1964), 933. Harnack (1908), 1.474, gives evidence of churches in rural areas under the direction of presbyters and even deacons rather than bishops. This becomes more frequent after 324.

<sup>246</sup> For the meaning of ἀποτακτικός, see 307f below.

<sup>247</sup> Paesis is named for his maternal grandfather. It raises the possibility that there was an older brother, named for his paternal grandfather according to custom.

<sup>248</sup> Use of age-rounding is consistent with Teeus' illiteracy, ll.25f. But Silvanos is literate. See Duncan-Jones (1977).

century it is more likely that he was born into a Christian family. His choice to be a monk suggests a religious environment of committed piety. A religious basis is given to Silvanos' adoption of Paesis, κατ' εὐσέβειαν (= εὐσέβειαν), l.11. The words are in Silvanos' first-person statement but seem likely to have come from Papnouthios, strengthening the sense that this is a Christian family.

Paesis' father, Papnouthios, Teeus' elder son, has died. Paesis' mother is also dead since the child comes to Silvanos' care 'with his paternal and maternal inheritance' (μετ[ὰ] τῆς πατρῶας αὐτοῦ [κ]λη[ρον]ομίας καὶ μη[τρ]ώ[ας])<sup>249</sup>, l.14. Silvanos becomes responsible for Paesis' property until his majority, and Silvanos agrees to act in good faith (ἐπὶ τῷ με ταῦτα αὐτῷ διαφυλάξει καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει αὐτῷ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ γεναμένῳ μετὰ καλῆς πίστεως)<sup>250</sup>, ll.20f. The document uses the standard formulae for adoption in the fourth century<sup>251</sup>, stating that Silvanos will bring the boy up, feed and clothe him, (ἀνατρέφεσθαι εὐγενῶς καὶ γνησίως, θρέψω καὶ ἱματίζω (= ἱματίσω) εὐγενῶς καὶ γνησίως) ll.12, 18, as if his own firstborn of his own blood (πρ[ὸ]ς τὸ εἶναί σου υἱ[ὸ]ν γνήσιον καὶ πρωτότοκον ὥς ἐξ ἰδίου αἵματος γεννηθέντα σοι, ὥς υἱὸν γνήσιον καὶ θυσικόν ὥς ἐξ ἐ[μ]ου γενόμενον), ll.15f, 18,<sup>252</sup>. In addition, Paesis will inherit Silvanos' property (καὶ τῶν ἐμῶν πραγμάτων κληρονόμον υἱοθετηθέντα μοι), l.22. Silvanos, thus, owns property that he has not ceded to relatives or to his community. The document presumes that Silvanos has, and will have, no children, or it privileges Paesis over any Silvanos may have.

### **P.Neph.1, C4<sup>253</sup>, Provenance: Alexandria BL 9.173; 11.139**

This letter is written by Paul and Tapiam to 'Ophellios and the other beloved brothers' (Ὁφελλί[ω καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἀδελφ[ο]ῖ[ς]), ll.1f.

The letter is one of sixteen in the Nephros Archive<sup>254</sup>. The address on the verso names Nephros with Ophellios as the recipients of the letter, and Nephros is directly addressed in l.20. Nephros' name may have occurred in the damaged prescript but this is uncertain given

<sup>249</sup> The wealth is specified: ἐν τε γηδίοις καὶ οἰκοπέδοις καὶ ἐνδομενικοῖς διαφόροις εἵδεσι, ll.14f.

<sup>250</sup> On *bona fide* = μετὰ καλῆς πίστεως, see Taubenschlag (1955), 44f and n.168.

<sup>251</sup> Taubenschlag (1955), 135f, n.19; also P.Oxy.9.1206 (335).

<sup>252</sup> Parents' responsibility to feed and clothe children is legally binding, Taubenschlag (1955), 142, 407.

<sup>253</sup> For the date, see P.Neph.18 above.

<sup>254</sup> The archive of 49 texts includes letters and official documents in Greek and Coptic. Nephros and the monastery are probably Melitian, 4, 11ff, 20f. It is almost certainly the same monastery as in P.Lond.6.1913-1922. Nephros is a bilingual πρεσβύτερος with pastoral responsibilities in the monastery and at least one village. He is respected for his holiness, prayer and healing.

the variety in Paul's usage. Paul is sole author of a further eight of the letters of the archive, P.Neph.2-9<sup>255</sup>.

Paul and Tapiam's Christian status is indicated by their 'greeting in the Lord' (ἐν κυρίῳ χαί(ρην)), I.2, using the *nomen sacrum*. They pray for the brothers' health (ὕγιαίνουσι), I.4, 'in soul and body' (ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι), II.4f, 30<sup>256</sup>. Their description of the brothers as ἀγαπητοὶ and their prayer 'night and day' (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας), II.3f, while not exclusively Christian, are most frequent in Christian texts<sup>257</sup>. Given the close association with the Melitian Nephros and his monastery, it is likely that Paul and Tapiam are also Melitian<sup>258</sup>.

Tapiam and Paul refer to their own prayers again, 'we pray to die in our own home and we wish to be released from the hardship of the world near our own people' (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐαυτῶ(ν) τὸ τέλος σχεῖν εὐχόμεθα καὶ ἔγγιστα τῶν ἰδίων ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς ταλαιπωρίας τοῦ κόσμου θέλομεν), II.15-18<sup>259</sup>. Death among family may come 'if the master considers us worthy to be kept alive during our exile' (εἴπερ καταξιοῖ ἡμᾶς ὁ δεσπότης σωθῆναι ἐν τῇ ξενιτείᾳ (= ξενιτεία) ἡμῶ(ν)), II.18f. The exile is in Alexandria. Tapiam and Paul close their letter with prayer to divine providence for health in soul and body (ἐρρωμένους ὑμᾶς διὰ παντὸς ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι ἢ θεία πρόνοια φυλάττοι), writing perpendicular to the main text.

Tapiam is almost certainly Paul's wife. Her status as an author of the letter is problematic. She appears as the first-person singular author of the statement 'for I, Tapiam, have been ill and still am bedridden' (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἡ Ταπιὰμ ἐνόσησα καὶ ἔτι ἀνάκειμαι), I.10, but her name does not appear with Paul's on the verso<sup>260</sup>. The

<sup>255</sup> Tapiam possibly dies as a result of this illness. Her name is absent from Paul's other letters.

<sup>256</sup> For the dichotomy, see 82f below.

<sup>257</sup> See 89f below.

<sup>258</sup> The Melitian schism resulted from differences between Melitian rigorism and the more lenient catholic position over the readmittance of *lapsi* during the Diocletian persecution. Melitians did not differ doctrinally. Distinguishing Melitian from catholic texts relies on the word 'Melitian' or reference to the Church of the Martyrs. Other possible criteria suggested by Kramer and Shelton, 20f, eg the use of James 5.14f, 21-24, are extremely uncertain. On the Melitian church, see Bell (1924), 38-45; Griggs (1990), 117-132; M. Simonetti, 'Melitius of Lycopolis, Melitian Schism', in *Encyclopaedia of the Early Church* (1992) 1.551; Hauben (2000); (2001).

<sup>259</sup> Similarly in P.Neph.4.14f, ἵνα ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις χαρίσῃται.

<sup>260</sup> Κ[υ]ρίοις μου ἀγαπητοῖς ἀδελφοῖς Νεφερῶ καὶ Ὁφελλίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς Παῦλ[ος] .

editors note that there is sufficient space for Tapiam's name. However, the possessive μου in the address indicates that Paul alone is author at this point<sup>261</sup>.

A first-person singular passage occurs again in II.23-25. Paul and Tapiam ask that Nephros 'make a few loaves (ὀλείγα (= ὀλίγα) ἡμῖν ψωμία) from the wheat which Papnouthis owes<sup>262</sup> and send them to us so that I may acquire them (εὔρω) with my children. For I want, God willing, to come to you and have them in the boat' (θέλω γὰρ σὺν θεῷ ἀνελθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ ἔχειν), II.20-25. The identity of this speaker is less certain but is likely to be Tapiam given her previous personal statement and the proposed visit.

The request for ὀλίγα ... ψωμία I.20ff, is curious and elicits considerable discussion by the editors<sup>263</sup>. They note the expense of sending bread from Hathor to Alexandria when it is available in the city. The bread would need to be durable for use on a return trip, although they acknowledge instances of storing bread over months<sup>264</sup>. There is no suggestion that persecution has made the purchase of bread difficult. The editors suggest that the bread may be ritually pure, hence the request, and they note such requirements among Egyptian cults. However, there is no evidence of Melitians or other Christians having purity requirements for bread for daily consumption. The only 'NT' use of ψωμίον occurs in John 19.26-30, of the morsel given by Jesus to Judas. Any allusion to this or any eucharistic association is extremely unlikely. Further, sacramental bread would be available in Alexandria. It appears most likely that there is no religious significance in the request for bread.

Paul and Tapiam write this letter to ask the brothers for prayer, making two requests. The first is general, that the brothers 'remember to name' them (μνημονεύσῃται (= μνημονεύσητε) ὀνομάσαι), I.8, 'in their prayers' (ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ὑμῶν), I.8. The reason is 'because we and our children are in a foreign place' (διὰ τὴν ξενειτίαν (= ξενιτείαν) ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν παιδίων ἡμῶν), II.8f. They appeal to the brothers' 'human kindness' (φιλανθρωπίαν), II.6f. The second request is for the brothers to 'pray for their health' (εὐξασθαι (= εὐξασθε) ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁλοκληρίας), I.11. The request follows Tapiam's statement, introduced by the strong παρακαλοῦμεν, II.10f. The reason for Tapiam and Paul's confidence in the brothers' intercession is that their children 'were ill' (ἐνόσησαν), I.12, and 'through your prayers they recovered. For we believe that the

<sup>261</sup> It is suggested that Paul and Tapiam compose the text but Paul is the scribe, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 72. However, there is no evidence that Paul writes any of his letters. All 9 are in different hands.

<sup>262</sup> There are frequent references to Papnouthis and the owed wheat: P.Neph.2; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8. Papnouthis is a monk, P.Neph.7.

<sup>263</sup> See pp.20f, 25f and notes to II.24f, 39. Other requests are in P.Neph.2.1-5; 4.25-28; 5.3-12; 6.11-23; 7.1-3. Papnouthis is the source of supply of grain in each.

<sup>264</sup> *Vita S. Antonii* 12 refers to bread for ascetics that is a year old. It is argued that clergy were entitled to a bread distribution in Alexandria that may have been denied to Melitians, Bell (1924), 69, but Paul is a layperson. A similar request is in P.Lond.6.1914.48-50.

Lord will hear you since you are righteous' (διὰ τὰς εὐχὰς ὑμῶν ἐπαύσαντο. πιστεύομεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν δικαίων ὄντων ἀκούσεται), ll.13-15.

Tapiam and Paul greet 'all the beloved brothers by name and the virgins of God and our father Horion and the mother Tienor and Pina and all the rest of our brothers'

(τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας κατ' ὄνομα καὶ τὰς παρθένους τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἡμῶν Ὡρίωνα καὶ τὴν μητέρα Τιενὸρ καὶ Πῖναν καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν πάντας), ll.25-29. Αἱ παρθένοι τοῦ θεοῦ are Christian virgins vowed to perpetual chastity<sup>265</sup>.

I analyse themes arising from these texts in the following five chapters. The first focuses on the use the Christian women make of 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery in their documents.

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<sup>265</sup> For the phrase, see 305f below.



## APPENDIX

### TEXTS POSSIBLY WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN WOMEN BUT NOT ACCEPTED

This appendix contains texts written by women where argument can be made that the woman is Christian but the classification is not accepted. The texts are included because they illustrate some of the methodological issues involved in classification. I distinguish the sections of the discussion that concern the religious elements of the text from those that refer to the broader content using twelve- and ten-point type.

For most texts in this category, the main, and sometimes only, indicator of the woman's Christian belief is her name<sup>1</sup>. These papyri sometimes include religious language that is common to pagans, Manicheans, Jews and Christians<sup>2</sup>.

#### **P.Abinn.56=P.Lond.2.406=Chr.Mitt.128, c.346, Provenance: Hermopolis**

This text is a petition 'to Flavius Abinnaeus *eparchos* of the troop of soldiers of the camp of Dionysias from Aurelia Maria, daughter of Peeios' ([Φ]λαουίῳ Ἀβινναίῳ ἐπάρχῳ εἵλης [στρατ]ιωτῶν κάστρων Διονυσιάδος. δέησις [παρὰ] Αὐρηλίας Μαρίας θυγατρὸς Πειεῖου), ll.1-4.

Maria's petition concerns her parental inheritance which her brother Onophris has taken and sold. His name does not clarify the religious milieu. Maria appeals to 'your (Abinnaeus') human kindness' (σου τῆς φιλανθρωπί[ας]), ll.9f. Φιλανθρωπία occurs in Christian, pagan and Jewish literature and Christian and pagan papyri<sup>3</sup> and does not assist in classification. There are no other religious elements in the text. Maria's name alone is insufficient to allow a precise classification<sup>4</sup>. The relation of religion to the family feud cannot be determined.

<sup>1</sup> A Christian name strictly reflects the beliefs of parents but, given patterns of inherited belief, is likely to indicate also the belief of the named person. See on P.Oxy.50.3581 at 55f above.

<sup>2</sup> Texts written by women in C4 that use religious language common to pagans and Christians and also lack other identifying criteria include SB 24.16320=P.Kell.19a Appendix (c.299); CPR 7.57 (C3/4); SB 16.12496 (C3/4); P.Charite 38 (300-350); P.Oxy.48.3406; 56.3860; P.Rainer Cent.85 (364-366); SB 20.15069. Texts written by women from earlier centuries that use neutral religious terms include: from C2, BGU 2.602; BGU 13.2350; P.Bodl.1.157; P.Bour.23; P.Col.8.215; P.Giss.97; P.Princ.3.189; P.Tebt.2.414; SB 5.7743; perhaps SB 14.12024; O.Claud.126 (107); from C2/3, BGU 3.822; P.IFAO 21; P.Mich.8.507; 8.510; P.Oxy.1.114; and from C3, P.IFAO 40; P.Lond.3.988 (243/244); P.Oxy.14.1679; 14.1773; 36.2789; P.Rein.2.118; SB 16.12326.

<sup>3</sup> See 103f below

<sup>4</sup> See 36f above.

### **P.Brook.73, C4, Provenance: Thebaid**

This subscription to a loan is made by Aurelia Maria, daughter of Horion (Αὐρηλία Μαρία Ὁρίωνος), l.1. Maria's name is the only criterion for religious classification and is insufficient<sup>5</sup>.

### **P.Cair.Isid.63=SB 6.9185, 21 December 297, Provenance: Karanis; BL 10.32; Supplement**

This is a petition 'to Aurelius Gordianos the *beneficiarius* on duty from Aurelia Taesis daughter of Copres' (Αὐρηλίῳ Γορδιανῶ Β(ενε)φ(ικιαρίῳ) στατιζοντῶ (= στατίζοντι) παρὰ Αὐρηλίας Ταήσεως Κοπρῆ), ll.1f.

Taesis states that she has now attained her majority 'by the providence of God' (ἐκ δαὶ (= δὲ) θεοῦ προνύας (= προνοίας) ἐν ἡλικίᾳ), l.14. While ἡ θεία πρόνοια, or this variant θεοῦ πρόνοια, is most commonly found in Christian texts, the phrase is not exclusively Christian<sup>6</sup>. As the only religious reference in the text, and given the early date, θεοῦ πρόνοια is insufficient to allow classification as Christian.

Taesis seeks redress for grievances against her uncle Chaeremon who appropriated her and her sister Kyrillous<sup>7</sup> paternal inheritance while they were minors, and now Chaeremon's wife and daughters have assaulted her.

### **P.Cair.Isid.114=SB 6.9172=CPJ 474a, 13 November 304, Provenance: Karanis; BL 5.21**

### **P.Cair.Isid.115=CPJ 474b, 17 November 306, Provenance: Karanis; BL 5.21**

These two texts are receipts from Aurelia Ptolema to Aurelius Isidorus acknowledging payment in kind for rent of agricultural land. In both<sup>8</sup>, Ptolema acts 'through me her husband, Aurelius Johannes, (ex)-gymnasiarch' (δι' ἐμοῦ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς Αὐρηλίῳ (= Αὐρηλίου) Ἰωάννου γυμ(ασιαρχοῦ or ασιαρχήσαντος)<sup>9</sup>), 114.1-3.

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<sup>5</sup> See 36f above.

<sup>6</sup> See 120, n.11 below.

<sup>7</sup> See also P.Cair.Isid.64, 104 for the name.

<sup>8</sup> In P.Cair.Isid.115=CPJ 474b, Αὐρηλία Πτολέμα δι' ἐμοῦ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς Ἰωάννου γυμ(ασιαρχοῦ or ασιαρχήσαντος), ll.1f.

<sup>9</sup> The reading γυμ(ασιαρχ ) is uncertain. Stern in CPJ, quoting the editors, comments that the space for ν may hold nothing but the horizontal mark of an abbreviation. The remaining γυμ( ) is the most frequent abbreviation for 'gymnasiarch'. The letters may also represent the name of Johannes' father.

Johannes' name suggests that he is either Christian or Jewish. Both classifications have difficulties. CPJ regards Johannes as Jewish, citing his name<sup>10</sup>. Stern comments that Johannes was a 'lax' Jew as the post of gymnasiarch is 'hardly compatible with strict adherence to Jewish faith'<sup>11</sup>. It seems unlikely that a Jew, observant or non-observant in early fourth-century Egypt, would hold such a position in Karanis. Jews were disqualified from membership of the gymnasium by Claudius' letter of 41<sup>12</sup>. There is no evidence that the ban was later lifted. Further the Jewish population of Karanis appears to have been destroyed in the war of 115-117<sup>13</sup>, and while Jewish immigrants may have again settled in the area, entry into the elite Greek world of the gymnasium is unlikely<sup>14</sup>.

Fikhman's proposal that Hebrew biblical names after 300 be regarded as Christian<sup>15</sup> suggests that Johannes, in 304, is Christian, although the early date implies considerable uncertainty. The date places this text in the period of the Diocletian persecution, when a Christian is unlikely to hold such a prominent office. If γυμνασιαρχήσαντος is correct, it may be that Johannes held the position prior to the persecution. It may be that he had converted to paganism in the context of persecution. As with Stern's proposal in relation to Jewish belief, Johannes appears to be a 'lax' Christian or not a Christian.

Given Johannes' 'laxity' if he is Jewish or Christian, it makes the presumption of conformity with the custom of marrying within his religious community uncertain. Therefore, it is not possible to determine Ptolema's belief. She is not classified as Christian or Jewish.

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eg Γυμνάσιος or Γυμνός. Γυμνασιαρχήσαντος is proposed in N. Lewis, 'Review of A. E. Boak and H. C. Youtie eds, "Archive of Isidorus"', *American Journal of Philology*, 83, 1962, 100; *BL* 5.21; see also CPJ 3.36.

<sup>10</sup> The classification is consistent with Tcherikover's proposal that Hebrew biblical names prior to 337 be regarded as Jewish, CPJ 1.xviii. See 24f, 29 above.

<sup>11</sup> CPJ 3.36. Jews were able to hold public office that did not conflict with their traditions, *Digest of Justinian* 50.2.3.3. See 355, n.241 below. The role of gymnasiarch, however, involved sacrifice. But on the need for caution in judging what is and is not acceptable for Jews in late antiquity, see Bohak (1997), 107ff.

<sup>12</sup> P.Lond.6.1912. Philo suggests Jews were members of gymnasia in Alexandria during the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods. Jews appear in ephebic lists of Cyrene, Iasos in Asia Minor and Corone in Greece, CJZC 7A, 7C; REJ 101 (1937), 85f; CIJ 1.721c, cited in M. Williams, 'The contribution of Jewish inscriptions to the study of Judaism' in Horbury, Davies and Sturdy (1999), 75-93. See also CPJ 1.39, n.99.

<sup>13</sup> A tax list of Karanis, mid C2, mentions only 1 Jew, indicated by payment of the Jewish tax, among c.1000 males, P.Ryl.4.594=CPJ 460.

<sup>14</sup> P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450 records the annual celebration at Oxyrhynchus in 199/200 of the defeat of the Jews in 117. See 346 below. It is not unreasonable to assume that ethnic distrust lingered also at Karanis.

<sup>15</sup> Fikhman (1996), 227ff. See also 24f, 29 above.

## **P.Charite, C4, Provenance: Hermopolis; BL 8.82; 9.56**

The archive of Aurelia Charite consists of 41 texts. The editor, Worp, considers that the archive contains no information about Charite's religious belief. Since publication, it has been suggested that she may be Christian<sup>16</sup>.

P.Charite 40 (320-350), as Worp suggests, may refer to a different woman from the rest of the archive. The letter is written to or by Charite and opens ...κυρία μου . [.] . [.] Χαρίτη or Χαρίτη Ἰερα[ . ] χαίρειν, ll.1-3, but Charite's father is known to be Amazonius. The letter refers to a κοιμητήριον<sup>17</sup>, translated by Worp as 'Schlafgemach, bedroom'. The word appears elsewhere only in the Nephros archive<sup>18</sup> where Kramer and Shelton translate it 'Friedhof, churchyard, cemetery', from where grain is to be obtained. Kramer's examination of the three uses of the word suggests that κοιμητήριον comes to belong in a Christian context from the late third century, being used for 'burial place' in accord with the Christian language of 'sleep' for 'death'<sup>19</sup>. In the Nephros archive, it is, then, a cemetery and not a dormitory that is used as a 'granary'. Kramer suggests from this that Charite of P.Charite 40 lives in a Christian community and/or is herself Christian<sup>20</sup>. There is insufficient information to establish her Christianity with certainty.

Bagnall more recently has argued that Charite of P.Charite 1-39, 41 is Christian based on her husband's name, Aldephios, of which Bagnall states, 'a strong argument can be offered that the name ... is distinctively Christian'<sup>21</sup>. His examination of occurrences shows no uses before the mid-third century, certainly Christian uses after this, and no certainly pagan uses, but several whose religious milieu cannot be determined. While the results suggest that Adelphios may be Christian, they are not sufficiently conclusive to allow the classification and hence do not allow Charite's own classification as Christian because of her marriage to a Christian man. As Worp notes, there are no Christian formulae, no prayers or religious references in the archive.

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<sup>16</sup> Bagnall (1995).

<sup>17</sup> εὖρον (= ἡδύρον) αὐτὴ ἐν τῷ κ[ο]ιμητηρίῳ, ll.9f.

<sup>18</sup> P.Neph.12; 36. For P.Neph.36, see 319f below.

<sup>19</sup> Kramer (1990).

<sup>20</sup> Kramer (1990), 272.

<sup>21</sup> Bagnall (1995), 37.

### **P.Kell.1.71, mid C4, Provenance: Kellis**

This text consists of two private letters. On the verso, written upwards in the right-hand margin is a short letter from Maria: 'I ask, mother Maria, send me ...' (ἀξιῶ, μήτηρ (= μήτερ) Μαρία, πέμψον μοι), ll.50, a dish and a loom ring. Maria also writes, 'I Maria greet my lady mother and sister with her children. My children also greet you. Farewell for me' (ἐγὼ Μαρία προσαγορεύω τὴν κυρίαν μου τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν μετὰ τέκνων. προσαγορεύει ὑμᾶς καὶ τὰ τέκνα μου. ἔρρωσθέ μοι), ll.52f.

On the recto is an extensive letter from Pamouris to Psais, 'his brother'<sup>22</sup>. The letter includes a greeting ἐν θεῷ, l.3, a reference to God's providence (προνοία τοῦ θεοῦ), ll.7f, and an invocation, καὶ νῆ τὸν θεόν, l.14, all without *nomina sacra*. These features are consistent with Christianity but the text is almost certainly Manichean<sup>23</sup>. Also on the recto, written downwards in the left margin, Psais reproaches mother Maria for not acknowledging receipt of a hanging (τὸ παρακρεμάσιον), l.49. A Maria is again found in the Coptic texts P.Kell.inv.45 and 91A/B with a Pamouris and Psais, almost certainly the same men named in this text<sup>24</sup>. The relationship between Maria and Pamouris is not specified. Maria is probably a member of Pamouris' household. In P.Kell.1.71, the same hand writes both Pamouris' and Maria's letters.

Maria's name suggests that she may be Christian, but she is probably Manichean, being associated with Pamouris and Psais' Manichean household, although neither her letter nor Pamouris' contains distinctly Manichean elements. Indeed, Maria's letter contains no religious references and nothing can be determined about her religious practice and experience. By reason of her likely Manichean status, she is not included in this thesis.

### **P.Koln 5.239, C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This is a fragmentary letter from Eirene to Asphalia, her sister (Εἰρήνη τῇ ἀδελφῇ μου Ἀσφαλία), ll.1f. It consists solely of greetings.

<sup>22</sup> Pamouris and Psais are probably natural brothers, although the honorific τιμιωτάτος adds uncertainty. A Pamouris and Psais appear, sometimes with Theognostos and other 'brothers', in P.Kell.1.Gr.66; 72; 73 and in the Coptic texts P.Kell.inv.45 and 91A/B. On the family relations in House 3 where this letter was found, see the editor's comments and family tree, 50f. Pamouris' letter, P.Kell.1.71, concerns a proposed visit by Psais that Pamouris urges him to make.

<sup>23</sup> P.Kell.inv.45 and 91A/B in which Pamouris and Psais appear are identified as Manichean by the editor. House 3 is the source of all 21 Coptic letters identified as Manichean. 'Εν θεῷ occurs in certainly Manichean texts, eg P.Kell.1.63; cf. P.Kell.Copt.32; P.Kell.1.67.

<sup>24</sup> See n.23 above. For other occurrences of the name, see P.Harr.1.107 at 286f.

The name Eirene is most frequent in Christian texts but not exclusive to them<sup>25</sup>. Among those greeted is a Maria, which increases the likelihood that this is a Christian circle. However, in the absence of any religious references, this text is not accepted as Christian. The reference to Asphalia as 'sister', while consistent with a Christian milieu, occurs also in pagan texts of familial and social relationship.

#### **P.Nag.Ham.72, C4, Provenance: Nag Hammadi**

Proteria<sup>26</sup> writes this letter to Sansnos and Psas (or Psatos)<sup>27</sup>, μοναχοῖς, l.2. The men are Christian ascetics and members of a monastic community<sup>28</sup>.

The letter has no other religious references. The closing section where a prayer might occur is lost. Proteria asks for 'a little chaff' (ὀλίγον ἄχυρον), ll.4f, for her donkeys and oxen, l.6. It is a commercial transaction, evident in the statement, 'send me about the price, how much ...' (πέμψατέ με ὑπὲρ τὴν τιμὴν ὅτι πόσον ...), ll.10f. It is not a charitable gift. The possession of several animals suggests that Proteria is wealthy. Unable to purchase chaff where she is, she asks the monks to seek some out (ἐραυνῆσαι), l.4. The 'little' amount is to be measured by the wagon-load, l.12. Proteria expects the monks to comply with her request, search on her behalf, purchase the chaff and arrange delivery. The nature of her relationship with the monks is unknown. It may be purely commercial, implying nothing about her religious belief. It may be personal or familial, making Proteria's own Christianity more likely, but there is no evidence.

#### **P.Oxy.14.1720, C4 or C6, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 2.2.102; 9.188**

This is a receipt on vellum for payment for wine from Aurelia Thekla<sup>29</sup>, wife of Papnouthios, to Aurelia Helene, daughter of Papontos (Αὐρηλία Θέκλα γυν(ή) Παπνυθίου ἀπὸ κόμης Βερκὺ Αὐρηλία <E>λένη Παπεντῶς (= Παποντῶτος)), ll.1f.

The fourth-century date proposed by the editor appears less likely than the sixth century based on the reference to συκώματα (= σηκωμάτων), l.5, which occurs only in later texts<sup>30</sup>. I consider the text outside the time limits of this thesis.

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<sup>25</sup> Pagan examples: BGU 1.343 (C2/3); 2.505(C2); 2.563(C2); 3.776 (C1); 9.1896-98(166-172); P.Bour.41 (197); P.Oxy.1.113 (C2); 7.1045 (205); SB 6.9480 (110); SB 5.7521 (Ptolemaic).

<sup>26</sup> Προτήρη in the greeting. Προτερία on the verso. The feminine form of the name is not listed in Preisigke (1967) or Foraboschi (1967-1971). The masculine Proterios is the name of an Alexandrian patriarch in 457.

<sup>27</sup> Ψᾶς and Ψάτος are both attested in Preisigke (1967) and Foraboschi (1967-1971).

<sup>28</sup> Sansnos appears again in P.Nag.Ham.75 and possibly 73.

<sup>29</sup> On the name, see SB 22.15359 at 270f below.

<sup>30</sup> P.Oxy.16.1896 (577); P.Col.8.245 (C6); PSI 8.881 (C6). See Vitelli (1926), 270; BL 2.2.102.

**P.Oxy.31.2599, C3/4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 10.149**

This papyrus consists of two letters from Tauris, one 'to my lord father Apitheon' (τῷ κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ Ἀπειθέωνι Ταῦρις χαίρειν), ll.1ff, the other 'to my lord brother Theodoros' (τῷ κυρίῳ μου ἀδελφῷ Θεωδῶρι Ταῦρις πλεῖστα χαίρειν), l.30. Both letters concern requests to Tauris' family to send goods and include greetings.

Tauris writes in the letter to her father, 'I greet Esther and your sister Sousanna' (απαδομαι (= ἀσπάζομαι) Εἰσθυρ καὶ τὴν ἀδελφήν σου Σουσάννα), ll.21-23. The editor suggests that the names reflect a Jewish or Christian circle and while these women almost certainly are either Jewish or Christian, given the date around 300<sup>31</sup>, it is not possible to determine which with certainty. Esther and Sousanna's belief does not imply anything about Tauris' belief, who may therefore be pagan. Tauris' letter to Theodoros refers to 'the little ? in the bag' (τὸ μικκὸν μανοαλλεῖν (= μικρὸν μαγονάλιον) τὸ εἰς τὸν σάκκον), l.33, which the editor notes may be a book, a portable lectern, a Jewish priestly garment or a hand-towel, but that choice among these is not possible. The editor suggests also that if a scroll in a wrapper is intended, the item could be a copy of the Torah. Tauris orders Theodoros not to give it to anyone (μηδενὶ αὐτὸ δῆς (= δῶς)), 34. While the possibility that τὸ μικκὸν μανοαλλεῖν (= μικρὸν μαγονάλιον) refers to a scriptural manuscript is interesting, it is unprovable. The text refers to two women in a greeting who may be Jewish or Christian but does not allow a more precise classification and offers no information about their beliefs. The text is not included in this thesis.

**P.Oxy.36.2770, 26 January 304, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 7.152; 10.150; 11.164**

This is the deed of divorce<sup>32</sup> between Aurelius Heracles and 'my former and divorced wife Aurelia Maria' (ἡ γενομένη καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένη μου γυναικὶ (= γυνή) Αὐρηλία Μαρία), ll.6ff.

Maria's name is the only criterion on which to determine a religious classification for this text, and by itself it is not sufficient<sup>33</sup>. There are no other religious elements.

<sup>31</sup> Fikhman (1996) argues that LXX names prior to 300 be considered Jewish; see 24f, 29 above. A Jewish community is known in Oxyrhynchus from the end of C2; see P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450.1-53 at 346f below; P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 at 354-359 below.

<sup>32</sup> See Migliardi Zingale (1992), 36f, no.19.

<sup>33</sup> See P.Abinn.49 at 36f above.

Nonetheless, it is likely that Maria is Christian or Jewish<sup>34</sup>. The names of Maria's parents, Heracleides and Tauonis, make a Roman, pagan milieu unlikely, and there are no Manichean elements in the letter. Heracles and his father Sarapion bear names that offer no assistance in determining religious belief. If Maria is Christian, the text points to the practice of divorce among Christians. Heracles' religious status is unknown.

The document opens with statements in the first person plural, 'we agree to have dissolved our union with one another' (ὁμολογοῦμεν ἀπεξεῦχθαι τῇ[ς] π[ρὸς] ἀλλήλους συμβιώσεως), ll.9-11, but moves to the first person singular and is subscribed by Heracles alone, 'I have dissolved my union ...' (ἀπεξεύχθην τῆς πρὸς σὲ συμβίωσιν (= συμβιώσεως)), ll.31-33. The question to which assent and subscription is made is put to both Heracles and Maria. The text is difficult to classify in terms of authorship as well as religious belief.

**P.Oxy.48.3403, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 8.270; 9.202**

This letter belongs to the Papnouthis and Dorotheos archive, P.Oxy.48.3384-3429 (331-c.371) and is from '(your) mother Maria to my lord son Papnouthis' (κυρίῳ μου υἱῷ [Πα]πνουθίῳ ἡ μήτηρ Μαρία), l.1f. The letter closes with the standard prayer, ἐρρωσθαί σε πολλοῖς χρόνοις εὖχομαι, ll.12-14.

Maria's name is insufficient to allow a religious classification<sup>35</sup> and the prayer which occurs in Christian and pagan letters offers no clarity about her beliefs. While the editor of the archive regards Papnouthis, Dorotheos and their family as Christian, there is no positive evidence to support the classification<sup>36</sup>.

**P.Wisc.2.74, 350-400, Provenance: Unknown; BL 7.282; 8.512; 11.291**

This letter is from 'Kyras and Aias to my lord brother Aphynchios' (κυρίῳ μου ἀ[δ]ελφῶι Ἀφυγχίῳ Κύρας καὶ Ἀίας (= Κύρα καὶ Ἀία)), ll.1f.

The letter urges Aphynchios to come immediately as 'our mother' has died and his assistance is needed to prevent the loss of family property. The women repeat their request four times. The relationships are almost certainly natural kin.

<sup>34</sup> The date, 304, is close to the cut-off date of 300 for accepting biblical names as Jewish, Fikhman (1996), 227ff. A Jewish community is known in Oxyrhynchus in this period (see n.31 above) and strengthens the editor in CPJ, Tcherikover's claim that Maria is Jewish. Bagnall (1993a), 193, n.72, regards Maria as Christian given the C4 date; BL 10.150.

<sup>35</sup> See 36f above.

<sup>36</sup> P.Oxy.48, p.76. See on P.Oxy.48.3407 at 55 above, 145f below. See also P.Oxy.48.3384 and 3396 at 289ff below, for a more detailed discussion of classification.



A Christian classification for the letter is suggested by the name 'Martyrios, our brother' (τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν Μαρύριον), II.10f, whom the women send to Aphynchios. The name 'Martyrios' appears only in Christian texts<sup>37</sup> and indicates that this 'brother' is Christian. However, the nature of the relationship is uncertain. Martyrios 'has taken the trouble' (τὸν σκυλμὸν πεποίηκεν)<sup>38</sup>, I.13, to go to Aphynchios, for which the women express great gratitude and they have paid him<sup>39</sup>. It seems likely that Martyrios is an acquaintance rather than a natural brother. The use of familial epithets is too common among pagans and Christians for 'brother' necessarily to imply that Martyrios and the women are members of a Christian community. The women greet Aphynchios' wife as τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, I.15f<sup>40</sup>, which may signify that she is a Christian 'sister' but may also be a term of affection between non-kin. The criteria suggesting a Christian classification are insufficient to allow its acceptance<sup>41</sup>. The *abaskanta* wish for the children does not rule out a Christian classification but makes it less likely<sup>42</sup>.

#### **O. Douch 137; 148; 149; 150; 151; 152, C4, Provenance: Kysis**

These ostraca are a series of instructions from 'Makaria to Victor, the manager' (Μακαρία Βίκτωρι ἐπιμελητῇ).

The name 'Makaria' suggests that this woman is Christian but the name is not exclusive to Christian circles<sup>43</sup>, and in the absence of other religious references the texts are not accepted as Christian.

<sup>37</sup> For the name, see 270 below.

<sup>38</sup> In the papyrus: τὸν σκυλμὸν πεποίηκεν.

<sup>39</sup> μισθός does not normally refer to expenses but to wages, *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>40</sup> Ἀσπάζομεν τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν τὴν ἐλευθέρᾳ σου καὶ τὰ <ἀ>βάσκα<ν>τα αὐτῆς παιδία. The meaning of ἐλευθέρᾳ is debated. It may be a proper name or refer to the wife as a freed woman. The meaning does not affect this analysis.

<sup>41</sup> It has been suggested that this letter contains covert allusions to Christian groups following the pattern of 2 John, Horsley, 'A cryptic Christian letter?' in *ND* 2.174ff, here 176. According to this interpretation the death of the mother and threat to the οἰκία are references to persecution. The original C3/4 date suited this proposal. However, Horsley's evidence is slight as he admits, and the revised date of C4 makes the persecutory context less likely.

<sup>42</sup> See note 39 above. The *abaskanta* formula occurs in the Christian text, P.Wisc.2.76. See also Horsley, 'The distribution of a deceased man's slaves' in *ND* 1.69f, here 70; Naldini (1968, 1998), 279.

<sup>43</sup> On 'Makaria', see P.Princ.2.95, ch8 below. Also Horsley, *ND* 'Christians in mid-IV land registers' in *ND* 3.156f, here 157 on 'Makarios'.



## CHAPTER 3

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S USE OF 'BIBLICAL' VOCABULARY AND IMAGERY

Christian literary papyri and codices<sup>1</sup>, canonical and non-canonical<sup>2</sup>, have been discovered in diverse locations along the Nile<sup>3</sup>, the earliest dating from the second century<sup>4</sup>. They are evidence of the importance of authoritative literary texts in Christian formation and life<sup>5</sup>, and of the broad range of texts on which the church in Egypt drew. They include what are now NT texts, the LXX<sup>6</sup>, as well as a number of apocryphal gospels including the Gospel of Mary which, notably, points to conflict in the contemporary church over women's roles in leadership and in teaching men, several 'Sayings of Jesus' gospels and apocalypses<sup>7</sup>. The distribution of texts suggests that those which become canonical are not necessarily privileged in authority above a number of related Christian and Jewish texts in the period<sup>8</sup> providing a broad corpus as the source of the women's vocabulary and imagery. The

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<sup>1</sup> The majority are codices. Of 172 biblical manuscripts to the year 400 in 1982, only 14 are papyrus rolls, and of these 2 are considered genuine rolls, Roberts and Skeat (1982), 39. While the statistics are dated, the relative frequency is apparent.

<sup>2</sup> The categories 'biblical/canonical' and 'non-biblical/non-canonical' are anachronistic in this period.

<sup>3</sup> The Arsinoite nome, Aphroditopolis, Theadelphia, Socnopaiou Nesos, Oxyrhynchus, Antinoopolis, Hermopolis, Panopolis, Coptos, Thebes, Memphis and Phylake Hipponos (Qarara), from *LDAB*; Roberts (1977), 6.

<sup>4</sup> John=P.Ryl.3.457; P.Oxy.50.3523; Matthew=P.Oxy.64.4404. In C2/3, texts of the gospels of John, Matthew, Luke and Pauline letters are extant; also The Shepherd=P.I and.1.4; P.Oxy.50.3528. Manuscripts of the LXX date from BCE. From the *LDAB*.

<sup>5</sup> Lectional aids and Genizah-style jars argue for the use of texts in public worship, Roberts (1977), 4. 1 Clement 45; 53 assume readers know 'Scripture' and its formative character, although the actual influence of 'Scripture' on people's lives is questioned; eg Christian letters of condolence dated C4 are generally indistinguishable from pagan letters, Epp (2004), 46-49. On this, see the conclusions below.

<sup>6</sup> Christian 'ownership' of the LXX is evident in frequent references to them, eg 1 Clement 4; Barnabas 10-16; and in claiming the patriarchs as 'our fathers', 1 Clement 4.8; Barnabas 13.7.

<sup>7</sup> Of 'biblical' texts dated C2-C4, 174 are from the LXX, most frequently Genesis 28x, Psalms 54x and major prophets 28x. Classification as Christian or Jewish depends on *nomina sacra* and the general pattern that papyri dated C2 are Jewish; codices dated C3 and C4 are Christian, Epp (2004), 20. 114 manuscripts are canonical NT texts, eg Matthew 34x, Luke 3x, John 19x, Pauline letters 25x. 81 are non-canonical texts, eg the Egerton Gospel, The Shepherd 16x, *Gospel of Thomas* 4x, *Gospel of Mary* 2x, unknown gospels 5x, *Protoevangelium of James* 5x, apocryphal Acts 11x, apocalyptic works 12x. From the *LDAB* and van Haelst (1976). The incidence and spread of manuscripts need not coincide with their authority and function.

<sup>8</sup> Eg Barnabas 12.1 cites 4 Ezra; The Shepherd 7.4 cites the Book of Eldad and Modat; P.Bodmer 5, 7-13, 20 (C3/4) includes Pauline letters, Jude, 1 and 2 Peter, *Protoevangelium of James*, Melitus of Sardis, *Acts of Phileas*, *Letter from the Corinthians*, *Eleventh Ode of Solomon*, Psalms; P.Hamb.Bil.1 (C3/4) contains Ecclesiastes and *Acts of Paul* in Greek, and Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Song of Songs in Coptic.

patterns reflect the period when canon formation is in process but not complete<sup>9</sup>. The *LDAB* indicates that the five works of the Apostolic Fathers already noted, *The Shepherd* of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, 1 and 2 Clement and the Didache<sup>10</sup>, are the significant and frequent texts additional to the canonical books in Egypt in this period. This broader corpus of authoritative texts I designate 'NT', and these with the LXX I designate as 'Bible', 'biblical' and 'scriptural'.

'Biblical' vocabulary and imagery occur, with varying degrees of certainty, in nine of the 26 texts written by Christian women<sup>11</sup>. The clearest references are in private letters with none in the commercial texts or petitions and one uncertain reminiscence from the male co-writer of the legal document<sup>12</sup>. There are few non-literary papyri, apart from magical<sup>13</sup> and school texts<sup>14</sup>, containing quotations of 'Scripture'. Harris notes two<sup>15</sup>, to which can be added P.Ben.Mus.5<sup>16</sup> and probably SB 14.11532<sup>17</sup>. This chapter relies on numbers of searches of the documentary papyri and Greek literary sources for its analysis. Searches of the papyri use the *DDBDP* and those of Greek literature use the *TLG*. I acknowledge these sources in the footnotes as (*DDBDP*) and (*TLG*).

## The Song of Mary

P.Oxy.12.1592 is Anonyme's response to her lord father (κύριέ μου π(άτε)ρ)<sup>18</sup>, l.3, acknowledging that she 'exulted greatly and rejoiced' (καὶ πάνυ ἐμεγαλύνθην καὶ

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<sup>9</sup> Epp (2004), 20, 55, suggests that there is little evidence for canon formation in the Oxyrhynchus papyri of C4. On the contrary, the range of texts is limited and regular, although broader than the final canon.

<sup>10</sup> Barnabas (c.130) and The Shepherd (c.110-140) are treated as authoritative as early as Clement of Alexandria (see the list of citations in the *Sources Chrétiennes* to the French edition of *Stromateis*) and are among the 'NT' texts in Codex Sinaiticus (C4). 1 Clement (95-110) is in Codex Alexandrinus (C5). 2 Clement (c.120-170) is closely associated with 1 Clement at least from C5, although not among Copts. Didache (C1-early C2), Barnabas, 1 and 2 Clement and the longer Ignatian Epistles are in the Codex Constantinopolitanus (C11, but representing a tradition dating to C2). See the Introductions to the editions cited.

<sup>11</sup> P.Bour.12; P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1, 18; P.Oxy.8.1161; 12.1592; SB 8.9746; 18.13612. Possible references in BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.49; P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Edmonstone are not accepted.

<sup>12</sup> P.Lips.1.28.

<sup>13</sup> See 366, n.10.

<sup>14</sup> Eg P.Yale 1.3 (C3/4); P.Oxy.2.209 (C4).

<sup>15</sup> P.Lond.3.981=Chr.Wilck.130 (C4); P.Heid.1.6=SB 1.2266 (C4); Harris (1975), 156.

<sup>16</sup> See P.Ben.Mus.4.

<sup>17</sup> It closes: ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [ . See 322f below.

<sup>18</sup> Most probably a spiritual father: see 111f, 189f, 230 below.

ἡγαλλείασα (= ἡγαλλίασα)), ll.4f, to receive his letter. Μεγαλύνω and ἀγαλλιάω open the Song of Mary<sup>19</sup>, according to Luke's account of Mary's joy at a message from God. The coincidence of the verbs constitutes this as a biblical reminiscence<sup>20</sup>, and indicates Anonyme's knowledge of the text and memorisation at least of its opening verses. Ἀγαλλιάω is rare, attested only here in addition to the LXX, NT and early Christian literature where it denotes exclusively the effect on a person of God's gracious action. The reason for Anonyme's joy is that her father has remembered her (ὅτει (= ὅτι) τοιοῦτός μου πατήρ τὴν μνήμην ποιεῖται), ll.5f.

Naldini attributes Anonyme's phrase to 'ingenuità di mente semplice'<sup>21</sup>, Ghedini to 'esaltazione cosciente di animo femminile'<sup>22</sup>. The identification is not to be so easily dismissed. The verbs alluding to the Song suggest Anonyme's identification with Mary and provide an early example of the role of Mary in shaping women's identity that becomes commonplace in the fifth century<sup>23</sup>. Use of Mary's words to express her own joy at receiving news points to her appropriation of Mary's experience as the framework within which to articulate her own<sup>24</sup>. The identification suggests further that the father stands in the place of God for her, an understanding strengthened by the use of ἀγαλλιάω. Mary states that she is a δούλη of God, marked by ταπείνωσις. While it is impossible to tell if humility and servanthood describe Anonyme's relationship to her father, it would accord with the demand, in the third century, for respect for the bishop who also is identified with God<sup>25</sup>.

### Body, soul, spirit

The trichotomy σῶμα/ψυχή/πνεῦμα occurs in P.Oxy.8.1161 and the more common σῶμα/ψυχή dichotomy in P.Neph.1, while P.Lond.6.1926 refers to a σῶμα/πνεῦμα dichotomy.

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<sup>19</sup> Luke 1.46f.

<sup>20</sup> Using the categories: biblical citations, echoes and reminiscences, in decreasing order of clarity, Harris (1975), 156.

<sup>21</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 159, no.31.

<sup>22</sup> Ghedini (1923), no.14.

<sup>23</sup> On Mary, see Cameron (1991), 72, 100; Limberis (1994), 59, 101-107, 145; also 303f below. Cameron in a private letter notes that interest in Mary in C4 and early C5 is primarily Christological, cited in A. M. Emmett, 'A fourth-century hymn to the Virgin Mary?' in *ND* 2.141-146, here 144.

<sup>24</sup> Identification with biblical characters and situations is regular in early Christian literature. See conclusion 3 below.

<sup>25</sup> The bishop 'rules in place of the Almighty ... to be honoured like God', *Didascalia Apostolorum* 2.26, 30 (IX).

In P.Oxy.8.1161, the trichotomy appears in Anonyme's prayer for God 'to help our body, soul and spirit' (ὅπως οὗτοι πάντες β[ο]ηθήσωσιν ἡμῶν τῷ σώματι, τῇ ψυχῇ, τῷ πνεύματι) πνεύματι), ll.4-7. It recalls 1 Thessalonians 5.23, although the word order is different<sup>26</sup>. The trichotomy appears in Christian literature from the first century<sup>27</sup>, in all permutations of word order and with variations occurring in any one writer's works<sup>28</sup>, suggesting that word order is not necessarily significant. Anonyme's variation is the most frequent. The trichotomy appears in Christian liturgical material<sup>29</sup>, not in the LXX, and is rare in pagan literature<sup>30</sup>. Recent discoveries suggest that elaboration of the trichotomy characterises Manichean texts<sup>31</sup>. However, there is no elaboration in P.Oxy.8.1161, nor any Manichean elements. In Anonyme's prayer, the terms of the trichotomy together stand for the whole person and have a hyperbolic character. For herself and her addressees, she wants God's help in all the accepted Christian dimensions of personhood. 1 Thessalonians 5.23 expresses the same desire and provides the matching context for the words.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 pray for health ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι, ll.4f, 30, of the brothers<sup>32</sup>. This dichotomy<sup>33</sup> occurs three times in the 'NT'<sup>34</sup> with different meanings. In Matthew 6.25, ψυχῇ by itself refers to a person's life considered as a whole, as does σῶμα. In Matthew 10.28 and 2 Clement 5.4<sup>35</sup>, ψυχῇ refers specifically to the

<sup>26</sup> τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα. The trichotomy is not found elsewhere in the 'NT'. It occurs in P.Harr.1.107 (C3); P.Coll.Youtie 2.91 (C5/6), both with the order ψυχῇ/σῶμα/πνεῦμα. Among Coptic Manichean papyri it occurs in different orders again: P.Kell.5.Copt.29, 'body, soul, spirit'; P.Kell.5.Copt.32, 'body, spirit, soul'. The trichotomy's neoplatonic background and possible 'Gnostic' association are noted in Naldini (1968, 1998), 78, 245. F. E. Brightman suggests that the order ψυχῇ/σῶμα/πνεῦμα is 'characteristic of Egyptian liturgies', cited in Horsley, 'Christian amulet' in *ND* 1.102f, here 103. But evidence is slight: see n.28 below. For the debated meanings of the terms and a bibliography, see Bruce (1982), 129f.

<sup>27</sup> Eg in Ignatius, Origen, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Chrysostom. (*TLG*). The trichotomy is significantly less frequent than any of the dichotomies.

<sup>28</sup> Eg Chrysostom uses four variations of word order.

<sup>29</sup> *Patrologia Orientalis* 18, 442-443 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 412f, no.645, πνεύματος καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος; *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), 349, no.581, ψυχῆς πνεύματος σώματος. Also *Liturgy of St James*, in Barrett-Lennard (1994), 33, n.141.

<sup>30</sup> Body/soul/spirit occurs in Comarius C1 (*TLG*).

<sup>31</sup> P.Kell.5.Copt.25; 29; 32; inv.P.81C (all C4), cited in Gardner, Nobbs and Choat (2001), 122. See P.Harr.1.107 at 286f below.

<sup>32</sup> Paul prays using similar expressions in P.Neph.2.10-13; 5.23-26; 7.12f.

<sup>33</sup> The order ψυχῇ/σῶμα is more frequent by 5:3 in both pagan and Christian literature.

<sup>34</sup> The order σῶμα/ψυχῇ does not occur in the 'NT' but appears in 2 Maccabees 7.32; 14.38; 15.30. In Revelation 18.3, αἰμάτων most probably refers to 'slaves'. The Shepherd 90.7 has ἐν πνεύμα καὶ ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἐν ἔνδυμα.

<sup>35</sup> 2 Clement 5.4 recalls Matthew 10.28.

spiritual aspect of human life in contrast to the physical σῶμα. These meanings are distinct from that in Tapiam and Paul's prayer where the dichotomy, like the trichotomy, connotes the whole human person. The dichotomy occurs in contemporary liturgical texts also to connote the whole person<sup>36</sup>, and is common in pagan<sup>37</sup>, Jewish and Christian sources<sup>38</sup>, suggesting the phrase is regular in the Christian community and general society. Tapiam and Paul's use may derive from any of these sources. The common vocabulary confirms the continuity of pagan and Christian society.

In P.Lond.6.1926, Valeria writes, 'even if in body I have not come to your feet, in spirit I have come to your feet' (ἐἰ κὲ (= καὶ) ἐν σώματι οὐκ ἴκα (= ἦκα) παρὰ τοὺς πόδας σ[ο]υ ἐν πνεύματι εἴκα (= ἦκα) πρὸς τοὺς πό[δ]ας σου), ll.17-19, recalling 1 Corinthians 5.3 and Colossians 2.5. This use of the spirit/body dichotomy<sup>39</sup> contrasts with the complementary sense of the body/soul dichotomy in P.Neph.1 and the trichotomy in P.Oxy.8.1161. The elements have a contrastive function, each standing for the whole person understood from a particular perspective<sup>40</sup>. In Valeria's letter, 1 Corinthians 5.3 and Colossians 2.5, the categories of presence and absence become blurred using the distinction between body and spirit. The category of spirit makes physical absence immaterial. The biblical passages provide the conceptual framework that allows Valeria to express her conviction.

It is noteworthy that these dichotomous and trichotomous constructions of the human person are conventions the women adopt to express their experience of themselves and others. The women identify a spiritual as well as a physical dimension to their lives.

<sup>36</sup> P.Würzb.3 (C3); *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), 342, no.568. The dichotomy ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας in BKT 6.6.1 (C3) denotes the inner life.

<sup>37</sup> Eg I.Eph.1a 5; 6; 11; 12, cited in Horsley, 'Body, soul, spirit ...' in ND 4.38f. Also P.Herm.5 (C4), of uncertain religious milieu, although its addressee is generally thought to be an adherent of Hermes Trismegistos. The TLG attests numerous occurrences in the Hermetic corpus and in the period BCE.

<sup>38</sup> Eg in C1 BCE in Philo c.50x; C2 Origen c.30x; C3 Clement of Alexandria c.10x; C4 Athanasius c.25x, all using both word orders. The order ψυχὴ/σῶμα occurs in apocryphal Acts. (TLG).

<sup>39</sup> The dichotomy σῶμα/πνεῦμα is not attested before C2 in either word order and is less frequent. In C2 σῶμα/πνεῦμα occurs 4x in historical, astrological, medical and Christian (Origen) texts; πνεῦμα/σῶμα appears in Origen 5x; in C3 σῶμα/πνεῦμα occurs 2x in Gregory Thaumaturges and a pagan text; πνεῦμα/σῶμα appears in Porphyry 1x; in C4 σῶμα/πνεῦμα occurs 57x eg Chrysostom 17x, Athanasius 1x, also in pagan texts; πνεῦμα/σῶμα occurs 14x eg Chrysostom 2x, Cyril 2x; all are Christian except one medical text. (TLG).

<sup>40</sup> The use is similar to that in Matthew 6.25.

## Προσευχή

Two of the women use προσευχή of their prayer, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926, and Taouak in P.Neph.18. Προσευχή is the common word for prayer in the 'NT'<sup>41</sup>. It is, however, infrequent in the papyri<sup>42</sup>. Εὐχή is the usual word for prayer in the papyri but occurs in the 'NT' in this sense only twice<sup>43</sup>. Both words occur in the LXX and in Christian, Jewish and pagan literature of the period with relatively equal frequency<sup>44</sup>.

Valeria uses προσευχή of Paphnouthios' prayers, 'remember me in your holy prayer' (μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ), ll.16f, 'remember them (Valeria's daughters) in your holy prayer' μνήσθητι αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ, ll.21f. She uses εὐχή also of receiving healing διὰ τῶν σῶν εὐχῶν, l.8. The words appear to be interchangeable<sup>45</sup>. The conclusion<sup>46</sup> that James 5.13-16 is the source of Valeria's request for prayer, based largely on her use of εὐχή, is, therefore, not established<sup>47</sup>. It is more likely that προσευχή reflects recall of a significant 'biblical'/liturgical word heard in church and a conscious positioning of herself within a Christian linguistic framework. Valeria uses a rich vocabulary for prayer: προσευχή, ll.17, 22; εὐχή, l.8; εὐχομαι, ll.14, 24, 26; αἰτέω, l.6; δέομαι, l.15, suggesting that the attribution of particular significance to any term be treated with caution.

In P.Neph.18 Taouak elaborates the conventional opening prayer formula with 'I pray in my prayers' (εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς (= προσευχαῖς) μου), ll.5f. The editors note that with two exceptions, this text and the pagan BGU 4.1080 (C3), προσευχή is used in the papyri only to designate the prayers of men (sic) of high religious standing, to

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<sup>41</sup> It occurs 37x in the canonical texts; also in Barnabas 19.12; 2 Clement 2.2; 16.4; Didache 4.14; The Shepherd 5.3. (TLG).

<sup>42</sup> It occurs 14x in 10 texts in the period of which 8 are Christian, P.Lond.6.1917 1x; 1926 2x; 1929 2x; P.Neph.10 3x; 12 1x; 18 1x; P.Herm.9 1x; Chr.Wilck.130=P.Lond.3.981 1x (all C4); the concentration among monastic texts is noteworthy. It occurs in the Jewish text, P.Lond.3.1177 (113) 1x of the 'synagogue'; and in the pagan text, BGU 4.1080 (C3) 1x. Προσεύχομαι occurs 87x in 'NT'; and in the papyri, only in P.Neph.12, and 5 pagan texts.

<sup>43</sup> James 5.15; Didache 15.4. Εὐχή meaning 'vow' occurs in Acts 18.18; 21.23; 1 Clement 52.3. In 1 Clement 41.3 θυσιάαι εὐχῶν probably means 'vow'.

<sup>44</sup> (TLG).

<sup>45</sup> In Pachomius, *Rule*, recension A 3 uses προσευχή, and recension B IX = *Rule* 9 uses εὐχή.

<sup>46</sup> Barrett-Lennard, 'Request for prayer for healing' in *ND* 4.245-250, especially 249. There is no reference to dependence on James 5.13-16 in his later book, Barrett-Lennard (1994).

<sup>47</sup> James 5.13-16 is discussed below.



which Valeria's use conforms, and never of the writer's own prayers<sup>48</sup>. From this, they suggest that Taouak is claiming a high value for her prayers, and perhaps indicating her status as a nun<sup>49</sup>. While the editors dismiss their own suggestion on the basis of the 'worldly' tone of the letter, it is, in addition, based on texts of limited range and number. Of the eight Christian papyri using προσευχή, seven, and arguably all eight<sup>50</sup>, have a monastic context and, of these, three are in the Melitian Nephros Archive. Only P.Lond.6.1926 and BGU 4.1080 use both προσευχή and εὐχή. It may be that προσευχή reflects an individual's, and particularly a monastic, reclamation of the 'NT' term, a conscious identification with a Christian practice.

### Healing practice, biblical vocabulary and James 5.13-16

Three of the women refer to prayer for healing.

Valeria has a severe breathing difficulty. She consistently uses ἱασις, II.7, 9, 14, of the healing she seeks from Christ, εἶασιν (= ἱασιν) λάβω, I.7, εἶασιν (= ἱασιν) λαμβάνω, x2, II.9, 14f. Ἰασιν λαμβάνω does not occur in the 'NT' although ἱασις/ἰάομαι occurs frequently of Christ's healing<sup>51</sup> and the apostles' healing<sup>52</sup>. It refers almost always to physical rather than spiritual healing<sup>53</sup> and, in this, follows the pattern in Greek literature<sup>54</sup>. A similar pattern occurs in the LXX<sup>55</sup>, but Philo prefers the spiritual sense<sup>56</sup>. Among the papyri dated 100-400, ἱασις appears to be attested only in this text<sup>57</sup>, and ἰάομαι not at all, although ἱατρός is frequent. Christ as ἱατρός appears in

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<sup>48</sup> The editors suggest that προσευχαί differ from εὐχαί in containing theological statements or referring to continuous prayer, both unlikely, they claim, among ordinary Christians but likely for clergy and monastics. See also n.41 above.

<sup>49</sup> Eds, P.Neph., 67f, 86.

<sup>50</sup> On the possibility that P.Lond.3.981=Chr.Wilck.130 belongs to the Apa Johannes archive, see 182, n.43 below.

<sup>51</sup> ἱασις: Luke 13.32; Acts 4.30; ἰάομαι: eg Matthew 8.8, 13; 15.28; Luke 6.18, 19; 14.4; Acts 9.34.

<sup>52</sup> ἱασις: Acts 4.22, 30; ἰάομαι: Acts 10.38.

<sup>53</sup> The metaphorical sense is more frequent in later 'NT' texts, eg Hebrews 12.13; 1 Peter 2.24; The Shepherd 29.11; 49.2; 60.4; 66.4; 77.3; 1 Clement 16.5; 56.7; Barnabas 5.2; 14.9. Christ is ἱατρός in Matthew 9.12 with a spiritual meaning.

<sup>54</sup> It refers to physical healing in Homer, Plato and frequently in the medical texts of Galen 122x (TLG). For further examples, see LSJ, s.v.; A. Oepke, 'ἱασις, ἰάομαι' in TDNT 3.194-215.

<sup>55</sup> Particularly in the Psalms, eg 6.1; 30.2 (LXX 29.2); 38.3, 7 (37.3); 41.4 (40.4); 103.3 (102.3); 107.20 (106.20); 147.3 (146.3).

<sup>56</sup> Philo does not use ἱασις but has ἱατρός mostly of God, A. Oepke, 'ἱασις, ἰάομαι' in TDNT 3.203.

<sup>57</sup> (DDBDP).

contemporary liturgical material of physical and spiritual healing<sup>58</sup>. The word group also occurs in pagan, Jewish and Christian literature<sup>59</sup>. ἰασις appears to be of a literary order and not regular in common speech. It suggests that Valeria's use may be a 'biblical' allusion, not to any particular story but generally to accounts of healing mediated through 'Scripture' reading or healing liturgy<sup>60</sup>. It functions to identify Valeria with those who obtain ἰασις from God/Christ. The pattern of use confirms the hypothesis that accounts of Christ's and the apostles' healing provide the tradition for healing in early liturgical texts and literary texts not, for example, James 5.13-16<sup>61</sup>.

Barrett-Lennard<sup>62</sup> argues for Valeria's dependence on James 5.13-16: her use of εὐχή/εὐχομαι and their appearance in James 5.13-16<sup>63</sup>; their co-incidence with ἰασιν λαμβάνω, II.7, 9, 14f, and James 5.16 'pray for one another, so that you may be healed' (εὐχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων, ὅπως ἰαθῇτε); and the emphasis on believing (π[ι]στεύω, πεπίστευκα καὶ πιστεύω) II.8, 13, and James 5.15, 'the prayer of faith with save the sick person' (ἡ εὐχή τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα). However, as argued above, Valeria uses προσευχή and εὐχή interchangeably and, although εὐχομαι is rare in the NT, the word is extremely frequent in the papyri with the meaning 'pray', to the extent that arguing verbal dependence on a NT text seems precarious. The emphasis on believing is found in many of the gospel accounts of healing<sup>64</sup> and is not unique to James 5.13-16. Further, the promise of healing (ἰαθῇτε) in James comes in the context of mutual confession of sin and prayer<sup>65</sup>, to which Valeria does not refer. She also makes no mention of anointing with oil, as occurs in James<sup>66</sup>. Valeria's

<sup>58</sup> P.Würzb.3 (C3), ἱατρὸς ψυχῶν καὶ σωμάτων; BKT 6.6.1 (C3), ἀρχιἱατρὸς τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν. P.Würzb.3 includes the verbal ἰασε.

<sup>59</sup> For pagan references, see n.54 above. Jewish examples occur in *Book of Enoch*, *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and are frequent in Philo, Josephus. Christian literary use is mostly in the spiritual sense, eg in *Acts of John*; *of Thomas*. (TLG).

<sup>60</sup> Ἰατικός occurs of Christ's power in 'Prayer of the sick, using oil', *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), 352, no.585.

<sup>61</sup> An analysis of the *Biblia Patristica* in Barrett-Lennard (1994), 53, n.68, indicates James 5.13-16 comes to be used in this connection only from C4.

<sup>62</sup> Barrett-Lennard, 'Request for prayer for healing' in *ND* 4.245-250, here 249.

<sup>63</sup> The verb occurs in the canonical NT meaning 'prayer' only 3x, of which the James usage is one. It more frequently means 'wish'.

<sup>64</sup> Eg Matthew 8.5-13; 9.27-30; 15.21-28; Mark 2.1-12; 5.24-34, 35-42; 9.14-29.

<sup>65</sup> James 5.16. 'Prayer for the sick, using oil', *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 352, no.585, also emphasises forgiveness of sin.

<sup>66</sup> James 5.14f. Barrett-Lennard (1994), 55, notes that anointing is not mentioned, but does not comment. The text does not suggest awareness that the rituals are impossible because Valeria is absent, or that their lack will impede the effectiveness of the healing. On the use of oil and laying-on of hands, see 125, n.53 below.

verbal dependence on James 5.13-16, therefore, appears unlikely, a conclusion consistent with the virtual absence of the passage from discussions of healing in Christian literature in the second and third centuries and only its gradual adoption in the fourth century<sup>67</sup>. It confirms the likelihood that Valeria draws on gospel accounts of healing, particularly stories of Christ healing at a distance<sup>68</sup>.

Identification with biblical narrative provides a mode of personal definition for Valeria. She uses *χριστοφόρος*, I.1, of Paphnouthios, a rare adjective in the papyri<sup>69</sup>, and greets him *ἐν Χριστῷ*, I.4, a rare formula, so giving a strong Christological focus to the letter<sup>70</sup>. Valeria further specifies Christ as the object of Paphnouthios' prayer and the source of her healing, II.6f. Valeria's focus on Christ, with Paphnouthios as 'Christ-bearer', and her repeated requests for prayer using *ἀξιόω*, I.5, *παρακαλέω*, I.5, and *δέομαι*, I.15, serve to further identify her with those who seek healing in the gospel stories, and Paphnouthios with Christ. It is noteworthy that both God and Paphnouthios are the objects of Valeria's prayer, *δέομαι τῷ θεῷ δέομαι καὶ σοι μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ*,<sup>71</sup> II.15-17.

The editors, Kramer and Shelton, argue for Tapiam and Paul's dependence on James 5.13-16 in requesting Nepheros (sic) for prayer for their health (*εὐξασθαι* (= *εὐξασθε*) *ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁλοκληρίας ἡμῶν*), II.11f. Tapiam and Paul recall the cure of their children, 'through your prayers they recovered. For we believe that the Lord will hear you since you are righteous' (*διὰ τὰς εὐχὰς ὑμῶν ἐπαύσαντο. πιστεύομεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν δικαίων ὄντων ἀκούσεται*), II.13-15. There are similarities in vocabulary to James that also recall P.Lond.6.1926: use of *εὐχή*; the emphasis on belief (*πίστις/πιστεύω*)<sup>72</sup>; and the reference to being righteous (*δίκαιος*)<sup>73</sup>. However, the similarities are insufficient to constitute a biblical reminiscence<sup>74</sup>. Each of *εὐχή*, *πίστις* and *δίκαιος* is common in the papyri and the latter two terms are common in the 'NT'. The

<sup>67</sup> James 5.13-16 is cited twice according to the *Biblia Patristica*, but not of physical healing, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 54.

<sup>68</sup> Matthew 8.5-13; 15.21-28; John 4.46-53.

<sup>69</sup> See 'Christian virtues' below.

<sup>70</sup> To 400, *ἐν Χριστῷ* occurs in a greeting only in this letter. By contrast, *ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ* occurs 16x. (DDBDP).

<sup>71</sup> In the papyrus, *δέομε τῷ θεῷ δέομε κὲ σοι μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ*.

<sup>72</sup> James 5.15.

<sup>73</sup> James 5.16.

<sup>74</sup> See n.20. Barrett-Lennard (1994), 74, also rejects a connection with James 5.13-16.

editors also note the role of church presbyters in praying for healing in James 5.14 and suggest this as a further connection<sup>75</sup>, given that Nepheros is a πρεσβύτερος<sup>76</sup>. However, in P.Neph.1 the attribution of effectiveness in prayer is plural, διὰ τὰς εὐχὰς ὑμῶν, ὑμῶν δικαίων ὄντων, ll.13-15; that is, Nepheros and all the brothers' prayers bring healing for the children, and the request is to the brothers, μνημονεύσητε, εὐξασθε<sup>77</sup>, ll.8, 11. The editors' emphasis on Nepheros as a presbyter, and on the relationship between Nepheros' priestly healing ministry and James 5.14f, does not address the consistently plural references<sup>78</sup>. In the rest of the archive, only Horion in P.Neph.10 asks Nepheros alone for prayers for healing<sup>79</sup>. There were also, no doubt, Melitian priests in Alexandria to whom Tapiam and Paul could turn if a priest as such was needed. The proposal that Nepheros, as a πρεσβύτερος, is the focus for the requests for prayer is not supported. Against a conscious recalling of James 5.13-16 also is the lack of reference to anointing with oil<sup>80</sup> and mutual confession of sin, central actions in the biblical passage.

It is more likely that the recent healing of their children and the brothers' asceticism rendering them righteous are the bases for Tapiam and Paul's request, supported by stories of healings in the gospels and Acts, with their emphasis on believing. The stories provide the context for identification with people who are sick, including women<sup>81</sup>, those unable to rise from their beds<sup>82</sup>, and whose friends bring them into Christ's presence<sup>83</sup>. Tapiam and Paul's dependence on the gospel stories rather than James 5.13-16 accords with the patterns evident in early Christian literature<sup>84</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> Barrett-Lennard (1994), 73, also takes Nepheros to be the object of the request for prayer and source of effective prayer but does not consider Nepheros' priesthood significant, noting that non-priests exercised healing ministries, eg Appa Paphnouthios, P.Lond.6.1926. If a priest as such had been needed, Melitian priests were no doubt available in Alexandria.

<sup>76</sup> P.Neph.12.3. Also the Introduction of the archive, 15.

<sup>77</sup> In the papyrus: μνημονεύσηται, εὐξασθαι.

<sup>78</sup> P.Lond.6.1917.24 indicates that requests for prayer circulated among monks κατὰ μονήν.

<sup>79</sup> Paul asks Nepheros for general prayer in P.Neph.2; 3; 5; 8; 9; and to die among family; P.Neph.4. Serapion asks general prayer in P.Neph.12.

<sup>80</sup> This lack is noted also in Barrett-Lennard (1994), 74.

<sup>81</sup> Luke 8.43-48, 49-56; Acts 9.36-43.

<sup>82</sup> P.Neph.1.11; Mark 2.1-14; Luke 8.49-56; Acts 3.2-9; 5.12-16; 9.32-35.

<sup>83</sup> Mark 6.53-56; Acts 5.12-16; 9.36-43.

<sup>84</sup> Barrett-Lennard (1994), 54. See also P.Lond.6.1926 at 86f above.

Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161 prays that God and his Son may help (β[ο]ηθήσωσιν), l.5. While the nature of the help is not specified, σῶμα, ψυχή, πνεῦμα suggest that it has both physical and spiritual dimensions<sup>85</sup>. Βοηθέω occurs in gospel appeals for help from Jesus<sup>86</sup>. In each instance, the person's request is rewarded with healing. The word, however, is frequent in pagan papyri<sup>87</sup> and in pagan, Jewish and Christian literary texts including liturgical texts, and is regular in the LXX<sup>88</sup>, indicating the word is part of common speech. Anonyme's familiarity with Christian vocabulary in use of the trichotomy, nonetheless, suggests a 'NT' connection is possible. While βοηθέω cannot be linked with any particular gospel healing, a recollection may occur at the level of identifying with need and appeal for help. There is no allusion to James 5.13-16. Rather, Anonyme's approach is consistent with the patterns of early discussions of healing.

### Prayer 'night and day'

Tapiam and Paul's statement that they pray 'night and day' (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας), ll.3f, for the brothers uses a phrase that occurs in the 'NT' to denote continuous, that is, regular prayer<sup>89</sup>. The phrase occurs in the LXX<sup>90</sup> and in pagan papyri about other matters<sup>91</sup>. In Christian papyri<sup>92</sup>, νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας is suggested to be a biblical

<sup>85</sup> See on the trichotomy, 81f above.

<sup>86</sup> Matthew 15.25; Mark 9.22, 24, both requests for healing. God and Christ are called βοηθός in 1 Clement 36.1; 59.3, 4. The word group occurs in P.Lond.6.1928 (C4) 4x, of healing by Christ; also P.Oxy.7.1085 (C4/5) of healing.

<sup>87</sup> Eg P.Hamb.1.84 (182-192); P.Brook.46 (160-161); P.Ryl.1.22 (127); BGU 7.1588 (222).

<sup>88</sup> Pagan occurrences date from Herodotus, *LSJ*, s.v. It is frequent in Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch and Galen. Jewish texts use βοηθέω of God's help, eg 2 Chronicles 26.15; Isaiah 44.2; Daniel 11.34; *Book of Enoch*; *Book of Jubilees*; Sibylline Oracle; Philo; Josephus. Christian examples include the apocryphal *Acts*. (TLG). God is βοηθός in the *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 330, no.553; 351, no.584.

<sup>89</sup> Luke 2.37; 18.1; 1 Thessalonians 3.10; 1 Timothy 5.5; 2 Timothy 1.3. For the possible meaning 'regular prayer', see Nobbs (1998), 236, n.17; for the meaning 'night and morning', see 164 below. The phrase is used also of work (Mark 4.27 accusative; 1 Thessalonians 2.9; 2 Thessalonians 3.8); crying out (Mark 5.5); worship (Luke 2.37; Acts 26.7 accusative); teaching (Acts 20.31 accusative); meditation (Barnabas 19.10; Didache 4.1). The word order ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς also occurs of prayer (Luke 18.7); work (Acts 9.24); worship (Revelation 4.8; 7.15); accusation (Revelation 12.10); torment (Revelation 14.11; 20.10).

<sup>90</sup> Isaiah 34.10; Judith 11.17. The order ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς is more frequent, especially in Psalms, but is not used in relation to prayer, eg 32.4 (LXX 31.4); 42.3 (41.4); 55.10 (54.11).

<sup>91</sup> P.Tebt.3.1.706 (c.171? BCE) dyke repair; 3.1.782 (c.153 BCE) agricultural practice; SB 14.11371 (C1 BCE) transport of grain tax; 16.13014 (C2 BCE) agricultural practice. See Nobbs (1998), 236, n.17. Both word orders appear with relatively equal frequency in both Christian and pagan texts.

<sup>92</sup> This text; P.Herm.9; P.Lond.6.1917; P.Neph.4; P.Oxy.34.2731, 258 below; SB 6.9605 at 269f below, (all C4).

reminiscence<sup>93</sup>. However, its general use makes this uncertain<sup>94</sup>. Nonetheless, its regular appearance in Christian and Jewish literary sources, though not liturgical texts, makes a 'biblical' derivation possible<sup>95</sup>. Tapiam and Paul claim to fulfil the Christian ideal of regular prayer. Their statement suggests a process whereby the 'Bible' provides a model that shapes people's lives and religious practices.

### **Death as τέλος and life in the world as ταλαιπωρία and ξενιτεία**

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 state, 'we pray to die in our own home and we wish to be released from the hardship/hard labour of the world near our own people' (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐαυτῶ(ν) τὸ τέλος σχεῖν εὐχόμεθα καὶ ἔγγιστα τῶν ἰδίων ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς ταλαιπωρίας τοῦ κόσμου θέλομεν), ll.15-18<sup>96</sup>. They ask for prayer because they live in exile in Alexandria (διὰ τὴν ξενιτείαν (= ξενιτείαν) ἡμῶν), ll.8f, and they hope to be counted worthy of preservation ἐν τῇ ξενιτείᾳ (= ξενιτείᾳ), l.19. Much of Tapiam and Paul's imagery has resonances with 'Scripture'. The desire to die at home, however, has no 'biblical' parallel, reflecting instead a common fear in Christian and pagan papyri about absence from home, illness and its consequences<sup>97</sup>.

Death as a τέλος 'completion/fulfilment' of life has 'NT' echoes particularly in Christ's statement at his death, τετέλεσται<sup>98</sup>. Τέλος occurs elsewhere with the meaning 'death' only in Hebrews 7.3, of Melchizedek who has no τέλος<sup>99</sup>. Τέλος ἔχειν 'to die', is attested regularly in pagan literature from Plato<sup>100</sup>, and in Jewish and Christian

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<sup>93</sup> See n.20. Also Naldini (1968, 1998), 72.

<sup>94</sup> Also Wipszycka (1974), 221.

<sup>95</sup> Νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας occurs in the *Book of Enoch*; Josephus, apocryphal *Acts*; *Apocalypse of John* in relation to prayer, worship, contemplation of judgement and God. Ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς appears in the *Book of Enoch*; Josephus; Philo; *Acts of Thomas*. Both word orders occur in Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, suggesting that word order is not significant. (TLG).

<sup>96</sup> Paul makes a similar request in P.Neph.4.14f, ἵνα ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς τὸ τέλος ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις χαρίσῃται.

<sup>97</sup> Eg PSI 10.1161; P.Neph.4; P.Bour.25 (all C4); P.Oxy.8.1154 (C1).

<sup>98</sup> John 19.30. The word also occurs in a liturgical text, P.Yale inv.1360 (C3/4), about spiritual struggle and salvation.

<sup>99</sup> Other occurrences carry a variety of meanings, eg 'goal', 'end result', 'tribute'. See G. Delling, 'τέλος' in TDNT 8.49-57, especially 54-56.

<sup>100</sup> For occurrences, see LSJ, s.v. The TLG attests about 40 occurrences meaning 'to die' in the period BCE, eg Strabo (C1 BCE). It still appears with this sense in the Hermetic corpus and Galen in C2. The expression can also mean 'come to the end', eg Strabo, of war; the Hermetic corpus, of god. (TLG).

texts<sup>101</sup>. It is infrequent in the papyri<sup>102</sup>, suggesting that it is not part of everyday speech but is of a literary order. Tapiam and Paul's use of the phrase seems likely to be drawn from the vocabulary for death of their Christian liturgical community, and association with Christ's death cannot be ruled out. While the evidence does not establish a direct source in 'Scripture', death as a τέλος is a theological position consistent with the 'NT'<sup>103</sup>.

Tapiam and Paul pray for death as a release (ἀπαλλαγῆναι) from τῆς ταλαιπωρίας τοῦ κόσμου. Ἀπαλάσσω in relation to death has a 'NT' parallel in 1 Clement 5.7, ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου of the apostle Paul's death. Ταλαιπωρία occurs in the 'NT' three times, of the results of sin<sup>104</sup>. It is more common in the LXX<sup>105</sup>. The word occurs in pagan and more frequently in Jewish and Christian literature<sup>106</sup>. Tapiam and Paul's attitude contains a number of 'NT' echoes particularly in the Pauline letters<sup>107</sup> and may reflect experiences of persecution as Melitians in Alexandria. Persecution is the context of the apostle Paul's discussion of longing for death, but there is no mention of persecution in P.Neph.1. The idea of death as release from suffering occurs in early Christian literature<sup>108</sup>. However, it is not uniquely Christian, being attested also in pagan inscriptions<sup>109</sup>, where it functions perhaps more as an amelioration of death from the writer's perspective than as a reflection of the dead person's views while living.

Tapiam and Paul's use of ξενιτεία as 'exile/living in a foreign place' does not immediately recall 'biblical' vocabulary but may use 'biblical' imagery with a twist, applying the 'NT' idea of Christians as ξένοι in the world with heaven as their home to

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<sup>101</sup> In Jewish texts eg Philo; Josephus (C1); in Christian texts eg Clement of Alexandria and Origen (C2). It can also mean 'come to the end' eg Clement of Alexandria (C3), of 'the good'; Athanasius (C4), of a kingdom. (TLG).

<sup>102</sup> Eg BGU 8.1857 (64-44 BCE); SB 6.9254 (C2) but not referring to death.

<sup>103</sup> Eg Philippians 1.19-26.

<sup>104</sup> James 5.1; Romans 3.16; 1 Clement 15.6.

<sup>105</sup> It occurs 29x, eg Job 30.3; 2 Maccabees 6.9.

<sup>106</sup> It is common in Galen and Philo; frequent in Josephus and Origen; also in *Testament of Job*; *Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena*. (TLG).

<sup>107</sup> 2 Corinthians 5.2-4, 8. See also Philippians 1.23; 1 Clement 5.7.

<sup>108</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 5.14.103.

<sup>109</sup> IG XIV Suppl. 2461 (Imperial) 'now that I have obtained this tomb I have ceased from illness and labour and troubled toil'; also IGUR 1146 (Imperial); CIL X, 1.4917 (no date), cited by Horsley, 'Brief notes on some epitaphs for slaves' in *ND* 2.52ff here 54; Barrett-Lennard, 'Request for prayer for healing' in *ND* 4.245-250, here 250.

Tapiam and Paul's life in Alexandria away from family and friends<sup>110</sup>. Ξένος has both literal<sup>111</sup> and metaphorical<sup>112</sup> uses. In the fifth and sixth centuries, ξενιτεία gains the technical monastic nuance of desirable 'solitude'<sup>113</sup>, but the sense here is negative and the original meaning 'exile' is consistent with Tapiam and Paul's concern to be with their own people. Ξενιτεία occurs once in the LXX<sup>114</sup>, not in the 'NT', and is rare in Jewish and Christian literature<sup>115</sup> but appears in pagan, especially astrological, texts where it has a literal sense<sup>116</sup>. The word is infrequent in the papyri<sup>117</sup>. The imagery of ξενιτεία is highly evocative and may, for that reason, lie behind Tapiam and Paul's use, while lacking the particular theological perspective of the 'NT'.

Tare in P.Bour.25 uses ἐπὶ ξένοις τόποις, l.12, of Apameia. Her meaning is literal.

## Seeing God

In P.Neph.18 Taouak writes to Eudaimon and Apia, ...] ἐὰν ἀποστερῇτέ (= ἀποστερηῇτέ, eds) με δηλώσατέ μοι καὶ ὄψετε (= ὄψεσθε) πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ll.24-26. Ὁψεσθε πρὸς τὸν θεόν is not biblical but has reminiscences in the 'NT'. It is not attested in the LXX, pagan, Jewish or Christian literature of the period, in this form or as ὁράω εἰς τὸν θεόν<sup>118</sup>. However, ὄψονται/ὄψεσθε τὸν θεόν occurs in the LXX<sup>119</sup>, the 'NT'<sup>120</sup> and Christian literature with increasing frequency to the fourth century, almost exclusively as the blessing for the pure of heart and otherwise always as blessing<sup>121</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> Eg Philippians 3.20. For ξενιτεία as the Melitian church's status in Alexandria, see 198 below.

<sup>111</sup> Matthew 25.35-44.

<sup>112</sup> Hebrews 11.13-16; The Shepherd 50.1. 1 Clement pr. uses παρικήω for a similar idea.

<sup>113</sup> Vivian (2004), 257, n.98. The word also retains its original meaning.

<sup>114</sup> Wisdom 18.3.

<sup>115</sup> It occurs with literal and symbolic senses in *Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena*, and appears regularly with θλίψις. (TLG).

<sup>116</sup> Eg in C2 BCE 4x of which Dorotheus Astrologer uses it 2x; in C2 45x of which Vettius Valens uses it 29x; in C4 93x of which Hephaestion Astrologer uses it 68x. (TLG).

<sup>117</sup> It occurs elsewhere only in P.Neph.4.13 where it has the same meaning. ξένος is frequent.

<sup>118</sup> Or in the order εἰς τὸν θεόν ὁράω, πρὸς τὸν θεόν ὁράω. (TLG).

<sup>119</sup> Habbakuk 3.10, of mountains seeing God, connoting threat.

<sup>120</sup> Matthew 5.8. See also John 1.18, 51; Hebrews 12.14; 1 John 3.2 of Christ; Revelation 22.4. In Revelation 1.7; 2 Clement 17.5 unbelievers see Christ/Christ's glory and wail.

<sup>121</sup> Τὸν θεὸν ὁψονται appears in *Acts of Paul* and is common in Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Τὸν θεὸν ὄψεσθε occurs in Celsus and Origen. Ὁψεσθε τὸν θεόν occurs in Eusebius (TLG). None of the phrases appears in Jewish or pagan texts of the period.



The editors understand Taouak's statement as, '... if you defraud me, make plain to me (your response) and you will see God', with καὶ ὄψεστε (= ὄψεσθε) πρὸς τὸν θεόν a threat<sup>122</sup>. The following greetings and farewell, they suggest, are to soften the harsh tone. The editors leave unanswered the inconsistency between Taouak threatening God's wrath and greeting her addressees with affection, particularly 'beloved Apia'. Threats between members of the Christian community are contrary to the 'NT' ideal, but the reality of church life means such an interpretation cannot be ruled out. Taouak's reason for her confident pronouncement about seeing God, 'we are God's treasure/treasury' (ὁ γὰρ θησαυρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖς (= ἡμεῖς)), II.26f, almost certainly includes Eudaimon and Apia<sup>123</sup> and argues against the idea of threat.

A further consideration of ὄψεστε (= ὄψεσθε) πρὸς τὸν θεόν is necessary. Intransitive use of ὁράω with πρὸς does not occur in the 'NT' nor does it seem to be attested elsewhere in the papyri or literary sources<sup>124</sup>. 'Οράω, used transitively in 'see God' occurs in the 'NT' generally with a sense of blessing. The only occurrences implying threat, Revelation 1.7 and 2 Clement 17.5, 'quote' Zechariah 12.10 and Isaiah 66.18<sup>125</sup>, where strictly the 'seeings' are neutral, the resulting joy or wailing depending on other factors. Zechariah 12.10 is quoted also in John 19.37, where ὁράω is intransitive with εἰς<sup>126</sup>; that is, the transitive use and the intransitive with εἰς, at least in certain contexts, are equivalent. The phrase here connotes neither threat nor blessing. Further, πρὸς and εἰς occur interchangeably in texts of this period<sup>127</sup>. The meaning 'see God' connoting blessing fits the context of this letter<sup>128</sup>.

It is possible that ἐὰν ἀποστερίτε με may be ἐὰν ἀποστελλήτε με<sup>129</sup> using the substitution of λ and ρ common in Greek of this period<sup>130</sup>. This allows the meaning, 'If you send them (the six artabas) to me, tell me and you will see God' (as a blessing)

<sup>122</sup> Eds, '... und Ihr werdet Gott schauen'.

<sup>123</sup> This is the most obvious reading; see also 129ff below; also 198 below on this phrase in relation to the Melitians.

<sup>124</sup> *DDBDP* and *TLG*.

<sup>125</sup> Zechariah 12.10 LXX καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς με. Isaiah 66.18 ὄψονται τὴν δόξαν μου.

<sup>126</sup> ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν.

<sup>127</sup> Turner in Moulton and Turner (1906, 1976) 3.256f; Moule (1953, 1959), 67f.

<sup>128</sup> The Eumenian curse formula, ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν in Phrygian tomb inscriptions is not an equivalent. See W. Tabbernee, 'The formula ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν' in *ND* 3.136-139.

<sup>129</sup> I am grateful to J. A. L. Lee for the suggestion. See ἀποστίλαί μοι I.22.

<sup>130</sup> Gignac (1981, 2002) 1.102f.

with no wrongdoing against which a threat need be made. This interpretation also requires no change in subject as is necessary in Kramer and Shelton's reading, where 'tell me' refers to Eudaimon and Apia's decision about the aroura. It seems likely, then, that Taouak intends the beatific vision of the 'NT' by ὄψεσθε (= ὄψεσθε) πρὸς τὸν θεόν and that it constitutes a biblical reminiscence<sup>131</sup>. Taouak uses the blessing as an incentive to encourage Eudaimon and Apia to comply with her wishes.

Taouak's reason for confidence in the blessing, ὁ γὰρ θησαυρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖς (= ἡμεῖς), ll.26f, is not a 'biblical' citation although it recalls similar statements<sup>132</sup>. In the 'NT', in addition to references to human treasure<sup>133</sup>, the kingdom of heaven is a θησαυρὸς hidden in a field<sup>134</sup>, and the gospel is a θησαυρὸς held in clay/human vessels<sup>135</sup>. It is possible that Matthew's θησαυρὸς refers to people, allowing a biblical background to Taouak's idea. However, even if such an interpretation was not current at the time, the sentiment is consistent with 'NT' ecclesiology, although the link is not direct<sup>136</sup>. The expression is not attested in contemporary liturgical texts nor with this meaning in the LXX, and while θησαυρὸς is frequent in pagan, Jewish and Christian literature, it is never used in Taouak's sense<sup>137</sup>.

### Christian virtues

The women writers refer to a number of virtues in their letters. The sources of their vocabulary vary.

Leuchis in P.Herm.17 attributes the words 'devout' (θεοσεβής), 'compassion' (ἐλεημοσύνη) and 'kindness' (χρηστότης) to Apa Johannes. Θεοσεβής in her address to 'my lord, the devout Apa Johannes' (τῷ κυρίῳ μου θεωσεβῇ (= θεοσεβεῖ) Ἄπα Ἰωάννην (= Ἰωάννη)), l.1, occurs only twice in the 'NT' where it denotes the truly pious person<sup>138</sup>. The word is infrequent in the LXX<sup>139</sup> but more common in intertestamental

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<sup>131</sup> See n.20 above.

<sup>132</sup> Eg 2 Corinthians 6.16; Ephesians 2.10; 5.30. Also Psalm 100.3.

<sup>133</sup> Eg Matthew 6.19, 20; 12.35; 19.21 and parallels.

<sup>134</sup> Matthew 13.44.

<sup>135</sup> 2 Corinthians 4.7.

<sup>136</sup> Eg 1 Clement 30.1 has Ἀγίου οὖν μερὶς ὑπάρχοντες but this expresses a different idea and is the basis of paranaesis.

<sup>137</sup> Eg in C3 Origen uses it 208x; in C4 it occurs 714x. It refers to literal and metaphorical treasure but not to people as God's treasure.

<sup>138</sup> John 9.31; 1 Clement 17.3 of Job.

<sup>139</sup> Genesis.20.11; Job 28.28; 4 Maccabees 7.6, 21f; 17.15; Wisdom 10.12.

Jewish literature and later inscriptions<sup>140</sup>. The cognate θεοσεβεία also occurs rarely in the 'NT'<sup>141</sup>. Θεοσεβής continues to be relatively infrequent in early Christian literature until the fourth century<sup>142</sup> when θεοσεβής/θεοσεβεία becomes a synonym for 'Christian' and a title for ecclesiastics<sup>143</sup>. Θεοσεβής is rare in pagan<sup>144</sup> and Jewish<sup>145</sup> literature. In the papyri of the period it is attested only twice, both Christian texts<sup>146</sup>. The pattern suggests that θεοσεβής is part of the Christian community's developing vocabulary.

Ἐλεημοσύνη, in the request that 'your compassion reach to me too' (κάμῃ (= καὶ ἐμὲ) φθάσι (= φθάσῃ) ἢ ἐλεημοσύνην (= ἐλεημοσύνη) σου), l.3, denotes people's concrete acts of mercy in the 'NT'<sup>147</sup>. It is not used of God's<sup>148</sup>. The word denotes both divine and human mercy in the LXX<sup>149</sup>. The noun occurs elsewhere in the papyri of the period only at P.Abinn.19<sup>150</sup>. It is regularly attested in early Christian literature, but not in liturgical material, and is virtually absent from pagan texts<sup>151</sup>. Leuchis' use almost certainly reflects a 'biblical' and Christian community background.

<sup>140</sup> Exodus 18.21; Job 1.1, 8; 2.3; 4 Maccabees 15.28; 16.12; Judith 11.17; Josephus, 3x. In inscriptions, the word denotes either 'the Jews' or 'godfearers' associated with the synagogue. An inscription from Miletus reads Ἰουδαίων τῶν καὶ θεοσεβίων, cited in Deissmann (1923, 1978), 446; see also Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987); Horsley, 'A judaizer from the Second Sophistic' in *ND* 3.123ff, here 125.

<sup>141</sup> 1 Timothy 2.10; 1 Clement 17.3; 2 Clement 20.4.

<sup>142</sup> In C1 Ignatius 1x; Clement of Rome 8x; C2 Clement of Alexandria 9x; Origen 5x; Acts of Paul 1x; C3 Hippolytus 1x; C4 Eusebius 30x; Athanasius 3x; Chrysostom 53x. (TLG).

<sup>143</sup> Dinneen (1927), 6; Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.; Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich and Danker (1957, 1979), s.v.; G. Bertram, 'θεοσεβής, θεοσεβεία' in *TDNT* 3.123-128.

<sup>144</sup> In C5-C1 BCE 8x; C1 Plutarch 1x; C2 in the Hermetic corpus 1x; Cassius Dio 1x; C4 Hephaestion Astrologer 2x. (TLG). For other examples, see Bauer et al. (1957, 1979), s.v.; LSJ, s.v.

<sup>145</sup> In C1 Josephus 2x, *Testament of Abraham* 1x. (TLG).

<sup>146</sup> This text; P.Kell.1.Gr.63 (C4). Θεοσεβεία does not occur before C4, then only in Christian texts almost all of which are monastic: P.Amh.2.145; P.Lond.5.1658; 6.1923; 1924; 1925; 1929; P.Herm.8; 9; P.Neph.4; 5; 6; 9; P.Oxy.56.3858; PSI 13.1342. (DDBDP).

<sup>147</sup> It occurs 13x in the gospels and Acts but not in the canonical epistles and Revelation, eg Matthew 6.2, 4; Luke 11.41; Acts 3.2; 9.36; also 2 Clement 16.4; Didache 1.6; 15.4.

<sup>148</sup> The cognate verb is used of God in Mark 5.9; Romans 9.15-18; 11.30-33; 1 Corinthians 7.25; 2 Corinthians 4.1; Philippians 2.27; 1 Timothy 1.13-16; and is frequent in appeals to Jesus, eg Matthew 20.30f; Mark 17.13.

<sup>149</sup> Divine mercy, eg Isaiah 1.27; 28.17; 59.16; Psalm 33.5 (LXX 32.5); 35.24 (34.24). Human mercy, eg Ecclesiasticus 3.14; 30; Tobit 1.3, 16. See R. Bultmann, 'ἐλεημοσύνη' in *TDNT* 2.485f.

<sup>150</sup> Of Abinnaeus' action if he complies with the writer's wish. See the letter at 244f below.

<sup>151</sup> In C1 23x, all Christian; C2 46x, eg Clement of Alexandria; Origen; *Traditions of Matthew*, *Testament of Job*; C3 6x eg *Acts of Thomas*; C4 1424x eg Chrysostom more than 1000x; C5 166x. The word is rare in the period BCE, occurring in C4-C2 BCE 1x each century and not in C1 BCE. (TLG).

Χρηστότης in 'your kindness embraces all who are powerless' (ἡ χρηστώτητά (= χρηστότης) σου κατέλαβεν πάντας τοὺς μὴ (= μὴ) δυναμένους), I.2, occurs in the epistles of the 'NT'<sup>152</sup>, and is used of both human and divine kindness. It is common in the LXX, especially the Psalms<sup>153</sup>, and attested in Christian, Jewish and, less frequently, pagan literature<sup>154</sup>. It occurs in early Christian liturgical material<sup>155</sup>. It is rare in pagan papyri but appears in Christian papyri of the fourth century<sup>156</sup>. Χρηστότης, especially of God, carries the sense of condescension evident in Leuchis' use<sup>157</sup>. The word appears to be part of her church community's developing Christian vocabulary consistent with the 'NT' and overlapping with the language for virtues of her society.

Given Apa Johannes' identity as a Christian ascetic, it may be that Leuchis takes words heard in the public reading of 'Scripture' containing the church's developing paranaesis and uses them to trigger his sense of duty and press her case. The words flatter Johannes and at the same time remind him of the virtues an ascetic ought to display, and from which Leuchis can benefit.

The virtues that Valeria ascribes to Appa Paphnouthios in P.Lond.6.1926, 'most honoured' (τιμιωτάτῳ (= τιμιωτάτῳ)), 'Christ-bearing' (χρηστοφόρῳ (= χριστοφόρῳ)), I.1, and 'all virtue' (πάσης ἀρετῆς), I.2, do not have a 'biblical' background. 'Practising' (τῶν γὰρ ἀσκούντων), II.9f, and 'observing religious discipline' (θρησκευόντων), I.10, have links to the 'NT'. Τιμιώτατος occurs only twice in the 'NT', of inanimate objects<sup>158</sup>, and once in the LXX of the 'land'<sup>159</sup>. It occurs more than 300 times in Christian and pagan papyri of the period, of objects and people<sup>160</sup>, has similar use in

<sup>152</sup> It appears 11x, eg Romans 2.4; 2 Corinthians 6.6; Galatians 5.22; Colossians 3.12; 1 Clement 9.1; 2 Clement 15.5; 19.1.

<sup>153</sup> Eg Psalm 14.1 (LXX 13.1); 21.4 (20.4); 25.7 (24.7); 31.19 (30.20). (TLG).

<sup>154</sup> Pagan texts eg in C5-C2 BCE 40x; C1 Plutarch 26x; C2 Cassius Dio 12x; Jewish texts eg in C2 BCE *Apocalypse of Esdras*; C1 BCE Philo 9x; C1 Josephus 22x; Christian texts eg in C1 Ignatius 6x; C2 Origen 129x; C3 *Acts of Thomas* 7x; C4 Chrysostom 132x. (TLG).

<sup>155</sup> Eg BKT 6.6.1 (C3). See also K. Weiss, 'χρηστότης' in *TDNT* 9.489-491.

<sup>156</sup> Pagan examples include P.Giss.7 (117); Chr.Wilck.19 (154); Christian examples are P.Ant.2.93; SB 1.2266 (both C4).

<sup>157</sup> This is also evident in P.Ant.2.93 of the writer's future mother-in-law; see 245f below.

<sup>158</sup> Revelation 18.12; 21.11.

<sup>159</sup> Wisdom 12.7.

<sup>160</sup> From a search of the *DDBPD*. See also Koskeniemi (1956), 100ff.

pagan and Jewish literature<sup>161</sup>, and is most frequent in Christian literary texts as it becomes a term of address in the fourth-century church, designating bishops primarily, priests, deacons and lay civil authorities<sup>162</sup>. Χριστοφόρος is not found in the 'NT' nor in Christian liturgical texts. It is not listed among the titles of address in Dinneen's listing<sup>163</sup>. It occurs elsewhere in the Greek papyri of this period only in four texts<sup>164</sup>, but is more frequent in the Coptic papyri. The pattern of use has been taken to suggest a Melitian preference for the term and a Melitian milieu for the Paphnouthios archive. However, while χριστοφόρος is rare in very early Christian literature, it is used by 'catholic' Christians<sup>165</sup>. Ἀρετή is uncommon in 'NT'<sup>166</sup>, rare of 'virtue' in the LXX<sup>167</sup>, regular in Jewish literature<sup>168</sup> and frequent in pagan writing<sup>169</sup> and later Christian texts<sup>170</sup>. Ἀσκέω occurs twice in the 'NT' referring to spiritual training<sup>171</sup>. The meaning 'discipline to contain passions' is frequent in Greek literature<sup>172</sup>. The word is rare in the LXX but appears in Jewish literature<sup>173</sup> and is regular in Christian writings<sup>174</sup>. Valeria's absolute use here appears to have particular

<sup>161</sup> In C5 BCE 31x including Euripides' use of τιμιωτάτη in address to a woman; in C4-C1 BCE 101x; C1 eg Josephus 22x but not in Philo; C2 eg the Hermetic corpus 3x.

<sup>162</sup> Dinneen (1927), 73ff; Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. Dinneen notes the term is used of all classes and τιμιωτάτη qualifies women. The word is most frequent among the 'Church Fathers': C3 43x; C4 353x; C5 60x. (TLG).

<sup>163</sup> Dinneen (1927). But Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v., classifies Valeria's use as a title.

<sup>164</sup> P.Neph.11; Stud.Pal.20.109 as a name; SB 1.2266, (all C4). (DDBDP).

<sup>165</sup> It occurs in 'catholic' texts with the following frequencies: C1 Ignatius 6x; C2 2x; C3 1x; C4 41x, eg Chrysostom 10x. (TLG). See also Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. A similar conclusion appears in Barrett-Lennard (1994), 45. Χριστοφόρος is relatively rare in Christian papyri in Egypt.

<sup>166</sup> Philemon 4.8; 1 Peter 2.9; 2 Peter 1.3, 5; The Shepherd 26.2; 36.3; 46.1; 61.4; 76.4; 2 Clement 10.1.

<sup>167</sup> Eg 2 Maccabees 10.28; 4 Maccabees 7.22.

<sup>168</sup> Eg in C2 BCE Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs 91x; C1 BCE Philo 675x; C1 Josephus 274x. (TLG).

<sup>169</sup> Eg in C1 BCE Diodorus Siculus 275x; C1 Dio Chrysostom 100x; Plutarch 789x; C2 Galen 163x; Cassius Dio 169x; C3 Plotinus 138x; Porphyry 98x; C4 Julian 110x. (TLG). See also O. Bauernfeind, 'ἀρετή' in TDNT 1.457-461.

<sup>170</sup> In C2 eg Clement of Alexandria 160x; Origen 796x; C3 eg Hippolytus 14x; C4 eg Eusebius 459x; Chrysostom 3222x. (TLG).

<sup>171</sup> In the context of a speech to a pagan, 'I (Paul) practise (ἀσκέω) to have a clear conscience', Acts 24.16. Also The Shepherd 38.10.

<sup>172</sup> In C1 BCE eg Dionysius of Harlicarnassus 22x; C1eg Plutarch 14x; C2 eg Galen 51x; the Hermetic corpus 1x; Cassius Dio 11x; C3 eg Porphyry 5x; Iamblichus 4x; C4 eg Libanius 6x; Themistius 4x; Eunapius 1x. (TLG). See also H. Windisch 'ἀσκέω' in TDNT 1.494-496.

<sup>173</sup> In LXX 1x, 2 Maccabees 15.4. In C1 BCE Philo 6x; C1 Josephus 5x. (TLG).

<sup>174</sup> In C1 Clement of Rome 7x; C2 eg Clement of Alexandria 10x; Origen 37x; Irenaeus 2x; C4 eg Athanasius 17x; Eusebius 16x; Palladius 11x; Chrysostom 41x. (TLG).

reference to ascetic practice, a sense that emerges in the fourth century<sup>175</sup>. The word does not appear to be otherwise attested in the papyri of the period<sup>176</sup>, suggesting that at this time it is part of literary not everyday discourse. Θρησκεύω appears in the 'NT' once<sup>177</sup>, and its cognates six times denoting 'religion/religious' in both good and bad senses<sup>178</sup>. Both meanings are attested in Greek literature but the word is not frequent<sup>179</sup>. It is rare in the LXX<sup>180</sup>, regular in Jewish<sup>181</sup> and Christian literature<sup>182</sup>, but appears not to occur in other Christian papyri of the period<sup>183</sup>. Valeria, then, derives her vocabulary for virtues from that developed by the church, both from its own lexicon and borrowing from its pagan society.

The mother in P.Ben.Mus.4 addresses her son as ἀγιώτατος. The word occurs in the 'NT' only once and not of a person<sup>184</sup>, and similarly in the LXX<sup>185</sup>. However, ἅγιος is common of people, Christ and God<sup>186</sup>. In the papyri of the period, ἀγιώτατος is most frequent in, but not exclusive to, Christian texts<sup>187</sup>. The superlative occurs with increasing frequency in literary sources, mainly Christian, and comes to be used as a form of address by the fifth century<sup>188</sup>, mainly for bishops, especially the bishop of Alexandria, and less frequently for high-ranking monks<sup>189</sup>. It does not appear in

<sup>175</sup> Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii* 12; 14. For other examples, see Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>176</sup> *DDBDP*, nor is it attested in C5.

<sup>177</sup> 1 Clement 45.7.

<sup>178</sup> θρησκεία, Acts 26.5; Colossians 2.18; James 1.26; 1 Clement 45.7; 62.1; θρησκός, James 1.26. See K. L. Schmidt 'θρησκεία, θρησκός' in *TDNT* 3.155-159.

<sup>179</sup> In C1 BCE eg Dionysius of Harlicarnassus 2x; C1 eg Plutarch 1x; C2 eg Cassius Dio 7x; Hermetic corpus 1x; C3 Porphyry 5x. (TLG).

<sup>180</sup> In LXX 2x, Wisdom 11.15; 14.17. θρησκεία 4x; θρησκός 2x.

<sup>181</sup> In C2 BCE Sibylline Oracle 2x; C1 Josephus 21x. (TLG).

<sup>182</sup> In C1 Clement of Rome 6x; C2 eg Clement of Alexandria 12x; Origen 13x; C3 Hippolytus 3x; C4 eg Athanasius 30x; Chrysostom 3x. (TLG).

<sup>183</sup> It occurs in the pagan texts BGU 13.2215 (113/4); P.Oxy.42.3018 (C3); O.Narm.92 (C2/3). The cognates also occur in pagan but not Christian papyri.

<sup>184</sup> It qualifies πίστις in Jude 20.

<sup>185</sup> 2 Maccabees 5.15, of the temple.

<sup>186</sup> It occurs more than 250x in 'NT'; 419x in LXX; Moulton, Geden and Moulton (1897, 1978), s.v.; (TLG).

<sup>187</sup> Christian examples include P.Lond.6.1917 (330-340); P.Herm.8 (C4) both of prayer; PSI 13.1342 (C4), as a title. Pagan examples include SB 18.13174 (258); P.Harr.1.69 (C3); PGM IV.668 (C4); P.Giss.40 (215) of the gods; PSI 10.1128 (C3) of Isis.

<sup>188</sup> It appears in C5-C2 BCE 10x; 1 BCE Philo 11x; C1 16x eg Josephus 4x; C2 28x eg *Acts of John* 3x; Clement of Alexandria 5x; Origen 3x; C4 190x eg *LH* 5x; C5 353x eg Justinian 289x. (TLG).

<sup>189</sup> P.Herm.16 (C5); P.Koln 2.112 (5/6); P.Oxy.16.1967 (427). In SB 20.15192 (C5/6) it occurs of monks collectively. For examples from Christian literature, see Dinneen (1927), 4.

liturgical material. It is noteworthy in relation to the mother's use of the term for her son that it is generally used by those of lower status to ecclesiastical superiors<sup>190</sup>.

While the mother does not use 'biblical' language, her son in P.Ben.Mus.5 uses a biblical citation as his closing prayer, ἡ [χά]ρις τοῦ κ(υρίο)υ ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ μετὰ τοῦ πν(εύματος) ὑμῶν<sup>191</sup>, ll.33-35. Ὑμῶν may reflect Anonymos' greetings to 'those loving us' (τοὺς φιλοῦντι[ας] ἡμᾶς), ll.31f, or simply quote the biblical prayer, which includes ὑμῶν on each occasion. The prayer gains significance for the mother if she recognises its biblical origin. The son's choice implies that she is sufficiently familiar with 'Scripture' to identify the source and appreciate its meaning. The mother, however, does not use 'biblical' vocabulary herself though it would appear suitable. It may indicate that 'Scripture' is not so much a part of the mother's verbal landscape as to make its use natural.

The mother in SB 18.13612 uses ἐλεέω and σώζω, in her requests to Apa Johannes. She asks Apa Johannes for mercy (καὶ ἐμὲ ἐλέησον), l.7, and characterises his response to petitioners as 'you both have mercy on and save all who flee to you' (πάντας τοὺς εἰς σὲ καταφεύγοντας καὶ ἐλεεῖς καὶ σώξεις) ll.3-7. Both ἐλεέω and σώζω are frequent and theologically significant words<sup>192</sup>.

Ἐλεέω occurs more than 90 times in the 'NT' of both divine and human mercy. In the LXX, ἔλεος translates *hesed*, the central concept of God's covenant faithfulness and mercy. In both the LXX and the 'NT', mercy is mandated for human relationships and is thought of as proceeding from God's mercy. The mother flatters Apa Johannes that he fulfils this requirement and invokes his Christian virtue for herself. Of the occurrences of ἐλεέω in the 'NT' and LXX, most are ἐλέησον, as used by the mother<sup>193</sup>. Ἐλεέω occurs in pagan<sup>194</sup> and Jewish literature<sup>195</sup>, and is common in

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<sup>190</sup> Dinneen (1927), 3.

<sup>191</sup> Galatians 6.18; Philippians 4.23; Philemon 25.

<sup>192</sup> See R. Bultmann, 'ἔλεος, ἐλεέω' in *TDNT* 2.477-487; W. Foerster and G. Fohrer, 'σῶζω, σωτηρία' in *TDNT* 7.965-1003. Also Bauer et al. (1957, 1979), s.vv.

<sup>193</sup> Eg Matthew 9.27; Luke 17.13, both appeals to Jesus; 1 Clement 18.2, an appeal to God. It occurs also in a request to Abraham functioning as a metonymy for God in Luke 16.24.

<sup>194</sup> Greek thought includes ἔλεος as a respectable emotion in response to the suffering of others, although in Stoicism the emotional rather than moral dimension reduces ἐλεέω to a 'sickness of the soul', R. Bultmann in *TDNT* 2.478. Ἐλεέω is relatively infrequent, occurring in eg Plato; Homer; and in C1 eg Plutarch 12x; Dio Chrysostom 5x; C2 eg Galen 2x; Cassius Dio 36x; Hermetic corpus 9x; C3 eg Porphyry 4x; Plotinus 1x; C4 eg Julian 5x; Libanius 48x. (TLG).

<sup>195</sup> Examples occur in C1 BCE Philo 12x; C1 *Testament of Abraham* 5x; Josephus 31x.

Christian writing<sup>196</sup> but infrequent in the papyri to 400 where it appears almost always in Christian texts<sup>197</sup>. It is found in liturgical material<sup>198</sup>. Anonyme therefore uses the vocabulary of the Christian community which intersects with that of the secular world. The appeal probably recalls 'biblical' use and identifies Anonyme with the needy who cry to God/Jesus for help. Apa Johannes stands to her like Christ.

Σώζω occurs in the 'NT' more than 200 times with meanings ranging from 'save' to 'make healthy' and 'protect', with the objects being both physical and spiritual life<sup>199</sup>. The word is frequent in the healing stories of the gospels of Jesus' action<sup>200</sup>, is common in literary texts<sup>201</sup> and found in liturgical material<sup>202</sup>. Σώζω, however, is not exclusive to the Christian community but occurs in Jewish<sup>203</sup> and pagan literature<sup>204</sup> and papyri of pagan gods rescuing from the dangers of life and preserving life beyond death<sup>205</sup> and is frequent in the LXX<sup>206</sup>. Anonyme draws on the language of her society as well as the 'Bible', and σώζω is an example of the shared vocabulary of Christian and pagan communities.

In P.Edmonstone Terouterou considers her act of manumission to be 'in accordance with the godliness of the all-merciful God' (κατ' εὐσεβίαν (= εὐσέβειαν)<sup>207</sup> τοῦ πανελεήμονος θεοῦ), l.7, and she charges that none of her heirs criticise ταύτη τῇ

<sup>196</sup> In C1 eg Ignatius 15x; Clement of Rome 41x; C2 eg *Protoevangelium of James*; Clement of Alexandria 43x; Origen 212x; C3 eg Hippolytus 9x C4 eg Eusebius 155x; Athanasius 145x; Chrysostom 1538x. (TLG).

<sup>197</sup> It is attested only 23x in the period eg SB 16.12509 (103); P.Gen.2.104 (147); P.Rein.2.113 (263); BGU 4.1024.4, 7 (C4); P.Fouad 80 (C4); P.Lond.6.1917 (C4). (DDBDP).

<sup>198</sup> Ἐλεέω occurs in BKT 6.6.1 (C3); Id. 4, 195 (C3) in Lodi (1979), 177, no.312; *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 335, no.560; 341, no.568; *Liturgy of St Mark* 48, 49.

<sup>199</sup> The meaning 'physical healing' is prominent in the gospels, and 'spiritual salvation' in the Pauline epistles. A similar semantic range is found in the LXX.

<sup>200</sup> It occurs 16x eg Matthew 9.22 and parallels, Luke 8.48. Θεραπεύω occurs 33x and ἰάομαι 15x.

<sup>201</sup> In C1 eg Clement of Rome 78x; C2 eg apocryphal Acts more than 20x; Origen 345x; Clement of Alexandria 154x; C3 eg Hippolytus 31x; C4 eg Athanasius 209x; Chrysostom 919x. (TLG).

<sup>202</sup> Σώζω occurs in P.Yale.inv.1360 (C3/4); *Patrologia Orientalis* 18.442-443 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 412f, no.645; *Liturgy of St Mark*, 62, 71 etc.

<sup>203</sup> Eg *Testament of Abraham* 12x; Josephus 178x.

<sup>204</sup> It occurs regularly. In C1 eg Plutarch 333x; Dio Chrysostom 50x; C2 eg Galen 370x; the Hermetic corpus 7x; Cassius Dio 141x; C3 eg Porphyry 76x; C4 eg Libanius 387x. (TLG).

<sup>205</sup> Eg P.Mich.8.499 (C2); P.Sarap.89 (C2); P.Oxy.31.2561 (293-305).

<sup>206</sup> It occurs more than 400x. (TLG).

<sup>207</sup> εὐσεβία is attested in LSJ, s.v., but is considered a poetic form. Terouterou probably uses it as a phonetic equivalent to εὐσέβεια.



εὐσεβεία, I.15. Εὐσέβεια is frequent in the later books of the 'NT'<sup>208</sup>, otherwise occurring only once<sup>209</sup>. It is common in the LXX, especially in 4 Maccabees<sup>210</sup>. It appears in both Christian and pagan papyri<sup>211</sup>, and is frequent in Jewish, pagan and Christian literature<sup>212</sup>, suggesting that it is part of common vocabulary in society as well as the Christian community. In pagan literature, εὐσέβεια denotes reverence for the divine and the divine order<sup>213</sup>, and appears to have a general content<sup>214</sup>. In the 'NT', εὐσέβεια denotes a particular manner of life that is consistent with 'biblical' teaching. Terouterou's phrase, κατ' εὐσέβειαν (= εὐσέβειαν), occurs twice in the 'NT'<sup>215</sup>, where it defines genuine Christian truth as that which accords with εὐσέβεια. The concept, paradoxically then, both determines what is genuine teaching and is determined by it. Κατ' εὐσέβειαν itself is attested in Jewish, Christian and pagan literary sources<sup>216</sup>. It is not possible to determine to what extent Terouterou's use of εὐσέβεια derives from 'Scripture' or from the common language of piety in fourth-century Egypt. Hence, it is not possible to determine its content for her. Εὐσεβεῖν describes family obligations in 1 Timothy 5.4, the context of Terouterou's use, and may signal her assessment of her action as, in her mind, consistent with 'biblical' teaching<sup>217</sup>.

Terouterou uses the language for virtues of her society to describe the behaviour of her slaves, 'good will, love and, in addition, service; good will and affection' (εὐνοίας καὶ στοργῆς ἔτι τε καὶ ὑπηρεσίας, εὐνοίαν καὶ φιλοστοργεῖαν<sup>218</sup>), II.9, 16. Εὐνοία occurs once only in the 'NT', interestingly, as here, in a context of slavery<sup>219</sup>, and only in the

<sup>208</sup> Pastoral Epistles 10x; 2 Peter 5x; 1 Clement 8x; 2 Clement 3x.

<sup>209</sup> Acts 3.12.

<sup>210</sup> It occurs in this book 60x of the 96 occurrences in the LXX.

<sup>211</sup> Christian examples include P.Herm.7 (C4); P.Kell.1.Gr.24 (352). Pagan examples include P.Giss.22 (98-138); P.Oxy.6.907 (276); 12.1449 (213-217).

<sup>212</sup> Frequency of use is consistently high, from C5 BCE 235x to C4 7168x and C5 1174x. Jewish examples are in Philo 198x and Josephus 148x; pagan examples occur in the Hermetic corpus 28x; Christian examples occur in Clement of Alexandria 56x; Origen 279x; Chrysostom 808x. (TLG).

<sup>213</sup> W. Foerster, 'εὐσέβεια' in *TDNT* 2.175-185, especially 178.

<sup>214</sup> This is perhaps the reason early Christian writers avoid it. Paul prefers πίστις and ἀγάπη which cannot be regarded as personal moral virtues.

<sup>215</sup> 1 Timothy 6.3; Titus 1.1.

<sup>216</sup> Eg in a Jewish text, Josephus 1x; Christian texts, Origen 2x; Eusebius 6x; Athanasius 2x; Chrysostom 12x; pagan texts, Posidonius 2x; Strabo 1x. (TLG).

<sup>217</sup> The phrase also describes family obligation in P.Lips.1.28 at 65 above.

<sup>218</sup> The word ὑπηρεσία is not a virtue although it appears to function as one for Terouterou.

<sup>219</sup> Ephesians 6.7.

later books of the LXX<sup>220</sup>. Φιλοστοργία and στοργή do not occur in the 'NT'<sup>221</sup>, but again in the late books of the LXX<sup>222</sup>. Εὐνοια, στοργή and φιλόστοργος are relatively frequent in pagan, Jewish and Christian literature<sup>223</sup>, and attested in both Christian and pagan papyri, where they often describe slaves' behaviour using a formula<sup>224</sup>. The words appear once in liturgical material<sup>225</sup>. The pagan background to these virtues does not necessarily determine the sense of κατ' εὐσεβίαν (= εὐσέβειαν) since Teroutherou draws on 'biblical' vocabulary in her use of πανελεήμων<sup>226</sup>. Teroutherou's vocabulary reflects Christian literary, perhaps liturgical, and broad societal influences and is an example of the integration into the church of non-biblical terms.

Didyme and the sisters in P.Oxy.14.1774 greet 'the lady sister blessed Asous' (προσαγόρευε τὴν κυρείαν (= κυρίαν) ἀδελφὴν μακαρείαν (= μακαρίαν) Ασοῦν), ll.17f. Μακαρίος/-α occurs some 85 times in the 'NT' and generally connotes sharing in salvation and its joy<sup>227</sup>. It is frequent also in the LXX<sup>228</sup>. The word's place in the Sermon on the Mount<sup>229</sup> becomes definitional for its Christian meaning, although it can also carry the less overtly religious sense 'happy'<sup>230</sup>. Μακαρία, in Didyme's greeting, almost certainly has its religious meaning. Its use of someone living is

<sup>220</sup> It occurs 18x, in Esther 3x; 1, 2, 3, 4 Maccabees 15x. (TLG).

<sup>221</sup> Φιλόστοργος appears in Romans 12.10.

<sup>222</sup> Φιλοστοργία occurs in 2, 3, 4 Maccabees 9x; στοργή in 3, 4 Maccabees 3x. (TLG).

<sup>223</sup> Εὐνοια occurs most frequently, φιλόστοργος less so, στοργή much less frequently. Εὐνοια occurs 211x in C5 BCE, to 1254x in C4; in Christian texts eg Clement of Alexandria 24x; Origen 5x; Chrysostom 490x; in Jewish texts eg Philo 76x; Josephus 232x. Φιλόστοργος occurs 14x in C3 BCE, to 610x in C4; in Jewish texts eg Philo 13x; Josephus 21x; in Christian texts eg apocryphal Acts 2x; Clement of Alexandria 13x; Chrysostom 394x. Στοργή occurs in C3 BCE 3x, to 81x in C4; in Jewish texts eg Sibylline Oracle 1x; Philo 1x; Josephus 5x; in Christian texts eg Clement of Rome 26x; apocryphal Acts 2x. See also LSJ, s.v.; Horsley, 'φιλοστοργία in epitaphs from Asia Minor' in ND 2.100-103, here 100f.

<sup>224</sup> Εὐνοια appears in pagan texts eg P.Brem.49 (C2); P.Mil.2.73 (128-163); P.Oxy.3.494 (156); P.Rainer Cent.64 (212); in the 'Jewish' text P.Oxy.4.705 (199/200) but of non-Jews' attitudes to Rome; in Christian texts eg P.Kell.1.Gr.63 (C4); P.Sakaon 48 (C4). Στοργή occurs in pagan texts eg P.Fouad 54 (C2); P.Mil.Vogl.2.73 (128-163) with στοργικός; in Christian texts eg P.Lond.6.1916 (C4); P.Oxy.31.2603 (C4); P.Sakaon 48 (C4). Φιλοστοργία occurs in pagan texts eg P.Grenf.2.71 (244-248); P.Harr.2.227 (221); and in no Christian text. (DDBDP).

<sup>225</sup> BKT 6.6.1 (C3).

<sup>226</sup> See 'Language for God' below.

<sup>227</sup> F.Hauck, 'μακάριος' in TDNT 4.367-370; Bauer et al. (1957, 1979), s.v. It is especially frequent in The Shepherd 15x; 1 Clement 12x. Dinneen considers it 'colorless' (sic), used by Christians and pagans for all classes, sometimes in the weakened sense 'dear', Dinneen (1927), 81ff, 93f. It is infrequent in the papyri but occurs with a stronger meaning as in P.Princ.2.95; see 266f below.

<sup>228</sup> It occurs 99x and is especially frequent in Psalms.

<sup>229</sup> Matthew 5.3-12.

<sup>230</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.40.

unusual<sup>231</sup>, occurring in this sense only once after Athanasius<sup>232</sup>. The word occurs frequently in pagan literature<sup>233</sup> and in Jewish texts where it is descriptive of a particular style of life<sup>234</sup>. It becomes most common in Christian literature, descriptive of living people but rarely as individuals, and the dead as individuals<sup>235</sup>. In the papyri, it occurs in Christian texts and is not attested qualifying a person in certainly pagan texts of this period<sup>236</sup>. Its use by Didyme and the sisters probably derives from 'scriptural' sources, and suggests that Asous is recognised for her sanctity. The fact that Asous' mother<sup>237</sup> is still alive suggests further that Asous is a relatively young woman and does not receive the honour simply as a factor of age.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 and Maria in P.Abin.49 appeal to the 'human kindness' (φιλανθρωπίαν), II.6f, of their addressees, a virtue that is not specifically Christian. The word occurs twice in the 'NT', once of pagans<sup>238</sup>, once of God's action in Christ<sup>239</sup>, and only in the late books of the LXX<sup>240</sup>. It is frequent in pagan, Jewish and Christian literature<sup>241</sup>, and is attested in papyri and inscriptions from the third century BCE into the Christian Era<sup>242</sup>. It appears in contemporary liturgical material in

<sup>231</sup> Μακάριος occurs most frequently of the dead eg the saints of the LXX and 'NT', martyrs, ecclesiastics, relatives, Dinneen (1927), 81. See also 131 below.

<sup>232</sup> Synesius, X 1348 A of Hypatia, cited in Dinneen (1927), 82.

<sup>233</sup> It is used in relation to life, the king etc. Europa, an Egyptian priestess (Hellenistic), is μακαρία in I.Rhod.Peraia 21.

<sup>234</sup> It is expressed in the formulae, 'The person is/you are blessed who/if ...' eg C2 BCE *Apocalypse of Esdras*; *Book of Enoch*; Sibylline Oracle; C1 BCE Philo. (TLG).

<sup>235</sup> Eg Clement of Rome 57x; *Gospels of Thomas and Bartholemew*; *Protoevangelium of James*; the apocryphal *Acts*. The Jewish formulae appear frequently. It occurs in C4 9916x. (TLG).

<sup>236</sup> In pagan texts it occurs as a name in P.Congr.XV 22 (C4); P.Panop.Beatty 1.10 (298); as an adjective but not describing people in CPR 1.30.Fr.1Fr2 (184), P.Mich.3.202 (105). In Christian texts it occurs as an adjective but not qualifying people in P.Lond.6.1915 (C4); qualifying people in P.Oxy.14.1774; P.Princ.2.95 at 266f below and P.Sakaon 48 at 267f below; as a name in P.Laur.4.190 (C4). In texts of uncertain religious milieu, it occurs as a name in P.Oxy.1.123 (C3/4); O.Douch 2.137, 148-152 (C4) at 77 above; P.Koln 2.109 (C4/5); as an adjective in SB 18.13946 (C3/4).

<sup>237</sup> A literal sense is most likely in a greeting connected neither to the writer nor to the addressee, Dickey (2004), 36. The 'rule' appears to apply in Christian texts.

<sup>238</sup> Acts 28.2; also φιλανθρωπῶς, Acts 27.3. See U. Luck, 'φιλανθρωπία' in *TDNT* 9.107-112.

<sup>239</sup> Titus 3.4.

<sup>240</sup> Esther 1x; 2, 3 Maccabees 4x. (TLG).

<sup>241</sup> In C1 BCE 156x eg Philo 56x; C1 178x, eg Josephus 28x; *Testament of Abraham* 1x; C2 301x eg *Apocalypse of John* 2x; Clement of Alexandria 37x; Origen 71x; also the Hermetic corpus 1x; C3 57x eg *Acts of Thomas* 3x; C4 4016x eg Chrysostom 2277x. (TLG). See also, *LSJ*, s.v. Interestingly, it is not attested in the philosophical ethics of Plato, Aristotle or the older Stoics and Epicureans.

<sup>242</sup> Eg IG.Aeg.9284 (270-46 BCE); ISE 77 (Delphi, 256/5 BCE); P.Strasb.606 (C2), cited in Horsley, 'φιλανθρωπία and related forms' in *ND* 1.87f.

relation to God<sup>243</sup>. Φιλανθρωπία originally denotes divine love for human beings, then the beneficence of kings, and human relations characterised by kindness and courtesy. It nearly always retains a sense of 'kindness done by a superior', as appears in both Maria's and Tapiam and Paul's use. The word seems almost to be avoided by the early post-apostolic Christian writers, occurring initially in the sense of God's action and comes to describe Christian behaviour only from the third century<sup>244</sup>. This pattern suggests that Tapiam, Paul and Maria are drawing from the vocabulary of virtue of their society, mediated perhaps through Christian liturgy.

## Peace and anxiety

This is discussed in relation to providence in chapter 4<sup>245</sup>.

## Language for God

Generally the women writers do not use specifically Christian language for God but words common to their society, almost universally in the form of unqualified nouns: (ὁ) θεός<sup>246</sup>, (ὁ) κύριος<sup>247</sup>, ὁ κύριος (ἡμῶν) θεός<sup>248</sup>, and ὁ δεσπότης<sup>249</sup>. Ὁ Χριστός occurs in one letter<sup>250</sup>. Three women refer to ἡ (θεία) πρόνοια<sup>251</sup>. Three use qualifying descriptors of God<sup>252</sup>.

The titles ὁ θεός, ὁ κύριος, and ὁ Χριστός are frequent in the 'NT'<sup>253</sup> and ὁ δεσπότης uncommon<sup>254</sup>. All the titles occur in contemporary liturgical texts and are frequent in

<sup>243</sup> *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), 336, no.562; 347, no.578; 348, no.579; 349, no.581.

<sup>244</sup> God's action: Titus 3.4; see also Justin Martyr, *Apology* 10.1; *Dialogue* 47.5. Christian behaviour: eg Clement of Alexandria; Origen (TLG).

<sup>245</sup> 119-123 below.

<sup>246</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.34; P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Bour.25; P.Edmonstone; P.Grenf.1.53; P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; 18; P.Oxy.6.903; SB 14.11588.

<sup>247</sup> P.Bour.25; P.Neph.1; 18; P.Oxy.14.1774; SB 8.9746; 14.11881.

<sup>248</sup> P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Grenf.1.53.

<sup>249</sup> P.Neph.1.

<sup>250</sup> P.Lond.6.1926.

<sup>251</sup> P.Neph.1; SB 14.11588. SB 18.13612 has ἡ πρόνοια. See 120ff below.

<sup>252</sup> BGU 3.948, παντοκράτωρ; P.Edmonstone, πανελεήμονος; P.Oxy.8.1161, ...ας καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ [ῷ ἡμῶν] σωτῆρι καὶ τῷ οἰ[ι]ῷ (=οὐκ) αὐτοῦ τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ.

<sup>253</sup> ὁ θεός occurs more than 1350x; ὁ κύριος more than 1250x; ὁ Χριστός more than 560x. (TLG).

<sup>254</sup> It is used of God in Luke 2.29; Acts 4.24; Revelation 6.10; Barnabas 1.7; 4.3; 1 Clement 24x; Didache 10.3; The Shepherd 24x; of Christ in 2 Peter 2.1; Jude 4.

Christian literature. Ὁ κύριος (ἡμῶν) θεός is regular in LXX<sup>255</sup> and does not occur in the 'NT'. It is to be distinguished from Κύριος ὁ θεός, in which Κύριος signifies the divine name<sup>256</sup>. The women do not use the distinctive biblical name but one compatible with pagan nomenclature and found in pagan texts, although not before the Christian Era<sup>257</sup>.

Kophaena in BGU 3.948 addresses God as almighty in her prayer for Theodoulos (εὐχομαι τὸν παντοκράτορα θεόν)<sup>258</sup>, II.2-4. Παντοκράτωρ is rare in the 'NT'<sup>259</sup>, though frequent in the LXX as the Greek translation of Sabaoth<sup>260</sup>, and occurs in contemporary liturgical manuscripts<sup>261</sup>. It is rare in the papyri<sup>262</sup>, occurring in the period in eight certainly Christian texts<sup>263</sup>, three of uncertain religious milieu<sup>264</sup>, and not at all in certainly pagan non-magical texts. Of the Christian uses, four are in monastic contexts, consistent with regular exposure to the LXX. Παντοκράτωρ, however, is not exclusively Christian, being used, for example, of Zeus, Sarapis, Isis and Hermes<sup>265</sup>, and in magical texts<sup>266</sup>. The pattern in literary sources<sup>267</sup> suggests

<sup>255</sup> The title occurs c.200x mostly as Κύριος Θεός Ἰσραήλ eg Joshua 14.14; Ruth 2.12.

<sup>256</sup> The title occurs in the gospels 15x; Revelation 1x. Also in *Acts of Paul* 3, Id.256-258 in Lodi (1979), 129, no.224. It is frequent in the LXX, more than 700x eg Genesis 2.18; 9.26; Deuteronomy 4.3; Judges 4.6. On the Greek translation of the Tetragrammaton, and the significance of ΚΣ, see Horsley, 'Nomina sacra in synagogue inscriptions' in *ND* 1.107-112, here 110; 'Some recently published fragments of the Greek Old Testament' in *ND* 2.111-122, here 112.

<sup>257</sup> Ὁ κύριος θεός occurs in pagan papyri but is infrequent, eg P.Oxy.14.1670 (C3/4) of Sarapis; P.Mich.3.216, 219, 221 (296), which I consider pagan. It is not attested in the papyri before late C3, although Hadrian is ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν καὶ θεός in 120, Parassoglou (1974).

<sup>258</sup> In the papyrus: εὐχομε τὸν παντοκράτορα θεόν.

<sup>259</sup> 2 Corinthians 6.18 quoting the LXX; in apocalyptic contexts influenced by the LXX in Revelation 9x eg 1.8; 4.8; 11.17; 1 Clement 7x eg pr.4; 2.3; 8.5; The Shepherd 11.5; Didache 10.3. (TLG).

<sup>260</sup> It occurs 181x and is especially frequent in prophetic books, eg Haggai 14x; Zechariah 56x; Malachi 24x, though it does not appear in Isaiah.

<sup>261</sup> BKT 6.6.1 (C3); Id. 4, 195 (C3) in Lodi (1979), 177, no.312; *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), 348, no.580; *Liturgy of St Mark*, 49.

<sup>262</sup> It does not occur in C2-C3; then C4 11x; C5 32x. (DDBDP).

<sup>263</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Haun.2.25; P.Herm.7, 8; P.Kell.1.Gr.24; P.Lips.1.40; P.Lond.6.1929; P.Neph.10.

<sup>264</sup> P.Abinn.22 Apollos' religious belief cannot be determined although members of Abinnaeus' circle are certainly Christian; P.IFAO 2.23 too damaged to determine religious affiliation; P.Herm.5 of uncertain religious classification but may be Christian with παρὰ τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος θεοῦ χάριτος, II.12f, for healing of 'soul and body', I.14.

<sup>265</sup> Zeus, I.Nikaia 2.2.1512 (C2/3); Sarapis, P.Berl.inv.21227 (C3/4), both cited in Horsley, 'The Greek Documentary Evidence and NT Lexical Study: Some Soundings' in *ND* 5.67-93, here 72; 'Credal Formula in a Christian amulet against fever' in *ND* 3.114-119, here 118. For its use with Hermes, Eriuios Hermes, Isis, see W. Michaelis, 'παντοκράτωρ' in *TDNT* 3.914f.

<sup>266</sup> Eg PGM IV 968, 1375.

<sup>267</sup> It occurs in C2-C1 BCE 13x exclusively in Jewish texts, eg Aristeas, Sibylline Oracle, Philo; C1 34x, eg Ignatius; Thessalus the Astrologer; C2 164x eg *Acts of Paul*; Clement of Alexandria; Origen; C3

that παντοκράτωρ becomes increasingly popular in Christian writing, as the church itself gains power. The background to Kophaena's use is most probably 'scriptural' and liturgical material heard in church. Her choice of παντοκράτωρ in prayer focuses God's transcendent power into Theodoulos' daily life. It is noteworthy that all the papyri using παντοκράτωρ are written by men except this one. The pattern raises the possibility that there is a gendered preference for the word and that perhaps the focus on transcendent power, which becomes a motif for Byzantine Christian art, held less significance for women. It is interesting that much of Kophaena's letter involves subtle manipulations of power in relation to Theodoulos<sup>268</sup>, a sense of powerlessness on her part to elicit a response from him, and that power is her prime focus in relation to God.

Terouterou in P.Edmonstone refers to God as all-merciful, κατ' εὐσεβίαν (= εὐσέβειαν) τοῦ πανελεήμονος θεοῦ, ll.7f. Πανελεήμων does not occur in the LXX or the 'NT'<sup>269</sup> while ἐλεήμων occurs in the 'NT', although it is not used of God<sup>270</sup>. Further, while 'merciful' is also used for Isis and Hermes<sup>271</sup>, 'all-merciful' appears to be restricted to Christian texts<sup>272</sup>. Terouterou's choice of πανελεήμων implies that she understands herself as a recipient of God's ἔλεος, although the circumstance is not indicated. It is noteworthy that the Exodus story, foundational to Jewish theology, concerns liberation from slavery in Egypt and is definitional of God's ἔλεος<sup>273</sup>. Similarly in the 'NT', salvation in Christ is imaged as liberation from slavery to sin and is understood as ἔλεος<sup>274</sup>. Πανελεήμων, therefore, seems to belong to the vocabulary of the Christian community rather than the broader society, suggesting that Terouterou draws on the 'biblical' emphasis on God's mercifulness for her thought. Hers may be

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15x eg *Apocalypse of Baruch*; *Testament of Solomon*, also Porphryi; C4 1183x eg Athanasius 105x. (TLG).

<sup>268</sup> See 222ff below.

<sup>269</sup> As πανελεήμων or παντελεήμων.

<sup>270</sup> It is used of people in Matthew 5.7; of Christ in Hebrews 2.17

<sup>271</sup> R. Bultmann, 'ἔλεος, ἐλεέω' in *TDNT* 2.478; I.Kyme 41 (C1/2, C3); *Hymn 1 of Isidorus* cited in Zabkar (1988), 138.

<sup>272</sup> Only 2 occurrences are attested: *Acta Martyrum* 452, cited in the note to ll.3, 4, P.Col.Teeter 7; Chrysostom's *Commentary on 2 Corinthians*, as παντελεήμων in a liturgical prayer for catechumens, in Lodi (1979), PG 61/10, 399, 289, no.489. It does not appear in the papyri before C4, then it occurs in P.Col.Teeter 7 (C4); P.Oxy.48.3421 (C4); P.Heid.7.407 (C4/5); P.Ross.Georg.3.10 (C4/5); SB 10.10522 (C4/5); P.Oxy.56.3864 (C5); 56.3865 (C5); P.land.6.103 (C6); P.Wash.Univ.2.108 (C6). None is certainly pagan. LSJ, s.v. cites only this text.

<sup>273</sup> Eg Psalm 136 (LXX 135); 106.1 (105.1); 107.1 (106.1); Exodus 34.6f; Numbers 14.18f.

<sup>274</sup> Romans 8.21; Galatians 4.24; 5.1; Ephesians 2.4.

an example of the church's elaboration of 'NT' language and of the Byzantine preference for hyperbole.

In P.Oxy.8.1161, Anonyme addresses her prayer to two persons of the Christian Trinity, '... and to our good Saviour and to his beloved Son' (...ας καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἡμῶν σωτήρι καὶ τῷ οἰ[ί]ῳ (= υἱῷ) αὐτοῦ τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ), ll.2-4. The language 'echoes' 'biblical' phrases but does not quote any<sup>275</sup>.

God as Saviour in the 'NT' always has a possessive 'my' or 'our', is not found with the adjective 'good', and suggests a late popularity for the title<sup>276</sup>. There are also references mostly in the later 'NT' to Jesus Christ as Saviour<sup>277</sup> and contemporary liturgical texts refer to both<sup>278</sup>. In the 'NT', the primary revelation of God as σωτήρ is in Jesus, and salvation is above all spiritual deliverance. In the LXX, σωτήρ is used almost exclusively of God, rarely of people and then only of those God has raised up<sup>279</sup>. It can suggest the idea of a national liberator, and its frequent use of the gods of paganism<sup>280</sup>, the kings and queens in the Hellenistic ruler cult, and, most frequently, the emperors in the imperial cult<sup>281</sup> may account for its infrequency in the earliest 'NT' books. The term is frequent in pagan, Jewish and Christian literature<sup>282</sup>.

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<sup>275</sup> See n.20.

<sup>276</sup> God as Saviour occurs 8x, Luke 1.47; 1 Timothy 1.1; 2.3; Titus 1.3; 2.10, 13; 3.4; 2 Peter 1.1; Jude 25; 1 Clement 59.3 but not in the certainly Pauline corpus. The word group is frequent: see 'Christian virtues' above.

<sup>277</sup> The title occurs 16x eg Acts 5.31; Ephesians 5.23; 2 Timothy 1.10; Titus 1.4; 1 Clement 59.3; 2 Clement 20.5. In the Pastorals and later texts 'Saviour' often lacks the theocentric focus of the LXX and earlier 'NT' texts, and resembles pagan use, Jung (2002), 350ff.

<sup>278</sup> God as Saviour occurs in *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 330, no.552; 334, no.560; 338, no.562; 350, no.582. Id. 4, 195 in Lodi (1979), 177, no.312; Christ as Saviour appears in *Patrologia Orientalis* 18.442-443 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 412f, no.645; reference to both as Saviour is in *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 352, no.585 with reference to God σωτήρα πάντων ἀνθρώπων, πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

<sup>279</sup> Eg Judges 3.9, 15; Esther 5.1; 8.12; Isaiah 17.10. (TLG).

<sup>280</sup> It occurs most often of Zeus, then of the Dioscouroi, Apollo, Athena, Isis, Sarapis, Asclepius, the last particularly in Aristides. On Isis as Saviour, see Apuleius, *Asinus Aureus* 11.4f; Plutarch 27, 35 both cited in Bleeker (1962), 11f. Bricault (1999) notes Sarapis as Saviour on coins.

<sup>281</sup> For examples, see W. Foerster, 'σωτήρ' in *TDNT* 7.1003-1012; Jung (2002); J. den Boeft, 'Saviour' in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, s.v.; Bleeker (1962); Brandon (1962). Human saviours appear most frequently in inscriptions. The title is given to those who alleviate some essential human need.

<sup>282</sup> In C3 BCE Manetho refers to Ptolemy Soter 3x. The word occurs in C2 BCE 8x exclusively in Jewish texts eg Sibylline Oracle 6x; *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* 2x of God; C1 BCE 17x eg Philo 13x of God following the pattern of the LXX, and of emperors only as titles; C1 29x eg Josephus 4x only as titles of emperors; C2 750x eg Origen 588x; Clement of Alexandria 91x of God and Christ; C3 92x eg apocryphal *Acts*; *Joseph and Asenath*; *Testament of Solomon*; C4 2872x eg Eusebius 581x of God, Christ, and the emperor; Athanasius 234x.

Given Anonyme's illness and her reference to σώμα/ψυχή/πνεῦμα, it is likely that she intends deliverance from disease by the σωτήρ as well as spiritual rescue. The theological significance of σωτήρ lies in Anonyme's expectation of divine intervention to save/heal her. Her use conforms to the theocentricism of the LXX and early 'NT' but may reflect both a 'biblical' background and a common pagan understanding of the divine as saviour.

God as ἀγαθός<sup>283</sup> is a central doctrine of the LXX<sup>284</sup> but the description is rare in the 'NT'<sup>285</sup>. The term is frequent of pagan gods<sup>286</sup>, and Anonyme's theology, in ἀγαθός σωτήρ, appears to borrow from Hellenistic use which applies 'good' to deities from whom salvation can be expected<sup>287</sup>. The title may for this reason be avoided in the 'NT' and in contemporary Christian literature<sup>288</sup>. Ἀγαθός is frequently used of people in the papyri but its use of god/the gods is rare<sup>289</sup>. God is πᾶτερ τοῦ μονογενοῦς, ἀγαθέ in liturgical material<sup>290</sup>. Anonyme's use of ἀγαθός, then, suggests that she draws on conventional ideas of the divine from pagan and/or Jewish sources, adopting a description that belongs more to the world of literature than to common vocabulary<sup>291</sup>.

The title υἱός<sup>292</sup> signifying 'Son of God' is frequent of Jesus in the 'NT'<sup>293</sup>. Υἱός occurs with ἀγαπητός three times in the gospels, while ἡγαπημένος is used of Jesus in the 'NT' rarely<sup>294</sup>. Reference to the Son is frequent in contemporary liturgical texts with a

<sup>283</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 36, 113, writing on P.Oxy.8.1161, wrongly ascribes ἀγαθός to Jesus but later correctly to God. The sense of καί, l.3, as epexegetic is unlikely.

<sup>284</sup> Eg 1 Chronicles 16.34; 2 Chronicles 5.13; Psalm 106.1 (LXX 105.1); 118.1 (117.1); 136.1 (135.1).

<sup>285</sup> God is ὁ ἀγαθός in Matthew 19.17, but is described with the adjective ἀγαθός in the parallel Mark 10.18, Luke 18.19. 1 Clement 56.16 refers to God as πατήρ ἀγαθός.

<sup>286</sup> For examples, see W. Grundmann, 'ἀγαθός' in *TDNT* 1.13.

<sup>287</sup> W. Grundmann, 'ἀγαθός' in *TDNT* 1.10-17, especially 11.

<sup>288</sup> It occurs only in Eusebius, *HE* 1.13.6; *Commentary on Psalms* 23.228.6, 1321.51. (*TLG*). The title ὁ πατήρ ὁ ἀγαθός appears in Clement of Alexandria, *Id.* 17, 191 in Lodi (1979), 125, no.214.

<sup>289</sup> Only in this text in C2-C4. (*DDBDP*). An early Christian hymn affirms God as the source of all good gifts, P.Oxy.15.1786 (late C3).

<sup>290</sup> *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 336, no.561.

<sup>291</sup> It suggests Anonyme is educated, a hypothesis consistent with her use of complex formulae.

<sup>292</sup> Use of the name and title of the Son in letters dated C4 and C5 reflects the Christological controversies of the period. See also 161 below.

<sup>293</sup> See the listing in Moulton, Geden and Moulton (1897, 1978), 966-970. The epithet occurs also in Barnabas 14x eg 5.9; 7.2; 1 Clement 3x eg 10.7; Didache 3x eg 7.1; The Shepherd 49x eg 6.8; 55.6. It occurs most frequently in the title υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ. (*TLG*).

<sup>294</sup> ἀγαπητός: Matthew 3.17; 12.18; 17.5, and parallels. ἡγαπημένος: Ephesians 1.6; Barnabas 3.6; The Shepherd 89.5. Use of ἡγαπημένος is not exclusively Christian but occurs also in pagan texts eg the Rosetta stele (196 BCE) Πτολεμαίου αἰωνοβίου, ἡγαπημένου ὑπὸ τοῦ Φθῶ, OGIS 90.4.



variety of epithets<sup>295</sup> but is rare in the papyri<sup>296</sup>. It is likely that Anonyme's use is a recollection of the 'biblical' phrase. Anonyme adopts a theological position in linking the Son with the 'Saviour' Father as an object of prayer and source of help. Whether this is a conscious stance in relation to Arianism<sup>297</sup> or the unconscious adoption perhaps of a liturgical formula is unknown. The Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, does not appear in Anonyme's formula. This need not signal a lack of Trinitarian orthodoxy. The explicit inclusion of the Spirit, which occurs most frequently in later texts, corresponds to fifth-century controversies<sup>298</sup>. Anonyme's theology reflects the current concerns of the church.

### **Language for the people of God: ἀγαπητὴ ἀδελφή / ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός, πατήρ and εὐεργέτης**

Three of the women refer to their addressees as 'beloved brother/sister'. Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 write 'to the rest of the beloved brothers' (τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἀδελφ[ο]ῖς), ll.1f, and greet 'all the beloved brothers by name' (τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας κατ' ὄνομα), l.25. Taouak in P.Neph.18 writes to Eudaimon and 'my beloved sister Apia' (τῇ ἀγαπητῇ ἀδελφῇ μου Ἀπίᾳ), l.2. Didyme and the sisters in SB 8.9746 write 'to Sophias my beloved sister' ([Σοφιάτι μου ἀγαπητῇ ἀδελφῇ]), l.1.

Ἀγαπητός, in the 'NT' and later Christian writing bears a weight of meaning conditioned by the use of ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω for God's love and people's responsive love for God and neighbour<sup>299</sup>. In the LXX, ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω most frequently describes

<sup>295</sup> Ἀγιωτάτου παιδός, Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ) τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, BKT 6.6.1 (C3); μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ, κυρίου δὲ καὶ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *Prex Eucharistica* 260-261 in Id. 4, 195 in Lodi (1979), 411, no.643. Jesus is most frequently μονογενής in the *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), eg 329, no.551; 336, no.561; 344, nos 573, 574; 345, no.575; and in *Liturgy of St Mark*, 48, 49 50 etc. Trinitarian references prefer υἱός to παῖς eg P.Nessana (C4), Lapis Daninos both in Lodi (1979), 410f, nos 641, 642. Literary sources often use ἀγαπητός, μονογενής, and most frequently υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>296</sup> See 161, n.66 below.

<sup>297</sup> 'Arianism' in Hastings, Mason and Pyper (2000), 37f.

<sup>298</sup> Trinitarian references that include the Spirit occur in 1 Clement 46, 58; Didache 7.1, 3; P.Oxy.15.1786 (C3); P.Nessana (C4); Lapis Daninos, both in Lodi (1979), 410f, nos 641, 642; *Patrologia Orientalis* 18, 442-443 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 412f, no.645. They occur in the Trinitarian doxologies in *Sacramentarium Serapionis*; *Liturgy of St Mark* noted above. The Spirit is Ψυχὴ in *Patrologia Orientalis* 4/2, 207-209 (250-350) in Lodi (1979), 173f, no.309.

<sup>299</sup> Eg John 3.16; Romans 8.37; Mark 12.28ff and parallels; 1 Corinthians 10.14; 2 Corinthians 7.1; 12.19; Philippians 2.12; 4.1; 1 Clement 20x eg 1.1, 7; 7.1; 8.5; 12.8; The Shepherd 55.6. The word group is very common in the 'NT', c.400x. See E. Stauffer, 'ἀγαπάω, ἀγαπητός' in *TDNT* 1.21-55; Naldini (1968, 1998), 19.

human love for God, and neighbour because of God<sup>300</sup>. God's love, occasionally ἀγαπάω<sup>301</sup>, is more usually ἐλεέω and οἰκτεῖρω. Ἀγαπητός is infrequent in pagan literary and documentary texts in the pre-Christian period<sup>302</sup>. It covers a wide semantic range, although aspects of its meaning are debated, from 'preferred' and 'that with which one must be content, hence of only children'<sup>303</sup> to 'beloved'<sup>304</sup>. It appears in Jewish texts in the period BCE/early CE<sup>305</sup> and becomes increasingly frequent in Christian literature to the fourth century<sup>306</sup>. It also occurs as a title for Isis in the second century<sup>307</sup>, but this use may reflect a Jewish or Christian influence.

Ἀγαπητός ἀδελφός is attested in the LXX<sup>308</sup> but is absent from other intertestamental literature, Philo and Josephus<sup>309</sup>. It comes to prominence in the canonical NT where it occurs frequently, describing members of the Christian community<sup>310</sup>, but is infrequent in literary sources<sup>311</sup>. In the papyri, ἀγαπητός ἀδελφός is attested from the late third century<sup>312</sup> and indicates a Christian authorship of the text<sup>313</sup>. The feminine

<sup>300</sup> It occurs in the LXX 25x eg Leviticus 19.18, 34; Deuteronomy 6.5; of Jephthah's daughter as μονογενῆς ἀγαπητή, Judith A 11.34. (TLG).

<sup>301</sup> Eg Hosea 3.1; 9.15; Zechariah 10.6; Malachi 1.2.

<sup>302</sup> Eg in C8 BCE Homer 5x; C7-6 BCE 0x; C5 BCE 42x including Plato 23x; Xenophon 10x; C4 BCE 49x including Aristotle 14x; C3 BCE 3x; C2 BCE 20x; C1 BCE 66x including Dionysius of Halicarnassus 28x. (TLG). Among the papyri it is attested only once before C3 in PSI 6.577 (248 BCE) where the meaning is more 'dear' than 'beloved'. (DDBDP).

<sup>303</sup> LSJ, s.v. Lee (2003), 197, considers this meaning 'farfetched'.

<sup>304</sup> Lee (2003), 193-211; Bauer et al. (1957, 1979), s.v.; LSJ, s.v.; Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.; E. Stauffer, 'ἀγαπάω, ἀγαπητός' in TDNT 1.21-55.

<sup>305</sup> Eg C2 BCE Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs 4x; Enoch 7x; Apocalypse of Esdras 8x; in C1 BCE Philo 29x; in the period CE, Josephus 5x; Testament of Abraham 5x. (TLG).

<sup>306</sup> Eg in apocryphal Acts 3x; Gospel of Bartholomew 7x; Clement of Alexandria 30x; Origen 60x; Chrysostom 1064x of 2864 occurrences in C4. (TLG).

<sup>307</sup> P.Oxy.11.1380 (C2), Isis is ἀ[γά]πην θεῶν. The reading is accepted by Gwyn Griffiths after examination of the papyrus, rejecting Manteuffel's, and West's, ἀ[γα]θὴν Θεόν. See Griffiths (1978); Horsley, 'A philosopher-nun' in ND 4.257ff, here 259. Ἀγαπάω /ἀγάπη also describes Isis' and Ammon's love, CIG 5159; OGIS 90.4.

<sup>308</sup> Tobit 3.10; 10.13.

<sup>309</sup> TLG.

<sup>310</sup> 1 Corinthians 15.58; Ephesians 6.21; Philippians 4.1; Colossians 4.7, 9; Philemon 16; James 1.16, 19; 2.5; 2 Peter 3.15. Ἀγαπητός qualifies personal names in Acts 15.25; Romans 16.5, 8, 9, 12; it occurs with τέκνον in 1 Corinthians 4.14, 17; Ephesians 5.1; 2 Timothy 1.2; as a substantive in 1 Corinthians 10.14; 2 Corinthians 7.1; 12.19; Philippians 2.12; 4.11. It is used with υἱός only of Jesus and only in the gospels and 2 Peter 1.17. Notably it does not occur in the non-canonical 'NT' texts.

<sup>311</sup> In C1 in Ignatius 1x; C2 Origen 1x; C3 11x all Christian texts; C4 59x, including Athanasius 6x, all Christian texts. (TLG).

<sup>312</sup> It is first attested in P.Alex.29 (C3).

<sup>313</sup> Nobbs (2004) 146, 149f; Horsley, 'Beloved brothers' in ND 4.250-255, here 252-254; Tibiletti (1979), 44f; Wipszycka (1974), 214. Horsley notes uses by Christians in relation to non-Christians, eg P.Herm.4 (317-324) as well as fellow-Christians. He also cites P.Abinn.32 (C4) but I consider

ἀγαπητὴ ἀδελφή first occurs in the fourth century<sup>314</sup>. It seems that members of the Christian community regularly called one another 'beloved brother/sister', at least in correspondence. It seems likely that Tapiam and Paul, Taouak, and Didyme and the sisters derive ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός/ἀγαπητὴ ἀδελφή from 'Scripture' mediated through the church's customary address for community members.

Anonyme in P.Oxy.12.1592, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and the mother in SB 18.13612 call their addressees 'father'. Anonyme writes κ(ύρι)έ μου π(άτε)ρ, l.3, 5f; Valeria, ἄππα and τιμιώτατε πατερ<sup>315</sup>, ll.5f, 27f; and the mother, ἄππα and κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ εὐεργέτη, l.1. All are almost certainly references to spiritual fathers. The vocabulary is interesting in the light of NT teaching and use. Jesus forbids Christians calling their superiors πατήρ<sup>316</sup>. Πατήρ is used sparingly of God in the LXX, but designates the patriarchs and later bearers of the tradition with increasing frequency in the intertestamental period<sup>317</sup>. Πατήρ is used frequently in the 'NT' of God, but only twice by Paul of his relationship to the churches, on each occasion as a metaphor rather than a title<sup>318</sup>. The metaphor of 'child' is more frequent, although used mainly for individuals in the later epistles, and it is noteworthy that, in these instances, the corresponding 'father' does not appear<sup>319</sup>. There is no evidence to suggest that the apostles were addressed as 'father'. Πατήρ is attested in Christian literature as a title from the second century<sup>320</sup> and appears to be used exclusively for ecclesiastics, the biblical apostles and patriarchs. Πατήρ also appears regularly in both Christian and pagan papyri in a non-literal sense for respected men who are older than the writer<sup>321</sup>. The Christian use of πατήρ is likely to be an appropriation of this common practice, facilitated perhaps by the church's early custom of meeting in homes and adopting familial terms for community relationships<sup>322</sup>, and following the patterns of

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Abinnaeus Christian; see 244, n.8 below. For the phrase as an uncertain criterion of Christianity, see Judge and Pickering (1977), 69.

<sup>314</sup> P.Neph.18; P.Col.Teeter 9, where ἀγαπητὴ occurs without ἀδελφή; SB 8.9746.

<sup>315</sup> In the papyrus: τιμιώτατε πατήρ, ll.5f, [τ]ιμιώτατε πατήρ, l.27, τιμιοτάτω πατρί, l.28.

<sup>316</sup> Matthew 23.9.

<sup>317</sup> G. Quell and G. Schrenk, 'πατήρ' in *TDNT* 5.945-1014, especially 976ff.

<sup>318</sup> 1 Corinthians 4.15; 1 Thessalonians 2.11; also of Paul's relationship to Onesimus, Philemon 10.

<sup>319</sup> 1 Timothy 1.2; 2 Timothy 1.2; Titus 1.4; 1 Peter 5.13.

<sup>320</sup> For examples, see Dinneen (1927), 12f, who notes the most frequent use for the Bishop of Alexandria; Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>321</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 32.

<sup>322</sup> Eg 1 Corinthians 16.19; 1 Timothy 5.1, 2; also Meeks (1983), 29f, 75-77.

the LXX. It may also reflect the church's borrowing of its status designations and organisational structures from its society, a phenomenon that becomes particularly prominent in the third century<sup>323</sup>. Πατήρ as a title for those in authority was a custom in the Greek world from the classical period<sup>324</sup>. The mother of Philadelphos, Anonyme and Valeria follow the common practice and adopt titles, and hence an ecclesiology, derived from their Christian community and conditioned by their society.

The mother's term 'benefactor' (εὐεργέτης) in SB 18.13612 occurs once in the 'NT' in a warning about the wrong exercise of power<sup>325</sup>. It is never used of God or Christ, although both are seen to be givers of benefits<sup>326</sup>. The place of the term in the religio-political life of the Greek and Roman empires may have led the writers and translators of the Bible to avoid it<sup>327</sup>. The title appears for God, however, in liturgical material<sup>328</sup>. It is not used in Christian literature for those with spiritual authority and is not among the titles listed by Dinneen<sup>329</sup>. The mother's use of the word is probably drawn from the vocabulary of her society and determined by her expectation that Apa Johannes will act in the manner of a benefactor for her.

#### ἐν θεῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ

Seven of the women use these phrases in eight texts: ἐν θεῷ, P.Bour.25 twice, P.Grenf.1.53; ἐν κυρίῳ, P.Neph.1, P.Neph.18, P.Oxy.14.1774, SB 8.9746 twice, SB 14.11881; and ἐν Χριστῷ, P.Lond.6.1926. 'Ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ does not occur in the women's texts. All use ἐν ... in opening greetings, and all but P.Grenf.1.53 use *nomina sacra*. Two repeat the phrase in the prayer. In the 'NT', ἐν Χριστῷ is a distinctly Pauline expression, occurring more than 90 times in the Pauline and post-Pauline corpus, and in 1 Clement<sup>330</sup>. 'Ἐν κυρίῳ occurs 48 times<sup>331</sup> and ἐν θεῷ

<sup>323</sup> Torjesen (1993), 155-176.

<sup>324</sup> Dinneen (1927), 12f.

<sup>325</sup> Luke 22.25.

<sup>326</sup> Eg Psalm 78.11 (LXX 77.11) 116.7 (114.7); Acts 10.38.

<sup>327</sup> For the term, see R. A. Kearsley, 'A Civic Benefactor of the First Century in Asia Minor' in *ND* 7.233-241; J. R. Harrison, 'Benefaction Ideology and Christian Responsibility for Widows' in *ND* 8.107-116; G. Bertram, 'εὐεργέτης' in *TDNT* 2.654f. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.45, of King Bagoas, has πατήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης.

<sup>328</sup> P.Würzb.3 (C3); *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 338, no.562; 347, no.578; 350, no.582.

<sup>329</sup> Dinneen (1927).

<sup>330</sup> Eg Romans 3.24; 6.11, 23; 8.1, 2, 39; 1 Clement 11x eg 1.2.3; 21.1.1; 32.4.2. (*TLG*).

<sup>331</sup> Eg 1 Corinthians 9.1; Ephesians 4.17; 5.8; Philippians 2.24, 29; 1 Clement 13.1 quoting Paul; The Shepherd 29.4 following πιστός.

once<sup>332</sup>. The extension of the ἐν κυρίῳ/ἐν Χριστῷ theology to ἐν θεῷ is easily accounted for in the later church<sup>333</sup>. The phrases occur in the LXX but not with the theological content of later Christianity<sup>334</sup>. They appear frequently in Christian literature from the first century<sup>335</sup>. Of three senses identified in Paul's use, objective, subjective and moral<sup>336</sup>, the subjective sense applies in the women's letters. This is a relational sense based on an experience of God's grace in Christ that unites believers with God and Christ, and with each other through their common experience.

## CONCLUSION

My examination of Christian women's use of 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery indicates that, while nearly half, that is eight, of the women writing private letters do not use 'biblical' allusion<sup>337</sup>, the nine who do almost always do so more than once<sup>338</sup>. Use of 'biblical' material is inherently less likely in formal documents and is not to be expected from the eight women writing them<sup>339</sup>. The pattern suggests that the women who do use 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery have a greater facility in 'biblical' allusion, deriving perhaps from a greater familiarity with the authoritative texts. Of the nine women using 'biblical' material, six have an ascetic connection. The pattern, then, suggests further that the women's choice of language may be determined in part by the identity of their addressees, as well as reflect the socio-religious world of

<sup>332</sup> 1 Clement 30.6.

<sup>333</sup> The developing focus of theology on the divinity of Christ in C3 and C4 would make the extension logical. The phrase occurs in Jewish texts eg Philo 7x of 'the "in God" life', 'the "in God" power', 'the "in God" rest' etc., suggesting the phrase was current in Jewish circles. An inaccurate recall of 'biblical' usage heard in the public reading of 'Scripture' would further explain 'mistakes'.

<sup>334</sup> 'Εν θεῷ occurs about 10x eg 1 Samuel 2.1; 1 Chronicles 5.25; 14.14; Hosea 12.6; ἐν κυρίῳ about 15x, eg 1 Samuel 2.1; 10.22; 24.22; ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ about 10x eg 1 Samuel 30.6; 2 Kings 18.5; Hosea 1.7; ἐν κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ in 1 Kings 1.17, 30. (TLG).

<sup>335</sup> 'Εν θεῷ occurs in C1 Ignatius 29x; C2 eg *Acts of Paul* 2x; Origen 29x; also the Hermetic corpus 2x; in C3 5x; in C4 352x eg Athanasius 21x; *LH* 1x. 'Εν κυρίῳ occurs in Ignatius 22x; apocryphal *Acts* 7x; Origen 56x; also in a text of Galen 1x; C3 *Acts of Thomas* 2x; *Testament of Solomon* 2x; C4 671x eg Athanasius 51x, *LH* 4x. 'Εν κυρίῳ θεῷ occurs in C4 22x, all Christian texts.

<sup>336</sup> Dunn (1998), 396-401; 1) the objective sense refers to God's redemption in Christ; 2) the subjective refers to believers' relationship to God, Christ and each other through sense 1; 3) the moral refers to behaviour appropriate to senses 1 and 2. Cranfield (1979) 2.833-835 identifies 4 senses which are variations and combinations of Dunn's but they are less useful analytically.

<sup>337</sup> In this statement, I do not include unqualified references to 'God'.

<sup>338</sup> P.Bour.12; P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1, 18; P.Oxy.8.1161; 12.1592; SB 8.9746; 18.13612. The exception is Didyme and the sisters, SB 8.9746. Their other letter, P.Oxy.14.1774, has no 'biblical' vocabulary or imagery.

<sup>339</sup> The three petitions P.Abinn.49; P.Oxy.6.903; 50.3581; Stud.Pal.20.86; lease P.Kell.1.Gr.32; manumission P.Edmondstone; adoption text P.Lips.1.28; and semi-official letter P.Abinn.34. The adoption document may allude to a 'biblical' virtue but the words are Silvanos'.

the woman. The evidence indicates that use of 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery correlates with a more overtly Christian environment and consciously Christian identity.

A second conclusion is that the Christian women's use of 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery is consistent with an oral transmission of 'Scripture'. The women's 'biblical' allusions are mostly inexact and general in nature<sup>340</sup>. It is unlikely that they would have their own copy of a 'biblical' text. Not only were books expensive<sup>341</sup> and uncommon<sup>342</sup>, but women's levels of reading literacy were low<sup>343</sup>. The most likely source of the women's familiarity with 'biblical' material is the public reading of 'Scripture' which was an integral part of Christian services<sup>344</sup> and confirms women's membership of worshipping communities<sup>345</sup>. The pattern in the women's allusions reflects recall of key words, for example the trichotomy, dichotomy and words to do with healing, death and God, as emblems of broader 'biblical' ideas. The particular ideas appropriated are not arbitrary or speculative but those with which the women identify.

A third conclusion concerns the role of 'biblical' material in shaping the identity of Christian women and their expectations of life and God. The women's use of ἐν θεῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ with their inherent theology suggests a new sense of identity as Christians and of connectedness within the Christian community. Notably the use does not correlate with other 'biblical' allusions or prayer. The women identify with 'biblical' characters whose circumstances parallel their own, for example those in need of healing and help. They appropriate the characters' words, actions, hope, healing and/or self-definition<sup>346</sup>. The identification shows a process of active

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<sup>340</sup> This is not to imply that memory need always be inexact eg *HL* 4.

<sup>341</sup> See 17, n.119 above. Codices were less expensive, Skeat (1982).

<sup>342</sup> It has been suggested that a number of Christian scriptoria existed in Egypt prior to Constantine. Evidence suggests one in Alexandria in C2, Zuntz (1953), 272f; Roberts (1977), 24 who argues that another at Oxyrhynchus by late C2 or C3 is unlikely. The number of Christian literary texts along the Nile in C2-C3 suggests scriptoria were functioning. Their nature and number are unknown. See also Horsley, 'Papyrus testimony to Christological controversies' in *ND* 3.111f, here 113. For a listing of 'biblical' texts to 400, see *LDAB*; also Roberts (1977), 61f; P.Ash.inv.3.

<sup>343</sup> See 11-19 especially 15f above.

<sup>344</sup> Martin (1995), 68-73. See nn.3, 5 above.

<sup>345</sup> See 198f below.

<sup>346</sup> Judge (1985), 342, notes that the need for healing and protection in the Christian community leads to appeals to biblical healing stories for use in prayers and on amulets: eg PGM 5b (C5) invokes 'the God of the sheep-pool' of John 5.2; PGM XXIII refers to Matthew 14.30-33.

Christianisation. The women also make use of 'biblical' concepts that allow them to articulate their situations to each woman's best advantage and to place those whose help they seek in a position parallel to the biblical rescuer.

Identification is a process observable among readers of sacred texts. It is taught in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, remembering the Exodus at the annual Passover festival rehearses God's action in relation to *us*<sup>347</sup>; that is, the contemporary community identified with the original community. In the 'NT', the early articulation of baptism similarly involves identification with Christ<sup>348</sup>, and the apostle Paul constructs the meaning of his work by identifying himself with the Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah and Jeremiah<sup>349</sup>. In the post-apostolic church, there are a number of examples of women identifying and being identified with others to articulate their understanding. Perpetua expresses the meaning of her sufferings through identification with Christ in the dream sequences of her martyrdom<sup>350</sup>, although she appears not to use it otherwise. Eusebius identifies Blandina with Christ on the cross and explains her sufferings in terms of Christ's<sup>351</sup>. More than a century later, Eugenia is identified with Thekla in her martyrdom<sup>352</sup>. A similar process is evident in naming one person in terms of another, for example ἡ δευτέρα Φοίβη, II.2f<sup>353</sup>, in an inscription for Sophia, deacon, a second Phoebe; Aelius Paion as a 'New Homer'<sup>354</sup>; and Julia Domna as a 'New Hera'<sup>355</sup>. Identification is a way of establishing identity, of giving meaning to circumstances and articulating their significance. It makes a past set of circumstances present and imaginatively powerful. The evidence of the women's texts indicates that identification was a way by which the 'biblical' material became an active shaper of women's lives.

A fourth conclusion concerns the range of the women's religious vocabulary and the evidence it provides for the development of Christian vocabulary beyond the 'NT' in

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<sup>347</sup> Eg Exodus 12.26f; 13.14f; Deuteronomy 6.20-23.

<sup>348</sup> Romans 6.1-8.

<sup>349</sup> Galatians 1.15 compared to Isaiah 49.1; Jeremiah 1.5.

<sup>350</sup> *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas* 4, 15.

<sup>351</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 5.5.41.

<sup>352</sup> *Acts of St Eugenia* 158.

<sup>353</sup> Guarducci, EG 4.445 republished in Horsley, 'Sophia, "the second Phoebe"' in *ND* 4.239-244.

<sup>354</sup> G. Bean, *Side kitabeleri: The Inscriptions of Side* 107.11 cited in Horsley, 'Sophia, "the second Phoebe"' in *ND* 4.239-244, here 241.

<sup>355</sup> IGRR 4.881 cited in Horsley, 'Addenda' in *ND* 5.149.

the post-apostolic period. The 'NT' vocabulary for God, fellow-Christians and the virtuous life has certain distinctive emphases but mostly displays a significant overlap of terms with Greek and Jewish society<sup>356</sup>. The women's vocabulary suggests a broadening of the overlap with time. The women use their society's vocabulary of language for God and tend to use vocabulary for the virtuous life not found or rarely found in 'Scripture' and sometimes occurring in liturgical texts: Kophæna in BGU 3.948, the mother in P.Ben.Mus.4, Terouterou in P.Edmonstone, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926, and Paul and Tapiam in P.Neph.1. While it is apparent that the 'NT' writers avoid certain words, Leuchis in P.Herm.17 uses several drawn from the vocabulary of Greek ideals and virtues. The women largely ignore the vocabulary for principal virtues in the 'NT': ἀπλότης, ἐπιστήμη, ἀκακία, σεμνότης, ἀγάπη, πίστις, φόβος κυρίου, ὁμόνοια, δικαιοσύνη, ἀλήθεια, ὑπομονή, φιλόξενος, ἡσύχιος<sup>357</sup>, πραῦς, μακρόθυμος, ἀγαθός, ἡσύχιος<sup>358</sup>, and σωφροσύνη, ἐπιεικής, φιλοξενία, γνῶσις, σεμνός, ἄγνός, ὑποταγή (for women), ἀλήθεια, παρρησία, πεποίθησις, ἐγκράτεια, μετάνοια, μακροθυμία, ταπεινοφρονέω, φόβος<sup>359</sup> and χαρά, εἰρήνη<sup>360</sup>. Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926, Anonyme in P.Oxy.12.1592 and the mother in SB 18.13612 use titles contrary to scriptural teaching but common in their society. Some of the women's vocabulary, for example the mother in P.Ben.Mus.4, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and Leuchis in P.Herm.17, reflects the Byzantine preference for superlatives, the language of flattery and elaborate use of descriptive terms. The women's practice illustrates the developing enculturation of Christianity into mainstream society during the fourth century.

An observation in addition to the conclusions above is the women's failure to use 'biblical' vocabulary for God, especially language about God's fatherhood which is frequent in the 'NT' and early church literature<sup>361</sup>. Its absence is notable and cannot be explained by the chance nature of the texts' survival<sup>362</sup>.

<sup>356</sup> For an initial investigation of the vocabulary of the NT in its society, see Horsley, 'The Greek Documentary Evidence and NT Lexical Study: Some Soundings' in *ND* 5.67-93.

<sup>357</sup> The Shepherd 16.5; 18.9f.

<sup>358</sup> Didache 20.7f.

<sup>359</sup> 1 Clement 1.2f; 2.1-3; 35.2; 62.2; 64.1.

<sup>360</sup> Galatians 5.22.

<sup>361</sup> See 168ff below.

<sup>362</sup> P.Oxy.8.1161 may contain one reference.



Following this analysis of the role and function of the text of 'Scripture' in the Christian women's documents from their use of its vocabulary and imagery, I now examine the evidence in the texts for the Christian women's theological thought.



## CHAPTER 4

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS

By 'women's theological positions' I mean women's understandings of God and the attitudes and behaviours informed by their belief. Theological material occurs in a variety of forms in the texts: overt statements about God and aspects of life; the language used for God and life; and references to behaviour in response to God. The subjects of the women's theologies vary from conceptions of God to marriage, from prayer to care of orphans and widows, from healing to death. My purpose in this chapter is not theological but historical: to examine the women's theological positions for insight into their religious lives. At times the analysis concerns the theology of only one woman. In most cases, there is evidence that the woman's theological position is shared more broadly.

The theological positions involved in women's prayer, use of the 'Bible', attitudes to asceticism, interactions with ecclesial institutions and people, and attitudes to marriage and family are explored separately.

#### Theology of God

The women's theology of God appears largely in their titles for God which are discussed in chapter 3<sup>1</sup>. Three women in addition refer to divine providence (ἡ θεία πρόνοια)<sup>2</sup>. Theology of God appears in two further expressions: Anonyme in P.Oxy.6.903 writes, 'God knows' (ταῦτα δὲ οἶδεν ὁ θεός), I.37, calling on God as witness to her truthfulness; Leuchis in P.Herm.17 writes, 'my lord, do this for God's sake' (κύριέ μου, διὰ τῶν θεῶν πύει (= τὸν θεὸν ποίει)), I.6. Her appeal is an urgent imperative linking human action with divine interest. Neither expression occurs in the 'NT' and neither is exclusive to Christian texts. Both may be largely formulaic<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless, their use suggests a belief in God's awareness of events, and in God as the One to whom life should be consciously directed.

The richly theological ἐν θεῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ and ἐν Χριστῷ are discussed in chapter 3<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 104-109 above.

<sup>2</sup> P.Neph.1; SB 14.11588. SB 18.13612 has ἡ πρόνοια. See 'Providence', 120ff below.

<sup>3</sup> See 47, n.126 above and 51f above especially n.158.

<sup>4</sup> 112f above.

## Providence

The concept of divine providence occurs in Jewish, Christian, Manichean and pagan texts with a variety of understandings<sup>5</sup>. Its theological content in any particular text is therefore difficult to determine, although it is invariably conceived to be for human benefit. Πρόνοια can signify legal judgement, military expertise, medical prognosis, administration of the Nile, benefactors' attention and general human forethought, as well as the purposeful divine ordering of the universe considered in general, transcendent terms or particular, immanent terms. In addition to ἡ θεία πρόνοια, the concept of providence is carried in such formulae as σὺν θεῷ, θεοῦ θέλοντος and their plural equivalents, and also in thanks for divine care. Πρόνοια appears to be avoided by the writers/translators of the 'Bible'. It occurs in the LXX of God only once and in the late 'NT' twice<sup>6</sup>, although the concept appears in other guises<sup>7</sup>. In Christian paranaesis, the appropriate response to providence is obedience and lack of anxiety<sup>8</sup>. Appeals against anxiety, however, are not exclusively Christian<sup>9</sup>. Reference to the divine providence occurs in 27 papyri of the third and fourth centuries<sup>10</sup>, 11 of which are certainly Christian and 2 are certainly pagan<sup>11</sup>. In all but 5, the context is prayer.

The concept of divine providence occurs in six of the texts written by Christian women: three use πρόνοια and three use other formulae, with one combining expressions.

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<sup>5</sup> On the concept of providence, see Peters (1967), 164f; J. Behm, 'προνοέω, πρόνοια' in *TDNT* 4.1009-1017; Naldini (1968, 1998), 14; Tibiletti (1979), 118f; Duffy (1983), 291f; Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 143f; Bonneau (1993), 299, 246, 300, n.364; J. R. Harrison, 'Benefaction Ideology and Christian Responsibility For Widows' in *ND* 8.106-116. Divine providence is prominent in Stoicism: eg Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 2.73f states that *providentia deorum mundum administrari*. For a Manichean use, P.Kell.1.Gr.71. For a Jewish use, Philo, *Flaccus* 125.

<sup>6</sup> LXX: Job 10.12, of God's providential care of the soul. 'NT': 1 Clement 24.5; The Shepherd 3.4. It refers to human forethought in Acts 24.2; Romans 13.14; as does the cognate verb, Romans 12.17; 2 Corinthians 8.21; 1 Timothy 5.8.

<sup>7</sup> Eg Genesis 50.19-21; Matthew 6.25-32.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 6.25-34; Philippians 4.6, using μεριμνάω.

<sup>9</sup> Using ἀγωνιάω, P.Oxy.8.1154 (C1); PSI 1.94 (C2); P.Oxy.3.530 (C2); SB 12.10772 (C2/3); P.Meyer 20 (C3); μεριμνάω, P.Tebt.2.315 (C2); P.Lips.1.111 (C4).

<sup>10</sup> For a list, see Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 143f, to which can be added from this thesis, P.Kell.1.Gr.71; P.Oxy.46.3314; 59.4001; SB 14.11588; 18.13612; 22.15359.

<sup>11</sup> Pagan texts: P.Laur.2.41, τῆς τῶν π[α]ρῶν ἡμῶν θεῶν προνοίας; P.Oxy.27.2477 (289); 33.2664 (245-248) has ἡ θεία πρόνοια τῶν κυρίων ἡμῶν Σεβαστῶν. ἡ θεία πρόνοια was at one time regarded as a certain criterion for Christian classification, eg Naldini (1968, 1998), 14.

Aria in SB 14.11588 opens with prayer to divine providence for Dorotheos' health and well-being (προηγούμενως εὐχομαι τῇ θεῖα προνοίᾳ παρὰ τῷ θε(ῳ) σοι ὑγιαίνοντι καὶ ὀλοκληροῦντι δοθῆναι τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα)<sup>12</sup>, ll.3-6. She understands ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια as an entity to which it is possible to pray<sup>13</sup>, that is, as an aspect of God that has personal characteristics similar to the intertestamental treatment of the divine wisdom, σοφία<sup>14</sup>. Aria's expression distances her from direct address to God. This does not arise from a reluctance to name God, since immediately she adds παρὰ τῷ θε(ῳ). Nonetheless, Aria's expression carries a sense of God's unapproachability and may reflect an early stage in the development of the theology that placed intermediaries between a pray-er and God in the later fourth and fifth centuries. The linking of providence with prayer is noteworthy. It shifts the notion of providence from God's rule according to God's will, to a power that can be accessed, activated and directed through prayer. The conventional religious sentiment masks the paradoxical nature of the connection.

Ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια is the object of Tapiam and Paul's prayer at the conclusion of P.Neph.1, 'divine providence keep you well' (ἐρρωμένους ὑμᾶς ... ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια φυλάττοι), in writing perpendicular to the main text. Closing prayer to ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια is more frequent than opening prayer, and prayers seeking God's providential keeping, using φυλάσσω or more often διαφυλάσσω in the imperative, occur regularly in fourth-century letters<sup>15</sup>. Ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια substitutes for the 'good luck/fate/fortune' (εὐτύχια/τύχη) of pagan texts<sup>16</sup>, making protection God's activity and introducing a more directly relational dimension, although falling short of ὁ θεὸς φυλάττοι<sup>17</sup>.

The mother in SB 18.13612 flatters Apa Johannes that he stands next to (divine) providence in showing mercy to people in need (μετὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν πάντας τοὺς εἰς σὲ καταφεύγοντας καὶ ἐλεεῖς καὶ σώζεις), ll.4-7, using the unusual μετὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν, l.4<sup>18</sup>. It is difficult to determine the extent to which the mother believes in a merciful providence or uses the term as a convention for her flattery. Her choice of ἐλεέω and

<sup>12</sup> In the papyrus: π[ροη]γουμένος εὐχομε τ[ῇ θεῖα] προ[ν]οία παρὰ τῷ θε[ῳ] σοι ὑγι[έν]οντι καὶ ὀλοκληροῦν[τ]ει δοθῆναι τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμμ[α]τα.

<sup>13</sup> The phenomenon is regular, eg P.Neph.1; also SB 22.15359 at 270f below.

<sup>14</sup> Wisdom 7-11.

<sup>15</sup> See 165 below.

<sup>16</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 64.

<sup>17</sup> Eg P.Abinn.6; 8; 19; P.Lond.6.1923; 1924 (all C4).

<sup>18</sup> Here ἡ πρόνοια is no doubt the equivalent to ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια; see 62, n.231 above.

σώζω as the qualities that most define providence favours a conscious theological position<sup>19</sup>, but this does not erase the flattery in the phrase or its quality of pressing Johannes to comply.

A similar perspective is apparent in two uses of μετὰ τὸν θεόν. The mother in P.Abinn.34 writes 'after God we have no help but yours' (μετὰ τὸν θεὸν οὐδίναν (= οὐδένα) ἔχομεν ἡμῆς (= ἡμεῖς) βοηθὸν ὑμῶν), ll.7f, and Leuchis in P.Herm.17 writes 'after God I look for your help' (μετὰ τῶν (= τὸν) θεὸν τὴν σὴν βοήθειαν (= βοήθειαν) προσδωκῶ (= προσδοκῶ)), ll.3f<sup>20</sup>. The women assert God's helpfulness as a doctrine, at the same time affirming their addressees as their primary source of effectual help<sup>21</sup>. The expressions have the effect of identifying providence with the human source of help, and function to emphasise the women's helplessness and place pressure on Abinnaeus and Apa Johannes to respond positively.

Tare closes P.Bour.25 with prayer that the Lord keep her aunt in health (ἐρρωμένην σε ὁ κύριος διαφυλάττοι μακροῖς καὶ εἰρηνικοῖς χρόνοις), ll.16-18. Similarly Didyme and the sisters close SB 8.9746 with ἐρρωσθαί σε ἐν κυρίῳ, ὁ κύριός σε διαφυλάξει ἡμῖν, ll.34f. Prayers for divine keeping are generally addressed to ἡ θεία πρόνοια<sup>22</sup>. Κύριος occurs as a variant<sup>23</sup> and appears to be a theological development beyond ἡ θεία πρόνοια away from the more impersonal εὐτυχία/τύχη, and contrary to the trend among some to distance God. Tare states one result of providential care's operation in εἰρηνικοῖς χρόνοις<sup>24</sup>. Unlike Athanasias in P.Berl.Zill.12, for whom belief in providence eliminates anxiety, Tare expects an external peace. While she alone among the women writers mentions this central 'NT' concept, her meaning misses the primary 'NT' focus on spiritual peace<sup>25</sup>. Athanasias' position reflects 'NT' theology

<sup>19</sup> On these terms, see 99f above.

<sup>20</sup> The negative form is more frequent, but see also eg P.Ant.2.93 at 246 below.

<sup>21</sup> See also P.Lond.6.1923(C4).

<sup>22</sup> See n.13 above.

<sup>23</sup> Other variants, eg ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς διαφυλάξει σαι, P.Abinn.6; ὁ θεὸς διαφυλάξει σε, P.Abinn.8, 19; P.Lond.6.1924.

<sup>24</sup> Εἰρηνικός occurs 3x in 'NT' not qualifying time.

<sup>25</sup> Moulton, Geden and Moulton (1897, 1978), 297f and the TLG cite references to peace more than 100x, eg Luke 24.36; John 14.27; 20.19-21; Galatians 5.22; Philippians 1.2; 4.7. It is common in Christian papyri, and a regular subject of prayer.

more closely than Tare's<sup>26</sup>. Tare, Didyme and the sisters believe life is ordered by God for human benefit and that the ordering is susceptible to prayer.

The women use other expressions to indicate their belief in the operation of providence.

Athanasias in P.Berl.Zill.12 writes, 'we give thanks to the Lord our God because he has kept (us) until now' (εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ κυρίῳ [ἡμῶν] θεῷ ὅτι τὰ ὡς ἄρτι συγκτηρεῖ), I.7f<sup>27</sup>. Πρόνοια is not used but God's keeping expresses its content. Athanasias evinces a worldview where the events of life express God's providence. The response that she proposes to the mother is conventional: she should not be anxious about her (μὴ ἀγωνᾶ (= ἀγωνία) οὖν ἐπ' ἐμου), I.6. Athanasias implies that lack of anxiety<sup>28</sup>, manifested in thanksgiving, characterises her own life in response to God's providence. Her theological position expresses a 'NT' ideal<sup>29</sup>.

Tapiam in P.Neph.1 uses σὺν θεῷ and ἡ θεία πρόνοια. She writes, 'for I want, with God's help/God willing, to come to you' (θέλω γὰρ σὺν θεῷ ἀνελθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς), II.23f<sup>30</sup>. Σὺν θεῷ<sup>31</sup> is the most frequent expression for God's providence in fourth-century papyri<sup>32</sup>. With θεοῦ θέλοντος and θεῶν θελόντων, it dates from the Ptolemaic period and passes into Christian writing. The phrase in the singular is uncertain in its reference, occurring in Christian<sup>33</sup> and pagan texts<sup>34</sup>. There is debate about the

<sup>26</sup> Good government as a guarantee of peaceful and ordered society is an issue addressed in the 'NT' and prayer for it is endorsed eg Romans 13.1-7; 1 Timothy 2.1f. It is not the distinctive 'NT' emphasis.

<sup>27</sup> See 39, n.63 above for the reconstruction.

<sup>28</sup> 'Ἀγών/ἀγωνία' is frequent in the 'NT', particularly the Pauline epistles and 1 Clement, always meaning 'struggle' not 'anxiety' which, however, is attested in Greek literature, LSJ, s.v. The regular term for 'anxiety' in 'NT' is μέριμνα/μεριμνάω, eg 2 Corinthians 11.28; 1 Peter 5.7, The Shepherd 19.3; 23.4, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Eg 1 Thessalonians 5.18.

<sup>30</sup> On the attribution of this first person section to Tapiam, see 66f above.

<sup>31</sup> Analysis of σὺν θεῷ in texts dated C6 suggests 3 senses: i) 'by the grace of God', almost as a title; ii) 'with God's help/God willing'; iii) 'necessitated by God's will and action', Rees (1950), 94. The second is Tapiam's meaning.

<sup>32</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 110. Other phrases are σὺν θεοῖς, P.land.97 (C3); P.Oxy.12.1482 (C2); 14.1760 (C2); θεῶν βουλομένων, P.Oxy.14.1666 (C3); θεῶν θελόντων, P.Oslo 2.62 (C4); θεῶν συλλαμβανόντων, P.Oxy.6.935 (C3); θεῶν συνεργούντων, P.Herm.2 (C4); θεοῦ θέλοντος, P.Ross.Georg.3.3 (C3); θεοῦ βοηθοῦντος, P.Fay.136 (C4); θεοῦ συνεργούντος, P.Got.13.4 (C4).

<sup>33</sup> Eg P.Grenf.2.73 (C3/4); P.Oxy.31.2609 (C4); P.Lond.6.1919 (C4); SB 1.4683 (C6-7).

<sup>34</sup> Eg P.Brem.48 (118); P.Laur.4.187 (C2); P.Mich.8.489 (C2); P.Oxy.14.1763 (after 222); SB 8.9903 (C2/3); P.Oxy.9.1220 (C3); P.Strasb.4.233 (C3). In a text of uncertain religious milieu eg P.Strasb.1.35 (C4/5).

religious significance of the expressions, whether they are conventional<sup>35</sup> or whether beyond the cliché there is a genuine religious sentiment<sup>36</sup>. It is not established that conventionality excludes religious expression in any or all cases. The religious sense, then, should be accepted. The religious content of Tapiam's letter makes the theological significance of σὺν θεῷ highly likely.

The mother in P.Ben.Mus.4 writes, 'with God's help I was quick to come (home) for your sake' (σὺ<ν> θεῷ δι' ἐσὲ ἐσπούδασα ἐρθ[ῖν (= ἐλθεῖν)), l.2. The ecclesial identity of the son and his presumption that the mother knows 'Scripture'<sup>37</sup> suggest σὺν θεῷ carry theological significance.

## Healing and miracles

The complex relationship between medicine, magic and religion forms the background to the women's theologies of healing<sup>38</sup>. Sickness as divine punishment<sup>39</sup> and as demonic attack<sup>40</sup> are popular ideas attested in the papyri and inscriptions of the period, as is the link between sickness and the god/gods who heal<sup>41</sup>.

Whether or not miracles occurred in the early church is not a question for this thesis. The historical record indicates that there was a general acceptance of miracles, and an expectation that miracles can result from prayer, ritual and magic<sup>42</sup>. In the period 100-400, this belief is evident among Christians<sup>43</sup> and pagans<sup>44</sup>, the educated elite

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<sup>35</sup> Eg Rees (1950), 95.

<sup>36</sup> Eg Tibiletti (1979), 108.

<sup>37</sup> See 99 above.

<sup>38</sup> Barrett-Lennard (1994); Kee (1986); Frost (1949); A. Oepke, 'ἰάομαι, ἰασις' in *TDNT* 3.194-215.

<sup>39</sup> Eg The Shepherd 63.3f; P.Herm.2 (317-323); Lydian inscriptions to Men cited in Horsley, 'Expiation and the cult of Men' in *ND* 3.20-31, here 27-31. See also Barrett-Lennard (1994), 328.

<sup>40</sup> Eg P.Oxy.8.1151 (C5?); P.Lund.4.12 at 369ff below; P.Oxy.6.924 at 371f below, (both C4). Fevers and chills are particularly linked to demonic causation, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 292.

<sup>41</sup> Evidence is in the form of prayers, vows and thanksgiving related to health and healing: in Christian texts eg P.Lond.6.1926; 1928; 1929; P.Oxy.6.939; 8.1161; 10.1299; 31.2609 (all C4); in pagan texts eg BGU 2.615 (C2); SB 16.12589 (C2); P.Giss.20 (C2/3); P.Mich.8.514 (C3); texts of uncertain religious milieu eg PSI 4.299 (C3); P.Oxy.55.3816 (C3/4).

<sup>42</sup> See Barrett-Lennard (1994), especially chapters 2, 3 on the papyri. Also Kee (1986).

<sup>43</sup> In the post-apostolic period belief in healing and its practice continued, eg Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 5; 15 (C3); *HL* 12.1; 39.4; 42 (C4/5); Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.32.4; 5.12.6 (C3); Serapion, *Sacramentary* 22 (VII); 30 (VIII); 5(XVII); 1 (XIII.15.19); 15 (XXII); 17 (XXIX); evidence consists in thanksgivings as well as requests, eg P.Abinn.6, 7; P.Lond.3.982; 6.1926; 6.1928; 6.1929; P.Neph.1; P.Oxy.6.939; 8.1161; 31.2609 (all C4).

<sup>44</sup> Strabo, *The Geography* 17.1.17; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 1.25.3, 5. Physical healing was practised in the cults of Asclepius, Isis and Sarapis.



and the general population<sup>45</sup>. Miracles are attested in Christian 'lives' and 'ecclesiastical histories'<sup>46</sup> and in pagan 'lives' and 'histories'<sup>47</sup>. Votive offerings provide further evidence of belief in miraculous healing<sup>48</sup>. Three of the Christian women writers refer to healing.

Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 believes in miraculous healing through prayer. She asks Appa Paphnouthios that he 'ask for me from Christ that I may receive healing' (ἐτήσης (= αἰτήσης) μοι παρὰ τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ εἶασιν (= ἱασιν) λάβω), ll.6f, also εἶασιν (= ἱασιν) λαμβάνω x2, ll.9, 14f<sup>49</sup>. Valeria expresses a theology of Christ as a living 'being' whom it is possible and appropriate to access in prayer and who responds consistently with gospel stories<sup>50</sup>. She is not expecting direction to medical treatment<sup>51</sup>, nor spiritual healing. Valeria expects Christ to cure her breathing problem and believes in his willingness to work a miracle, if not through her own prayer, at least in response to an ascetic. It is noteworthy that the immediate object of Valeria's trust is not Christ's healing power but Paphnouthios and his spiritual authority: 'thus I believe that through your prayers I may receive healing' (οὕτως π[ι]στεύω διὰ τῶν σῶν εὐχῶν εἶασιν (= ἱασιν) λαμβάνω), ll.8f, and οὕτως γὰρ πεπίστευκα καὶ πιστεύω ὅτι ἐὰν εὕξη ἐπάνω μου εἶασιν (= ἱασιν) λαμβάνω, ll.13-15<sup>52</sup>.

Another aspect of Valeria's theology of healing appears in her understanding of her distance from Paphnouthios. Valeria explicitly affirms that her absence is not significant. Implicitly she indicates belief that healing can occur independently of physical presence and the rituals of Christian healing, the laying-on of hands and anointing with oil<sup>53</sup>, which give a material, and sometimes a magical, dimension to

<sup>45</sup> On the relationship between Christian and pagan healing practice, see MacMullen (1997); Frankfurter (1998).

<sup>46</sup> For a list of miracles, see MacMullen (1997), 165f. Miracles play a significant role in the apochryphal Acts. While the Acts as a genre have much in common with the novel, their paraenetic value derives from the fact that they reflect contemporary attitudes.

<sup>47</sup> MacMullen (1997), 208; Frankfurter (1998), 46-52; Cotter (1999) particularly Parts 1 and 2 for healings and exorcisms from Greek and Roman sources.

<sup>48</sup> Eg P.Giss.20 (C2); SB 1.15.

<sup>49</sup> On the significance of Valeria's request to Appa Paphnouthios as an ascetic, see 185ff below.

<sup>50</sup> See 85ff above.

<sup>51</sup> Holy men's 'healing' might consist in direction to a doctor or a medicinal preparation, Brown (1982), 142.

<sup>52</sup> Use of the perfect in πεπίστευκα points to Paphnouthios' reputation as healer evident in requests for healing in the archive, and Valeria's knowledge of it.

<sup>53</sup> P.Lond.6.1928 asks that Paphnouthios pray and send 'the oil'. See also 'Prayer of the sick, using oil', *Sacramentarium Serapionis*, in Lodi (1979), 352, no.585. On anointing with oil and the laying-on of

healing<sup>54</sup> and a material support to belief. Valeria's confidence derives not from material things but from her understanding of Paphnouthios' spiritual power. Whether Valeria believes in healing at a distance or in Christ's omnipresence to which Paphnouthios' presence is marginal is not clear. Valeria's belief contrasts with the importance of physical presence in the temples of the healing gods in Egyptian/Greek religion.

Valeria holds a strongly interventionist theology formulated in material terms. She expects physical healing. Her theological position is consistent with a literal reading of the gospels. It is consistent, too, with pagan beliefs about the healing gods, especially, in fourth-century Egypt, Asclepius and Sarapis<sup>55</sup>. The simplicity of Valeria's approach stands in contrast to pagan healings with their incubation rites, complexity of spells and use of media such as oil and water<sup>56</sup>. Valeria's reference to Christ, use of 'biblical' allusion and identification with the sick of the gospels suggests her theology is largely Christian in formulation.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 ask Ophellios and the brothers 'to pray for our health' (εὐξασθαι ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁλοκληρίας ἡμῶν)<sup>57</sup>, I.11. Tapiam is sick. The request is conditioned by Tapiam and Paul's belief that their children were healed through the brothers' prayers, II.13-15<sup>58</sup>. Tapiam, while using a general expression, looks for a similar miracle for herself. Tapiam holds a strongly interventionist theology in relation to physical healing. Her belief in the need to be present with the brothers is unclear. She and Paul are absent but Tapiam plans to travel to Hathor. It may be that she hopes to obtain a more immediate ministry from Ophellios, Nephros and the brothers<sup>59</sup> but she does not explicitly connect the travel with healing, the laying-on of

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hands, Kee (1986), 2; R. J. S. Barrett-Lennard, 'A request for prayer for healing' in *ND* 4.248; Barrett-Lennard (1994), 54-56, 122-124; (2005), 155f.

<sup>54</sup> Water, soil, parts of buildings at sacred sites were common media for healing, Frankfurter (1998), 46-52.

<sup>55</sup> Kee (1983), 78-104.

<sup>56</sup> A. Oepke, 'ἰάομαι, ἰασίς' in *TDNT* 3.194-215.

<sup>57</sup> On the significance of Tapiam's request to the brothers as ascetics, see 188f below.

<sup>58</sup> It is argued that this is the only claim of healing in the private letters, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 73. Horion in P.Neph.10 claims good health as a result of Nephros' prayer but it is unclear if healing has occurred.

<sup>59</sup> Being in the immediate presence of an ascetic was important at least for some, evident in the crowds that gathered around 'holy men'. But see P.Lond.6.1926 above for belief in the effectiveness of healing prayer at a distance.

hands or anointing with oil<sup>60</sup>. The travel is perhaps linked to the desire to die among family. It suggests that Tapiam believes in the possibility of healing at a distance, independently of the common Christian rituals of healing, but allows that healing may not occur.

Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161 prays to God and God's beloved Son 'that they all may help our body, soul and spirit' (ὅπως οὗτοι πάντες β[ο]ηθήσωσιν ἡμῶν τῷ σώματι, τῇ ψυχῇ, τῷ [[πν(ευματ)ι]] πν(εύματ)ι), ll.4-7, and refers five times to illness. While this text is discussed in detail elsewhere<sup>61</sup>, there are four points of theological interest in relation to sickness and healing. Firstly, Anonyme may be an example of those Christians whose interest in illness, as Barrett-Lennard argues, is greater than people in other religious groups<sup>62</sup>. He considers that Christian papyri indicate a greater interest in illness, describe it in greater detail and make a more consistent connection between illness, healing and the divine than pagan texts. His evidence rests largely on the diversity of terms used and frequency of mention. His sample size, however, is too small to draw reliable conclusions<sup>63</sup>. Secondly, Anonyme's use of the trichotomy indicates her understanding that both the physical and spiritual aspects of human existence need God's help and are susceptible to God's power. The type of help is not indicated. Her references to illness<sup>64</sup> suggest physical healing but whether Anonyme seeks healing also of her soul and spirit, and what such healing might entail or whether a different help is needed for each aspect of personhood is not stated. Thirdly, Anonyme seeks no intercessory prayer in the extant portion of this letter. Whether such a request occurred in the lost section is unknown. Nonetheless, it is evident that she believes in her own ability to access God's healing. A fourth point is that Anonyme affirms the goodness of God and the nature of God as 'saviour' (σωτήρ) at the same time as she has an illness which is not healed. Mondini<sup>65</sup> finds

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<sup>60</sup> P.Neph.3 refers to oil that is a εὐλογία which Paul has not received. This may be blessed oil, Vivian (2004), 258, n.107, but in the same sentence Paul refers to being anxious about providing for his children, so that the oil may be for general use. Yet need due to poverty seems unlikely as P.Neph.5 notes Paul's distribution of three artabas of wheat to the poor.

<sup>61</sup> See 82, 89, 107ff above and 161f below.

<sup>62</sup> Barrett-Lennard (1994), 31, n.129.

<sup>63</sup> The conclusions are based on 9 out of 104 Christian letters mentioning illness and 3 out of 92 pagan letters. A comparison of the *Canons of Hippolytus* with the earlier *Apostolic Tradition*, Barrett-Lennard (2005), concludes that Christians in Egypt in C3 and C4 demonstrate an increasing interest in illness and healing. However, the differences yield to other explanations, eg the greater institutionalisation of Christianity.

<sup>64</sup> See 53f above.

<sup>65</sup> Mondini (1917), 38.

here evidence of the 'spirito grande serenità e pace' that arises from Christian hope. Naldini<sup>66</sup> notes 'le è di conforto una fede sincera, rassegnata'. Both writers allude to sentiments perhaps more exalted than the fragmentary text allows. Nonetheless, Anonyme's attitude is far from the contractual relationship with the divine that is sometimes found in Christian and pagan texts and practices<sup>67</sup>.

All three women believe that miraculous healing is possible and actively seek it. The women do not connect sickness with sin, punishment or demonic attack. In the context especially of Valeria and Tapiam's requests, it could be expected that the women would refer to such beliefs if they held them. While being an argument from silence, it seems likely that these are theological views the women do not hold. Further, the women do not regard it as necessary to ask if their healing is God's will. They presume it.

### Grace and merit

A theology of grace and merit is explicit in only one letter written by a Christian woman, the Melitian text P.Neph.1. Indirect references occur in the other Melitian letter examined in this thesis, P.Neph.18, and in P.Oxy.14.1774, BGU 3.948 and P.Edmonstone.

Tapiam and Paul write in P.Neph.1 that death among their own people may happen 'if the master considers us worthy to be kept alive during our exile' (εἴπερ καταξιοῖ ἡμᾶς ὁ δεσπότης σωθῆναι ἐν τῇ ξενειτίᾳ (= ξενιτείᾳ) ἡμῶν), ll.18f. Σωθῆναι is unlikely to carry its spiritual meaning 'to be in a state of salvation', or to mean 'to be healed', but is more likely to have its material sense, 'to be preserved/kept alive'<sup>68</sup>; that is, Tapiam and Paul ask for preservation in Alexandria so that death may occur at home. The passive σωθῆναι suggests that they expect God to keep them alive, which God will do εἴπερ καταξιοῖ ἡμᾶς. The meaning Tapiam and Paul give to καταξιοῖ is uncertain. The word can be objective with a sense of 'deem worthy', or it can be subjective,

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<sup>66</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 254.

<sup>67</sup> Eg P.Oxy.7.1065 (C3), 'just as the gods paid no attention to me, in the same way I will pay no attention to the gods' (ὥσπερ [οἱ] θεοὶ οὐκ ἐφείσαντό μοι οὕτως καὶ ἐγὼ θεῶν] οὐ φείσομαι); P.Brem.63 (C3), οὐ μέλλω θεῶι σχολάζειν εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἀπαρτίσω τὸν υἱόν μου. For miracles wrought in exchange for faith, see MacMullen (1997), 9, 165f, n.22. For idea of relationship with the divinity as a contract: in pagan texts, see Bell (1953), 95; MacMullen (1984), 13; (1997), 113ff; in Christian texts, see Rees (1950), 87; MacMullen (1984), 116.

<sup>68</sup> LSJ, s.v.

‘deign’<sup>69</sup>. The ‘NT’ theology of grace favours the latter meaning. However, Tapiam and Paul’s hesitancy about whether they qualify for the master’s intervention favours the former meaning. The logical inconsistency between grace and worth recalls similar ambiguity in the ‘NT’ and early liturgies<sup>70</sup>.

Taouak in P.Neph.18 says to Eudaimon and Apia, ‘for we are the treasure/treasury of God’ (ὁ γὰρ θησαυρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖς (= ἡμεῖς)), II.26f<sup>71</sup>. The translations ‘treasure’ and ‘treasury’ are both possible. The significance of the phrase for Taouak’s theology of grace and merit concerns who is included in the term.

Kramer and Shelton suggest the following possible interpretations.

1. ‘We’, though plural, refers to Taouak alone as a martyr (sic)<sup>72</sup>. This they dismiss as unlikely since the plural is not Taouak’s style and suggests arrogance. However, given Melitians’ idealisation of martyrs and confessors<sup>73</sup>, the arrogance cannot be ruled out.
2. ‘We’ refers to all people in having an immortal soul, in accord with Clement of Alexandria, ἡ ψυχὴ μόνη θησαυρὸς αὐτοῦ<sup>74</sup>. This they reject because the word order implies the addressees are not included in ‘we’. However, the word order may emphasise their inclusion.
3. ‘We’ refers to Melitians. This requires, for the editors, that the addressees are not Melitian, which is unlikely. Otherwise it would fail for the same reason as 2.
4. ‘We’ refers to a special subgroup, the martyrs/confessors, of which Taouak is one but Eudaimon and Apia are not. The editors comment that a confessor using her status to gain recognition decades after persecution is ‘grotesque’ but possible. The suggestion could make sense of the presumed threatening tone of this section of the letter.
5. ‘We’ refers to members of the monastery of which Taouak is one and her addressees are not, in which case the letter was never sent or was returned. However, there is no suggestion that Taouak is a nun, and her relationship to the monastery is not explained<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>70</sup> Luke 20.35; 2 Thessalonians 1.5; BKT 6.6.1 (C3), ‘prepare me a worthy temple’ (κατασκευάσόν με ναὸν ἡξιωμένον); P.Würzb.3 (C3), ἵνα καταξιοθῶσιν τῆς ἐπουρανίου σου ζωῆς.

<sup>71</sup> See 94 above.

<sup>72</sup> Based on Taouak’s use of προσευχή and her assertive attitude.

<sup>73</sup> The distinction between a martyr who confesses Christ and dies, and a confessor who confesses but does not die first appears in Eusebius, HE 5.2.2-3 but was not always observed. V. Saxer ‘Confessor’, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* (1992), s.v.

<sup>74</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* 3.6.36.2.

<sup>75</sup> See 50 above.

Kramer and Shelton require a separation between Taouak and her addressees based on their assumption that ὄψεστε πρὸς τὸν θεόν connotes threat. Given that such an interpretation is unnecessary and unlikely<sup>76</sup>, and the lack of evidence for Taouak as a confessor or nun, possibilities 2 and 3 remain. Possibility 2, which implies a universalistic theology of salvation, is unlikely in a Christian, let alone Melitian, context. It is more likely that a separation is implied between those who are God's treasure/treasury, including Eudaimon and Apia, and those who are not, the former being superior by implication. The basis for inclusion and exclusion is certainly religious. The reference may be to all Christians, but the Melitian rigorist conception of Christianity involved a sharp distinction between Melitians and the 'catholic' church which Melitians regarded as tainted by compromise<sup>77</sup>. God's treasure/treasury, then, most probably refers to the Melitian community which, as the pure church, saw itself as enjoying a privileged relation to God. Taouak illustrates the exclusivist Melitian view<sup>78</sup> that saw salvation belonging primarily to the Melitian church<sup>79</sup>. While opposing the Melitian position as schismatic, the 'catholic' church did not consider Melitians 'heretical' at this stage<sup>80</sup>.

The consequence of being God's treasure/treasury is that a person will see God. Hebrew and Christian 'Scripture' states that seeing God is not possible for human beings<sup>81</sup>. In the 'NT', seeing God forms part of the eschatological hope and is possible now only in a figurative sense, through faith<sup>82</sup>. Taouak's promise that Eudaimon and Apia will see God if they send the wheat implies a more immediate fulfilment than the eschatological hope but what this might mean is not indicated and implies a shared understanding. That Taouak feels she can pronounce spiritual blessing is noteworthy, as is the fact that she makes it contingent on Eudaimon and Apia doing what she wants.

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<sup>76</sup> See 92ff above.

<sup>77</sup> See 197f below. Also Hauben (2000), 332f.

<sup>78</sup> Melitians and 'catholics' were not always hostile, particularly during Alexander's episcopate, Bell (1924), 39.

<sup>79</sup> Hauben (2000), 333.

<sup>80</sup> The decision of the Council of Nicaea to accept Melitians into fellowship did not require re-baptism, Bell (1924), 39.

<sup>81</sup> Exodus 33.18-23; 1 John 4.12. Biblical theophanies and visions are manifestations that God is present, not presentations of God for sense perception, W. Michaelis, 'ὁράω' in *TDNT* 5.331-334.

<sup>82</sup> Eg Matthew 5.8; 1 John 3.2; 1 Clement 19.3; Barnabas 5.10; *Epistle to Diognetus* 8.5f; 10.2.

For both Kophaena in BGU 3.948 and Terouterou in P.Edmonstone, reciprocity rather than grace is the predominant ethic. Kophaena offers the terms of her exchanges with Theodoulos, perhaps to alleviate her sense of dependence and indebtedness<sup>83</sup>. Terouterou explicitly grants manumission in exchange for her slaves' loyal service<sup>84</sup>. In theological terms, either there is a discontinuity between the women's spiritual and material modes of functioning, or their spiritual worlds in reality do not operate on the Christian value of grace. Didyme and the sisters' use of 'blessed' in greeting the living Asous in P.Oxy.14.1774 expresses the theological doctrine of the giftedness of salvation<sup>85</sup>.

## Death and life

Tapiam and Paul's description of death as τέλος and ἀπαλλαγή, and life as ταλαιπωρία represents a particular theology inherent in the 'scriptural' texts from which it derives and is discussed in chapter 3<sup>86</sup>.

## Slavery

Slave-owning by Christian women is attested in P.Edmonstone and P.Oxy.6.903. Before examining the women's theological positions, I briefly outline the culture of slavery in Egypt and the 'NT' treatment of the practice<sup>87</sup>.

Slavery was less common in Egypt than elsewhere in late antiquity, due most probably to the cheapness of labour<sup>88</sup>. Slaves, at about 3.4% of the population of cities and 8.5% of villages<sup>89</sup>, were a significant part of both rural and urban economic and social life<sup>90</sup>. Slaves had no legal rights. They could not own property or enter into

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<sup>83</sup> See 223 below.

<sup>84</sup> See below, 'Slavery'.

<sup>85</sup> On μακαρία, see 102f above.

<sup>86</sup> See 90ff above.

<sup>87</sup> On slavery, see Westermann (1955), 149-159; Gülzow (1969); Biezunska-Malowist (1977); Bradley (1987); (1994); Harrill (1995); Llewelyn, 'Slaves and Masters' in *ND* 6.48-81. The 'NT' presumes slave-owning by church members, Ephesians 6.9; Colossians 4.1.

<sup>88</sup> Winter (1933), 57; Westermann (1955), 133.

<sup>89</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 208; (1997), 126. The 'decline' in slave-owning in C3 and C4 argued in explanation of the decline in evidence for slavery is better explained by shifts in the nature of the documents and documentation of the period, with the genres of documents referring to slaves missing from mid-C3, Bagnall (1993b), 220-227.

<sup>90</sup> Slaves are attested in village households eg P.Cair.Isid.64 (298); P.Cair.Isid.141 (C4); P.Lips.1.26 (C4); P.Oxy.14.1638 (282); in elite households eg P.Lips.1.97 (338); P.Strasb.4.296 (C4); P.Oxy.6.903 (C4); P.Oxy.43.3146 (347); P.Oxy.49.3480 (360-390). See also Bagnall (1993b), 227-233.

marriages, bear children without permission or have authority over their children who were their owners' property. Women in particular were vulnerable in slavery<sup>91</sup>. Not only their labour but also their bodies belonged to their master<sup>92</sup>. For example, in P.Oxy.6.903 the slave-woman, Anilla, may have been a sexual partner to Anonymos.

Slave-owning is widely attested among early Christians. The 'NT' accepts the practice and exhibits no interest in overturning slavery, instead urging slaves to obedience<sup>93</sup>. Ignatius of Antioch, in the second century, advises churches not to assist in the manumission of Christian slaves<sup>94</sup>. His statement indicates that manumission was practised by churches and confirms the paraenesis of other writers that ransoming slaves is a 'proper' exercise of charity<sup>95</sup>. There is evidence also of the motivation to convert the freed person<sup>96</sup>.

The attitude of the church to slavery is complex and varied<sup>97</sup>. Westermann finds evidence of an 'equalisation movement' in 300-350 in church and state legislation to ameliorate the conditions of slaves<sup>98</sup>. There is no suggestion that Christian owners should manumit their slaves<sup>99</sup>. Westermann also notes a retreat from the early

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<sup>91</sup> Women are over-represented among slaves and under-represented in cities. This may be due to their greater frequency of exposure as infants, Bagnall (1997), who suggests the exposed baby girls were acquired by poor rural families, raised as slaves and later sold back to the urban rich.

<sup>92</sup> Eg Kephalon sells nine-year-old Soteris to Apion, κυριεύειν οὖν καὶ ἐγκρατεῖν καὶ διοικεῖν αὐτῆς τὸν Ἀπίωνα καὶ ἐπιτελεῖν περὶ αὐτῆς ὅν ἐὰν αἰρήται τρόπον, SB 14.11277 (225).

<sup>93</sup> Slaves should remain as slaves, 1 Corinthians 7.21, Philemon 8-21; obey their masters as the Lord, Ephesians 6.5-9, Colossians 3.22-4.1, ὡς κύπῳ θεοῦ, Barnabas 19.7; Didache 4.11; honour fellow-Christian masters, 1 Timothy 6.1ff; obey unjust masters, 1 Timothy 6.1; 1 Peter 2.18-20. Advice to slaves is uniformly longer than advice to masters in household instruction. In the later texts 1 Timothy and 1 Peter, there is no corresponding advice to masters. The same attitude is found in Canon 3, Council of Gangra (c.340).

<sup>94</sup> Ignatius *To Polycarp* 4.3. Schoedel in his commentary, 'Ignatius of Antioch, *A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, H. Koester ed., W. R. Schoedel commentary and trans. (1985)', 270f, argues that Ignatius aims to prevent liberated slaves being forced into prostitution by poverty. The explanation is not widely supported, Bradley (1987), 82; Harrill (1995), 161f. It is more likely that Ignatius aims to bring house churches and their finances under the bishop's (his) control, and prevent empty conversions that would build patronage independent of the bishop, given that the freed person's obligations would be to the ransoming church, Harrill (1995), 189ff.

<sup>95</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.62.4; 4.9.2; Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.301. On Christian corporate and individual manumission, see Harrill (1995), 178-182.

<sup>96</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.62.4; Harrill (1995), 179-181.

<sup>97</sup> Eg the mass manumissions in hagiographies illustrate a paradoxical attitude to slave-owning, showing that saints and martyrs own slaves and yet display saintliness in freeing them; eg Hermes frees 1250 slaves, Ovinus frees 5000, Melania the Younger frees 8000, cited in Westermann (1955), 135. The numbers are no doubt exaggerated.

<sup>98</sup> Westermann (1955), 152.

<sup>99</sup> Christian slaves owned by Jews must be sold to Christians, *CT* 3.1.5 (384). See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 2.395f.



acceptance of slaves as equals in the church<sup>100</sup> and, instead, an insistence on the slave's inferiority compared to the master<sup>101</sup>. In the mid-fifth century, for example, Pope Leo forbids slaves from being priests because of their inherent inferiority<sup>102</sup>. The early acceptance of slaves' equality may have been a brief phenomenon, if not an illusory one. The *manumissio in ecclesia* 316<sup>103</sup> and 321<sup>104</sup> cannot be taken as a sign of the church's rejection of slavery but rather illustrates its participation in the system<sup>105</sup>.

Terouterou in P. Edmonstone frees the portion she has inherited of three slaves, Aurelius Sarapammon, Tkales and Tkales' daughter Aurelia Lousia, 'in exchange for what you have shown me over time of good will and love and, in addition, service' (καὶ ἀνθ' ὧν ἐνεδειξώσθῃ μοι κατὰ χρόνον εὐνοίας καὶ στοργῆς ἔτι τε καὶ ὑπηρεσίας,). l.9, and αὐτοὶ τῷ χρόνῳ ἐνέδειξάν μοι εὐνοίαν καὶ φιλοστοργείαν, l.16. The idea of freedom as a reward for compliant slave behaviour is common in manumission documents and appears to have been an effective means of ensuring submission<sup>106</sup>. In P. Edmonstone the concept of reward is strengthened by Terouterou's 'I, the one recompensing, having the recompenses, and having been persuaded, have come to this manumission' (καὶ αὐτὴ ἀμοιβόμενος (= ἀμειβομένη) τὰς ἀμοιβὰς ἐκὼν (= ἐκούσα) καὶ πεπισμένη ἦκον εἰς τήνδε τὴν ἐλευθερίαν), l.17. Terouterou, consciously or not, by her use of εὐνοία, στοργή, ὑπηρεσία and φιλοστοργεία recognises her slaves as persons 'in the image of God' like herself, capable of exercising virtue<sup>107</sup>. However, it does not motivate her to manumit them. While freedom was recognised as a good<sup>108</sup> and the desire for it a basic human

<sup>100</sup> Slaves are full church members in the canonical NT, apparently without regard to owners' consent. Whether this equality extended to ministry is not indicated, although Pliny, early in C2, records two slave *ministrae*, Pliny, *Letters* 96.8.

<sup>101</sup> Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 16.4, 5. In an ostrakon dated C6 a slave to the master parallels the creature to the Creator, cited in Westermann (1955), 152.

<sup>102</sup> Leo the Great, *Letter* 4.1 (443). *Canons of Basil* 63 rules that a priest must not be a slave. See also MacMullen (1997), 7.

<sup>103</sup> CJ 1.13.1 (316) confirming an earlier ruling now lost, possibly dated 313-315. See Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.72f; Bradley (1994), 158.

<sup>104</sup> CJ 1.13.2=CT 4.7.1 (321) explicitly confers citizenship. See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.84f.

<sup>105</sup> Bradley (1994), 158; Westermann (1955), 154. Westermann notes that *manumissio in ecclesia* spread slowly in C4.

<sup>106</sup> Bradley (1987), 83.

<sup>107</sup> The regular designation of slaves as σώματα denies their full humanity.

<sup>108</sup> The absolute value of freedom has been identified in the Roman legal system in the principle of *favor libertatis* at least from C1 BCE, eg *Digest of Justinian* 29.2.71; 31.1.14; 35.2.32.5; 40.4.16; 40.4.17.2; 40.5.24.10. See also Bradley (1994), 162.

instinct<sup>109</sup>, at least among certain Christians, Jews and pagans<sup>110</sup>, it clearly was not regarded as a right nor, for Christian and Jews, as theologically essential.

Sarapammon, Tkales and Lousia's real attitude to Terouterou cannot be determined, nor can their religious belief<sup>111</sup>. They may have felt genuine affection for her. Their love may also be Terouterou's interpretation of their compliance.

In addition to the ethic of reward, Terouterou gives a further reason for the manumission, 'for it seems good and I, the one freeing, am persuaded by the ones being freed to come to this liberation for the ones being freed' (εὐδοκεῖν γὰρ καὶ πείθεσθαι ἐμὲ τὴν ἐλευθεροῦντα (= ἐλευθεροῦσαν) τοῖς ἐλευθερουμένοις εἰς τήνδε τὴν ἐλευθέρωσιν ἦκειν τοῖς ἐλευθερουμένοις), ll.11f<sup>112</sup>. The initiative for this manumission, then, comes from the slaves rather than from any theological conviction on Terouterou's part or primarily from gratitude. Nonetheless, Terouterou twice states that she regards her action as εὐσέβεια, and particularly 'in accordance with the godliness of the all-merciful God' (κατ' εὐσεβίαν (= εὐσέβειαν) τοῦ πανελεήμονος θεοῦ), ll.7f, and for which she asks her heirs not to criticise her, l.15. Εὐσέβεια connotes piety<sup>113</sup> and signals a secondary, distinctly theological, dimension to her action. Terouterou may be an example of the *religiosa mens* referred to in Constantine's provision of *manumissio in ecclesia*<sup>114</sup>, albeit, in Terouterou's case, a 'religious conviction' that consists only in the persuasive argument of her slaves. A similar link between Christian belief and manumission is evident in P.Kell.1.Gr.48 (C4), in which Valerius frees Hilaria 'because of (my) outstanding Christianity' (δι' ὑπερβολὴν χ[ρι]στιανότητος)<sup>115</sup>. Terouterou's reckoning of her manumission as something owed and earned removes it from the arena of mercy as understood in the 'NT' where it is always undeserved. The fact that the text does not mention the payment of a ransom

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<sup>109</sup> Inscriptions give evidence of slaves' desire for freedom, eg ILS 3427; 3491; 3526; 3944, cited in Bradley (1987), 81f.

<sup>110</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish War* 4.175; Diodorus Siculus 11.36.5. Philo regards freedom as an absolute good but considers slaves inferior and deserving of slavery, *Every Good Man is Free* 19.136-20.137. See also Bradley (1994) 154; Harrill (1995), 167.

<sup>111</sup> See P.Kell.1.Gr.48 at 285f below, on the relationship between a slave's religious belief and the owner's belief.

<sup>112</sup> The papyri attest slaves' efforts to gain freedom by running away or using persuasion, eg P.Oxy.12.1423 (C4); 14.1643 (298); P.Panop.Beatty 1.149-152 (298); PSI 5.452 (C4).

<sup>113</sup> See 100f above. Also for εὐσέβεια.

<sup>114</sup> *CJ* 1.13.2.

<sup>115</sup> See 284ff below.

nor state a παραμονή clause may suggest mercy at least at this level<sup>116</sup>. The text does not indicate whether Terouterou owns other slaves nor whether the portion not owned by her of the slaves she frees is freed or slave.

In P.Oxy.6.903, Anonyme refers to multiple slaves whom she and Anonymos own<sup>117</sup>. The slaves are among those whom Anonymos has abused, ll.2-4, 6, 9f<sup>118</sup>. Anonyme uses 'insult' (ὕβρις), l.5, of his action but implies powerlessness to prevent it. A theological basis for her opposition is not formulated. There is no evidence that Anonyme regards slave-owning itself as unacceptable. Zoe is Anonyme's personal slave (τὴν ἐμὴν δούλην Ζωὴν), l.5, and while the other slaves belong to Anonymos, Anonyme has power over Anilla at least.

Many attempts have been made to explain the attitude of early Christianity to slavery, from appeals to eschatology, to mitigating the realities of slavery, to various socio-political concerns of the church<sup>119</sup>. It is not possible to determine whether Terouterou, Anonyme or any other Christian slave-owner consciously adopted a theological position in relation to slavery. It may be that the baptismal formula 'neither slave nor free'<sup>120</sup> was taken by some to affect social relations and lead to manumissions. It appears more often that the equality asserted was understood as spiritual, not affecting worldly institutions<sup>121</sup>. It is not my purpose to discuss the theology of Christian slave ownership at length, only to note that Anonyme's beliefs, consistent with those of the contemporary church, accommodate it and that Terouterou, while also accommodating slavery, sees the granting of freedom as a 'godly' merciful act.

### Care of widows and orphans

In this section I examine the women writers' attitudes to care for widows and orphans from a theological perspective. I consider the family connections of the women as

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<sup>116</sup> On *paramone* clauses, see 357 below.

<sup>117</sup> A slave represents a capital investment of 20-30 artabas of wheat, about six months' income, Bagnall (1993b), 229. Anonymos and Anonyme are among the wealthy.

<sup>118</sup> This text attests the abuse of slaves in late Roman Egypt. The imperial legislation protecting slaves appears to have had little impact. See Westermann (1955), 114f; Bradley (1987), 126-129.

<sup>119</sup> For a summary of scholars' theories, see Llewelyn, 'The Sale of a Slave-Girl: the New Testament's Attitude to Slavery' in 'Slaves and Masters' 48-55 in *ND* 6.48-81, here 54.

<sup>120</sup> Galatians 3.28.

<sup>121</sup> Bradley (1987), 38.

widows and with orphans in chapter 7<sup>122</sup>. The vulnerability and neediness of widows and orphans are a commonplace in ancient literature<sup>123</sup> and appeals for help are common<sup>124</sup>. The papyri give evidence of the real difficulties they faced<sup>125</sup>. The ideal of protecting them also occurs widely in ancient literary sources<sup>126</sup> including the idea that widows and orphans enjoy divine protection<sup>127</sup>. In Jewish and Christian literature widows and orphans, usually cited together, are those who should arouse pity and whom the community should care for and protect<sup>128</sup>. True religion, in Christian terms, consists in caring for widows and orphans<sup>129</sup> and the failure to do so constitutes a denial of faith<sup>130</sup>. Widows feature as the recipients of Christian charity from the earliest days<sup>131</sup>.

<sup>122</sup> See 214ff, 232-234, 237, 239 below.

<sup>123</sup> Eg Homer, *Iliad* 6.432; 22.484; 24.725; Sophocles, *Ajax* 653; Euripides, *Andromache* 348; Lamentations 1.1. In a patriarchal society, widows were disadvantaged in law, economics and social relations, being without a protector and a male to act in the public sphere. The apocryphal *Acts* generally present a different expression of widowhood, with widows/virgins as central, powerful figures, eg Tryphaena, *Acts of Paul* 3.29-31, 41. See G. Stählin, 'χήρα' in *TDNT* 9.440-465. On orphans, H. Seesemann, 'ὀρφανός' in *TDNT* 5.487f; Bauer et al. (1957, 1979), s.v. For the social position of widows and orphans, McGinn (1999), reviewing J. Krause (1994-5), *Witwen und Waisen im Römischen Reich*.

<sup>124</sup> In addition to those in this thesis eg P.Sakaon 36 (c.280); CPR 7.15 (c.330); P.Amh.2.141 (350).

<sup>125</sup> P.Sakaon 36 (c.280); P.Cair.Isid.64 (c.298); P.Oxy.8.1120 (C3); CPR 7.15 (c.330); P.Oxy.12.1470 (336); 22.2344 (351/2); P.Amh.2.141 (350); P.Rainer Cent. 85 (364-366). See also Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 309. Not all widows are poor eg P.Oxy.1.71.Col.2 (303); P.Coll.Youtie 2.83 (353); Melania the Elder and Younger, Gerontius, *Life of Melania the Younger*; also Mantas (1997); Clark (1984); .

<sup>126</sup> Eg Plato, *Laws* 11.926D; Homer, *Iliad* 6.432; 24.725; in the *Code of Hammurabi*, care of widows and orphans is a mark of a good king, R. 24.59-62; also Lysias, *Orationes* 2.71 and Pseudo-Demosthenes, *Orationes* 43, 75, cited in G. Stählin, 'χήρα' in *TDNT* 9.441, n.12; 443, n.31. Stählin notes that in the military world there was a welfare fund for invalids and for the orphans and parents of dead soldiers. See also H. Seesemann, 'ὀρφανός' in *TDNT* 5.487f.

<sup>127</sup> Eg Amon-Re and Ptah in Pharaonic Egypt, G. Stählin, 'χήρα' in *TDNT* 9.443. In Judaism, God protects widows and orphans, Deuteronomy 10.18; Psalm 68.5 (LXX 67.5); 146.9 (145.9).

<sup>128</sup> Exodus 22.22; Deuteronomy 10.18; Psalm 10.14 (LXX 9.34); 2 Maccabees 3.10; James 1.27, Mark 12.40 D text; Barnabas 20.2; 1 Clement 8.4; The Shepherd 17, 38. Also *bSanh.* 19b; *Midr. Est.* 2, 5 (93a) cited in H. Seesemann, 'ὀρφανός' in *TDNT* 5.488.

<sup>129</sup> James 1.27; 1 Timothy 5.3-16.

<sup>130</sup> James 2.14-17; 1 Timothy 5.8.

<sup>131</sup> Acts 6.1-6; 1 Timothy 5.3; Barnabas 20.2; The Shepherd 38.10; 50.8; Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 4.1; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 20.1, 26.16, 27. Eusebius, *HE* 6.43.11 records that in mid-C3 the church in Rome supported 1500 widows and destitute persons. Whether the widows numbered among the destitute is debated. At the end of C4, the church in Antioch supported 3000 widows and virgins, not all of whom were poor, Chrysostom, *Homilies in Matthew* 66.3. 1 Timothy 5.3-16 distinguishes good widows who should receive assistance from the bad who should not. The distinction is based on sexual continence. A similar distinction exists in Roman law, Winter (2003), 133-140.

## Care of widows

Χήρα can designate any woman living without a husband and so include virgins in the category<sup>132</sup>. Evidence for church assistance to widows is absent from the papyri although the editors argue for it in P.Neph.36. Tauris, the widow, they suggest, in receiving seven artabas of wheat has a ministry distributing food to other widows. There is little evidence to support the hypothesis in the text<sup>133</sup>.

None of the papyri written by Christian women discusses widows in the third person, offering a disinterested theology of care for the widowed 'other'. The only references are to the widowed authors themselves. The women's theology becomes evident in their expectations of others and the use they make of their status.

Leuchis in P.Herm.17 appeals to Apa Johannes for help in approaching the tribune, 'for I am a widow and a woman' (ἐπὶ (= ἐπεὶ) χήρα γυνή εἰμι), l.6, with a widow's vulnerability and disadvantage, compounded by the pleonastic statement that she is a woman, a claim of further disadvantage. The themes of female weakness and the disadvantage of widowhood are common in the papyri<sup>134</sup>. A number of possibilities present themselves. Leuchis' statement may reflect genuine disadvantage, due perhaps to her lack of experience in the public world of the authorities, or to her vulnerability at the hands of the women she wants evicted and their possible military protectors<sup>135</sup>. It may be a device to manipulate Apa Johannes to meet her request, reminding him of his Christian obligation to care for her as a widow. It is also possible that Leuchis simply draws on a convention. The fact that she cites widowhood indicates that Leuchis expects her status to influence Apa Johannes in her favour and it is likely, given his identity, that she draws on 'biblical' theology to press him to his duty. This, then, represents theology from the point of view of the disadvantaged and Leuchis uses it to assert her claim.

The mother in SB 18.13612 gives as the reason for requesting Apa Johannes for mercy in connection with Theognostos the *exactor*, 'both me, a widow, and the

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<sup>132</sup> Methuen (1997).

<sup>133</sup> See 319f below.

<sup>134</sup> Eg SB 3.7206 (283-284); P.Oxy.34.2713 (c.297); 1.71 (303); CPR 7.15 (c.330); 5.9 (339); P.Amh.2.141 (350); P.Vindob.L.132 (345-352); P.Rainer Cent.85 (364-366); PSI 8.944 (C4); P.Lond.3.971 (C4); SB 14.11881 (C4), source Beaucamp (1990-1992), 2.46. The counter-side of women's disadvantage, women's weakness, is enshrined in law, CT 9.1.3 (322); 9.24.1 (326); CJ 2.12.21 (315).

<sup>135</sup> The editor suggests the women are ἐταῖραι following the garrison.

orphans' (κάμῃ (= καὶ ἐμὲ) τὴν χήρα[ν] καὶ τοὺς ὀρφανοὺς [ ], ll.9-11. As with Leuchis, Anonyme may use conventional language to secure the help she wants but is more likely, given Johannes' status, to draw on 'biblical' theology to remind him of his Christian obligations. Again, the mother presents her theology from the perspective of the disadvantaged.

Kophaena in BGU 3.948 is probably widowed or divorced<sup>136</sup>, and writes of need for a 'small provision' (μεκὴν (= μικρὰν) σιταρχίαν), l.14. She appeals to Theodoulos, not mentioning her marital status, but as his mother. Her theological position in relation to the care of widows and divorced women is not formulated. Kophaena's belief that her son should care for her is inseparable from her sense of what is owed to her as a mother, conditioned by social expectation and organisation that obliged sons to care for their widowed mothers<sup>137</sup>.

Kophaena's uncertain status as a widow or a divorced woman raises the issue of the relative needs of the two groups and their standing in the church. The needs of widowed and divorced women are not compared in ancient literature, pagan or Christian, and divorced women rarely appear in paraenetic discourse as a distinct group<sup>138</sup>. The question arises as to whether their absence is because of moral disapproval, their relatively low numbers<sup>139</sup>, presumed transient state<sup>140</sup>, inclusion in the same category as widows, or for some other reason.

Treggiari argues that there is no evidence in Roman society of stigma attaching to either party in divorce automatically, although she notes social disapproval of unjustified divorce<sup>141</sup>. Gardner argues that 'divorcées were never entirely approved

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<sup>136</sup> See 32 above.

<sup>137</sup> On sons' duty to care for widowed mothers, see 222, n.124 below.

<sup>138</sup> Tertullian explicitly rules out divorce for Christians: there should be 'perseverance in widowhood or reconciliation', Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 16.

<sup>139</sup> Divorce rates are not easily deduced from epigraphic and papyrological sources, Gardner (1986), 82, and statistics are missing from the ancient record for both marriage and divorce. Literary evidence for elite Romans in the late Republic suggests divorce is 'common', Treggiari (1991), 41, 44, who proposes a rate of first marriage to divorce of 6:1 within 10 years. Statistics for poorer classes without the motive of political ambition or need for an heir, and with financial interest in the economic unity of the family, cannot be determined, but probably divorce is less frequent. See similar observations and conclusions in Pomeroy (1975), 204.

<sup>140</sup> For divorce and the encouragement, requirement and discouragement of widows and divorcées to remarry, see 214f below.

<sup>141</sup> Treggiari (1991), 40, 46.

of<sup>142</sup>. Divorce documents from Egypt indicate a tendency towards not attributing blame even with unilateral repudiation<sup>143</sup>. It suggests a framework for divorce of no fault with no resulting stigma.

Both widows and divorcées in antiquity are seen as disadvantaged due to the lack of financial, legal and social support of a husband. In pagan custom and law, both classes of women are encouraged, even required, to remarry, although the period before penalties differs<sup>144</sup>. A divorced Christian woman's need might be exacerbated since her Christianity may count against her gaining support from pagan family<sup>145</sup>. In the church, a divorced woman was expected to remain unmarried until the death of her ex-husband. The reality was often different and remarriage occurred<sup>146</sup>.

Nonetheless, the church's attitude no doubt rendered some divorced women's situations more difficult. The silence of early Christian literature on the needs of divorced women and the lack of clarity as to whether they are subsumed under the category 'widow'<sup>147</sup> make their standing, and Christian community attitudes to them, difficult to determine with certainty<sup>148</sup>.

The mother in P.Abinn.34 approaches Abinnaeus with a request for leave for her son, Heron. She indicates urgent need, saying 'after God we have no help but yours' (μετὰ τὸν θεὸν οὐδὲν (= οὐδένα) ἔχομεν ἡμῆς (= ἡμεῖς) βοηθὸν ὑμῶν), ll.7f, but she does not refer to her sex or her likely widowed or divorced status to press her case<sup>149</sup>. The mother may consider it would not influence Abinnaeus although he is probably a

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<sup>142</sup> Gardner (1986), 51, whose evidence appears to be drawn from elite Rome where men might divorce and remarry for political advantage or to secure an heir without condemnation. She notes that according to male rhetoric women's motivation in serial divorce and remarriage could only be sexual, and so was regarded with suspicion, 261f.

<sup>143</sup> Divorce by mutual consent frees both parties from blame. A common cause of marital breakdown from C4 is demonic influence, a device which avoids blame, eg P.Grenf.2.76 (305/6); P.Strasb.3.142 (391). No divorce documents survive between these dates.

<sup>144</sup> See 215, nn.95, 97 below.

<sup>145</sup> MacDonald (1990), 233.

<sup>146</sup> In the post-Constantinian period, even where penalties for remarriage apply, the marriage itself is never regarded as invalid, Bagnall (1987b), 50.

<sup>147</sup> 'Widow' meaning 'living without a husband' can apply to virgins, Methuen (1997), so, presumably, to divorcées.

<sup>148</sup> Arjava (1996), 257-266, concludes that Christianity did not influence women's legal position, nor change society's attitude even in 'church-interested' areas, eg divorce.

<sup>149</sup> On the mother's marital status, see 35 above.

Christian<sup>150</sup>, or it may form part of Athioeis' appeal. The text, therefore, gives no information on the mother's theology of the care of widows.

Teeus in P.Lips.1.28 gives her grandson, Paesis, in adoption to her apotactic son. She does not indicate her marital status, although she is no doubt widowed or divorced<sup>151</sup>. Consequently there is no indication of her theology of care of widows. Nor does her status appear a significant factor in the decision to 'hand over' Paesis which is sufficiently accounted for in the request of her dead son. His reasons, however, are not given.

Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86, in undertaking legal procedures without a husband, is by implication either widowed or divorced<sup>152</sup> but she does not refer to her marital status. She therefore gives no information on her theology of care of widows.

### Care of orphans

'Orphan', in the ancient world, can mean a person who has lost both parents or either parent<sup>153</sup>. The death of the father leaves children *sui iuris*, even as minors, in the care of a male guardian/tutor. This applies even if the mother is living with the children in her care<sup>154</sup>. All five Christian women who refer to orphans imply their vulnerability and need for care.

Attiaena in P.Oxy.50.3581, detailing her husband Paul's abuses, writes, 'he despised my orphanhood' (καταφρονήσας τῆς ὀρφανίας μου), l.12<sup>155</sup>. The statement is the climax of Attiaena's claims functioning to express the ultimate heinousness of Paul's behaviour. It reveals Attiaena's view that orphans are vulnerable and ought to be protected. It is noteworthy that Attiaena's sense of disadvantage continues in her adult years, consisting, most probably, in not having a father whose retributive power might dissuade Paul from his actions<sup>156</sup>. Attiaena's claim of orphan status undoubtedly is to alert the tribune to her need. The religious status of the tribune is

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<sup>150</sup> See 244, n.8 below.

<sup>151</sup> On Teeus' marital status, see 64 above

<sup>152</sup> See 234 below.

<sup>153</sup> Horsley, 'ὀρφανός' in ND 4.162ff. An example of an 'orphan' whose mother is dead and father living occurs in CIJ 2.1510 (Egypt, 5 BCE); whose father is dead and mother living, in P.Tebt.2.326 (c.266); whose parents are both dead, in P.Col.7.173 (c.335).

<sup>154</sup> Gardner (1986), 147.

<sup>155</sup> Also P.Oxy.12.1470 (336), τῆς δε ἡμετέρας ὀρφανίας καταφρονῶν.

<sup>156</sup> On the role of families in marital conflicts, see Arnaoutoglou (1995). 26.



unknown, but Attiaena uses the commonplace of orphans' neediness to elicit a positive response. Attiaena's attitude to orphans is consistent with 'biblical' teaching, but it is not possible to determine the extent to which it is theologically formulated. The influence of the presbyters argues in favour of church affiliation and perhaps an informed theology. If this is so, Attiaena is another example of a woman presenting her theology from the perspective of the disadvantaged.

Aria in SB 14.11588 writes, 'for what goes right for me? Know this also that the orphan child is in my house and I myself have need of expenses' (τί γὰρ ὀρθοποδεῖ ἐν ἐμοί; ἵνα καὶ τοῦτο καὶ εἰδῆς ὅτι τὸ παιδίον τὸ ὀρφανικὸν παρ' ἐμοί ἐστὶν καὶ χρεῖαν ἔχω ἀναλωμάτων αὐτῇ)<sup>157</sup>, ll.21-25. The relationship of the child to Aria is not indicated, but the child is likely to be family<sup>158</sup>. The child's presence adds to Aria's need, a fact she implies by juxtaposing the ideas rather than stating the link overtly. Her attitude to the child can only be inferred by her willingness to provide a home. It is consistent with 'biblical' theology and with the ideals of her society. Whether it derives from Christian conviction, family feeling or both is unknown. Aria uses the child as an incentive to garner Dorotheos' help.

Allous in SB 14.11881 writes to Faustina, '... of the orphan children of my brother, (I am) unable to assist them being a woman' (τῶν ὀρφανῶν παίδων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου μὴ δυνα[μ]ένη αὐτοῖς ἐπαρκεῖν γυνὴ οὕσα), ll.18-21. 'Orphan' most probably means 'the loss of both parents' since Allous finds herself responsible for assisting the children although unable to in some respect. Both νήπια and παιδίον, l.29, imply these children are minors<sup>159</sup>.

Allous acts in some aspects of the children's lives. The children are with her and she will sell Faustina's hemp εἰς αὐτά, l.27. But Allous is not able to 'assist them' about which she expresses no opinion<sup>160</sup>. Her attitude to the orphans is complicated by their status as family, and given the primary call of family on a person's care as part

<sup>157</sup> In the papyrus: τεί γὰρ ὀρθοποδεῖ ἐν ἐμοί; εἶνα καὶ τοῦτο καὶ οὕδας, ὅθει τὸ πεδεῖον τὸ ὀρφανικὸν παρ' ἐμ[οί] ἐσθῆιν καὶ χερίαν ἔχω ἀναλωμάτων αὐτῇ. Aria has just rehearsed four unsuccessful attempts to recover debts.

<sup>158</sup> See 232f below.

<sup>159</sup> Possibly less than 7 years, *LSJ*, s.v. The ὀρφανοὶ παῖδες of ll.18f, are almost certainly the νήπια παιδία of l.29.

<sup>160</sup> On Allous' difficulty in assisting the children, possibly related to their need for a guardian, see 234 below.

of 'biblical' teaching<sup>161</sup> and broader social expectation<sup>162</sup>, the extent to which Allous' attitude derives from her beliefs is unknown. Her theology concerning the orphans is not formulated.

The mother's theology of the care of orphans in SB 18.13612 also cannot be determined. She states her need in relation to the ἐξάκτωρ as 'both me a widow and the orphans' (καὶ ἐμὲ τὴν χήρα[ν] καὶ τοὺς ὀ[ρ]φανοὺς) ll.10f, but the papyrus is broken at this point. She evidently regards her association with orphans as further evidence of disadvantage and another reason for Apa Johannes to respond to her request, but to what extent her own association with them is motivated by Christian theology is unknown. The text does not indicate whether the mother has care of the orphans, although it seems likely. The reference to orphans may function to pressure Apa Johannes to remember his Christian duty and so reflect her theology, or represent convention<sup>163</sup>.

In P.Lips.1.28 evidence for Teeus' theology of the care of orphans is found in her action to give Paesis in adoption to her son, Silvanos, but is difficult to identify amidst competing considerations. No doubt Teeus' concern for Paesis arises as much from family feeling as from concern for an orphan and reflects her society's sense of family solidarity. Teeus' gives Paesis in adoption to his uncle at his father Papnouthios' request. She has taken initial care of him and the discontinuance is not a rejection of Christian duty. The adoption is likely to have been requested for practical reasons of guardianship, education and family financial interest<sup>164</sup>.

## Christian Community

Exhortations to unity and forbearance in the Christian community within certain limits of doctrine and behaviour are regular in the 'NT'<sup>165</sup>, including the ideal that Christians should suffer wrong rather than take fellow-Christians to a public court<sup>166</sup>. The

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<sup>161</sup> 1 Timothy 5.1, 8, the teaching is about widows but is more broadly applicable.

<sup>162</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 206. Also 232, n.184 below.

<sup>163</sup> The same possibilities arise in relation to the mother's reference to widowhood above.

<sup>164</sup> See the argument in relation to Allous' possible guardianship of orphans in SB 14.11881 above; also 234 below and on P.Lips.1.28 at 191, below.

<sup>165</sup> Eg Romans 14.1-15.6; 1 Corinthians 1.10-17; 2.6, 14f; 3.1-9; 6.1-8; Ephesians 4.25-5.2; Philippians 2.1-4; 4.2f; Colossians 3.12-15; Barnabas 18-20; 1 Clement 3; 13-15; 46-48; Didache 14; 15; The Shepherd 75; 76; 109.

<sup>166</sup> 1 Corinthians 6.1-8.

directive does not deny the need for a mechanism for securing justice but urges that it be established within the community. The motivation appears to derive from concern for the community's reputation<sup>167</sup> and parallels the role played by concern for reputation in regulating family life in honour:shame societies<sup>168</sup>. The language of household and family for the Christian community which no doubt strengthens this concern also provides the conceptual framework for internal discipline and for relations with those outside the community<sup>169</sup>. The repeated exhortations to unity indicate that actual experience of Christian community life regularly involved conflict which could extend to litigation. P.Abinn.49 provides an example of such conflict, recording the dispute between Maria and two men, Elias and John, who have shorn nine of her sheep and stolen three others. Maria, John and Elias, from their names, are Christian<sup>170</sup> so that the wrong and subsequent claim for justice involve members of the Christian community. Maria lodges this petition with Abinnaeus seeking the men's arrest, a forced confession and referral to the Prefect to bring about judgement (ἐκ[δικεῖν], l.22. Maria emerges as a woman who does not conform to the 'NT' ideals of forgiveness and suffering wrong. If she has followed the 'NT' protocols of direct approach to Elias and John, then appeal to the presbyters of the church<sup>171</sup> and referral to a Christian court if one exists she does not refer to them. Whether an episcopal court was available is not evident<sup>172</sup>.

## Conversion

P.Oxy.50.3581 contains Attiaena's account of her abduction by her husband Paul, his subsequent abandonment of her and their child, a second abduction and probable rape, his theft of her property and threat of slander. It is likely that Paul is a Christian<sup>173</sup>.

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<sup>167</sup> van Unnik (1960). See also 1 Corinthians 10.32.

<sup>168</sup> Cohen (1991), 49ff, 161.

<sup>169</sup> Meeks (1983), 75-110.

<sup>170</sup> See 36f above.

<sup>171</sup> Matthew 18.15-35.

<sup>172</sup> On the *episcopalis audientia*, see 299f, nn.51, 52 below.

<sup>173</sup> See 56 above.

Paul's behaviour, plainly contrary to Christian morality, raises the question of conversion in the early church<sup>174</sup>. The definitions of conversion that specify theological understanding and change of belief<sup>175</sup> may be appropriate before 324 but are unhelpful in the light of post-Constantinian realities. Certainly Paul would number among the unconverted by such standards. However, to class Paul as non-Christian is too simple.

A Christian status in the fourth and later centuries is likely to have resulted from a number of possible causes: from birth into a Christian family; 'conversion' due to conviction; the influence of accounts of miracles; other factors such as worldly inducements of tax exemptions and opportunities of promotion; and negative inducements such as violence and exclusion<sup>176</sup>. In addition, major social and intellectual changes including the spread and institutionalisation of the church, the development of monasticism and a new individualism create a context which facilitates the adoption of Christianity<sup>177</sup>. Many 'converts' no doubt had little understanding of Christian doctrine and morality, and yet would be counted Christian<sup>178</sup>.

Within this framework it is useful to place three observations about the Christian women writers. The first relates to the absence of a strongly conscious Christian identity in their language for God and practice of prayer<sup>179</sup>. Conversion as outlined above, as the result of a complex mix of forces that may only marginally include doctrine and its significance, provides the framework within which such phenomena find explanation. The second observation concerns the absence of 'biblical' allusions from almost half the letters of the Christian women. Of the seventeen Christian

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<sup>174</sup> On conversion in late antiquity, see Nock (1933, 1972); Judge (1980a); MacMullen (1984); (1986); (1997); Frankfurter (1998); Salzman (2002). Personal and household conversion is attested in the earliest Christian writings, eg Acts 2.37; 10.44-48; 16.15, 32f; 18.8; 1 Corinthians 1.16; The Shepherd 46.6; 66.2.

<sup>175</sup> Eg Nock (1933, 1972), 7, defines conversion as an intense belief and 'passion of willingness' that recognises that 'the old was wrong and the new is right'; MacMullen (1984), 5, suggests 'that change of belief by which a person accepted the reality and supreme power of God and determined to obey Him'.

<sup>176</sup> MacMullen (1997), 33, although the prominence he accords to miracles is open to question.

<sup>177</sup> Judge (1980a), 9-19.

<sup>178</sup> It has been argued that there is little doctrinal content in ancient conversion based on the paucity of references to basic Christian doctrines such as the role of Jesus in salvation in the writings of the Apologists, MacMullen (1984), 21. But, as MacMullen himself notes, the Apologists appear to have written largely for a Christian not a non-Christian readership.

<sup>179</sup> See 104f above and 168ff below.

women writing eighteen private letters, ten use vocabulary and imagery that are also found in 'Scripture' and seven do not. The possible reasons for not including 'biblical' allusions are numerous, from their unsuitability to the general content of the letter to the individual woman's lack of rhetorical skill. Nevertheless, the absence may suggest a lack of knowledge and theological formation. The third observation concerns the anomalous presence of elements in one woman's letter that derive from paganism. Terouterou in P.Edmonstone swears 'under Earth and Heaven' in the phrase describing her behaviour as imitating the Christian God (ὕπὸ Γῆν καὶ Οὐρανὸν κατ' εὐσεβίαν (= εὐσέβειαν) τ[ο]ῦ πανελεήμονος Θεοῦ), ll.7f. The oath invoking Earth and Heaven is regular in manumission texts and appears to be purely formulaic<sup>180</sup>. Nonetheless, it suggests a mindset that is not fully formed in Christian theology. The anomaly is explicable within a framework of conversion that embraces social as well as doctrinal factors.

The complexities surrounding conversion shed light on the domestic realities of Attiaena and Paul in P.Oxy.50.3581, and Anonymos and Anonyme in P.Oxy.6.903. Paul most probably identifies himself and is identified as a Christian, approaches the presbyters and gains their mediation, and yet does not integrate Christian morality. In P.Oxy.6.903 Anonyme's identity as a Christian is sufficiently strong for her to attend church in the face of her husband's opposition. Her husband does not attend church, questions Anonyme for doing so, mistreats her and the other members of his household, yet swears an oath before the bishops to amend his behaviour. A conversion that has involved a social shift provides an explanation for the anomalies.

### **Status designation**

The Christian landlady in P.Oxy.48.3407 refers to Papnouthis, her steward<sup>181</sup>, and Hatres, the foreman, as ἀδελφοί, l.18. This may be an example of the status discounting attested in Christian communities<sup>182</sup>. The non-literal use of familial terms is common in pagan and Christian papyri and within this convention

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<sup>180</sup> For another Christian example, see P.Kell.1.Gr.48 at 284 below.

<sup>181</sup> For 'steward' not 'caretaker' for προνοητής, see BL 10.153.

<sup>182</sup> Judge (1982), 22. See also P.Col.Teeter 7 at 246f below. The apostle Paul frequently uses 'brother' of those of lesser ecclesial status, eg 1 Corinthians 1.26; Philemon 16. Of 343 occurrences of ἀδελφός in the canonical NT, 260 refer to non-kin relationships differing in ecclesial and social status, Arzt-Grabner (2002), 202.

ἀδελφός generally designates status peers<sup>183</sup>. This is not the case between a landlady and her employees. It may be that Papnouthis and Hatres are members, with the landlady, of the Christian community and that the landlady acknowledges the theological proposition of spiritual equality in Christ. If this is correct, her use of ἀδελφός would be the only positive evidence for the Christian belief of Papnouthis in the archive. However, there is papyrological evidence of status discounting unrelated to Christian belief. In BGU 1.248, 249; 2.531; 3.850 (C1), Chairemon, *gymnasiarchos*, addresses Apollonios as ἀδελφός. Apollonios never uses ἀδελφός of Chairemon, BGU 2.594, 595. The letters concern business and it is likely that the men are business partners. However, their status inequality, which allows Chairemon to use the familial title for his social inferior, prevents Apollonios from reciprocating<sup>184</sup>. The basis on which the landlady, as social superior, calls Papnouthis ἀδελφός may be other than Christian theology. She also tells Papnouthis and Hatres to go 'to our farm of Akindynos to remove the rock of my lords brothers Nepotianus and Diogenes' (εἰς τὸ ἡμέτερον ἐποίκιον Ἀκινδύνου πρὸς σύρσιν λίθου τῶν κυρίων μου ἀδελφῶν Νεπωτιανοῦ καὶ Διογένοϋς), ll.7-11. The reference to 'our farm' where the brothers' rocks are suggests that Nepotianos and Diogenes are her kin. If they are also Christian, Anonyme apparently does not consider removing the rocks on the Lord's Day with the brothers' probable absence from worship a problem<sup>185</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

The papyri written by Christian women allow exploration of a variety of theological positions which, from the nature and number of the documents, are necessarily often individual and allow conclusions only at a more abstract level. The conclusions draw on the analyses of other chapters.

The first conclusion relates to the women's understanding of God. The texts attest the women's theology of God as an active presence in the lives of their addressees and themselves. The conviction is most frequently expressed in their prayer<sup>186</sup> and in references to providence. Some of the women articulate their belief as a faith position drawn from personal experience. Athanasias' sense of providential keeping in

<sup>183</sup> It is used between officials of similar status, friends and business partners, Arzt-Grabner (2002), 186, 191, who finds no clear evidence of its use in Roman guilds and mystery cults, 199.

<sup>184</sup> Arzt-Grabner (2002), 195f.

<sup>185</sup> On the 'Lord's Day', see 196 below.

<sup>186</sup> See 167f below.

P.Berl.Zill.12 which frees her from anxiety and Tapiam's conviction in P.Neph.1 that God healed her children are in this category. Other women, the mother in P.Abinn.34 and Leuchis in P.Herm.17, affirm God's active presence and help, while locating the source of actual help in their addressees. For still other women, belief in God's active presence, while still highly personal, exists on the level of theological conviction. Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 believes in God's power and willingness to heal her illness, and all the women who pray express belief in God's ability to prevent illness in others. The women's texts attest that they believe God's power can be accessed, activated and directed through prayer. These beliefs are consistent with Christian theology at the same time as they belong to the common religious culture of late antiquity. None is formulated in specifically Christian terms.

The texts attest the women's belief in God's goodness, and belief that God's ordering of the world and action in it is for human benefit. The women's prayers are evidence of their conviction that blessing, protection, healing and helping are according to God's nature and that God's willingness to intervene can be presumed.

The women's theological understanding of God's relationship to the less immediately personal aspects of life, that is, to the broadly political and economic, is not articulated<sup>in</sup> their documents. All except one woman are silent about it. The exception is Tare in P.Bour.25, who makes an oblique reference, 'the Lord keep you well for a long and peaceful time' (ἐρρωμένην σε ὁ κ(ύριο)ς διαφυλάττοι μακροῖς καὶ εἰρηνικοῖς χρόνοις), ll.16-18. While an argument from silence is always problematic, from the evidence it seems that the women's theological concerns are limited and highly personal. Paradoxically the women's letters also generally lack any reference to God's relationship to the inner, spiritual dimension of life<sup>187</sup>. This latter sphere of divine activity is also missing from pagan texts<sup>188</sup>. Such topics may not be matters for discussion in letters by convention. The former sphere of divine action does appear in pagan texts, in statements for example that relate the divine to the Nile flood, crops and natural disasters, and that associate the divine and the cult with government and justice<sup>189</sup>.

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<sup>187</sup> The exceptions are P.Neph.1; P.Oxy.8.1161. See 167 below.

<sup>188</sup> This observation arises from an initial examination of pagan women's papyrological documents which will be the subject of post-doctoral study.

<sup>189</sup> The comparative dimension to the study of women's religious lives awaits analysis of the texts written by, to and about pagan women.

The second conclusion is alluded to in the first. The women, generally, do not give evidence of formulating their theological positions in distinctly Christian terms in such major areas as prayer, healing, providence, slavery and the nature of the human person, help for the needy, status designations and conceptions of God. The articulation of their beliefs and behaviour belongs, in most instances, to the common religious culture of the society. The same formulations of prayer, the same general vocabulary for God and the same expectation of answers to prayer for healing and protection occur in Christian and pagan papyri. It may be that the rarity of specifically Christian titles for God reflects a lack of distinctive Christian theology among the women<sup>190</sup>. It may be that *nomina sacra* connote a distinctive Christian understanding that the vocabulary itself does not convey. However, of the nineteen texts that use titles for God, only five employ *nomina sacra*. While this tends to confirm the lack of a clear Christian identity, it may be due to a lack of knowledge of Christian epistolographic convention among the women or their scribes<sup>191</sup>. Paradoxically, alongside this apparent lack of distinctiveness is the practice of numbers of the women of identifying with 'biblical' characters and situations to articulate their circumstances and to place themselves in particular postures in relation to God and/or their addressees.

There are two exceptions to the more general conclusion of non-distinctiveness.

The first concerns the attitude to asceticism articulated by some of the women, that asceticism is a superior way, giving greater access to God than is possible for ordinary Christians. The women share this belief with Christian men and illustrate a significant shift in thought developed by the Christian church. Asceticism as a way of life for life and for anyone is not part of pagan religious culture<sup>192</sup>. The Vestal Virgins in Rome, and occasional instances of virgin priestesses and prophetesses in Greek religion, gain their prestige from their exceptionality<sup>193</sup>. Ascetic discipline for short periods is attested, for example, in preparation for initiation into the mysteries and to enter certain temples<sup>194</sup>, but prolonged virginity and celibacy, and discipline in food and sleep are rare. Brown notes the uniqueness of the Christian attitude also in

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<sup>190</sup> See 168ff below.

<sup>191</sup> Scribal influence is possibly significant but unknowable.

<sup>192</sup> Brown (1991), 8.

<sup>193</sup> Beard (1980). Virginal chastity in religious contexts is generally limited to women with only occasional reference to virginal male priests, Lane-Fox (1986), 347.

<sup>194</sup> Eg 1-2 days' abstinence from sexual intercourse before worship, Lane-Fox (1986), 347.



regarding asceticism as the pinnacle of human nature and representing a lost perfection that people should seek to regain and so inaugurate the life of the world to come<sup>195</sup>.

The second distinctively Christian element is an absence. In the extant texts, the Christian women do not practise *proskynema* for the recipients of their letters<sup>196</sup>. Either their theology of God and prayer makes the practice inappropriate, or the opportunity to do *proskynema* is lost in the physical arrangement and liturgy of the church. The latter explanation appears unlikely as *proskynemata* occur in texts written by Christian men<sup>197</sup>. The women's texts are examples of the change in consciousness and religious practice introduced by Christianity.

The Christian women also do not include *abaskanta* formulae. The wish, at one time considered a certain indication of a pagan text, is attested in letters written by Christian men<sup>198</sup>. *Abaskanta* wishes most frequently occur in relation to children and their absence from the women's letters may be noteworthy. However, the conclusion is offered with caution. The statistical basis for it is extremely small. Nine of the letters include greetings in their extant portions. Of these, only two greet children. However, a further eight texts mention children, all without the *abaskanta* wish. While *abaskanta* may have largely lost its literal significance<sup>199</sup>, its absence from all the women's texts is marked and illustrates the influence of Christianity on this level of religious formulation.

An aspect of the Christian women's religious lives that gives particular expression to their theological understanding is their practice of prayer. The following chapter examines the statements of prayer in the Christian women's texts and analyses the statements' functions as well as the evidence they provide for the Christian women's prayer practice.

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<sup>195</sup> Brown (1991), 8.

<sup>196</sup> On *proskynema*, see the excursus to this chapter.

<sup>197</sup> P.Oxy.59.3998 (C4) at 263f below; SB14.12173 (C4) at 323f below.

<sup>198</sup> Eg P.Oxy.20.2276 (C3/4) at 255f below; P.Wisc.2.76 (C4) at 268f below.

<sup>199</sup> See 273 below.

## EXCURSUS

### **PROSKYNEMA**

The formula 'I do obeisance for you before the gods/god' (τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιῶ παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς/τῷ θεῷ) occurs rarely in the papyri of the first century, increasingly in the second to its most frequent use in the third. The frequency of occurrences declines rapidly in the fourth century<sup>1</sup>, suggesting active suppression by the church. The meaning of τὸ προσκύνημα ποιέω is debated<sup>2</sup>. It is generally understood to be an act of obeisance done before the image/s of the god/s to whom the act is offered<sup>3</sup>. *Proskynema* for another is obeisance offered as though the person is present doing the obeisance him/herself. Tibiletti notes the possibility that *proskynema* may refer not to an act of obeisance but to the writing of a person's name in a sacred place as though the person was present doing obeisance<sup>4</sup>. The evidence suggests that the term may cover both meanings. The presence of a *proskynema* formula has been presumed to be a certain indication of a pagan text but Christian examples are attested<sup>5</sup>. Youtie supports Wilcken's proposal that Christian writers who include the *proskynema* formula are new converts<sup>6</sup>. There is no way of proving the suggestion, but the formula's rarity in Christian texts supports it.

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<sup>1</sup> Eg P.Alex.30; P.Oxy.14.1775; 59.3998; PSI 7.825; SB 14.12029; 14.12173, from a search of the *DDBDP*.

<sup>2</sup> Wilcken, *Grundzüge* in Mitteis and Wilcken (1912), 2.1.123; Geraci (1971); Tibiletti (1979), 53-58.

<sup>3</sup> See Lajtar (1991).

<sup>4</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 55.

<sup>5</sup> See 197 below.

<sup>6</sup> Youtie (1981), 451-454.

## CHAPTER 5

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S PRACTICE OF PRAYER

Prayer features in 13 of the 26 texts written by Christian women. Of the twelve that do not mention prayer, seven are official documents<sup>1</sup> where prayer is not to be expected<sup>2</sup>. The remaining six are private letters<sup>3</sup>. The final sections of three, where a closing prayer might have occurred, are lost<sup>4</sup>. Of the remaining three letters, one is Mikke's short, embedded greeting in Euthalios' letter which does contain prayer statements. Another is Leuchis' letter, P.Herm.17. Its date<sup>5</sup> suggests that Leuchis follows the late fourth- and fifth-century tendency not to include the conventional prayer formulae<sup>6</sup> 'first I pray' (πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι)<sup>7</sup> and 'I pray you be well' (ἐρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι)<sup>8</sup>. The third text is the landlady's letter, P.Oxy.48.3407, which, while private, is a business letter.

There is debate concerning the significance of opening and closing prayer formulae in the papyri, whether they are social conventions or have religious significance. Naldini, in his discussion of prayer, assumes that the expressions are religious<sup>9</sup>. Tibiletti similarly does not discuss the opening and closing prayer formulae, but does consider whether *proskynema* formulae are purely conventional<sup>10</sup>. Primarily on the basis of the varieties of expression, he concludes in agreement with Geraci<sup>11</sup> that the use of *proskynema* is not formulaic in every instance. Similarly in relation to

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<sup>1</sup> Four petitions, P.Abinn.49; P.Oxy.6.903; P.Oxy.50.3581; Stud.Pal.20.86; a lease, P.Kell.1.Gr.32; a manumission, P.Edmonstone; an adoption, P.Lips.1.28.

<sup>2</sup> The mother prays for Abinnaeus in P.Abinn.34. The text is a 'semi-official' letter.

<sup>3</sup> P.Herm.17; SB 18.13612; P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Oxy.48.3407; SB 12.10840; P.Oxy.12.1592.

<sup>4</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Oxy.12.1592; SB 18.13612.

<sup>5</sup> Late C4. On the date, see 46f above.

<sup>6</sup> The other letters dated C4/5, BGU 3.948 and P.Bour.25, contain prayer statements.

<sup>7</sup> From an analysis of ἐρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι and πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι in the Oxyrhynchus papyri, vols 1-49, in texts dated C1-C6, Harding (1985). Πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι occurs with the following frequency: C1 x1; C2 x3; C2/3 x1; C3 x4; C3/4 x2; C4 x5; C4/5 x1; C6/7 x1. The formula displays considerable variation in language about health and the god/gods.

<sup>8</sup> Ἐρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι occurs first in C1 in official correspondence. It appears in private letters in 113. Before this, ἔρρωσο is regular. Ἐρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι occurs with the following frequency: C1 2x; C2 6x; C2/3 7x; C3 9x; C3/4 7x; C4 14x; C4/5 0x; C5 1x. The prayer regularly includes time references and the name or title of the person being prayed for, Harding (1985).

<sup>9</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 11f.

<sup>10</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 54.

<sup>11</sup> Geraci (1971), 174.

θεῶν θελόντων, σὺν θεοῖς and their singular equivalents, Tibiletti suggests that there is, 'beyond the cliché, a living religious sentiment'<sup>12</sup>. A similar argument can be made for πρὸ πάντων εὐχομαι and ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι. Genuine religious sentiment is more likely in letters that refer to the divine or other religious matters in addition to the conventional formulae and also where there is variation in the standard formulae, suggesting conscious choice. This is not to suggest that all occurrences of the basic formulae are purely conventional. While some conventionality may occur, it remains the case that writers choose a religious expression of concern or farewell. By no means all or a majority of writers of papyri choose a religious option. I consider that the religious significance of the prayer statements should be accepted, though they may also fulfil other functions. The evidence of the letters further suggests that a presumption of religious significance does not imply that all expressions of prayer carry the same level of conviction.

The 'NT' contains frequent references to prayer<sup>13</sup> including injunctions and encouragements to pray<sup>14</sup>, instruction on prayer<sup>15</sup>, subjects for prayer<sup>16</sup> and examples of Jesus, the apostles and other significant believers praying<sup>17</sup>. Similarly, prayer features frequently in Hebrew Scripture<sup>18</sup>. Examples of contemporary prayers indicate both liturgical and private practice<sup>19</sup>. Prayer, of course, is not exclusively Christian<sup>20</sup> and, while differences in theology may inform it, the practice is regular in

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<sup>12</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 108.

<sup>13</sup> See 84, nn.41, 43 above.

<sup>14</sup> Eg Matthew 5.44; Mark 13.33; Luke 18.1; 2 Clement 15; The Shepherd 58.5.4.

<sup>15</sup> Eg Matthew 6.9ff; Luke 18.11; 1 Corinthians 11.13; Philippians 4.6; Didache 8.2f, 9, 14; The Shepherd 39, 43.9, 51.

<sup>16</sup> Eg Matthew 5.44, 6.9-13; 1 Timothy 2.1-4; James 5.13ff; 1 Clement 64.

<sup>17</sup> Eg Mark 6.46; Colossians 1.9; 1 Clement 59.3-61.3.

<sup>18</sup> See J. Herrmann, 'εὐχομαι, εὐχή, προσεύχομαι, προσευχή' in *TDNT* 2.785-800. Examples of personal prayer include 1 Samuel 1.10ff; 2 Samuel 7.18-29; 1 Kings 8.23-53, 18.36f; Nehemiah 1.4-11; 2.4 etc. The book of Psalms consists of prayers read regularly in Jewish worship and in Christian worship derived from it.

<sup>19</sup> BKT 6.6.1 (C3): P.Oxy.15.1786 (late C3); P.Würzb.3 (late C3); P.Bodmer 12 (C3/4); P.Amst.1.20 (C3/4); P.Kiselliff 3 (C3/4); P.Ryl.3.470 (C3/4); P.Yale inv.1360 (C3/4). Also the Latin P.Ryl.3.472 (C3/4). Possibly P.Fay 2 (C2), but the poem of a journey to the dead may be pagan.

<sup>20</sup> On pagan, Jewish and Christian prayer, see Kiley et al. (1997); Charlesworth (1994) with extensive bibliography. On the relationship between Christian and Jewish prayer, see van der Horst (1998) and the bibliography from B. Thurston in Kiley et al. (1997), 209, n.1.

Christian and pagan society as reflected in the papyri. Further, the same prayer formulae and subjects appear regularly in pagan and Christian texts<sup>21</sup>.

A diversity of theologies lies behind the practice of prayer in both paganism and Christianity. All share a core conviction that god/the gods are active in daily life and that divine power can be accessed through religious practice<sup>22</sup>. In particular, the women's letters indicate that all of them believe in their own ability to access God and so to influence events, although to different degrees. This distinguishes them from those of later centuries, who consider God distant and turn to intermediaries, to saints and martyrs, for everyday assistance<sup>23</sup>. There is evidence of a beginning of this trend in letters requesting prayer from ascetics, exemplified in Valeria's letter, P.Lond.6.1926. While it is not my purpose to discuss the theology of prayer as such, particular theologies become evident in the women's prayers which give insight into their beliefs, practices and experiences.

In BGU 3.948, Kophaena opens her letter, 'I pray to the almighty God about your health and on account of your well-being' (εὐχομαι τὸν παντοκράτορα θεὸν τὰ περὶ τῆς ὑγείας σου καὶ ὁλοκληρίας σου χάριν)<sup>24</sup>, ll.3f. Health is the most frequent subject of opening prayers in the papyri<sup>25</sup>. Kophaena uses two common terms, ὑγίεια and ὁλοκληρία<sup>26</sup>. Where both terms occur, it is likely that ὁλοκληρία retains something of its original sense of 'complete, perfect'<sup>27</sup>, but the words are generally interchangeable from the third century. Ὑγίεια carries the spiritual meaning 'salvation' in the Melitian P.Lond.6.1919<sup>28</sup>, but the sense is also broader, retaining the more usual dimension of physical health.

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<sup>21</sup> Eg among thousands of pagan texts BGU 3.845 (C2); P.Monach.3.57 (C2); SB 5.8027 (C2/3); P.Oxy.14.1769 (C3).

<sup>22</sup> See MacMullen (1984); (1997), particularly 153; Frankfurter (1998).

<sup>23</sup> Eg Augustine's preaching indicates such a trend, Augustine *City of God* 6.1; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 26.2.19; 34.1.7; 40.3. See also Derda and Lajtar (1994); MacMullen (1997), 121.

<sup>24</sup> In the papyrus: εὐχομε τὸν παντοκράτοραν θεὸν τὰ περὶ τῆς ὑγείας σου καὶ ὁλοκληρίας σου χαίριν.

<sup>25</sup> All 10 texts with opening prayers have health as their subject, following the epistolographic convention. Other prayers are for 'good cheer' or 'well-being'.

<sup>26</sup> The double expression can be verbal or nominal, eg P.Oxy.14.1678 (C3); P.Berl.Zill.12 (C3/4); P.Oxy.12.1493 (C3/4); P.Oxy.14.1680 (C3/4) with εὐοδοῦσθαι added; P.Lips.1.111 (C4); P.Oxy.10.1299 (C4); PSI 14.1423 (C4); SB 14.11588 (C4).

<sup>27</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 47.

<sup>28</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 48f.

The construction Kophaena uses is a variation of the regular formula that is difficult to interpret. The editor understands χαίριν as χάριν; that is, the prayer is composed of two phrases introduced by περί and χάριν in a chiasmic construction. The difficulties with this reading are two: the construction does not occur elsewhere; and the syntax favours τὰ περί introducing both ὑγίεια and ὁλοκληρία. O'Callaghan argues that χαίριν is to be understood as an infinitive, χαίρειν, with τὰ περί as its object<sup>29</sup>. This allows the clause to be read as an accusative and infinitive, makes God its subject and allows τὰ περί to take the dual object. However, χαίρειν with the meaning 'be gracious to' is not attested, a fact that O'Callaghan acknowledges. His suggestion 'be interested in' or 'preoccupied with' is not convincing. The proposal also requires a change in the meaning of χαίρειν between l.2 and l.4. The verb followed by the accusative does occur, although rarely, and has the sense 'rejoice at' or 'renounce', neither of which suits this context. It is possible that χαίρειν with the accusative may in time have extended its meaning to include O'Callaghan's connotations but there is no evidence. Neither of the suggested interpretations of Kophaena's construction is without difficulties. I consider there are more significant problems with O'Callaghan's suggestion and regard Kophaena's construction as either an expression of her creativity, already demonstrated in the opening greeting<sup>30</sup> and possibly evident in her unusual use of εὐχομαι with the accusative τὸν θεόν<sup>31</sup>. The construction may also be a confused combination of forms that she has heard. It is also possible that χαίριν occurs in the text by mistake, repeated from l.2. The sentence resulting from its omission makes sense. However, the removal of words from the text should only be done with caution and after eliminating all other possibilities.

Kophaena's originality suggests a consciously formulated statement for her prayer. The opening greeting, likewise original and drawing on conventions of official documents, appears designed to convey an elevated tone. It may be that Kophaena's prayer is also designed to impress. If this is the case, it suggests her prayer statement has a role in expressing her relationship to her son, and functions as more than a prayer. Kophaena perhaps uses her prayer in part to assert her maternal dignity in the face of Theodoulos' neglect and her need to ask for his assistance.

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<sup>29</sup> O'Callaghan (1988).

<sup>30</sup> See 33 above.

<sup>31</sup> The accusative after εὐχομαι is attested in later Greek literature, *LSJ*, s.v.

Kophaena's focus on the sovereign powerfulness of God as παντοκράτωρ provides the conceptual context for her prayer<sup>32</sup>. Such power and the prayer for Theodoulos' health stand in tension with Kophaena's own illness, to which she alludes twice using ἄσθενέω and νοσέω. The latter term suggests that her illness is severe<sup>33</sup>. The seeming inconsistency is unaddressed. Kophaena is silent about any connection between her illness and God, prayer or her faith.

Kophaena closes her letter with the standard ἐρρώσθε (= ἐρρώσθαι) [σε εὔχομαι (= εὔχομαι)] modified by the frequent πολλοῖς χρόνοις, l.21.

The mother in P.Abinn.34 does not write an opening prayer in this semi-official letter to Abinnaeus, but couches the farewell as prayer<sup>34</sup>, ἐρρώσθαι σε εὔχομαι, l.20. She uses the standard closing formula with the common inclusion of the title or name of the person, here, κύριε πάτρωνι (= πατρων), l.21. Naming their child 'Moses' indicates that the parents' belief is a significant part of their identity<sup>35</sup>. P.Abinn.34 is dated 342-351. If Heron is in his early twenties<sup>36</sup>, he was named in c.320-330. The mother, then, emerges as a member of a family that strongly identified itself as Christian during the uncertain period immediately before or shortly after the Edict of Toleration. This makes it likely that prayer is part of the mother's religious practice. The degree of religious sentiment in her final prayer, however, is uncertain. The prayer appears as an intrusion in a letter that is otherwise brief, business-like and obsequious. It may be a device to create the appearance of personal relationship or to re-establish an existing acquaintance, with resulting obligations for Abinnaeus. The relationship from the mother's side is marked by prayer and goodwill, with the implication that Abinnaeus should reciprocate by acceding to her request.

<sup>32</sup> On παντοκράτωρ, see 105f above. Κράτος occurs regularly in doxologies frequently with δόξα, eg P.Oxy.15.1786 (late C3); P.Würzb.3 (late C3); in an uncertain reconstruction in P.Macq.inv.346 (C3/4 or C4); *Patrologia Orientalis* 18, 497 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 416, no.648a.

<sup>33</sup> See 33, n.22 above.

<sup>34</sup> This is the pattern in 14 letters in the archive. 5 letters have opening prayers only. 10 have both an opening and closing prayer.

<sup>35</sup> Naming children with biblical and saints' names and with Christian virtues was noted in antiquity. See Harnack (1908), 422-430; Bagnall (1982), 107; (1987a), 243; Wipszycka (1986), 173; Horsley (1987). On Jewish use of the name Moses, see Derda (1997); Williams (1997). For the identity of the mother of Moses as a Christian rather than a Jew, see 34 above.

<sup>36</sup> P.Oxy.7.1022 (103) is list of recruits whose ages are given as 20-25 years. See Watson (1969, 1985), 42.

In P.Berl.Zill.12, Athanasias opens her letter with prayer for her 'mother'<sup>37</sup>, 'first I pray to the Lord our God that you be healthy and well' (πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομε (= εὐχομαι) τῷ [...] κυρίῳ ἡμῶν θεῷ ὁλοκληρεῖν (= ὁλοκληρεῖν) καὶ ὑένεν (= ὑγιαίνειν) σε), ll.3f.

Athanasias uses the commonly paired infinitives ὁλοκληρεῖν καὶ ὑγιαίνειν as a variation of the conventional formula<sup>38</sup> and names God in the regular dative. The title ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν θεός with the possessive pronoun is attested only in Christian texts and confirms the assumption that prayer statements indicate shared belief that renders the statement meaningful. The phrase establishes a consciously personal relationship between Athanasias, her recipients and God, which provides the context for her prayer. Athanasias closes with the standard ἐρῶσθέ σε εὐχομε (= ἐρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι), l.20, with the common variation, the vocative of the person, κυρία μου μήτηρ (= μήτερ).

Athanasias alone of the Christian women writers gives thanks to God for God's action in her and others' lives: 'we give thanks to the Lord our God that he has kept us until now' (εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ κυρίῳ [ἡμῶν] θεῷ ὅτι τὰ ὡς ἄρτι συγκτηρεῖ)<sup>39</sup>, ll.7f. The identity of 'we' is unknown. It is unlikely to be the recipients<sup>40</sup> of the letter, since Athanasias has just urged them not to be anxious (μὴ ἀγωνᾶ (= ἀγωνία) οὖν ἐπ' ἐμου), l.6, anxiety rather than thanksgiving being their current emotional state. Thanksgiving is a central Christian response to God in the 'NT'. It is particularly associated with the doctrine of providence, the context also of Athanasias' thanksgiving<sup>41</sup>. God's keeping is given as the reason that the mother should not be anxious. Athanasias' belief in God's providential care is confirmed, in her mind, by her experience and indicates, with the sense of personal relationship, the framework within which she prays. Whether God's keeping has occurred as a result of prayer is not stated.

Tare opens her letter, P.Bour.25, with a common variation of the standard formula, 'first I pray to God that you receive the letter from me well and in good cheer' (πρὸ παντὸς εὐχομαι τῷ θ(ε)ῷ ὑγιαίνουσάν σε καὶ εὐθυμοῦσαν ἀπολαβεῖν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ

<sup>37</sup> This is one of the mothers addressed in the prescript, possibly Athanasias' natural mother, and the woman frequently addressed with singular forms. See 40f above.

<sup>38</sup> On the meaning of ὁλοκληρεῖν καὶ ὑγιαίνειν, see BGU 3.948 above.

<sup>39</sup> For this reconstruction, see 39, n.63 above.

<sup>40</sup> The letter varies between singular and plural forms.

<sup>41</sup> See 120-123 above.



γράμματα)<sup>42</sup>, ll.4-6. The opening prayer is about more than physical health extending to the aunt's emotional state, with εὐθυμεῖν added to the regular ὑγιαίνειν<sup>43</sup>. While Tare does not indicate what cheerfulness consists in, she holds that experience of it is open to God's action and a suitable matter for prayer. Tare adds an emphatic 'for this is my prayer' (αὕτη γάρ μου ἐστὶν εὐχή). She appears to want to convince her aunt of the genuineness of her prayer. This may imply that without αὕτη γάρ μου ἐστὶν εὐχή the prayer statement may be seen as conventional and lead Horeina to doubt its religious substance. It is also possible that Tare uses the statement to assert, and perhaps re-establish, the genuineness of her relationship with her aunt following her mother's death.

Tare closes her letter with a fourth-century elaboration of the regular formula, 'the Lord keep you well for a long and peaceful time' (ἐρρωμένην σε ὁ κ(ύριος) διαφυλάττοι μακροῖς καὶ εἰρηνικοῖς χρόνοις), ll.16-18<sup>44</sup>. Tare expresses belief in God's providential care, with the conviction that providence can be directed through prayer<sup>45</sup>. The use of the optative in statements of prayer is less frequent than the imperative in this period, but increases in the fourth century<sup>46</sup>. It appears to be a linguistic convention without particular significance; that is, it does not signal a lack of confidence in prayer.

In P.Grenf.1.53, Artemis' opening prayer, 'first I pray to the Lord God that we may receive you well' (πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ, ὅπως ὁλοκληροῦντά σε ἀπολάβωμεν (= ἀπολάβωμεν)), ll.3-5, is an unusual form of what is a common variation of the conventional formula<sup>47</sup>, adapting its construction to suit her purpose.

Theodoros is a soldier away from home. Artemis prays for health and protection until his return. Most probably the children and Allous who greet Theodoros later constitute the 'we'. Artemis' shift from singular εὐχομαι to plural ἀπολάβωμεν, thereby excluding 'we' from the act of praying, suggests that family prayer is not their

<sup>42</sup> In the papyrus: πρὸ παντὸς εὐχομε τῷ θ(ε)ῷ ὑγιένουσάν σε καὶ εὐθυμοῦσαν ἀπολαβὴν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα.

<sup>43</sup> The word occurs in James 5.13 as a reason to praise God. It occurs in pagan texts, eg BGU 3.892 (C2); P.Fouad 80 (C4); P.Herm.5 (C4); in Christian texts, eg P.Oxy.14.1683 (C4); 56.3860 (C4); P.Neph.10, 18 (C4).

<sup>44</sup> For another example, see P.Abinn.28 (C4). Also Tibiletti (1979), 64f.

<sup>45</sup> Διαφυλάσσω expresses providential care in 'Scripture', eg Psalm 91.11 (LXX 90.11). See 121ff above.

<sup>46</sup> Moulton and Turner (1906, 1976), 3.120; Mandilaras (1973), §604, 272f.

<sup>47</sup> Common variations take the forms πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι ὁλόκληρον ἀπολαβεῖν; ὅπως ὁλόκληρος ἀπολάβῃς (τὰ ἐμοῦ γράμματα) or the plural equivalents, eg P.Mich.3.219 (297); P.Oxy.14.1773 (C3); P.Bour.25 (C4).

practice. The singular εὐχομαι may simply reflect use of the conventional word but the unusual formulation and the shift makes this unlikely. Artemis prays again for Theodoros using the common closing prayer, ἐρρωσθαί σε εὐχομαι, ll.7f. The prayer is unusual, though not unique, in occurring in the body of the text.

Artemis' letter to Sarapion contains no opening greeting and no opening or closing prayer such as appears in her letter to Theodoros. It is likely that Sarapion also is a Christian<sup>48</sup> but Artemis does not greet or pray for him. The absence of both the greeting and prayer cannot be explained by supposing this to be a quoted rather than embedded letter<sup>49</sup> and is too marked to be without significance. Their absence may be due to the anger which Artemis makes evident. If so, her silence supports the hypothesis that statements of prayer function as more than prayer. They also serve to express relationship, and in this case by the absence of prayer, to express broken relationship.

Valeria's letter to Appa Paphnouthios, P.Lond.6.1926, contains numerous references to prayer but little about Valeria's own practice. Most references relate to her request for Appa Paphnouthios' prayers and indicate her elevated view of ascetic piety<sup>50</sup>. Valeria does not open her letter with prayer for Paphnouthios but with her urgent request for his prayers, 'I ask and beseech you, most honoured father, that you request for me' (ἄξιῶ καὶ παρακαλῶ σε, τιμιώτατε πάτερ (= πάτερ), εἶνα (= ἵνα) ... ἐτήσης (= αἰτήσης) μοι), ll.5f. She refers to her own prayer in the body of the text, 'I pray to God, I pray also to you, remember me in your holy prayer' (δέομαι τῷ θεῷ δέομαι καὶ σοι μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ)<sup>51</sup>, ll.15-17. Both God and Paphnouthios appear as the receivers of Valeria's prayer. The unusual expression suggests that Valeria's prayers to God have the same beseeching character, driven by need, as marks her approach to Paphnouthios. It suggests further the effectiveness that Valeria attributes to Paphnouthios' prayers and the exalted estimation she has of his person. Valeria makes a final statement of prayer using a

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<sup>48</sup> See 44 above.

<sup>49</sup> See 45 above.

<sup>50</sup> See 185ff below.

<sup>51</sup> In the papyrus: δέομε τῷ θεῷ δέομε κὲ σοι μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ.

common variation of the standard closing formula, ἐρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι, τιμιώτατε πάτερ<sup>52</sup>, ll.26f.

Valeria asks Appa Paphnouthios 'ask for me from Christ that I may receive healing' (αἰτήσης μοι παρὰ τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ εἴασιν (= ἴασιν) λάβω), l.7. Prayer to Christ is rare in the papyri<sup>53</sup>. It does not occur in the 'NT' but appears to be part of liturgical practice<sup>54</sup>. Valeria is explicit about what she wants, a miraculous physical cure for her breathing illness<sup>55</sup>. She believes this is possible, if not through her own prayer then at least through Paphnouthios' prayer, 'thus I believe that through your prayers I receive healing' (οὕτως π[ι]στεύω διὰ τῶν σῶν εὐχῶν εἴασιν (= ἴασιν) λαμβάνω), ll.8f, 'thus I have believed, and believe, that if you pray for me I receive healing' (οὕτως γὰρ πεπίστευκα καὶ πιστεύω ὅτι ἐὰν εὕξῃ ἐπάνω μου εἴασιν (= ἴασιν) λαμβάνω), ll.13-15, 'for by those practising and observant of religious discipline revelations are shown' (τῶν γὰρ ἀσκούντων καὶ θρησκευόντων ἀποκαλύμματα (= ἀποκαλύμματα) δεικνέοντε (= δεικνύονται)), ll.9-11. Valeria's need to reiterate her confidence in Paphnouthios' prayer speaks of a lack of confidence in her own.

Valeria also asks Paphnouthios, 'remember them (her daughters, Bassiana and Theoklia) in your holy prayer' (μνήσθητι αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ), ll.21f, but she does not indicate what he is to pray. Most probably she intends a general 'doing good' on God's part. Her request is in contrast to the specificity of the appeal for herself. Similarly she asks Paphnouthios, 'pray for him (her husband)' (εὕχ[ου] ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ), l.24. These imperatival statements continue the insistent tone of Valeria's requests. Further, where prayer for others is frequent in the papyri and requests for prayer for oneself are infrequent<sup>56</sup>, requests for prayer for others are rare<sup>57</sup>.

Valeria's reticence in relation to God contrasts with the assertiveness of her requests to Paphnouthios. It is argued that Valeria's phrase 'my whole household' (ὅλος ὁ οἶκός μου), l.25f, indicates she is 'a woman of some position in the world'<sup>58</sup>, managing a large household with its authority and responsibilities, in which case her lack of

<sup>52</sup> In the papyrus: ἐρῶσθέ σε εὐχομαι, [τ]ιμιώτατε πάτηρ.

<sup>53</sup> P.Lond.6.1925; 1928; SB 6.9605 at 269f below. See also P.Oxy.8.1161 at 161f below.

<sup>54</sup> Eg *Patrologia Orientalis* 4/2, 207-209 (250-350) in Lodi (1979), 173f, no.309. Pliny, *Letter* 96.7.

<sup>55</sup> On ἴασις, see 85f above.

<sup>56</sup> Eg this text; P.Lond.6.1928; P.Neph.1, 4, 9, 10; P.Herm.8, 9.

<sup>57</sup> But Paul regularly asks prayer for his children, P.Neph.4.11-13; 9.12-14.

<sup>58</sup> Bell (1924), 108.

confidence is anomalous. However, there is too little information to confirm the hypothesis. Valeria's lack of confidence in her prayer appears likely to be due to her status as an 'ordinary' Christian in contrast to the ascetic Paphnouthios<sup>59</sup>, possibly combined with her gender.

In P.Neph.18, Taouak opens her letter with a variation of a conventional prayer formula, 'I pray in my prayers that you are well as you receive <my letter> and of good cheer [in the Lord]? as you receive [the things I am sending]' (εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς μου ὑμᾶς ἀπολαβεῖν ....ω<sup>60</sup> ὑγιαίνοντας καὶ εὐθυμοῦντας ἀπολαβεῖν δια ... εντα)<sup>61</sup>, ll.5-9. 'I pray in my prayers' appears not to be attested elsewhere in the papyri<sup>62</sup> and to have an emphatic function. It is perhaps a device to stress her genuineness and the strength of her relationship with people who are fellow-treasures of God with her, one of whom she describes as ἀγαπητή, and whose compliance she wishes to gain. Her assertion implies that she believes in the effectiveness of prayer in general and her prayers in particular. The content of Taouak's prayer is that her addressees be ὑγιαίνοντας, l.7f, and εὐθυμοῦντας, l.8<sup>63</sup>. Taouak holds a common conviction that both the body and inner emotional state are arenas for God's activity and potential subjects of prayer. The letter closes with a greeting that is substantially lost, ἐρρ[ , l.28, and may have been the simple ἔρρωσθε or the conventional ἐρρώσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι.

Alongside her prayers is Taouak's quasi-prophetic 'you will see God' (ὄψετε πρὸς τὸν θεόν), ll.25f, which she pronounces as a promise of blessing for Eudaimon and Apia when they do as she asks<sup>64</sup>. It is a strong expression of conviction and suggests a robust confidence in relation to the spiritual world. Her statement, 'for we are God's treasure/treasury' (ὁ γὰρ θησαυρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖς (= ἡμεῖς)), ll.26f, continues the confident affirmation and perhaps indicates its basis. Taouak's confidence in spiritual matters contrasts sharply with her sense of powerlessness in the face of business

<sup>59</sup> See the conclusions below; also 185ff below.

<sup>60</sup> [In the Lord]?, eds pr., note to l.7.

<sup>61</sup> In the papyrus: εὐχομαι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς μου ὑμᾶ(ς) ἀπολαβῖν ....ω ὑγειένο(ν)τας καὶ εὐθυμοῦντας ἀπολαβῖν δια ... εντα.

<sup>62</sup> From a search of the *DDBDP* using εὐχή and προσευχή. On the unusual use of προσευχή in the papyri, see 84f above.

<sup>63</sup> On the conjunction of these terms regularly in prayer, see P.Bour.25 above.

<sup>64</sup> For this interpretation, see 92ff above.

difficulties where she asserts a disadvantage because of her gender<sup>65</sup>. The amount of property mentioned in the text suggests Taouak is among the wealthier strata and her business interests infer a degree of capability. The tension that emerges among these different aspects of Taouak's life illustrates again the complexity of women's experience of power and powerlessness.

Anonyme's fragmentary letter, P.Oxy.8.1161, begins with a statement about God in the dative, '... and to our good Saviour and to his beloved Son' (...ας καὶ τῷ ἀγαθ[ῷ] ἡμῶ]ν σωτῆρι καὶ τῷ οἰ[ί]ῳ (= υἱῷ) αὐτοῦ τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ), ll.2-4, followed by 'that they all may help our body, soul and spirit' (ὅπως οὗτοι πάντες β[ο]ηθήσωσιν ἡμῶν τῷ σώματι, τῇ ψυχῇ, τῷ [[πν(ευσματ)ι]] πν(εύματ)ι), ll.4-7. This is almost certainly a prayer addressed to two persons of the Christian Trinity, God as 'good Saviour' and God's 'beloved Son'. Prayer addressed to the Son alone or in conjunction with God is rare in the papyri though regular in liturgical texts<sup>66</sup> and signals that Anonyme is a Christian woman familiar with Christian forms of prayer and theological formulation. The construction and vocabulary do not follow the standard pattern of opening prayer formulae suggesting this may occur in the body of the text. If it is an opening prayer, the form is unusual again in that Anonyme uses ἡμῶν, and so includes herself and perhaps the group indicated by 'all those here' (πάντες οἱ ἐνταῦθ[α]) mentioned in the left margin, along with the addressees, in the prayer.

Anonyme prays that God and his Son β[ο]ηθήσωσιν, l.5. She does not indicate to her readers or to God the kind of help she seeks, although her delineation of the human person as 'body, soul, spirit' suggests that the help has both physical and spiritual dimensions. The context for Anonyme's prayer is her illness to which she refers five times in thirteen lines<sup>67</sup>, and which makes physical healing a most likely priority. However, the trichotomy indicates that Anonyme seeks an experience of God that touches every aspect of her and her addressee's being and that she regards all aspects as susceptible to God's action and suitable subjects of prayer<sup>68</sup>. In this she follows 'NT' models<sup>69</sup>. Anonyme's use of βοηθέω recalls gospel stories of appeals for

<sup>65</sup> Her statement may be a device to procure help but may also reflect real disadvantage.

<sup>66</sup> See 108f especially n.295. A search of the *DDBDP* yields no examples of prayer to the Son in the period, with or without ἀγαπητός or μονογενής. See also SB 6.9605 at 269f below.

<sup>67</sup> Including the proposed ἐνόσησα, l.14. On the terms for illness, see 33, n.22 above and 53 above.

<sup>68</sup> On the trichotomy, see 81f above.

<sup>69</sup> Eg Ephesians 1.15-19; Philippians 1.9-11; 1 Clement 59.3.

help from Jesus<sup>70</sup>, and it appears that her prayer may be formulated with them as a model<sup>71</sup>. In her prayer, Anonyme places herself in the position of the gospel characters in calling on God and Christ to help.

In SB 8.9746 Didyme and the sisters omit an opening prayer for Sophias, opting rather to write a second greeting, 'first, we considered it necessary to greet you' ([προηγουμ]ένως ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησά[μεθα προ]σαγορεύειν σαι (= σε)), ll.3f. The use of a greeting in the place where prayer might be expected suggests that the greeting and prayer fulfil, at least in part, the same function. Didyme and the sisters close their letter in prayer, '(I pray) you be well in the Lord, the Lord keep you for us' (ἐρρωσθαί σε ἐν κυρίῳ, ὁ κύριός σου (= σε) διαφυλάξαι ἡμῖν), ll.34f. The prayer combines two constructions. The first is the standard formula although omitting εὐχομαι and adding the theological affirmation ἐν κυρίῳ. The second uses the infinitive διαφυλάξαι as an imperative. The prayer indicates Didyme and the sisters' belief in the providential care of God<sup>72</sup> and that it can be secured for others through prayer.

Didyme and the sisters open P.Oxy.14.1774 with a similar second greeting, 'first it is necessary to greet you' (προηγουμένως ἀναγκαῖον ἦν προσαγορεύειν σε), l.4f, however, adding, 'praying that you are well for us' (εὐχόμεναι ὑγιένιν σαι ἡμεῖν (= ὑγιαίνειν σε ἡμῖν)), l.5. The inclusion of prayer in this letter where it was omitted in SB 8.9746 and its unusual form suggest that it is not an automatic convention. Didyme includes the sisters in the offering of the prayer. Given that the context of the prayers is likely to be the commercial reality of a small, probably family business, the hint of communal prayer practice is suggestive. The papyrus is broken at the point where a closing prayer might occur.

Aria in SB 14.11588 does not pray to God for Dorotheos but to divine providence: 'first I pray to the divine providence that is with God that my letter be given to you with you healthy and well' (προηγουμένως εὐχομαι τῇ θεῇ προνοίᾳ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ σοι ὑγιαίνουντι καὶ ὁλοκληροῦντι δοθῆναι τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα)<sup>73</sup>, ll.3-6. Prayer to divine providence occurs in fourteen third- and fourth-century texts, of which six are

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<sup>70</sup> See 88 above.

<sup>71</sup> The concept of God as βοηθός is current; eg it appears in the liturgical text, P.Würzb.3 (C3), in the context of intercessory prayer.

<sup>72</sup> See G. Bertram, 'φυλάσσω' in *TDNT* 9.237.

<sup>73</sup> In the papyrus: π[ρο]ηγουμένος εὐχομε τ[ῇ] θεῇ[α] προ[ν]οία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ σ[οι] ὑγι[έ]νοντι καὶ ὁλοκληροῦν[τ]αι δο[θ]ῆναι τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμμ[α]τα.

certainly Christian<sup>74</sup>. It occurs most frequently in the closing prayer formulae of private letters, commonly in third-person imperatival commands seeking divine protection for the addressee<sup>75</sup>. In Aria's letter, the phrase is oddly qualified by *παρὰ τῷ θεῷ*<sup>76</sup>. Its purpose is unclear but, intended or not, it strengthens the 'orthodoxy' of the formula in that Christian prayer is normally addressed to God, not to God's attributes or functions. The effect of the formulation is to emphasise the providential aspect of God's nature which can be directed according a pray-er's wish and provides the context for prayer. The effect of the formulation is also to slightly distance Aria from direct address to God, suggesting perhaps that God is not to be approached by ordinary Christians, an understanding evident in letters to ascetics<sup>77</sup>. The content of Aria's prayer again is the addressee's health, using the frequent double description *ὑγιαίνω* and *ὁλοκληρέω*<sup>78</sup>. There is no closing prayer.

Aria prays for Dorotheos even though she charges him with neglect. The prayer may function to confirm Aria's relationship of maternal care for Dorotheos and be intended to provoke a filial response from him, particularly his sense of duty in relation to her need of expenses, her commercial difficulties and the orphan.

In SB 14.11881, Allous opens her letter not with prayer but with a second greeting<sup>79</sup>, 'finding the opportunity of a letter-bearer, I greet your motherly disposition' (*καιρὸν εὐροῦσα τοῦ γραμματηπόρο[υ] προσαγορεύω τὴν μητρικὴν σο[υ] διάθεσιν*), ll.4-7, supporting the proposal that opening prayer in letters has a role in expressing and maintaining relationship. The standard prayer formula closes the letter, *[ἐρρ]ῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι*, l.31. There is no reference to religion, the divine or spiritual activity in the letter outside the initial greeting *ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ* and the brief final prayer.

<sup>74</sup> Christian texts: P.Oxy.46.3314; P.Lond.3.982 with *εὐχαριστέω*; SB 1.2266; 6.9605; 14.11588 and this text (all C4). Texts of uncertain religious milieu: P.Congr.XV.20 (C3/4); P.Abinn.10; 11; 25; P.Oxy.48.3396; 56.3859; 59.4000; 59.4001 (all C4). None is certainly pagan.

<sup>75</sup> *Εἰ ἐρ[ρ]αμέν[ο]ν σε ἡ θεία διαφυλάξει<ε> πρόνοια*, P.Lond.6.1929 (C4). Also P.Abinn.12; 28 (C4); P.Ant.1.44 (C4) using *εὔχομαι*; P.Neph.1, 14, 17 (C4); P.Oxy.55.3821 (C4); 17.2156 (C4/5); P.Strasb.676 (C5). It may be that *ἡ πρόνοια* replaces the pagan *εὐτυχία/τύχη* in the closing formulae of Christian letters, reflecting a shift from belief in 'blind fate' to the activity of God, Tibiletti (1979), 64f, 118f.

<sup>76</sup> But see also P.Oxy.17.2156 (C4/5), *τῇ θείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίᾳ εὔχομενος*. On omitting the article before *παρά*, see Youtie (1976b), 66.

<sup>77</sup> See P.Lond.6.1926 at 158ff above and 185ff below.

<sup>78</sup> On the terms, see BGU 3.948 at 153 above.

<sup>79</sup> A second greeting also occurs in SB 8.9746.

Tapiam and Paul's letter, P.Neph.1, to Ophellios and the brothers contains multiple references to prayer, their own prayer and requests for prayer from the brothers.

Tapiam and Paul open the letter, 'we pray night and day' (εὐχόμεθα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας), ll.4f, for the brothers. They assert that their practice is consistent with the 'NT' ideal of continuous, that is, regular prayer νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας<sup>80</sup>. The statement indicates perhaps regular prayer as a couple, possibly with their children. While the frequency of prayer is unknown, 'night and day', as well as being formulaic, suggests a morning and evening practice. The phrase expresses not only a committed prayer practice in general but a committed intercession for the brothers in particular. It functions also to articulate a strong relationship with the brothers. The focus of their prayer is the health (ὑγιαίνουνσι, ἐρρωμένους), ll.4, 31, in soul and body (ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι), ll.4f, 31, of the brothers<sup>81</sup>. The phrase demonstrates the belief encountered in other letters that both the spiritual and physical dimensions of the human person are susceptible to God's action and can be affected through prayer<sup>82</sup>. The sense of ὑγίεια as 'salvation'<sup>83</sup> is probably intended here with the reference to ψυχῇ, though its application to physical health is also likely.

Tapiam and Paul refer to their own prayer a second time, 'we pray/wish to die in our own home and we wish to be released from the hardship of the world near our own people' (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐαυτῶ(ν) τὸ τέλος σχεῖν εὐχόμεθα καὶ ἔγγιστα τῶν ἰδίων ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς ταλαιπωρίας τοῦ κόσμου θέλομεν), ll.15-18<sup>84</sup>. Εὐχόμεθα and θέλομεν appear to be parallel, suggesting εὐχομαι may have its other regular meaning 'wish'. However, in such an overtly Christian letter, and with Tapiam and Paul having just used εὐχομαι, l.12, and εὐχή, l.14, of 'prayer', it is unlikely that εὐχόμεθα in l.16 has no such 'prayer' connotation. Rather it suggests the overlap of the concepts of wishing-before-God and praying. Concern for home, family and community is a recurrent theme in both Christian and pagan papyri and is frequently expressed as

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<sup>80</sup> On νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, see 89f above.

<sup>81</sup> Similarly P.Neph.2.10-13; 5.23-26; 7.12f.

<sup>82</sup> On the dichotomy, see 82f above.

<sup>83</sup> See BGU 3.948 at 153 above.

<sup>84</sup> Paul makes a similar statement in P.Neph.4.14f, ἵνα ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς τὸ τέλος ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις χαρίσῃται.



prayer<sup>85</sup>. The fear of dying alone and in a foreign place is uncommon in the papyri and infrequent as a matter for prayer<sup>86</sup>.

Tapiam and Paul close their letter with the prayer, 'the divine providence keep you well ...' (ἐρρωμένους ὑμᾶς ... ἡ θεία πρόνοια φυλάττοι), written perpendicular to the main text. Closing prayers to divine providence, generally with φυλάσσω or διαφυλάσσω either in the imperative or, as here, in the optative, appear in the fourth century<sup>87</sup>. There is a certain conventionality in the phrase with either mood so that no particular meaning can be read into the use of the optative.

Tapiam and Paul make two prayer requests of the brothers. They ask that the brothers 'remember to name' (μνημονεύσηται (= μνημονεύσητε) ὀνομάσαι), I.8, them in their prayers. It appears to be a general request for God's blessing and providential care<sup>88</sup>. The second request is that the brothers pray 'for our health' (εὕξασθαι (= εὕξασθε) ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁλοκληρίας ἡμῶν), I.11f, the context being Tapiam's statement that she is ill (ἐνόσησα), I.10<sup>89</sup>. The requests give little insight into Tapiam's own practice of prayer although they provide information about her and Paul's theology of prayer and healing<sup>90</sup> and their theology of asceticism<sup>91</sup>. At I.10, Tapiam's voice intrudes, it seems, to emphasise the urgency of the request for prayer, introducing the strong παρακαλοῦμεν, I.10f, and indicating her belief in prayer's efficacy. She and Paul are convinced that their children's recovery was miraculously given by God as a result of the brothers' prayers. The children were ill (ἐνόσησαν), I.12 and 'through your prayers they recovered' (διὰ τὰς εὐχὰς ὑμῶν ἐπαύσαντο), I.13. Their statement is evidence of their belief in the efficacy of prayer and provides a powerful basis for their own practice νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, II.4f. Barrett-Lennard notes that this is the only

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<sup>85</sup> Eg P.Mich.3.203 (114-116); SB 3.6263 (C2); P.Bour.25 (C4); P.Alex.Giss.58; 59; P.Giss.20-24; 67; 80; P.Brem.63 (all c.115-117). See Wilcken (1912), 417-422; Winter (1933) 48; Rowlandson (1998), 84-95.

<sup>86</sup> Examples occur in PSI 10.1161; P.Bour.25 (both C4).

<sup>87</sup> BGU 3.984; P.Abinn.8; 19; 28; P.Lond.6.1929; P.Neph.5; 7; P.Oxy.56.3858 (all C4); P.Oxy.17.2156 (C4/5).

<sup>88</sup> Similarly P.Lond.6.1923. The same idea using μνείαν ποιοῦμαι occurs in Romans 1.9; 2 Timothy 1.3. On this request, see also 189 below.

<sup>89</sup> Νοσέω tends to refer to severe illness; see 33, n.22 above.

<sup>90</sup> See 126f above.

<sup>91</sup> See 188f below.

instance in the private letters of an explicit statement of healing as a result of prayer<sup>92</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

My examination of the practice of prayer by these Christian women leads to a number of conclusions concerning subject matter and background of the prayer, and the women's personal practice and their confidence in prayer. First, however, I note the following observations on the function of prayer and epistolographic trends from the women's letters.

The evidence of the women's letters suggests that their prayer statements function as more than prayer, having a role in expressing, maintaining and ordering relationships. In BGU 3.948 Kophaena's construction and language for her prayer convey an elevated tone that establishes her status and dignity as mother in relation to her neglectful son. Athanasias in P.Berl.Zill.12 prays τῷ [.] κ<υ>ρίῳ ἡμῶν θεῷ<sup>93</sup>, l.3. Use of the first person plural pronoun immediately establishes a bond with the mothers, citing their mutual relationship with God. Tare in P.Bour.25 adds an emphatic αὕτη γάρ μου ἐστὶν εὐχή, l.6. It stresses the genuineness of the prayer and thereby, the genuineness of the relationship with her aunt. It strengthens the call to family connection and the likelihood of eliciting help. Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53 omits both prayer and greeting for Sarapion. It reflects their broken relationship. Taouak in P.Neph.18 stresses the fact of her prayers with ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς μου, l.6, so adverting to a level of relationship with Eudaimon and Apia where the help she needs and the compliance she wants can be expected. Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 refer to their prayer νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, ll.4f, for the brothers. It indicates the earnestness of the prayer, hence their concern for, and commitment to, the brothers and provides the relational context for their requests for prayer and material help. Aria in SB 14.11588 affirms through her statement of prayer her relationship with her son Dorotheos and her care for him despite Dorotheos' neglect. The relationship is the basis for the requests of the rest of the letter. In the letter of Didyme and the sisters, SB 8.7946, and in Allous' letter, SB 14.11881, in the position where an opening prayer might be expected there is instead a second greeting. In P.Oxy.14.1774, Didyme and the sisters add prayer introduced by εὐχόμεναι, l.6, to the second

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<sup>92</sup> Barrett-Lennard (1994), 73.

<sup>93</sup> See *Note di Aggiornamento*, 434, in Naldini (1968, 1998).

greeting. These constructions make explicit the function of the epistolary opening to establish relationship and support the proposal that opening prayer has a relational function. It does not necessarily follow that the prayer and greeting are complete equivalents, but the religious element appears to become secondary over time. The inclusion of the opening prayer in some texts, its omission in others and its possible replacement with a greeting in some confirms among the women's texts the decline in use of the religious formulae *πρὸ πάντων εὐχόμεαι* and *ἐπρῶσθαί σε εὐχόμεαι* evident in the late fourth/early fifth century. It also confirms that there is a conventional element in the inclusion of prayer in letters. Reference to prayer adds a religious dimension to the women's caring and communicates a constant care despite the addressee's absence that is otherwise not possible.

The first conclusion from this examination of the Christian women's practice of prayer concerns the subject matter of their prayer. The subjects include health<sup>94</sup>, happiness<sup>95</sup>, divine protection<sup>96</sup>, healing<sup>97</sup>, peace<sup>98</sup>, death at home<sup>99</sup>, divine help in healing and salvation<sup>100</sup>, and unspecified prayer for general blessing<sup>101</sup>. The subjects are limited in scope to the highly personalised areas of health and individual well-being. Prayers articulated in the 'NT' suggest both a more narrowly spiritual focus to their content<sup>102</sup> and also a broader range of topics including the strategic, social and political<sup>103</sup>, a pattern repeated in early liturgies<sup>104</sup>. At the same time the 'NT' encourages prayer about anything, especially any source of anxiety<sup>105</sup>. No doubt health and well-being were pressing issues in the ancient world, and, while the

<sup>94</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.34; P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Bour.25; P.Grenf.1.53; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; 18; P.Oxy.8.1161; 14.1774; SB 8.9746; 14.11588; 14.11881.

<sup>95</sup> P.Bour.25; P.Neph.18.

<sup>96</sup> P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Bour.25; SB 8.9746.

<sup>97</sup> P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; P.Oxy.8.1161.

<sup>98</sup> P.Bour.25.

<sup>99</sup> P.Neph.1.

<sup>100</sup> P.Oxy.8.1161.

<sup>101</sup> P.Lond.6.1926.

<sup>102</sup> 'NT' prayer focuses on spiritual insight, strength and growth in Christian virtue, eg Ephesians 1.15-20; Philippians 1.9-11; Colossians 1.9-12; 1 Clement 59-60; 74. Similarly Manichean Coptic letters to women focus on spiritual concerns; eg P.Kell.5.Copt.29 includes prayer for joy in the soul and firmness of spirit and that 'after this place, you may find life in the kingdom of eternity'; also P.Kell.5.Copt.32.

<sup>103</sup> Romans 16.30-32; Ephesians 6.18-20; 2 Thessalonians 3.1f; 1 Timothy 2.1ff; 1 Clement 59.4; 61.

<sup>104</sup> Eg *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979) #551-586, 329-354; *Liturgy of St Mark*.

<sup>105</sup> Philippians 4.6.

situation would have been the same for the writers of the 'NT' letters, the nature of the 'NT' letters is less personally focussed. A health emphasis can be expected in the private letters of the papyri given their focus on family and friendship. Prayers about the other matters to which the letters refer: business affairs, weather and crops, children, marriage, friendship and conflict, do not occur. It may be that health, well-being and protection were the only subjects conventionally sanctioned for prayer in written documents. If other subjects were actual matters for prayer among Christian women, together with wider issues of political and community concern, they are not formulated in these papyri. Christian men, at least in their letters to women, display an identical pattern<sup>106</sup>. The same focus on health and well-being occurs also in the pagan letters. From the evidence, then, in terms of content, it seems that the 'NT' and Christian liturgy do not provide the background for the subjects of the women's written prayers nor, perhaps, for their practice of prayer. The women's prayers do not reflect the language or concerns of the Lord's Prayer, although independent copies of it are known to have circulated widely<sup>107</sup>. The subjects of their prayers draw on the conventions of their society shaped by its pagan traditions. The Greek magical papyri display a similar content and subject range as the women's prayers, being also highly personalised, focussing on love, health and protection of people and property, except for vengeance<sup>108</sup>. The evidence of the women's texts suggests a process of assimilation in terms of the content of Christian prayers.

Health is the most frequent subject of prayer in the letters<sup>109</sup>. The thirteen texts mentioning prayer all include prayer for the health of their addressees. In addition three women request prayer for health for themselves<sup>110</sup>. Health occurs as at least part of the content of all the opening prayers, and the expression of the prayer for health and accompanying greetings can be the sole reason for writing a letter.

My second conclusion concerns the background and models for the Christian women's prayer and develops the observation already made concerning the lack of distinctive Christian content of the women's prayers. Personal prayer can be

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<sup>106</sup> See ch. 8 below.

<sup>107</sup> P.Ant.2.54 (C3); P.Oxy.3.407 (3/4); PGM 2.04 (C4); P.Princ.2.107 (C5/6); P.Oslo inv.1644 (C4/5); PSI 6.719 (C4/5); P.Koln 4.171 (C5); BGU 3.954 (C6).

<sup>108</sup> See ch. 11 below.

<sup>109</sup> The Christian women's texts confirm the finding in Tibiletti (1979), 47f.

<sup>110</sup> P.Lond.6.1926; P.Oxy.8.1161; P.Neph.1.

expected to reveal the women's most deeply held and actual conceptions of God. The women's formulations tend not to use specifically Christian references in their prayers. The women do not pray to God as Father<sup>111</sup>, with the possible exception of Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161, or as Creator, or invoke God as the source of grace, peace, compassion, comfort, hope etc., following the pattern of the 'NT' prayers<sup>112</sup> and of extant liturgical prayer<sup>113</sup>. They do not allude to God as Trinity, while such consciousness is evident in contemporary liturgical prayer<sup>114</sup>. Names of God appear in the opening prayers of six letters<sup>115</sup>. In only two is the reference explicitly Christian<sup>116</sup>. Only in Valeria's request to Paphnouthios is prayer *παρὰ τῷ Χριστῷ*<sup>117</sup>. None invokes the Spirit as occurs in liturgical material<sup>118</sup>. Liturgical prayer from the second century prays *διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου παιδὸς Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ)*<sup>119</sup>, invokes Christ as Shepherd<sup>120</sup> and uses Trinitarian formulae, for example in doxologies<sup>121</sup>. This finding indicates that in their prayer life as portrayed in their letters, the women tend not to articulate their relationship with God in strongly Christian terms nor do they approach God in their prayer within a distinctly Christian framework. Their forms of prayer and names of God with few exceptions draw on the models of the general

<sup>111</sup> Prayer to God as Father is also absent from 1, 2 Clement and Barnabas.

<sup>112</sup> Romans 15.13; 2 Corinthians 1.3; 2 Thessalonians 3.16; 1 Clement 60; 61; 64. The same lack of specifically Christian invocation occurs in the letters written by Christian men. See ch. 8 below.

<sup>113</sup> Contemporary liturgical prayers invoke God as 'Father', most frequently refer to God as holy and regularly ascribe light, life, compassion, immortality, power and might to God. See BKT 6.6.1 (C3); P.Oxy.15.1786 (C3); P.Würzb.3 (C3); P.Amst.1.20 (C3/4); P.Kiseliff (C3/4); P.Macq.inv.346 (C3/4); *Patrologia Orientalis* 4/2, 207-209 (250-350) in Lodi (1979), 173f, no.309; Id. 4, 195 (C3) in Lodi (1979), 177, no.312; the *Sacramentarium Serapionis* Lodi (1979) eg 329, 336, 345, nos 551, 561, 575. See also *Acts of Paul* 3, Id. 252 in Lodi (1979), 128f, no.223. Prayer to God as Father also occurs frequently in Origen and Clement of Alexandria, eg Lodi (1979), 121f, 154f, nos 209, 211, 278.

<sup>114</sup> Eg the Trinitarian hymn, P.Oxy.15.1786 (C3); the doxology in P.Nessana (C4) in Lodi (1979), 410f, no.641; *Patrologia Orientalis* 18, 442-443 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 412f, no.645; the invocation in Lapis Daninos in Lodi (1979), 410f, no.642; *Apocalypse of Esdras* (after C1) (TLG). Trinitarian doxology is frequent in *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), addressing God *διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ σοὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος ἐν ἀγίῳ πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν*. Also in Clement of Rome and Clement of Alexandria in Lodi (1979), 90, 121, 125, nos 157, 209, 214.

<sup>115</sup> BGU 3.948 ὁ παντοκράτωρ θεός; P.Grenf.1.53 ὁ κύριος θεός; P.Berl.Zill.12 ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν θεός; P.Bour.25 ὁ θεός; P.Oxy.8.1161 ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἡμῶν σωτὴρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ ἡγαπημένος; SB 14.11588 ἡ θεία πρόνοια παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

<sup>116</sup> P.Berl.Zill.12, εὐχομαι τῷ κ<υ>ρίῳ ἡμῶν θεῷ; P.Oxy.8.1161, ...ας καὶ τῷ ἀγαθ[ῷ ἡμῶν]ν σωτῆρι καὶ τῷ οἰ[ί]ῳ αὐτοῦ τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ. See 104-109 above.

<sup>117</sup> P.Lond.6.1926 at 159 above. But see also P.Oxy.8.1161 at 161f above and n.116 above.

<sup>118</sup> *Sacramentarium Serapionis* in Lodi (1979), 329, no.551; *Liturgy of St Mark* 49.

<sup>119</sup> P.Würzb.3 (C3); *Liturgy of St Mark*, 49. 1 Clement 61.3 is prayer *διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ προστάτου τῶν ψυχῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. See also BKT 6.6.1 (C3).

<sup>120</sup> *Patrologia Orientalis* 18, 497 (C4) in Lodi (1979), 416, no.648a.

<sup>121</sup> *Liturgy of St Mark*, 48, 49, 50 etc.

social milieu and the formulaic conventions of epistolography. The element of praise, frequent in liturgical sources<sup>122</sup>, is absent in all but Athanasias' thanksgiving in P.Berl.Zill.12. The name of God is generally omitted from the closing prayers, the pattern in both pagan and Christian texts. It may be that these formulations reflect scribal influence, using names for God common among pagans, Christians and Jews, and common prayer formulae, but the extent of such influence would need to be considerable and the hypothesis runs counter to the logic of the women's situations, of dictating letters from the start of the prescript to literate family, friends or professional scribes. While it may be that the general 'biblical' and Christian literary emphasis on prayer contributes to the women's practice it seems likely that the common custom of praying, evident in pagan texts, provides the background. In the light of this finding, it is noteworthy that *proskynema* formulae do not appear in the women's texts but this may reflect the chance nature of papyrus preservation<sup>123</sup>.

The role of the 'NT' and Christian literature in shaping the women's prayer practice finds expression through the process of identification<sup>124</sup>. Appeals to Jesus for help and healing in the gospels appear to provide the models for the prayers, and requests for prayer and help, of several of the women: Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926, Tapiam in P.Neph.1, Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161 and the mother in SB 18.13612.

A third conclusion concerns the Christian women's practice of prayer. In eleven of the thirteen letters referring to prayer, the formulations indicate, with varying degrees of certainty, that the women actively practise praying. Kophaena in BGU 3.948, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161 use titles for God that reflect liturgical or 'biblical' influence and invoke particular attributes of God for their prayer, suggesting real practice. The mother in P.Abinn.34 indicates a seriousness of Christian commitment, evident in naming her son Moses, that makes a prayer practice likely. Tare in P.Bour.25 and Taouak in P.Neph.18 emphasise the fact of their prayer, inferring its actuality. Athanasias in P.Berl.Zill.12 and Tapiam in P.Neph.1 use multiple references to prayer that infer practice. Other women's various elaborations of the basic prayer formulae, Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53, Didyme and the sisters in P.Oxy.14.1774 and SB 8.9746, and Aria in SB 14.11588 point to considered choice in language and the intention to express actual practice. In the

<sup>122</sup> BKT 6.6.1 (C3); P.Oxy.15.1786 (C3); P.Würzb.3 (C3); P.Bodmer 12 (C3/4); P.Mich.inv.6427 (C4).

<sup>123</sup> See 149 above.

<sup>124</sup> See 115 above.

remaining two cases, the mother in P.Abinn.34 and Allous in SB 14.11881, the situation is more uncertain. Only the standard closing prayer formula occurs and, while this suggests prayer in the act of composing the letter, whether it signals a broader practice is unclear.

My fourth conclusion focuses on the women's confidence about their prayer. All the women who pray, except Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926, exhibit confidence in their access to God and in the effectiveness of their prayer. Prayer is an exercise of agency in spiritual matters on behalf of others and for oneself. It is significant that most of these women pray without any evident sense of incapacity because of their gender. This is not specifically Christian. It is noteworthy that the confidence of the women stands in various degrees of tension with their sense of competency in matters of ordinary life. It suggests that prayer is an activity in which the women feel free to engage regardless of gender and circumstances. It gives access to a power to influence events unavailable to them in public life.

In the cases of Kophaena in BGU 3.948, the mother in P.Abinn.34, Tare in P.Bour.25, Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53, Taouak in P.Neph.18 and Aria in SB 14.11588, their confidence in prayer contrasts with evidence of reticence, uncertainty and powerlessness in aspects of everyday life. Kophaena stands in an uncomfortable relationship of dependence on the uncaring Theodoulos. The mother of Moses is powerless to secure the presence of her son, Heron. Tare prays confidently for her aunt's protection, at the same time as she finds herself unable to form supportive relationships in Apamea. Artemis' strongly assertive letter speaks of powerlessness in the face of charges of misconduct, complicated perhaps by Theodoros' absence. Taouak confidently announces God's blessing even as she experiences disadvantage due to her gender that renders her incapable of conducting certain business activities, although she nonetheless conducts business. Aria reports her inability to successfully achieve her activities or garner Dorotheos' support. But all five women pray and Taouak especially displays boldness in her prayer, and each letter is a strongly assertive act in relation to its addressees.

Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161, Tapiam in P.Neph.1 and Kophaena in BGU 3.948 pray in the context of illness. The physical incapacity does not appear to influence their spiritual activity. With all three women the tension between their prayers for health, for themselves and/or others, and the reality of their own illnesses is not addressed.

With two of the women their confidence in prayer and their ordinary activity appear to be consistent. Anonyme in P.Berl.Zill.12 expresses confidence about her life and safety, and prays similarly. Didyme and the sisters display confidence in their prayer that parallels their evident business capability.

Valeria's lack of confidence in relation to God is in sharp contrast to the assertiveness of her approach to Paphnouthios and to her confidence in his prayers. Questions arise. Is it that Valeria feels the need of a mediator, whose prayers she is confident God will hear while God may not hear her own? Is it important that the mediator be a male or an ascetic?

Letters to ascetics requesting prayer for healing in the fourth century occur in three texts in addition to Valeria's: P.Lond.6.1928 from Heraclides to Paphnouthios; P.Neph.1 from Tapiam and Paul to Ophellios and the brothers; and P.Neph.10 from Horion to Nephros. Two further texts contain requests for prayer: P.Herm.8 from the son of Abraham to Apa Johannes requesting prayer for deliverance from unspecified trouble; and P.Herm.9 from Chaeremon to Apa Johannes seeking prayer of an unspecified kind and blessing.

The letter from a woman and a man, Tapiam and Paul, displays a similar sense of relative spiritual uncertainty to that evident in Valeria's letter although not to the same degree. Tapiam and Paul request the brothers' prayers because of an experience of their prayers' effectiveness. At the same time Tapiam and Paul refer to their own prayers with no sense that the brothers' intercessions are substitute for their own even though they are more likely to be heard and are therefore more effective.

The four letters written by men show different levels of spiritual dependence and confidence. Heraclides in P.Lond.6.1928 writes, 'Now truly I am in affliction, where help neither from a brother nor from any other is able to assist me except the hope which I await through our Lord Christ through your prayers (εὐχῶν)', ll.13-15.

Heraclides' trust, like Valeria's, is ultimately in Christ but immediately in Paphnouthios' prayer. Heraclides, like Valeria, prays himself but asserts an element of mutuality that is absent from her letter, 'I pray you be well in the Lord Christ for a long time, (you) praying continually on my behalf, most devout father', ll.8-11. As Heraclides prays for Paphnouthios' health, Paphnouthios prays for Heraclides' health. Horion in P.Neph.10 displays a high degree of dependence on the power of Nephros' prayers, and a sense of personal powerlessness:



'I know therefore my lord father (δέσποτά μου πάτερ) that next to the master God (τὸν δεσπότην θεόν) your prayers have made me healthy and I am confident again in the master God that, through your prayers, we will, in the end, be restored to our homes; for I know that so long as you make mention of me in your prayers, the master God will not abandon me', ll.10-15.

Again, however, Horion introduces a note of mutuality, not in the spiritual realm but in the material. He invites Nepheros to let him know of any needs he has and adds, 'I have pleasure when you instruct me as to whatever you want, for next to God I have you as helper and father', ll.18-20. The son of Abraham in P.Herm.8 writes, '... beseeching that you remember me who greets you and all my house in the prayers (εὐχαῖς) which you send up ever and daily to our Lord Saviour. For I trust (πέποιθα) that through your most holy prayers (εὐχῶν) to be set free also from this trouble in which we are ...', ll.9-16. The son of Abraham prays for Apa Johannes, 'know that I have your holy face in my thought', ll.6f. He remembers Johannes because 'I believe (πιστεύω) that I and my house are a concern to you', ll.4f, indicating some awareness of mutuality. Chaeremon in P.Herm.9 writes, 'I beseech you that in your prayer (προσευχῇ) you remember me, Chaeremon', ll. 7-9, '... and bless me and pray to the Lord God night and day for me', ll.13-16, '... but after the most high God I rely (ἐπανάκειμαι) on your godliness and am persuaded (πέπισμαι (= πέπεισμαι)) that through your prayers (εὐχαῖς) I can ? nothing ...οὐδὲν δύνῃμι[αι]', left margin. Chaeremon, like Valeria, expresses a dependence on the ascetic's prayers and an immediate trust in Johannes' spiritual power. He does not refer to his own prayer or pray for Apa Johannes. He gives Johannes the title 'lord my father' (τῷ δεσπότῃ μου πατρί), l.1, in the opening greeting but calls him 'lord my brother' ([τ]ῷ δεσπότῃ μου [ἀ]δελφῷ), ll.24f in the address.

This sample of letters is too small to allow firm conclusions but their evidence is suggestive. There appears little difference between the men and Valeria in their belief in the effectiveness of the ascetics' prayers and their dependence on them. The male writers differ among themselves in the confidence, or lack of it, that they express in praying, in a way that suggests personality rather than gender is determinative. The elements of mutuality are stronger, or asserted more explicitly, in the letters written by the men. The common relative lack of confidence in prayer in contrast to their confidence in the ascetics' prayer appears, therefore, to arise from the women's and men's status as ordinary lay-people. Lerner points out, however, that the powerlessness experienced by men vis à vis men who have power does not parallel

the experience of women<sup>125</sup>. For a man 'likeness' to those with power operates. A man always has the potential to become a powerful man. For a woman this is not the case. The situation, then, of a man seeking a male intermediary does not entirely parallel similar behaviour in a woman. Valeria's lack of confidence may well hold this additional gendered dimension.

A fifth conclusion concerns God's omnipresence and prayer. In praying for their absent addressees, the women express belief in God who is active both where they are and where their addressees are. This cosmology is also frequent in pagan texts<sup>126</sup>. However, some texts from the second and early third centuries indicate belief in the localised power of particular gods, expressed in references to 'the gods here'<sup>127</sup>. The absence of such formulae from the women's prayers indicates the shift in some aspects of thought in moving from paganism to Christianity.

Having examined the Christian women's use of 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery, their theological positions and practice of prayer, I now broaden the analysis to consider the evidence of the Christian women's texts for their relationship to and participation in the institutional aspects of their religious lives; that is, their interactions with clergy, ascetics and the church.

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<sup>125</sup> Lerner (1986), 4.

<sup>126</sup> In pagan texts, prayer is generally offered using the standard *πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι* and *ἐπρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι*, clearly with belief in the god's transregional powers. The majority of pagan papyri do not specify the god/s to whom prayer is offered. Of 272 pagan and Christian texts, and texts of uncertain religious milieu of which 25 are Christian, written by, to or referring to women and including prayer, 23 name the divinity: lord god 12x; god 3x; god most high 2x; the gods 1x; all the gods 1x; the male and female gods 1x; almighty god 1x; the lord 1x; our good saviour and his beloved son 1x. Of these 23, 10 are certainly Christian, a disproportionately large number. Among pagan texts, the name of the god/s occurs in *proskynema* statements more than in prayer statements, 62x, most frequently using the god's personal name rather than a generic name: Sarapis 23x; Isis 4x; Thooris, Apis, Apollo each 2x; the gods here 7x; all the gods/the gods 6x; the ancestral gods 3x.

<sup>127</sup> Eg BGU 2.632 (C2); P.Mich.3.207 (C2); 8.491 (C2), 495 (C2); P.Tebt.2.413 (C2/3); SB 5.8027 (C2/3); 6.9251 (C2/3); 14.11901 (C3).

## CHAPTER 6

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S INTERACTIONS WITH CLERGY, ASCETICS AND THE CHURCH

Interactions with clergy, ascetics and the church occur in 15 of the 26 texts written by Christian women<sup>1</sup>. The relationships are expressed using a number of configurations among which hierarchy and patriarchy are frequent.

#### **WOMEN'S INTERACTIONS WITH CLERGY**

Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53 casts the presbyters of the church (τ[ο]ῦ[ς] πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας), ll.22f, as figures of authority recognised for their trustworthiness<sup>2</sup>. She remonstrates with Sarapion about his daughters' demand for husbands (ἄνδρες θέλομεν), l.25, and sexual conduct that Artemis labels harlotry (ποιοῦσα ἐαντή<ν> (Loukra) γαιετάναν (= γα<δ>ειτάναν)), l.28. Artemis calls on Sarapion to confirm her story from the presbyters. They are authorities whom she expects Sarapion and implicitly Theodoros to respect and to whose opinion they will defer. It is likely that there is a gendered dimension in Artemis' appeal. The presbyters' maleness, their stability and reliability according to the constructs of gender in ancient society may be factors in Artemis' perception that they will convince Sarapion. She is a woman who is inherently less reliable and trustworthy, sexually and in terms of truthfulness<sup>3</sup>.

The presbyters 'feel indignant' (φθονοῦσιν), l.29<sup>4</sup>, towards Artemis. The reason is obscured within the oblique references and uncertain grammar of the letter, but it is perhaps because Artemis has accused a certain Soucharos, whom the presbyters

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<sup>1</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Grenf.1.53; P.Herm.17; P.Kell.1.Gr.32; P.Lips.1.28; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1, 18; P.Oxy.6.903; 12.1592; 48.3407; 50.3581; SB 12.10840; 18.13612; 16.12673. I consider that SB 8.9746 and P.Oxy.14.1774 do not refer to ascetics, See 321f below.

<sup>2</sup> See also the roles of Appa Paphnouthios, P.Lond.6.1923-1929; Apa Paiêous, P.Lond.6.1913-1922; Apa Miôs, P.Abinn.6, 7, 8, 19; Apa Kaor, P.Abinn.32.

<sup>3</sup> The contemporary male view of women's unreliability and deceitfulness finds regular expression, eg '... these women (ie *subintroductae*) make all the men they capture easy for the devil to overcome. They render them softer, more hot-headed, shameful, mindless, irascible, insolent, importunate, ignoble, crude, servile, niggardly, reckless, nonsensical, and, to sum it up, the women take all their corrupting feminine customs and stamp them into the souls of these men', Chrysostom, *Instruction and Refutation* 11. See also Wilken (1984) who notes the general view of women as weak and unreliable among the early Christian apologists and the Roman critics of Christianity. P.Oxy.17.2073 (C4) appears to be a homily against women. See also P.Oxy.13.1603. Also Epp (2004) 41f.

<sup>4</sup> On the presbyters as subjects of φθονοῦσιν, see 45, n.112 above.

respect, of involvement in the immorality of Sarapion's daughters<sup>5</sup>. Artemis strongly defends herself with insinuations about Soucharos' class and status. On this reading Artemis is prepared to argue with the presbyters about their opinion, at least in her letter. There is no mention of an actual confrontation.

The daughters' demand for husbands occurs in the presence of the presbyters<sup>6</sup>. If this is deliberate on their part, it raises the possibility that the presbyters have a role in arranging Christian marriages for their community but there is no evidence from this period for the practice. Evidence from other papyri indicates presbyters have a role as mediators in marital conflict<sup>7</sup>, but their involvement otherwise is uncertain.

In P.Kell.1.Gr.32, Jacob, the reader of the catholic church<sup>8</sup> (ἀναγνώστης καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας (= ἐκκλησίας)), l.21, signs a lease for Aurelia Marsis since she is illiterate (γράμματα μὴ εἰδυίης), ll.22f<sup>9</sup>. Marsis uses Jacob for his literacy in a way many women use a male relative<sup>10</sup>. The description of Jacob indicates that being reader is his occupation. Readers appear frequently in the third- and fourth-century Greek and Coptic papyri, not always associated with the church but working in secular, for example legal, contexts<sup>11</sup>. The explanatory καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας (= ἐκκλησίας) establishes Jacob as an ecclesial reader, a minor order of clergy and, in Egypt, not ordained<sup>12</sup>. The role varies with time and geography but appears to have a broad function in Egypt, including the explication of read texts<sup>13</sup> and perhaps reading the gospel<sup>14</sup>. While the role of presbyter includes the public reading of Scripture, if he is

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<sup>5</sup> Winter (1933), 157.

<sup>6</sup> The presence of the presbyters is implied by their capacity to act as witnesses.

<sup>7</sup> Eg P.Oxy.6.903. See also the role of bishops in P.Oxy.50.3851.

<sup>8</sup> In papyri dated C4, καθολικὴ of the church bears a range of meanings: i) an actual church; ii) one directly under a bishop's oversight; iii) the local church as an expression of the universal, Wipszycka (1994b), 205-209, who favours either i) or ii) in this text, but later favours a combination of ii) and iii), Wipszycka (1996a), 173. I agree with this latter opinion. A theological statement about orthodoxy seems unlikely.

<sup>9</sup> On literacy, see 11-19 especially 15f above.

<sup>10</sup> On the church as an alternate family, see 238ff below.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of readers connected with the church include P.Ant.2.93; P.Lond.6.1914; P.Neph.12; P.Oxy.33.2673; SB 14.12021 (all C4); readers whose style of work is uncertain eg SB 4.7336 (C3); P.Oxy.24.2421 (C4); 55.3787 (C4). See Wipszycka (1993), 195.

<sup>12</sup> *Canons of Hippolytus* 7 (C4) revised from, but in this canon agreeing with, Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 12. *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.22 (C4, Syria) describe readers' ordination.

<sup>13</sup> *Canons of Athanasius* 58.

<sup>14</sup> *Canons of Athanasius* 78. *Liturgy of St Mark* 53 specifies that deacons read the gospel; *Canons of Basil* 97 excludes readers from reading the gospel and allows it only to deacons and presbyters.

illiterate a reader might be appointed, although this is not the only circumstance<sup>15</sup>.

Jacob retains the civil status marker 'Aurelius' which comes to be omitted by clergy in later centuries<sup>16</sup>. It is interesting that Jacob is son of a presbyter ('Αυρήλιος Ἰακώβ Βήσιος πρ(εαβυτέρου)), ll.20f. It raises the possibility that Jacob works with/for his father, and that ministry like other occupations is inherited. However, I have found no other example, and a single text can only be suggestive. Evidence from Egypt indicates that the presbyterate begins with the diaconate without the necessity of passing through the minor orders, but there is also no necessity for Jacob to be training for the presbyterate. There is no indication of Jacob's age<sup>17</sup>.

Stud.Pal.20.86 is the memorandum of Aurelia Demetria in her conflict with Eus over a land sale. The original contract had been agreed 'in the presence of Dioskouros, presbyter of the church in the region' (ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ Διοσκουρίδου πρεσβυτέρου τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ ὅροις), ll.7f. Dioskouros' role as witness implies that the women consider him reliable. It is likely that as the role of clergy became established they would be used in leadership functions by the whole village, but there is no evidence of this in the first half of the fourth century. While Demetria is accepted as Christian, Eus' belief is less certain<sup>18</sup>, yet she recognises Dioskouros' position. Demetria expects the προπολιτευόμενος also to accept Dioskouros as reliable. She claims that the 'mediating witness', most probably Dioskouros, can be called to verify the truth of her claims, προσφωνήσῃ ὁ μεταξὺ μάρτυς, l.14, ὁ μεταξὺ δύναται μαρτύρασθαι, l.16, ὁ μεταξὺ μεσίτης προσφωνήσῃ, l.23. Demetria and Eus do not approach Dioskouros to settle their dispute. Certainly he lacks the legal capacity to judge the conflict formally<sup>19</sup>. The expression ἐπὶ ὅροις is interesting in terms of its meaning for ecclesial structures and Dioskouros' role. It appears not to be attested elsewhere<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Readers appear regularly in churches headed by a bishop with varied functions in addition to reading eg delivering ecclesiastical requirements. See Wipszycka (1993), 194-204. For the debate about a possibly illiterate reader, see P.Oxy.33.2673 (304); Youtie (1975a); Wipszycka (1983); (1984); (1996d); Clarke (1984).

<sup>16</sup> Worp (2005). Worp dismisses Jacob as clergy citing Wipszycka (1993), 195. However, Wipszycka does not regard all references to readers in C4 as secular.

<sup>17</sup> Ecclesial decrees dated C4 and C5 indicate that children might be appointed as readers. The papyri show this was not the norm with references clearly to adults. See Wipszycka (1993), 199.

<sup>18</sup> See 63 above.

<sup>19</sup> The interpretation dated 333 of CT 1.27.1 allowing bishops to act as civil judges postdates this text by three years although the original law is dated 318. Nonetheless Dioskouros is a presbyter.

<sup>20</sup> From a search of the *DDBDP* of texts dated 100-500.

Bishops appear in the role of judges in P.Oxy.6.903, Anonyme's statement against her husband Anonymos for his abuse of her and their household. Anonyme and Anonymos have attempted a marital reconciliation. The husband 'swore in the presence of the bishops and his own brothers' (ὤμοσεν ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ τῶν ἐπισκόπων καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ), l.15, to give his wife the household keys and no longer to insult her. The bishops play a judicial rather than pastoral role<sup>21</sup>, receiving a legal undertaking from Anonymos, sworn by oath, that he will change his behaviour. This is most probably the *episcopalis audientia*. Its function and authority are not explained but presumed as a known judicial instrument<sup>22</sup>. A marriage contract results (γαμικὸν γέγονεν), l.17. Anonyme's side of the contract is not mentioned nor are any penalties. She clearly considers the process before the bishops legally binding and expects Anonymos to honour his oath.

Whether the bishops play a passive role in simply hearing Anonymos' oaths, or actively persuade Anonymos to make them and perhaps Anonyme to accept them, is unclear<sup>23</sup>. There is no indication who initiates the proceedings. It is unlikely to be Anonymos but may be Anonyme or Anonymos' brothers.

The reference to bishops in the plural acting in a marital dispute is unusual and the situation unclear. Monarchical episcopacy emerges as the preferred structure of the church in its first centuries<sup>24</sup> and descriptions of bishops as judges and mediators generally refer to the bishop in the singular<sup>25</sup>. The presence of more than one bishop may reflect the presence of family from a different area come with their bishop to

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<sup>21</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 195, identifies a pastoral rather than a judicial role, but gives no reason. He does not address the fact of Anonymos' undertaking of an oath.

<sup>22</sup> On the *episcopalis audientia*, see 299f, nn.51, 52 below.

<sup>23</sup> The presbyters play an active role in P.Oxy.50.3581; see below.

<sup>24</sup> Didache 15.1f (C1-early C2) points to a process of transition from charismatic leadership to monarchical episcopacy. The church in Antioch had adopted this structure by the end of C1; the Roman church by mid-C2. Ignatius commends it and cites it throughout Asia Minor: Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 1.3; *To the Magnesians* 2.1; *To the Trallians* 1.1; *To the Philadelphians* 1.1; *To the Smyrnaeans* 8.1. See Lietzmann (1938, 1958) 1.143-146, 192-195, 247f; 2.58-61.

<sup>25</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum* (C3) advocates mediation as the preferred mode of function for the bishop rather than judgement, but in either role the bishop acts alone, 2.1-2.25 (IV-VIII). An example is Paul, Bishop of Antioch, Lane-Fox (1986), 513.

urge reconciliation, or the chance occasion of a brother bishop's visit<sup>26</sup>. It is unlikely to result from ecclesiastical politics<sup>27</sup>.

Anonyme's statement is not addressed but is probably prepared for the bishop's court. This would be consistent with contemporary practice, with the history of the dispute and with Anonyme's closing 'God knows' (ταῦτα δὲ οἶδεν ὁ θεός), l.36. The designation θεός, however, expresses her appeal in the broadest possible terms, suitable for the bishop's court or its secular equivalent<sup>28</sup>. The reference to the bishops in the third rather than the second person need not argue against this suggestion. The statement is not written as a petition nor is there reason to presume the presiding bishop/s would be the same as in the original hearing.

Presbyters appear as active interventionists in P.Oxy.50.3581, Attiaena's petition against her ex-husband Paul. Attiaena states that after Paul's first abandonment of her 'again he beguiled (me) through presbyters' (πάλιν (= πάλιν) ἐξηπά[τησ]εν διὰ πρεσβυτέρων), l.8, to re-establish the marriage. The presbyters are undoubtedly church officials<sup>29</sup> who play an active role in the negotiation, representing Paul at whose initiative they come, and persuading Attiaena to take him back. Whether the presbyters wittingly share in the beguiling is not stated, just as the reality of Paul's deceit is uncertain. Only Attiaena's account remains. The presbyters, however, are clearly aware of Paul's past behaviour and it is difficult to avoid the implication of πάλιν, that they have been involved in one or more previous reconciliations<sup>30</sup>, knowing the ongoing abuse. On this occasion the presbyters bring a written undertaking from Paul in which he acknowledges that his marriage to Attiaena is still valid and that any continuation of his illegal behaviour (ἀνελεύθερα πράγματα), l.10, will result in a penalty of two ounces of gold. Attiaena mentions no requirements of her. The reasons for the presbyters' involvement and advocacy for Paul are not given. Paul apparently has approached them to mediate. It may be that Paul's wish accords with their understanding of 'biblical' teaching on the indissolubility of

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<sup>26</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum* 2.58 (XII) envisages a bishop visiting a fellow-bishop and being invited to act alongside him. CT 1.27.1 does not specify number.

<sup>27</sup> Eg during the Melitian schism Melitian and Catholic churches functioned as parallel institutions in parts of Egypt, Hauben (2000), 329. But rival bishops acting together as here is unlikely.

<sup>28</sup> See 51f above.

<sup>29</sup> The office of village elder disappears at the end of C3, Tomsin (1952), 524.

<sup>30</sup> πάλιν (= πάλιν) most naturally governs the whole following clause.

marriage<sup>31</sup>. It may be that, as socio-anthropological studies of Mediterranean society conclude, the presbyters' concern for the church's reputation focuses on the right behaviour of its female members, in this case Attiaena's return to, and submission within, her marriage<sup>32</sup>.

Attiaena's submission to the presbyters and to her husband both accord with 'biblical' teaching<sup>33</sup>. Attiaena's compliance, however, appears not to be immediate. The language suggests resistance and a period of beguiling<sup>34</sup> following previous experiences of failed reconciliation/s. Her compliance contrasts with later assertiveness against Paul, the presbyters and the ideals of 'Scripture', demonstrated in issuing a *repudium* after Paul's continued abuse and in the writing of this petition.

Attiaena's initial response to the presbyters identifies them as authority figures for her, 'fathers' in an alternative family<sup>35</sup>. Attiaena uses the plural *πρεσβύτεροι* which points to a Christian community of sufficient size to warrant more than one presbyter and supports the picture of Oxyrhynchus as a city with a number of churches known from other texts<sup>36</sup>. In terms of ecclesial organisation, the reference points to multiple *πρεσβύτεροι* in one church or cooperation among *πρεσβύτεροι* across churches for such a situation as this. The presbyters approach Attiaena as a group, which, even if only two, carries the sense less of a pastoral visit than of a matter of church order and discipline.

## CONCLUSION

This examination of Christian women's interactions with clergy suggests that a variety of modes of relationship exists.

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew 19.7; 1 Corinthians 7.10f.

<sup>32</sup> MacDonald (1996), 150, 180, 258.

<sup>33</sup> Obedience to church officials: Hebrews 13.17; 1 Peter 5.5; 1 Clement 3; 44; Didache 4.1; wives' submission to their husbands, Ephesians 5.22-24; Colossians 3.18; 1 Clement 1.3.

<sup>34</sup> *πάλειν* (= *πάλιν*) ἐξηπά[της]εν διὰ πρεσβυτέρων ἄχρις οὗ *πάλειν* (= *πάλιν*) συνεισενέγκω αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ἡμέτερον οἶκον, l.8f. See 213 below.

<sup>35</sup> See 238ff below.

<sup>36</sup> P.Oxy.1.43 (?) notes churches in the north and south of the city. The verso dates to 295 so that a date for the recto in C4 is possible. P.Oxy.57.4617 (C5) refers to 15 churches in the city. See also 310 below for the idealised picture from the *Historia Monachorum* of many thousands of ascetics in Oxyrhynchus in C4/5. The presbyters to whom Attiaena alludes need not have been financially supported by the community.



The first conclusion concerns the women's attitudes to clergy. The evidence of the texts indicates that women generally articulate respect for clergy. They refer to clergy as trustworthy witnesses, advisers and mediators. The women's formulations imply that they are not alone in their estimation. The appeals to clergy for confirming testimony, for example by Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53 and Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86, rely on the fact that others, including the secular authorities, recognise the clergy's trustworthiness. It is significant that the women appeal to clergy when their own truthfulness is questioned.

The women's accounts indicate they regard clergy as men with authority. They submit to clergy in obedience. It is noteworthy, however, that Anonyme in P.Oxy.6.903 and Attiaena in P.Oxy.50.3581, who both initially submit to clergy brokering reconciliations, finally assert themselves against their husbands' abuse. Anonyme lodges a complaint. Attiaena issues a *repudium* and seeks the agreed penalty. Furthermore, Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53 appears ready to defend herself in relation to the presbyters' charge against her, at least in writing to her husband. It is not known whether there was also a face-to-face confrontation. The evidence of the women's texts, then, suggests limits to the authority the women concede to clergy.

The second conclusion relates to the role of clergy as alternate family, especially for women who do not otherwise refer to men<sup>37</sup>. The texts give evidence of women approaching clergy for assistance with secular tasks as women most frequently approach male relatives. Marsis in P.Kell.1.Gr.71 has Jacob write for her due to her illiteracy, and Demetria and Eus in Stud.Pal.20.86 have Dioskouros act as witness in their contract. The presbyters in P.Oxy.6.903 appear as family negotiators or arbitrators in the marital reconciliation between Anonymos and Anonyme, and in P.Grenf.1.53 possibly with a role in arranging marriages.

A third conclusion concerns clergy acting in secular functions. Sources indicate that clergy increasingly exercise secular functions in the fourth century<sup>38</sup>. These texts confirm this trend in relation to Christian women. Clergy act in the women's business and personal dealings: as witnesses for Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53, and Demetria in

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<sup>37</sup> Argued in detail at 238ff below.

<sup>38</sup> The papyri give evidence of church officials acting as mediators, secular authorities, judges, witnesses and scribes, eg from this thesis, P.Kell.1.Gr.32; P.Lips.1.43; P.Oxy.6.903; 50.3581. Bishops had the right to judge civil cases where their decisions were final and enforceable, CT 1.27.1 (318). See also Coleman-Norton (1966) 1.74f.

Stud.Pal.20.86; as scribe for Marsis in P.Kell.1.Gr.71; as judges in P.Oxy.50.3851. The appearance of clergy in papyri of the period frequently derives from this trend, being incidental to a personal or commercial transaction that generates a written text.

### **WOMEN'S INTERACTIONS WITH ASCETICS**

Seven of the texts refer to Christian women's interactions with ascetics<sup>39</sup>. In four of these, the women ask for help<sup>40</sup>. The kind of help relates to the woman's perceptions of the ascetics' power and the nature of her need. The texts where requests for help do not appear are two involving mothers with their ascetic sons<sup>41</sup> and a letter from a woman to her spiritual father, the content of which is lost<sup>42</sup>.

Leuchis in P.Herm.17 asks Apa Johannes to appeal to the tribune on her behalf to remove certain women from her house. Apa Johannes is a prominent ascetic, known from P.Herm.7-10 and P.Ryl.Copt.268-274, 276<sup>43</sup> as an intercessor with God and mediator with secular authority, civil and military<sup>44</sup>. "Απα, with ἄπα and ἄββᾱ, is a Greek transliteration of the Semitic 'father' that first appears in the papyri as a title for clergy and ascetics in the 330s and connotes respect<sup>45</sup>. Leuchis approaches Johannes to intervene with secular authority using his spiritual authority which she represents in Christian qualities. She expects the secular powers to recognise and comply with his authority. Johannes' role, then, is an extension to the secular sphere

<sup>39</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Herm.17; P.Lips.1.28; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; P.Oxy.12.1592; SB 18.13612.

<sup>40</sup> P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; SB 18.13612. For similar appeals from men, see eg P.Herm.7, 10; PSI 13.1342; P.Abinn.32; P.Lond.3.981=Chr.Wilck.130; P.Lond.6.1923-1929.

<sup>41</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Lips.1.28.

<sup>42</sup> P.Oxy.12.1592. There is no indication of the father's status in the text, but his identity as a cleric or more probably an ascetic is argued below.

<sup>43</sup> Crum (1905), 127, considers P.Ryl.Copt.275, 295, 301, 310-314, 396 also belong to the archive. Zuckerman (1995), 188, further suggests P.Amh.2.145=Chr.Wilck.53; P.Lond.3.981=Chr.Wilck.130; 3.1014, being addressed to 'father' (πατήρ) John.

<sup>44</sup> On the identity of these ascetics as the same man, see 46f above. On Apa Johannes' identification with John of Lycopolis, see Zuckerman (1995), 191ff; BL 10.86.

<sup>45</sup> The title is used for Christian clergy, monks and other ascetics. It appears in P.Lond.6.1914 (335), a Melitian text; also eg P.Abinn.6; 7; 8; P.Amh.2.145; P.Herm.7; 8; 17; P.Lond.6.1916-1919; 1924-1929; P.Neph.12; 15; PSI 13.1342 (all C4). See also Lampe (1961, 1968), 2, 169. For an extensive discussion of the title, see Derda and Wipszycka (1994), who conclude that Apa and Abba are used interchangeably in Egypt in this period, 29, and not always for clerics, 31. Later, the words develop distinct semantic ranges but this does not apply at this time. The title appears rarely in pagan texts from C2; see 324, n.41 below.

of the original conception of the 'holy man' as one who is able to intercede effectively with God, being closer to the divine power because of his asceticism<sup>46</sup>.

Leuchis' approach to Johannes makes use of the effusive rhetoric of late fourth- and fifth-century letters: 'the devout Apa Johannes' (θεωσεβῆ (= θεοσεβεῖ) Ὁ Ἀπα Ἰωάννην (= Ἰωάννη)), l.1; 'your compassion reach to me too' (καμὲ φθάσι ἡ ἐλεημοσύνην σου), l.3; 'your kindness embraces all who are powerless' (ἡ χρηστότητά (= χρηστότης) σου πάντας τοὺς μὴ (= μὴ) δυναμένους), l.2, among whom Leuchis reckons herself. Leuchis uses the conventional flattery of an inferior to a superior but her actual powerlessness is belied by her appeal. Her words may express genuine respect for Johannes' piety. Certainly they elucidate the qualities she hopes to elicit for herself.

Leuchis makes a spiritual claim on Apa Johannes, stating her powerlessness and dependence, 'after God I look for your help' (μετὰ τὸν θεὸν τὴν σὴν βοήθειαν προσδοκῶ)<sup>47</sup>, l.3<sup>48</sup>. Her imaginative organisation of the spiritual world reflects the class structures of society with its layered hierarchy. Her attitude confirms the image of the 'holy man' as a patron who will act in relation to higher authority for his clients<sup>49</sup>.

Leuchis bases her powerlessness in her marital status and gender, 'for I am a widow and a woman' (ἐπὶ (= ἐπεὶ) χήρα γυνή εἰμι), l.6. The appeal to femaleness compounds the disadvantage<sup>50</sup>. The gendered division of space in the ancient Mediterranean world served to exclude women from the public domain and thus from experience in negotiating public power<sup>51</sup>. Leuchis' lack of confidence in her ability to approach the tribune successfully no doubt reflects social reality. Her statement reminding Johannes of his Christian duty to care for widows<sup>52</sup>, however, also appears to be a device to pressure Apa Johannes to comply with her request. These positions are not mutually exclusive. Whatever its nature, Leuchis' appeal is an act of power that

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<sup>46</sup> The role of male ascetics as 'holy men' is debated with suggestions ranging from healer, allayer of anxiety, intercessor, repository of divine power and patron, Brown (1982), 141-143; to facilitator of the transition to Christianity, Brown (1995), 60, 63f, 74; to spiritual agent and networker, Brown (1998), to agent of transformation, Frankfurter (2003).

<sup>47</sup> In the papyrus, μετὰ τὸν θεὸν τὴν σὴν βοήθειαν προσδοκῶ.

<sup>48</sup> A similar statement made of the local military official occurs in P.Abinn.34.

<sup>49</sup> Brown (1982), 116, 120.

<sup>50</sup> For other such statements, see 136, n.134 above.

<sup>51</sup> Torjesen (1993), 59-65, 125-128 notes that while political discourse distinguished sharply between the private sphere of the οἶκος and the public sphere of the πόλις, this did not deny women significant power within the domestic world. See 9ff above.

<sup>52</sup> On the disadvantage of widows and their care, see 135-140 above.

paradoxically negates the powerlessness it asserts. Leuchis uses her gender and her status disadvantage to gain the assistance from Apa Johannes that she wants.

In SB 18.13612, the mother uses the conventional rhetoric of flattery in her appeal to Apa Johannes<sup>53</sup>: 'my lord, father, benefactor' (κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ εὐεργέτῃ), ll.1-3; giver of mercy and salvation to all who flee to him (πάντας τοὺς εἰς σὲ καταφεύγοντας καὶ ἐλεεῖς καὶ αὐξεῖς), ll.4-7; potential source of mercy to her (καὶ ἐμὲ ἐλέησον), l.7. The kind of mercy the mother seeks is not related to spiritual need but concerns the *exactor*. The mother's language marks her as an inferior approaching a superior and recalls 'biblical' appeals to God for mercy<sup>54</sup>, and, further, draws a parallel between Johannes and God. The parallel is made explicit in the mother's statement that Johannes stands 'next to providence' (μετὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν), l.4, in showing mercy<sup>55</sup>. The mother's titles for Johannes, 'Apa' and 'lord, father, benefactor', l.1, establish him as a powerful ascetic or a member of the clergy, and a spiritual father<sup>56</sup>. The title 'benefactor' is not generally used of ecclesiastics<sup>57</sup> but regularly describes donors of money who benefit a community in exchange for honour<sup>58</sup>. It is associated with wealth and its accompanying power. It is unlikely that material wealth applies in Johannes' case, although this cannot be entirely ruled out<sup>59</sup>. It is more likely that the mother identifies Johannes with the prestige and influence of a benefactor. Her use is an example of the introduction of secular titles into the church.

The mother positions herself among the powerless in contrast to Johannes. Her language about mercy emphasises her undeserving and Johannes' generosity. Further self-effacement, culturally conditioned or not, is evident in her naming style, ἡ μήτηρ Φιλαδέλφου ἀποτακτικοῦ, ll.2f. The mother focuses on Philadelphos and his vocation perhaps to maximise the effectiveness of her request. The idea finds support in her proffered motivation for Johannes' response, namely her son's benefit

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<sup>53</sup> On the identity of this Apa Johannes with the Johannes of P.Herm.7-10, 17, see 61, nn.223, 224. On this ascetic, see 182f above.

<sup>54</sup> See 99f above.

<sup>55</sup> μετὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν is almost certainly the equivalent of μετὰ τὴν θεῖαν πρόνοιαν. For the latter expression, see 246 below. On ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια, see 120ff above.

<sup>56</sup> For similar relationships, see P.Lond.6.1926; P.Oxy.12.1592.

<sup>57</sup> The title is not listed in Dinneen (1927).

<sup>58</sup> Luke 22.25; Horsley, *ND* 1-5, s.v., 'benefactors'; Danker (1982); R. Kearsley, 'A Civic Benefactor of the First Century in Asia Minor' in *ND* 7.233-241.

<sup>59</sup> On ascetics and property, see 307f, 311f, 315 below. Clergy in C4, and especially bishops, come to be drawn from the wealthier classes, Wipszycka (1972), 95, 156; Bagnall (1993a), 292.

(εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ ἀποτακτικοῦ μου υἱοῦ), ll.8f<sup>60</sup>. The mother appears to expect Apa Johannes to respond to her preferentially because her son is ἀποτακτικός<sup>61</sup>. Her attitude suggests that she recognises a group identity among ascetics that elicits privileged action, and being ἀποτακτικός has high status<sup>62</sup>. It is noteworthy that the mother does not regard Philadelphos, though an apotactic, as powerful in relation to secular authority. Spiritual power does not necessarily reside in asceticism itself but in a distinguished minority of ascetics that does not include her son. In a further claim of powerlessness, the mother styles herself as ‘a widow with the orphans’ (καὶ ἐμὲ τὴν χήρα[ν]καὶ τοὺς ὁ[ρ]φανοὺς), l.10f. The mother casts herself as the epitome of the needy to whom Johannes, as a Christian, owes a response. The self-designation functions to apply pressure on Johannes to respond favourably to her request and as such is an example of the paradoxical exercise of power by one claiming to be powerless.

The nature of the mother’s relationship with her apotactic son is not described<sup>63</sup>, although she names herself by her relationship to him. Whether there is ongoing contact is not indicated. If Philadelphos is her eldest son, it may be that his ascetic practice has robbed the mother of her primary support since her husband’s death<sup>64</sup>. The loss of sons to ascetic practice points to a significant effect of the ascetic movement on the social lives of women.

P.Lond.6.1926 is Valeria’s letter to Appa Paphnouthios asking that he pray for her ‘healing’ (ἱασις), l.7. She addresses him, using the exalted language of Byzantine letters, as ‘most honoured, Christ-bearing and adorned with all virtue’ (τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ (= τιμιωτάτῳ) καὶ χρηστοφόρῳ (= χριστοφόρῳ) καὶ πάσης ἀρετῆς κεκοσμημένῳ), ll.1-3<sup>65</sup>. Valeria’s understanding of Paphnouthios’ power appears in her statement, ‘by those practising and observant of religious discipline revelations are shown’ (τῶν γὰρ ἀσκούντων καὶ θρησκευόντων ἀποκαλύμματα δεικνύοντε (= ἀποκαλύμματα δεικνύονται)), ll.9-11. Valeria considers Paphnouthios closer to God than she is, because of his

<sup>60</sup> εἰς τιμὴν τινός, ‘for someone’s honor (sic)’, W. Arndt and F. Gringrich (1957), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v., τιμή, cited in Parassoglou (1987), 250.

<sup>61</sup> On the meaning of ἀποτακτικός, see 307f below.

<sup>62</sup> It appears at times as a title at which to aim, Wipszycka (2001b), 168.

<sup>63</sup> See 234 below.

<sup>64</sup> On the role of sons as the primary providers for their widowed mothers, see 222, n.124 below.

<sup>65</sup> For τιμιώτατος, χριστοφόρος, ἀρετή, ἀσκέω and θρησκεύω, see 96ff above.

ascetic practice<sup>66</sup>. It is noteworthy that God and Paphnouthios both appear as the objects of Valeria's prayer, δέομε (= δέομαι) τῷ θεῷ δέομε (= δέομαι) κὲ (= καὶ) σοι μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ σου προσευχῇ, ll.15-17. The one framework of approach fits both. Valeria's action confirms the significance of an ascetic as a man 'who makes God present'<sup>67</sup>.

Valeria describes her relationship with Appa Paphnouthios as father and daughter<sup>68</sup>. The epithet Ἄππα, l.2, itself means 'father' but in the address on the verso Valeria writes τιμιωτάτῳ πατρὶ Ἄππα Παφνουτίῳ. She demonstrates the fourth-century development of Apa/Appa into a title, denoting ascetics and clergy in their role as 'spiritual fathers' and institutionalising family terminology<sup>69</sup>. Valeria describes herself as daughter, παρὰ τῆς θυγατρὸς Οὐαλερίας, verso. The relationship is undoubtedly a spiritual one. The father/daughter language suggests a hierarchical relationship involving affection and respect.

Valeria's conviction that ascetics are closer to God is an example of the development of the apostle Paul's thought on marriage and celibacy, that there are two levels of Christian life, one superior, the ascetic path, and one inferior, life in the world, of marriage, family and commerce. Eusebius writes:

Two ways of life were thus given by the Lord to his Church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, child-bearing, property nor the possession of wealth ... Like some celestial beings, these gaze down upon human life, performing the duty of a priesthood to almighty God for the whole race ... And the more humble, more human way prompts men to join in pure nuptials, and to produce children, to undertake government, to give orders to soldiers fighting for right; it allows them to have minds for farming, for trade and for the other more secular interests as well as for religion.

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Valeria is an example of the petitioners, male and female, in the fourth-century papyri who request prayer, spiritual counsel and practical help from male ascetics<sup>70</sup> but

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<sup>66</sup> Trust in an intercessor's prayer appears from c.300 in P.Oxy.12.1494, but the intercessor's status as an ascetic is not given.

<sup>67</sup> Brown (1995), 58.

<sup>68</sup> On familial terms for non-kin, see 225, n.147.

<sup>69</sup> For the use of Apa/Appa, see n.45 above. Πατήρ alone occurs in P.Lond.6.1923, 1929; ἄπα alone in P.Lond.6.1925. The double term occurs also in P.Lond.6.1924; 6.1928.

<sup>70</sup> On male ascetics as 'holy men', see n.46 above.

never from a female<sup>71</sup>. For Valeria, Appa Paphnouthios is a 'Christ-bearer', with his masculine gender significant in that sharing Jesus' gender, he is more readily identified with Christ and his divine power.

The focus of Valeria's interaction with Paphnouthios is her request for prayer. By contrast with her lack of confidence in her own prayer, Valeria states her confidence in Paphnouthios' prayer three times, οὕτως π[ι]στεύω διὰ τῶν σῶν εὐχῶν εἶσιν (= ἴσιν) λαμβάνω, ll.8f, οὕτως γὰρ πεπίστευκα καὶ πιστεύω ὅτι ἐὰν εὕξῃ ἐπάνω μου εἶσιν (= ἴσιν) λαμβάνω, ll.13-15, τῶν γὰρ ἀσκούντων καὶ θρησκευόντων ἀποκαλύψματα (= ἀποκαλύμματα) δεικνύοντε (= δεικνύονται), ll.9-11. While a gendered dimension to Valeria's reticence is undoubtedly a factor, her attitude finds explanation in her theology of asceticism as gaining privileged access to God<sup>72</sup>. Valeria's attitude is contrary to suggestions that the polarity between ascetic and lay spiritual confidence was not as marked as once thought, that 'one did not have to sit on a sixty-foot column for one's prayers to be considered acceptable ...'<sup>73</sup>. Nor is Valeria's lack of confidence a factor of personality. Her reticence in relation to God contrasts with the assertiveness of her requests to Paphnouthios.

Bell's reconstruction of ll.19-21, προσα[γορεύω] τὰς θυγατ[έρ]ας μου, places Valeria's daughters with Paphnouthios, among those women, and men, who live in the company of holy men<sup>74</sup>. Some of these women were themselves ascetics. Others were seekers of counsel and healing. Valeria does not ask the daughters to pray. The suggested alternative reconstruction, προσά[γε]τε αἱ θυγατ[έρ]ες μου, 'my daughters embrace (you)'<sup>75</sup>, places the daughters with Valeria. The text is too uncertain to draw conclusions about the daughters' interactions with Paphnouthios.

Valeria's interaction includes prayer for Appa Paphnouthios' health using the standard ἐρ<ρ>ῶσθαί σε εὐχομε (= εὐχομαι), [τ]ιμιώτατε πάτερ (= πάτερ), ll.26f. She offers no opening prayer for him. Her reticence is consistent with, but does not prove, a lack of mutuality in the relationship.

<sup>71</sup> On this issue, see 316f below.

<sup>72</sup> See 172ff above, on men's and women's confidence in prayer. The same attitude by a woman appears in Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii* 61.1-3.

<sup>73</sup> Brown (1998), 374.

<sup>74</sup> *HL* 7.4; 10.2; 11; 17.3 etc. Holy men could gather large groups eg 100 persons who then need food, shelter and water, Brown (1995), 62; (1982), 113f.

<sup>75</sup> For this possible reconstruction, see 229 below.

Tapiam and Paul's letter to Ophellios and the brothers, P.Neph.1, reveals a relationship which has both spiritual and material aspects<sup>76</sup>. Tapiam and Paul ask the brothers to send them supplies of bread from wheat owed by a certain Papnouthis<sup>77</sup>. They expect the brothers to arrange for transport and delivery. They write of a proposed visit, at least by Tapiam and the children. They also ask for prayer, though confident that the brothers pray for them, and they pray for the brothers. The relationship is evidently close, illustrated by the additional eight-letter correspondence from Paul, possibly after Tapiam's death<sup>78</sup>, and no doubt strengthened by Tapiam and Paul's conviction that their children were healed through the brothers' prayers.

If the proposed visit is correctly attributed to Tapiam, θέλω γὰρ σὺν θεῷ ἀνελθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ll.24f, it suggests that there is no barrier to her meeting with the brothers. The avoidance of women that characterises many of the desert fathers and some monastic communities would seem not to apply<sup>79</sup>.

Paul and Tapiam make two prayer requests, one general, ll.7-9, and the second for their health, ll.11f<sup>80</sup>. Their appeal to the brothers' φιλανθρωπία, ll.6f, as the reason to pray cites a virtue more associated with pagan than 'biblical' values<sup>81</sup>, and uses the strong παρακαλοῦμεν, ll.10f. Prayer appears to constitute a significant dimension of the relationship. Tapiam and Paul's conviction about the efficacy of the brothers' prayers derives from the healing of their children through prayer and also from their theology of asceticism, 'for we believe that the Lord will hear you since you are righteous' (πιστεύομεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν δικαίων ὄντων ἀκούσεται), ll.13-15. Tapiam and Paul reflect the popular understanding that asceticism engenders a righteous life, with greater access to divine power<sup>82</sup>. God will hear the brothers'

<sup>76</sup> On Paul's business dealings with and for the monastery, see P.Neph.4; 6; 8; 9.

<sup>77</sup> For other such requests, see 67, n.263.

<sup>78</sup> Tapiam's name does not occur in the other 8 letters.

<sup>79</sup> Avoidance of women occurs as a subject in *AP* Abraham 1; Cyrus 1; Olympios 1, 2; Poemen 11, 14, 15, 59, 114, 115, 154, Paphnutis 4; *HL* 71.2. In C5, Shenoute forbade visits to monks and nuns by members of the opposite sex even by relatives, *De vita monachorum* 7, 18, 21 cited in Elm (1994, 2000), 302. At the same time several brothers lived within the women's communities to assist with manual labour. Monks did manual labour in female Pachomian communities when needed but neither ate nor slept there, and it appears the appointed monk 'supervisor' only visited, *Vita Prima Graeca* 32. Pachomius allowed visits between brothers and relatives in the sister community although reputedly refusing to see his sister, *Vita Prima Graeca* 32; *Rule* 143 in Pachomius, *Pachomian Koinonia*. Women appear in the greetings of P.Neph.1; 3; 7; 10.

<sup>80</sup> See 165 above.

<sup>81</sup> See 103f above.

<sup>82</sup> See also P.Lond.6.1926 at 185f above, and 171-174 above.



prayers where God may not hear Tapiam and Paul's own. The fact that Tapiam and Paul pray, and clearly not in any perfunctory way (ll.15-18), suggests they perceive this to be a relative, and not absolute, difference. In the context of her need for healing, Tapiam's faith is not primarily in God but in the brothers as effectual means of access to God.

Tapiam and Paul relate to the brothers as a community as well as to specific individuals within it. The request for bread is to Nephros. The requests for prayer, and the attribution of righteousness and of effective prayer are plural. Tapiam and Paul are perhaps aware of the practice in this monastery whereby requests for prayer are circulated among monks in their cells, κατὰ μονήν<sup>83</sup>.

Tapiam and Paul address Ophellios and the brothers with the adjective ἀγαπητός, ll.1, 27. The epithet appears to distinguish the monks from 'all the rest of our brothers' (τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν πάντας), l.29. Ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός is common in the Christian papyri, although not exclusive to them<sup>84</sup>, and expresses a warm relationship. Tapiam and Paul address Nephros specifically as κύριε ἄδελφε, l.20<sup>85</sup>, with no further qualification. They do not use the more respectful 'lord father'. This may reflect a sense of shared status, indicate Nephros' vocation as a brother<sup>86</sup> or point to Nephros' relative status within the monastery, that he is not yet in a leadership role<sup>87</sup>.

Among those whom Tapiam and Paul greet are 'the virgins of God' (τὰς παρθένους τοῦ θεοῦ), ll.26f<sup>88</sup>. Tapiam and Paul ask nothing of these consecrated ascetic women; in particular they do not seek their prayer.

P.Oxy.12.1592 is the fragment of a letter to κ(ύρι)έ μου π(άτε)ρ, l.1, for whom the woman writer uses the forms of the *nomina sacra*, and in response to whom she uses the opening words of the Song of Mary (καὶ πάννυ ἐμεγαλύνθην καὶ ἡγαλλίασα (= ἡγαλλίασα))<sup>89</sup>, ll.3f. Anonyme's response indicates a warm relationship on her part,

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<sup>83</sup> P.Lond.6.1917.24.

<sup>84</sup> See 109-111 above.

<sup>85</sup> Also at P.Neph.2.2.

<sup>86</sup> Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>87</sup> See P.Neph.3.4; 6.11f. The editors suggest the change in address may reflect a rise in Nephros' status within the monastery, Introduction, 7.

<sup>88</sup> These women are discussed at 301, 305f, 310f below.

<sup>89</sup> On this allusion to Luke 1.47, see 80f above.

though perhaps one not regularly maintained on the father's part. It is almost certainly a spiritual relationship<sup>90</sup>. There is no indication that the father is a cleric or ascetic but the language of Anonyme's response, her elevated respect and the father's likely familiarity with 'Scripture' suggest it. The relationship, both in intimacy and irregularity, appears more consistent with a spiritual connection with an ascetic than a pastoral bond with clergy. No titles survive.

Anonyme's language of self-identification with Mary in Luke 1.47ff locates this likely ascetic in the place of God to her. Her use of the *nomen sacrum* (π(ά)τε)ρ for him is noteworthy. Her attitude, following Mary's, is then likely to be characterised by humility, obedience and servitude<sup>91</sup>. It suggests the patterning of some spiritual relationships within the church on patriarchal 'biblical' models, with the models selected being those of extreme hierarchy. The extant fragment of the text does not allow a conclusion to be drawn about any mutuality in the interaction between Anonyme and the father. There is no statement that Anonyme prays for the father, although prayer may have occurred in the section now lost.

The mother in P.Ben.Mus.4 writes to her son whom she describes as 'most holy' (μου ἁγιωτάτῳ υἱῇ (= υἱεῖ or υἱῷ)[ ), l.1. The adjective suggests that the son is a bishop or perhaps a high-ranking monk<sup>92</sup>. The son's knowledge of 'Scripture' supports his likely ecclesiastical status as does the writing in biblical majuscule, which, even if done by a monk-scribe, locates the son in an ecclesial context. The evident education of the son favours his status as a bishop<sup>93</sup>, since bishops were drawn from the wealthier classes in the fourth century. However, education is not inconsistent with asceticism<sup>94</sup>. Ascetic status is suggested by the reference, among the foods the mother sends, to parsley root (χλουβὸν κωρσελήνης), l.3, understood to be eaten by ascetics<sup>95</sup>. Further, the mother refers to a possible visit by the son using κάτω, which

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<sup>90</sup> See 230 below.

<sup>91</sup> See 81, especially n.25 above.

<sup>92</sup> See 98 above.

<sup>93</sup> The editor strangely contrasts this with 'his "mother's" apparently poor social, financial and educational status', for which he provides no evidence.

<sup>94</sup> See 17 for ascetic illiteracy as a trope for virtue.

<sup>95</sup> Parsley root, κωρσελήνη, l.3, which Winter, editor of P.Mich.3.212, understands as a dessert eaten by monks, the word derived from σκωρσελήνη in *The Life of St Pachomius* cited in his note to l.3. The editor suggests this is indicative of the son's status. Elsewhere the word occurs only in P.Mich.3.212 (C2/3) σκωρσελήνη and P.Oxy.6.936 (C3) σκωρσελείνας. Other food items sent are wheat and raisins. See also Goehring (1999), 53-72.

may refer to travel from the son's monastery in the desert<sup>96</sup> or more probably down the Nile. The son's use of ἐνταῦθα of his mother need not imply the exact same location, but probably refers to the same local area where both reside. The fact that they write letters indicates that there is some distance between them. The evidence favours the son's status as a bishop but both are possible. The content of the letter, however, concerns the interaction of a mother with her son rather than with an ascetic or cleric as such<sup>97</sup>. It is noteworthy that the son's living situation allows his mother considerable contact through visits, letters and gifts, and he with her. This need not argue against asceticism<sup>98</sup>.

P.Lips.1.28 is a joint document in which Teeus gives her grandson, Paesis, in adoption and her son, Silvanos an apotactic, agrees (Σιλβαν[ὸ]ς Πιε[τή]σιος υἱὸς τῆς προκειμένης Τεεῦτος ... ἀποτακτικός) l.7. 'Apotactic' suggests that Silvanos is an ascetic living in community<sup>99</sup>. The obligations to which he agrees commit him to family relationship and involvement with commerce and agriculture. He agrees to raise the boy, who is ten, to feed and clothe him, treat him as his own first-born son and have him as his heir<sup>100</sup> (ἀνατρέφεσθαι, τὸ εἶναι σου υἱ[ὸ]ν γνήσιον καὶ πρωτότοκον ὡς ἐξ ἰδίου αἵματος γεννηθέντα, θρέψω καὶ ἱματίζω (=ἱματίσω), καὶ τῶν ἐμῶν πραγμάτων κληρονόμον υἱοθετηθέντα μοι), ll.12, 15f, 18, 22. Silvanos also agrees to manage Paesis' parental inheritance for him (διαφυλάξαι καὶ ἀποκαταστήσαι αὐτῷ), l.21. The text confirms that being an apotactic does not necessarily involve renunciation of family ties or personal property<sup>101</sup>.

The practical meaning of Silvanos' undertaking in the context of an ascetic community raises possibilities that nuance models of detachment drawn from literary sources. The document suggests such an adoption by an apotactic is not unusual. Paesis apparently will live with his uncle, presumably in the ascetic community. It is not clear whether the intention is that Paesis will (eventually) become an apotactic or whether he will stay with Silvanos, being educated and cared for, until his majority. There is evidence that some monasteries developed schools where orphans and

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<sup>96</sup> P.Lond.6.1927 (C4) has ἀνέλθωμεν. Travel outside a monastery, mainly to conduct monastic business and visit family, is frequently attested in literature and papyri, Wipszycka (2001a), 49.

<sup>97</sup> See 224f below.

<sup>98</sup> Eg women are able to visit the monks at Hathor, P.Neph.1. On such visits, see n.79 above.

<sup>99</sup> See 307f below.

<sup>100</sup> Silvanos apparently possesses property of his own.

<sup>101</sup> See 307f below.

children brought by their parents could be educated<sup>102</sup>. It may be that Teeus' adoption of Paesis to Silvanos is an early example. In later centuries, the 'donation' of children to monasteries for financial reasons, especially in the case of girls, proves a problem for the church<sup>103</sup>. Entry to the monastery and its resources, in Paesis' case, is through adoption rather than 'donation'.

## CONCLUSION

This examination of women's interactions with ascetics leads to a number of conclusions.

The first concerns the women's attitude to ascetics. The women's descriptive language gives evidence of respect. The women attribute Christian and pagan virtues to the ascetics. Leuchis in P.Herm.17 uses θεοσεβής, χρηστότης and ἐλεημοσύνη. In P.Lond.6.1926 Valeria has τιμιώτατος, χριστοφόρος, ἀρητή, ἀσκέω and θρησκεύω. The mother in SB 18.13612 uses ἐλεέω, σώζω and εὐεργέτης. Tapiam in P.Neph.1 has δίκαιος, Anonyme in P.Oxy.12.1592 ιερός, and the mother in P.Ben.Mus.4 ἀγιώτατος. Some of the women accord the ascetic the honorary title Apa<sup>104</sup>. Some use the language of father/daughter (πατήρ/θυγάτηρ)<sup>105</sup>. Some use language for the ascetic equally suited to God or Christ<sup>106</sup>. The effusiveness of the women's respect and the positioning of themselves in the dependent and lesser role alerts to the women's use of rhetorical conventions suited to a patron/client relationship and designed to help them achieve their ends. Manipulation and flattery are likely to be factors alongside genuine sentiment. The women's hierarchical language indicates that power conditions their interactions with ascetics.

The second conclusion concerns the women's theology of asceticism. Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and Tapiam in P.Neph.1 exemplify the understanding of asceticism as a superior Christian discipleship. Valeria states that God gives revelations to ascetics

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<sup>102</sup> St Basil's *Regulae Fusius Tractatae* 15 refers to young boys and girls being accepted for education in his monasteries. They were housed separately in the precinct. The evidence refers to Asia Minor in C5 but it is likely that the experience in Egypt was similar. Pachomius, *Vita Prima Graeca* 24 refers to children coming to the monastery who were tested with their parents. The account possibly represents a need to counter children coming against parents' wishes as Theodore, Pachomius' ultimate successor, did at an early age, 33-37; or as a remedy against parents who later changed their minds about the child's future. See Goehring (1999), 50; also Elm (1994, 2000), 71.

<sup>103</sup> See also 227, n.156 below for social problems caused by donating family wealth to monasteries.

<sup>104</sup> P.Herm.17; P.Lond.6.1926; SB 18.13612.

<sup>105</sup> P.Lond.6.1926; P.Oxy.12.1592; SB 18.13612.

<sup>106</sup> P.Lond.6.1926; P.Oxy.12.1592.

and the devout. Tapiam and Paul refer to God's preferential hearing of ascetics because they are righteous. Asceticism may be a factor in other women's esteem but this is implicit and less certain. Anonyme in P.Oxy.12.1592 holds her spiritual father in the place of God, responding to him as did Mary at the Annunciation. Leuchis places the ascetic Johannes next after God in her estimation of sources of help. The mother in SB 18.13612 places Johannes next after God as a source of mercy. Their theology of asceticism almost certainly forms the basis of the women's rhetoric. The women's own place in their constructed spiritual hierarchy is necessarily lower in terms of value and spiritual power, and their Christian lives, in comparison, compromised and worldly.

The third conclusion concerns the women's readiness to access the ascetics' authority and their assertiveness in doing so. Leuchis in P.Herm.17 refers to her disadvantage as a widow and a woman in approaching the tribune but her inability is not such as to prevent her approaching Apa Johannes or urging him to fulfil her request. The mother in SB 18.13612 seeks Apa Johannes' help in relation to tax matters. She emphasises her powerlessness with language of mercy and saving, and by stating that she is a widow associated with orphans, yet her approach to Johannes and the construction of her appeal constitute acts of power. Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and Tapiam in P.Neph.1 ask for ascetics' prayers. Both emphasise the ascetics' spiritual power in prayer which they hope to direct to their advantage. Both understand ascetics to have greater access to God because of their asceticism. The women's sense of occupying an inferior spiritual place does not prevent their approaches or lessen the assertiveness of their requests.

The evidence of the Christian women's papyri is consistent with the papyri more generally in confirming the evidence of literary sources that male and not female ascetics, with a very few exceptions, receive requests for spiritual and practical assistance<sup>107</sup>. The gendered division of space in the Mediterranean world disadvantaged women in education and experience in negotiating public power. It may be that, with the institutionalisation of the church as a public space in the fourth century, God's power came to be thought of as public power, with a resulting lessening of women's spiritual confidence not only in themselves but also in other women.

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<sup>107</sup> See 316f below.

A fourth conclusion concerns ascetics' function in society. The women's letters confirm the picture in literary sources that ascetics are seen as a means to access power to supply what is lacking in an individual's or community's life, and the ascetic is held to participate in that power<sup>108</sup>: God and divine power; the governing authorities and secular power; resources and social power. Appa Paphnouthios in P.Lond.6.1926 in relation to God, and Apa Johannes in P.Herm.17 and SB 18.13612 in relation to secular authority illustrate this phenomenon. The women's texts also illustrate the findings of recent scholarship which note the increasing use of clergy and ascetics in secular functions in the fourth century.

A fifth conclusion concerns the impact of men's ascetic practice on women's social experience. The women's letters do no more than hint at the difficulties that the absence of sons and brothers raised for women in the loss of male support<sup>109</sup>. The mother in SB 18.13612 and Teeus in P.Lips.1.28, both mothers of apotactic sons, turn to non-kin for the assistance sons frequently provide, although neither cites the son's asceticism as the reason for their need. The women's experience parallels that of women whose sons are absent because of military service as in P.Abinn.34, or neglect as in BGU 3.948. The problem, though incipient in the women's texts, confirms the evidence of other sources that point to social difficulties arising because of ascetic practice<sup>110</sup>. It may have contributed to the development of the church as an alternative family<sup>111</sup>.

## ***WOMEN'S INTERACTIONS WITH THE CHURCH***

References to interactions with the church occur in six letters written by Christian women<sup>112</sup>.

Anonyme reports in her statement against Anonymos, P.Oxy.6.903, that she attends church (ἀπελθοῦσα [εἰς] τὸ κυριακὸν ἐν συμβαθῶ (= σαββάτῳ)), l.19. Τὸ κυριακόν, 'the Lord's house/household', is known from the third century<sup>113</sup>. Anonyme's reference

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<sup>108</sup> Brown (1982), 109, describes 'holy men' as 'one device people used to cope with living'.

<sup>109</sup> On the role of sons in providing support for widowed mothers, see 222, n.124 below.

<sup>110</sup> See also n.103 above.

<sup>111</sup> See 238ff below.

<sup>112</sup> P.Bour.25; P.Neph.1; 18; P.Oxy.6.903; 48.3407; SB 12.10840. Women's interactions with clergy and ascetics are excluded as examined above.

<sup>113</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.18, οἶκον δὲ κυριακόν; Τὰ Κυριακά, Eusebius, *HE* 9.10.10. Also τὸ κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, 1 Corinthians 1.20; Chrysostom, *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 27.3; ἡ κυριακὴ

suggests a dedicated building<sup>114</sup> that is known and requires no explanation. Anonyme attends on the Sabbath<sup>115</sup>, the Jewish day of rest and worship<sup>116</sup>. While Sabbath observance was established in Egypt from Jewish practice, there is only slight evidence for Christian observance of the Sabbath compared with other places in the Empire<sup>117</sup>. The Canons of Laodicea<sup>118</sup>, perhaps reflecting the more active Jewish Christian presence in Phrygia and Galatia, condemn observance of Jewish festivals and the Sabbath rest by Christians<sup>119</sup>. At the same time the Canons allow services of worship on the Sabbath provided there are readings from the gospel, that is, that they are distinctly Christian<sup>120</sup>. Such services were not to replace Sunday worship. From the mid-fourth century τὸ σάββατον occasionally is used by Christian writers to denote Sunday but the shift in meaning appears to be made clear with each usage<sup>121</sup>. Τὸ σάββατον can also refer to a general day of rest<sup>122</sup> but this seems not to be Anonyme's meaning, which is to a specific day. It may be that the pattern of worship in Anonyme's Christian community involves both Saturdays and Sundays.

Anonyme attends church on her own, and in the face of Anonymos' active opposition. On her return he questions why she attended and shuts the doors against her. The

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ἡμέρα, Revelation 1.10; P.Oxy.48.3407 (C4) below; κυριακή κυρίου Didache 14.1; Κυριακή in SB 14.11881 below. Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>114</sup> With growing numbers, the church increasingly became a public space with its own buildings, evident from the time of Commodus (180-192) and modelled by C4 on the basilicas of Roman public life. See Harnack (1908) 2.85-88; Torjesen (1993), 155-176; Hopkins (1998), 203, 222.

<sup>115</sup> The original editor understood the text as ἐν Σαμβαθῷ, denoting a place. Σαββάτον meaning 'Sabbath' was suggested by W. Schubart, *Einführung in die Papyrusforschung* (1918) cited in Youtie (1973c), 803; BL 3.133. Youtie accepts the reading, as does CPJ 16; Winter (1933), 126f; and this thesis. The phrase ἐν σαββάτῳ is frequent in 'NT', eg Matthew 12.2; Mark 3.2; Luke 6.1, 7; John 7.22, 23 from which Youtie argues for the reading here. He notes a parallel use in an inscription (581) from Abda, southern Palestine, τῇ τρίτῃ τοῦ σάμβατος.

<sup>116</sup> The earliest Christians observed both the Sabbath and Sunday but Sunday worship quickly displaced Sabbath observance by all but a minority and was established as the Christian holy day by C2. Ignatius, *To the Magnesians* 9.1, condemned Christian observance of the Sabbath. It was still being condemned in C5 eg Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos* 1.8.1, 3.3.1; Augustine *On charity*. Constantine, *CJ* 3.12.3 (311), forbade most business on the *venerabilis die solis* with agricultural work exempt. It remained exempt until 585, *Concilium Matisconense* 1, cited in P.Oxy.vol.48, 110. Christians were banned and later punished for attending Jewish worship, *CT* 16.8.1 (315, 329); *CT* 16.8.7 (352, 353)=*CJ* 1.7.1. See also in Coleman-Norton (1966) 1.82-84; Simon (1996), 310, 323.

<sup>117</sup> Simon (1996), 329.

<sup>118</sup> Council of Laodicea (345-381) otherwise unknown. The 60 Canons may be a collection from previous Councils.

<sup>119</sup> Canons of Laodicea 29, 37, 38.

<sup>120</sup> Canon 16; also 49, 51. *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.33.1f indicates worship on both days.

<sup>121</sup> Eg τὸ μέγα σάββατον and ἡ ἡμέρα δευτέρα τοῦ σαββάτου, Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>122</sup> Eg Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 12.3. For other examples, see Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

text implies that Anonymos' response is connected with their marriage contract, but whether this forbids her attendance or explicitly allows it is unclear. Her appeal to the injustice of the situation suggests the latter. Anonyme's determination to follow her own spiritual path signals her as a committed member of the congregation. The imbalance in the sexes suspected in early congregations<sup>123</sup> may, in part, be attributed to women like Anonyme whose husbands are either not Christian or not church-goers. Women whose husbands attend church may have had less freedom to choose not to attend. The honour:shame system of the ancient Mediterranean world suggests that women's church attendance without their husband's approval is likely to gather a charge of immorality<sup>124</sup> and so bring dishonour to the husband and disrepute to the church. Anonymos' potential loss of honour provides an explanatory framework for the strength of his opposition.

The landlady in P.Oxy.48.3407 refers to agricultural labour being conducted on her land 'on the Lord's Day' (ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ (= κυριακῇ) ἡμέρᾳ), ll.15f. The reference marks time in terms of Christian liturgical observance. Constantine's edict of 321 explicitly exempts agricultural workers from the requirement that most businesses cease on *venerabili die solis*<sup>125</sup>. The landlady makes use of the exemption. However, she clearly knows the day as the day of Christian worship. Κυριακός/ -ή/ -όν, in the sense of 'the Lord's', is rare in the papyri to the end of the fourth century<sup>126</sup> and marks the landlady as a member of a Christian community that has adopted the term.

In P.Bour.25, Tare dates her mother's death ἀπο τῶν Πάσχω(ν), l.7, that is, Easter which she describes as the Pasch<sup>127</sup> without explanation. Her organisation of time is

<sup>123</sup> See 206, n.28 below.

<sup>124</sup> Women's unapproved absence from their appropriate sphere connotes unchastity in an honour:shame society. See Torjesen (1993), 112f, 122, 142f; also 9f above.

<sup>125</sup> CJ 3.12.3 (311). The earliest dated papyrus reference to 'the Lord's day' is P.Oxy.54.3759 (2 October, 325). A judge defers proceeding because of τῆς ἐπιούσης κυριακῆς ἱερᾶς, ll.38. The name differs from Constantine's *die solis*, perhaps chosen because planetary namings were unpopular in Egypt. Revelation 1.10 refers to ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα; see also Didache 14.1; Eusebius, HE 4.23.11; Clement of Alexandria eg *Stromateis* 7.12. Κυριακή may be the name used among Christians, S. R. Llewelyn and A. M. Nobbs, 'The Earliest Dated Reference to Sunday in the Papyri' in ND 9.106-118. No evidence suggests the term was in general use, suggesting the judge is probably Christian.

<sup>126</sup> A search of the DDBDP shows the only other occurrences with this meaning are P.Oxy.54.3759 in the note above and P.Oxy.6.903.19, 21, above with κυριακόν. In P.Oxy.48.3407 the term is an adjective and not yet a substantive.

<sup>127</sup> Possible meanings of the terms are the Jewish Passover, Passover meal, Paschal Lamb or the Christian festival later called Holy Week and Easter. Use of τὸ πάσχα for Easter dates from Hippolytus, *De Pascha*, cited in Dix's textual notes to Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, 74. See also Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. Earliest Jewish Christians observed the Passover on 14 Nisan with the days of Unleavened Bread, differing from Jews only in its significance, Simon (1996), 324. Christians celebrated Easter on



shaped by Christian religious observation and suggests that she is, or has been, a member of a church. However, Tare makes no mention of church as a source of comfort and connection in her loneliness<sup>128</sup>. Her interaction with the church in Apameia is therefore not indicated and notable for the lack.

A similar reckoning of time by Christian festivals occurs in SB 12.10840. Mikke tells her brother Euthalios not to visit their mother, Syras, before the festival (πρὸ τῆς ἰορτῆς (= ἑορτῆς)), l.6, but to go at the end of the fast (πρὸς τὴν λύσιν τῆς νηστείας)<sup>129</sup>, l.9, for the festival (πρὸς τὴ ἰορτή (= τὴν ἑορτήν), l.12. Given the date of 27 March, these references to fast and festival are almost certainly to Lent and Easter<sup>130</sup>. Mikke, Syras and Euthalios, then, regulate their activity by their observance of the church's liturgical calendar, complying with the penitential preparation<sup>131</sup>. Their practice marks them as members of worshipping communities and devout. It is interesting to speculate whether Mikke's restraint of Euthalios' visit is an indication that her observance is more rigorous than her brother's, and that her Christian discipleship is correspondingly more serious<sup>132</sup>.

Two of the letters are by women who are members of the Melitian church<sup>133</sup>. Tapiam and Paul write P.Neph.1 to brothers in the Melitian monastery of Hathor<sup>134</sup>. Taouak's letter to Eudaimon and Apia, P.Neph.18, was purchased with the rest of the Nephros archive making it likely that they are connected with the monastery and are

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the Sunday following. Another time reference to Easter occurs in P.Ross.Georg.3.10 (C4/5). On Lent and Easter, see SB 12.10840 below.

<sup>128</sup> On church as an alternative family, see 238ff below.

<sup>129</sup> In the papyrus, πρὸς τὴν λύσιν τῆς νηστείας.

<sup>130</sup> Lent is the penitential preparation for Easter. Other possible references to Lent are P.Ant.2.92.26 (C4/5); P.Flor.3.384.55f (489?); CPR V.2.25.5 (C7/8?). Sources Rea (1970), 357; Horsley, 'Varia', in brief in *ND* 3.166 (v), confirmed by a search of the *DDBDP* as the only references. P.Bour.25 (C4) and P.Ross.Georg.3.10 (C4/5) refer to Easter as τὰ πάσχα.

<sup>131</sup> Early Christians observed a 40-hour fast from 'crucifixion to resurrection', Irenaeus in Eusebius, *HE* 5.24.12. The fast was extended to a week in early C3 and to a 40-day fast about 300-325, since Canon 5 of the Council of Nicaea refers to it as customary practice. The Council of Laodicea, Canon 50 commands the 40-day fast. *CT* 9.35.4 (380) also refers to it. The 40-day fast to exclude Sundays was fixed in C7. Fasting generally meant abstention from flesh, eggs and dairy products. *Apostolic Constitutions* 5.18.1 allows only bread, salt, water and boiled vegetables. Rea argues a one-week fast is meant in Euthalios' letter, Rea (1970), quoting Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v., νηστεία, who states that the 40-day fast did not apply at this period. Literary evidence, however, indicates it was observed at least in some churches. See also D. Sahas, 'Lent' in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (1997), s.v.

<sup>132</sup> The reason for Mikke's statement and the nature of her power to direct Euthalios' actions are not given.

<sup>133</sup> On the Melitian schism and the Melitian church, see 66, n.258.

<sup>134</sup> Eds, 11-14.

also Melitian. The texts offer hints about the Melitian church and its conflict with the catholic church. The information is at best tentative and is suggested with caution.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 ask the brothers to remember them in their prayers 'because we and our children are in a foreign place' (διὰ τὴν ξεντείαν (= ξεντείαν) ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν παιδίων), I.8f<sup>135</sup>. The reference appears to be to Alexandria where they are forced to live<sup>136</sup>. Ξεντεία refers primarily to absence from family and friends, II.16-19. It is unlikely to result from a lack of fellow-Melitians<sup>137</sup>. The Melitian church in Alexandria, however, held a tenuous position, no doubt adding to Tapiam and Paul's sense of alienation. The decision of the Council of Nicaea to accept Melitians into fellowship with catholic Christians<sup>138</sup> did not end either the existence of the Melitian church or the violence between Melitians and Catholics, certainly not during the episcopacy of Athanasius<sup>139</sup>. It may be that Tapiam and Paul, in addition to being far from home, are vulnerable to actual or potential violence and persecution in Alexandria<sup>140</sup>, although they do not allude to it.

Taouak in P.Neph.18 writes to Eudaimon and Apia, 'for we are God's treasure/treasury' (ὁ γὰρ θησαυρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖς (= ἡμεῖς)), II.26f. It is the reason Taouak can pronounce to Eudaimon and Apia a reward, ὄψεσθε πρὸς τὸν θεόν, I.25f<sup>141</sup>. The statement has both an inclusive and exclusive function, to identify Eudaimon, Apia, Taouak and all Melitians as God's treasure/treasury and to exclude not only pagans but also Catholic Christians. Taouak exemplifies the exclusivist stance of the Melitian church which saw itself in a privileged relation to God, and the Catholic church as tainted by compromise<sup>142</sup>.

In addition to these six texts, seven women writers suggest that they are members of worshipping communities from their use of 'biblical' vocabulary and imagery, heard

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<sup>135</sup> On ξεντεία in the 'NT', see 91f above.

<sup>136</sup> Paul appears to be a soldier in Alexandria, P.Neph.8.

<sup>137</sup> The editors note P.Lond.6.1914 refers to a meeting place for Melitian soldiers at the Parembolē, 27.

<sup>138</sup> Socrates, *HE* 1.9; Sozomen, *HE* 1.24.

<sup>139</sup> On charges against Athanasius of violence against Melitians, see Sozomen, *HE* 2.22. Also P.Lond.6.1914.

<sup>140</sup> Eds, 27.

<sup>141</sup> On this interpretation, see 92ff above.

<sup>142</sup> Hauben (2000), 332f.

most probably in the context of worship<sup>143</sup>. A further two women are probably members of the Christian communities whose clergy act in secular capacities for them<sup>144</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

The small number of texts with evidence about women's interactions with the church and the uncertain nature of some of the information allow conclusions to be offered only with caution. Nonetheless, the women's texts shed light on what is already known of the church in fourth-century Egypt from other sources.

The first conclusion concerns women's participation in the church. The women writers' formulations indicate that they are members of worshipping communities, both Catholic and Melitian. Some of the women demonstrate that their attendance at church is sufficiently frequent and their attention to the reading of 'Scripture' sufficiently focused for them to recall and use 'biblical' words and imagery, among whom are Anonyme in P.Oxy.12.1592, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926, Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161, Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 and the mother in P.Ben.Mus.4. The texts are silent about any formal ministry roles of the women, their attitudes to the church and the nature of their involvement beyond attendance at worship. The only reference to a religious role for women is the mention of αἱ παρθένοι τοῦ θεοῦ in P.Neph.1. The silence about women's roles, apart from that of consecrated virgin, may reflect reality, so that, despite the small sample size, these texts reflect a situation in fourth-century Egypt where the only roles in the church open to women are those associated with asceticism.

There is little extant literature on the roles of women in the Egyptian church. Clement of Alexandria and Origen in the third century write about the roles of widows and women deacons as past, not present, realities<sup>145</sup>. Origen allows that women may prophesy and teach, but not in the church, and only to women<sup>146</sup>. The *Apostolic Church Order* written in fourth-century Egypt shows hostility to the ministry of women

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<sup>143</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Edmonstone; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Herm.17; P.Oxy.8.1161; P.Oxy.12.1592; SB 18.13612.

<sup>144</sup> P.Kell.1.Gr.32; Stud.Pal.20.86.

<sup>145</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* 3.12.97.2; Origen, *On prayer* 28.4; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.6.53.3-4. In Egypt, the female diaconate was not separate from the order of widows, Gryson (1976), 32f.

<sup>146</sup> Origen, *Fragments on 1 Corinthians* 74 cited in Gryson (1976), 28f.

through the device of a conversation between the apostles and Mary and Martha. At Andrew's suggestion that positions of ministry be created for women, the women are made to acknowledge their unsuitability. The text clearly seeks to constrain women's roles<sup>147</sup> which, by implication, are a current issue in the church, suggesting some women hold ministry positions. Consistent prohibitions of women's ministry and restriction of allowed functions are evident in official statements and documents of the church outside Egypt<sup>148</sup> and, again, indicate that women are actively engaged in ministerial roles in the church. The papyri examined here give no evidence of these roles.

A second conclusion concerns the composition of worshipping congregations. P.Grenf.1.53, with Sarapion's daughters' demand for husbands, raises the possibility of imbalance in the numbers of men and women in congregations such as the literary sources suggest. A criticism of the early church was that it was an institution for women, children and slaves<sup>149</sup>. The picture that emerges from P.Oxy.6.903 of a woman attending church without her husband is consistent with the suggestion of an imbalance in numbers and offers a scenario that may reflect the reality of local church life.

A third conclusion does not concern women specifically but notes the growing influence of Christianity evident in the reckoning of time by Christian festivals and in the naming of property as Christian without explanation. In P.Bour.25, Tare refers to the Pasch, and in SB 12.10840 Euthalios and Mikke refer to the fast of Lent and the festival of Easter. P.Oxy.48.3407 includes the landlady's reference to 'the Lord's Day', marking it as the day of Christian worship, and Anonyme in P.Oxy.6.903 refers to a building as 'the Lord's house'. While P.Bour.25 and SB 12.10840 are letters

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<sup>147</sup> *Apostolic Church Order* 1.24-28. Part of the logion appears in English as *Agrapha* 9. See also *Canons of Hippolytus* 7, 32. The *Canons of Athanasius* do not attest any ministry for women although a possible addition forbids the priest anointing a woman at baptism, leaving the action to other women, of what category is unclear, *Canons of Athanasius*, 142. The list of seven offices in Canon 10 include *παλμφοδοί* and *θυρωροί*. Women do not appear to be among their number and are certainly not in the other orders.

<sup>148</sup> Tertullian in C3 writes against women teaching and administering the sacraments, *De baptismo* 17; *De virginibus velandis* 9.1. The roles of widow and deaconess described in *Didascalia Apostolorum* 3.1-12 (XIV-XVI) (Syria C3) and *Apostolic Tradition* 1-19 (Rome) become more constrained in C4 until they disappear. The later *Apostolic Constitutions* 3.9 (C4) consider women baptising illegal and impious, priestly ministry being for men. Canon 19 of the Council of Nicaea (325) and Canons 11, 44 of the Council of Laodicea explicitly exclude women from ordained ministry.

<sup>149</sup> Eg Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.44, 55.

within Christian families, P.Oxy.48.3407 is not, and P.Oxy.6.903 is a public document.

A fourth conclusion follows. The texts illustrate some of the significant shifts in the theology and organisation of the church in Egypt in the third and fourth centuries which contributed to the marginalisation of women<sup>150</sup>.

1. The church came to be regarded as public rather than private space where women became increasingly more constrained.
2. The church became more institutionalised, modelled on the structures of Roman social and political life with its gendered hierarchy, and the distinction between ordained clergy, from whose number women were excluded, and laity became more marked.
3. The concept of church leadership shifted from ministry to governance, and from a charismatic to an institutional base.

Monasticism came to offer women an alternative vocational path to the ordained roles of bishop, priest and deacon that were closed to them, and to the roles of ecclesiastical widow and deaconess which became increasingly constrained until they finally disappeared.

After examining the Christian women's religious lives expressed in their interactions with the institutional church and its representatives, the following chapter continues the focus on embedded theology in considering the evidence of the papyri for the women's attitudes to marriage and family.

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<sup>150</sup> Torjesen (1993), 155-176; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 7; *Didascalia Apostolorum* 9.



## CHAPTER 7

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage and family are frequent topics in the papyri written by Christian women. Extensive greetings of family<sup>1</sup>, complaints about failures to write<sup>2</sup>, and requests for letters<sup>3</sup> are evidence of the importance of family relationship and indicate the role of letters in maintaining connection. The definition of family in the ancient world is debated. Οἶκος, household, refers to a wider circle than husband, wife and children, for which group there is no specific word. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a consciousness that it forms the core structure of the family<sup>4</sup>. Research<sup>5</sup> concludes that the οἶκος<sup>6</sup> is the foundational unit in ancient society, not the individual, and that family harmony is the ideal<sup>7</sup>, a significant factor of which is common religious belief.

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

Plutarch, *Moralia* 140D

<sup>1</sup> Eg P.Mich.3.214-221 (C3); P.Giss.20-24, 67, 80 (C2).

<sup>2</sup> Eg BGU 2.601 (C2); P.Mich.15.751 (C2); SB 12.10876 (C2); P.Mich.3.217 (296/7); P.Lund.2.4 (C3); P.Oxy.6.937 (C3); 8.1157 (C3); 59.3994 (C3); 55.3819 (C4); BGU 3.948; P.Oxy.34.2731 (C4/5). The frequency of such complaints suggests they may have a formulaic quality, Koskenniemi (1956), 104-114, but the tone of the letters, the significance of family in illness, bereavement and need, indicate that this does not empty them of meaning.

<sup>3</sup> Eg P.Mich.8.481 (C2); P.Oxy.10.1293 (C2); 6.937 (C3); 8.1157 (C3); 59.3994 (C3); PSI 8.899 (C3), all addressed to women. For the significance of such requests for women's literacy, see 15 above.

<sup>4</sup> Moxnes (1997a), 29.

<sup>5</sup> The subject has generated considerable scholarship eg Pomeroy (1975); Cameron and Kuhrt (1983, 1993); Hallett (1984); (1989); Beaucamp (1990-1992); Dixon (1991); (1992); Gardner and Wiedemann (1991); Rawson (1991a); Llewelyn, 'Paul's Advice on Marriage and the Changing Understanding of Marriage in Antiquity' in *ND* 6.1-18; 'The Allotment after Death and Paul's Metaphor of Inheritance' in *ND* 6.27-41; E. A. Judge, 'A Woman's Behaviour' in *ND* 6.18-24; R. Kearsley, 'Women in Public Life' in *ND* 6.24-27; Hunter (1992); (2003); Evans-Grubbs (1995); (2002); Barker (1997); Moxnes (1997a); Gardner (1998); Pomeroy (1998); Jacobs (1999); Gourevitch and Raepsaet-Charlier (2001), 88-115.

<sup>6</sup> The οἶκος denotes the persons and property belonging to the household unit, Pomeroy (1998), 20. For a study of the definition of 'family', see Dixon (1992), 1-35.

<sup>7</sup> On the development of marriage as friendship (*philia*, *amicitia*) and the emphasis on harmony (*concordia*, *homonoia*) within it, see Hunter (1992), 8. Brown (1991), 16f, notes that marriage came to represent the social and political virtue of *concordia* in microcosm. See also Wilcken (1912), 417-422; Dixon (1991), 113.

Plutarch's urging and his reference to women's secret religious behaviour suggests that reality did not always align with the ideal.

My purpose in this chapter is to examine the issues about marriage and family that emerge in the Christian women's letters, and what these indicate about the women's religious lives.

References to marriage and family occur in 20 of the 26 texts written by Christian women<sup>8</sup>. Six writers are currently married<sup>9</sup>. Two are widows<sup>10</sup> and one divorced<sup>11</sup>. Four suggest, but do not state, that they are either widowed or divorced<sup>12</sup>. Eighteen refer to parent/child relationships<sup>13</sup>. Three concern sibling relationships<sup>14</sup>.

## **WOMEN AND MARRIAGE**

Two attitudes to marriage emerge in the early Christian period<sup>15</sup>, both deriving from the 'NT' and early Christian literature. One affirms the goodness of marriage as the norm for most people<sup>16</sup>. The other advocates celibacy, seeing marriage as a legitimate but lesser way and a concession to human weakness<sup>17</sup>. The Christian women's texts do not discuss these issues but deal with the realities they concern:

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<sup>8</sup> I consider the father in P.Oxy.12.1592 and the brothers in P.Oxy.48.3407 to be non-kin. See 145f, 189f above and 230, 235 below.

<sup>9</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Edmonstone; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; P.Grenf.1.53; P.Oxy.6.903.

<sup>10</sup> P.Herm.17; SB 18.13612.

<sup>11</sup> P.Oxy.50.3581.

<sup>12</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.34; P.Lips.1.28; Stud.Pal.20.86.

<sup>13</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.34; P.Ben.Mus.4; P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Bour.25; P.Grenf.1.53; P.Lips.1.28; P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1; P.Oxy.6.903; 12.1592; 50.3581; SB 12.10840; 14.11588; 14.11881; 16.12673; 18.13612.

<sup>14</sup> SB 8.9746; P.Oxy.14.1774; 48.3407.

<sup>15</sup> For an extensive collection of sources with introduction, see Hunter (1992); for an examination of asceticism and marriage from the NT to Augustine, see Brown (1991).

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.9; Ephesians 5.21-33; 1 Timothy 5.1-16; 1 Peter 3.1-7. Also Justin Martyr, *Prima Apologia* 15, 29; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 2.23.137-142; 3.6.45; 7.12.70; *Instructor* 3.11; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.28.1; 4.11.1; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.29; Chrysostom, *Homily on Ephesians* 5.22-24 20; Augustine, *De bono coniugali*. Justin and Clement hold as an ideal that marriage, and specifically sexual intercourse, are only for procreation.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.4-11; *Acts of Paul* 3.5. Valentinians, Marcionites and Encratites taught sexual renunciation, Hunter (1992), 12f; Jerome, *Select Letters of St Jerome* 49.2. See also Martin (1997), who compares Pauline sexual asceticism with Stoic and medical thought. The superiority of celibacy receives developed articulation in C3 and C4 eg Origen, *Commentary on the Song of Songs* 2.5; Methodius, *Symposium* 1, 2; Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 1.8; Athanasius, *On virginity* 10; First *Letter to Virgins* 19, 24; Chrysostom, *On virginity*, especially 51-72. For Chrysostom's ambivalent attitude to marriage, see Clark (1979), 1-34.



marriage, family, widowhood, celibacy, remarriage, marital conflict, reconciliation and divorce.

In examining marriage in ancient texts, it cannot be presumed that modern conceptions of romance and intimacy are significant factors<sup>18</sup>, that the husband/wife relationship is the most important to either party or to the society<sup>19</sup>, or that construction of gender within marriage is coincident with modern conceptions. The functions of marriage in late antiquity show wide variation including physical and social production and reproduction, material and emotional support, protection and the transmission of property, wealth, honour and the family cult<sup>20</sup>.

Among the texts written by Christian women, only one, P.Grenf.1.53, is to a husband, giving written expression to a marriage relationship. Artemis is married to the absent Theodoros, a soldier<sup>21</sup>. She greets him ἐν θεῷ, l.1. The meaningfulness of the phrase requires Theodoros to be a Christian in a marriage with shared religious beliefs. Whether one or both converted is unknown<sup>22</sup>. The marriage is such that Artemis is concerned about Theodoros' opinion of her. She justifies herself to him as much as to Sarapion, including Sarapion's letter so that Theodoros must read it. Her action suggests the value she gives to her marriage. It may also reflect the provisions of a marriage contract, that she not shame her husband<sup>23</sup>, whereas Sarapion has charged her with being a seducer (οἰκοφθόρους), ll.19f, which would bring shame. Further the indignation of the presbyters<sup>24</sup> suggests she has incurred shame in charging Soucharos<sup>25</sup>. In a society with a gendered honour:shame value, where women carry the onus of family and community respectability, the charge would have negative

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<sup>18</sup> Peskowitz (1993), 10-12, who writes on Jewish families, but her statements on the lack of universality in the construction of marriage apply generally.

<sup>19</sup> The companionate model of ancient marriage is argued in Dixon (1991), 104ff; (1992), 70. *Contra* Garnsey and Saller in Garnsey and Saller (1987), 131ff; Hallett (1984), 241.

<sup>20</sup> Dixon (1992), 30; Moxnes (1997a), 30; Rupprecht (1998); Hunter (2003).

<sup>21</sup> Marriage for soldiers was possible from c.197 when Severus ended the ban noted in Herodian 3.8.4, 5. See Campell (1978); Phang (2001). Also Llewelyn, 'Name and Status: A Veteran Seeks Tax Exemption' in *ND* 6.147-152, here 148.

<sup>22</sup> The timing of conversion relates to the issue of mixed marriage. See on P.Grenf.1.53 at 206f below.

<sup>23</sup> This is the regular stipulation for women, Arnaoutoglou (1995), 12ff. See also n.50 below.

<sup>24</sup> See 45, n.112 above and 175f above.

<sup>25</sup> Following the reconstruction in Winter (1933), 157, n.4.

consequences for Artemis' marriage and her acceptance in the church. Her desire for harmonious relationship and vindication is not specifically Christian<sup>26</sup>.

This letter contains other information on marriage. Artemis records Sarapion's daughters' demand, 'we want husbands' (ἄνδρες θέλομεν), l.25, which raises the issue of marriage within the Christian community<sup>27</sup> and may point to an imbalance in numbers of women over men<sup>28</sup>. Sarapion's daughters are unwilling to wait for their father to contract (Christian) marriages for them and they do not choose the option of celibacy<sup>29</sup>. Taking the matter into their own hands worsens the charge of immorality with the derogatory πορνείματα, ll.20f<sup>30</sup>.

The church discouraged marriage between Christians and pagans from the apostolic period yet recognised their reality<sup>31</sup>. The 'NT' encourages Christians to remain in mixed marriages because of the evangelistic potential, while urging believers not to enter new mixed marriages<sup>32</sup>. In later centuries, attitudes against mixed marriage hardened<sup>33</sup> and, in the west, the Council of Elvira (c.312) banned the practice<sup>34</sup>. Continued bans recognise intermarriage was continuing<sup>35</sup>. The Council of Hippo

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<sup>26</sup> A similar concern for harmony but by the husband is evident in P.Mich.3.214-221 (C3). A wife's concern for her husband's opinion and the marital relationship appears in SB 14.11644 (C1/2).

<sup>27</sup> See MacDonald (1990); Salzman (2002), ch.5. References in early Christian literature and church Councils indicate that mixed marriage was a common and continuing issue. However, a study of elite Roman women suggests mixed marriage was infrequent, with 82 out of 90 pagan and Christian marriages analysed occurring within their faith communities; that is, only 8 mixed marriages are attested, Salzman (2002), 145. Whether these figures relate to classes other than the elite is not known.

<sup>28</sup> Canon 15, Council of Elvira (c.312), 'because Christian girls are very numerous, they are by no means to be married off to pagans lest their youthful prime presume and relax into an adultery of the soul'. Origen, *Contra Celsus* 3.44, 50, 55, does not disagree with Celsus' charge that the gospel is attractive to women but it is unclear whether he attempts to counter Celsus' claim that women outnumber men in the church. Origen's attack on pagan priestesses suggests he does. See Harnack (1908) 2.82; MacDonald (1996), 109-115. Elite Roman Christian women do not significantly outnumber men, Salzman (2002), 139-141.

<sup>29</sup> Such a problem leads the daughters of Nicholas to remain virgins, Clement of Alexandria, *Stomateis* 3.4.25. But Nicholas' son remains celibate as well. See also Brown (1991), 147.

<sup>30</sup> See also ll.27, 28.

<sup>31</sup> There was strong encouragement to marry fellow-Christians, eg 2 Corinthians 6.14; Tertullian, *De monogamia*, 2; Eusebius, *HE* 8.14.16. See also MacDonald (1994).

<sup>32</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.12-16, 39; 2 Corinthians 6.14-16; 1 Peter 3.1.

<sup>33</sup> Eg Tertullian, 'believers who marry pagans are guilty of fornication and are to be excluded', *De monogamia* 2, particularly 2.3; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 3; Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 3.62; *De Lapsis* 6. In the apocryphal Acts, Christian women separate from pagan husbands/fiancés less because of the men's pagan status than for the sake of celibacy.

<sup>34</sup> Canons 15-17. Other proposed dates for the Council: after 324, Lane-Fox (1986), 664f; 312, Brown (1991), 206; 306-314, Evans-Grubbs (1995), 15.

<sup>35</sup> Ambrose, *Abramo* 1.9.84; Zeno of Verona, *Tractatus* 2.7.8.14-16. Also MacMullen (1984), 137, n.31.

(393) limited the ban to clergy families<sup>36</sup>. The progression points to compromise in light of continued failure. While the apostle Paul's discussion of mixed marriage addresses both husband and wife, 1 Peter 3.1-6 and later treatments show the problem mainly concerned Christian women<sup>37</sup>. Plutarch's ideal is reconstructed in the 'NT' ideal of whole households sharing the conversion of the male head or single female head<sup>38</sup>.

Sarapion's daughters' voicing their demand before the presbyters may exhibit awareness of the church's discouragement of mixed marriage, frustration with the need to conform and with presbyters' role, if such is the case<sup>39</sup>, in organising the marriages of their community. Artemis, nonetheless, holds Sarapion at least partially to blame for the daughters' situation, an attitude attested in Christian literature<sup>40</sup>. Artemis does not indicate her own attitude to the girls' lack of husbands, but she considers their behaviour unacceptable and, without using the word, shameful, incurring loss of honour for their father and the church. Artemis' attitude is not exclusively Christian but is consistent with an honour:shame value.

Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 does not name her husband<sup>41</sup> but asks that Appa Paphnouthios pray for him. The husband greets Paphnouthios, indicating acquaintance. It seems likely that he is Christian in a marriage of shared belief. The relative times of adopting Christianity are unknown. Valeria refers to τὰς θυγατέρας μου, l.20, but it is unclear whether the daughters are also the husband's<sup>42</sup>. Valeria's request for prayer for her husband suggests loving concern, but any specifically Christian dimension to Valeria's attitude is unknown.

Terouterou in P.Edmonstone acts with her husband, Aurelius Dorotheos, assisting (μετὰ συνεστῶτ[ο]ς), l.3, in the manumission of her part-share of three slaves. He

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<sup>36</sup> Canon 12 (Greek Canon 24).

<sup>37</sup> That mixed marriage is mainly about a Christian woman with a pagan man is confirmed by the need for widows and deaconesses to minister to women in pagan households, *Apostolic Constitutions* 3.16. See also Justin Martyr, *Seconda Apologia* 2; 1 Clement 6.2f; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 3.

<sup>38</sup> Acts 16.15, 32f; 18.8; 1 Corinthians 1.16; The Shepherd 46.

<sup>39</sup> See 176 above.

<sup>40</sup> ll.20-22. Parents were held responsible to provide spouses at an early age to prevent children committing fornication eg *Didascalia Apostolorum* 4.11 (XXII); Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis* 11.4; *Canons of Athanasius* 94. Tertullian advocates marriage before puberty.

<sup>41</sup> Valeria names both daughters.

<sup>42</sup> See n.165 below.

signs for her as she is illiterate but this says little about their relative status<sup>43</sup>. It is reasonable to assume that Dorotheos concurs in the manumission, but Dorotheos does not own the slaves with his wife. They have separate property<sup>44</sup>.

The mother in P.Ben.Mus.4 does not refer to her husband in the extant portion of her letter. Knowledge of him comes from P.Ben.Mus.5<sup>45</sup>. The son, however, does not write to his father though it seems the mother and father live together. It is unclear whether the father visits. The mother writes 'because I came to see you' (ὅτ[ι] ἦρθα (= ἦλθον) ἥδ[ι<ν>] (= ἰδεῖν) σε), 4.14, which, however, does not rule out the father's presence. The son writes 'glory to God that you (pl.) came back healthy, my lady mother' (δόξα τῷ θε(ε)ῷ ὅτι ἦλθατε ὑγια<ί>νοντες κυρία μου μήτηρ (= μήτερ)), ll.22-26, and immediately adds 'all with me greet you (pl.)' (ἀσπάζονται (= ἀσπάζονται) ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ), ll.27-29. The editor presumes these are interchanged plural forms for the singular, commenting that such practice is common. However, in this text the plurals may refer to the father. The mother's independent movement and contact with the son are, therefore, uncertain.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 are almost certainly married and their marriage appears harmonious. The couple pray together, are members of the Melitian church and share common attitudes to healing, death and life, the brothers, asceticism and salvation<sup>46</sup>. The letter indicates Paul's concern about his wife's health and his concurrence in her travel to the brothers and family while he remains in ξενιτεία. Tapiam's own attitude to her marriage includes that she opts not to stay with Paul in her illness<sup>47</sup>.

P.Oxy.6.903 and P.Oxy.50.3581 are two women's accounts of the abusive behaviour of their husbands<sup>48</sup>. The women are Christian as most probably are the husbands.

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<sup>43</sup> Literacy shows only little correlation with social class with a slightly increased likelihood that the wealthy and urban dwellers are literate. See 13f especially n.87 and 16 especially n.112 above.

<sup>44</sup> A part-share of slaves seems unlikely in a dowry.

<sup>45</sup> The son writes, χα[ρὰν οὖν πο[λ]λῇ[ν ἔσ]χον, ὅτι κα[ ]πι[ ]σου τὸν [κ(ύριό)]ν μου πα[τέ]ρα, ll.13f.

<sup>46</sup> Presuming 'we' expresses Tapiam and Paul's shared opinion.

<sup>47</sup> Paul as a soldier, P.Neph.8, may be unable to leave Alexandria; see the editors' comment, 27.

<sup>48</sup> On the abuse of women in Egypt in the period, see Parca (2002), who distinguishes verbal, physical, economic and psychological aspects, all evident in these texts.

P.Oxy.6.903 is an affidavit in a marital adjudication<sup>49</sup> of what appears to have been an ἄγραφος γάμος<sup>50</sup>. The marriage is conflicted. Anonyme refers to Anonymos' torture, verbal abuse, reprisals, questions about her church attendance, and failure to give her the keys. She classifies Anonymos' behaviour as ὑβρις, l.1, 17, one of the three standard terms to describe abuse in petitions in marital disputes<sup>51</sup>. A previous marital adjudication results in Anonymos swearing before the bishops to amend behaviour which Anonyme, the bishops and Anonymos himself recognise as unacceptable. The undertakings are written in a marriage contract, the regular outcome of adjudication<sup>52</sup>, stipulating behaviour and financial penalties for non-compliance<sup>53</sup>. It is noteworthy that Anonyme does not mention separation from Anonymos<sup>54</sup>. It suggests a commitment to reconcile, already evident in Anonyme's likely initiation of the first hearing before the bishops<sup>55</sup>. Seeking reconciliation is consistent with church teaching on the indissolubility of marriage<sup>56</sup>. The ideal of lifelong union, however, exists in paganism<sup>57</sup> and Christianity, as does the reality of divorce.

The reasons for Anonyme's commitment to the marriage may not be compliance with Christian teaching. The dating of P.Oxy.6.903 is no more precise than the fourth century, during which time divorce legislation underwent a number of

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<sup>49</sup> On marital disputes, see Arnaoutoglou (1995), 26. It would be consistent with contemporary practice and Anonyme's own past action for the statement to be submitted to the bishop's court. See 178f above.

<sup>50</sup> Marriage without contract is common. Where a contract exists it relates not to a ceremony but to finances and behaviours that can be negotiated at any stage, Taubenschlag (1955), 115-119, 120. For examples of contracts, see Montevecchi (1936); Wolff (1939). Regular behavioural stipulations for the man include that he provide what befits a free woman, not have a concubine, not have children from another woman, not maltreat his wife; the one regular stipulation for the woman is that she must not shame her husband. Cohabitation does not constitute marriage. Intention and consent were also required, Gardner (1986), 46f, 50.

<sup>51</sup> ἐκβάλλειν, κακουχεῖν, ὑβριζειν, Arnaoutoglou (1995), 23.

<sup>52</sup> On adjudication, see Arnaoutoglou (1995), 26. A similar text is P.Cairo.Masp.3.67295.

<sup>53</sup> Taubenschlag (1955), 120f.

<sup>54</sup> Similarly, P.Lips.1.41 (C4), also a petition arising from marital conflict written by a woman who does not seek termination of the marriage but marital harmony restored, τούτων γὰρ οὕτω πεπραγμένων εἰκότως ἡμῖν καὶ ἡ τοῦ γ[άμου] ἀρμ[ονία] τέλει[ος] ἔσται.

<sup>55</sup> It is unlikely that Anonymos would arraign himself, although possible that the brothers took a mediating role. Evidence suggests family involvement in marital reconciliation is regular eg SB 6.9271 (C1/2); P.Oxy.3.528 (C2); P.Mich.8.514 (C3); also friends' involvement eg SB 1.4658. Petitions and divorce settlements represent the end of the process, Arnaoutoglou (1995), 26.

<sup>56</sup> Mark 10.5-9; Luke 16.8; Matthew 5.31f; 19.9 allowing divorce and remarriage on the grounds of unchastity; 1 Corinthians 7.10-16; The Shepherd 29.1; Justin Martyr, *Prima Apologia* 29. P.Würzb.3 (C3), a liturgical prayer, asks 'quench the fiery darts of the evil one, and set at rest those who maintain holy matrimony in spite of opposition'.

<sup>57</sup> Treggiari (1991), 49; Dixon (1992), 67.

developments<sup>58</sup>. Pre-Constantine, divorce was without penalty for either unilateral repudiation or divorce by mutual consent, with few restrictions<sup>59</sup>. Constantine introduced penalties against unilateral divorce for all but a few causes. Women could divorce without penalty where the husband was a murderer, sorcerer or grave robber<sup>60</sup>. Divorce because the husband was a drunkard, a gambler or a philanderer led to loss of the woman's property and exile. Julian rescinded Constantine's penalties in about 363, and sources suggest that they were not re-imposed until 421<sup>61</sup>. Depending on date, Anonyme initiating divorce may have resulted in loss of property and liberty. Her motivation for staying in the marriage cannot be determined. Anonymos' misconduct may reflect Anonyme's inability to divorce.

In contrast to Plutarch's ideal, Anonyme practises her religion in the face of Anonymos' hostility, attending church on her own. Her absence from home is likely to carry the suspicion of immorality and to be a source of shame for her husband<sup>62</sup>, accounting for his punishing behaviour. The marriage bears the hallmarks of the strife to be avoided by the compliant wife<sup>63</sup>. Anonyme's assertiveness in attending church is consistent with other examples of her independence. Anonyme assists Chooos, Anonymos' assistant, financially, against her husband's wishes. She refuses to dismiss Anilla, Anonymos' slave-woman, over allegations that are obscure but may involve theft and possibly Anilla's sexual involvement with Anonymos. Anonyme is far from the submissive ideal wife of the 'NT'. Anonyme's independence is also evident on the economic level. She refers to 'my', in contrast to 'his' slaves, and to her considerable debts to the state<sup>64</sup>, which Anonymos refuses to pay. Anonyme's

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<sup>58</sup> See Bagnall (1987b); Evans-Grubbs (1995).

<sup>59</sup> Augustus' *lex Iulia*, 18 BCE and *lex Papia Poppaea* 9 ban freedwomen from divorcing their husbands without permission when the men are also their patrons, and insane women from any divorce. On divorce, see Montevecchi (1936); Gardner (1986), 81-95; Treggiari (1991); Dixon (1992), 61-97; Evans-Grubbs (1995), 203-260;. The law could not prevent the ending of marriage since marriage rested on mutual consent, but it could control its consequences, eg the recovery of a woman's dowry and remarriage.

<sup>60</sup> CT 3.16.1 (331). Bagnall (1987b), 42, 45, demonstrates that the Constantinian legislation on marriage and divorce shows no particular Christian influence.

<sup>61</sup> CT 3.16.2.

<sup>62</sup> See 196 above.

<sup>63</sup> 1 Peter 3.2. For an example of compliance that still ends in divorce, see Justin Martyr, *Seconda Apologia* 2. The contribution of belief and practice to Anonyme's marital difficulties is unknown.

<sup>64</sup> Anonyme owes 100 artabas of wheat, sufficient to feed an adult for over 16 years, Bagnall (1993a), 116.

property suggests that she is wealthy in her own right, making economic dependence an unlikely factor in her decision to stay in the marriage.

Anonyme's independent actions contrast with her limited authority within the household. Anonymos withholds the household keys from her while allowing them to his slaves. The keys have symbolic as well as practical significance<sup>65</sup>. The gendered division of space in the ancient world, which gave women authority in the domestic sphere, is suspended here at Anonymos' say-so.

Anonyme's appeal to her mother-in-law as a witness suggests she lives with the couple and that the marriage is conducted within a vertically extended family on the husband's side, as was common<sup>66</sup>.

P.Oxy.50.3581 is a petition seeking arbitration on personal and property issues after Attiaena's divorce from Paul<sup>67</sup>. Attiaena refers to abduction, theft, abandonment, reconciliation/s, further theft, and abandonment, divorce initiated by her, a second abduction, probable rape, and a third abandonment. The reconciliation on which this text focuses<sup>68</sup>, probably an adjudication with subsequent contract, occurs through the 'beguiling' of the presbyters, at Paul's initiative.

The beginning of Attiaena's marriage lies in Paul's abduction of her<sup>69</sup>. Harsh legislation to prevent abduction marriage was promulgated in the early fourth century<sup>70</sup>. Abduction could be a means of forcing families to acquiesce in a disapproved marriage since the woman's reputation was damaged<sup>71</sup>. The law assumed that if a woman allowed herself to be abducted, forcibly or not, she had consented to it<sup>72</sup>. Willing participation on the woman's part was not always the case, however, as is evident from this text. Attiaena describes her relationship as marriage which involves consent. An abducted girl's marriage prospects, being damaged, no

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<sup>65</sup> A husband withholding the keys is part of the divorce procedure in the Twelve Tables, Cicero, *Philippics* 2.28.69. See also Gardner (1986), 84.

<sup>66</sup> Dixon (1992), 7-11; Bagnall (1993a), 118, 199.

<sup>67</sup> On marital conflict, see Arnaoutoglou (1995), 23.

<sup>68</sup> Use of *πάλιν*, I.8, suggests previous reconciliations.

<sup>69</sup> On the abduction of women, see Gardner (1986), 118-121; Evans-Grubbs (1989); Clark (1993), 11f, 36-38.

<sup>70</sup> *CT* 9.24.1 (326). See also Evans-Grubbs (1989); (1995), 183-193.

<sup>71</sup> Penalties aim not to protect the woman and punish the abductor but to protect the father's right to assign his daughter and property. Constantine's legislation presumes the woman's fault.

<sup>72</sup> Evans-Grubbs (1995), 185f.

doubt made 'consent' the only viable alternative<sup>73</sup>. Attiaena claims to be an orphan, presumably with no protection<sup>74</sup>.

Paul abandons Attiaena and cohabits with another woman (συνῆλθεν ἑταίρα γυναικεῖ (= ἑτέρα γυναικί), I.7. While married men with mistresses are widely attested, cohabitation with the mistress suggests the end of the marriage<sup>75</sup>. In leaving Attiaena, Paul takes all her property (πάντα μου τὰ πράγματα), I.6, most probably her dowry, perhaps indicating he claims she has acted wrongly<sup>76</sup>. She asserts that she is left with nothing (εἵσέν με χηρεύουσα<ν>), II.7f, yet continues to live in 'our house', I.9, which she owns independently<sup>77</sup>. Attiaena does not write about divorce, the restoration of her dowry or any legal procedures against Paul at this point<sup>78</sup>. Given a late fourth- or early fifth-century date<sup>79</sup>, no current penalties against unilateral repudiation prevented her from initiating divorce had she chosen it. Her disinclination may reflect her Christian commitment to the indissolubility of marriage or the disadvantages of the divorced state<sup>80</sup>.

Paul initiates reconciliation through the presbyters. They broker the marriage contract and are an example of clergy mediating in marital disputes. They perhaps also represent the church's concern for social respectability in the stability of Christian marriages. Paul offers in writing that the original marriage is still valid (γραφάμενός μοι συνπα[ρ]αμείναι τὴν συμβίωσιν), I.9, and undertakes, if he behaves in the same base way (τὰ αὐτὰ ἀνελεύθερα πράγματα διαπράξασθαι), I.10, to pay a penalty of two ounces of gold. Paul's father is surety for him, and evidence of the involvement of extended family in marital arrangements. It suggests further that Paul's father

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<sup>73</sup> Evans-Grubbs (1989), 62.

<sup>74</sup> See 140f above.

<sup>75</sup> A new marriage through cohabitation demonstrates that a divorce has taken place, Cicero, *De oratore* 1.40.183, 56.238. Also Treggiari (1991), 35. Attiaena's phrase τῇ αὐτῇ λεγομένη αὐτοῦ γυναικεῖ, I.20, suggests that Paul sees the second relationship as marriage.

<sup>76</sup> The dowry remained a woman's property and was forfeit only as a penalty, Evans-Grubbs (1995), 226-234.

<sup>77</sup> 'Our' is unlikely to include Paul, given that συνεισενέγκω αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ἡμέτερον οἶκον, I.9, after the reconciliation, occurs as εἰσαγαγούσα εἰς τὸν ἡμ[έτε]ρ[ον οἶκον], I.5, at the marriage. The house may be inherited from Attiaena's parents. Seven such cases are known from C3, Barker (1997).

<sup>78</sup> Women generally do not seek termination of marriage but are satisfied with the return of their dowry or its equivalent, Arnaoutoglou (1995), 28.

<sup>79</sup> Ed.pr., on palaeographical grounds.

<sup>80</sup> On the vulnerability of many divorced women, see MacDonald (1990), 233f; Pomeroy (1976). Pomeroy argues that Christian affiliation could alienate a woman from her family and work against her gaining their support.



supports the marriage's continuance<sup>81</sup>. The written document is not called a marriage contract but no doubt functioned as one<sup>82</sup>. It stipulates the behaviour required of Paul but Attiaena is silent about any requirements of her, or financial arrangements beyond the stipulated penalty.

The presbyters represent the church's authority to Attiaena and she acquiesces. She is still committed to the marriage for reasons that are unknown but may include status and financial support as a married woman although Attiaena appears to have some independent means, and the approval of the church and her community. It may again be that reconciliation is consistent with Attiaena's own Christian convictions. Attiaena obeys the elders' advice/demand that she take Paul back. Her ideal of Christian womanhood, at least at this time, is consistent with the submission urged in church teaching<sup>83</sup> and coincident with pagan σωφροσύνη. However, there may be another dimension to the reconciliation.

Attiaena's later reflection is that Paul 'again beguiled me through the elders until I again took him into our house' (πάλειν (= πάλιν) ἐξηπά[της]εν διὰ πρεσβυτέρων ἄχρις οὗ πάλειν (= πάλιν) συνεισενέγκω αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ἡμέτερον οἶκον), II.8f. Attiaena uses the aorist of the beguiling, while ἄχρις suggests a period of time during which the beguiling occurred. Use of the aorist for an ongoing action in the past, now complete and considered as a unit, is regular. The construction suggests reluctance or at least hesitancy on Attiaena's part, standing against Paul and the presbyters for a time, and a repeated approach from them. However, she finally concedes.

The reconciliation fails. As self-protection (εὐλαβηθεῖσα μὴ κίνδυνον πάλιν ὑπομείνω ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ) I.15, Attiaena sends to Paul 'through the *tabularius*, a *repudium* through the *tabularius civitatis* in accordance with Roman law' (ῥεπούδιον διὰ ταβουλαρίου προσέπεμψα αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ τῆς πόλεως ταβουλαρίου κατὰ τὸν βασιλικὸν νόμον), II.15-17<sup>84</sup>. Attiaena's submission gives way to self-assertion in initiating divorce that is

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<sup>81</sup> Paul's name reflects the parents' Christianity and such an attitude would be consistent.

<sup>82</sup> Taubenschlag (1955), 120.

<sup>83</sup> Ephesians 5.22-24; Colossians 3.18; 1 Timothy 2.8-15; Titus 2.3-5; 1 Peter 3.1-6, 1 Clement 1.3; 21.6f. The 'Church Fathers' describe all relationships in terms of power, authority, domination and submission; eg the husband/father is king who rules his subjects, namely his wife, children and slaves, Chrysostom, *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 34.7. To Chrysostom, man to woman is as ruler to subject; head to body; master to slave; teacher to disciple; charioteer to horse, Clark (1979), 2.

<sup>84</sup> Women in Roman law had the right to divorce unilaterally without penalty, Gardner (1986), 86. Successive Christian emperors reformed the laws, with penalties for divorce by consent or possibly *repudium* eg CT 3.16.1 (331); see also Jones (1964), 974f. Julian tried to reinstate classical law but

contrary to the church's ideals of submissiveness and marital indissolubility. Further assertive action is evident in Attiaena's petition for redress, without guardianship or male assistance. Both actions are within her legal capacity.

Two of the women writers are widows, the mother in SB 18.13612 and Leuchis in P.Herm.17. Four other women are likely to be widows or divorced, the mother in P.Abinn.34, Kophaena in BGU 3.948, Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86 and Teeus in P.Lips.1.28. In considering these six women<sup>85</sup>, it is necessary to outline the church's teaching on widowhood, divorce and remarriage, and contemporary pagan attitudes to them.

The church's teaching on widowhood and remarriage is not uniform across time or place. The 'NT' urges young widows to marry and have children<sup>86</sup>, and encourages them not to<sup>87</sup>. Older widows, if married only once, may enrol as widows whom the church supports<sup>88</sup> if they remain celibate, pray for the church and teach other women to become the church's ideal wife and mother<sup>89</sup>. Discouragement of widows remarrying occurs in early Christian literature<sup>90</sup> and in post-Constantinian legislation especially for widows with children<sup>91</sup>. Tertullian, in his later writing, rejects the possibility altogether<sup>92</sup>. Jerome regards remarriage as close to prostitution<sup>93</sup>. The

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Constantine's penalties were reintroduced. Ed.pr. considers the βασιλικὸς νόμος refers to CJ 5.17.8 (449) as best suiting its provisions, or possibly CT 3.16.2 (421; 438 East) or NTh 12 (439) which stipulates that a *repudium* is to be sent to effect a divorce and which restores the ancient divorce laws which included no penalty. Bagnall (1987b), 43, n.7, opts for NTh 12 as the likely referent in this text. Gardner (1986), 85f, argues that formal declarations of divorce were normal before 439 but not required. CT 3.16.1 (331) presumes *repudia*. Taubenschlag (1955), 122, argues their requirement from C4. A further consideration is that κατὰ τὸν βασιλικὸν νόμον may refer to Roman practice recognised in law not a law requiring it and therefore the phrase would not determine the date of the text. Also it may refer to the *tabularius*' role rather than the procedure but this is unlikely. This divorce would fit Julian's supposed legislation, c.363, ed.pr., note to l.16.

<sup>85</sup> See 135-140 above. The focus of this chapter is attitudes to marriage, remarriage and divorce.

<sup>86</sup> 1 Timothy 5.14. Methuen (1997) argues these 'widows' may be virgins.

<sup>87</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.39 allows widows to remarry μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ but 7.27-35 discourages marriage and change in life-circumstances. The Shepherd 32 allows but discourages remarriage.

<sup>88</sup> 1 Timothy 5.3-16. Widows are enrolled at 60 years, with childbearing and rearing complete.

<sup>89</sup> Repeated attempts to contain the ministry of widows suggest their roles were broader and more active than the constrained picture of the 'NT' and early Christian literature. On the 'order' of widows, see Gryson (1976).

<sup>90</sup> Eg Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.12. 82.4f, 88.4, 89.1; Justin Martyr, *Prima Apologia* 15.

<sup>91</sup> CJ 5.37.22.5 (326); CT 8.13.1 (349); 8.13.4 (358); 3.17.4 (390). The legal requirement that widows remarry ceased in 320, CT 8.16.1.

<sup>92</sup> Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis* (c.212); *De monogamia* (c.217). *Ad uxorem* (200-206) allowed second marriages.

<sup>93</sup> Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 1.13, 15: 231C-232B, 234D.

Christian discouragement of remarriage is generally articulated in terms of faithfulness to Christ. The parallel concept in late Roman antiquity, though conceived differently, is the ideal of the *univira*<sup>94</sup>, which persisted alongside the social freedom, and at times insistence, to remarry<sup>95</sup>.

Remarriage of divorced women and men was discouraged and in some places officially forbidden by the church, based on 'NT' condemnation<sup>96</sup>. This attitude contrasts with the prevailing social practice that allowed it and, in the Augustan legislation, insisted that divorced people remarry<sup>97</sup>. In the West, even the 'innocent' partner in a case of adultery could not remarry, despite separation being sometimes mandatory<sup>98</sup>. In the East, remarriage was regulated less strictly<sup>99</sup>. The apocryphal canons of Nicaea, written in Egypt perhaps in the early fifth century, allow a spouse unjustly accused by the partner to divorce and remarry, although remarriage after divorce for the cause of adultery is not permitted<sup>100</sup>.

Leuchis and the mother of Philadelphos do not discuss widowhood in terms of the fourth-century debates, nor Attiaena her divorce.

Leuchis in P.Herm.17 states that she is a widow and a woman (ἐπὶ (= ἐπεὶ) χήρα γυνή εἰμι), l.6, reliant on Apa Johannes who stands next after God as a potential source of

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<sup>94</sup> Gardner (1986), 50ff; Dixon (1992), 89, 212, n.123; Pomeroy (1975), 161, 206. Evans-Grubbs (1995), 66-68, points out that most pre-Christian inscriptions to *univirae* are to women who predeceased their husbands and were not divorced. Christian *univirae* refuse to remarry.

<sup>95</sup> Widows could remarry after 10 months or after giving birth. Before 320, it was required after 24 months (*lex Iulia, lex Papia Poppaea*). See Pomeroy (1975), 161; Gardner (1986), 51f; Evans-Grubbs (1995), 66-68; Arjava (1996), 77. Demographic studies indicate that divorcées/widows over 30-35 were unlikely to remarry, possibly due to rejection of marriage or because, with children, they were not 'a desirable commodity', Bagnall and Frier (1994), 153f, fig.6.1.

<sup>96</sup> Mark 10.2-12; Matthew 5.31f; 19.3-12; Luke 16.18; The Shepherd 29. The 'Matthean exception' is not considered original by many scholars and its meaning is debated, as to whether it allows remarriage or only divorce following a spouse's πορνεία. The 'Pauline privilege' allowing Christians divorced by pagan partners to remarry is also debated. Justin Martyr, *Prima Apologia* 15 does not allow remarriage of widows/ers, so presumably also the divorced. Similarly Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.12.82.4f; 88.4; 89.1. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 14.23, wrote against remarriage after divorce but understood the need to prevent fornication; Evans-Grubbs (1995), 242-253. See also Bagnall (1987b), 47.

<sup>97</sup> After 18 months, *lex Iulia, lex Papia Poppaea*. See n.95 above; also Arjava (1996), 77.

<sup>98</sup> Christian law differs from Roman law in that the innocent partner was required to separate in order not to condone the sin but allow full repentance. They then had to receive the repentant partner back into the marriage.

<sup>99</sup> Bagnall (1987b), 46-49; Evans-Grubbs (1995), 246f. Eg Basil of Caesarea allowed remarriage following a partner's adultery and the Armenian church allowed remarriage after divorce following a period of penance. The western church excommunicated for remarriage after divorce, although exceptions could be determined at church Councils.

<sup>100</sup> Bagnall (1987b), 49f.

help. Leuchis' rhetoric about widowhood suggests a conventional negative attitude, although this may be misleading. Her rhetoric functions as an act of power to secure her wishes. Leuchis gives no indication of her spiritual understanding of, or attitude to, widowhood, or whether she has made a conscious decision to remain a widow. There is no suggestion that *χήρα* denotes an ecclesial role<sup>101</sup>.

The mother in SB 18.13612 calls herself a widow (*κάμῃ* (= καὶ ἐμὲ) τὴν χήρα[ν] καὶ τοὺς ὁ[ρ]φανούς), ll.10f. The letter is broken at this point but the mother's intention is to plead her neediness in relation to Theognotos, the *exactor*. Again, her claim is an act of power. Whether the mother constructs her widowhood as a consciously chosen state rejecting second marriage out of Christian conviction is unknown. Again there is no reference linking *χήρα* to a church position.

Kophaena in BGU 3.948, the mother in P.Abinn.34, Teeus in P.Lips.1.28 and Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86 do not refer to their marital status although all seem to be without husbands. It is not possible to know whether their continued status as widowed or divorced is linked to Christian convictions.

## CONCLUSION

The texts examined in relation to marriage and the Christian women's beliefs and practices suggest a number of conclusions.

The first relates to the expression of marital status. I tabulate the information.

TABLE

Christian Women's Statement of their Marital Status

Statement of marital status	Name	Siglum
Married	Terouterou	P.Edmonstone
	Artemis	P.Grenf.1.53
	Valeria	P.Lond.6.1926
	Tapiam	P.Neph.1
	Anonyme	P.Oxy.6.903
Married but not stated	the mother	P.Ben.Mus.4

<sup>101</sup> There is no evidence in the papyri for *χήρα* as a ministry position. See P.Neph.36 at 319f below.

Not stated but have been married (each has at least one child)	Kophaena	BGU 3.948
	the mother	P.Abinn.34
	Teeus	P.Lips.1.28
	Demetria	Stud.Pal.20.86
Widowed	Leuchis	P.Herm.17
	the mother	SB 18.13612
Divorced	Attiaena	P.Oxy.50.5381
No statement	Maria	P.Abinn.49
	Athanasias	P.Berl.Zill.12
	Tare	P.Bour.25
	Marsis	P.Kell.1.Gr.32
	Taouak	P.Neph.18
	Anonyme	P.Oxy.8.1161
	Anonyme	P.Oxy.12.1592
	the landlady	P.Oxy.48.3407
	Didyme and the sisters	SB 8.9746, P.Oxy.14.1774
	Mikke	SB 12.10840
	Aria	SB 14.11588
	Allous	SB 14.11881

Only five of the women indicate that they are married. In addition, the mother in P.Ben.Mus.4 is married but does not state it. Four other women have been married. Two further women are widows and one is divorced. In the remaining thirteen texts the women do not indicate marital status. Of these, eleven are private letters and two are public documents. Only Mikke, in referring to her brother, suggests that she lives with a man<sup>102</sup>. These women do not describe their lives in terms of close relationships with men or dependence on them, nor do the seven widowed/divorced women. There is expression of material need only from Kophaena and Allous, and of practical need only from Leuchis and the mother of Philadelphos.

<sup>102</sup> This is almost certainly not a husband/wife relationship. Brother/sister marriage, about 20% of marriages in the early Roman period, was banned in 212, Bagnall and Frier (1994), 127.

The silence about marital status by half of the women and the omission of reference to husbands from the lives of three-quarters are suggestive but require caution, firstly because the sample is small, and secondly because arguments from silence are problematic. Nonetheless, the statistics invite consideration.

It seems unlikely that such a high proportion of women not mentioning their marital status is an accident of source preservation. It may be that among Christians marriage was not a primary status category<sup>103</sup>. It may be that the silence reflects singleness, and the high number of documents mirrors these women's need to act for themselves. It may be that mention of husbands was unnecessary in these particular texts, although with the private letters some mention of husbands would seem natural and in the cases of Tare, Taouak, Aria and Allous in particular, appropriate to their different concerns. There is no positive evidence to suggest that the women are ascetic, with the lack of reference to husbands attributable to celibate conviction. It has been argued that Christianity, by its attitude to marriage, remarriage and asceticism, gave women choices that previously had not been available<sup>104</sup>. The women's self-descriptions suggest the influence of such choices.

Marriage appears to be the accepted norm among those women who mention it. It is the preferred status of Sarapion's daughters in P.Grenf.1.53. Asceticism is also clearly valued as a superior Christian discipline by those who refer to it, although the evaluation is of male asceticism.

The second conclusion concerns the married women's commitment to their marriages. The mother in P.Ben.Mus.4, Terouterou in P.Edmonstone, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and Tapiam in P.Neph.1 give no information on the nature of their commitments beyond being in their marriages. Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53 indicates commitment to the quality of her marriage, and Anonyme in P.Oxy.6.903 and Attiaena in P.Oxy.50.3581 to the continuance of theirs despite abuse until, in Attiaena's case, the abuse exceeds her limits. The women's commitments are consistent with Christian teaching on the indissolubility of marriage and contrast with the more ready practice of divorce and remarriage in pagan society, although commitment and marital arbitration are attested also among pagans. It may be that

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<sup>103</sup> Moxnes (1997a), 38, argues that in the early church marriage was not prescribed or assumed and that there was little interest in its institutional aspects, suggesting that marriage did not hold a high status at least in some Christian circles.

<sup>104</sup> Herrin (1983, 1993), 179; Clark (1993), 140.

the Constantinian penalties are a factor in the women's decisions to remain married, at least in Anonyme's case. Attiaena's decision to divorce Paul represents significant personal assertion in the face of the church's ideals.

The third conclusion concerns the married women's behaviour within their marriages in light of Christian teaching on women's submission and the ideal of silence. Of the seven women known to be married or divorced, three do not conform to the ideal. In P.Grenf.1.53 Artemis vigorously justifies herself to her husband and is outspoken in her opposition to both Sarapion and the presbyters. In P.Oxy.6.903 Anonyme pursues her Christian praxis independently, despite Anonymos' opposition, and defies her husband. In P.Oxy.50.3581 Attiaena asserts herself in resisting the presbyters and Paul and ultimately divorcing him. While the sample of marriages is small, the high proportion of women not conforming to 'NT' models represents a reality of Christian marriage that differs from the literary ideal. However, the nature of the papyri is such that marriages in conflict are those which create written records while generally harmonious marriages appear only incidentally. Therefore, for the other four women known to be married or divorced in P.Ben.Mus.4, P.Edmonstone, P.Lond.6.1926 and P.Neph.1, marriage is incidental to the women's purposes. The nature<sup>of</sup> their marriages in relation to 'NT' teaching is unknown.

A fourth conclusion concerns the women and asceticism. That asceticism is practised among fourth-century Christian women is certain<sup>105</sup> but renunciation of family and marriage finds only uncertain expression among the Christian women writers. Kophaena in BGU 3.948, the mother in P.Abinn.34, Leuchis in P.Herm.17, Teeus in P.Lips.1.28, the mother in SB 18.13612 and Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86, once married, appear to live without husbands. Their reasons and the role of religious conviction are not formulated. Asceticism may be a factor in the apparent absence of husbands from the twelve texts of the women who do not mention marital status but there is no evidence for it in their documents. Didyme and the sisters in particular may live ascetically, but their marital status and their convictions about it are not expressed. No woman known to have children is detached from them; on the contrary, all are concerned about their children's lives.

A fifth conclusion concerns the Christian distinctiveness of the women's attitudes to marriage and derives from the conclusions above. The women exhibit behaviours

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<sup>105</sup> See ch. 9 below.

both consistent and inconsistent with Christian ideals, both wifely submissiveness and independent assertiveness, commitment to the permanence of marriage and willingness to divorce. The church's distinctive positions on widowhood, divorce, remarriage and asceticism are not articulated by the Christian women and do not determine the behaviour of a number of the women.

## **WOMEN AND FAMILY**

Early Christian attitudes to family derive from Jewish traditions and from the customs of Greek and Roman society<sup>106</sup>. Hebrew Scripture gives a high priority to family, including that honour of mothers and fathers correlates with honour of God<sup>107</sup>, and nurture of children as a responsibility from God<sup>108</sup>. 'NT' teaching largely endorses the principle<sup>109</sup> and similarly commands care of needy members of the extended family<sup>110</sup>. The *Haustafeln*, which address the relationship between fathers and sons<sup>111</sup>, can be applied to mothers and daughters only with caution. In Mediterranean societies, symmetrical relationships cannot be presumed between fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters<sup>112</sup>. The role of mothers receives explicit attention only in the Pastoral Epistles, where women are told to love their children and be good managers of the household<sup>113</sup>, an ideal common in ancient societies. Timothy is to relate 'to older women as mothers'<sup>114</sup> but this is given no content. Mothers, apart from Jesus' mother, who appear in the gospels caring for children are described without

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<sup>106</sup> Moxnes (1997a), 36.

<sup>107</sup> Exodus 20.12; Leviticus 20.9; Proverbs 17.25; 19.26.

<sup>108</sup> Deuteronomy 6.7; Proverbs 13.24; 22.6; 29.17.

<sup>109</sup> Mark 7.9-13; 10.13-16; 10.17-19; 2 Corinthians 12.14; Hebrews 12.9; 1 Clement 1.3; Didache 4.9.

<sup>110</sup> 1 Timothy 5.4.

<sup>111</sup> Ephesians 6.1-4; Colossians 3.20f. See also Hebrews 12.5-11; 1 Clement 1.3; 21.6, 8. The *Haustafeln*, so called by convention, concern paired, non-reciprocal, hierarchical relationships, assigning asymmetrical duties and attitudes to both the superior and inferior party. See also Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 4.1-6.1. For a review of more recent scholarship on *Haustafeln*, see Best (1998), 520, with bibliography.

<sup>112</sup> Hallett (1984), 32; (1989), 60; Malina (1990), 57-59. Hallett argues that women's roles were constructed as social metaphors for culturally valued female behaviour.

<sup>113</sup> Titus 2.4f.

<sup>114</sup> 1 Timothy 5.2



comment<sup>115</sup>. The concurrence of early Christian teaching on family with the attitudes of Roman society and Greek philosophical schools has long been recognised<sup>116</sup>.

The idealised picture of the Holy Family in Matthew 1.18-2.23 and Luke 2.39-52 suggests that family, mutual care and harmony were significant values in the early church. In later theological development, the family becomes a model for the church as the household of God<sup>117</sup>. This model carries inherent expectations about children's submission to and respect for fathers and about the father as ruler of household members<sup>118</sup>. The place of mothers is expressed only in terms of submission as wife alongside the children. The articulation of the relationship of God to believers in terms of fatherhood, together with the status of believers as children of God, and brothers and sisters to each other, reflects the early Christian understanding of, and preoccupation with, family and gendered hierarchy. The metaphor of brother/sister connotes a more egalitarian understanding<sup>119</sup>.

The 'NT', however, is not univocal in its discussion of family<sup>120</sup>. Ambivalence about family with its distracting ties appears in language about hatred of family and leaving family for discipleship<sup>121</sup>. The attitude re-emerges in the later apocryphal *Acts*<sup>122</sup> and in the practice of renunciation, both sexual and familial, in the ascetic movement of the third and fourth centuries<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> Matthew 8.14f; 27.55f; Mark 1.29-31; 7.24-30; 15.40f; Luke 4.38; 7.11-17. Mothers are included in the rehearsals of the fifth commandment, Matthew 19.19; Mark 7.10.

<sup>116</sup> Eg Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2; Seneca, *Epistolae Morales* 94.15; *De beneficiis* 2.18.1ff; Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.10.3-13. Greek influence was perhaps mediated to Christianity through Hellenistic Judaism eg Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.1-9; *On the decalogue* 165-167; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.199-219. See Dibelius (1953), 48-50, who argues for a Stoic background to the *Haustafeln*; Moxnes (1997a), 2.

<sup>117</sup> A family pattern is assumed by the time of the Pastoral Epistles, Barclay (1997), 77. See also Moxnes (1997a); (1997b); Harding (2001), 50-54, with bibliography.

<sup>118</sup> 1 Timothy 3.1-5; Hebrews 3.1-6; Galatians 6.10; Ephesians 2.19-22.

<sup>119</sup> Sandnes (1997).

<sup>120</sup> On these contradictory attitudes, see Barclay (1997), 73-78.

<sup>121</sup> Mark 10.29ff and parallels; Luke 14.26.

<sup>122</sup> Eg Thekla's rejection of her fiancé and of her parents' expectations, *Acts of Paul* 3.5-7. See also Uro (1997).

<sup>123</sup> The Council of Gangra (340/341) condemned abandonment of family by ascetics, particularly directed against the followers of Eustathius. The condemnation witnesses to the practice. With renunciation of family an essential element of monastic life, some male ascetics placed female relatives in communities allowing their own withdrawal, eg Pachomius, Basil of Caesarea, Antony of their sisters. Other literary evidence suggests continued contact with families, eg Mark in Abba Sylvanus 3, 4; Paul the Barber 1; Carion 2; Poemen 5, *AP* 123f, 172, 100f, 138.

Eighteen of the women writers refer to children, parents and extended family, and provide information about their Christian beliefs.

Kophaena's family in BGU 3.948 comprises Kophaena, widowed or divorced, Theodoulos her son and his son Zenon, and Kyrilla her daughter who has children but whose husband is not mentioned so that she too may be widowed or divorced. Theodoulos' wife is not mentioned and may be dead or divorced.

Kophaena has clear expectations, consistent with 'scriptural' and societal norms, that Theodoulos, almost certainly a Christian, express his sonship by caring for her, maintaining the relationship through letters, and giving and receiving assistance. Kyrilla's presence, notably, is insufficient. Kophaena's expectation is consistent with studies of ancient Greek families which conclude that sons are the ones expected to provide for their widowed mothers<sup>124</sup>. Theodoulos' lack of care for his mother causes hurt and would be a source of shame. She accuses, 'you did not have the heart to ...' (οὐκ ἐτόρμηκας (= ἐτόλμηκας)), l.7<sup>125</sup>. Kophaena embodies the situation of widows in 1 Timothy 5.4 whose children should provide for them but do not<sup>126</sup>. Theodoulos' neglect places her in a difficult situation economically, as reflected in the letter's requests, and emotionally, asking for help and bearing shame<sup>127</sup>.

Using Winter's reconstruction, Kophaena has favoured Theodoulos, her son, over Kyrilla, her daughter, an attitude common in the ancient world<sup>128</sup>. Male children were preferred for the continuance of the household, for property and financial reasons

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<sup>124</sup> Roman law requires that the eldest son first provide for his mother with her dowry, then other sons and the woman's father, Winter (2003), 126; see also Pomeroy (1998), 194. Where a daughter is eldest sister, the duties of eldest son, eg to bury parents, fall to her, El-Mosalamy (1997), 271. For parents' expectations that their children will care for them in old age, see Dixon (1992), 108-111. Children also write of their sense of obligation eg the daughter in P.Oxy.8.1121 (295). For an example of the importance of sons, see P.Abinn.19 (342-351) at 244f below. Malina (1990), 60, argues that the mother/son relationship in the ancient world is the closest equivalent in intensity to the modern idea of love in marriage.

<sup>125</sup> On the translation of *τολμάω* see 33, n.23 above. On neighbours monitoring family relationships in honour:shame societies, see Cohen (1991), 48-50, 52.

<sup>126</sup> These widows become a drain on church finances. There is no suggestion that Kophaena receives church support.

<sup>127</sup> The text gives only Kophaena's perspective.

<sup>128</sup> Eg P.Brem.63 (C2); P.Giss.77 (C2); P.Oxy.9.1216 (C2/3); P.Oxy.4.744 (C1 BCE) where the husband writes to his wife, *ἐὰν πολλὰ πολλῶν τέκνης, ἐὰν ἦν ἄρσενον, ἄφες, ἐὰν ἦν θήλεα, ἡκβαλε*. The favoured status of males is suggested also by the greater number of girl-children exposed as infants, inferred from the 2:1 ratio of female to male slaves. See Bagnall (1997). Gardner argues that the evidence for the greater number of girls exposed is inconclusive, but her analysis is not exclusively of Egypt, Gardner (1986), 156-158. Lane-Fox (1986), 48, 343, assumes the imbalance. The reason for exposure, and for the more frequent exposure of girls, is largely economic, Brown (1991), 261.

including those related to dowry, and for future social security<sup>129</sup>. Kophaena understands family relationship as a system of obligation. She has cared for Theodoulos, had him as her favourite, and therefore he ought now to show consideration for her. Kophaena's resentment evident in οὐκ ἐτόρμηκας (= ἐτόλμηκας) is stated three times in II.7, 9, 10, in syntax that borders on the inarticulate<sup>130</sup>.

Kophaena's devotion to Theodoulos continues despite his lack of response. She prays for him, giving a religious dimension to her maternal concern<sup>131</sup>. She follows her rebukes with requests for costly linen<sup>132</sup> from which she will make him a garment, grain and she will send him food<sup>133</sup>, and wool for a cloak for herself and she will send him the money. The family is such that Kophaena expects Theodoulos' support and yet, in having to ask, wants nothing for which she cannot give some exchange. Kophaena needs Theodoulos' help but complains of lacking opportunity to help him (ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔχω τί ποιήσω σοι), I.14. Kophaena's conception of motherhood, in accordance with Christian and pagan ideals, places her in the role of carer and giver. She displays an uncomfortable awareness of dependence on Theodoulos, at the same time as she asserts her motherhood and ability to give to her son, in her unusual formulation of prayer<sup>134</sup> and offers of exchange. Her sense of ideal motherhood and ideal family is at odds with her reality.

Kophaena raises her grandson, Zenon, probably over the thirteen-month absence of his father and likely death or divorce of his mother<sup>135</sup>. It was law that children remain in the father's household, being in his *potestas*, following the ending of a marriage, although there is evidence that this was not always followed and that women could petition for custody<sup>136</sup>. Kophaena oddly does not mention Zenon as an added reason

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<sup>129</sup> Preferential treatment of boys is not a subject treated in the 'NT'.

<sup>130</sup> Winter says Kophaena 'writes with Christian resignation ... without resentment ... patiently and with fortitude ... in a new, pervading hope and assurance', Winter (1933), 154f. Winter ignores the resentment evident in the repeated *τολμάω*. It appears a romantic assessment of Christian women and Christian sentiment.

<sup>131</sup> Prayer for families is frequent also in pagan papyri eg among many, P.Alex.Giss.58; 59; P.Giss.20-24; 67; 80; P.Brem.63.

<sup>132</sup> Wool is the common material for clothing in summer and winter among lower and middle classes. Flax was expensive, used more often for the wealthy, Bagnall (1993a), 33. Theodoulos is to pay, suggesting he is wealthy.

<sup>133</sup> Possibly cheese cake, see 34 above.

<sup>134</sup> See 154 above.

<sup>135</sup> Grandparents care for grandchildren also in eg P.Oxy.54.3754 (320); 19.2235 (c.346).

<sup>136</sup> Gardner (1986), 146-152.

for Theodoulos' obligation but relies solely on her maternal relationship. The vertically extended family appears frequently in the papyri and in census returns in Roman Egypt<sup>137</sup>.

The mother in P.Abinn.34, probably widowed or divorced, has at least two children in the army, Moses and Heron, and she styles herself solely by teknomyny of her elder son. Such self-designation occurs elsewhere in the papyri but is not common<sup>138</sup>. Her purpose is probably to identify herself to Abinnaeus in a meaningful way. Her name will not contribute to this. The mother adopts a humble yet urgent pose, 'I ask your feet ...' (ἀξιῶ τοὺς πόδας σου), ll.11f, 'I ask you and I beg you ...' (ἀξιῶ σε καὶ παρακαλῶ (= παρακαλῶ) σε), l.15, seeking leave for Heron. His presence for the 'five days' is clearly important, whether for his mother's benefit, pointing to the vital role of sons to a widowed/divorced mother<sup>139</sup>, or for Heron's benefit, and giving evidence of the extent of a mother's advocacy that takes her into the public world. The differing possibilities do not allow a firm conclusion about the mother's purpose. On either interpretation, the text attests the significance of family.

In P.Ben.Mus.4, the mother writes to 'my most holy son' (κυρίῳ μου ἁγιωτάτῳ υἱῇ (=υἱεῖ or υἱῶ)[ ]<sup>140</sup>, l.1, a letter that implies preoccupation with him. It contains instructions about food she has sent, reference to his possible visit and to her speedy return for his sake with God's help. The son in P.Ben.Mus.5 thanks Christ and praises God for his mother's safe arrival (ἡ χάρις τῷ Χ(ριστ)ῷ καὶ ἡ [δό]ξα τῷ θ(ε)ῷ ὅτι ἡ[νε]γκέν σε πάλιν [ἐ]νταῦθα ὁλόκλη[ρο]ν οὐσαν), ll.3-7, and for her good health (δόξα τῷ θ(ε)ῷ ὅτι ὑγια<ι>νοντες), ll. 22-24<sup>141</sup>. The editor suggests the nature of the mother/son relationship is a spiritual one but gives no reason. On the contrary, the content of the letters points to natural kinship<sup>142</sup>: closeness maintained by regular contact through letters and visits; the mother's gifts of food by which she expresses

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<sup>137</sup> Census returns cease from the historical record from early C4 so little evidence exists for family structure in the period. But significant change is unlikely, Bagnall (1993a), 199.

<sup>138</sup> Eg SB 18.13612. Teknomyny was not the norm in Egypt, but where it occurs is more usual of naming women by their eldest sons than men of daughters. The practice continues in parts of modern Africa. It may reflect the cultural importance of children, Dickey (2004), 167, but the motivation of the mothers of Moses and Philadelphos appears to include identification by the relationship most likely to elicit the response they want.

<sup>139</sup> Pomeroy (1998), 194.

<sup>140</sup> Ἁγιώτατος suggests that the son is a bishop or an ascetic. See 98f, 190f above.

<sup>141</sup> The son also writes about joy in relation to his father but the reason is lost.

<sup>142</sup> See 37 above.

care; mutuality; and that the son's ascetic/clerical life does not necessitate separation. Her maternal care bypasses an opening prayer, instead announcing immediately her safe return 'for your sake' (δι' ἐσέ), I.1. The end of <sup>the</sup> letter, where she might have written a closing prayer, is lost. The son addresses P.Ben.Mus.5 to his mother alone, although he refers to his father in II.13f and possibly in the plural forms of II.23-25; 28. Nonetheless, the mother emerges as a primary, independent contact between the family and its ἀγιώτατος son.

Athanasias in P.Berl.Zill.12 writes 'to my lady mothers' (ταῖς κυρίαις μου μητέραις (= μητρᾶσιν)), I.1. At least one of these referents is non-literal<sup>143</sup>. Μήτηρ can denote an older female friend, a spiritual mother<sup>144</sup> or the superior of a convent<sup>145</sup> although there is no indication of the latter meaning in this letter. Athanasias also greets 'my lord father and my lady mother and my sister Horigenia' (τὸν κύριόν μου πατέρα καὶ τὴν κυρία<ν> μου μητήραν (= κυρίαν μου μητέρα) καὶ τὴν ἀδελφήν μου Ὠριγενίαν), II.9ff, who appear to be a distinct family grouping. She further greets 'my lord brother Pekulos' (τὸν κύριόν μου ἀδελφὸν Πέκυλον), I.14, fourteen other people without familial epithets, and an unnumbered group, 'all your people (whom I greet) by name' (πάντας τοὺς ὑμῶν κατ' ὄνομα) II.18f. It is likely that one of the mothers in the prescript is Athanasias' natural mother<sup>146</sup>, and that the prayers using σε, II.4, 20, and the singular imperatives (μαθέ, ἀγωνία), II.4, 6, are intended for her. It follows that the distinct family grouping is not kin and the non-literal use of 'father' and 'mother' without accompanying names is unusual and represents a development of the conventions that applied prior to the fourth century<sup>147</sup>. Whether Pekulos is Athanasias' natural brother is unknown. The letter's content, the appeal against anxiety and the greetings indicate that relationships, family and non-family, are significant to Athanasias and that she makes efforts to maintain relational bonds. Her elevated tone in the greeting and farewell<sup>148</sup> distances her from the mother's anxiety. Her concern has a religious dimension in prayer. This text carries a sense of a

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<sup>143</sup> Use of μήτηρ in a non-literal sense without an accompanying name in a prescript is unusual. See 37, n.50 above.

<sup>144</sup> Eg Chrysostom *Homilies on Matthew* 44.2. Also Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>145</sup> Eg Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Saint Macrina* 26.30.

<sup>146</sup> See 41, n.77 above.

<sup>147</sup> Dickey (2004). On the use of family epithets for non-kin, see also Dinneen (1927); Tibiletti (1979), 32.

<sup>148</sup> See 40 above.

community of people, family and others, gathered in the mothers' home hearing Athanasias' news and greetings.

Tare in P.Bour.25 is a woman for whom family has primary importance and lack of family is a grief. Her language is emotive and colourful. She refers to her aunt as 'longed for' (ἐπιποθήτη θεία), l.1. Tare's mother, Allous, was her 'whole family' (ὅλον τὸ γένος μου αἴτη ἦν), l.10. Tare is now 'desolate, having no-one and being in a foreign place', in Apameia (ἔμυνα (= ἔμεινα) ἔρημος, μηδένα ἔχουσα ἐπὶ ξένοις τόποις), ll.11f.

Tare writes as though she has a strong family relationship with Horeina, but its reality is uncertain. Tare establishes her identity as family in the prescript, explaining who she is, 'Tare daughter of your sister Allous' (Τάρη θυγάτηρ ἀδελφῆς σου Ἀλλοῦτος), l.2, and repeats it in her address 'To Horeina sister of Apollonios, resident of Coptos, from Tare daughter of her sister, from Apameia' (Ὡρέινα, ἀδελφῇ Ἀπολλωνίου, Κοπιτίσα (= Κοπιτίσση), παρὰ Τάρης, θυγατρὸς ἀδελφῆς αὐτῆς, ἀπὸ Ἀπαμίας (= Ἀπαμείας)), ll.20f. Such identification by the writer is rare. The usual formula qualifies the name of the addressee with a relational epithet while the writer's name is not qualified. Tare's formula occurs in two other letters of the late fourth, early fifth century, and both emphasise the relationship established in the epithet<sup>149</sup>. Tare's appeal for contact suggests the aunt's relationship with Allous may not automatically extend to Tare: 'therefore, remember (me), aunt, as though my mother were living' (μνημόνευε οὖν, θεία, ὡς ζώσης τῆς μητρός μου)<sup>150</sup>, ll.12f. Tare sends one greeting to her family, 'greet all our family' (προσαγόρευε πᾶσαν τὴν συγγένειαν (= συγγένειαν) ἡμῶν), ll.14f. Κατ' ὄνομα is absent but the significance of the lack, that is whether it reflects lack of acquaintance, is uncertain. Tare's relationship with her mother has been close. The nature of her other family relationships is less certain. Notably she claims them as 'our'. Tare calls Horeina 'Apollonios' sister'. Most probably they are husband and wife; otherwise it is striking that Tare does not also appeal to Apollonios as Allous' brother.

Tare's sense of family includes the common religious dimension of prayer, ll.4f. The unusual and emphatic statement, 'for this is my prayer' (αὕτη γάρ μού ἐστιν εὐχή), l.6,

<sup>149</sup> P.Ross.Georg.3.10, from your brother to my brother; BGU 3.948, to my son from your mother.

<sup>150</sup> Ed.pr. read ζητούσης but ζώσης is certain, Naldini (1968, 1998), 308.

appears designed to establish the reality of the family connection<sup>151</sup>, and on this basis, Tare informs her aunt of her circumstances and appeals for an expression of family solidarity. She asks her aunt to remember her and if she finds anyone, to send to her, most probably a letter<sup>152</sup>. For Tare, kinship clearly carries an obligation to give the family bond practical expression.

Artemis in P.Grenf.1.53 sends greetings to her husband from his children, (ἀσπάζεται τὰ παῖδιά σου), ll.8f. Use of σου may indicate that Artemis is not their mother but a subsequent wife<sup>153</sup>, although the children live with her. Her attitudes towards them are not indicated although she has them in her care. Artemis' understanding of parental responsibility and children's right behaviour emerges in her statements about Sarapion's family<sup>154</sup>. Daughters are to be modest, chaste and submissive. A father is ultimately responsible for daughters' circumstances and behaviour. Her ideal is common to Christians and pagans.

In P.Lips.1.28, Teeus, a 60-year-old grandmother, gives Paesis, her ten-year-old grandson, in adoption to his uncle, Teeus' son, Silvanos the apotactic, according to Paesis' father Papnouthios' verbal request<sup>155</sup>. Papnouthios, Teeus' older son, has died, as has Paesis' mother. It is not clear whether the mother predeceased her husband but Paesis is in his father's household, with Teeus as his primary carer and with the authority to give him in adoption, along with his paternal and maternal inheritances. The adoption secures Paesis' care and both his and Silvanos' property within the family<sup>156</sup>. Teeus' authority in giving Paesis for adoption is noteworthy, if

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<sup>151</sup> See 157 above.

<sup>152</sup> Tare may intend a family member's visit. The importance of the physical presence of family is frequently attested, eg P.Oxy.46.3314 at 260ff below; P.Neph.1.

<sup>153</sup> Possessives that include only one parent but refer to a couple's children are less common than the article or plural possessive and are almost always used of the father as here. Examples of use of the singular possessive include P.Giss.20 (C2); P.Mich.3.216; 218 (C3). Death of the mother in childbirth would not be unusual, eg P.Fouad 1.75 (64 CE); SB 16.12606 (C3). It was the greatest cause of adult female mortality but rarely made explicit eg IGUR 1240 (c.C1 BCE or CE); CIJ 2.1481; 1510; 1515 (Tell el-Yehoudeh 25-5 BCE) cited in Horsley, 'Physician, heal yourself ...' in *ND* 4.20-24, here, 23f; IGUR 1147 cited in 'δόγμα' in *ND* 4.146; see also 'ὀρφανός' in *ND* 4.162ff here 163; 'A Jewish family from Egypt in Rome' in *ND* 4.221-229, here 224.

<sup>154</sup> Whether Sarapion's daughters are Artemis' responsibility is unknown. There is no suggestion of family connection.

<sup>155</sup> There is no reference to a will as the legal foundation for the adoption. Rather ἐδεῖθην (= ἐδεήθην), l.10, suggests a spoken request.

<sup>156</sup> The devolution of wealth away from families to monastic institutions becomes a problem in late C4, CT 16.2.20 and especially 16.2.27 (390) although the ban on bequests to clergy and churches was soon repealed; D. Hunt, 'The church as a public institution', in Cameron and Garnsey (1998), 238-276, especially 258-260. See also 191f above.

technically not allowed. It is noteworthy also that there is no mention of *patria potestas*<sup>157</sup>. In Egyptian and Greek law prior to the *Constitutio Antiniana*, grandmothers could become guardians of their grandchildren<sup>158</sup>. However, in Roman law prior to 390<sup>159</sup>, women were forbidden to be guardians but had to apply for one to be appointed if there was no provision in the father's will<sup>160</sup>. Nonetheless, it is likely that there was widespread confusion as to the rules<sup>161</sup>.

Teeus acts as matriarch in the family, yet compliant with her dead son's request. Her attitude to it is unknown, but Teeus has taken initial charge of Paesis. Teeus is almost certainly a widow or divorced, acting without a guardian but with a self-appointed assistant as scribe who is not kin<sup>162</sup>. Little is evident of Teeus' relationship with Silvanos except that they maintain the family bond despite his apotactic status and they cooperate in the adoption of Paesis. It may be that Silvanos is usually Teeus' assistant but, being party to this agreement, is unable to act<sup>163</sup>. It may also be that Silvanos is not Teeus' usual assistant because of his vocation, although the degree of involvement in his family's life makes this unlikely<sup>164</sup>. Silvanos may be Teeus' only surviving son or child.

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<sup>157</sup> Arjava (1998), 160, notes the consistent failure to mention, and confusion about, *patria potestas* in papyri dated C3 and C4.

<sup>158</sup> Eg P.Fouad 35 (48), with ἐπιτροπένει of a grandmother; P.Lond.3.1164 (212) where a grandmother is φροντίστρια; P.Mich.inv.2922 (172/3), where a grandmother is ἐπαχκολουθήτρια alongside ἐπίτροποι. Some 150 years after Teeus' document, Justinian recognised the rights of grandmothers to be statutory guardians before all secondary relatives, where there was no testamentary guardian, *Novella* 118.c.5 cited in Taubenschlag (1955), 156; see also 158f.

<sup>159</sup> *CT* 3.17.4 (390); cf. *CJ* 5.35.2 (373), is the first clear evidence of women being permitted to act as guardians, but the right may have existed before this provision with women appointed as guardians usually by will, often with the proviso that they not remarry. The proviso became law in 390. See Taubenschlag (1955), 156; Gardner (1986), 149f; Clark (1993), 60; Dixon (2001), 181, n.26; Vuolanto (2002), 216.

<sup>160</sup> Gardner (1986), 146-148. Severus confirmed women's exclusion as guardians, *CJ* 5.35.1 (225); as did Diocletian almost 100 years later, *CJ* 2.12.18. P.Med.Bar.1 (142) refers to a woman προστάτις to her son. Montevecchi (1981), 113-115, concludes this is an example of Egyptian law in operation with προστάτις equivalent to ἐπίτροπος. It seems women acted as guardians despite legal prohibition. See Clark (1993), 59; Arjava (1998); Dixon (2001), 83; Vuolanto (2002), 214-224. Note also Babatha's exclusion from guardianship, Cotton (1993).

<sup>161</sup> Law differs from practice in that from late C2 women control children's property with only nominal guardians, Clark (1993), 59; Evans-Grubbs (1995), 332, n.50.

<sup>162</sup> Most women's guardians and assistants are male relatives, particularly husbands and sons. See 11, n.65 above.

<sup>163</sup> Conflict of interest was recognised in Roman law, Taubenschlag (1955), 174.

<sup>164</sup> Renunciation of family by ascetics to avoid involvement is regularly encouraged, eg *LH* 6.2; Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii* 5; Basil of Caesarea, *Regulae Fusius Tractatae* 9; Clark (1981), 242f, especially n.22.



Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 asks Appa Paphnouthios to pray for her two daughters, Bessiana and Theoklia, as for her husband. The kinship terms are undoubtedly literal. Her request gives a religious dimension to her maternal concern<sup>165</sup>. The editor reconstructs the damaged ll.19-21, προσαγ[ορε]ύω τὰς θυγατ[τέρας] μου, 'I greet my daughters', suggesting that Valeria's daughters are with Paphnouthios, a circumstance he regards as anomalous, and certainly it is unlikely. An alternative, προσάγ[οντ]αι αἱ θυγατ[τέρες] μου 'my daughters embrace (you)', would place the daughters with Valeria<sup>166</sup>. Either reading implies the daughters have adopted their mother's Christianity. Valeria also writes that her whole household (ὅλος ὁ οἶκός μου), ll.25f, know and greet Paphnouthios, and may have converted to Christianity<sup>167</sup>. Valeria does not ask prayer for the household, which clearly stands in a more distant relationship to her and attests the identity of the nuclear family within the οἶκος. Valeria uses familial epithets of her relationship with Paphnouthios [τ]ιμιώτατε πάτηρ (= πάτερ), l.27, and in the address on the verso 'to the most honoured father, Appa Paphnouthios' (τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ πατρὶ Ἀππα Παφνουτ[ίῳ] παρὰ τῆς θυγατρὸς Οὐαλερίας) but the relationship is almost certainly spiritual<sup>168</sup>.

Anonyme in P.Oxy.6.903 describes the membership of a large household. She refers to slaves, 'his' and 'mine' (τοὺς ἐ[α]υτοῦ δούλους καὶ τοὺς ἐμοῦ), ll.2f, her foster-daughters (ταῖς τροφίμ[αι]ς (= τῶς τροφίμ[ω]ν) μου), l.3, Anonymos' agent and his son (τὸν προνοητὴν καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ), l.3, Choous, Anonymos' assistant (Χωοῦς ὁ βοηθὸς αὐτοῦ), l.26, and Anonymos' mother. The foster-daughters may be the children of poor relatives brought up in the household by Anonyme<sup>169</sup>. Among other purposes<sup>170</sup>, fostering could be a device to remedy childlessness and there is no reference to Anonyme and Anonymos' children, although they may be adult. Being foster-daughters implies that the children remain in their own father's or guardian's *potestas*

<sup>165</sup> Valeria's use of μου raises the question whether the daughters are also her husband's. See n.153 above. On the infrequency of such requests, see 159 above.

<sup>166</sup> A problem is that α appears reasonably secure. The first editor, note to l.20, states 'προσαγορεύουσί σε does not seem possible'. See 187 above. R. J. S. Barrett-Lennard, 'Request for prayer for healing' in *ND* 4.245-250, here 250; *BL* 9.149 suggests προσαγ[ορε]ύω meaning 'mention', but the sense is rare and is not listed in *LSJ*, s.v., although appears as a possibility in Bauer et al. (1957, 1979), s.v.

<sup>167</sup> On conversion in C4, see 143ff above.

<sup>168</sup> On the use of familial language for non-kin, see 41, n.78 above.

<sup>169</sup> Τρόφιμαι are not slaves nor are they adopted. Women were prevented from adopting, having no *potestas*. See Balconi (2001), 246. The one known instance of a woman adopting occurs by imperial rescript in Rome in late C3, Gardner (1986), 144.

<sup>170</sup> Fostering freed mothers for work and enabled children to work, Dixon (1992), 11, 128f

or they are *sui iuris*. Nonetheless, Anonyme's foster-daughters appear to come under the *potestas* of Anonymos<sup>171</sup>, in that he imprisons, strips and tortures them as he abuses his slaves. If the girls are far from their families or *sui iuris* there may be no one to protect them.

Anonyme's disapproval of the treatment of the household suggests concern but inability to protect them and indicates powerlessness. The household, however, shows her loyalty even under torture. Anonyme's loyalty to, and power within, the household appear in her assistance of Chooos against Anonymos' wishes and her refusal to dismiss Anilla.

Anonyme cites Anonymos' mother who can testify against her son. The solidarity of the women in light of the mother's potential vulnerability should she alienate her son<sup>172</sup>, the close affective bond found to characterise mother/son relationships in the ancient world<sup>173</sup> and natural family loyalty are noteworthy and no doubt carry their own significance for the recipients of Anonyme's statement. It is interesting to note that the core of this family is largely female, consisting of Anonyme, a number of foster-daughters and Anonymos' mother. The women stand together against their male head, revealing a household that is far from the harmonious ideal.

Anonyme in P.Oxy.12.1592 uses extravagant language to the 'father' who has written her a letter: 'greatly rejoice and exult' (πάνυ ἐμεγαλύνθην καὶ ἡγαλλείασα (= ἡγαλλίασα)), ll.4f, and 'kiss your holy face' (τὸ ἱερόν σου [πρόσωπον προσεκ]ύνησα), ll.7f<sup>174</sup>. Given Anonyme's ascription of holiness to the father, her idealised response using the words of Mary and her application of the *nomen sacrum*, π(άτε)ρ to him, it is likely that he is her spiritual father<sup>175</sup>. While Anonyme values and maintains this relationship, her attitude to her natural family is unknown.

Attiaena in P.Oxy.50.3581 refers only to her nuclear family. She bears a daughter to her abusive husband, Paul. She becomes pregnant again after the divorce as a result of her second abduction but says nothing about the child's birth. The petition may

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<sup>171</sup> On *patria potestas*, see Gardner (1986), 5-11; Arjava (1998).

<sup>172</sup> On the role of sons in caring for widowed mothers, see 222, n.124 above.

<sup>173</sup> Malina (1990), 60.

<sup>174</sup> For this reconstruction, see 54 above.

<sup>175</sup> *Canons of Athanasius* 48 notes such relationships. See 189f above.

serve to secure the child's legitimacy<sup>176</sup> but Attiaena does not request this or ask for maintenance. The *potestas* of a father, established through legitimacy, included the right to custody. However, Paul does not avail himself of this right with the daughter. His attitude to the second child, were it a boy, may be different. Attiaena does not indicate her attitudes to her child/children but she has the care of them. She states that she is an orphan, makes no reference to a wider family, and submits the petition without a guardian or male assistant, signing herself. Attiaena's isolation from the regular social structural supports of family is marked.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 ask Ophellios and the brothers 'that you remember to mention us in your prayers because of our exile and our children's' (ὅπως ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ὑμῶν μνημονεύσῃται (= μνημονεύσητε) ὀνομάσαι ἡμᾶς διὰ τὴν ξενειτίαν (= ξενιτείαν) ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν παιδίων ἡμῶν), ll.7ff<sup>177</sup>. The request emphasises the children's inclusion in their parents' lot. The children will accompany Tapiam on her visit to Hathor rather than stay with their father, perhaps to ensure their care among family should Tapiam die<sup>178</sup>. The children clearly have a special status for Tapiam and Paul in being healed through the brothers' prayers. The relationship of the children to the prayer to die among family and friends is unclear. Tapiam and Paul pray to die in their own home (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ), l.15, and near their own people (ἐγγιστα τῶν ἰδίων), ll.16f. They regard family as support in a world characterised by 'hardship' (ταλαιπωρία), l.18.

Mikke in SB 12.10480 appears to live with her brother, Euthalios<sup>179</sup>. They and their mother, Syras, form a close-knit family. The father is mentioned in a final greeting (ἀσπάζομαι τὸν κύριώ (= κύριόν) μου πατέρα), ll.29f, but the letter is addressed to Syras alone, and the opening and two closing prayers are for her<sup>180</sup>. Mikke, Euthalios and Syras are Christian and share a common practice, observing the liturgical festivals of Lent and Easter and determining family arrangements by them. The

<sup>176</sup> Following divorce, women had one month to declare a pregnancy and establish a claim on the father's estate, Gardner (1986), 52

<sup>177</sup> Eds.pr. suggest τὰ παιδιά ἡμῶν based on other prayer requests which include the children in P.Neph.4.11-13; 9.12-14, and because the children being with their parents can be presumed. But the text is clear and makes sense. The proposed change then cannot be justified. There is no reason to exclude the children from ἡμᾶς, the shift in meaning being explanatory and emphatic.

<sup>178</sup> Paul's inability to leave Alexandria may be because he is a soldier, P.Neph.8, eds.pr.

<sup>179</sup> See 58 above.

<sup>180</sup> πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι τὴν . ἡν ὀλοκλ[ηρία]ν σου παρὰ τῷ κυ(ρίῳ) θε(ῷ), ll.3-5; οἶδας καὶ σὺ ὅτι α ... εὐχομαί σοι (= σοι), ll.28f; ἐ[ρρω]σθαί σοι (= σε) εὐχομαι π[ο]λλοῖς χρόνοις, l.31.

sense of the father's exclusion is interesting, but whether it is on religious grounds is unknown<sup>181</sup>.

The letter indicates that the family maintains connection through visits, letters and goods sent. Mikke has influence over her brother. She prevents him from visiting their mother despite his wish to do so (κατέσχε μοι (= με) ἡ ἀδελφή μου Μίκη), II.6f, and tells him when he may go. Euthalios concedes. Euthalios will pay for Mikke's trip to their mother, to save her. Mikke's power to direct Euthalios is noteworthy beside her financial dependence on him.

Aria in SB 14.11588 writes to her son, Dorotheos, charging him with neglect and expressing disappointment (θαυμάζω πῶς (= πῶς) ἡμέλησάς μου), I.31. Aria has clear expectations of a son's involvement<sup>182</sup>. She refers to business difficulties and implies that Dorotheos should be more helpful in recovering moneys and goods. Dorotheos, for his part, has contacted his mother with advice, but Aria is not satisfied. She nonetheless writes him the letter and continues her care in praying, actions that serve to emphasise Dorotheos' obligations.

Aria refers to 'the orphan child in my house' (ὅτι τὸ παιδίον τὸ ὀρφανικὸν παρ' ἐμοὶ ἐστίν)<sup>183</sup>, II.23f. It is likely that the child is a member of Aria's family<sup>184</sup>, possibly a grandchild but probably not Dorotheos<sup>185</sup>. Aria has taken responsibility for the child and its needs. If the child is related, it indicates a commitment to family solidarity on Aria's part. However, family sentiment as conceived in the modern world cannot be presumed. Family feeling as applied to parental loss of children is debated<sup>186</sup>. The exposure of children<sup>187</sup>, sale into slavery, sexual exploitation and apprenticing at

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<sup>181</sup> The lack of reference to the father may be because Euthalios writes in response to a letter from his mother. The greeting to the father indicates that he is not estranged.

<sup>182</sup> On parental expectations of children and the mother/son relationship, see BGU 3.948, 222f above.

<sup>183</sup> Ed.pr., in the papyrus: ὅθι τὸ πεδεῖον τὸ ὀρφανικὸν παρ' ἐμ[οί] ἐσθελν.

<sup>184</sup> Orphan children frequently appear in the care of relatives eg P.Tebt.2.326 (266); P.Lips.1.28 and SB 14.11881. It is especially the case where the orphan owns property needing protection, Bagnall (1993a), 206. But this seems not to be the case in this text.

<sup>185</sup> 'Orphan' would be a strange reference when writing to Dorotheos. On 'orphan' as the loss of one or both parents, see Horsley, 'ὀρφανός' in ND 4.162ff.

<sup>186</sup> Garnsey and Saller (1987), ch. 7, 'Family and Household', 126-147; Dixon (1991), 109; (1992), 99f, 107ff, 123; Bagnall (1993a), 202.

<sup>187</sup> Exposure was part of a father's *ius vitae necisque*. The practice was beginning to be regarded as murder from C2/3, but was not prohibited until 374. Christian opposition to exposure is documented, eg Justin Martyr, *Prima Apologia* 27-29.

young ages<sup>188</sup> indicate that modern Western attitudes cannot be attributed unexamined to the ancient world<sup>189</sup>. At the same time, inscriptions commemorating the deaths of infants indicate emotional investment and grief<sup>190</sup>. Aria uses the reference to the orphan to heighten her need for financial relief. She does not ask Dorotheos for help directly.

Allous in SB 14.11881 uses family epithets for her lady mother Faustina (κυρία μου μήτηρ (= μητρί) Φαυστίνα), I.1, and the mother Kyriake (Κυριακὴν τή[ν] μητέρα), II.29-31. Whether either or neither woman is Allous' natural mother is unclear. Allous, further, refers to Faustina's maternal disposition (τὴν μητρικὴν σο[υ] διάθεσιν), II.6ff, and on this basis asks for hemp as a gift not a sale. There is no suggestion of reciprocity and no justification beyond the statement of need because of orphans for whom she cares. Ἡ μητρικὴ διάθεσις appears to be unique<sup>191</sup> and is Allous' only description of Faustina. It sums up her character for Allous, at least in this description, and may be a device to elicit the maternal generosity she wants. Faustina's other attributes are ignored. Allous similarly styles Kyriake ἡ μητήρ, but makes no reference beyond her greeting. The article can be equivalent to a possessive adjective<sup>192</sup>, but it does not necessarily signify a different relationship. Kyriake is the only person Allous greets, presumably part of Faustina's household. The descriptions shed light on Allous and her circle's ideal of womanhood. A good woman is motherly, hence domestic and private, devoted, nurturing and virtuous<sup>193</sup>. This description accords with Christian and pagan ideals. Allous closes with the conventional prayer of farewell, giving a religious dimension to this possibly familial relationship.

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<sup>188</sup> Dixon (1992), 131; Bagnall (1997). Christian attitudes to slavery and child labour are not univocal. See Boswell (1984), 13-19; Brown (1991), 261, 438.

<sup>189</sup> Childhood as a distinct period of human development was recognised in the ancient world, Rawson (1991b), 7; Dixon (1992), 102.

<sup>190</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 202; eg IGUR 1323; SEG 22.355; 29.1190; I.Smyrna 519; 541.

<sup>191</sup> From a search of the *DDBDP*. P.Lond.5.1789 (C6) reads πρὸ μὲν πάντων πολλὰ προσαγορεύω τὴν σὴν μητρικὴν ... . Gonis suggests διάθεσιν based on P.Oxy.43.3150 (C6), or εὐνοίαν from P.Oxy.58.3932 (C6), both written to 'mothers', Gonis (2003), 167. This text supports the former reading.

<sup>192</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 91.

<sup>193</sup> 1 Timothy 5.10-14, Titus 2.3-5; Tacitus *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 28f; Plutarch, "Advice to Bride and Groom", *Moralia*, 138A-146F, especially 142. See also Hallett (1984), 7, 29f n.46; 38-46, 211-262 with extensive references; Pomeroy (1975), 150. Μητρικός -ῆ -όν occurs with σπλάγχνα in Eusebius, *HE* 5.2.6 and with φιλοστοργία in P.Oxy.3.495 (182-189).

Allous cares for the orphan children of her brother, whom she is also not able to assist, being a woman (... τῶν ὀρφανῶν παίδων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου μὴ δυνα[μ]ένη αὐτοῖς ἐπαρκεῖν γυνὴ οὖσα), ll.18-21. The nature of the assistance is not indicated but the reason cited is her gender. It may be that Allous refers to the children's need for a tutor which she, as a woman, is not able to fulfil<sup>194</sup>. It is possible too that Allous is declaring herself unable to be responsible for the orphans at all, perhaps because of poverty although this accords less directly with her stated reason, perhaps because she is without a husband. The children's status as family is probably of greater significance in determining her response than their status as orphans.

The mother in SB 18.13612 identifies herself by her motherhood of Philadelphos the apotactic (ἡ μήτηρ Φιλαδέλφου ἀποτακτικοῦ), ll.2f, verso. She is a widow with orphans and turns to Apa Johannes not to Philadelphos for help with the *exactor*, in a society where widows are dependent on sons<sup>195</sup>. This may be due to Philadelphos' renunciation of family ties as an ascetic<sup>196</sup>, or his relative lack of authority. It is not because of broken relationship since the mother urges Johannes to respond for the honour of Philadelphos (εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ ἀποτακτικοῦ μου υἱοῦ), ll.7-9. She is proud of his status and uses it to press her case. The number of orphans and their relationship to the mother is not known, though they are probably family.

Demetria refers to 'our son' in Stud.Pal.20.86, denying Eus' claim that the son should have been a party to her sale of land. Eus' suggestion implies that the property is not Demetria's but may be the son's for whom Demetria is guardian, or may belong jointly to mother and son<sup>197</sup>. Eus implies inside knowledge of the family's property and finances. Demetria's ἡμέτερον υἱόν, l.18, is strange, there being no reference to the father, and her sole pursuit of justice implying the absence of a husband<sup>198</sup>. Nothing is known of the mother/son relationship and the circumstances are too uncertain to allow firm conclusions.

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<sup>194</sup> See 141f above. Aunts appear as semi-official guardians in P.Mich.3.171 (58); P.Oxy.3.495 (181-189), where an aunt is nominated as guardian in a will.

<sup>195</sup> Pomeroy (1998), 194.

<sup>196</sup> See 184f above.

<sup>197</sup> On women as guardians before 390, see 228 above. If this property is the son's, an official (male) guardian may exist, but Demetria claims it as μου τὰ τῶν γονέων. It may be that a *fidei commissum* is operating, so Demetria is not free to dispose of the capital. Eus may refer to the son's guardianship of his mother, but women's sale of land did not require consent, although confusion between local guardianship and Roman requirements is evident, Arjava (1996), 112-123; (1997), 28.

<sup>198</sup> Beaucamp (2002).

The landlady in P.Oxy.48.3407 addresses Papnouthis and Hatres, her employees, as ἀδελφοί, l.18. The use is not literal<sup>199</sup>. She again uses ἀδελφοί of Nepotianos and Diogenes who are likely to be her literal brothers<sup>200</sup>. The landlady's reminder suggests that they are not well known to Papnouthis and Hatres, οἶδατε καὶ ὑμῖς (= ὑμεῖς) ὅτι οὐκ ἴσιν (= εἰσιν) ξένοι, ll.11-13. They perhaps live on another part of the family property, with this an example of a family cooperating in agricultural work<sup>201</sup>. Family solidarity enabled greater productivity. The landlady cooperates, sending her employees. Her brothers will then work on the Lord's Day, about which she seems unconcerned, but their religious affiliation is uncertain.

The relationships among Didyme and the sisters, the beloved sister Sophias, and the lady sister Atienateia in SB 8.9746 and P.Oxy.14.1774, are the subject of debate. The proposal that the women are members of an ascetic community<sup>202</sup> receives only slight support<sup>203</sup>. There is a hint of corporate prayer, εὐχόμεναι ὑγιένιν σαι ἡμεῖν (= ὑγιαίνειν σε ἡμῖν), P.Oxy.14.1774.6, but no other evidence of a common life. It is equally likely that the women run a small family business, as appears in the archive of Dryton and Apollonia (174-95 BCE). Apollonia is one of four sisters. She and Dryton have five daughters. The archive records the extensive business dealings of the women who function as a female corporation, owning the family property jointly, not dividing it, and living close to one another<sup>204</sup>. The quantities of goods listed suggest individuals as customers rather than communities and the nature of the business as one of procurement of goods and dispatch rather than production supports a non-monastic setting. Didyme and the sisters appear to have close relationships and Didyme writes as their representative, using repeated plural pronouns. The women run the business together and pray together. There is no mention of husbands. Whether Sophias and Atienateia are natural sisters is less clear. Other family epithets refer to 'the brother, Piperas', SB 8.9746, l.5, and 'the lady sister, the blessed Asous, and her mother', P.Oxy.14.1774, ll.17f. The nature of these relationships is uncertain, although Asous and her mother seem likely to be

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<sup>199</sup> Papnouthis' family and career are documented in P.Oxy.48.3384-3429 (331-c.376).

<sup>200</sup> See 145f above.

<sup>201</sup> For similar family agricultural cooperatives, see P.Cair.Isid.24-26 (C4); P.Sakaon 50 (322); also Bagnall (1993a), 118.

<sup>202</sup> Emmett (1984); Elm (1994, 2000), 241.

<sup>203</sup> See 321f below.

<sup>204</sup> Pomeroy (1998), 209f; Rowlandson (1998), 105-112.

natural mother and daughter<sup>205</sup>. The women's attitude to family does not appear to give priority to the traditional structure of husbands and children but this is too uncertain to allow a definite conclusion.

## **CONCLUSION**

The family situations of the Christian women writers vary from those married with and without children, to widows and divorcées with and without children, to the apparently never-married with and without children, and with various configurations of extended family. The variety among the small number of texts is surprisingly representative of the social possibilities. The analysis suggests a number of conclusions.

The first conclusion concerns the relationship between the women's attitudes to their families and the teachings of the early church. All the women express care and commitment to their families, which take a variety of forms. The letters that eight women write to family themselves express commitment. Six of the eight indicate care by praying for their families<sup>206</sup>. Two request ascetics' prayer for family<sup>207</sup>. Two women write about gifts of food and clothing<sup>208</sup>, two about visits<sup>209</sup>. Four women nurture children who are not their own but are probably family<sup>210</sup>. Five women indicate family solidarity by writing a petition for a family member's benefit<sup>211</sup>, making an adoption<sup>212</sup>, objecting to abuse of household members<sup>213</sup>, demonstrating consideration for religious practice<sup>214</sup> and reassuring against anxiety<sup>215</sup>. The women also hold

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<sup>205</sup> For family epithets for non-kin, see 41, n.78 above.

<sup>206</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Berl.Zill.12; P.Bour.25; SB 14.11588; 14.11881; 8.9746 and P.Oxy.14.1774. The prayer is not particularly Christian in its formulation and content; see 167-170 above. P.Ben.Mus.4 has no opening prayer and the closing section is lost; SB 10.10840 has no prayer in Mikke's brief greeting, but Euthalios prays. In the four public documents, P.Abinn.34; P.Lips.1.28; P.Oxy.6.903; P.Oxy.50.3581, prayer for family is not to be expected and does not occur.

<sup>207</sup> P.Lond.6.1926; P.Neph.1.

<sup>208</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Ben.Mus.4.

<sup>209</sup> P.Ben.Mus.4; SB 10.10840.

<sup>210</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Lips.1.28; SB 14.11588; 14.11881.

<sup>211</sup> P.Abinn.34, if the petition is for Heron's benefit.

<sup>212</sup> P.Lips.1.28.

<sup>213</sup> P.Oxy.6.903.

<sup>214</sup> SB 10.10840.

<sup>215</sup> P.Berl.Zill.12 perhaps family; P.Ben.Mus.4.



expectations that their families, most frequently sons, will follow 'biblical' injunctions about honour and solidarity<sup>216</sup>.

The women's concern for family, articulations of care and expectations of solidarity and conformity are not formulated in distinctly Christian terms<sup>217</sup>. The women's ideal of loving and caring motherhood may be modelled in part on Mary, the mother of Jesus, whose role constitutes the most extensive treatment of mothering in the 'NT'<sup>218</sup>, but their expressions are also undoubtedly drawn from contemporary social models which attest the same nurturing ideals. The women appear to hold the general 'biblical' ideals of love, family unity and children's obedience, but only Athanasias in P.Berl.Zill.12 explicitly states that she derives her attitude from Christian belief, giving God's providence as her reason for urging the mothers not to be anxious.

The women attest the value of family solidarity and express the need for, and the comfort of, family. They also speak of the anxiety family, or lack of it, generates. Kophaena in BGU 3.948 and Aria in SB 14.11588 express distress at their sons' lack of support. Tare's desolation without her mother leads her to seek connection with her aunt in P.Bour.25. Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 wish to be with family and friends when they die, and describe their absence from family as exile. Attiaena in P.Oxy.6.903 highlights her vulnerability in being an orphan and expresses disturbance that her household is abused. Allous speaks about difficulties with orphans, probably family, in SB 14.11881, as do Aria in SB 14.11588 and the mother in SB 18.13612. The mother in P.Abinn.34 and Teeus in P.Lips.1.28 attest measures taken to preserve family solidarity and in Teeus' case, family property. The importance these women attribute to family, their dependence on it, and the anxiety generated by it hint at the spiritual danger of family life as a distraction from

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<sup>216</sup> BGU 3.948; P.Abinn.34 if the petition is for the mother's benefit; P.Bour.25; SB 14.11588. Also P.Grenf.1.53, although Artemis' expectations concern Sarapion and his daughters not her own family.

<sup>217</sup> The same sentiments are evident in the many pagan requests for letters, rebukes for not writing, prayers, *proskynemata*, appeals for visits and fear of dying away from family, eg P.Alex.Giss.58, 59; P.Giss.20-24, 67, 80; P.Brem.63 (all c.116/117 CE); P.Leid.Inst.42; P.Mich.8.481; 8.508; SB 12.10876; 14.12014 (all C2); P.Mich.3.214-221 (C3); 8.517; P.Oxy.14.1670 (both C3/4); PSI 10.1161; SB 18.13588 (both C4).

<sup>218</sup> Mary appears as model of motherhood in Luke 2.4-7, 51; Mark 3.31-35; John 19.25-27; of faith and chaste female behaviour in 'biographies' from C2 eg *Protoevangelium of James*. She appears more as a model of virginity than motherhood in C4, Cameron (1991), 93, 100, 175. Her role as *theotokos* emerges in C5 with the Christological controversies that led to the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) with their statements on Mary's paradoxical motherhood and virginity. See also 303f below.

discipleship, against which the 'NT', apocryphal Acts and 'Church fathers' warn. The virtue of detachment receives attention only from Athanasias.

The reciprocal ethic which Kophaena and Aria express in relation to their sons in BGU 3.948 and SB 14.11588, while the flipside of their own observance, is contrary to the 'biblical' ideals of generosity without expectation of return and parental responsibility<sup>219</sup>.

A second conclusion concerns the women who appear to be without family. The texts suggest the Christian community functions as an alternative family for the women.

In P.Kell.1.Gr.32, Jacob, the reader of the catholic church, writes for Marsis since she is illiterate. Marsis is in Aphrodite, away from her family in Kellis. In contracting the lease, she acts without guardian or male assistance, with only the reader as scribe. While the practice of using church officials in secular functions increases during the fourth century, most signatories for illiterate women remain husbands, brothers and sons<sup>220</sup>. The signatory almost always has a connection with the illiterate person as a guarantee of trustworthiness. That Marsis has the reader perform a function generally undertaken by a male relative suggests that the Christian community, and its officials in particular, act as alternate family.

In P.Herm.17, Leuchis appeals to Apa Johannes to mediate with the tribune on the basis that she is a widow and a woman. In the gendered division of space in the ancient world, women most frequently act in the public domain through a male as κύριος or μετὰ συνεστότος<sup>221</sup>. A small number of women submit petitions but rarely<sup>222</sup>. Leuchis approaches Apa Johannes to act for her as other women might approach a male relative<sup>223</sup>. The mother in SB 18.13612 similarly approaches Apa Johannes for help with the *exactor*. She writes without male assistance, with her son Philadelphos perhaps unable or insufficiently powerful to help as an apotactic. Apa Johannes stands as a substitute male relative.

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<sup>219</sup> Luke 6.35; Acts 20.35; 2 Corinthians 12.14.

<sup>220</sup> Youtie (1975c), 215, notes the primary principle in signing documents that literates must sign for themselves. With the illiterate, a relative signs, if possible.

<sup>221</sup> With male guardians eg P.Ryl.2.174 (112); BGU 3.891 (144); PSI 8.878 (152/3); with male assistants eg P.Ryl.2.117 (269); P.Berl.Moeller 1 (300); P.Edmonstone (354).

<sup>222</sup> BGU 2.522 (C2) a priestess who pleads helplessness as a woman; SB 6.9219 (319); P.Abinn.49 (342-351); Stud.Pal.20.86 (330) written by a Christian woman.

<sup>223</sup> Eg P.Abinn.19 (C4) at 244f below.

Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86 submits her petition against Eus, acting alone as she apparently did negotiating the sale of land. Dioskouros, the presbyter of the church, witnessed the contract. Dioskouros is constructed as impartial third party who will give unbiased witness. At the same time, Demetria calls on Dioskouros as alternative family to support her side of the conflict.

Tapiam and Paul in P.Neph.1 request the brothers at Hathor for ψωμιά<sup>224</sup> from grain owed by Paphnouthis. The brothers are to receive the grain, make bread, and arrange delivery from Hathor to Alexandria. There is no offer of payment, only the expectation that the brothers will do it. The brothers function as an alternative family.

If the hypothesis that the church functions as an alternative family is correct, it would be consistent with 'NT' use of family metaphors and epithets<sup>225</sup>. The hypothesis also sheds light on some of the texts. For example, in P.Oxy.50.3581 Attiaena is an orphan and refers to no one who might protect or represent her interests. The presbyters of the church, representing Paul, broker a reconciliation which Attiaena negotiates alone. If the church acts as alternate family, the presbyters have the authority of fathers, giving their representations weight they might not otherwise bear. It helps explain Attiaena's unlikely decision to comply. Again, if the hypothesis is correct, it raises the question why the presbyters fail to act for Attiaena, taking the role of protective and retributive alternative family for her. In P.Bour.25 Tare is a woman on her own<sup>226</sup>, far from family in Coptos, I.20, and desolate following her mother's death. Tare's sense of isolation raises questions about her relations with the church in Apameia, Syria<sup>227</sup> where a Christian community is known to have existed before 325. The hospitality identified among Christian communities in enabling travel<sup>228</sup> might be expected to have extended to someone in Tare's circumstances. Moreover, Tare is resident in Apameia, though for how long is unclear. Her Christian practice, in her emphatic statement of prayer, reference to Easter and use of *nomina*

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<sup>224</sup> For other requests, see P.Neph.2.1-5; 4.25-28; 5.3-12; 6.11-23; 7.1-3.

<sup>225</sup> Eg household of God, 1 Timothy 3.1-5, Hebrews 3.1-6; brothers/sisters, Romans 16.1, 1 Corinthians 6.6; 8.18, 2 Thessalonians 3.6, 15, Philemon 1, 7, 1 Timothy 5.2; mothers/fathers, Matthew 12.48f, Mark 10.30, 1 Timothy 5.1, 2; people with one Father, Ephesians 4.6.

<sup>226</sup> Tare makes no reference to a husband or other family and includes no greetings from people with her.

<sup>227</sup> Ed.pr; Naldini (1968, 1998), 309; O'Callaghan (1963), 90. Evidence indicates churches existed in Apameia in Phrygia, Pisidia and Syria prior to 325 and Bithynia at least from 325, Harnack (1908), 2.212, 188, 218, 221, 136f.

<sup>228</sup> Judge (1980a), 7.

*sacra* suggest she is a member of the church and that the church might act as alternative family, moderating her desolation. However, Tare makes no mention of support or of a lack of support. Her silence about the church alongside her need for connection is suggestive but no firm conclusion is possible. It may be that Tare presents her circumstances in their most austere light to elicit her aunt's sympathy. It may be that her circumstances, work or marriage, prevent attendance at church.

This concludes the examination of themes arising from the texts written by Christian women. The next chapter examines the religious lives of Christian women from a different perspective using papyri that are written by men or people whose gender is not indicated. These texts are written to Christian women or they refer to Christian women in a significant way.

## EXCURSUS

### WOMEN AND GUARDIANSHIP

An observation arising from the texts written by Christian women concerns the women's conformity with the laws of guardianship. In the legal and commercial documents in this thesis<sup>1</sup>, no woman acts with a guardian and none cites the *ius liberorum*<sup>2</sup>. In this, the texts are typical of women's documents during, and especially after, the third century when the legal requirement of guardianship of women fell into desuetude<sup>3</sup>. While not immediately related to the women's religious lives, the apparent recognition of competency and enabling independence signifies a shift in attitudes that has implications for women's participation in the church.

*Tutela mulierum perpetua* was instituted to safeguard masculine control of family property as part of a land-based agnatic system of inheritance and marriage<sup>4</sup>. In their original form, both *tutela mulierum* and *tutela impuberum* were administered by the heir/s of the people in guardianship, who thus had a personal interest in preserving the estate<sup>5</sup>. Roman and Graeco-Egyptian guardianship, while overlapping in major respects, have distinct aspects that appear as confusions in the papyri. In particular, local guardianship of women was required in all private transactions that gave rise to public record.

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<sup>1</sup> P.Abinn.34; P.Edmonstone; P.Kell.1.Gr.32; P.Lips.1.28; P.Oxy.6.903; P.Oxy.50.3581; Stud.Pal.20.86.

<sup>2</sup> See Sheridan (1996) for women in the papyri acting without a κύριος by right of children, updating Sijpesteijn's lists in P.Mich.15, 158-169; Beaucamp (1990-1992) 2.197ff. Of 123 texts dated 99-615 only 27 are 324 or later, including 5 dated C3/4 or C4.

<sup>3</sup> The last recorded example of *tutela* is in the legal collection *Vatican Fragment* 325-327 (293/4) cited in Arjava (1996), 116; (1997), 26. Women's guardianship does not figure in the CT (438), Dixon (2001), 79. Indeed CJ 8.59.1=CT 8.17.3 (410) granted *ius liberorum* to all women, effectively abolishing *tutela mulierum*, Evans-Grubbs (1995), 326, n.28. See also Beaucamp (1990-1992), 2.260-263.

<sup>4</sup> Women under *tutela mulierum* required a guardian's authority to alienate property classed as *res Mancipi*, that is, slaves, oxen, horses, mules, asses, land in Italy and people in service. Everything else a woman could freely dispose of and purchase. A guardian was also required for making a will, giving a dowry and assuming an obligation. See Arjava (1997), 25; Gardner (1986), 18; Taubenschlag (1955), 175. After 212, women in the provinces could dispose of land and houses as these were not *res Mancipi*, although they needed a guardian to bequeath them. Slaves and animals were *res Mancipi* everywhere.

<sup>5</sup> *Digest of Justinian* 26.4.pr, 1. By the late empire, women conducted their own affairs with tutors bestowing *auctoritas* for certain specified acts. In this way, where guardians to wards could be prosecuted for mismanagement, guardians of women could not. See Gardner (1986), 21; Dixon (2001), 77.

Over time guardianship came to have no significant bearing on the direction of family property and Claudius abolished the agnatic system in the first century. The principle of *tutela mulierum* was weakened by successive legislation<sup>6</sup>, particularly women's ability to make wills<sup>7</sup>, the *ius liberorum*<sup>8</sup>, marriage without *manus*, the 'choice' of a tutor<sup>9</sup> and the precedents of compellable permission<sup>10</sup>. The reason for women's guardianship came to be rationalised as a protection of 'womanly weakness'<sup>11</sup> with references to women's *infirmetas* and *fragilitas* appearing in literary and legal texts at the same time as women's successful management led to questioning the meaningfulness of, and need for, guardianship<sup>12</sup>.

In the early third century, women past puberty (twelve years when *tutela impuberis* ended) but under 25 were subject to a *curator minoris*, so that *tutela mulierum* did not apply, nor, therefore, the *ius liberorum* even if the woman had three children<sup>13</sup>. It is reasonable to assume that many women over 25 qualified for the *ius liberorum*. At this time examples of women acting μετὰ κύριος disappear from the papyrological record. However, alongside the new freedom, the use of μετὰ συνεστῶτος emerges<sup>14</sup>, a male assistant who, like the κύριος, is most frequently a husband or male relative. The practice is voluntary. It suggests that the absence of κύριοι from papyri, at least for some women, does not reflect a new subjective or social independence but a change in legal requirement.

<sup>6</sup> Gardner (1986), 15; El-Mosalamy (1997), 252; Dixon (2001), 75ff.

<sup>7</sup> Gaius, *Institutes* 1.115a.

<sup>8</sup> *Lex Iulia* 18 BCE, *lex Papia Poppaea* 9.

<sup>9</sup> Gaius, *Institutes* 1.151-153. The choice is not whether to have a tutor or not, but the tutor's identity.

<sup>10</sup> Gaius, *Institutes* 1.190-192.

<sup>11</sup> Eg Cicero, *Pro Murena* 27, 'Our ancestors required all women owing to the instability (*propter infirmitatem*) of their judgement to be under the control guardians (*in tutorem*)'; Gaius, *Institutes* 1.144 has 'propter animi levitatem'. See also Dixon (2001), 74.

<sup>12</sup> Gaius, *Institutes* 1.190-1. Also Dixon (2001), 82.

<sup>13</sup> CJ 5.37.12 (242). Also Arjava (1997), 29; Taubenschlag (1955), 179.

<sup>14</sup> See Taubenschlag (1955), 172; Arjava (1996), 115; (1997). Eg P.Edmonstone; P.Lips.1.28 written by Christian women; in both, the assistant writes since the woman is illiterate. See also CJ 2.3.9 (222); 2.13.13 (239); 2.19.16 (252); 4.44.8 (293); 8.56.6 (294).

## CHAPTER 8

### DOCUMENTS WRITTEN TO CHRISTIAN WOMEN

#### OR REFERRING TO CHRISTIAN WOMEN

In this chapter I examine the papyri that are written by men or by those of unknown gender to Christian women or referring to Christian women, in order to explore the women's religious lives. These texts do not allow insight into the women's religious subjectivity but contribute to the wider picture of Christian women's religious beliefs and practices. I do not include Christian texts where reference is made to women in passing, for example in a greeting, where their belief is unknowable, nor texts where the women mentioned bear what may be a Christian name but there is no further information<sup>1</sup>. The analysis focuses on the women and is briefer than for the texts written by Christian women. The women receiving letters that include Christian prayer formulae, conventions and greetings are taken to be Christian on the assumption these are meaningful where the women share the authors' beliefs<sup>2</sup>. Letters from Christian authors whose gender is unknown are included in this chapter since it cannot be presumed that they express women's religious subjectivity.

I have identified 24 texts written to Christian women or referring to Christian women<sup>3</sup>. Sixteen are written by men and eight by authors whose gender is unknown. Thirteen texts are written to women, two to a man and a woman, seven to a man but referring to women, and two to a person whose gender is not known. A further seven documents refer specifically to ascetic women and are discussed in a separate chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> CPR 13.4 (C3), Maria, Sousanna, tax list; P.Berl.Bork.1.2 (298-330) mentions Maria; P.Berl.Bork.1.13 (298-330) mentions Maria; P.Col.8.238 (C4) Maria, list of accounts; P.Erl.53 (C4) Maria, tax list; P.Erl.127 (323-642), Sophia, Maria, Sara, list; P.Gen.1.69 (386), mentions Maria; P.Herm.46 (C4) greets Maria; P.Kell.1.61 (C4) Rachel, list; P.Oxy.1.123 (C3/4) greets Makaria; P.Oxy.10.1349 (C4) mentions Hagia; P.Oxy.24.2421 (312-313), Hagia, wheat accounts; P.Oxy.44.3184 (297), Maria, mother; P.Oxy.55.3787 (301/2), Maria, mother; P.Prag.1.14 (C3), Maria, mother; P.Sakaon 39 (318) Maria, mother of Peter; P.Sakaon 73 (328) Maria, mother; P.Wash.Univ.2.95 (C4/5) Maria pays tax; SB 1.1727 (C3/4) Maria, list; Chr.Wilck.381, (374) mentions Maria; O.Strasb.658 (C4/5) mentions Maria; O.Waqfa 78 (C4) mentions Maria; P.Oxy.31.2599 (C3/4) mentions Sousanna; P.Oxy.60.4091 (352) mentions Sousanna. See also 322f below for Kyria in SB 14.11532; 75 above for Esther and Sousanna in P.Oxy.31.2599.

<sup>2</sup> On *nomina sacra* as indicators of the Christianity of a letter's addressee; see the excursus below.

<sup>3</sup> See the appendix to this chapter for 7 further texts in which the women, while arguably Christian, are not finally classified as Christian.

I provide a brief outline of each text, giving the name of the papyrus, date, provenance, author, addressee, reasons for classification as Christian, any other religious elements, and information on the religious lives of the women in twelve-point type, and other aspects of the text in ten-point type.

**P.Abinn.19=P.Gen.1.51, mid 342-351, Provenance: Philadelphia; BL 7.2**

This petition is from Anonymos to 'my beloved brother Abinnaeus' (τῷ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ Ἀμινναίῳ), verso<sup>4</sup>.

Anonymos asks that the brother of his wife Naomi be released from military service or at least that he not serve overseas. The release would be a 'good deed' (ἔργον καλὸν) l.17, 'because of God' (διὰ τὸν θεόν), l.18<sup>5</sup>, and 'because of me' (δι' ἐμέν (= ἐμέ)), l.19, 'since his mother is a widow and has no one except him' (διότι χ[ρ]ήρα ἐστὶν ἡ μή[τ]ηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔχει ἄλλο(ν) εἰ μὴ αὐτόν), ll.19-21<sup>6</sup>.

The petitioner is a Christian. He uses four *nomina sacra*, τῷ θε(ε)ῷ, l.12, τὸν θε(ε)όν, l.18, ὁ θε(ε)ός, ll.24f, 35, and a conflated 'NT' citation, the context of which is lost in the opening damaged section, '...a drink of water to one of these little ones shall not lose his reward' (πο[τ]ήριον ὕδα[δα]τος (= ὕδατος) ἐν τῷ [μικ]ρῶν [τ]ούτων οὐκ ἀπολεῖ τὸν [μ]ισθὸν αὐτοῦ), ll.8-10<sup>7</sup>. The writer opens with prayer whose content is lost, ]ν εὐχομαι [ , l.3, closes with prayer, ὁ θε(ε)ός διαφυλάξῃ σε, l.35, and uses ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός, verso<sup>8</sup>, of Abinnaeus. The author may be Apa Mios<sup>9</sup>. The biblical quotation is consistent with, but does not prove, the author's identity as clergy/ascetic, as is his

<sup>4</sup> The top of the papyrus is damaged, ...ἀγ]απητῷ ... [χ]αίρειν, ll.1f, remains.

<sup>5</sup> See also P. Herm.17, ch2 above.

<sup>6</sup> The boy's father was a soldier, ll.14f. It is not clear whether Naomi and her brother share a common father, mother or both.

<sup>7</sup> The quotation conflates Mark 9.41 and 42. Use of the quotation suggests that the writer expects Abinnaeus to understand its reference.

<sup>8</sup> τῷ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ. The phrase appears to be used only by Christian writers, but can be used for both pagan and Christian addressees; see 109ff above. The question of Abinnaeus' belief arises. The editor argues Abinnaeus is not Christian, 33. Horsley, 'Beloved brothers' in *ND* 4.250-255, here 254, finds no evidence positively supporting Christian belief. Barnes argues he is Christian, based on references to God using the singular, but this is an uncertain criterion; the relationship with Apa Mios; and possible support for Athanasius, but the evidence is slight, 'Career of Abinnaeus' in Barnes (1994), 373f. I would add the evidence of this text and on balance of probability consider Abinnaeus Christian; see n.7 above.

<sup>9</sup> Ed., 64. Also Judge and Pickering (1977), 57. Apa Mios appears in P.Abinn.6, 7, 8.



sense of ability to declare God's reward for Abinnaeus<sup>10</sup> and his urging Abinnaeus, 'believe in God' (πίστευε δὲ τῷ [θ](ε)ῷ), l.12.

It is reasonable to assume that Naomi is a Christian. She is married to an overtly Christian man, possibly Apa Mios<sup>11</sup>, and her biblical name indicates her parents are Christian<sup>12</sup>. Naomi's attitude to the widow is not stated but it is reasonable to assume that she shares her husband's concern and even that she initiates the letter<sup>13</sup>. There is no evidence that Naomi co-writes the letter, and that its use of biblical allusion, *nomina sacra*, appeals to God and references to Christian virtues and rewards reflect Naomi's theology and knowledge. The religious beliefs of the widow are not indicated.

#### **P.Ant.2.93, C4, Provenance: Antinoopolis; BL 11.7**

This letter from Papais 'to my most honoured Nonna' (τῇ τιμιωτάτῃ μου Νόννᾳ Παπαίς χαίρειν), l.1, concerns his marriage to Nonna's unnamed daughter and the acquisition of a house. The letter has no opening prayer<sup>14</sup>, but concludes with a standard prayer for health, ἐρρῶσθαι (= ἐρρωσθαι) ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι πολλοῖς χρόν[ο]ι[ς], ll.44f<sup>15</sup>.

Nonna's name suggests that she is Christian, but is insufficient for Christian classification in the fourth century<sup>16</sup>. Τιμιώτατος/-η also occurs most frequently in Christian texts, but is attested in pagan texts<sup>17</sup>. Χρηστότης in 'I made clear to your goodness' (ἐδήλωσα τῇ χρηστότητι ὑμῶν), l.5, strengthens a Christian classification, but again occurs in pagan papyri, though rarely in the period<sup>18</sup>. The messenger for Papais, Serenos the reader, (διὰ Σερήνου ἀναγνώστου), ll.5f, may be a minor church

<sup>10</sup> 'God make a return to you for your mercy and elevate you to greater things' (ὁ θεὸς ἀποδιδῆ (= ἀποδοῖ) σοι πρὸς τὴν ἐλεημωσύνην σου καὶ ἀνυψῇ (= ἀνυψοῖ) σε εἰς τὰ μί[ζ]ονα (= μείζονα)), ll.24-27.

<sup>11</sup> See 244 especially n.9 above. Also 206f above for marriage within religious communities.

<sup>12</sup> From the Book of Ruth. Biblical names after 300 are generally regarded as Christian, Fikhman (1996).

<sup>13</sup> Concern for widows is consistent with Christian teaching, for which see 135f above.

<sup>14</sup> Papais opens with a second greeting, πρὸ πάντων προσαγορεύω ..., l.3. See also SB 8.9746.

<sup>15</sup> The closing prayer is followed by a greeting; see also P.Grenf.1.53.

<sup>16</sup> See 302, n.68 below.

<sup>17</sup> The adjectival use indicates τιμιώτατος/-η is not fully developed into a title for elite clergy and laity as occurs in C4. See 96f above.

<sup>18</sup> χρηστότης is attested of people in the 'NT', but not as a complementary deictic. See 96 above.

cleric, but this is uncertain<sup>19</sup>. Even if he is, Papais' use of him may be circumstantial. Papais says of Nonna, 'next to God I have you as mother and as sister' (μετὰ γὰρ τὸν θεό(ν) σε ὡς μητέρα ἔχω καὶ ὡς ἀδελφή(ν)), ll.10f, without *nomen sacrum*. Μετὰ τὸν θεόν is common to Christian and pagan texts<sup>20</sup> but calling a future mother-in-law μητέρα and ἀδελφήν may be a Christian discounting of status distinctions<sup>21</sup> and adoption of extended kinship terms<sup>22</sup>, and reflect common membership of the church<sup>23</sup>. Certainly Papais' use is a politeness strategy to engender favourable feelings in Nonna. On the basis of cumulative probabilities, Nonna and Papais are taken to be Christian, as is the bride, although nothing is known of her Christianity or her feelings about the location of the house<sup>24</sup>.

### **P.Col.Teeter 7=P.Col.11.299, C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This letter from Anonymos/e<sup>25</sup> is to 'my mistress and most honoured sister' (τῇ δεσπ[ό]τῃ μου καὶ [τ]ιμιω[τάτῃ ἀ]δ[ελφ]ῇ), l.1.

Δεσπότης appears as an honorific title in literature of the fourth and fifth centuries and is commonly used for bishops and elite laymen<sup>26</sup>. Its use for a woman is unusual, with δέσποινα more usual<sup>27</sup>. The meaning of the prescript is uncertain, since δεσπότης/δέσποινα, following κύριος/κυρία, tend to lose their honorific sense in the fourth century and become expressions

<sup>19</sup> On readers, see 176f above. 'Readers' in C3 and C4 are not always associated with the church but work in secular contexts. Serenos' function is not qualified, as in P.Kell.1.32.21 ἀναγνώστης καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας (= ἐκκλησίας). It may be that Serenos is the literate person who will read Papais' letter to an illiterate Nonna. Her literacy status is unknown.

<sup>20</sup> The expression is more usually negative, eg μετὰ τὸν θεὸν οὐδένα ἔχομεν ἡμεῖς βοηθὸν ὑμῶν, where it obliges the person to act as asked, P.Abinn.34 (C4); οὐδένα <ἔ>χω [μ]ετὰ τὸν θεὸν εἰ μὴ σε, in the pagan text, P.Giss.68.8f (C2); μετὰ τὸν θεὸν ἄλλον ἀδελφὸν οὐκ ἔχω ... εἰ μὴ σὺ μόνος, P.Lond.3.1244.5f (C4) of uncertain religious milieu. See also P.Oxy.56.3859 (C4); PSI 10.1161 (C4); P.Abinn.34 (C4), put negatively; P.Herm.17, put positively; see the latter 2 texts at 122 above.

<sup>21</sup> See also P.Col.Teeter 7; P.Oxy.48.3407; also 145f above.

<sup>22</sup> Use of μήτηρ in a non-literal sense does not occur before C2 and is unusual in C3. It becomes more frequent in C4 with Christian use. There is no evidence for a systematic adoption of μήτηρ and πατήρ for parents-in-law, Dickey (2004), 161, 163.

<sup>23</sup> A similar position is adopted in Arzt-Grabner (2002), 187f.

<sup>24</sup> Papais asks to live near Nonna rather than his brother. It is not known whether this reflects the bride's choice. Papais allows that Nonna may not want the close proximity, but does not say why. Either way, the couple will not live in the same house as either family.

<sup>25</sup> All but the first 8 lines are lost and the 2<sup>nd</sup> line, which may have named the writer, is damaged.

<sup>26</sup> Dinneen (1927), 56f.

<sup>27</sup> Dinneen (1927), 76.

of affection or politeness<sup>28</sup>. The addition of τιμιώτατη may suggest that the writer considers the mistress his superior but this is uncertain as τιμιώτατος/ -η can be used of all classes<sup>29</sup>.

The letter is Christian. It opens with prayer 'to the all-merciful God' (τῷ παγγελήμονι θεῷ), ll.3f, an expression that is almost certainly Christian<sup>30</sup>, and refers to ὁ μοναχός, l.7, who is unnamed but apparently known to both the mistress and the writer.

The mistress is probably a Christian to whom appeal to the 'all-merciful God' is meaningful. She is wealthy, as indicated by her possession of a *paragaution*, which the monk has delivered<sup>31</sup>. The mistress's wealthy status is consistent with third- and fourth-century evidence that members of the governing elite of the Greek cities of Egypt are Christian<sup>32</sup>. Her Christian practice accommodates wearing a garment that announces her wealth, and what appears a discounting of status distinctions whereby she is called both ἡ δεσπότης and ἡ ἀδελφή<sup>33</sup>.

#### **P.Got.11, C3/4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 2.2.69**

This is a letter of introduction<sup>34</sup>, specifically an ἐπιστολή συστατική, from Anonymos/e to Anonymos/e<sup>35</sup>. Christian commendations from one church to another are regular, but the custom is not exclusively Christian<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Eg τὴν δέσποινάν μου νύμφην, P.Ant.2.93.3f, above.

<sup>29</sup> See 96f above.

<sup>30</sup> On πανελεήμων, see 106f above.

<sup>31</sup> The editor comments on the peculiarity of a monk being in possession of such an expensive garment and delivering it to a secular individual, p.48. There is no suggestion that the monk is other than the carrier of the garment and, if he lives as part of the local society, the action is not remarkable. On the evidence of the papyri for ascetic women in local communities, see 308-311 below.

<sup>32</sup> Judge and Pickering (1977), 69f.

<sup>33</sup> See the conclusions below.

<sup>34</sup> The church developed two types of letters of introduction: the letter of recommendation (ἐπιστολή συστατική), that is, this text; P.Abinn.31 (C4); P.Oxy.31.2602 (C4); 31.2603 (C4); 43.3149 (C5?); P.Koln 2.112 (C5/6); and the letter of peace (ἐπιστολή εἰρηνική) known from late C3 and C4; see P.Oxy.36.2785 below. The ἐπιστολή συστατική was given with episcopal approval to clergy and laity of high status for admission to communion as well as material support. Canon 42 of the Canons of Laeodicea (343-381) forbids clergy journeying without such letters. The difference between the letter types is evident from the Council of Elvira (c.312) and especially Canons 11, 13 of the Council of Chalcedon (451), *Seven Ecumenical Councils*, s.v. Examples in 'NT' include Acts 18.27; Romans 16.1; 2 Corinthians 3.1; Colossians 4.10; Philemon. See Horsley, 'Beloved brothers' in *ND* 4.250-255, here 255; Llewelyn, 'Christian Letters of Recommendation' in *ND* 8.169-172; Teeter (1997); Keyes (1935).

<sup>35</sup> The opening lines are lost. It would be most unusual for an ἐπιστολή συστατική to be written by a woman, but not impossible.

<sup>36</sup> Pagan examples include P.Oxy.51.3643 (C2); P.Tebt.Tait 51 (C2 or C3). For a list, Keyes (1935), 32-38.

The writer's use of ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ, ll.3, 4, 9, with *nomen sacrum*, including ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ, l.9, establishes him/her as Christian.

The writer asks assistance, βοηθ[εῖ]ν, l.4, in the form of 'love' ([τ]ὴν ἀγάπην σου), l.6<sup>37</sup>, for 'these women who are being taken to the *epitropos*' (ταύταις ἀγομέναις πρὸς τὸν ἐπίτροπον), ll.5f, just as the recipient's custom has been 'to help all the brothers in the Lord' (καθὼς δέ σοί ἐστιν πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ βοηθ[εῖ]ν), ll.3f. The brothers are almost certainly Christian<sup>38</sup>.

The identity of the women is not given, but the use of an ἐπιστολὴ συστατική, a request for ἀγάπη, and treatment similar to the Christian brothers<sup>39</sup> establishes them as Christian and implies that they are distinguished members of the church<sup>40</sup>. The women are not called ἀδελφαί.

The date of the text<sup>41</sup> has suggested that these women are being taken for trial<sup>42</sup> during the Diocletianic persecution<sup>43</sup>. The identity of the ἐπίτροπος, however, is uncertain. The term may designate the prefect of Egypt<sup>44</sup>, but is also used for guardians of women<sup>45</sup> and children, making a background in persecution unnecessary. The use of an ἐπιστολὴ συστατική would be consistent with status as confessors.

**P.Grenf.2.73=P.Lond.3.713=Chr.Wilck.127, late C3, Provenance: Great Oasis; BL 2.72; 9.97; 10.80; 11.87**

This letter from Psenosiris, πρεσβ[υτέ]ρω (= πρεσβύτερος), to Apollon, 'presbyter and beloved brother' (πρεσβυτέρῳ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ), l.2, forms part of the gravediggers' archive from Kysis<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> ἀγάπη is frequent in Christian texts, echoing its use in 'NT' of the love of God, but is not exclusive to them. See 109f above. Use here is no doubt conditioned by Christian theology.

<sup>38</sup> ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ is probably to be read with τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, establishing the brothers as Christian, rather than with βοηθεῖν. Where ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ qualifies the verb as in ll.2f, the writer places it after.

<sup>39</sup> πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς may include sisters.

<sup>40</sup> Teeter (1997), 956.

<sup>41</sup> Palaeographically, perhaps late C3 rather than C4, van Haelst (1976), 498.

<sup>42</sup> ἄγω can be used of bringing prisoners to court, LSJ, s.v.

<sup>43</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), no.23; Bell (1944), 206.

<sup>44</sup> The word is used of various levels of administration, including *procurator*, BL 2.2.69, *praeses* or ἡγεμών, although ἑπαρχος is more accurate. The Diocletianic administrative reforms make nomenclature uncertain. See Lenz (1992), who does not refer to ἐπίτροποι; Lallemand (1964); Bagnall (1993a), 57-67. Ghedini rejects a context of persecution because of this uncertainty in meaning, cited in Naldini (1968, 1998), 139, n.6. An ἐπίτροπος is connected with Montanists in Eusebius, HE 5.16.14; 5.18.15.

<sup>45</sup> Eg P.Oxy.14.1645 (308).

<sup>46</sup> SB 1.4651-3; 4654-4657; 5679; 3.7205-7206; P.Grenf.2.68-78 (240-310).

The letter relates that 'the grave diggers'<sup>47</sup> have brought here to Toeto the *politike* sent to the Oasis<sup>48</sup> by the authorities<sup>49</sup> (οἱ νεκροτάφοι ἐννηόχασιν ἐνθάδε εἰς Τοετὼ τὴν πολιτικὴν τὴν πεμψθεῖσαν εἰς Ὑασιν ὑπὸ τῆς ἡγεμονίας), ll.7-11, and she is now given into protection (εἰς τήρησιν)<sup>50</sup>, l.14, of 'good and faithful men' (τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ πιστοῖς)<sup>51</sup>, ll.12f, from among the νεκροτάφοι until her son Neilos arrives.

The author is Christian, using three *nomina sacra*, ἐν κ(υρὶ)ῷ, ἐν θ(ε)ῷ, ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ θ(ε)ῷ, ll.3, 6, 22, and praying in closing, ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ θ(ε)ῷ, ll.21f. He and the addressee are Christian presbyters.

The woman is most probably Christian, given the concern of the two presbyters and the likelihood that her son, Neilos, is Christian<sup>52</sup>. The late third-, early fourth-century date has suggested that the woman may be a martyr/confessor of the Diocletianic persecution<sup>53</sup>. The phrase 'he (Neilos) will witness to you about the things they have done to her' (μαρτυρήσι σοι περὶ ὧν αὐτὴν πεποιήκασι), l.16ff, may support the idea of persecution, with the subject of πεποιήκασι being those designated ἡ ἡγεμονία, l.11, but its antecedent is debated<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> It is argued that gravediggers named κοπιᾶται are a minor order in the church, J. Zeiller cited in Naldini (1968, 1998), 134. The term is not listed in Wipszycka (1993).

<sup>48</sup> The Great Oasis is known to have functioned as a place of banishment, suggesting this meaning of πεμψθεῖσαν. But the usual terms for banishment are ἐξορίζειν and πέμπειν ἐν ἐξορίᾳ, Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 622. If the hypothesis of a body is correct, πεμψθεῖσαν will refer to its consignment. Kysis is the site of a necropolis and gravediggers' workshop, Lukaszewicz (1998), 87.

<sup>49</sup> ἡγεμονία may refer to the prefect or local governor in the Diocletianic period, but nomenclature for positions of authority is difficult to interpret; see also n.44 above. ἡγεμονία is also attested of ecclesiastical authority especially a bishop, O'Callaghan (1987), 126f; and of the president of a guild, in particular, in P.Petaus 28 (C2), a gravediggers' guild, Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 625.

<sup>50</sup> ἡγεμονία and its cognates are used of maintaining objects, guarding prisoners, keeping bodies and caring for living persons, Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 628f.

<sup>51</sup> The combination of words, while appropriate to designate Christians, occurs in secular contexts and is used of non-human subjects, Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 626f. The expression means 'those who do a task well'.

<sup>52</sup> Neilos' Christianity is suggested by Psenosiris' use of σὺν θεῷ, l.16, of his arrival and the presbyters' evident respect for him. On σὺν θεῷ, see 123f above.

<sup>53</sup> Deissmann (1902); Lukaszewicz (1998). The period of the archive includes the persecutions under Decius, Gallus, Valerian and Diocletian.

<sup>54</sup> Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 630, take as the subject νεκροτάφοι, but this is not obvious, being separated by 4 lines and 4 ideas. Lukaszewicz takes as the subject people in the government's service, Lukaszewicz (1998), 94. The idea of μαρτυρήσι as Neilos' Christian witness to his mother is central to the reconstruction in Lukaszewicz (1998), 92.

Suggested meanings for πολιτική<sup>55</sup> include a proper name<sup>56</sup>, a 'citizen of Alexandria'<sup>57</sup>, and an immoral woman<sup>58</sup>. Of 31 instances of πολιτική in the papyri from 100 to 400, 29 refer to the state and citizenship<sup>59</sup>. One occurrence in P.Oxy.6.903<sup>60</sup> connotes immorality. The other is this text<sup>61</sup>. The meaning 'prostitute' appears unlikely given the care of the presbyters. There is no attested use of Politike as a name in Egypt<sup>62</sup>, and the grammatical construction, with use of the definite article, τὴν πολιτικὴν τὴν πεμφθεῖσαν, II.9f, argues against a proper name and favours the meaning 'citizen'. Use of the term suggests the woman is not known to the presbyters who rather know her son. The possibility that the presbyters care for the woman for Neilos' sake casts doubt on her Christianity. The early date means that his belief need not imply hers.

The situation referred to is debated<sup>63</sup>. Suggestions fall into two groups: the transport of a Christian prisoner banished in the Diocletianic persecution<sup>64</sup>; and the transport of a Christian woman's body for funeral<sup>65</sup>. The latter suggestion attracts most contemporary favour. A major and unresolved difficulty with the former suggestion is the role of the gravediggers as quasi-police. It may be that the gravediggers are in Toëto travelling from Alexandria to Kysis for other reasons, are given the care of the woman because she is Christian, and have no

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<sup>55</sup> LSJ, s.v.; BL 10.80.

<sup>56</sup> Deissmann (1902); Bell (1944), 206; W. Crönert, *Raccolta di scritti in onore di G. Lumbroso* (1925) 514-528, cited in Bell (1944), 206. Deissmann's theory is examined in Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 621f. Quoting Judge, they suggest the use of Politike for a Christian is unlikely given its overtones of immorality, but Politike's parents need not be Christian given the early date.

<sup>57</sup> F. de' Cavalieri, *Una ultima parola su la lettera di Psenosiris*, cited in Naldini (1968, 1998), 132. Πολιτικός/-ή indicating Alexandrian citizenship is attested in Sozomen, *HE* 3.14; P.Oxy.1.117 (C2/3); P.Bad.2.43 (C3); P.Oxy.8.1146 (C4) but always in conjunction with a name.

<sup>58</sup> The editors note πολιτική can be the equivalent of πόρνη, but cite *Theophanes Continuatus* 430 dated C9-C10.

<sup>59</sup> A status marker (*Standesbezeichnung*), Lumbroso, BL 2.2.72

<sup>60</sup> Anonyme quotes her husband's threat to take a mistress (λαμβάνω πολιτικὴν ἐμαυτῶ), I.37; see 52 above.

<sup>61</sup> πολιτική may have developed an ambiguous meaning arising from the society's honour:shame value, whereby a suspicion of immorality attaches to women functioning in the public domain.

<sup>62</sup> The name Politike occurs in epitaphs on Chios and Thasos, JÖAI 15, 47 nos 5, 10 (184/5); IG XII [8] 503 (imperial) cited in Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995), 621. The epitaph of Julia Politike/politike in Rome may refer to an Egyptian woman but the word appears to be a descriptive adjective rather than a name. Politikos occurs in P.Ross.Georg.2.42 (C2); P.Oxy.42.3045 (314/5).

<sup>63</sup> See especially Deissmann (1902); Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995); Lukaszewicz (1998). All the proposed reconstructions produce different but plausible interpretations, none without difficulties, all involving conjecture for missing facts. I analyse them only as they impinge on the religious life of this woman.

<sup>64</sup> Deissmann (1902); Hamack, *Theol. Literaturzeit.*, cited in Naldini (1968, 1998), 132.

<sup>65</sup> Bell (1944), 206; W. Crönert, *Raccolta di scritti in onore di G. Lumbroso*, 514-528, cited in Bell (1944), 206; Judge and Pickering (1977), 55; O'Callaghan (1987); BL 9.97; Llewelyn and Nobbs (1995); Lukaszewicz (1998). Llewelyn and Nobbs argue that the body has been sent to the wrong destination and cite an example of gravediggers involved in the transportation of a body, P.Grenf.2.77, 619. Lukaszewicz with Judge and Pickering argue that the woman has died *en route* to the Oasis.

connection with the ἡγεμονία<sup>66</sup>. Also problematic is the woman's lack of voice and action, which is cited in favour of her being dead, but which may reflect her status as a prisoner. A difficulty with the second proposal is that the text gives no suggestion that the woman is dead<sup>67</sup> apart from the mention of gravediggers whose role is unclear. It is not possible on present knowledge to draw a conclusion. Of interest is her possible involvement in the Diocletianic persecution. Her status as dead or alive becomes evidence of the nature of the persecution. Central to Lukaszewicz's reconstruction is μαρτυρήσι σοι περὶ ὧν αὐτὴν πεποιθήκασιγ, ll.16-18, which he understands as Neilos' witness to his mother's suffering as a Christian. However, while this is possible, the antecedent to πεποιθήκασιγ is too uncertain to bear the weight he places on it. Llewellyn and Nobbs, with their proposed mistaken delivery of a body, account for most features of the letter without a context of persecution. The supposed hidden Christian references in the letter<sup>68</sup>, which may indicate a persecutory context, do not stand examination<sup>69</sup>. The major difficulty with Llewellyn and Nobb's reconstruction is the lack of reference in the letter to the mistake that is central to their proposal.

While this woman's Christian belief is most likely, there is not sufficient information to classify her as a martyr/confessor, or this text as a source for the Diocletianic persecution.

**P.Laur.2.42, 366/7-368/9, Provenance: Oxyrhynchite nome; BL 7.76; 8.164; 9.310; 10.92, 224**

This letter begins on the verso of a papyrus sheet and is completed on the recto between the columns of a list of goods and amounts. The names of the author and addressee are lost but the recipient is most probably male<sup>70</sup>. The list has the siglum SB 18.14039 and predates P.Laur.2.42<sup>71</sup>.

In the letter's beginning on the verso Anonymos/e rebukes the addressee for failing to check a sailor, Tletes, for wrong actions. There follows a gap and then a second paragraph, continuing the demand that the sailor be reprimanded. The papyrus is damaged in the lower portion.

<sup>66</sup> The hypothesis supposes that the gravediggers are Christian, but association with Apollon and the phrase τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ πιστοῖς are insufficient to establish Christian belief.

<sup>67</sup> Eg there is no reference to σῶμα or ταφή.

<sup>68</sup> Περμθεῖσαν meaning banishment, τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ πιστοῖς meaning Christian, the lack of reference to Jesus Christ.

<sup>69</sup> Llewellyn and Nobbs (1995), 622f. The invitation to ask for anything Apollon may wish that Psenosiris will then supply suggests a situation without persecution.

<sup>70</sup> The syntax of the extant first line favours reading πῶς as a conjunction introducing a subordinate clause, and ἀκούσας as a participle qualifying ἡμέλησας; 'I am amazed how, having heard that Tletes is in your area, you neglected to get hold of him' (θαυμάζω πῶς ἀκούσας ὡς ὅτι Τλήτης ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι ὑμῶν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡμέλησας αὐτὸν συνλαβέσθαι), ll.1f.

<sup>71</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 282, n.126; BL 10.224

While certainly some text is missing, the condition of the list of goods suggests that only a small section is lost.

The letter on the recto continues the tone of reprimand: 'you did such a thing to Atheatis<sup>72</sup> who is a Christian, because even though she is a laywoman, she has never been found doing the things of the world' (ποιήσης πρᾶγμα τοιοῦτο Ἀθηᾶτι χρηστιανῇ (= χριστιανῇ) οὔσα, διότι καὶ λαε[ι]κῇ (= λαικῇ) οὔσα καὶ μηδέποτε <ποιοῦσα> εὐρέθη πράγματα τοῦ κόσμου), recto ll.2f<sup>73</sup>. The nature of the wrong is not indicated but is of sufficient seriousness to earn a rebuke and to be a source of much grief (πάνυ ἐλυπήθην καὶ λοιπούμεθα (= λυπούμεθα) πάνυ σφόδρα), l.1, to the writer and his unnamed associates. The idea that unworldliness singles Atheatis out as a λαικῇ is noteworthy, although πράγματα τοῦ κόσμου are not defined. The phrase does not occur in the 'NT', although the negative connotation attached to κόσμος in the letter occurs regularly and can connote immorality and worldliness<sup>74</sup>. The clause suggests that laywomen regularly do worldly things whereas Atheatis' behaviour is similar to Christian women in another category, most probably ascetics while denying that she is one. Λαικός/-ῇ is attested in the 'NT' only once<sup>75</sup> and becomes increasingly frequent in Christian literature from the second century<sup>76</sup>. It denotes lay people as opposed to clergy or monks/nuns<sup>77</sup>. Χριστιανός/-ῇ occurs in the papyri from the third

<sup>72</sup> Ἀθηᾶτι most likely has the nominative form Ἀθηᾶτις, BL 7.76.

<sup>73</sup> An alternative translation, taking χριστιανῇ οὔσα with the addressee is found in Horsley, 'χρηστιανή in a Christian letter' in ND 2.172-174; BL 8.164. A difficulty is that this translation requires different referents for the consecutive occurrences of οὔσα and also a shift to a female addressee. In the translation adopted in this thesis which takes χριστιανῇ οὔσα with Atheatis, the form χριστιανῇ οὔση would be expected. Iota subscript is not written at this time, allowing χριστιανῇ to be read, and in this late period of *koinē* Greek, the lack of conjunction between participles and their antecedents is regular, Gignac (1981), 2.130-133. A change to a female addressee in the broken section of papyrus is unlikely given the small portion that is lost. Pintaudi, ed.pr, understands χριστιανῇ οὔσα as a descriptor of Atheas, his assumed nominative of this otherwise unattested name, 50, but does not discuss the case problem. Bagnall comments that this 'seems surely wrong', Bagnall (1993a), 282, n.126. *Miscellanea Papyrologica* does not mention Atheatis or the case problem. Elm (1994, 2000), 236, reads χριστιανῇ οὔσα with 'Atheas' and concludes that 'Atheas is a Christian and a laywoman but behaves uncharacteristically'.

<sup>74</sup> Eg John 1.10; 12.31; 1 Corinthians 1.20f; 2.6ff, 12; 3.19; Romans 3.19; James 4.4; 1 Peter 3.3; 1 John 2.15; 5.18f. κόσμος can also denote 'the world/humanity/creation' in a positive or neutral sense. See H. Sasse, 'κόσμος' in TDNT 3.868-896.

<sup>75</sup> 1 Clement 40.5 of the laity in contrast to priests in Judaism and, by analogy, Christian laity. See also Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.12.90.

<sup>76</sup> Ignatius, *To the Magnesians* 7.1 (according to the TLG. The word is missing from the Loeb edition.) to distinguish bishops, presbyters and deacons from the laity; in C2 Clement of Alexandria 3x; Origen 10x; Apocalypse of John 3x; C3 5x eg Hippolytus 2x; C4 167x, all Christian uses eg Athanasius 19x; Eusebius 5x Chrysostom 21x. (TLG)

<sup>77</sup> Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. λαικῇ is the female equivalent of λαικός but is not listed in Lampe. λαικός in the papyri of this period has a distinguishing function that sets limits to a person's position in the church, Choat (1999), 114f.



century in mainly official contexts, being used of believers by those outside the church<sup>78</sup>. Its use here appears to be by one member of the church of another<sup>79</sup>. The word denotes a status that apparently warrants a defined standard of behaviour from others and implies the addressee is Christian. The author's reference to what is proper to Christians and lay people suggests that s/he also is Christian and a person of sufficient authority to reprimand the addressee. There are no statements of prayer or other religious elements in the text.

#### **P.Leid.Inst.64, C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This fragmentary letter is written to a 'sister' (ἀδελφή), l.1, by Anonymos/e and opens with prayer for 'health and well-being to the Lord God' (εὐχομέ (= εὐχομαί) σε ὁλοκληρεῖν [καὶ ὑγιαίνειν παρ]ὰ τῷ κ(υρί)ῳ θ(ε)ῷ)<sup>80</sup>, l.4, using *nomina sacra*. The writer of the letter is Christian and the presence of *nomina sacra* implies that the sister also is Christian<sup>81</sup>. Nothing further is evident about the nature of her practice and experience. The writer possibly complains that the sister has not written and refers to buying.

#### **P.Oxy.6.939=Chr.Wilck.128=Sel.Pap.1.163, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 6.99; 7.133; 9.182**

This letter from Demetrius to Flavianus opens with expressions of thanks to God for the recovery (ἀνασφῆλαι)<sup>82</sup>, l.5, of Anonyme who is both Flavianus' wife and Demetrius' unnamed κυρία, ll.5, 9.

The letter is Christian on the basis of cumulative probabilities<sup>83</sup>. It contains 'NT' reminiscences<sup>84</sup>. Demetrius writes 'the recognition by the master God of you

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<sup>78</sup> P.Oxy.42.3035 (256); P.Oxy.43.3119 (259/60); possibly PSI 14.1412=SB 12.10772 (C2/3) but the reading is very uncertain. On χριστιανός see Horsley, 'χρησιανή in a Christian letter' in *ND* 2.172-174, here 173; W. Tabernee, 'Christian Inscriptions from Phrygia' in *ND* 3.126-139. In the 'NT', χριστιανός occurs in Acts 11.26; 26.28, used by pagans of Christians; 1 Peter 4.16; Didache 12.4 by the Christian writers of other Christians.

<sup>79</sup> For the hypothesis that χρησιανή (= χριστιανή), l.2, denotes an ascetic, see 319 below. The meaning here is almost certainly 'Christian'.

<sup>80</sup> The use of παρά with εὐχομαι appears to derive from the *proskynema* formula. See Ghedini (1922).

<sup>81</sup> See the excursus on *nomina sacra* below.

<sup>82</sup> The word is not attested elsewhere in the papyri, from a search of the *DDBDP*, nor in the 'NT' or 'Church Fathers', from searching the *TLG*.

<sup>83</sup> Considered pagan in Epp (2004), 22, n.54, with ὁ δεσπότης θεός rightly considered inadequate as a criterion. But Epp ignores the other elements.

<sup>84</sup> Using categories: citations, echoes, reminiscences in decreasing order of clarity, Harris (1975), 156.

(Flavianus) has appeared to us all with the result that the mistress has recovered' (ἡ πρὸς σέ [τοῦ δεσπότη] του θεοῦ γνώσις ἀνεφάνη ἅπασιν ἡμῖν ὥστε<sup>85</sup> κυρίαν ἀνασφῆλαι), II.3f<sup>86</sup>, and refers to God's graciousness (ἱλεως), I.7<sup>87</sup>, and to the mistress's illness as θλίψις, I.13<sup>88</sup>. He also writes, 'in her all we have hope' (ἐν γὰρ αὐτῇ πάντες τὰς ἐλπίδας [ἔχομεν])<sup>89</sup>, II.9f. The healing is due in part to 'our prayers' ([ταῖς εὐ]χαῖς ἡμῶν), I.8. The letter closes with prayer 'to the Master of all' (τῷ τῶν ὅλων δεσπότη εὐχομαι), II.29f<sup>90</sup>.

The remainder of the letter continues with the mistress's health and Demetrius' anxiety. It is noteworthy that Anonyme's recovery is seen as God's acknowledgement of Flavianus, not of Anonyme herself. Demetrius' statement that Anonyme is the household's hope is hyperbolic, no doubt part of his effort to placate Flavianus through flattery<sup>91</sup>. Anonyme appears to be an extension of Flavianus' ego.

It is reasonable to assume that Flavianus shares Demetrius' Christianity and interpretation of the mistress's recovery. It is also noteworthy that Demetrius does not call him ἀδελφός. It is likely that Anonyme is Christian, being mistress in an overtly Christian household, and the source of hope for her Christian servants/slaves. Her healing does not imply her Christianity since she is not perceived as its 'cause'. There is no information on Anonyme's understanding of her recovery.

<sup>85</sup> For ὥστε τὴν, see Mandilaras (1973), 344; *BL* 7.133.

<sup>86</sup> The phrase recalls Titus 2.11. God's γνώσις occurs in Romans 11.33 and 2 Corinthians 10.5 but the meaning is different. Here it has the sense of personal acquaintance, a meaning not attested in the 'NT' nor listed in Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v., though found in the LXX of human relations, eg Genesis 4.1; see R. Bultmann, 'γινώσκω, γνώσις' in *TDNT* 1.689-719. The word ἀναφαίνω occurs in Luke 19.11 of the Kingdom of God.

<sup>87</sup> Matthew 16.22; Hebrews 8.12.

<sup>88</sup> The word is frequent in the 'NT', used 56x of 'trouble' in general rather than illness specifically, H. Schlier 'θλίβω, θλίψις' in *TDNT* 3.143-148. It is frequent also in the LXX, 183x, but not in the sense 'disease'.

<sup>89</sup> Hope is a primary virtue in the 'NT', eg 1 Corinthians 13.13, but the object of hope is almost always God or Christ, eg Colossians 1.27; 1 Thessalonians 1.3. It is used of human beings only in 1 Thessalonians 2.19.

<sup>90</sup> In this defensive letter, Demetrius may intend to defuse Flavianus' anger by reminding him that he too has a Master, following Ephesians 6.9, but the inference is not direct with κύριος, κυρία of Flavianus and his wife, δεσπότης of God.

<sup>91</sup> Demetrius begs Flavianus to pardon him because he had summoned Flavianus to his sick wife who has now 'taken a turn for the better' (ἐπὶ τῷ ῥῆον ἔδοξεν τετραφῆθαι), I.17.

**P.Oxy.20.2276, C3/4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 4.65; 6.107; 7.146**

This letter from Aurelius Artemidoros to the wife of Aurelius Apollonios reports on Apollonios' trial. Only the final part of the woman's name survives in the address, [ ]ωναρίω, verso l.31<sup>92</sup>.

The classification of this text as Christian rests on the closing greeting and prayer, 'I greet your children by name, may the evil-eye not touch them, and I pray for the health of you and them in the Lord God' (ἀσπάζομαι κατ' ὄνομα τὰ ἀβάσκ[αν]τὰ [σο]υ παῖδια, μεθ' ὧν ἐρρωμένην σ' ἐν<sup>93</sup> κυ[ρίω] [θ]εῷ εὐχομαι), ll.28-30, without *nomina sacra*. 'Εν κυρίῳ θεῷ indicates Christian belief<sup>94</sup>. The text is an example of a Christian *abaskanta* formula<sup>95</sup>.

The woman is most probably Christian, for whom the Christian prayer is meaningful. Her attitude to the *abaskanta* formula is unknown<sup>96</sup>. Nothing further is known about her religious life.

The letter points to the woman's concern for her husband. The small 40 dr. being contested suggests a late third-/ early fourth-century date, before the inflation of the fourth century.

Palaeographically, the fourth century is possible<sup>97</sup>. The nature of Apollonios' trial is unclear but involves alleged theft<sup>98</sup>. There is no suggestion that it relates to the Diocletianic persecutions.

**P.Oxy.31.2601, early C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 9.196; Supplement, 155**

Copres<sup>99</sup> writes this letter 'to his 'sister' Sarapias' (Σαραπιάδι ἀδελφῇ), ll.1f. He is a Christian. He uses a *nomen sacrum* incorrectly in his opening prayer, εὐχομαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοκληρεῖν παρὰ τῷ κυρί(ῳ) θ[(ε)ῷ], ll.4f<sup>100</sup>, and includes the isopsephism ρθ<sup>101</sup>, verso,

<sup>92</sup> Apollonarion or Ammonarion, ed.

<sup>93</sup> Mandilaras (1973), 371; BL 7.146.

<sup>94</sup> There are no Manichean elements; see 28f above. The text is considered pagan in Epp (2004), 21f, based on the *abaskanta* formula, but see n.95 below.

<sup>95</sup> The *abaskanta* formula appears to lose its original meaning to become a wish that its object, most frequently children, be protected from harm. It occurs in other certainly Christian letters, eg P.Mich.8.519 (C4) with χμγ; PSI 8.972=SB 12.10841 (C4) with *nomina sacra*; P.Wisc.2.76 with ἐν θεῷ, below. See Naldini (1968, 1998), 279; also the conclusions, 272f below.

<sup>96</sup> See the conclusions, 272f below.

<sup>97</sup> The editor notes Latin with translation in court documents need not require a date in C4.

<sup>98</sup> The text is broken and obscure.

<sup>99</sup> On copronyms and the reasons for their popularity, see Iouannidou (2004).

<sup>100</sup> In the papyrus: εὐχομε ὑμᾶς ὀλοκληρῖν. For εὐχομαι with παρὰ see also P.Leid.Inst.64 above.

<sup>101</sup> ρθ = 99, α+μ+η+ν = 1+40+8+50 = 99.

an unusual use in the early fourth century<sup>102</sup> suggesting that Copres is especially devout. He closes with a standard prayer, ἐρρωσθαί σε εὔχομαι (= εὐχομαι), l.33.

Copres writes, 'it became known to us that those who present themselves in court are being made to sacrifice' (ἐγνώσθη ἡμῖν ὅτι οἱ προσερχόμενοι ἀναγκάζονται θύειν), ll.8-11<sup>103</sup>. Copres easily evades the necessity by giving a 'power of attorney' (ἀποσυστατικὸν ἐποίησα τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου (= μου)<sup>104</sup>), ll.11ff, to his 'brother' and expresses no awareness of any anomaly.

Sarapias is most probably Copres' wife<sup>105</sup>, and a Christian for whom the 'Amen' isopsephism and the *nomina sacra*<sup>106</sup> are meaningful and who is married to the Christian Copres<sup>107</sup>. It is not known whether she shares Copres' nonchalant attitude to sacrifice.

Copres urges Sarapias, 'if it is possible' (εἰ δυνατόν ἐστίν), verso l.32<sup>108</sup>, to let Anonymos/e<sup>109</sup> come with Sarapias' mother 'so that the leukoma<sup>110</sup> may be cured – for I myself have seen others cured' (ἵνα θεραπευθῇ τὸ λευκωμάτιον. ἐγὼ γὰρ εἶδον ἄλλους θεραπευθέντας), verso ll.32f. Copres does not state the destination.

The meaning of θεραπεύω is uncertain. The word is used most frequently of divine healing in the 'NT'<sup>111</sup> and in liturgical texts<sup>112</sup> and only twice of healing by a doctor<sup>113</sup>, but in the ancient world, these categories, with magical healing, are not necessarily mutually exclusive<sup>114</sup>. The editor notes that cures for eye disease were known in Egypt and argues that Copres is referring to a medical cure by doctors, possibly in Alexandria. However, Copres' confidence

<sup>102</sup> It occurs also in P.Oxy.8.1162 (C4); PSI 13.1342 (c.330-340); P.Mich.6.378. 'Amen' written in full is not attested in letters dated C3 and C4, ed.

<sup>103</sup> The editor notes that First Edict of the Great Persecution recorded in Lactantius, *de Morte Persecutorum* dated 23 February 303, sets out such a requirement and is most likely the circumstance to which Copres refers. Copres' lack of awareness of it suggests a time early in the Diocletianic persecution, ed. The nature of the sacrifice is not specified: possibly it consists of incense.

<sup>104</sup> μ is written over σο.

<sup>105</sup> The epithet ἀδελφή frequently refers to a wife, eg P.Giss.21-24 (C2); P.Mich.2.214, 217 (C3); P.Oxy.46.3314 (C4), below.

<sup>106</sup> See the excursus below.

<sup>107</sup> On marriage within religious communities, see 206f above.

<sup>108</sup> The sense seems to be 'if health allows'.

<sup>109</sup> Possibly Maximina, probably Sarapias and Copres' daughter, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 14.

<sup>110</sup> The word λευκωμάτιον may be an equivalent of λευκῶμα, a disease of the eyes, or possibly an ulcerated wound, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 13, n.19. It is a *hapax legomenon* according to the *DDBDP*.

<sup>111</sup> Jesus' and the disciples' healing is described using θεραπεύω 26x in the gospels, eg Matthew 4.24; 8.7, 16; 9.35; 10.1. See H. Beyer, 'θεραπεύω, θεράπων' in *TDNT* 3.128f.

<sup>112</sup> Eg P.Würzb.3 (C3).

<sup>113</sup> Luke 4.23; 8.43.

<sup>114</sup> Kee (1986), 2-4.

appears to go beyond the known efficacy of medical treatments, and the claim of personal eye-witness implies an immediate cure. Copres appears to have in mind a divine healing for which it is essential that Anonymos/e be present<sup>115</sup>. He does not specify how the healing is to be effected.

Copres' emphatic ἐγὼ γὰρ εἶδον ἄλλους θεραπευθέντας appears designed to allay Sarapias' doubts, and suggests that she may be less convinced about the possibility of divine healing.

### **P.Oxy.31.2609, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; Supplement, 155**

This letter opens, 'Mebrio? to my lady sister, greeting in the Lord' (Μηβριω[ ] τῇ κυρίᾳ μου ἀ[δελ]φῇ ἐν κυρίῳ. χαίρει[ιν]), ll.1ff<sup>116</sup>, using the *nomen sacrum* and a barely visible sign after ω, probably a chi-rho. The nature of the relationship is unknown.

Mebrio?<sup>117</sup> is a Christian and, it is argued, a woman because of reference to the sick son who is assumed to be young and the greeting 'more likely to be written by a woman than a man'<sup>118</sup>. However, there is no evidence that concern for a sick son is more likely in a woman<sup>119</sup>, nor a greeting to 'my sister in the Lord', and no indication of the son's age. Mebrio?'s gender is uncertain. The *nomen sacrum*, sign<sup>120</sup> and ἐν ... theology suggest that the lady sister is Christian.

Mebrio? writes about the illness, νενώθραντε (= νενώθρανται), l.6f<sup>121</sup>, of a son, Helenos<sup>122</sup> who 'has recovered already with God' (ἤδη [σ]ὺν θεῷ ἐπαύσατο), ll.8f. It is not stated whether Mebrio? regards Helenos' wellness as a divine healing, a medical cure under God's providence or a simple recovery with God's help<sup>123</sup>. Mebrio? expects the sister to share belief in divine intervention. It is reasonable to assume that she does.

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<sup>115</sup> Compare P.Lond.6.1926, where physical presence is unnecessary when spiritually present.

<sup>116</sup> With ἐν κυρίῳ qualifying ἀδελφή, Barrett-Lennard (1994), 33; modifying χαίρειν, Naldini (1968, 1998), no.74, 297. The function of the chi rho here is uncertain.

<sup>117</sup> Μηβριων, ed., but not attested elsewhere.

<sup>118</sup> Barrett-Lennard (1994), 34, n.145.

<sup>119</sup> See eg P.Oxy.6.939; 31.2601; also SB 6.9605 examined by Barrett-Lennard (1994) himself.

<sup>120</sup> See the excursus below.

<sup>121</sup> The word νωθραίνειν seems not to be attested elsewhere in the papyri according to the *DDBDP*.

<sup>122</sup> The choice of this name by a Christian was perhaps influenced by Constantine's mother, ed.

<sup>123</sup> These may not be distinct in Mebrio?'s mind. Barrett-Lennard (1994), 36, understands σὺν θεῷ to mean 'with God's help', but states he has no other example of its use with healing.

The body of the letter, now largely lost, appeals for news about health (περὶ τῆς σῆς σωτηρ[ίας]), ll.11f, and refers to household matters.

### **P.Oxy.34.2731, C4/5, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus**

Maximos writes to 'my lady mother, Zenobia' (τῇ κυρίᾳ μου μητρὶ Ζηνοβία), l.1

Maximos urges Zenobia to send his wife, Salamai, to him. 'Once, twice, three times I have told you to send my wife, and you were not willing. Now, do not neglect, night and day (νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας)<sup>124</sup>, to send me my wife', ll.9-13. The *praepositus*, Maximos says, prevents him coming to them, ll.16f<sup>125</sup>. The letter includes greetings from Rufina, ἡ μήτηρ μ[ου] 'Ρουφίνα, ll.7f.

Maximos is a Christian. He greets Zenobia ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ θ(ε)ῶ, l.2, using *nomina sacra*, and interprets the availability of a letter-bearer as 'an answer to prayer' (κατ' εὐχὴν), l.3. He closes with a standard prayer, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι πολ[λοῖς] χρόνοις, ll.21ff. Zenobia is most probably Christian for whom the Christian formula, *nomina sacra*<sup>126</sup> and references to prayer and providence are meaningful. It is probable that Zenobia is Maximos' natural mother<sup>127</sup>. Salamai also is most probably Christian, married to Christian Maximos.

The circumstances are unclear why Zenobia determines Salamai going to her husband, and why Maximos does not write to Salamai directly. The problem may be travel money, or losing Salamai's labour. Salamai, herself, apparently has no say. Maximos bears no ill-will towards Zenobia. He greets her 'inimitable disposition' (τὴν σὴν ἀμίμητον διάθεσιν), ll.4f, and 'begs' her (π[αρα]καλῶ), ll.17f, for news about her health so that he may cheer up (εὐθυμησ[ει]), l.19.

### **P.Oxy.36.2785, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 7.153; 10.150; 11.164f**

This is a standard letter of peace<sup>128</sup> beginning, 'rejoice<sup>129</sup> in the Lord, beloved Papa

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<sup>124</sup> See 89f above.

<sup>125</sup> The *praepositus* was in charge of an administrative district to supervise taxes, appoint village officials, and do 'almost anything else', Bagnall (1993a), 62.

<sup>126</sup> See the excursus below.

<sup>127</sup> The subject matter implies a family context and μήτηρ is not used regularly of mothers-in-law.

<sup>128</sup> Teeter (1997). The editor notes this as one among a distinct set of 9 ἐπιστολαὶ εἰρηνικαί: also P.Alex.29 (C3); P.Berol.8508 (C3/4); PSI 3.208 (C3/4); 9.1041 (C3/4); SB 10.10255 (C3/4); 16.12304 (C3/4); P.Oxy.8.1162 (C4); 56.3857 (C4); SB 3.7269 (C4/5). They were for lay people, did not require episcopal approval, and concerned only material support. Canon 81, Council of Elvira forbids women from writing or receiving letters of peace without their husbands. On their structure, see P.Oxy.vol.56, 112-114. They are distinct from ἐπιστολαὶ συστατικαί, for which see P.Got.11 above.

<sup>129</sup> Four of the 9 letters of peace use the imperative χαῖρε, Llewelyn, 'Christian Letters of Recommendation' in ND 8.169-172, here 170. It recalls Philippians 3.1; 4.4, though singular.

Sotas<sup>130</sup>, we, the presbyters<sup>131</sup> of Heracleopolis, greet you many times' (χαῖρε ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ ἀγαπητὲ πάπα Σώτα πρεσβ(ύτεροι)<sup>132</sup> Ἡρακλέους πολλά σε προσαγορεύομεν), ll.1f, using the *nomen sacrum*. The letter closes, ἐρρῶσθαί σε ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ εὐχόμεθα, ἀγαπητὲ πάπα, ll.13-15, again with *nomen sacrum*. The letter introduces 'Taion our sister' (τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν Ταίωνα), ll.4f, whom Sotas should receive 'in peace' (ἐν εἰρήνῃ)<sup>133</sup>, ll.6f, and a man or Anos<sup>134</sup> 'being instructed' (καθηχούμενον) in Genesis<sup>135</sup> whom he should receive 'for edification' (εἰς οἰκοδομήν)<sup>136</sup>, l.9.

The presbyters and Sotas are certainly Christian, as πάπα, πρεσβύτεροι and the use of a *nomen sacrum* indicate.

Taion is a Christian laywoman being commended with a catechumen. She is designated ἀδελφή where he is not ἀδελφός. In this context ἀδελφή may connote baptised membership of the church<sup>137</sup>.

The letter does not indicate the purpose for Taion's visit. Her name occurring first may indicate that she is a person of significance although not sufficient to warrant an ἐπιστολὴ συστατική, or it may reflect that she is baptised while the catechumen is not, or simply that her name is known and the catechumen's is not. The letter closes with σδ=204<sup>138</sup>. This may be a unique isopsephism possibly denoting εἰρηνικά<sup>139</sup>.

<sup>130</sup> For the possible identity of this Sotas with any of the writers of P.Oxy.12.1492, PSI 3.208 and/or 9.1041, see the editor's comment.

<sup>131</sup> For πρεσβ(ύτεροι), see BL 7.153.

<sup>132</sup> BL 7.153. πρεσβ(ύτερε), ed.pr.

<sup>133</sup> 5 of the 9 letters of recommendation ask that people be received in peace, Llewelyn, 'Christian Letters of Recommendation' in ND 8.169-172, here 170.

<sup>134</sup> In the papyrus: ανου, which the editor takes to be a *nomen sacrum* for ἄνθρωπος although the abbreviation marker ἄνον is missing. A name would normally be expected in this position. A woman's name in P.Oxy.34.2729 is written ανου with a mark above α. The editor reads 'Ανου, Hanu. P.Sakaon 48 includes Ἀννοῦτος, Annous. See the text below. The reading may be Ἄνου although Anos is not attested elsewhere, Martin (1996), 706, n.256; BL 11.164f. Annos is listed in Foraboschi (1967-1971), *Supplement*, s.v.

<sup>135</sup> Suggesting he is not a new catechumen.

<sup>136</sup> The editor suggests this metaphorical sense but notes it is new to the papyri. See also Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. Journey is not inherent in the catechumate, although three letters of introduction refer to catechumens, this letter, PSI 9.1041 and 15.1560, both C3/4, Martin (1996), 706.

<sup>137</sup> K. Treu, 'P.Berol.8508', 1982, cited in Llewelyn, 'Christian Letters of Recommendation' in ND 8.169-172, here 171.

<sup>138</sup> The isopsephism ρθ occurs in other letters of recommendation, P.Oxy.8.1162 (C4); 56.3857 and SB 16.12304. Llewelyn, 'Christian Letters of Recommendation' in ND 8.169-172, here 172, notes a connection between the use of ρθ and letters to unnamed recipients, with SB 3.7269 an exception.

<sup>139</sup> Εἰρηνικά=204=5+10+100+8+50+10+20+1, Llewelyn, 'Christian Letters of Recommendation' in ND 8.169-172, here 172; BL 11.164f; Llewelyn (1995). BL 10.150 proposes that σπδ may be meant. On isopsephisms, see 26f above.

**P.Oxy.46.3314, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 8.269**

This letter opens, 'Judas to my lord father, Jose, and my wife, Maria' (κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ Ἰωσῆ καὶ τῇ συμβίῳ μου Μαρία Ἰούδας), ll.1f, but Judas uses singular forms in all but the prayers, ll.4, 24. His main addressee is Maria whom he also calls κυρία μου ἀδελφή, ll.5f, 12.

Maria may live in her father or father-in-law's house<sup>140</sup> with τὴν θυγατέρα μου, l.20. The letter is an urgent request that Maria send her brother, ll.6, 13f, because Judas is 'in a foreign place<sup>141</sup> and ill' (ἐπὶ ξένης καὶ ἐν νόσῳ ὄντι) l.17, following a riding accident. The brother is expected to comply. Judas tells Maria, if she needs money, to 'get it from Isaac the cripple' (λάβε παρὰ Ἰσαὰκ τὸν κολοβόν (= τοῦ κολοβοῦ)), l.23.

Maria's belief is debated and depends on determining the beliefs of a Judas, Jose, Maria and Isaac in the fourth century.

The four biblical names indicate that this is a Jewish or Christian text<sup>142</sup>, and while the date after 300 favours a Christian classification<sup>143</sup>, the rate at which Christians adopted Hebrew biblical names is uncertain<sup>144</sup>. 'Maria' may be Jewish or Christian<sup>145</sup>. 'Judas' is frequent in Jewish literature, from the hero of the Maccabean revolt<sup>146</sup>. The name seems unlikely for a Christian being that of Jesus' betrayer, but the Letter of Jude<sup>147</sup> may have rendered it acceptable, and it may be that Judas, a Jew, converted. An almost certainly Christian Judas appears in Eusebius<sup>148</sup>. 'Jose'<sup>149</sup> and 'Isaac'<sup>150</sup> occur in both Jewish and Christian texts<sup>151</sup>. The

<sup>140</sup> The non-systematic use of kinship terms for in-laws strengthens Jose's identity as Judas' father, but Maria is expected to send her brother suggesting this is Maria's family. But the families may be neighbours.

<sup>141</sup> See 91f above for absence as ξένιτια.

<sup>142</sup> Christian classification is argued by the editor; Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a Letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 145; Horsley (1987) and Jewish classification by Tibiletti (1981), 409; Nachtergaele (1981), 157; Judge (1982), 28-31, especially 31; *BL* 8.269; Epp (2004), 26, n.68.

<sup>143</sup> Following Fikhman (1996). See 24f, 29 above.

<sup>144</sup> Judge (1982), 31.

<sup>145</sup> Pagan and Manichean classification is not indicated. On 'Maria', see P.Abinn.49at 36f above; also 363 below and P.Harr.1.107 at 286f above.

<sup>146</sup> Judas Maccabeus, 1 Maccabees 3ff.

<sup>147</sup> The letter opens Ἰούδας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος, Jude 1.

<sup>148</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 6.7.

<sup>149</sup> The name occurs as Ἰωσήπ, Ἰωσήπος, Ἰωσήφης, Ἰωσήφιος, Ἰωσής, Ἰωσήας, Tibiletti (1981), 408.

<sup>150</sup> The name occurs as Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαάκις, Ἰσακος, Ἰσάκιος, Tibiletti (1981), 408.

<sup>151</sup> 'Jose' occurs in Christian texts eg P.Lond.6.1914 (335); in Jewish texts eg P.Herm.52 (398). It is attested from the Ptolemaic period. 'Isaac' occurs in Christian texts eg P.Col.7.171 (324); in Jewish texts eg P.Lond.2.258 (94). It occurs from C2 BCE.



scarcity of Jewish private letters, with no certain examples from the third and fourth centuries, strengthens the likelihood of a Christian classification<sup>152</sup>.

The letter includes an opening prayer for health (περὶ τῆς ὑμῶν ὁλοκληρίας), I.4, 'to divine providence' (τῇ θείᾳ (=θεΐᾳ) προνοίᾳ), I.3, and a standard closing prayer, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὖχομαι πολλοῖς χρόνοις, II.24f, both attested, separately at least, in certainly Christian and pagan letters<sup>153</sup>.

Judas writes, 'I have no one to give me even a cup of water' (καὶ μέχρις ποτηρίου ὕδατ[ο]ς οὐκ ἔχω τὸν ἐπιδοῦντά (= ἐπιδιδόντα) μοι), II.10f<sup>154</sup>, recalling 'NT' phrases<sup>155</sup> but not sufficiently clearly to warrant categorisation as a 'biblical reminiscence'<sup>156</sup>. The imagery does not appear in Jewish literature<sup>157</sup> but references to a drink of cool water as a metaphor for life after death feature in funerary contexts in the Osiris myth<sup>158</sup>. Judas' statement may be a cultural cliché for being near death and having no one to arrange a burial<sup>159</sup>, but no example for such a non-funerary use is attested. Judas also states that he has tried to find a ship but has no one to search for him, 'for I am in Babylon' (ἐν τῇ γὰρ Βαβυλῶνι εἰμὶ (= Βαβυλῶνι εἰμί)), I.19. This may be a reference to Rome<sup>160</sup>, but is much more likely a location in the Delta in Egypt<sup>161</sup>.

The names and religious elements in this letter do not allow classification as either Jewish or Christian with certainty. The cumulative probability perhaps favours Judas as a Christian, particularly his prayer to divine providence, which is most frequent in Christian texts. It is likely, then, that Maria also is Christian<sup>162</sup>. Prayer to divine

<sup>152</sup> Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a Letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 142.

<sup>153</sup> Christian letters eg SB 12.10840 at 58f above; P.Neph.19 (C4); in pagan letters eg P.Mich.8.477 (C2); P.Panop.Beatty 22 (300). On divine providence, see 120ff above, and 162f above.

<sup>154</sup> Judas' statement is clearly not literal, given that two people turn him, II.9f. Judas is wealthy enough to ride a horse and have money available for his family, so presumably has sufficient to pay for help. His appeal suggests that he is without personal support and lacks assistance from the Jewish or Christian community. It illustrates the importance of family.

<sup>155</sup> Mark 9.41; Matthew 10.42. P.Abinn.19 above refers to a cup of water in a context that is Christian and uses a conflated citation. Mark 9.41 and Matthew 10.42 are rarely quoted in Christian literature in C2 and C3, Judge (1982).

<sup>156</sup> The least certain of Harris' categories; see n.84 above.

<sup>157</sup> Judge (1982), 30, quoting H. Strack and P.Billerbeck (1926), *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*.

<sup>158</sup> For a full discussion see Brandon (1962), especially 26f; Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a Letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 144f who notes 'May Osiris give you cold water' and similar phrases in 12 inscriptions from Egypt (6x), Italy (5x) and Carthage (1x). The inscriptions date from C4 BCE to C3.

<sup>159</sup> Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a Letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 145.

<sup>160</sup> The great whore Babylon, Revelation 14.8, is understood to signify Rome.

<sup>161</sup> No Jewish community is known at Babylon; the closest is Leontopolis, although evidence for it dates from an earlier period, Judge (1982), 31. Evidence for Jewish communities anywhere in Egypt in C4 is slight; see 347-352 below.

<sup>162</sup> Marriage within religious communities appears to be the norm; see 206f above.

providence<sup>163</sup> is a theology she shares, but, given the doubtful biblical allusion in 'a cup of water', it cannot be said that Judas expects Maria to recognise a reference. Judas does not request prayer for healing where it might be expected were it part of his theology. It suggests, although arguing from silence, that it is not. Maria's view is not known. Judas' appeal to Maria's sympathy is consistent with a family context and says little about Maria's beliefs. Her response is not known.

#### **P.Oxy.56.3857, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 9.205**

This is a letter of peace<sup>164</sup> from Anonymos<sup>165</sup> to 'the beloved brothers and fellow-ministers in every place' (τοῖς κατὰ τόπον ἀγαπητοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ συνλειτουργοῖς), ll.2f.

The letter introduces 'our daughter, Germania' (τὴν θυγατέρα ἡμῶν Γερμανίαν), ll.4f, asking that she be received ἐν εἰρήνῃ, l.9<sup>166</sup>. Christian belief is evident in the isopsephism, ρθ, l.13<sup>167</sup>, the final prayer, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ εὐχομαι, ἀγαπητοὶ ἀδελφοί, ll.14-16, and Ἐμ(μανουή)λ, l.13<sup>168</sup>, both using *nomina sacra*. References to ἀγαπητοὶ ἀδελφοί, ll.2f, 16, confirm the classification<sup>169</sup>.

Germania is a Christian laywoman, in receipt of an ἐπιστολὴ εἰρηνικὴ, and perhaps a member of the community of which the writer is the λειτουργός<sup>170</sup>. She does not receive an ἐπιστολὴ συστακικὴ. The description 'our daughter' is no doubt used with a spiritual rather than a natural or social meaning<sup>171</sup>. Whether she is an ascetic is unknown.

The address without a specific name and the phrase κατὰ τόπον indicate that this is a general letter and that Germania will travel from place to place<sup>172</sup>. The reason is not stated. The writer

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<sup>163</sup> See 162f above.

<sup>164</sup> See P.Oxy.36.2785 above.

<sup>165</sup> The writer is unlikely to be a woman given the address to συνλειτουργοί. See P.Oxy.8.1162 (C4) where συνλειτουργοί is in apposition to πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι.

<sup>166</sup> See P.Oxy.36.2785 above.

<sup>167</sup> On a possible link between ρθ and letters to unnamed recipients, see n.138 above.

<sup>168</sup> This is the only occurrence of the contracted form in the papyri. It appears as a theological statement detached from its context.

<sup>169</sup> See 110 above.

<sup>170</sup> The community is indicated only by οἱ σὺν ἐμοί, l.10f.

<sup>171</sup> The editor argues for a social meaning, given its frequency with this sense. The context of a circular introduction by a λειτουργός to συνλειτουργοί favours a spiritual relationship.

<sup>172</sup> For τόπος as an institution, possibly a church, see Judge (1977), 81. The meaning, then, would be 'from church to church'. But this is not always the case, eg 1 Maccabees 12.4 where κατὰ τόπον denotes 'in each place'.

says only that she is asking for help (ἐπικουρίας δεομένην)<sup>173</sup>, ll.5f. There is evidence that some women practised their asceticism by ξενιτεία, a wandering lifestyle<sup>174</sup>, but there is no positive indication that Germania is one or that wandering involved visiting.

### P.Oxy.59.3998, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus

This is a letter from 'Thonis to my lords, children Syras and Kallinikos' (Θῶνις Συράτι καὶ Καλλινίκῳ τοῖς κυρίοις μο[υ] τέκνοις), ll.1f.

The greeting is in the singular, πλῖστα χαῖραι (= πλεῖστα χαῖρε), l.3<sup>175</sup>, and is almost certainly addressed to Syras alone. She is later addressed as κυρία μου θυγάτηρ (= θύγατερ), ll.15, 34f, and θυγάτηρ (= θύγατερ), l.28, and is the referent for the singular pronouns and verbs<sup>176</sup>. The letter concerns a family dispute<sup>177</sup>.

Thonis is most probably Christian. The text opens with a greeting ἐν θεῷ κυρίῳ, l.2, without *nomina sacra*, followed by a *proskynema* statement (τὸ προσκύνημα ὑμῶν ποιῶ καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέρ[α]ν παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ), l.5, again without *nomina sacra*. 'Ἐν θεῷ κυρίῳ indicates that Thonis is Christian<sup>178</sup>, his word order evidently interchangeable. The *proskynema* formula occurs in the possibly Christian SB14.12173 (C4)<sup>179</sup> and is a doubtful indicator of paganism. This letter is a more certain example of its use by Christians<sup>180</sup>. Thonis ends with the prayer, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι ἰς (= εἰς) τὸν [ ], l.34.

<sup>173</sup> Letters of recommendation rarely specify what is required of addressees, ed. The only similar phrase occurs in P.Oxy.36.2785 above. But the exact phrase appears in Canon 11, Council of Chalcedon, δεομένους ἐπικουρίας.

<sup>174</sup> Elias of Atripe built a monastery for female ascetics who wandered about (αἱ ἀλώμεναι), gathering above 300, *LH* 29. He acts from compassion, suggesting these women endured hardship and did not go from community to community. Bessarion 4 in *AP* 34 refers to a woman living in a cave. On wandering as an ascetic practice, see 314, n.150 below.

<sup>175</sup> The imperatival form is unusual and commonly occurs as the first word, as in P.Oxy.36.2785 above. The form here appears to be a mixture of πλεῖστα χαίρειν and χαῖρε.

<sup>176</sup> ll.6, 9, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 30, and in the writing perpendicular to the main text. The editor suggests that Kallinikos is Thonis' son-in-law.

<sup>177</sup> Thonis is in a legal dispute with the brother of the dead husband of Theodora, Syras' sister, over the affairs of Theodora's daughter who would remain part of her father's family having been in his *potestas*, Gardner (1986), 146-152. Given the frequency of marriage within religious communities, this is probably a dispute between Christian families. It is noteworthy that the child's grandfather defends her interests not the mother. Possibly Theodora is an example of widows' vulnerability even within the family.

<sup>178</sup> There are no Manichean elements in the letter. It is considered pagan in Epp (2004), 22, because of the *proskynema* formula, but see the conclusions.

<sup>179</sup> See 323f below.

<sup>180</sup> A similar formula is in P.Oxy.65.4493 (C4), written to Thaesis and, or from, Herakleides, with reference to 'the first day of the festival' (ἡ πρώτη ἡμέρα τῆς ἱορτῆς), ll.8f and the urgent need for

Given Thonis' Christianity, it is likely that Syras is Christian for whom ἐν θεῷ κυρίῳ is meaningful. Syras' attitude to the normally pagan *proskynema* formula is uncertain<sup>181</sup>. Nothing further is evident about Syras' religious life.

**P.Oxy.63.4365, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 11.173**

This is a brief letter from Anonymos/e to 'my dearest lady sister' (τῇ κυρίᾳ μου φιλάτῃ ἀδελφῇ)<sup>182</sup>, l.1. The names of both writer and addressee are omitted, a rare occurrence in the papyri where names are required for identification<sup>183</sup>. Their absence suggested to the editor a situation requiring 'discretion', prior to 325. A parallel to invitations, which include the name of the writer but generally lack the name of the addressee, has also been suggested<sup>184</sup>. However, the formulaic nature of the invitations and the consistent inclusion of writers' name make them an uncertain parallel to the individuality of this letter. Moreover, a general invitation sent to multiple addressees stands more in contrast than in parallel to the specificity both of the addressee and of the content of this letter. A sufficient explanation may simply be that the writer, addressee and letter-bearer are known to each other. The tone of the letter suggests the writer is in a position of sufficient authority to make this demand. The editor notes a possible similarity between the handwriting in this text and the subscription of Aurelia Soteira also called Hesychium to the cut-down petition on the recto, P.Oxy.63.4364 (C3/4)<sup>185</sup>. However, the identification is too unsure to be accepted<sup>186</sup>.

The letter opens with greetings ἐν κυρίῳ, l.2, and closes with a farewell, ἔρρωσο ἡμεῖν (= ἡμῖν) ἐν θε(ε)ῷ, l.6, using *nomina sacra*<sup>187</sup>, and establishing the writer as Christian. S/he urges the sister, 'lend the Ezra since I lent you the little Genesis'

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supplies. It includes a standard closing prayer. There is no evidence the festival is Easter and no indications of Christianity.

<sup>181</sup> See the conclusions below.

<sup>182</sup> The word φιλάτος denotes affection and is more frequent in pagan texts and those with no religious element than in Christian texts. See Naldini (1968, 1998), 69; Tibiletti (1979), 32, 42. Dinneen (1927), 91, considers φιλάτος rare in Christian literary texts.

<sup>183</sup> Dickey (2004).

<sup>184</sup> Epp (2004), 27f.

<sup>185</sup> There is no evidence of Christianity in the extant text.

<sup>186</sup> The editor states the writing in the letter is larger than in the petition, the pen thinner, the letter forms 'rather similar', but adds that the identification is 'speculation', 44. It is accepted in Epp (2004), 28f, without further evidence.

<sup>187</sup> The editor notes that this is the only occurrence of ἐν θε(ε)ῷ in a farewell formula.

(χρησον τὸν Ἑσδραν, ἐπεὶ ἔχρησά σοι τὴν λεπτὴν Γένεσιν), II.3-5. While the exact identity of the books mentioned is uncertain, they are 'biblical' texts in the LXX<sup>188</sup> and could imply a Jewish context. However, Jewish belief for the writer has already been ruled out, and the Christian formulae with ἐν ... indicate that the sister too is Christian. It is evident that she is educated sufficiently to read 'biblical' text and that her reading includes the LXX. If the books are to be identified as Ezra IV and Jubilees it suggests the sister shares the interest in apocalyptic works evident in Egypt in the period<sup>189</sup>. There is no other content to the letter. It is difficult to ascertain from the brevity of the note whether the writer appeals to a reciprocal ethic to urge the sharing, or whether s/he urges his/her own example of sharing to inculcate the Christian value of generosity.

The reason for the request to lend the books is not stated. Possession of 'biblical' books is more likely in a community than a personal situation, although individual ownership of Christian texts is attested<sup>190</sup>, and there is evidence of Christians lending books, especially among monks, although from a later period<sup>191</sup>. However, there is no clear evidence that the sister is a member of such a religious community.

### **P.Prag.2.191, C3/4, Provenance: Unknown**

In this letter, Kalemeros writes 'to my lady mother' (κυρία μου μητρί), I.1, of whom he later says, 'I have you for a mother' (ὕπὲρ μητέρα σε ἔχω), II.7f, implying non-kinship. He writes 'I greet my daughter in the Lord' (προσαγορεύω τὴν θυγατέρα μου ἐν κυρίῳ), II.8-10, using the *nomen sacrum*, and indicating he is a Christian. Neither woman is named, and there is no opening greeting or prayer<sup>192</sup>. Kalemeros closes with the standard, ἐρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι, κυρία, II.10f.

The daughter is no doubt Christian, for whom ἐν κυρίῳ is meaningful. The phrase suggests the relationship is not literal but whether spiritual or social is unclear. The

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<sup>188</sup> The editor considers 'the Ezra' may be Ezra IV but the evidence is uncertain. Another reference to Genesis occurs in P.Oxy.36.2785 above, in the context of catechesis. The adjective 'little' (λεπτή) suggests this is a codex, all of which regularly appear with the word, argued to mean 'detailed' in C4, Hilhorst (2000). Hilhorst argues that the work is the pseudepigraphal Book of Jubilees. The same conclusion appears in Hagedorn (1997); *BL* 11.173.

<sup>189</sup> Frankfurter (1993), especially 35-44; 270-278.

<sup>190</sup> See P.Lips.1.43 at 298ff below.

<sup>191</sup> R. Dostáiová, 'Der "Bücherkatalog" Pap.Wess.Gr.Prag.1.13', *Byzantina*, (1985), 13, 537-547 cited by the editor.

<sup>192</sup> On the omission of χαίρειν, see 62, n.225 above. This is an early example. On the omission of the opening prayer, see 151, n.7 above.

mother is probably also Christian, in whose presence the Christian greeting is read. The relationship between 'my lady mother' and 'my daughter' is not indicated. Other information on the mother's and daughter's Christianity is not given.

The letter concerns the dispatch of grapes.

**P.Princ.2.95, C4<sup>193</sup>, Provenance: Unknown; BL 3.150; 9.220; 10.165**

This text is a list of stolen property submitted by Anonymos/e<sup>194</sup>, of the 'things left by my blessed daughter Tloulla' (γνώσις φανερώων σκευῶν καταλειφθέντων παρὰ τῆς μακαρίας μου θυγατρὸς Τλούλλας), ll.1ff. The relationship is almost certainly natural kinship.

The adjective μακαρία suggests the writer and daughter are Christian and that Tloulla is dead<sup>195</sup>. It occurs most frequently among Christians in this sense<sup>196</sup>. There is no information about the nature of Tloulla's Christianity and no reason to assume that μακαρία refers to outstanding Christian practice.

The father states that the items in his list were taken violently (βιαιῶς), l.3, by Tloulla's husband, Paul. He lists money, clothing and other property which might have constituted Tloulla's dowry<sup>197</sup>. Καταλείπω occurs most frequently of what is bequeathed in deceased estates<sup>198</sup> and supports the hypothesis that Tloulla is dead. If Tloulla's marriage was typical of the fourth century, occurring without *manus*, she remained in the *potestas* of her father, and, on the ending of the marriage in this case by death, her dowry should be returned<sup>199</sup>. Paul's likely retention of the dowry leads to this submission. The name suggests that Paul is Christian<sup>200</sup> or, at least, that his parents were. The connection between Tloulla's death and

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<sup>193</sup> C5 is suggested by Bagnall (1993a), 43, n.215; BL 10.165, but he gives no reasons.

<sup>194</sup> Given the gendered division of space, it is likely that the writer is male, but examples of women submitting petitions and legal statements exist eg P.Oxy.6.903 at 51ff above; 50.3581 at 55f above, and it cannot be entirely ruled out that the writer is Tloulla's mother.

<sup>195</sup> See 102f above.

<sup>196</sup> The most likely meaning of 'of blessed memory' is made explicit in CPR 1.30 (184) υἱὸς τοῦ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Παμοῦν. It is used of the dead Gerontios in P.Sakaon 48 below. See also Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.; Horsley, 'A family feud' in ND 3.149-155, here 153. But see P.Oxy.14.1774 at 102f above, for its use of a woman living.

<sup>197</sup> Disputes over dowries are the most frequent subjects of petitions in marital conflict, Arnaoutoglou (1995).

<sup>198</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>199</sup> Gardner (1986), 97-116; Llewelyn, 'Paul's Advice on Marriage and the Changing Understanding of Marriage in Antiquity' in ND 6.1-18 here 4, n.6.

<sup>200</sup> See P.Oxy.50.3581 at 56, n.189 above, and 143ff above. On the frequency of marriage within religious communities, see 206f above.

Paul's violent acquisition of her property is not stated, but there is no hint of murder. It is noteworthy that the adjective μακαρία occurs here in an official document.

**P.Sakaon 48=SB 6.9622, 6 April 343, Provenance: Theadelphia; BL 8.301;  
11.192**

This petition to Aurelius Ision, [π]ρ[ο]πολ(ιτευόμενος)<sup>201</sup>, *praepositus*, is 'from Aurelius Zoilos son of Melas, deacon<sup>202</sup> of the catholic church' (παρὰ [Αὐ]ρηλίου Ζωΐλου Μέλαν[ο]ς δ[ι]άκονος τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλη[σ]ία[ς])<sup>203</sup>, l.2.

The petition concerns the alleged lawless behaviour of Sakaon<sup>204</sup> and his family that is part of an ongoing feud including the past abduction of Zoilos' own wife, Taeus, Sakaon's daughter<sup>205</sup>. According to Zoilos, Sakaon abducted his great-niece Nonna, wife of Zoilos' son Gerontios, as Gerontios was dying. Sakaon took her to his house with the co-operation of Nonna's mother, Annous<sup>206</sup>, and Sakaon's brothers<sup>207</sup>. There is much interesting material in this text<sup>208</sup> but I focus on the women's religious lives.

It is likely that Nonna is a Christian, given that she married Gerontios<sup>209</sup> almost certainly Christian<sup>210</sup>, and lived in Zoilos' home. Her name occurs most frequently in Christian circles, although it is not exclusive to them<sup>211</sup>.

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<sup>201</sup> BL 11.192. πολ(ιτευόμενος), ed.pr.

<sup>202</sup> It is noteworthy that Zoilos, a deacon, is illiterate (ἔγραψα ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ἀγρ(αμμάτου)), l.28. For a deacon's work contract, see Horsley, 'A deacon's work contract' in ND 1.121-124; on deacons, also E. Ferguson, 'Deacon' in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (1997), s.v. The civil status marker 'Aurelius' is generally omitted by clergy and monks from C5, Worp (2005) but the practice is erratic in C4.

<sup>203</sup> On the 'catholic church', see 176, n.8 above.

<sup>204</sup> The archive of Sakaon consists of 76 documents. The editor suggests Sakaon is Christian based on Zoilos' silence about Sakaon's pagan status which would have been to his advantage to mention, and on Nonna's likely status as a Christian suggesting that Sakaon's family, and perhaps Sakaon himself, is Christian. There is no positive evidence

<sup>205</sup> P.Sakaon 38 (312), because of inadequate marriage gifts. It is strange that Zoilos does not mention Sakaon's abduction of his own wife a generation previously.

<sup>206</sup> Annous may be the wife of Sarmates, Sakaon's nephew by marriage, P.Sakaon 38.24f.

<sup>207</sup> Sakaon and his family also attack Zoilos' son, Pasis, and Pasis' grandfather, and on another occasion steal their sheep.

<sup>208</sup> Eg Zoilos refers to his quietude, τὸν ἀπ[ρ]άγμον[α βίο]ν, τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀπραγμοσύνης, ll.13, 19. Arion makes a similar statement in similar circumstances in P.Sakaon 41. The nature of this life is unclear. Zoilos undertook civic functions at least to 326. The quietist life may refer to a later detachment from such activity. Horsley, 'A family feud' in ND 3.149-155 suggests it refers to a vow of non-violence, perhaps related to being a deacon, 153. Certainly non-retaliation is an aspect of the lifestyle, l.13.

<sup>209</sup> See 206f above for marriage within religious communities.

<sup>210</sup> Gerontios is son of a deacon and the name is most frequent among Christians reflecting Zoilos' beliefs at his birth. Gerontios, then, grew up in a Christian family. For the ideal, see 2 Corinthians 6.14; 1 Timothy 3.1-13.

<sup>211</sup> See 302, n.68 below.

The involvement of the women in the family feud is noteworthy. Nonna's co-operation in her abduction is suggested by Zoilos' comment that he expected 'good will and affection' (εὖνοιαν κα[ι] στ[ο]ργήν), l.6, but she brought 'the opposite' (τούναντία (= τὰ ἐναντία)), l.6. Zoilos asserts the probably Christian Annous' active participation in the abduction. The women's Christian practice does not include the submission commanded of wives in the 'NT'<sup>212</sup> nor adherence to its teaching on indissoluble marriage<sup>213</sup>. Zoilos denies knowing the reason for the abduction, l.7, but it may have been due to the inadequacy of the marriage gifts<sup>214</sup>. Nonna's departure while her husband is dying is, according to Zoilos, 'improper and illegal ... a blatant transgression of decency ... reckless' (οὐ δεόντως καὶ παρὰ πάντας [τ]οὺς νόμους ... τῆς τηλικαύτης παρανομίας ... ῥιψοκινδύνου πράγματος), ll.10, 12f. Sakaon, Annous and the brothers, all probably Christian, share Nonna's attitudes. Zoilos tells only his side of the story.

**P.Wisc.2.76, 350-400<sup>215</sup>, Provenance: Unknown; BL 7.282; 8.512**

This fragmentary letter from Anonymos/e opens 'to the sisters ... Taarpaesis and Tausiris in God' (ταῖς ἀδ[ελφαῖς ...]νλακρειτις Τα[ρπαήσιτι καὶ] Ταυσίρ[ι] ἐν θεῷ), ll.1-3, and includes 'greeting in God to your children, may the evil eye not touch them' (ἀσπάζο[μαι τὰ] ἀβάσκαντα οἰμῶν (= ὕμῶν) ταί[κνα](= τέ[κνα ἐ]ν θεῷ), ll.25-27, both without the *nomen sacrum*. The letter opens and closes with standard prayers, πρὸ μ]ὲν πάντων εὐχ[ομαι τὸν θεὸ]ν τὴν ὁλοκληρί[αν ὕμῶν, ll.5f; ἐρῶσθε (= ἐρρώσθαι){σαι} οἰμᾶς (= ὕμᾶς) εὐ[χομα]ι, ἀδελφαί, Τααρπαῆσις [καὶ Τα]υσίρει[ς] (= Ταυσίρις), ll.35ff.

The writer is Christian, using ἐν θεῷ<sup>216</sup>, and is an example of a Christian using the *abaskanta* formula<sup>217</sup>. It can be assumed that the sisters are Christian, for whom the Christian understanding of ἐν θεῷ is meaningful. Their attitude to the *abaskanta* wish is unknown<sup>218</sup>.

Only the sisters' children receive the *abaskanta* wish though other children are mentioned, ll.29, 31, 32. Whether the sisters are kin to each other and the writer is unknown. Their

<sup>212</sup> Ephesians 5.22-24; Colossians 3.18; 1 Peter 3.1-6; 1 Clement 1.3.

<sup>213</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.10-16. Separation is possible only at the initiative of an unbelieving spouse.

<sup>214</sup> The reason for the abduction of Taeus, P.Sakaon 38. But Zoilos denies knowing the reason here, l.7. Horsley, 'A family feud' in *ND* 3.149-155 here 152, notes that the couple appear to have no children so that it may be early in their marriage, but the conclusion does not follow nor is the lack of children certain.

<sup>215</sup> *BL* 11.291.

<sup>216</sup> There are no Manichean elements in this letter.

<sup>217</sup> See P.Oxy.20.2276 above.

<sup>218</sup> See the conclusions below.



husbands are greeted after the children, καὶ τοὺς ἀνδρας ὑμῶν, ll.27f. The content of the letter, beyond asking for hospitality for the letter-bearer<sup>219</sup>, deals with family matters<sup>220</sup>.

**SB 6.9605, early C4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 5.117f; 6.156; 7.212**

Anonymos/e writes this letter possibly to Ἀπα[ , l.26, but the reading is uncertain<sup>221</sup>.

The writer opens with prayer 'to the most high God<sup>222</sup> and to the divine providence of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>223</sup> night and day<sup>224</sup> about your health together with my sweetest sister, Thebais' (εὐχομ[αι τῷ [ὕ]ψιστῳ θεῷ<sup>225</sup> καὶ τῇ θεῇ προνοίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (= Χριστοῦ) νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας περὶ τῆς ὁλοκληρίᾳς [ὕ]μων ἅμα τῇ) γλυκυτάτῃ μου ἀδελφῇ Θεβ[ . ]<sup>226</sup>), ll.3-8. The letter includes thanks to God (εὐχαριστῶ δὲ τῷ θεῷ), l.15, for Copreas' recovery and a slightly elaborated closing prayer, ἐρρωσθ[αι] ὑμᾶς εὐχομ[αι] πολλοῖς [χ]ρόν[οις] διὰ βίου, ll.27-30. There are no *nomina sacra*.

The writer is Christian and so, it can be assumed, is Apa.... Given the practice of reading letters aloud it is likely that the writer intends Thebais to hear that she is included in the prayer. She, therefore, is most probably Christian also. The nature of her belief is suggested by her belonging to a community that gives an explicitly Christian naming of God<sup>227</sup>, holds a strong Christology attributing divine providence to Jesus, and attributes recovery from illness to God's action.

<sup>219</sup> The practice of hospitality among Christians is evident in the circulation of letters of recommendation, eg P.Got.11; P.Oxy.36.2785; 56.3857 above. There is no indication that this letter-bearer is Christian. The absence of a name suggests that his/her availability postdates writing the letter, Horsley, 'A cryptic Christian Letter?' in *ND* 2.174ff, here 176. Hospitality is not exclusive to Christians eg P.Tebt.Tait 51.

<sup>220</sup> ll.1-11, 21-40 only are relatively intact.

<sup>221</sup> In the papyrus: ]ενσι απα[ . I follow the text in Naldini (1968, 1998), no.53, 231. The recipient may be Apa Mios, known from the Abinnaeus archive, based on the similarities between l.26 and P.Abinn.8.29; l.25 and P.Abinn.7 verso, ed.pr. But supposed similarities are too tenuous to be accepted.

<sup>222</sup> Θεὸς ὑψιστος occurs in the LXX for the God of Israel, and in Mark 5.7; Luke 1.32, 35, 76; 6.35; 8.28; Hebrews 7.1; Acts 7.48; 16.17; 1 Clement 29.2; 45.7 2x; 52.3; 59.3. For occurrences that are neither Jewish nor Christian, see Horsley, 'Dedications to "The Most High God"' in *ND* 1.25-29, here 27; 'Bilingual curse tablet' in *ND* 2.46 with θεοὶ ὑψ(ιστοι); 4.128; 5.135f.

<sup>223</sup> This appears to be the earliest use of 'Jesus Christ' in the private letters, Naldini (1968, 1998), n.53, 231.

<sup>224</sup> See 89f above.

<sup>225</sup> Ed.pr., [εὐχο]μ[αι τῷ [ὕ]π[ι]στῳ θεῷ

<sup>226</sup> Perhaps Θεβ[α]ῖς, for Θεβ[α]ῖδι, Naldini (1968, 1998), n.53, 231. Ed.pr., Θεβ[η]ῖς.

<sup>227</sup> The writer names the first two members of the Trinity but not as 'Father' and 'Son'. See also P.Oxy.8.1161 at 53 above and 107ff above.

The letter concerns Anonymos/e's failure to send Copeas because Copeas is ill, the intention to send him, and a request for medicine ([τὸ φαρμ]ακωθὲν ἀπόστειλόν μ[οι], ll.19f<sup>228</sup>).

**SB 14.11437, C4/5, Provenance: Unknown; BL 9.274**

This letter opens, 'to my lady daughter Sousanna from your father Martyrios' (τῇ κυρίᾳ μου θυγατρὶ Σουσάννᾳ Μαρτύριος ὁ σὸς πατήρ), ll.1ff. There is no opening prayer but Martyrios closes, ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὖ(χομαι) πολλ(οῖς) χρόνοις<sup>229</sup>, ll.23f.

Martyrios asks Sousanna to come, with her husband<sup>230</sup>, as her mother is ill and longs for her.

Martyrios' name is attested only in Christian texts<sup>231</sup>, and suggests he is Christian. The classification is strengthened by his choice of a biblical name for his daughter, Sousanna<sup>232</sup>. She also is likely to be Christian, being the daughter of a Christian but nothing is known of her belief. Martyrios does not ask Sousanna to pray for her mother's healing as might be expected, and the lack, although arguing from silence, suggests Martyrios' theology does not include it. Sousanna's attitude is unknown.

Martyrios states that he has written a previous letter asking Sousanna to come to which she has not responded. Whether she received the letter and is unwilling to come or has not received it is not known. The significance of the lack of response for her Christian practice cannot be determined.

**SB 22.15359=P.Oxy.Desc.11=P.Oxy.1.182, mid C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL10.136**

This letter opens 'to my wife and sister Thekla, Thonois sends many greetings in the Lord God'<sup>233</sup> (τῇ συμβίῳ μου καὶ ἀδελφῇ Θέκλας (= Θέκλα) Θώνιος ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ

<sup>228</sup> BL 5.117f. The reading is uncertain. In the papyrus φαρμ]ακωθὲν ἀπόστειλον.

<sup>229</sup> BL 9.274. εὖ(χο)μαι ed.pr.

<sup>230</sup> Possibly Antoninos, l.21. If so, they live with his mother and family.

<sup>231</sup> The name occurs first in C3 but is most frequent from C4 to C8. See Foraboschi (1967-1971), s.v.; Preisigke (1967), s.v.; Horsley, 'A cryptic Christian letter?' in *ND* 2.174ff, here 175; 'Addenda' in *ND* 5.141. The name reflects Martyrios' parents' beliefs, but being born into such an overtly Christian family, Martyrios is probably Christian.

<sup>232</sup> 'Sousanna' occurs in the LXX in an eponymous book; also in Luke 8.3. It is rare in documentary texts in the period occurring in this Christian letter; also in 3 texts whose Jewish or Christian milieu is uncertain, CPR 13.4 (C3); P.Oxy.31.2599 (C3/4); P.Oxy.60.4091 (352). It is more frequent in C6 and C7, Horsley, 'Sousanna' in *ND* 4.183. P.Oxy.60.4091 and this text supplement Horsley's list. The name occurs in 2 Jewish inscriptions CIJ 1.627 (C3), 637 (Rome, Imperial); 3 Christian inscriptions, IGA 5.363; 571; 577 (dates unknown), cited in Horsley, 'Sousanna' in *ND* 4.183.

<sup>233</sup> The syntax requires 'greeting in the Lord God'. The editor translates 'my spouse and sister in the Lord God, very many greetings'.

πλεῖστα χαίρειν), ll.1-3, without *nomina sacra*. He prays to divine providence to receive her letter (εὐχομαι τῇ θεῇα προνοίᾳ ὅπως ἀπολαβῖν (= ἀπολαβεῖν) τὰ παρὰ σοῦ γράμματα), ll.4f<sup>234</sup>. Thonios is Christian, as indicated by ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ<sup>235</sup>.

It is likely that Thekla is Christian, for whom the Christian formula is meaningful, and who is married to a Christian<sup>236</sup>. Her name appears in the second-century *Acts of Paul and Thekla*<sup>237</sup>, and it is likely that it indicates Christianity in the fourth century<sup>238</sup>. Thonios interprets receipt of Thekla's letter as an act of divine providence, but whether this refers to the safe delivery of the letter or is a device to encourage her to write is unclear. Thekla's own interpretation of providence is not known, although it is reasonable to assume that she shares Thonios' view.

The letter concerns money given to Papnouthis, who is possibly to be identified with Papnouthis of P.Oxy.48.3384-3429<sup>239</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

This examination of texts written to and referring to Christian women suggests a number of conclusions about Christian women's religious lives, and about the papyri as sources for them.

The first conclusion is methodological. In texts not written by women, it is difficult and in three cases impossible to determine anything about the woman's Christianity

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<sup>234</sup> ἀπολαβῖν, 'to have received', ed., is better translated 'to receive'. The editor notes the formula is an unusual variant of εὐχομαι ὑγιαίνοντά σε ἀπολαβεῖν τὰ γράμματα, and suggests that Thonios omitted ὑγιαίνοντά σε, but notes that ὅπως then is difficult to explain. Given that variants with εὐχομαι and ὅπως are attested, the editor suggests also that Thonios conflated standard and variant forms. The proposal requires that σοῦ be omitted from τὰ παρὰ σοῦ γράμματα, or changed to μοῦ emending a text that makes sense as it is and therefore is not accepted. Prayer that a letter be received occurs also in P.Lond.6.1927.

<sup>235</sup> There are no Manichean elements.

<sup>236</sup> See 206f above on marriage within the Christian community.

<sup>237</sup> *Acts of Paul* 3.

<sup>238</sup> The name is not attested in C1 or C2. The libellus, P.Oxy.12.1464 (250), reading θέκλα is now considered unlikely, Davis (1999), 74. Davis (1999), 74; (2001, 2003), 84, also argues that use derives from *Acts of Paul* 3, and indicates Christianity. See especially his chapter 'The Cult of Saint Thecla in Egypt', 83-141. A search of the *DDBDP* indicates the name appears in 7 other texts dated C4 of which this is the earliest. Most are of uncertain religious milieu: P.Herm.22 (394); P.Herm.Landl.1.25.408; 2.28.624 (C4); O.Douch 3.226 (C4); CPR 7.22 (C4/5); P.Wash.Univ.2.95 (C4/5). The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> texts are additional to Davis' list. The name appears in C5 and later certainly Christian texts, frequently with ἁγία.

<sup>239</sup> The link is based on the co-incidence of names: Thonios and his son Copres I.12, and Thonios, his son Copres/Copreus in 3429 and father Copres in 3394; also the similarity in handwriting between this text and 3387 and 3390. The links are tentative at best.

beyond its likelihood. The mistress in P.Oxy.6.939, the object of her household's hope and prayer, is regarded as the locus of divine healing, but her own theological views about her illness, healing and status in the household are not evident. Tloulla in P.Princ.2.95 is dead, called μακαρία by her parent, but her attitudes to the parent, Paul and the marriage are not indicated. In SB 14.11437, Sousanna is asked to come to her ill mother. Nothing is evident about her theology of healing and family duty. In three further texts, P.Oxy.20.2276, P.Oxy.59.3998 and P.Wisc.2.76, greetings ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ and ἐν θεῷ 2x imply the women's understanding of basic Christian theology and recognition of scriptural phraseology. The texts contain prayer statements suggesting prayer is meaningful, but their own practice is not evident. There is no further information on the women's religious lives. Notably, none of the ἐν ... phrases uses *nomina sacra*<sup>240</sup>, and all three include elements associated with pagan texts<sup>241</sup>. Among the texts written by Christian women, Demetria in her petition Stud.Pal.20.86 provides least information on religious life, yet implies membership of Dioskouros' church and readiness to use its clergy and trust in them<sup>242</sup>.

A second conclusion concerns the possible capacity of some women's Christian beliefs to accommodate pagan elements. In P.Oxy.20.2276 and P.Wisc.2.76, Artemidoros and Anonymos/e greet the women's children with an *abaskanta* wish, followed in P.Oxy.20.2276 by prayer ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ, and in P.Wisc.2.76 by a greeting ἐν θεῷ. Thonis in P.Oxy.59.3998 assures Syras that he does obeisance for her, immediately after greeting her ἐν θεῷ κυρίῳ. It is argued that the pagan phrases eliminate these texts as Christian<sup>243</sup> but this ignores the possibility that the writers may be new Christians<sup>244</sup> whose conversion is yet to modify their language, and the fact that *proskynema* and *abaskanta* formulae are stock phrases of a 'religious' nature yet whose dogmatic content is fading. Thonis' confusion about the conventional word order in ἐν θεῷ κυρίῳ supports the hypothesis, and the failure of all three to use *nomina sacra* is consistent with it. If they are new Christians, the pagan

<sup>240</sup> The pattern of ἐν ... phrases in texts written by men is noticeably different and would make an interesting study. Eg 11 of the 22 male writers use the phrases 18x in a greater variety of contexts. ἐν κυρίῳ θεῷ, which does not occur in the texts written by Christian women, occurs 5x in those written by men, 2x with *nomina sacra*; ἐν κυρίῳ occurs 9x in 6 texts, always with the *nomen sacrum*; ἐν θεῷ occurs 4x in 3 texts, 2 with and 1 without the *nomen sacrum*.

<sup>241</sup> See the conclusions below.

<sup>242</sup> 62ff above

<sup>243</sup> Epp (2004), 21-24. This would locate ἐν ... theology in pagan texts where it is otherwise unknown.

<sup>244</sup> Youtie (1981), 451-454.

elements may reflect their own syncretism and say nothing about the women's beliefs. Even if not new Christians, the accommodation remains their own. Nonetheless, the sentiments may be acceptable to the women. The use of the formulae is evidence of the significant place that *proskynema* and *abaskanta* hold in social communication. Their theological content may largely be lost but, nonetheless, their use raises questions about the nature of conversion in the fourth century and the capacity of Christianity to absorb and/or modify pagan practices<sup>245</sup>. Neither formula occurs in the texts written by Christian women but the sample is small.

A third conclusion concerns the evidence of these texts for the practice of recommending Christians from one community to another using letters of recommendation, and for the inclusion of women among those commended. In P.Oxy.36.2785, Taion is commended to Papa Sotas ἐν εἰρήνῃ. She is called ἀδελφή while the catechumen is not. In P.Oxy.56.3857, Germania is commended ἐν εἰρήνῃ and κατὰ τόπον. She is not called ἀδελφή but is θυγάτηρ. The epithets suggest spiritual relationships but not necessarily asceticism. These letters are ἐπιστολαὶ εἰρηνικαί, indicating that the women are recognised members of their churches but not considered of the highest distinction. The texts do not indicate the reasons for the women's travel. Germania travels alone to several places, while Taion is accompanied to one destination by a male catechumen.

In two texts, there are possible overtones of persecution. A group of women being taken to the *epitropos* in P.Got.11 is commended to a Christian who has shown love 'to all the brothers in the Lord' (πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν κυρίῳ), l.4. The letter is an ἐπιστολή συστατική, implying that the women are of high status in the church, perhaps holding ministerial positions, being wealthy or notable in some other way, possibly as confessors. They are not called ἀδελφαί in contrast to πάντες οἱ ἀδελφοί. What constitutes the distinction is not clear, referring perhaps to non-ascetic practice, being unbaptised or not known personally<sup>246</sup>. P.Grenf.2.73, while not a letter of recommendation or peace, is a report on the πολιτική such as might be written in response to one<sup>247</sup>. It is suggested that both letters bear witness to these women's roles as martyrs/confessors in the Diocletianic persecution, but there is insufficient

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<sup>245</sup> See also 144f above.

<sup>246</sup> Being an unbaptised catechumen seems the basis of distinction in P.Oxy.36.2785.

<sup>247</sup> The πολιτική being alive or dead does not alter this conclusion.

evidence. Nonetheless, the letters are testimony, with the first two letters of peace, to the women's significance in their Christian communities<sup>248</sup>.

A fourth conclusion concerns the theological positions held by these Christian women. A number of preliminary observations need to be noted. Knowledge of the women's theological positions depends on their views being mentioned by the writers. Those not mentioned remain unknown, and those that are mentioned represent primarily the theological perspectives of the writers. Nonetheless, the texts indicate, for some women, a belief in divine healing, prayer and providence, a discounting of status distinctions and views about widowhood.

Three women are likely to believe in divine healing. Copres in P.Oxy.31.2601 expects Sarapias to share his theology about the possibility of healing, though perhaps without his conviction. Mebrio? in P.Oxy.31.2609 expects the lady sister to share his/her interpretation of Helenos' recovery as divine healing. In SB 6.9605, Thebais is part of a circle that attributes recovery from illness to God's action, with thanks offered for Copres' recovery. The failure to request women to pray for healing in circumstances where it could be expected is notable. Judas in P.Oxy.46.3314, incapacitated by his fall from a horse, does not ask Maria, his wife, for her prayers but begs her to help<sup>249</sup> and to send her brother. Martyrios in SB 14.11437 similarly does not ask Sousanna to pray for her ill mother, but to come<sup>250</sup>. It may be that the women's prayers are considered impotent, where for example those of a (male) ascetic would be powerful<sup>251</sup>, or it may be a lack of belief in divine healing on the men's part, saying nothing of the women's belief. Among the letters written by Christian women, belief in divine healing appears central to three: P.Lond.6.1926, Valeria's request for prayer for healing to Appa Paphnouthios; P.Oxy.8.1161, Anonyme's statements about her illness and prayers for health; and P.Neph.1, Tapiam and Paul's request for prayer for healing from the monks at Hathor.

Prayers for health using the conventional opening and/or closing formulae occur in all but three of the thirteen private letters written to Christian women. P.Oxy.31.2609,

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<sup>248</sup> It remains possible that the significance of the πολιτική rests in her son Neilos' status.

<sup>249</sup> The reading καὶ σοὶ (= συ) παραβοηθήσης μοι, l.16, seems to have the sense 'you too, send help' rather than the editor's suggested 'come yourself as well and help me'. See Nachtergaele (1981), 157; also Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a Letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.141-148, here 142.

<sup>250</sup> Judas also does not ask prayer of Jose his father, nor Martyrios of Sousanna's husband.

<sup>251</sup> See 193 above and 316f below.

with no opening prayer, is damaged where a final prayer might occur. P.Oxy.63.4365, again with no opening prayer, concludes, ἔρρωσο ἡμεῖν (= ἡμῖν) ἐν θ(ε)ῶ.

SB 22.15359 opens with prayer to receive a letter. Formulaic prayers in the remaining ten texts have a conventional element but this does not necessarily negate the religious value of the prayers which should be accepted<sup>252</sup>. The connection between God, prayer and health is an explicit aspect of each of the thirteen private letters written by Christian women that mention prayer.

The concept of divine providence appears in four of the letters written to or referring to Christian women, in each case, linked to prayer. In P.Oxy.46.3314, Judas prays to divine providence about Maria's health. In SB 22.15359, Thonios prays to divine providence about the arrival of Thekla's letter. Thebais in SB 6.9605 belongs to a Christian community that attributes divine providence to Jesus Christ, and makes it the object of prayer for health. In P.Oxy.43.2731, Maximos sees in the provision of a letter-bearer God's response to prayer, although he does not use πρόνοια. The writers expect the women to share their theology of providence, with the understanding that providence can be directed through prayer. Divine providence is attested in different guises in six of the letters written by Christian women<sup>253</sup>. In P.Berl.Zill.12, Athanasias writes of God's keeping (συντηρέω). In P.Bour.25, Tare prays that God protect (διαφυλάσσω) her aunt. In SB 8.9746, Didyme and the sisters pray for God's protection (διαφυλάσσω) of Sophias. Aria in SB 14.11588 prays to divine providence for her son Dorotheos. The mother in SB 18.13612 uses μετὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν in relation to Apa Johannes' mercy. In P.Neph.1, Tapiam and Paul use σὺν θεῶ of God's providence in travel in addition to their prayer to ἡ θεία πρόνοια.

The texts give evidence of cultural attitudes to widowhood consistent with Christian teaching. Naomi's husband in P.Abinn.19 asks Abinnaeus for the release of her brother from military service because his 'mother is a widow and has none but him' (διότι χ[ρ]ῆρα ἐστὶ(ν) ἡ μή[τ]ηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔχει ἄλλο(ν) εἰ μὴ αὐτόν), ll.19-21. The neediness of widows is a commonplace in ancient literature and forms the basis of appeals for help in numbers of pagan and Christian papyri<sup>254</sup>. The primary role of sons in caring for widowed mothers is illustrated in this text<sup>255</sup>. The advocacy of

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<sup>252</sup> See 151f above.

<sup>253</sup> See 120-124 above.

<sup>254</sup> See 135f above.

<sup>255</sup> See 222, n.124 above.

Naomi's husband, doubtless with Naomi the widow's (step-) daughter's cooperation, seems to contradict '(she) has none but him', except that they are not sons. Naomi and her husband and/or the widow make use of conventional attitudes to press their appeal<sup>256</sup>. Nonna in P.Ant.2.93, the πολιτική in P.Grenf.2.73, and Zenobia in P.Oxy.43.2731 may be widows but their status is not indicated and their attitudes are therefore unknown. Among the texts written by Christian women, Leuchis in P.Herm.17 appeals to Apa Johannes for his mediation because she is a widow. The mother in SB 18.13612 similarly seeks Apa Johannes' help. The presence of sons as essential for the well-being of their widowed mothers is evident in BGU 3.948 and P.Abinn.34, where the women are most probably widowed or divorced.

The texts provide possible examples of the discounting of status distinctions that mark some Christian texts<sup>257</sup>. In P.Col.Teeter 7, δεσπότης, τιμιωτάτη and wealth suggest that the woman is of higher status than the author who also styles her ἀδελφή, a title used for those of equal status<sup>258</sup>. In P.Ant.2.93, Papais addresses Nonna, his future mother-in-law, as both μήτηρ and ἀδελφή. The former epithet expresses respect, the latter equality. The women's attitudes to the possible status discounting, however, are not known. They may accept the claims to equality or regard them as hubris.

A fifth conclusion concerns the evidence of the texts for women's commitment to Christian discipleship. The lady sister in P.Oxy.63.4365 studies 'biblical' texts<sup>259</sup>. Her reading suggests an advanced stage of learning. There is no evidence that she is an ascetic but such a status would be consistent with her education and possession of books. The ἐπιστολαὶ εἰρηνικαί for Taion in P.Oxy.36.2785 and Germania in P.Oxy.56.3857 suggest their significant and recognised Christian commitment. There is no evidence that either woman is ascetic. Thebais in SB 6.9605 belongs to a group with a strong Christology which, it is reasonable to assume, she shares, although her age is unknown. The daughter in P.Prag.2.191 may have Kalemoros as a spiritual father to whom she would look for prayer and counsel, although this is not certain. There is no evidence that Kalemoros is an ascetic or clergy. The woman addressee

<sup>256</sup> I consider Abinnaeus Christian, which adds the sense of Christian duty to the petition.

<sup>257</sup> See 145f above.

<sup>258</sup> Arzt-Grabner (2002), 186, 191; Naldini (1968, 1998), 15f.

<sup>259</sup> The canon of Scripture is not fixed in this period. See 79f above; also J. Barton, 'Canon', Coggins and Houlden (1990), 101-105.



and Atheatis in P.Laur.2.42 are recognised for their Christian status, Atheatis being commended for behaviour considered by the male author as exemplary for a laywoman. It involves some element of withdrawal or detachment from the world but is otherwise unspecified. Both women appear to be members of one congregation. The evidence that the women in P.Got.11 and P.Grenf.2.73 are confessors and, therefore, deeply committed Christians is insufficient to be accepted<sup>260</sup>. The letters written by Christian women also indicate women's commitment to discipleship particularly in P.Bour.25, P.Lond.6.1926, P.Neph.1, 18, P.Oxy.6.903, 8.1161, 12.1592 and, with less clarity, P.Herm.17. These women appear to be members of congregations. They demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, although there is no reference to them possessing 'biblical' books. Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 places herself as a spiritual daughter to Appa Paphnouthios as does Anonyme to her lord father in P.Oxy.12.1592. Anonyme in P.Oxy.8.1161 expands her articulation of God to include 'the beloved Son'. The extension resembles that of the circle to which Thebais belongs, including the first two members of the Christian Trinity but omitting the Spirit. Unlike Thebais' circle, Anonyme does not name the Son as Jesus or Christ.

A sixth conclusion is in contrast to that just discussed. The texts give evidence of women who behave contrary to modes consistent with the ideals of Christian discipleship. The woman addressee in P.Laur.2.42 is charged with behaving to the laywoman Atheatis in a way judged by the male author as inconsistent with 'being Christian'. The nature of the wrong is not indicated but is of sufficient seriousness to earn the writer's rebuke. The author writes as one with authority in relation to the addressee who expects his rebuke to be heeded. Nonna and her mother Annous in P.Sakaon 48 act contrary to Christian ideals. Nonna's co-operation in her abduction from the home of her dying husband and Annous' complicity in the abduction contradict Christian teaching on women's submission, family care and the indissolubility of marriage. The women actively perpetuate the feud between two apparently Christian families. In P.Oxy.34.2731, Zenobia exhibits attitudes to marriage, family and women's roles that do not conform to 'NT' ideals<sup>261</sup>. She keeps Salamai with her against Maximos' wishes. Salamai's own wishes are not known. At the same time, Maximos flatters Zenobia, acknowledging her power. The gap between the world of the papyri and the 'NT' ideals of Christian marriage and family

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<sup>260</sup> For women in the Diocletianic persecution see eg Eusebius, *HE* 8.8.1; 8.9.1f; 8.9.3; 8.11.1; 8.12.3.

<sup>261</sup> Eg 1 Corinthians 11.8-10; 14.34ff; 1 Timothy 2.11-14.

life is evident also in the texts written by Christian women, particularly P.Oxy.6.903 and 50.3581, both dealing with marital conflict, and BGU 3.948 and P.Grenf.1.53 that focus on intergenerational problems.

A final conclusion concerns the evidence of these texts for women's use of clergy and ascetics in secular functions. The writer of P.Abinn.19 is arguably a member of the clergy and may be Apa Mios. He is Naomi's husband who petitions Abinnaeus most probably at her initiative. Their relationship does not weaken the argument that it is his authority as a Christian figure that gives power to his mediation. Among the texts written by Christian women, in Herm. 17 and SB 18.13612, Leuchis and the mother ask Apa Johannes to petition the authorities on their behalf, and Marsis in P.Kell.1.32 and Demetria in Stud.Pal.20.86 use clergy as writers and witnesses.

A number of the themes that emerge from the texts written by Christian women also appear in texts written to and referring to Christian women, particularly belief in healing, prayer and providence. However, the custom of recommending women from one Christian community to another appears only in the texts written to and referring to Christian women. The nature of women's prayer practice, relation to Scripture and sense of power in spiritual matters are not evident.

Texts written to ascetic Christian women and referring to ascetic Christian women constitute a distinct subgroup of the documents examined in this chapter. They are the subjects of the following chapter's analysis.

## EXCURSUS

### LETTERS TO WOMEN, NOMINA SACRA AND ISOPSEPHISMS

Texts written to women that contain *nomina sacra* acutely raise the question of the relation between reading literacy and their use, whether their appearance suggests literacy and a knowledge of *nomina sacra* on the part of the women, and whether, therefore, the *nomina sacra* can be used to classify the women addressees as Christian. Six of the fourteen Christian texts written to women include *nomina sacra*<sup>1</sup>. Two of these texts also include Christian symbols<sup>2</sup>.

The *nomina sacra* are a form of communication among Christians that require readers to recognise and decode them. They occur also among Manicheans<sup>3</sup>. *Nomina sacra* communicate not only the unabbreviated word in abbreviated form, but also a bond of shared knowledge. The successful communication of both these levels of meaning would seem to require reading literacy on the women's part which, however, is known to be uncommon in Egypt. If the women can read *nomina sacra*, it implies that their Christian experience includes exposure to these conventions and learning their significance. If the women cannot read and a third party reads the *nomina sacra* as complete words, it raises the question as to why the writer would use them. It may be that the writer presumes, and sometimes knows, that a Christian is available to read the letter and opts for the abbreviated form for efficiency of writing or to use the convention. The communication of shared symbolic meaning with the addressee is, however, lost.

Three associated questions arise: whether the Christian conventions of *nomina sacra* and isopsephisms are known among pagan as well as Christian literates; whether the *nomina sacra* are simply a device for efficiency in writing and lack symbolic significance; and whether *nomina sacra*, while significant, are also conventional and are used in writing to pagan addressees.

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<sup>1</sup> P.Leid.Inst.64, ἐν κ(υ)ρίῳ /παρὰ τῷ κ(υ)ρίῳ θ(ε)ῶ; P.Oxy.31.2601, παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ θ(ε)ῶ; P.Oxy.31.2609, ἐν κ(υ)ρίῳ; P.Oxy.34.2731, ἐν κ(υ)ρίῳ θ(ε)ῶ; P.Oxy.63.4365, ἐν κ(υ)ρίῳ /ἐν θ(ε)ῶ; P.Prag.2.191, ἐν κ(υ)ρίῳ.

<sup>2</sup> P.Oxy.31.2601 includes the isopsephism ϣθ and P.Oxy.31.2609 includes the chi-rho symbol.

<sup>3</sup> See 26 especially n.23 above. Classification of texts including *nomina sacra* as Manichean relies on the presence of Manichean elements.

*Nomina sacra* are the subject of considerable research which, however, tends to focus on literary rather than documentary uses and in particular on *nomina sacra* and the Tetragrammaton<sup>4</sup>. In relation to this thesis and the current excursus, the interest is in whether *nomina sacra* can be used to classify an addressee as Christian.

Firstly, there is no certain evidence of *nomina sacra* and Christian isopsephisms in non-magical texts written to pagans or by pagans in the period being examined<sup>5</sup>. The evidence suggests that *nomina sacra* and Christian isopsephisms are not used outside Christian or Manichean circles except in magical papyri<sup>6</sup>. In response to the first question posed above, however, it cannot be ruled out that some *nomina sacra* at least are recognisable and known among the small community of literates in fourth-century Egypt. The regular association of *nomina sacra* for the names of God with εὐχομαι and ἐν (κυρίῳ) θεῷ χαίρειν make them easy to decode. From recognisability their use by pagan professional scribes<sup>7</sup> can be posited although there is no way of knowing if this happened. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that scribes employ conventions appropriate to a text's author, and that the appearance of *nomina sacra* in any text reflects the author's religious conventions rather than the scribe's. In response to the second question, the absence of *nomina sacra* from certainly pagan texts suggests that there is a symbolic significance in their use, recognised by Christians and pagans. In response to the third question, the evidence of the papyri indicates that the *nomina sacra* were becoming established as a Christian epistolographic convention in the papyri during the fourth century. It implies that their use in this period is unlikely to be purely formulaic but reflects communication of a shared understanding on the part of the writer and addressee. Further, *nomina sacra* and Christian isopsephisms are visual signs in a text recognisable to an addressee regardless of literacy status. They communicate shared understanding in and of themselves and support the hypothesis that their use would be restricted to Christian addressees. The presence of *nomina sacra*, at least in

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<sup>4</sup> Eg Bonner (1950); Paap (1959); Traube (1967); Treu (1973); Blanchard (1974); Bedodi (1974); Roberts (1977); Roberts and Skeat (1982); D. Mazzoleni, 'Nomina Sacra' in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (1997), s.v.; Millard (1994); Hurtado (1998); Tuckett (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Pagan isopsephisms occur, see 26, n.25 above.

<sup>6</sup> See Bonner (1950). Also ch. 11 below.

<sup>7</sup> Use by pagan family and friends acting as scribes seems inherently unlikely in this period.

the fourth century, then can with reasonable probability be taken to imply the Christianity of the addressee of a letter.

Use of *nomina sacra* cannot be taken to indicate the reading literacy of addressees without presuming a great increase in literacy for which there is no evidence. The use of *nomina sacra* to the illiterate raises the interesting question as to whether there was some means of conveying their presence other than through reading such as bowing the head at the sacred word, as is the custom in some modern churches. It may also be that the presence of *nomina sacra*, and knowledge of their presence, could be presumed.

Of the six letters to women that contain *nomina sacra*, the woman's Christianity is inferred on other grounds in five cases. The 'sister' in P.Leid.Inst.64 is accepted as Christian on the basis of the *nomen sacrum* alone. A further five texts written to men about women also use *nomina sacra* and Christian isopsephisms<sup>8</sup>. Among the Christian women writers, six use *nomina sacra*<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> P.Ant.3.192 ἐν κυρίῳ; P.Got.11 ἐν κυρίῳ; P.Grenf.2.73 ἐν κυρίῳ, ἐν θ(ε)ῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ θ(ε)ῷ; P.Oxy.36.2785 ἐν κυρίῳ, σδ; P.Oxy.56.3857 ἐν κυρίῳ, Ἐμ(μανουή)λ, ϩθ.

<sup>9</sup> P.Bour.25 ἐν θ(ε)ῷ; P.Neph.18 ἐν κυρίῳ; SB 8.9746 ἐν κυρίῳ; P.Oxy.14.1774 ἐν κυρίῳ; SB 14.11881 ἐν κυρίῳ; P.Neph.1 ἐν κυρίῳ; P.Oxy.12.1592 κ(ύρι)έ μου π(άτε)ρ for a father.



## APPENDIX

### TEXTS POSSIBLY WRITTEN TO CHRISTIAN WOMEN OR REFERRING TO CHRISTIAN WOMEN BUT NOT ACCEPTED

This appendix contains texts written to women and referring to women where argument can be made that the woman is Christian, but the classification is not accepted. The texts are included because they illustrate some of the methodological issues involved in classification. I distinguish the sections of the texts that describe the religious elements from those that refer to broader life concerns using twelve- and ten-point type.

#### **CHRISTIAN LETTERS IN WHICH THE WOMEN ARE NOT REGARDED AS CHRISTIAN**

##### **P.Ant.3.192, C4, Provenance: Antinoopolis**

This letter to Herakleides 'the beloved brother' (ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ), l.1, from Anonymos/e uses a *nomen sacrum* in the opening greeting (ἐν κυρίῳ), l.2, and is classified as Christian. The writer closes with a standard prayer, ἐρῶσθαί σε εὖχομαι πολλοῖς χρόνοις, l.18.

The letter is written because a letter-bearer is available: 'I now find an opportunity in sister Maria's coming' (εὐκαιρίαν (= εὐκαιρίαν) καὶ νῦν εὐρών τῆς ἀδελφῆς [.]. Μαρίας παραγιγνομένης), ll.3f<sup>1</sup>. The author addresses 'your kindness', (προσειπεῖν τὴν σὴν χρηστότητα), l.5, and refers to financial arrangements that are unclear.

The nature of Maria's belief is uncertain. The epithet 'sister' occurs frequently in pagan and Christian papyri designating familial, social and spiritual relationship. It need not indicate that Maria is Christian. The description of Maria lacks the qualifying ἀγαπητός/ -ή afforded to Herakleides. Maria's connection as letter-bearer with the Christian Anonymos/e may be circumstantial. It need imply nothing about her beliefs. The only indicator of Maria's belief is her name which could be Jewish, Christian, Manichean or, with slight possibility, pagan<sup>2</sup>. While there is no evidence for a

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<sup>1</sup> Letters regularly refer to letter-bearers whose travel is the occasion for writing, eg P.Oxy.17.2156 (C4/5); P.Ross.Georg.3.9 (C4).

<sup>2</sup> See P.Abinn.49 at 36f above; also 363 below and P.Harr.1.107 below.

Manichean connection there is insufficient evidence to classify Maria as Christian or Jewish.

### **P.Kell.1.48, 355, Provenance: Kellis**

This text is a copy of the manumission<sup>3</sup> (ἀ(ντίγραφον) ἀ[πελευθερώσεως]), l.1, of Hilaria by Aurelius Valerius.

Valerius states that he is Christian. He frees Hilaria 'because of (my) outstanding Christianity' (δι' ὑπερβολὴν χ[ρι]στιανότητος<sup>4</sup>), l.4, and because of Hilaria's 'loyalty to me' (καὶ εὐνοίαν τὴν πρὸς με), l.6. Valerius uses the traditional formula, 'under Zeus, Earth and Sun' (ὑπὸ Δία Γῆν Ἥλιον), l.5, with no sense of inconsistency<sup>5</sup>.

The document gives no explicit information about Hilaria's religious belief. In the Jewish community, manumission of fellow-Jews was encouraged, but there is little evidence of a parallel value in the Christian church, and no necessary implication that Hilaria is Christian<sup>6</sup>. The witness to the manumission, Aurelius Psekes, may be a priest (Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ψεκῆ[ς] πρ( ) ὁ προκείμενος παρὼν μαρτυρῶ)<sup>7</sup> l.20. His role in the manumission appears to be more than signing the document but is unclear<sup>8</sup>. He is mentioned as 'the most revered father' through whom the manumission is accomplished (δ[ι]ὰ (or ἐ[π]ί) τοῦ αἰδε[σιμω]τάτου πατρ[ὸς ἡμῶν] Ψεκῆ[τος] ), l.9f. Αἰδεσιμώτατος πατήρ is used of a natural father in SB 14.12085 (C5). The editor notes that there are no certain instances of the adjective as an honorary epithet for clergy. It may argue against the 'father' referring to a priest and so against the reading πρ(εσβύτερος). His presence does not necessarily imply anything about Hilaria's belief.

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<sup>3</sup> The editor notes this is one of few manumissions from Byzantine Egypt. The only other fourth-century manumission is P.Edmonstone (355); see 42ff above. The editor of P.Kell.1.48 concludes that it is not possible to classify this manumission. For a list of types of manumission see on P.Edmonstone at 42, n.87 above. The fact that the witness is possibly a priest has suggested that this may be a *manumissio in ecclesia* but its features are not consistent with that form, with its bilateral nature and lack of reference to a bishop or church.

<sup>4</sup> χριστιανότης is not attested in Lampe (1961, 1968) nor among the other papyri according to the *DDBDP*.

<sup>5</sup> A similar statement occurs in P.Edmonstone (355), ὑπὸ Γῆν καὶ Οὐρανόν alongside εὐσεβία τοῦ πανελέημονος Θεοῦ; see 43 above.

<sup>6</sup> The church demonstrates a neutral or negative attitude to manumission in its early centuries, and there are many examples of Christians owning slaves, eg P.Oxy.6.903. See 131-135 above.

<sup>7</sup> The reconstruction πρ(εσβύτερος) is suggested in Judge (1981), 619. The editor notes other possibilities: πρ(ύτανις), πρ(αιπόσιτος), πρ(ονοήτης), πρ(αίκων).

<sup>8</sup> On clergy's increasing role as witnesses, scribes and mediators in C4, see 181f above.



The question arises whether Hilaria's religious belief can be implied from Valerius' Christianity, that is, whether slaves follow the beliefs of their owners in the fourth century<sup>9</sup>. The evidence of the 'NT' is not univocal. The earliest writings attest the conversion to Christianity of whole households, presumably including slaves<sup>10</sup>. Later writings indicate that the church admitted slaves as well as free persons and they address the difficulties of Christian slaves in pagan households<sup>11</sup>, a phenomenon that increases with the success of the Gentile mission<sup>12</sup>. The Jewish practice of circumcising and baptising non-Jewish slaves at purchase, thereby making them members of the Jewish community, appears not to have had its parallel in the church<sup>13</sup>. In the broader social world, scholars identify an easing in the insistence that slaves adhere to their owners' religion in the shift from agrarian to urbanised Roman society, and during the principate the freedom of slaves to participate in cults suggests little enforcement of conformity<sup>14</sup>. In the Greek east, however, there appears a greater insistence on conformity<sup>15</sup>. Christian writers of the fourth and fifth centuries make landowners responsible for the conversion of their slaves and tenant farmers<sup>16</sup>, attesting their religious independence. However, in the post-Constantinian period, the church, through state law, endorsed the right of a slave-owner to enforce slaves' religious conformity by beating if necessary, and refused baptism to slaves without the owner's permission<sup>17</sup>. The evidence suggests, therefore, that while there may have been an official insistence on slave conformity in religious belief, the reality was otherwise. It is not possible in any particular case to argue from the religious

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<sup>9</sup> Nock (1933/1972) does not address the question.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 16.15; 16.31-34; 18.8; 1 Corinthians 1.16; 16.5.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Timothy 6.1f; 1 Peter 2.18-20.

<sup>12</sup> H. Gültow, *Christentum und Sklaverei in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, cited in Llewelyn, 'The Sale of a slave-Girl' in *ND* 6.54f, identifies three periods in the 'NT' discussion. The earliest, to which the letters to Philemon, Romans and Corinthians belong, has Christian slaves as members of converted households. The second period, of Ephesians and Colossians, seeks to regulate behaviour within the existing social structure; that is, slaves are to obey their masters, spiritual equality not translating into social equality. The third period, 1 Peter and the Pastoral Epistles, follows the break with Judaism, the death of the apostles and the rise of persecution, and intensifies conformity and compliance. Westermann (1955), 150, argues that there appears to be no social opposition to slaves' conversion in the 'NT' period. J. Derrett, 'The Function of the Epistle to Philemon', cited in Llewelyn, 'The Sale of a slave-Girl' in *ND* 6.54, argues that the letter to Philemon is a public denial by the church that it acted as an asylum for slaves.

<sup>13</sup> Westermann (1955), 136.

<sup>14</sup> Bömer (1957-63), 1.57f.

<sup>15</sup> Bömer (1957-63), 4.61-63; 3.61.

<sup>16</sup> Chrysostom, *Homil. in Act. 18.4* cited in MacMullen (1984), 65; Augustine, *Epistulae* 58.1.

<sup>17</sup> Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 10, c.230.

belief of a slave-owner to the belief of a slave. In particular, it cannot be inferred that Hilaria is Christian from Valerius' Christianity.

This text, nonetheless, is of interest in indicating an aspect of women's lives that might be affected by Christianity, namely their status as slave or freed. Valerius regards the manumission as an expression of Christianity, although he does not specify the connection<sup>18</sup>. It is also not known how widespread such an attitude might have been. This and P.Edmonstone are the only papyrus texts to the end of the fourth century that suggest a positive link between Christianity and manumission.

### **LETTERS, AND THE WOMEN IN THEM, NOT REGARDED AS CHRISTIAN**

**P.Harr.1.107, C3, Provenance: Unknown; BL Supplement; 8.148; 11.90**

In this letter, Besas writes to his mother, Maria. The text contains elements that have been accepted as Christian<sup>19</sup>, including an opening greeting 'in God' (ἐν θεῷ)<sup>20</sup>, I.3, prayer 'to the Father God of truth and to the Spirit, the Paraclete'<sup>21</sup> (τῷ πατρὶ θεῷ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τῷ παρακλήτῳ πνεύματι), II.5-7, use of an elaborated Pauline trichotomy, with 'health for the body, cheerfulness for the spirit and eternal life for the soul' (τῷ μὲν σώματι ὑγίαν (= ὑγιείαν), τῷ δὲ πνεύματι εὐθυμίαν, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ ζωὴν αἰώνιον), II.8-12<sup>22</sup>, and reference to 'for the feast of the Pascha' (εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν τοῦ Πάσχα), II.20f<sup>23</sup>. These elements and the early third-century date<sup>24</sup> have led to classification of the letter as the earliest Christian letter on papyrus. Besas ends the letter with a standard prayer, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχαιμαι (= εὐχομαι) πολλοῖς χρ(ό)νοις), II.25ff.

The letter concerns family matters<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Contemporary attitudes cannot be presumed in antiquity.

<sup>19</sup> Eg Emmett (1985). Emmett Nobbs' examination of Manichean texts published since this article leads her now to conclude that P.Harr.1.107 is Manichean, Gardner, Nobbs and Choat (2001).

<sup>20</sup> Once regarded as a criterion for a Christian classification, eg Naldini (1968, 1998), 29f.

<sup>21</sup> Reference to the Spirit as Paraclete occurs only in John 14.15f; 14.26; 15.26; 16.7. In John 14.15f the Spirit is called the 'Spirit of truth'. In Manichean circles, Mani, in his spiritual aspect, is understood to be the Paraclete. See Gardner, Nobbs and Choat (2001), 121.

<sup>22</sup> On the trichotomy, see 81f above.

<sup>23</sup> BL Supplement. See also P.Bour.25 at 41f above and SB 12.10840 at 58f above.

<sup>24</sup> The editor proposes C3; Naldini (1968, 1998), 76, early C3; Bell (1944), 197, c.200; Tibiletti (1979), 6, early C3; van Haelst (1976), no.1194, early C3.

<sup>25</sup> See Migliardi Zingale (1992), no.88.

Recently discovered Manichean material suggests that the elaboration of the biblical trichotomy characterises Manichean texts<sup>26</sup> and makes it most likely that Besas is Manichean. The conclusion is supported by the description of God as 'Father of truth', which occurs in certainly Manichean texts<sup>27</sup>, and the appeal to the Spirit as Paraclete<sup>28</sup>. Earlier suggestions that the incomplete Trinitarian reference points to the text being Gnostic or that this and the trichotomy display traces of Origen's theology<sup>29</sup> are less convincing. The phrase ἐν θεῷ, once regarded as an indicator of Christianity, has been found in other Manichean texts<sup>30</sup> and is consistent with a Manichean classification. In addition, observance of Easter among Manicheans is attested by Augustine<sup>31</sup> and implied by P.Kell.5.Copt.22<sup>32</sup>. A significant problem in deciding a Manichean classification for this letter is its date. The early third century would preclude a Manichean milieu since Manicheism arrived in Egypt c.260<sup>33</sup>. Gardner, Nobbs and Choat argue for parallels to the style of writing not only in the early third century but also in the late third and early fourth centuries<sup>34</sup>, thus making a Manichean classification possible.

Given the strong evidence for Manichean vocabulary and expressions, it is most likely that Maria, like Besas, is Manichean for whom these expressions are meaningful. While the name 'Maria' is common in Christian texts from the fourth century<sup>35</sup>, it occurs in a number of Manichean Greek and Coptic documents<sup>36</sup>. Maria, mother of Besas, appears to be a Manichean woman in a Manichean family<sup>37</sup> and falls outside the parameters of this thesis.

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<sup>26</sup> P.Kell.5.Copt.25; 29; 32; also inv.P.81C, cited in Gardner, Nobbs and Choat (2001), 122. All date to C4.

<sup>27</sup> The editor regards 'God of truth' as a distinctively Manichean phrase, 91.

<sup>28</sup> Another instance of its use as a religious title is in the Manichean P.Kell.1.Gr.63. The title occurs in the liturgical text P.Yale inv.1360 (C3/4 or 4/5), εὐκλέως ἔδωκεν ἀγίοις Παρακλητῶ . [.

<sup>29</sup> Crouzel (1969).

<sup>30</sup> P.Kell.1.Gr.63, P.Kell.5.Copt.32 and 36. P.Kell.1.Gr.67 and 1.71 both contain the phrase and are arguably Manichean. For P.Kell.1.Gr.71, see 73 above.

<sup>31</sup> *C. Epist. Fund.* 9 cited in Gardner, Nobbs and Choat (2001), 123, n.35.

<sup>32</sup> 'of grapes and olives and ... and... for the Pascha', l.18, a Manichean text.

<sup>33</sup> Most probably in Mani's lifetime. On the history of Manicheism in Egypt, see Lieu (1994), especially 89-105; also Lieu (1985,1992).

<sup>34</sup> P.Lit.Lond.207 and 255, cited in Gardner, Nobbs and Choat (2001), 120.

<sup>35</sup> On 'Maria', see P.Ant.3.192 above. The text rules out a Jewish or Roman pagan milieu.

<sup>36</sup> P.Kell.5.Copt.19; 20; 21; 22; 24; 25; 26; 29 (all refer to Maria, mother of Matthaïos and Piene); 42 (Maria, daughter of Louiapshai). Mother Maria and Maria are also names in the arguably Manichean P.Kell.1.Gr.71 at 73 above

<sup>37</sup> Besas' father is greeted along with his brothers at the end of the letter and presumably is included in the final prayer, ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχαίμαι, ll.25f. He is not included in the opening greeting nor is the letter written to him.

**P.Oxy.14.1682, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 6.103**

This letter is from Heracleides to his 'lady sister Antiochia' (κυρία μου ἀδελφῇ Ἀντιοχείῃ), l.1.

Heracleides prays, 'the providence of God grant that your household receive you in health' (ἡ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοια παρέξει τὸ μετὰ ὀλοκληρίας σε τὰ οἰκεῖα ἀπολαβεῖν), ll.6-8, without *nomen sacrum*. He closes the letter with a standard prayer, ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὖχομαι, κυρία μου ἀδελφή, πολλοῖς χρόνοις, ll.15-18. There are no other references to religious matters.

Heracleides inquires about Antiochia's journey and health, and advises her son to pay attention to his work.

The religious classification of this letter depends on the phrase ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοια<sup>38</sup>. The editor considers it a possible indicator of Christianity. Naldini regards it with more certainty<sup>39</sup>. Tibiletti recommends caution in relying on the phrase as the sole criterion for Christian classification since it occurs also in pagan texts<sup>40</sup>. Tibiletti's position is also adopted by Horsley<sup>41</sup> and this thesis<sup>42</sup>. With no other indication of Christian belief, this letter is not accepted as Christian<sup>43</sup>.

**P.Oxy.27.2474, C3, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 5.82; 6.109; 9.195; 10.148**

This text is a draft of a will<sup>44</sup> whose testator, his name lost, refers to his wife Aurelia Chaeremonis as 'well-disposed' toward him (εὐνου[σ]τάτην μου [...], ἐ[ὺ]νοήσασάν μοι, εὐνουστάτη μου συμβίῳ, εὐνουστάτης μου συμβίου, τῇ εὐνο[υσ]τάτῃ μου συμβίῳ), ll.5, 6, 16, 30, 32f, and does not refer to her without the description<sup>45</sup>. He writes ... θεῶ καὶ ἀνθρώποις, l.6, in a context that is lost but appears to refer to Chaeremonis.

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<sup>38</sup> There appears to be no difference in meaning between ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοια and ἡ θεία πρόνοια. A combined form occurs in P.Oxy.17.2156 (C4/5), τῇ θείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίᾳ εὐχόμενος.

<sup>39</sup> Naldini (1968, 1998), 14.

<sup>40</sup> Tibiletti (1979), 118, n.34.

<sup>41</sup> Horsley, 'Divine Providence in a letter of Judas' in *ND* 3.143f.

<sup>42</sup> See 120ff above.

<sup>43</sup> For examples of texts with ἡ θεία πρόνοια and general statements of prayer without other religious indicators, see P.Cair.Isid.63 at 70 above; 120, n.11; P.Oxy.48.3396 and P.Oxy.59.4001 below.

<sup>44</sup> On the text, see Migliardi Zingale (1997), no.25. On wills, see Montevicchi (1935).

<sup>45</sup> The intensity of this pattern is heightened by the lack of affective descriptions of the other women named, Asclatariou his mother and Theognoste his full sister.

The editor suggests that Chaeremonis may be Christian. The εὐνοια/εὐνοέω word group occurs in the 'NT'<sup>46</sup> although the adjectival form is not attested, and is regular in pagan wills of the period<sup>47</sup>. The word describes a wifely ideal encouraged in pagan, Jewish and Christian texts<sup>48</sup>. The testator's ... θεῶ καὶ ἀνθρώποις occurs in the 'NT'<sup>49</sup> and only rarely in the papyri<sup>50</sup>. It is consistent with a Christian, Jewish or pagan milieu. The evidence is too slight to allow classification of the text or of Chaeremonis as Christian. Further, the family does not appear to be Christian or Jewish, in that a son has been a *prytanis*. The mention of Ἀβδιέος, l.39, most probably a Jew<sup>51</sup> who previously owned some of the testator's land, is noteworthy, raising questions about possible confiscation of Jewish property after the 115-117 war, but does not assist in classification.

**P.Oxy.48.3384, 14 April 331, and 3396, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 8.270; 9.202**

These texts are part of the Papnouthis and Dorotheos Archive, P.Oxy.48.3384-3429 (331-c.376). 3384 is the lease of a house owned by Aurelius Aphynchis and rented by Maria (Αὐρηλία Μαρία Παθερμουτίου), ll.4f, almost certainly Papnouthis' mother. 3396 is a letter from Papnouthis to his parents, Aphynchis, possibly Maria's past landlord, and Maria (κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ Ἀφυγχίῳ καὶ τῇ κυρίᾳ μου μητρὶ Μαρίας (= Μαρία)), ll1f.

The lease, 3384, contains no religious references. Maria's name alone suggests a Christian classification and is insufficient to allow it<sup>52</sup>.

The letter, 3396, opens with prayer to divine providence for health and well-being (προηγουμένως εὐχομαι τῇ θεῇ προνοίᾳ ὑγιαίνοντά σε καὶ ὁλοκληροῦντα καὶ

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<sup>46</sup> Eg εὐνοια Ephesians 6.7; εὐνοέω Matthew 5.25. Also 4 Maccabees 2.10; 13.25.

<sup>47</sup> P.Oxy.3.494 (165) of a wife; P.Ryl.2.153 (169) of a male cousin; P.Strasb.2.122 (161-169) used negatively of a son; P.Oxy.6.907 (276) of a wife. It occurs in the Christian will P.Antinoe 1=FIRA 3.52 (460) of a wife. Εὐνουστάτος/-η occurs elsewhere only in SB 8.9867 (C3) of a male.

<sup>48</sup> Ilan (1995), 58-61; MacDonald (1996), 16; Brown (1991), 57.

<sup>49</sup> Luke 2.52; similarly 1 Thessalonians 2.4.

<sup>50</sup> P.Oxy.48.3417 (350-400) below; SB 3.6266 (C6).

<sup>51</sup> Koenen (1968), 252, n.4. Possibly Ἀβδιαῖος, ed.pr.

<sup>52</sup> See P.Abinn.49 at 36f above.

εὐθυμοῦντα ἀποδοθῆναι ὑμῖν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα)<sup>53</sup>, ll.3f. There are no other religious elements.

The editor accepts Papnouthis, his family including Maria and all others in the archive to whose belief reference is made as Christian<sup>54</sup>, citing the evidence of 3396, and 3397, 3407, 3417, 3418 and 3421. However, the criteria in each case are insufficient for the classification<sup>55</sup>. In particular, the Christian attribution of 3396 depends on the phrase ἡ θεία πρόνοια which is insufficient by itself as a criterion<sup>56</sup>. The letter, therefore, is not included in this analysis.

Papnouthis writes concerning certain pledges (ἐνέχυρα), ll.5, 6, and about his stay in Alexandria receiving money on behalf of the landlord of Sarapammon and his associate. The letter includes greetings to two other fathers, Ammonios and Petemounius, and another mother Taesis, and to a number of 'brothers' and 'sisters' who may or may not be kin, although Dorotheos is certainly a natural brother. At each of three greetings to children Papnouthis writes τὰ ἀβάσκαντα αὐτῆς τέκνα, ll.26, 28, 30<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> In the papyrus: προηγουμένους εὐχομαι τῇ θείᾳ προνοίᾳ οἱ[γ]ένοντά σοι καὶ ὁλοκληροῦν<τα> καὶ εὐθυμοῦντα {καὶ} ἀποδοθῆναι [σοι] ὑμεῖν τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ γράμματα.

<sup>54</sup> 'So far as the religion of any persons in these papers can be determined, they are without exception Christians', 76.

<sup>55</sup> Only two of the cited letters are written by Papnouthis, 3396 and 3397. In 3397, Papnouthis invokes God using the singular, μὰ τὸν γὰρ Θεόν, l.5, and closes with a standard prayer, both of which are consistent with a Christian belief but do not prove it.

3407, a letter by Papnouthis' landlady, is examined at 55 above. It does not necessarily imply Papnouthis' Christianity.

In 3417, Maximus, writing to Papnouthis and Dorotheos, refers to God using the singular διὰ τὸν θεόν, l.9, and uses the invocation μὰ τὴν γὰρ θεϊαν πρόνοιαν, l.16f, and the phrase τὸ οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις, ll.26f. While this latter phrase recalls 'NT' language, Luke 2.52; 1 Thessalonians 2.4, and strengthens the argument that Maximus is Christian, its occurrence does not necessarily imply Papnouthis' Christianity. The phrase would be consistent with a pagan belief. In C4 the phrase also occurs in P.Oxy.27.2474 of uncertain religious milieu, above.

3418 is written by an unknown author who uses the phrase θεοῦ γὰρ θέλοντος, l.7, insufficient as a criterion for Christian classification although consistent with it.

In 3421, Ammonios, who may or may not be the Ammonios of 3419 and 3420, prays τῷ πανελεήμονι θεῷ, l.4, in a letter written to an unknown Serapion. This is likely to be a Christian text but it carries no implications for Papnouthis' Christianity.

<sup>56</sup> See P.Oxy.14.1682, above.

<sup>57</sup> The wish strengthens the argument against a Christian classification, although it occurs in Christian texts.

**P.Oxy.55.3819, early C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 11.171**

This is a letter of condolence<sup>58</sup> from Julius 'to his lord father Demetrius and his lady sister Apollonia' (κυρ[ί]οις μου πατρὶ Δημητρίῳ καὶ Ἀπολλωνίᾳ ἀδελφῇ Ἰούλιος χαίρειν), ll.1ff.

Julius writes, 'therefore, it is possible for the Lord God to grant us health for the remaining time' (δυνατὶ (= δυνατεῖ) οὖν τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ 'τοῦ λοιποῦ' ἡμῖν τὴν ὀλοκληρίαν παρασχῆν (= παρασχεῖν))<sup>59</sup>, ll.9ff. Δυνατέω is rare, found almost exclusively in the Pauline corpus of the 'NT', although never used impersonally<sup>60</sup>. The occurrence here has led to the suggestion that Julius is Christian<sup>61</sup>. However, there are no Christian expressions of consolation or specifically Christian elements in the letter alongside the sophisticated construction with δυνατέω. Further, ἀδυνατέω is relatively frequent and is regularly impersonal, suggesting that Julius has borrowed this construction, rendering it in the positive. Without further evidence, Julius' Christianity is not accepted. The belief of Apollonia is unknown.

**P.Oxy.59.4001, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 11.171**

This letter is from Eudaimon to 'the ladies, my mother and grandmothers and Kyra' (κυρία[ς] μου μητρὶ καὶ μάμαις (= μάμμαϊς) ὁμοῦ καὶ Κύρα), ll.1f.

Eudaimon prays for the women's health to divine providence (τῇ θεῇ προνοίᾳ), l.5, and, using the first person plural, thanks 'divine providence which helps us everywhere and in everything' (εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῇ θεῇ προνοίᾳ τῇ πανταχοῦ ἡμῖν καὶ εἰς πάντα βοηθοῦσῃ), ll.10-13, for the recovery of Kyra who has been ill. The classification of this text as Christian depends on ἡ θεῖα πρόνοια which is not a sufficient indicator of Christianity<sup>62</sup>. This text is therefore excluded from analysis.

Eudaimon refers to books and medical instruments which he hopes to receive from home.

<sup>58</sup> On letters of condolence, see Worp (1995); Chapa (1998).

<sup>59</sup> The editor suggests δυνατεῖ οὖν ὁ κύριος θεός be read. This is no doubt the meaning.

<sup>60</sup> Romans 14.4; 2 Corinthians 9.8; 13.3.

<sup>61</sup> Chapa (1998), 125-130.

<sup>62</sup> See P.Oxy.14.1682, above.





## CHAPTER 9

### ASCETIC CHRISTIAN WOMEN

#### INTRODUCTION

Asceticism, expressed institutionally in monasticism, is a major development for women in the life of the church in the fourth century<sup>1</sup>. The popularity of the movement, its place within the structure and identity of the institutional church, and its significance for women render it an important source of information on the religious lives of one group of women in early Christian Egypt. The essence of Christian asceticism lies in renunciation, particularly of sexual activity, and often also of property<sup>2</sup> and other aspects of physical life such as food and sleep<sup>3</sup>, for the pursuit of spiritual goals. Asceticism generates a complex of understandings in the early church. It is a way of participating, while on earth, in the perfection of heaven where there is no marriage<sup>4</sup>. As the perfect state, virginity functions as a symbol for Christianity itself, and virgins come to carry the burden of the church's purity<sup>5</sup>. Ascetic women embody values prized by masculine authority<sup>6</sup> and, in addition, serve

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<sup>1</sup> The subject has attracted recent scholarship eg Brown (1991) and Elm (1994, 2000) with bibliographies; also Barison (1938); Radford-Reuther (1974b); (1979); Judge (1977); (1981); Emmett (1982); (1984); Clark (1986); Veilleux (1986); Willem-Drijvers (1987); Kraemer (1988); (1992); Francis (1995); Wipszycka (1996a); (1996b); (2001b); Goehring (1997); (1999); Methuen (1997); Krawiec (1998); (2002); Shaw (1998); Stramara (1998); Bagnall (2001a); Davis (2001, 2003); (2002); Swan (2001); Choat (2002); Brakke (2003); Frankfurter (2003); Parker (2004); Vivian (2004). The skewed nature of the ancient sources is argued in Jacobs and Krawiec (2003), warning against interpreting social trends solely through the lens of ascetic rhetoric.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence for property ownership by ascetics is complex. The papyri attest ascetics, men and women, owning property; see below. *Canons of Athanasius* 102 allows virgins to receive inheritances. Pachomian monasteries allowed retention of property but Shenoute's communities did not, Wipszycka (1996b), 393, n.60. Literary sources suggest entry into monasteries generally involved, if not handing over of all property for sharing, at least devolution of its management and benefits. Basil's *Regulae Brevius Tractatae* 187 states that all personal property is to be disposed of, yet personal income should be held in trust by local clergy. *Rule of St Augustine* 3 allows no personal property; 4 states that possessions become the property of the community. Bagnall (2001a) notes tensions in the *AP* in attitudes to property, and relates them to the different circumstances of anchorite and coenobitic monks, abbots and ordinary brothers.

<sup>3</sup> Eg Athanasius writes of virginity involving a broader renunciation of the world so that virgins are to eat only to sustain life and bathe only to calm themselves not for enjoyment, *Second Letter to the Virgins* 4, 11-13, 15ff; *On virginity* 1, 3, 8f. The authorship of these texts is debated; see Brakke (1994).

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 22.30.

<sup>5</sup> For the church as a pure virgin, see The Shepherd 781f; 2 Corinthians 11.2; Cameron (1991), 175.

<sup>6</sup> '...we possess ... in the state of virginity, a picture of the holiness of the angels ... nowhere established but only among us Christians ... with us is to be found the genuine and true religion', Athanasius, *Apologia ad imperatorem Constantium* 33; also *First Letter to the Virgins* 4f.

to display the bishop's power<sup>7</sup>. Monasticism involves a moderated asceticism exercised within a community and emphasising order, work, prayer, obedience and stability.

Asceticism in Christianity probably has its origin in ascetic movements in Judaism<sup>8</sup> and in philosophic Greek and Roman society<sup>9</sup>. It can be discerned as early as the Pauline letters of the 'NT'. 1 Corinthians 7 contains a clear ascetic element in its advocacy of celibacy and its appraisal of marriage as a legitimate but lesser way of Christian life, a concession to human weakness<sup>10</sup>, because it distracts from single-minded devotion to Christ<sup>11</sup>. Later advocates of ascetic Christianity add a misreading of Paul's spirit:flesh dichotomy, interpreting 'flesh' as 'body' and 'sexuality'. Significant for women is the interconnectedness of the polarities current in late antique philosophic and religious discourse constructed by men to define reality: spirit:flesh, male:female, culture:nature, public:private. Women in all cases are associated with the less desired element.

Asceticism is not the whole of Paul's thought in 1 Corinthians 7. Paul also commends marriage with sexuality as an essential element<sup>12</sup>. This pro-marriage position is taken up in the later 'NT' writings<sup>13</sup> and given theological interpretation in the husband:wife, Christ:church metaphor. The ascetic aspect of Paul's thought is rejected in these later texts and, instead, finds expression in the apocryphal *Acts*<sup>14</sup> where celibacy

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<sup>7</sup> Brown (1991), 260.

<sup>8</sup> Eg the Therapeutai and Therapeutrides, Philo, *On the contemplative life*. On the community, see Kraemer (1989). The Essenes and Qumran communities practised asceticism but the role of women is uncertain. Philo, *Hypothetica* 11.14-17 states Essenes abstain from marriage due to women's low moral capacity and Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 5.15.73 says Essenes include no women. Josephus, *The Jewish War* 2.160-1 notes some Essenes marry for procreation, implying women are wives not participants. See Kraemer (1989), 365, n.81; Brown (1991), 34-41; Elder (1994); Kraemer (1999). Asceticism at Qumran is associated with a communal priestly role rather than bodily discipline.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 2.17.19. An ascetic lifestyle in pagan society is designated as 'philosophy', Jensen (1996), 19f, but whether it involved sexual renunciation is uncertain. Hypatia in C5 was probably celibate but only Vestal Virgins and infrequent priestesses, αἱ ἱεραὶ παρθένοι, are otherwise attested. See Clark (1993), 130. Brown (1991), 8, argues that virginity was anomalous in pagan society and not portrayed as ideal. Augustinian legislation penalised the unmarried and childless but the laws were overturned in 320, *CT* 8.16.1. See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.77-79.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.9.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.33f.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.4-11.

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 5.21-33; 1 Timothy 5.1-16; 1 Peter 3.1-7.

<sup>14</sup> The Pastoral Epistles and apocryphal *Acts* are probably contemporaneous in late C1/early C2. They represent different developments of the Pauline tradition, MacDonald (1983). See also Davies (1991); Dunn (1993); MacDonald (1979).

becomes the ideal, and much of the drama centres on the defence of women's, and significantly not men's, virginity<sup>15</sup>. The style of ascetic women's leadership evident in the apocryphal *Acts*, essentially independent of male ecclesial authority, signals they belong to a time of transition<sup>16</sup>. Ultimately the ascetic movement of the third century comes firmly within church control, and with it, ascetic women's independence. The active, independent, ascetic woman, personified by Thekla<sup>17</sup>, becomes the withdrawn virgin whose sole task is to pray.

The actual experience of women ascetics, both within and outside Egypt, is difficult to determine. Information comes mainly from literary sources written by men<sup>18</sup> in writings that are highly rhetorical and polemical. The writers describe and instruct female monastic communities, but mostly those of their elite, educated women friends who found and lead important monastic institutions. The descriptions cannot be taken as necessarily typical of Egyptian monasticism, nor the life of the women founders as typical of the life of the nuns they lead<sup>19</sup>. The voices of women are heard in these texts with difficulty. Asceticism is understood to offer women an alternative to the traditional roles of wife and mother, allowing a degree of freedom and lack of spiritual distraction unavailable to the married<sup>20</sup>. Evidence confirms that some women gain new independence, freedom to travel<sup>21</sup> and opportunities for education<sup>22</sup>. Women so often opt for this life that the Council of Gangra (c.340) ruled that women

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<sup>15</sup> Eg *Acts of Paul* 3. On possible female authorship and likely female readership of the apocryphal *Acts*, see Davies (1980).

<sup>16</sup> Davies (1980), 100.

<sup>17</sup> *Acts of Paul* 3.

<sup>18</sup> All major Christian writers in C4 and C5, eg Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus, write on asceticism. See Clark (1979); Brown (1991), 449-464; Elm (1994, 2000), 387-395; Jensen (1996), 312-323.

<sup>19</sup> There is little evidence that the ascetics of Egypt were the wealthy elite. Exceptions occur, eg Antony in Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii* 1 and Isidore in *HL* 1.4. Most ascetics have poor or middle-class backgrounds, eg herdsmen, builders, slaves, balsam growers, robbers, *HL* 8.3; 19.1; 22.1; 35.1; 49.1. *Rule of St Augustine* 1.5 (c.397) presumes the poverty of some community members, indicating poor women should not seek material benefit from entering the convent, eg food, clothing, medicine, unavailable to them outside. But Augustine, *Letter* 211.6 acknowledges wealthy women ascetics who are not to despise poor members of the community. Augustine does not address Egyptian ascetics, but it is likely that the composition of their communities is similar.

<sup>20</sup> Chrysostom, *La virginité* 40 explains that ascetic women enjoy freedom from domestic hardships: problems caused by slaves and money, marital suspicion, jealousy, violence, childbirth and anxiety caused by children.

<sup>21</sup> Pilgrimage offered women new opportunities for travel eg Jerome, *Epistula* 108; *HL* 35; Athanasius, *Second Letter to Virgins* (c.350-370). The diary of Egeria records her travels to holy sites and is one of the earliest writings by a Christian woman, Egeria, *Travels*, late C4/early C5. See Clark (1981), 251f; (1986), 186; Elm (1994, 2000), 331-336.

<sup>22</sup> See 16, n.111 above and n.112 below.

who leave their husbands (Canon 14) and/or their children (Canon 15) for the ascetic life are *anathema*. Similarly children must not abandon their parents (Canon 16). Asceticism becomes a tacit requirement for ministry as ecclesiastical widow, virgin and deaconess<sup>23</sup>. Monasticism emerges as an alternative vocational path to the ministerial roles of bishop, priest and deacon closed to women, and an alternative to the roles of ecclesiastical widow and deaconess which disappear through constraint<sup>24</sup>.

Asceticism, as constructed in the fourth century, is ambivalent in its outcomes for women, bringing benefits largely at the expense of female identity. Transcending sexuality is a goal for both male and female ascetics, but desexualisation almost always means masculinisation for women<sup>25</sup>. Thus, women ascetics are said to exercise 'manly' virtue (ἀρετή) with '(masculine) courage' (ἀνδρεία)<sup>26</sup>. They 'cease to be a woman and will be called a man'<sup>27</sup>. The increasing emphasis in the third century on discipline in food and sleep<sup>28</sup>, and neglect of personal appearance<sup>29</sup> become particularly associated with female asceticism. Strict discipline in relation to food and dress allows women to achieve undifferentiated, no longer overtly female bodies. Desexualisation, however, does not mean feminisation for men<sup>30</sup>, which rather is feared and becomes part of the polemic against spiritual marriages. Men's virtues

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<sup>23</sup> Widows and virgins are unmarried by definition. Deaconesses replace widows in church structures and are most probably unmarried, but no requirement is made explicit in *Didascalia Apostolorum* (C3) or Canon 19, Council of Nicaea (325). Canon 15, Council of Chalcedon (451) presumes it. Some women's orders were supported by the church, Jensen (1996), 23.

<sup>24</sup> The increasing restriction is evident in descriptions of their roles: Eusebius, *HE* 2.16f; 2.18.9; 3.37.1; 4.27.1; 6.43.11; 8.8.1 etc (c.300); *Didascalia Apostolorum* 3.1-12 (XIV-XVI) (Syriac, C3); Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 11, 13, 18.5 (Rome, d.235); *Apostolic Constitutions* 3.9 (Antioch, C4).

<sup>25</sup> It is noteworthy that only certain desexualisation is approved; eg cropped hair for women is condemned as claiming equality with men, Canon 17, Council of Gangra (c.340 CE); Canon 13 condemns women dressing as men. The Canons concede that the women's motivation is greater holiness. See also Jensen (1996), 43.

<sup>26</sup> *HL* 41.

<sup>27</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* 658, comment on 5.28a. Also Clark (1986), 43. Within gender theory of performance, given the feminine as body, nature, worldly, the women ascetics do become men, Brakke (2003), 390.

<sup>28</sup> This is evident in Origen's life, Eusebius, *HE* 6.3.9; and is a focus of Pachomian monasticism, Brown (1991), 217f.

<sup>29</sup> The link between holiness and dirt is evident from the time of Antony, Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii* 47. *Rule of St Augustine* 9 requires women to bathe once a month, and wear simple, sombre clothing. Augustine, *Letters* 211.13 says that an excessive desire for clean clothes soils the soul. See also Clark (1986), 66.

<sup>30</sup> Chrysostom, *Instruction and Refutation*. But it is interesting to note the idealisation of female virgins and the subsequent self-identification of men with them. Boyarin (1999), 87, notes the tendency among certain rabbis in the same period to see themselves as feminised in order to overcome their male lust.

continue unaltered<sup>31</sup>. Women's desexualisation works to eliminate them as a source of temptation to men by eliminating them as women, rendering them sexless through fasting and neglect, and thus appears constructed for men's benefit<sup>32</sup>. Palladius is noteworthy among early writers on asceticism in explicitly making women subjects of the *Lausiac History* along with men, although they are πατέρες θήλειαι<sup>33</sup>. Both equally practise ascetic discipline to transcend sexuality<sup>34</sup>. The language of sexual asceticism is highly paradoxical and particularly powerful for women who come to be the sole bearers of the title παρθένος<sup>35</sup>. The virgin is the 'bride of Christ' and virginity itself is 'true marriage' to Christ. The language of ascetic devotion is often highly erotic, deriving its legitimacy from the Song of Songs<sup>36</sup>.

### **ASCETIC WOMEN IN THE PAPYRI**

References to ascetic women are argued to occur in a number of fourth-century papyri. However, many are not sufficiently clear to be accepted<sup>37</sup>. Those that are accepted I now present in outline; analysis follows.

#### **P.land.6.100, Second half C4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 3.87; 6.57**

This text is a letter from Bessemios<sup>38</sup> to 'the beloved fathers Zoilos<sup>39</sup> and Valerios and brothers Herakleides and Paesios and Atres', ll.1-3. After an opening prayer, Bessemios greets 'Aron and Mariam and Tamounis and all the brothers in the monastery' (ἀσπάζομαι Ἀ[ρων] καὶ Μαριὰμ καὶ Ταμοῦνι καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς π[άν]τας τοὺς ἐν τῷ μοναστηρίῳ)<sup>40</sup>, ll.5-7. Bessemios' greeting to the women singles them out, with Aron, for particular mention. The three may be in a different category from καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς π[άν]τας τοὺς ἐν τῷ μοναστηρίῳ but live sufficiently closely to be included

<sup>31</sup> Vidén (1990), 148ff.

<sup>32</sup> Willem-Drijvers (1987), 261, 264f.

<sup>33</sup> *HL* pr. 2. Palladius devotes a chapter to γυναῖκαὶ ἀνδρεῖαι, *HL* 41. The same perspective is missing from the almost contemporary *HM*.

<sup>34</sup> *HL* pr.; 34; 41.

<sup>35</sup> Cameron (1991), 175.

<sup>36</sup> Eg Origen, *Song of Songs* (C3).

<sup>37</sup> SB 8.9746; P.Oxy.14.1774; SB 14.11532=P.Strasb.1900; SB14.12173=P.Mich.inv.346; P.Laur.2.42 recto; P.Neph.36. See the appendix to this chapter.

<sup>38</sup> Βησσημ[ί]ος BL 6.57. Ed.pr. proposed Βησ[όδ]ω[ρο]ς.

<sup>39</sup> In the papyrus, Δοῖλος.

<sup>40</sup> This is an early example of μοναστήριον in the papyri. The word occurs in 4 other texts dated C4: P.Kell.12.Fr2; P.Neph.12; SB 10.10522; 14.11972FrA.

in the one greeting, or καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς π[ά]ντας] may function with ἄλλους understood; that is, Mariam and Tamounis may be members of the monastery<sup>41</sup>. The greeting reads as a continuation of the opening address, picking up the naming of community members after the prayer. The structure, therefore, favours the women's membership of the monastery but it remains uncertain. It is possible that the women and Aron are associated with the monastery in another capacity, perhaps as textile workers, but, in this case, naming them before 'all the brothers in the monastery' in a letter addressed to the 'fathers' and some 'brothers' seems unlikely. It may be that Aron, Mariam and Tamounis are Bessemios' natural family, named first, but this does not clarify their relationship with the monastery. It seems more likely that Mariam and Tamounis are community members and this raises the possibility that this is a mixed-sex monastery.

The letter has a standard opening prayer for health, (εὐχομαι τῷ θε[ῷ] περὶ τῆς ὁλοκληρίας ὑμῶν), ll.4f, without *nomen sacrum* and concerns commercial matters, partly at least related to textile manufacture<sup>42</sup>.

**P.Lips.1.43=Chr.Mitt.98, C4, Provenance: Lycopolis<sup>43</sup>; BL 10.95**

Thaesis, the ever-virgin of P.Lips.1.43, appears in a formal court report of proceedings held 'in the forecourt of the catholic church under Plousianos the most honoured bishop' (ἐν τῷ πυλῶνι τῆς κ[αθ]ολικῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ὑπὸ Πλουσιανὸν ἐπιδιώτατον (= ἐπιτιμώτατον) ἐπίσκοπον), ll.1f. Thaesis' name occurs without patronymic but with the epithet 'ever-virgin' (Θαήσιος ἀειπαρθ[ένο]υ) which functions as an identifier and is legally sufficient and recognised. The description indicates that Thaesis is a Christian ascetic<sup>44</sup>. Her Christian status is supported by the fact that she is accused of taking Christian books, and by her appearance before the bishop's court. Thaesis appears without a guardian.

<sup>41</sup> Elm (1994, 2000), 245, notes the two possibilities of the women's membership or not, but draws no conclusion. Her earlier reference, 237, suggests she regards the women as ascetics.

<sup>42</sup> The text discusses the sale of a tunic (κολόβιον), cheeses and other goods. Textile manufacture is frequently recorded as monastic work and suggests such communities are self-supporting but the quantities here are very small. In this community, wool-working may be the task of the women, as in Pachomian monasteries, Clark (1993), 104; Elm (1994, 2000), 296.

<sup>43</sup> Ed.pr. proposed the provenance as Hermopolis Magna. Worp (1994), 286, n.10, argues Lycopolis as the place of origin, with subsequent transfer of the text to Hermopolis; BL 10.95.

<sup>44</sup> The word ἀειπαρθενος is discussed below.

Plousianos has arbitrated the case between her and the (other) heirs<sup>45</sup> of Besarion (μεταξὺ Θαήσιος ἀειπαρθ[ένο]υ καὶ τῶν κληρο[ν]όμων Βησαρίωνος), ll.3-5. His court has met in the presence of a number of officials, including a βουλευτής and a διάκονος, ll.7-10<sup>46</sup>. The charge against Thaesis is of removing Christian books, περὶ ἀφαιρέσε[ω]ς βιβλίων χρε[ιστ]ιανικῶν (= χριστιανικῶν), ll.12f; that is, Thaesis removed the books before the distribution of the inheritance. These books are no doubt codices<sup>47</sup> and, although cheaper than papyrus rolls, are plainly valuable materially and possibly spiritually<sup>48</sup>. The bishop's judgement is that either the heirs provide witnesses who can testify that Thaesis took the books whereupon she is to restore them, or Thaesis must swear an oath not to have taken the books. The bishop specifies that Thaesis is to receive the largest portion of the inheritance, at least double that of any other heir<sup>49</sup>.

An implication of the removal of the books is that Thaesis is educated. It is possible that she takes the books solely for their monetary value but the fact of suspicion falling on her suggests that she is known to have an interest in books.

Plousianos is probably to be identified as the bishop of Lycopolis who died c.350 CE<sup>50</sup>. The early date for this hearing of the *episcopalis audientia*<sup>51</sup> does not necessitate that both Thaesis and the heirs agree to its function<sup>52</sup> and it gives no information on the heirs' beliefs.

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<sup>45</sup> Ed.pr. understands Thaesis as an heir in Besarion's will, but with κληρονόμοι, ll.4f, 10, 19 denoting the 'other heirs' although ἄλλοι is not used. It is possible that Thaesis is not an heir and that the dispute is not about the settlement of Besarion's estate, although the bishop's determination favours this sense.

<sup>46</sup> The number, names and titles of the others are lost.

<sup>47</sup> See Roberts and Skeat (1982), 53; Llewelyn, 'The Development of the Codex' in *ND* 7.249-262. The books are 'Christian' but otherwise unspecified. They may be 'Scripture', theological writings, other Christian literature eg apocryphal Acts. The word βιβλίον designates Scripture from the time of Chrysostom; see Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. The books also may be non-literary texts, perhaps documents associated with a church or monastery.

<sup>48</sup> SB 14.11858 is the receipt for a book for adornment. It is sufficiently valuable to warrant a receipt. See also Lane-Fox (1986), 304f. On the cost of books, see 17, n.119 above.

<sup>49</sup> The inheritance is divided into 2 parts, one going to Thaesis, the other to all the other heirs of unknown number, ll.17-19. I understand 'all the things left in the house' (πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκείας καταλειφθέντα), l.17, to refer to more than the books. The referent for πάντα τὰ is unclear.

<sup>50</sup> Martin (1996), 708. Elm (1994, 2000), 235, n.24, considers this 'unlikely', but gives no reason. The proposal in Worp (1994), 286, n.10, that the letter originates from Lycopolis strengthens the likelihood. Plousianos is not listed in Morris (1994).

<sup>51</sup> This appears the earliest reference to, and actual record of, the *episcopalis audientia*. With only the judgement recorded, the text gives little information on procedure, but indicates setting, form of judgement and the fact that witnesses are present and that oaths can be used. Bagnall (1993a), 224, rejects the concept of bishops' powers of formal civil adjudication and identifies this as a private dispute. On the *episcopalis audientia*, see also P.Oxy.6.903 at 178f above; Horsley, 'A family feud' in *ND* 3.149-155, here 152.

<sup>52</sup> The consent of both parties was at first not necessary but came to be required in *CJ* 1.4.8 (398). See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 2.475f; Jones (1970), 343f; Horsley, 'A family feud' in *ND* 3.149-155, here 152. The authorisation of bishops to hear legal cases in church matters was established in 313 according to Eusebius, *HE* 10.5.18-50. This judicial capacity was expanded to cover private law in *CT* 1.27.1 (318) although its authenticity is debated. The power was confirmed in *CS* 1 (333). *CT*

Their concern about the Christian books does not necessarily imply Christian faith, only recognition of the books' value. The fact that they bring a charge against Thaesis need not argue against a Christian affiliation according to which they should rather suffer wrong than take a fellow-Christian to court<sup>53</sup>. The charge may reflect the realities of Christian community life.

### **P.Lips.1.60, C4 before 371, Provenance: Panopolis; BL 1.209**

This text is a receipt from Aurelius Mikalos<sup>54</sup> and 'his sister Didyme, ever-virgin' (ἡ [τούτου] ἀδελφή Διδύμη ἀειπάρθενος), ll.1f, to Flavius Isidoros. Mikalos and Didyme are both children of Aphthonios and Tnouthis. 'Αειπάρθενος signals that Didyme is an ascetic Christian woman<sup>55</sup> and that her status is socially and administratively recognised. The omission of 'Aurelia' from her name may be part of the tendency identified among clergy and ascetics to omit the civil status marker, the omission operating as a religious status marker<sup>56</sup>, and so confirming her religious standing<sup>57</sup>. There are no other references to religion in the text. Didyme appears without a guardian.

The receipt is torn after the opening statements and concerns the supply of a quantity of military cloaks that are part of Mikalos and Didyme's father's tax obligation<sup>58</sup>. The receipt in joint names indicates that Mikalos and Didyme are both active in the business of their father who is perhaps dead<sup>59</sup>. Mikalos' name has no descriptor, such as an occupation, equivalent to Didyme's 'ever-virgin'.

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16.2.23 (376) reserves criminal matters for secular courts. CS 3 (384) requires clergy to be tried in episcopal courts. See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 48f, n.3 for the history; also 1.74f; 177f; 324f; 393f.

<sup>53</sup> 1 Corinthians 6.7, referring particularly to pagan courts but including hearings before Christians.

<sup>54</sup> Ed.pr., 'Αυρήλιος Μίκαλος, l.1 and, in a second hand, [ Μικκάλου εἰς , verso, BL 1.209.

<sup>55</sup> For the meaning of ἀειπάρθενος, see below.

<sup>56</sup> Worp (2005), from occurrences of ἀναγνώστης, διάκων, (ὑπο)διάκονος, πρεσβύτερος, μοναχός, μοναχή, μονάζων, μονάζουσα dated to C7.

<sup>57</sup> This finding suggests that ascetic women and men shared the same status as clergy in the secular realm.

<sup>58</sup> Throughout C4 there were levies in kind of garments to meet shortfalls in state-run factories, Jones (1964), 837. For a receipt for military clothing dated 326/27, see Youtie (1980b).

<sup>59</sup> An Aurelia Didyme, daughter of Aphthonios, from Panopolis appears in P.Lips.1.45 (371), also addressed to Flavius Isidoros, now called *officialis*. Aphthonios is in charge of clothing for the thirteenth indiction. Aurelius Sempronius agrees to be surety for Didyme for taxes levied on her father. It is likely that 'Didyme' refers to the same woman. P.Lips.1.45 does not identify Didyme as ἀειπάρθενος, it does not refer to her belief and it gives her the title 'Aurelia'. Didyme's virgin-status is apparently irrelevant to Sempronius in P.Lips.1.45 but focal to Didyme's self-description, or Mikalos' description of her, in P.Lips.1.60.



Didyme's name occurs in the nominative as a co-writer of the document but if [τούτου], l.1<sup>60</sup>, is correct, Mikalos is as the actual writer. The end of the papyrus that might have indicated Didyme's literacy status is lost.

### **P.Neph.1, C4, Provenance: Alexandria, BL 9.173; 11.139**

Tapiam and Paul in their letter to Ophellios and the brothers<sup>61</sup> write, 'we greet all the beloved brothers by name and the virgins of God' (ἀσπαζόμεθα τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας κατ' ὄνομα καὶ τὰς παρθένους τοῦ θεοῦ), ll.27f. This is the only reference to consecrated women in the Nephros archive. The relationship between the virgins and the monastery is unknown, but is such that they are greeted in the same letter. The virgins form a distinct group, with the greeting to them following the greeting to the brothers and being followed by greetings to καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἡμῶν Ὡρίωνα καὶ τὴν μητέρα Τιενὸρ καὶ Πῖναν καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν πάντας, ll.27-29, who appear not to be monastics.

### **P.Oxy.44.3203, 25 June- 24 July 400, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 8.267**

This lease is agreed between Aurelia Theodora and Aurelia Tauris, 'apotactic nuns' (μοναχαῖς ἀποτακτικαῖς), l.6, and 'Aurelius Jose, son of Judas, Jew' (παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Ἰωσὴ Ἰούδα Ἰουδαῖος)<sup>62</sup>. The women are Christian ascetics<sup>63</sup>. There is no other reference to their religious life in the text.

According to the lease, Jose will rent from the nuns 'one ground-floor room, a hall, and one cellar in the basement, with all their fittings' (ἐπίπεδον τόπον ἓνα ἐξέτραν (= ἐξέδραν) κα[ὶ] [τ]ῆ[ν] ἐν τῷ καταγείῳ καμάραν μία[ν] σὺν] χρηστηρίοις πᾶσιν), ll.15-17. The women are sisters, having the same father, Silvanus. They are described as [ἀ]πὸ τῆς λαμπρᾶς καὶ λαμπροτάτης [Ὀ]ξυρυγχιτῶν πόλεως, l.6, without any further statement about residency suggesting they live in the city. The women act without guardians or male assistants.

### **PSI 6.698, 25 January 392, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 8.400; 10.243**

This text concerns the division of inherited property among two men and two women<sup>64</sup>. The description of the property includes the statement that on the south

<sup>60</sup> BL 1.209. In the papyrus: ...]λος ἐ [about 8 letters] [2 letters] ἀδελφή ...

<sup>61</sup> The text is discussed in detail in the chapters on papyri written by Christian women above.

<sup>62</sup> See Horsley, 'Nuns as lessors of property' in *ND* 1.126-130; *BL* 8.267. For evidence of the Jewish community in Oxyrhynchus in this period, see 346f, 354-359 below.

<sup>63</sup> The term μοναχαῖ ἀποτακτικαῖ is discussed below.

<sup>64</sup> On women and land ownership in the Roman period, see Pomeroy (1983, 1985).

side there is public land, on the east side it borders the property of Annis<sup>65</sup>, nun, and on the west, there is the inheritance of Apion (νότο]ν δημοσία ρύμη, ἀπηλιώτου Ἄννιτος μοναχῆς, λιβὸς κληρονόμων Ἀπίωνος), l.7. Μοναχή indicates that Annis is a Christian ascetic<sup>66</sup> and that this epithet identifies her. She appears without a patronymic.

The description implies that the land is agricultural. It is most likely that Annis' property, bordering it, is similarly agricultural. The other landowner, Apion, is also named without patronymic and without any other identifier.

### **SB 16.12620 = P.Mich.inv.431, C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This letter is written to Agathinos, the lord brother, by an unknown person.

The surviving fragment includes reference to an iron implement which is 'necessary for the fields', the need for courage (θάρσι (= θάρσει)), l.2 and two greetings, the first of which is to the mother of Komon who is unnamed.

The second greets 'Nonna and her ever-virgin daughter' (Νόναν μετὰ τῆς ἀειπαρθένου θυγατρὸς), ll.7f. Ἀειπάρθενος indicates that Nonna's daughter is a Christian ascetic<sup>67</sup>. The name 'Nonna' is used by Christians but is not itself sufficient in the fourth century to classify someone as Christian<sup>68</sup>. Nevertheless, in combination with an ἀειπάρθενος θυγάτηρ, it is likely that Nonna is Christian.

### **O. Douch 3.190, C4-early C5, Provenance: Kysis; BL 10.290**

This text is a four-line fragment of a list of people receiving grain. An unknown quantity of wheat, lost because of damage to the right-hand side of the ostrakon, is given to Anonyme, τῇ μοναχῇ, l.3.

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<sup>65</sup> The editors understand Ἄννιτος as a feminine genitive. The name seems not to be attested elsewhere from a search of the *DDBDP*, Foraboschi (1967-1971) and Preisigke (1967).

<sup>66</sup> The term μοναχή is discussed below.

<sup>67</sup> The term ἀειπάρθενος is discussed below.

<sup>68</sup> The name is first attested in SB 14.11575 (C3), the dowry arrangements for Nonna, daughter of Aurelia Apia. The text gives no indication of religious affiliation. It has been published since Youtie (1977), 138, stated that 'Nonna' does not appear before C4. Of 16 occurrences dated C4, 2 suggest a Christian milieu, P.Ant.2.93; P.Sakaon 48; most give no information about religious affiliation: SB 4.7445; 8.9931; 14.11575; 14.12140 (C4/5); Stud.Pal.20.109; P.Oxy.10.1288; 60.4084; P.Genova.1.22; P.Herm.Landl.1.31; 2.33; P.Abinn.25; 62; 63; 64; the latter 4 most probably refer to Abinnaeus' wife Nonna also called Polyetion. Abinnaeus' belief is debated. I consider him Christian, suggesting his wife is also Christian.

The other person named in the extant fragment is a male, τῷ Βικτωρ(ίνῳ)<sup>69</sup>, l.2, who receives grain through an intermediary Petechon. The circumstances of this distribution are not known. It may be charitable, for Anonyme's personal use or on behalf of a community. It may be for agricultural cultivation. The source of the grain is also not known.

## ANALYSIS

### Nomenclature

The papyri attest a range of terms for ascetic women in the fourth century.

#### ἀειπάρθενος

Ἀειπάρθενος is doubtfully cited once in Greek literature in the seventh century BCE<sup>70</sup> but is otherwise not attested among Greek writers before the second century CE<sup>71</sup>. It is used of the Vestal Virgins in Rome<sup>72</sup>. The word occurs in Philo but not in other Jewish literature<sup>73</sup> and is found in Christian writing possibly from the second century<sup>74</sup>. In the early fourth century, Eusebius uses ἀειπάρθενος of a choir of holy virgins<sup>75</sup> and in Pachomius' *Rule*, the word designates the women in his community<sup>76</sup>.

Ἀειπάρθενος commonly describes the Virgin Mary in Christian literature of the period and becomes almost exclusively used of her by the fifth century<sup>77</sup>. This is most probably a development of its use for consecrated virgins<sup>78</sup>. The pattern of exclusive

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<sup>69</sup> BL 10.290.

<sup>70</sup> LSJ, s.v.; Supplement, s.v., citing with a query Alcaeus, 304.5 L.-P.

<sup>71</sup> From a search of the TLG. The word is most frequent in Cassius Dio (C2/3), *Roman History*, 26x.

<sup>72</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 56.5, 59.3.

<sup>73</sup> Philo uses ἀειπάρθενος 12x, the only writer using it in C1 BCE, from a search of the TLG.

<sup>74</sup> Ignatius of Antioch refers to τὰς ἀειπαρθένους καὶ τὰς χήρας of the church, *To Smyrna* 13.1, according to the TLG text. The same verse occurs as τὰς παρθένους τὰς λεγομένας χήρας in the Schoedel, Loeb and Lightfoot editions of his Epistles. For the reading, see these editions, *ad loc.*

<sup>75</sup> Eusebius, *De vita Constantini* 4.28.3, τὸν γοῦν τῶν παναγίων ἀειπαρθένων χορὸν τοῦ θεοῦ; also *De laudibus Constantini* 17.6.

<sup>76</sup> Pachomius, *Rule* 143 = *Rule B* CXLIII. See also Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>77</sup> The only use of ἀειπάρθενος dated C3 occurs in Hippolytus, *Contra Beronem et Heliconem* 325.33, referring to Mary, from a search of the TLG. In C4, of 55 occurrences, 51 refer to Mary, eg Athanasius *Oratio II Contra Arianos* 296; Athanasius *Expositio in Psalmum LXXXIV* 373; Athanasius *De Communi Essentia Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti* 77. The word applies to ascetics in Epiphanius once out of 20x; in Chrysostom once out of 4x; in Theodoret once out of 2x; in Ephraim once out of 4x, from a search of the TLG.

<sup>78</sup> Debate about Mary's perpetual virginity begins in C2. *Protoevangelium of James* and Clement of Alexandria argue for her virginity *in partu* and *post partum*. Origen does not, but he refers to her virginity in his commentaries on John 1.34, 37 and Matthew 10.17 where he asserts that she remains a virgin. He does not use ἀειπάρθενος. Mary as ever-virgin becomes official doctrine at the Lateran

use for Mary is later repeated in the papyri<sup>79</sup>. The attribution of perpetual virginity to Mary and the tradition of Isis' motherhood and virginity<sup>80</sup> are noteworthy parallels.

Ἀειπάρθενος occurs in three papyri from the fourth century: P.Lips.1.43, P.Lips.1.60 and SB 16.12620. In none does it designate the Virgin Mary. In P.Lips.1.43 and 1.60, it occurs with a proper name, unlike its earlier uses in literary sources. Both are public texts in which the term appears where a patronymic or occupation might be expected. Ἀειπάρθενος is a recognised and accepted identifier. In SB 16.12620, a private letter, the term occurs without the woman's name.

In the papyri, ἀειπάρθενος is generally understood to refer to 'a Christian woman who, in imitation of the Holy Virgin Mary, took a vow of perpetual virginity, hence a nun'<sup>81</sup>. Given the non-ecclesial, non-monastic contexts for the ἀειπάρθενοι, Emmett suggests that the word may mean 'still virgin/unmarried'<sup>82</sup>, with παρθένος θεοῦ designating a consecrated virgin<sup>83</sup>. Elm argues for the meaning 'nun', maintaining that παρθένος is sufficient of itself to signify 'still virgin'<sup>84</sup>. In contemporary Christian literature, ἀειπάρθενος always appears to have an ecclesial connotation<sup>85</sup>, and in pagan and Jewish sources, a religious reference<sup>86</sup>. These considerations suggest that a religious sense applies also in P.Lips.1.43, 1.60 and SB 16.12620, and, given the fourth-century date, that the ever-virgins are Christian ascetics. The lack of

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Council, 469, Benko (1993), 203. On the development of Marian theology, see Limberis (1994); also Giamberardini (1975) who relies on later devotional material. See also 237, n.218 above.

<sup>79</sup> SB 1.4762, 4763, 4767, 4862, 4870, 5254, 5319 (C4-C7, eds, but certainly after C4). The word ἀειπάρθενος is attested of unmarried women in an inscription in Edessa, C5/6, BCH supplement 8, no.23, cited in *LSJ* Supplement, s.v.

<sup>80</sup> Isis is named 'the Great Virgin' in the *Hymn to Osiris*, and has the title 'Mother of the God', Witt (1971), 272. Limberis (1994), 136f, agrees Isis is 'Mother of God' but states she was not known as a virgin. On the continuities between Isis and the Virgin Mary, see Limberis (1994), 130-132; 136-141; Benko (1993), 43-53, 85; Witt (1971), 267-281. Witt notes that veneration of Mary coincides with Theodosius' destruction of pagan temples, but cautions against confusing chronology with cause and effect. Benko warns that the development of Marian veneration is too complex to be derived from a single source and argues for its origins in Asia Minor in worship of Cybele, rather than in Egypt and worship of Isis. On the continuation of Isis worship in Egypt into C6, see Frankfurter (1998), 98-106.

<sup>81</sup> Youtie (1980a), 580. Imitation of Mary by virgins is a theme of Athanasius' *First Letter to Virgins* 12 (c.350-370).

<sup>82</sup> Emmett (1982), 508.

<sup>83</sup> A search of the *TLG* indicates παρθένος unqualified is the more usual designation. Emmett (1982), 508, notes that ἀεί with the sense 'hitherto' rather than with a future/perpetual nuance is well attested, although not in adjectives beginning ἀει- as in this case.

<sup>84</sup> Elm (1994, 2000), 239.

<sup>85</sup> From examining examples in the *TLG*.

<sup>86</sup> Eg of the Vestal virgins, see 303 especially n.72 above. Similarly Philo's uses have a religious context.

immediate ecclesial or monastic reference suggests the texts reflect an early form of asceticism that is located in ordinary village and family life, or possibly that the term refers specifically to such women<sup>87</sup>.

### παρθένος τοῦ θεοῦ

Παρθένος<sup>88</sup> without qualification is the most frequent designation of ascetic women in Christian literary sources<sup>89</sup>. Παρθένοι are not ordained<sup>90</sup> but dedicate themselves by a vow<sup>91</sup>. Wool work, clothing manufacture and other tasks traditionally allocated to women appear frequently as the occupations of παρθένοι<sup>92</sup> indicating that strict hierarchies remain for ascetic women. Virgins' roles focus on prayer and charitable works<sup>93</sup>. In the earliest writings, παρθένος is used for men and women<sup>94</sup> but comes to designate women almost exclusively. Παρθένος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs rarely in Christian literature to the end of the fifth century<sup>95</sup>, with no discernible difference in meaning. Among the papyri, παρθένος τοῦ θεοῦ is attested only in P.Neph.1. The simple παρθένος occurs in the papyri of unmarried girls with decreasing frequency<sup>96</sup> but

<sup>87</sup> Balconi (2001), 251. Pachomius' reference to ἀειπάρθενοι argues against the term's specific designation of such women, *Rule* 143 = *Rule* B CXLIII.

<sup>88</sup> On παρθένος, see Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.; Leclercq, H. 'Vierge, Virginité' in Cabrol and Leclercq (1924), 15.3094-3108.

<sup>89</sup> Eg Pachomius *Vita Prima Graeca* 32; παρθένος is the most frequent term for ascetic women in *HL*, eg 6.1; 18.11; 20.2; 31.1; 33.1, 3; 67.1. More than 3000 occurrences of παρθένος are attested in Christian literary texts dated C3-C5, from a search of the *TLG*, the majority of which are to ascetic women.

<sup>90</sup> Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 11, 13 and the later *Canons of Hippolytus* 7 (C4) stipulate that virgins and widows are not ordained because ordination is for clergy on account of their liturgical ministry which women do not undertake.

<sup>91</sup> *Canons of Basil* 5, 36; *Canons of Athanasius* 97, 98. 97 refer to women who vow their daughters to virginity, 98 to a virgin's own vow.

<sup>92</sup> *HL* 33; Clark (1993), 103f; Elm (1994, 2000), 289-296, particularly 294; Krawiec (2002), 92-118. See also n.146 below.

<sup>93</sup> 1 Timothy 5.5; *Canons of Hippolytus* 32, 'The virgins and widows fast frequently and pray for the church'; similarly *Canons of Basil* 36. See also Athanasius, *On virginity*.

<sup>94</sup> *Canons of Athanasius* 102 refers to male virgins; 94 to men in virginity; *Canons of Hippolytus* 7 to readers as virgins but neither of these latter 2 texts uses παρθένος. Canon 19, Council of Ancyra, refers to male and female virgins.

<sup>95</sup> No occurrences are dated C1-C4; 2 occur in C5 in Epiphanius and Chrysostom, from a search of the *TLG*.

<sup>96</sup> In C2, παρθένος occurs in 10 texts including an ἱερὰ παρθένος, P.Mert.2.73 (163/64); on the title ἱερὰ παρθένος, and the role as a female attendant to the deity, see Horsley, 'A Pure Bride' (2 Cor 11.2) in *ND* 1.71f. In C3, παρθένος occurs once of an ἱερὰ παρθένος, P.Oxy.44.3177 (247). In C4, it occurs 3x of unmarried girls, P.Flor.3.309; P.Lond.3.983; P.Rainer Cent.85. From a search of the *DDBDP*. The word does not necessarily connote literal virginity but may refer to unmarried women who are not virgins, *LSJ*, s.v.; Horsley, 'A Jewish family from Egypt in Rome' in *ND* 4.221-229, here 222.

never of an ascetic woman. There is a gap in the papyrological evidence during the fifth century until παρθένος emerges as a term for ascetic women in the late fifth/early sixth century<sup>97</sup>. Παρθένος possibly occurs of the Virgin Mary in a prayer in the fourth century, but the date is uncertain<sup>98</sup>.

The παρθένοι τοῦ θεοῦ in P.Neph.1 are Christian virgins committed to perpetual chastity<sup>99</sup>. Given Tapiam and Paul's likely identity as Melitians and the virgins' association with the Melitian monks of Hathor, it is almost certain that the virgins are also members of the Melitian church. This text then provides evidence that groups, perhaps organised communities, of consecrated women existed in the Melitian church<sup>100</sup>.

### μοναχή

Μοναχή referring to ascetic women is the feminine of μοναχός<sup>101</sup>, a term which appears in the papyri from the early fourth century<sup>102</sup>. Μοναχή is found in three papyri in the fourth century: PSI 6.698, O.Douch 3.190 and P.Oxy.44.3203<sup>103</sup>. The term occurs in each text with a name and functions as an identifier, recognised and accepted at this early date in official documents. In contrast to the papyri, μοναχή does not occur in Christian literature of nuns until the ninth century<sup>104</sup>. The

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<sup>97</sup> Stud.Pal.8.1069 (C5/6).

<sup>98</sup> P.Ryl.3.470 (?) in a prayer, εὐσπλα[γχνε παρθένε ?] κατ' ἄφε[σιν ἁμαρτίων ?] θεοτόκε ... . The editors suggest a possible C3 date on palaeographical grounds but prayer to Mary and use of θεοτόκος do not occur certainly before the end of C4. The editors opt for C3/4 as a compromise. Given the uncertainty of palaeographical dating, C5 is more likely. Similarly P.Bon.1.9 (C3/4) includes prayer to the Virgin and Longinus. A later date is likely. See van Haelst (1976), no.893. Other invocations of Mary are dated C5/6 and later, A. M. Emmett, 'A fourth-century hymn to the Virgin Mary?' in *ND* 2.141-146, here 145f.

<sup>99</sup> A woman 'is named a virgin who has willingly consecrated herself to the Lord, and has renounced marriage and preferred the life of holiness', Basil of Caesarea, *Epistola* 199. The emphasis on 'willingly' contrasts with *Canons of Athanasius* 97 where parents' dedication of their daughter is primary. See also Elm (1994, 2000), 233.

<sup>100</sup> Elm (1994, 2000), 344, argues the existence of Melitian women ascetics is uncertain. Her book was originally published prior to publication of the Nephros archive.

<sup>101</sup> For μοναχός in the papyri, see Judge (1977); Judge (1981); Goehring (1999), 53-72; Wipszycka (2001b), 147f; Choat (2002). Also *LSJ*, s.v. It connotes renunciation of sex and marriage more than property, with the adoption of religious practices.

<sup>102</sup> The earliest certain attestation is P.Col.7.171 (6 June 324), although P.Neph.48 may precede it by a year, being dated 15 September 323 if the restoration by Worp (1989), 135, of the consular formula in l.1 is correct.

<sup>103</sup> P.Oxy.56.3862; P.Vindob.Gr.G.39847=CPR V 26; SB 16.12525 are not regarded as having a C4 date. See the appendix to this chapter.

<sup>104</sup> Theodorus Studita cited in Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v., confirmed by a search of the *TLG*. The word is not listed with the meaning 'nun/ascetic woman' in *LSJ*.

reason for this difference is unclear. It is possible that, in literary sources, μοναχός was regarded as a masculine term, answering to 'virgins and widows' for ascetic women, and so led to the avoidance of μοναχή. The μοναχαί in the papyri own property, in the form of agricultural land and a house, and engage in commercial activity<sup>105</sup>.

### μοναχή ἀποτακτική

The meaning of the combined term μοναχαί ἀποτακτικάί, of which the occurrence in P.Oxy.44.3203 is the only attestation, is debated, as is the meaning of ἀποτακτικός/-ή<sup>106</sup>. The editor concludes that the μοναχαί ἀποτακτικάί are ἀναχωρηταί, but, as Horsley notes, this conclusion is 'surprising' given that these women appear to live in the city, possibly together, contrary to the usual meaning of eremitic<sup>107</sup>. The central sense of ἀποτακτικός concerns renunciation<sup>108</sup> and its application to ascetics appears to be established by the fourth century<sup>109</sup>. Recent surveys of ἀποτακτικός in the papyri suggest that it refers to ascetics with a communal dimension to their practice, although without defining its nature or the degree of renunciation involved<sup>110</sup>. They suggest further that neither μοναχοί nor ἀποτακτικοί are necessarily remote from society, they live outside a monastery or in one, and they can own and administer property. There is no reason to think that the meanings of the feminine forms are different. The evidence of the papyri to date does not allow a certain conclusion about the meaning of the double term μοναχαί ἀποτακτικάί. However, it

<sup>105</sup> The same level of involvement with property and commerce does not appear in papyri referring to μοναχοί. Of 17 texts dated C4 referring to male ascetics examined by Judge (1981), only 4 use μοναχός: P.Col.7.171; P.Lond.6.1913; 1914; 1925. None concerns property and commerce. Of 14 occurrences of μοναχός dated C4 listed in Choat (2002), 9f, two concern property. The infrequency of μοναχή does not allow any conclusion about the existence or significance of any difference.

<sup>106</sup> On the terms, see Emmett (1982), 510ff; Goehring (1999), 53-72; Wipszycka (2001b); Choat (2002), 12-15. 'Αποτακτικός occurs in 8 papyri dated C4 in addition to this text: P.Oxy.46.3311 (373/4); P.Herm.Landl.1.30.505; 2.32.722 (shortly after 346/7); P.Lips.1.28 (381) which indicates ἀποτακτικοί own property; P.Berl.inv.11860 A-B=SB 14.11972 (367/8) which concerns monastic property; P.Würzb.16 (349); P.Herm.9 (C4); SB 18.13612 (C4). The majority of texts deal with property as is expected since ownership generates records. See Llewelyn, 'Monastic Orthodoxy and the Papyri of the Nag Hammadi Cartonage' in *ND* 6.182-189, here 189.

<sup>107</sup> Horsley, 'Nuns as lessors of property' in *ND* 1.126-130, here 128. Evidence dated C4 indicates that ἀναχωρηταί can live in a μονή, P.Lond.6.1925; SB 8.9683.

<sup>108</sup> From ἀποτάσσω, Luke 14.33.

<sup>109</sup> Pachomius, *Rule* 49 = *Rule A* 17 (B XLIX). See also Emmett (1982), 510.

<sup>110</sup> Judge (1977); Emmett (1982), 510ff; Goehring (1999), 59, 68, 71; Wipszycka (2001b), 159-168; Choat (2002), 14. While Choat agrees, he argues that use of the term may not be so specific. Emmett suggests that ἀποτακτικός may specify a particular kind of monastic. Judge concludes that ἀποτακτικοί are neither eremitic nor coenobitic but ascetics who live in local communities, in households, self-sufficient and owning property.

confirms that μοναχὰὶ ἀποτακτικαὶ can live outside monastic communities, own and administer property, and engage in commercial activity that will produce income<sup>111</sup>.

## Living situations

The papyri attest a range of living situations for ascetic women.

### ἀειπάρθενος

P.Lips.1.43 offers no information on Thaesis' living arrangements. She owns or can own personal property in inheriting from Besarion. She is also not immune from legal suit. Given her education, Thaesis is likely to come from a family that can afford to educate a girl-child and considers it worthwhile, or she may be a member of an ascetic community where she receives an education<sup>112</sup>. If Thaesis is a member of such a community, it raises the possibility that the books she is accused of stealing may have been bequeathed to the community of which she is part rather than to her personally. However, it is more likely that she lives independently because she, and not a community, gains the majority share in Besarion's inheritance. This presumably is the provision of Besarion's will and raises questions about the relationships among Thaesis, Besarion and the (other) heirs. Thaesis is clearly in a special category. She may be a relative of Besarion, perhaps his daughter, although it is strange that this is not stated. It may be that Besarion provides for her because she is an ἀειπάρθενος<sup>113</sup>, perhaps in recognition of her need or as an expression of honour. It may also be that Thaesis was a *virgo subintroducta*<sup>114</sup> who lived with Besarion chastely. The practice derives from the 'NT'<sup>115</sup> and continues despite being repeatedly condemned<sup>116</sup>.

Beyond the suggestion in the privileged share in the inheritance, there is no evidence to support this hypothesis. Given the climate of condemnation, it is difficult to determine whether such a status is more or less likely to be mentioned. The custom

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<sup>111</sup> It is noteworthy that no deeds of cession exist by which ascetics give their property to relatives or the church.

<sup>112</sup> Augustine, *Letters* 211.7f; 13; 16 presumes monastic women's literacy. Pachomius, *Rule* 139, 140 require members of the community to learn to read first, then write. Evagrius of Pontus, *Exhortation to a Virgin* 4 requires reading as the first activity of the day. No one is to be illiterate. See 15f above.

<sup>113</sup> For a similar idea, see Elm (1989), 210.

<sup>114</sup> The practice involves an ascetic woman living chastely with an ascetic man. He provides her material and social needs; she provides domestic labour.

<sup>115</sup> 1 Corinthians 7.36-38.

<sup>116</sup> Eg Athanasius, *Second Letter to Virgins* 20-29; Councils of Elvira (c.312), Canon 27; Ancyra (315), Canon 19; Nicaea (325), Canon 3; Chrysostom, *Instruction and Refutation Against Those Men Cohabiting With Virgins; On the Necessity of Guarding Virginity* in Clark (1979), 158-248.



among Christians of leaving money to ascetics is attested from the fourth century in the provisions of the edict of Valentinian in 370<sup>117</sup>, which seek to curtail the practice of ascetics soliciting such inheritances<sup>118</sup>. Elm plausibly suggests that, if Thaesis is not a relative of Besarion, this makes the antipathy of the other heirs to her 'all the more understandable'<sup>119</sup>.

Didyme, the ever-virgin in P.Lips.1.60, may be an example of an early type of asceticism whose practitioners live with their families or in small communities, and are part of village life. Didyme is involved in her (probably dead) father's business with her brother, with its attendant commercial activities and concerns. It is likely that she lives in her brother's household<sup>120</sup>. Her consecrated life most probably consists in a chaste existence, with an intensified commitment to prayer, but in other respects indistinguishable from others in her village.

In SB 14.12620, Nonna and her ever-virgin daughter appear to live together, sharing a common greeting. 'Daughter' may carry a literal or spiritual sense or both. One of the early forms of ascetic community is that of a mother and her daughter/s living together<sup>121</sup>. However, whether Nonna is an ascetic cannot be determined. Nonna's daughter lives a consecrated life in her family home, greeted alongside others at the same time as her dedicated status is both known and acknowledged.

### μοναχή / μοναχή ἀποτακτική

In PSI 6.698, Annis, μοναχή, owns land<sup>122</sup>. In this, she resembles the two μοναχαὶ ἀποτακτικαὶ of P.Oxy.44.3203. Annis' land is agricultural, implying that she is responsible to farm the land herself or lease it to tenants and pay the appropriate taxes<sup>123</sup>. Annis may, but does not necessarily, live on the property. Her ownership involves her in commercial activity and social obligation.

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<sup>117</sup> CT 16.2.20. CT 16.2.4 (321) allowed the church to accept legacies. See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.326f; 85f; Clark (1981), 242, nn.14, 15.

<sup>118</sup> PL 13.

<sup>119</sup> Elm (1989), 210.

<sup>120</sup> Her name suggests he may be her twin, although 'Didyme' probably has lost its literal sense.

<sup>121</sup> Eg HL 60.1. See also Emmett (1982), 509.

<sup>122</sup> See also P.Vindob.Gr.G.39847 (C5), 321 below.

<sup>123</sup> The size of Annis' land is not indicated. Land registers dated C4 record holdings from over 250 arourai (1 aroura = 52½ x 52½ m) to 1¼ arourai, Jones (1964), 2.772. Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 308, notes that in the papyri women appear as lessors of agricultural land more often than lessees, and that

The μοναχαὶ ἀποτακτικαί, Theodora and Tauris in P.Oxy.44.3203, own at least part of a house which they lease to Jose, a Jew. The women make this contract in person, without guardians, assistants or mediators, suggesting that they live in Oxyrhynchus. The fourth/fifth-century *Historia Monachorum* has the bishop of Oxyrhynchus remark that the city and environs are home to 10,000 monks and 20,000 virgins, and that monasteries outnumber houses. The statistics are to be treated with caution<sup>124</sup> but suggest a substantial ascetic population. It may be that the women are members of a community who retain their property and who are able to move outside their monastery. It may be that they live independently either in part of the house they lease to Jose or elsewhere. Their ascetic expression does not preclude this commercial involvement and its legal concomitants.

#### παρθένος τοῦ θεοῦ

The 'virgins of God' (τὰς παρθένους τοῦ θεοῦ), ll.27f P.Neph.1, whom Tapiam and Paul greet are a group distinct from, but associated with, 'the beloved brothers' and 'all the rest of our brothers'. The virgins are not qualified by the adjective ἀγαπητός which is used in both references to the monks, ll.1, 27, and appears to distinguish monks from 'all the rest of our brothers' (τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν πάντας), l.30, and perhaps to distinguish the virgins from membership with the brothers in the monastery. Tapiam and Paul know the virgins as a group rather than as individuals, not greeting them κατ' ὄνομα as they greet both the other groups, ll.27, 30, and the named individuals. It strengthens the suggestion that the virgins of God and the brothers are not a single community, and that the women may have a lesser status or be less well known. The lack of individual greeting favours the latter and raises the possibility that the women lead a more enclosed life<sup>125</sup>. The monastery at Hathor may be a double monastery but it is surprising that the virgins receive no other mention in the archive. They may

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husbands work agricultural land given in their wife's dowry and pay the taxes, eg P.Ryl.2.154 (66). The papyri also indicate that women work agricultural land themselves, eg P.Col.8.218 (139); P.Tebt.2.311 (134); O.Bodl. 2.778; 784; 1433; 1435-7; 1455 (all c.150).

<sup>124</sup> HM 5. Similarly the description of the city as being without heretics and pagans is idealised and to be treated with caution.

<sup>125</sup> Strict regulation of virgins' movements is common in literary sources, from absolute enclosure eg *Canons of Basil* 36; Pachomius, *Rule* 84; = *Rule A* 28 (B LXXXIV) and implied by 143; in Shenoute's White Monastery, Krawiec (1998); Caesarius of Arles, *Rule of Saint Caesarius* 5; to relative restriction eg *Canons of Athanasius* 92; 98; 99; 101; Evagrius of Pontus, *Exhortation to a Virgin* 24, 26. Palladius implies being outside the monastery is not condemned but speaking to a man is, *HL* 33; staying inside is idealised, *HL* 60.1. Wipszycka (1996b), 360, speaking about Pachomius' restrictions, warns this is undoubtedly an idealised picture presented to the generation after Pachomius' death and may not reflect reality. Similar caution may be applied in interpreting the Canons.

constitute an ascetic community in their own right, perhaps within a local village, but it is surprising that they are greeted in the same greeting and letter.

### **Ascetic women's status**

The papyri provide information on the status of ascetic women. All the epithets describing Christian ascetic women in the papyri<sup>126</sup> function as identifiers in texts ranging from private letters<sup>127</sup> to legal<sup>128</sup> and commercial documents<sup>129</sup>. The epithets are socially and legally recognised. In the case of Nonna's daughter in SB 16.12620, the epithet ἀειπάρθενος substitutes for her name. The use of the identifiers suggests that the women have a status, role and function that their community acknowledges.

In P.Lips.1.43, it is possible that there is a connection between Thaesis' standing as an ever-virgin and the hearing before a bishop. While the *privilegium fori* comes into effect only in 539, evidence suggests that the privileged jurisdiction for clergy developed in the late fourth century<sup>130</sup>. It may be that this privilege applies in Thaesis' case, and that, as an ever-virgin, she is regarded, if not as clergy, at least as having a privileged status in the church. Thaesis holds a similarly privileged status in relation to Besarion's estate, receiving half the inheritance. The disproportionate inheritance is likely to be related to Thaesis' status as an ever-virgin, an expression of respect and care on Besarion's part, although this is not stated.

### **CONCLUSION**

This examination of the papyri referring to women ascetics suggests a number of conclusions and raises questions that await further research.

The first conclusion is more an observation on the papyri as a source of information about female asceticism. The number of papyri referring to ascetic women is extremely small, namely eight texts. The reasons for this paucity are complex. The chance nature of preservation is undoubtedly a factor. However, the majority of texts that generate a historical record, namely commercial and legal documents related to property and business, are, by their very nature, less likely to have been written by

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<sup>126</sup> ἀειπάρθενος, παρθένης τοῦ θεοῦ, μοναχή and μοναχή ἀποτακτική.

<sup>127</sup> P.Neph.1; SB 16.12620.

<sup>128</sup> P.Lips.1.43.

<sup>129</sup> P.Lips.1.60, P.Oxy.44.3203, PSI 6.698; O.Douch 3.190.

<sup>130</sup> Jones (1964), 487, n.14.

ascetic women<sup>131</sup>. Ascetic women living at home would have male family to write for them. In double monasteries, evidence indicates that women's communities are subordinate, reliant on the men's community for administration<sup>132</sup>. Private letters require ascetic women's connection to absent family and friends. Those women whose ascetic path involves renunciation of property and family leave no trace in the papyrological record. At the same time, more than half of the texts referring to ascetic women concern property. The absence of evidence for independent women's communities is strange and raises the possibility that ascetic women devolve administrative activity to men<sup>133</sup>, leaving this interface with the public world to men. From the evidence it seems that women's asceticism perpetuated the traditional gendered divisions of space and social role.

There are no papyri written by female ascetics or at least none where ascetic women identify themselves, none written to female ascetics, and none that document ascetic women's relationships with each other or with the world. Of the references that survive, women's asceticism is incidental to the text. The papyri, therefore, offer valuable but limited insight into the religious lives of ascetic women.

A second conclusion concerns the range of terms used for ascetic women in the papyri. The fourth-century papyri give no information on how ascetic women named and understood themselves. Nomenclature arises from male-authored texts which attest a narrow range of terms that differ from those in Christian literary sources. The terms *ἀειπάρθενος*, *παρθένος τοῦ θεοῦ*, *μοναχή* and *μοναχή ἀποτακτική* appear in the papyri while *παρθένος*, *παρθένος θεοῦ*, *χήρα*, *παρθενεύουσα* and *μονάζουσα* occur in literature, and *ἀειπάρθενος* occurs only occasionally of women other than the Virgin Mary<sup>134</sup>. While *παρθένος* without further qualification and *χήρα* appear frequently in the papyri of the fourth century, no occurrence has a clearly ascetic reference<sup>135</sup>. The significance of the different terms for ascetic women is uncertain. Each may

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<sup>131</sup> The majority of texts referring to ascetic men and property arise from the 'semi-anchorites', a style infrequent among women. See Wipszycka (1996b), 394.

<sup>132</sup> Barison (1938), 39.

<sup>133</sup> See also Wipszycka (1996b), 394.

<sup>134</sup> Coptic sources refer to *παρθένοι*, *ἀποτακτικοί* and *ἀναχωρηταί*, although literary and papyrological evidence suggests the terms are not clearly defined or mutually exclusive. See Goehring (1999), 53-72; Choat (2002).

<sup>135</sup> See P.Neph.36, 319f below. References to widows receiving Christian charity occur in C6 in SB 22.15528-30=P.Oxy.16.1954-1956; the text published in Rémondon (1972), 266, also in Horsley, 'Provision for widows in the Church' in *ND* 2.192f. See also in Wipszycka (1972). There is no indication that these widows are members of an ascetic order.

designate a specific variety of ascetic practice that is unclear to the modern reader<sup>136</sup> but it is more likely that nomenclature in the fourth century is fluid, as is the structure of ascetic practice<sup>137</sup>.

The language of the papyri confirms that sexual continence is an essential element in Christian asceticism and is emblematic of Christian women's asceticism. Παρθένος τοῦ θεοῦ and ἀειπάρθενος label women, and in general not men, by this aspect of their practice. As noted above in relation to literary sources, the language of virginity paradoxically combines with the language of marriage and eroticism. It also uses metaphors that the 'NT' uses for the church, and by this lays the foundation for ascetic women to bear the symbolic weight of the idealised church, a process that reaches its height in the later Byzantine period and ensures a stricter regulation of ascetic women's lives<sup>138</sup>.

A third conclusion concerns the nature of ascetic women's practice expressed in their living situations. The papyri illustrate, with different degrees of certainty, the evidence of the literary sources, that ascetic women in the fourth century live in a variety of situations, from family homes<sup>139</sup> and living independently at home<sup>140</sup>, to living with ascetic men as *virgines subintroductae*<sup>141</sup> and in ascetic communities, which, in the papyri, are either a mixed<sup>142</sup> or a double monastery<sup>143</sup>. Literary sources attest

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<sup>136</sup> The Gnomic of the Council of Nicaea (377 or 400) use μοναχή and παρθένος interchangeably, Wipszycka (1996b), 378, n.40.

<sup>137</sup> The pattern of terminology for female ascetics differs to that for men. Judge argues that ἀποτακτικός is the earliest term for male ascetics, used as the equivalent to παρθένος and χήρα for women. He suggests μοναχός was a nickname based on the men's solitary life-style. The eremitic tradition adopted these names and also ἀναχωρητής. Coenobitic communities developed later, whose members can be μοναχοί or ἀποτακτικοί, Judge (1977), 88f. Choat (2002), 11-14, also notes the lack of a precise nomenclature in the asceticism of C4.

<sup>138</sup> On a similar role for the Vestal Virgins, see Parker (2004).

<sup>139</sup> P.Lips.1.60; SB 16.12620. Also HL 20; 31; 60. The accounts of Amoun, HM 22; HL 8; Socrates, HE 4.23, and Sozomen, HE 1.14.1-8 offer variations in detail that no doubt reflect developing ecclesially accepted ascetic practices. Evagrius of Pontus addresses his *Exhortation to a Virgin* to elite ascetic women in homes, C5. *Canons of Athanasius*, Athanasius' *First Letter to Virgins* 13 and *Second Letter to Virgins* 8 recognise virgins living with family and in community. See also Wipszycka (1996b), 381.

<sup>140</sup> Eg the women in P.Oxy.44.3203 and P.Lips.1.43. Also HM 10.3; HL 5.

<sup>141</sup> Possibly P. Lips.1.43 but this is uncertain. In literary sources, evidence for the practice in Egypt is in the form of condemnations, Athanasius, *Second Letter to the Virgins* 20-29; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 67.8.3; *Canons of Basil* 32; Canon 3, Council of Nicaea (325).

<sup>142</sup> This best fits the situation in P.land.6.100.

<sup>143</sup> This best fits the virgins of God in P.Neph.1.

women's ascetic communities in Egypt<sup>144</sup> in the fourth century, including those attached to Pachomius' communities for men<sup>145</sup>, those addressed by Athanasius<sup>146</sup>, and those directed by the *Canons of Athanasius*<sup>147</sup>, and in the fifth century, the Red (women's) monastery of Shenoute, attached to the White (men's) monastery<sup>148</sup>. In Asia Minor there is evidence for mixed communities of men and women<sup>149</sup>. The papyri do not attest the category of ascetic women with a wandering lifestyle<sup>150</sup>.

Didyme in P.Lips.1.60 and Nonna's daughter in SB 16.12620 who live with family may be examples of the practice to which the *Canons of Athanasius* 98 refers:

In every house of Christians, it is needful that there be a virgin, for the salvation of the whole house is that one virgin. When wrath comes upon the whole city, it shall not come upon the house wherein a virgin is.

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<sup>144</sup> HL 29; 59; Athanasius, *On virginity, First Letter to Virgins; Second Letter to Virgins*. Antony in C3 entrusts his sister to a community 'of pious virgins', Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 3. Its nature is unknown and cannot be assumed to resemble the organised communities of ascetic women that emerge in C4.

<sup>145</sup> HL 32-34. The earliest women's community was established soon after, and near to, the earliest monastery for men at Tabennese, 329, by Pachomius for his sister, *Vita Prima Graeca* 32. A second women's community at Tsmine was again near a men's community. A third Pachomian monastery for women was established by Theodoros at Bechne, near the men's monastery of Pbau, Wipszycka (1996b), 356. See also Rousseau (1985).

<sup>146</sup> Athanasius, *On virginity, First Letter to Virgins, Second Letter to the Virgins*.

<sup>147</sup> *Canons of Athanasius* 98, 99 (c.350-450).

<sup>148</sup> Elm (1994, 2000), 296-310; Krawiec (2002). Women in the communities of the White Monastery were perhaps more independent than those in Pachomian communities, but were expected to perform the tasks traditionally assigned to women within a strict hierarchy, Wipszycka (1996b), 356-374; Krawiec (1998); (2002), 92-118. The relationship between the women's and men's communities in a double monastery reflects the patriarchal hierarchy of late antique society, including a limited authority and independence for the female superior, and conflicts over power. A female superior's position was inherently constrained by her lack of sacramental authority. The Arabic version of Shenoute's *Life* suggests there were 1800 nuns and 2200 monks in the communities. The accuracy of the figures is uncertain.

<sup>149</sup> Socrates, *HE* 2.38.2; Sozomen, *HE* 4.20.2. The Cappadocian Fathers refer to members of communities of men and women as ἀγαπητοί and ἀδελφότητες, Elm (1994, 2000), 205. Elm suggests that such mixed communities constitute the majority of ascetic organisations prior to Basil of Caesarea's model of separate institutions for men and women. Stramara (1998) notes numerous examples of 'double monasteries' throughout the Greek East, particularly following Basil's rule, and alludes to their existence in Egypt. On 'double monasteries', see Elm (1994, 2000), 68-75.

<sup>150</sup> Literary sources attest the practice. In C4/5, Elias of Athribe founds a monastery for 300 ascetic women with a wandering practice, HL 29. The number like others in HL needs to be treated with caution and the account may reflect church policy. Amma Syncletica warns ascetics against the practice of wandering from monastery to monastery, AP 193-7. See also Veilleux (1986), 302-304, for the practice of ascetic wandering. The Messalians, men and women in Syria and Asia Minor who wandered and begged, are condemned by Epiphanius in *Haeres.* 80 cited in Elm (1994, 2000), 191. Other possible examples occur in HM 14.5 and HL 34. Evagrius of Pontus, *Exhortation to a Virgin* 13 warns against old women who wander about. See also 263, especially n.174 above.

An ascetic woman, thus, can carry a prophylactic value as one who attracts God's mercy and ensures protection and prosperity<sup>151</sup>. Another example is Piamoun who lives with her mother in their village 'spinning flax and eating only every other day at evening' and is recognised as a prophet. When the village is threatened she advises the men, refuses their request that she go to the enemy that they, the men, are too afraid to face, prays and protects the village from the raid<sup>152</sup>. In the gendered polarity of authority and power as a descriptive device, the power of virgin women ascetics in the local community is evident.

The majority of ascetic women in the papyri are active in their communities. They own property, pay taxes and are involved in legal proceedings and commercial activities. They generate income. They live with family, possibly with each other and connected to friends. In fifth-century texts, such urban ascetics come to be condemned for their independence from ecclesiastical control and their 'degeneracy', and appear under the pejorative description *remnuoth* in Jerome's writings<sup>153</sup> and *sarabaitae* in Cassian<sup>154</sup>.

A fourth conclusion concerns the status of ascetic women in their communities. Ascetic women appear before the bishop's court, suggesting their privileged standing within their community<sup>155</sup>. They appear as the favoured beneficiaries of wills and, thus, to be the objects of people's veneration and care. Their role as ascetics is acknowledged. The women, however, do not appear as the recipients of requests for prayer, advice or intervention with civil authority as do male ascetics and certain elite Roman ascetic women<sup>156</sup>. The papyri provide numerous examples of men's and women's petitions to monks for spiritual and practical help<sup>157</sup>. Tapiam and Paul, in

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<sup>151</sup> A similar value attaches to monks who live in cells near villages and whose prayers act as protection, *HM* pr.

<sup>152</sup> *HL* 31.

<sup>153</sup> 'These men live together in twos and threes ... according to their own will ... everything they sell is very dear ... their workmanship, not their life, is sanctified', Jerome, *Select Letters* 22.34. Jerome distinguishes *coenobium* (later *coenobitae*), *anachoretai* and *remnuoth* as ascetics in Egypt, but *remnuoth* is not a category attested in Egypt and the terminology as a system of categorisation is absent from early Egyptian monasticism, as is the precision it suggests, Choat (2002), 17-21. Judge (1977) especially 80, argues for the equivalence of *remnuoth* and ἀποτακτικοί. See also Wipszycka (1994a).

<sup>154</sup> Cassian, *Conferences* 3.18.4-7 refers to *coenobitae*, *anachoretai* and *sarabaitae*. The terminology is not reflected in the papyri. See Wipszycka (1994a), 285; Choat (2002), 17-21.

<sup>155</sup> On the *episcopalis audientia*, see nn.51, 52 above.

<sup>156</sup> In Pachomius' writings on monasticism, women never occur as examples, good or bad.

<sup>157</sup> Eg P.Herm.7-10; 17; P.Lond.3.981; SB 18.13612; P.Lond.6.1923-1929. See also 182-189 above.

P.Neph.1, ask the monks at Hathor for prayer but do not also ask the virgins of God whom they merely greet.

There are a very few references in literary sources to ascetic women as spiritual advisers. In the *AP* for example, three women's names, Amma Theodora, Amma Sarah and Amma Syncletica, occur among almost 150 men's names<sup>158</sup>. These women, if they are not literary fictions, most probably lived in the late fourth or fifth century. Their *apophthegmata* suggest that they understand themselves as spiritual leaders and that others accept them in this role. The women give spiritual counsel and teach, although the identity of their petitioners is unknown. It has been argued that these 'desert mothers' may be constructs using elements from male *apophthegmata*, yet reflecting a memory that women ascetics lived in the desert, although recollection of them is blurred<sup>159</sup>. The reasons for placing the teachings in the mouths of women, if not reflecting actual characters, are unclear. There is evidence for women as spiritual authorities in Palladius' *Lausiac History*. Piamoun, a prophetess and ascetic, is consulted by her village<sup>160</sup>. The elite, educated women of western monasticism, such as Melania the Elder<sup>161</sup>, Melania the Younger<sup>162</sup> and Marcella of Rome<sup>163</sup>, are consulted as spiritual guides. Jerome notes that Marcella made it seem that her answers to questions from clergy came from Jerome himself. She did not want to appear to contravene the injunctions of 1 Timothy 2.12. It is likely that in the cases of these women, their wealth and status, as much as spiritual wisdom, are reasons that people approach them<sup>164</sup>. The masculine gender of the holy man is almost certainly significant for the 'highly public and conflictual role' that men, not women, were expected to occupy<sup>165</sup>. The evidence does not support the hypothesis that the holy man as an 'angelic' figure 'transcended the categories of

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<sup>158</sup> *AP* Theodora, Sarah, Syncletica.

<sup>159</sup> Brakke (2003) argues that women, both ascetic and 'worldly', in the *AP* are devices to shame ascetic men or emblems of contemporary theological controversies. Wipszycka (1996b), 381-392, argues the ammas are literary constructs; they do not address concerns particular to ascetic women or reveal anything about women's communities. Also Swan (2001), 32-70, who adopts an uncritical approach but gives an account of the history and development of the *apophthegmata*.

<sup>160</sup> *HL* 31. See above.

<sup>161</sup> Melania the Elder was consulted by monks, *HL* 38.8f; 46.6.

<sup>162</sup> Melania the Younger was consulted by bishops and monks, as well as converting and instructing lay men and women, Gerontius, *Life of Melania* 29, 36, 39, 51, 54, 56.

<sup>163</sup> Marcella in Rome was consulted by clergy, Jerome, *Select Letters* 127.7, and also corrected clergy, 127.9.

<sup>164</sup> Also Clark (1998), 413.

<sup>165</sup> Brown (1998), 371.



gender as normally defined'<sup>166</sup>. The holy man, as male, is a 'Christ-bearer', as in P.Lond.6.1926, sharing the same gender as Christ, and so more readily identified with Christ and his power.

A fifth conclusion concerns ascetic women's independence. The papyri give ambivalent evidence for ascetic women's ability to transcend the patriarchal structures of their society through their practice. The women who live in ascetic communities, Mariam and Tamounis in P.Land.6.100 and the virgins of God in P.Neph.1, if their communities mirror the patterns of Pachomian and Shenoutian double monasteries, live in strict hierarchies that perpetuate patriarchy. The ascetic women perform tasks traditionally allocated to women in the domestic sphere. Their lives are administered and controlled by men who provide the interface between them and the world. Among the other ascetic women, only Didyme in P.Lips.1.60 is explicitly associated closely with a man, in this case her brother Mikalos, with whom she is involved in business and with whom she may live, presumably within the gendered hierarchies of his household. It is possible that Thaesis lived with Besarion as a *virgo subintroducta*. The other women are named only in connection with women, or alone. All the ascetic women, except Didyme in P.Lips.1.60<sup>167</sup>, appear without patronymics, and all act without male guardians and assistants. The evidence suggests a degree of independence for these ascetic women. A similar independence of action, however, is evident among ordinary women who increasingly act without guardians and assistants in the fourth century, but such independence of identity is less frequent.

Ascetic women have an acknowledged status deriving from a social role and function which is unclear from the evidence available but acknowledged by their community. If it is the women's belief and practice, their fasting, prayer and celibacy, that are acknowledged, it suggests that these activities are regarded as a legitimate and respectable alternative to marriage and motherhood. The public outrage at transgressing the traditional female role that meets the ascetic women of the apocryphal Acts is not evident. The ascetic practice that developed in the fourth century, illustrated in the papyri, regulates women in the traditional hierarchies of the

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<sup>166</sup> Brown (1998), 371.

<sup>167</sup> Didyme and Mikalos together are named as children of Aphthonios in a letter about their father's business, ἀμφότεροι ἐκ πατρὸς Ἀφθωνίου ... γεν[ο]μένου [ἐ]πιμελητοῦ ἐσθῆτος στρατιωτικῆς, II.2-5. The patronymic establishes their right to administer Aphthonios' affairs.

home. Ascetic women remain in the private sphere at home or in their community, performing 'women's tasks' such as wool work and, it seems likely, giving the administration of their lives to men.

This chapter concludes the examination of the perspectives of the non-magical papyri on the religious lives of Christian women. The following chapter turns to Jewish women and the evidence of the papyri for Jewish women's religious lives.

## APPENDIX

### TEXTS POSSIBLY REFERRING TO ASCETIC CHRISTIAN WOMEN

#### BUT NOT ACCEPTED

**Laur.2.42, 366/7- 367/8, Provenance: Oxyrhynchite nome; BL 7.76; 8.164; 9.310; 10.92, 224**

The author of P.Laur.2.42<sup>1</sup> rebukes the addressee, 'you did such a thing to Atheatis who is a Christian, because even though she is a laywoman, she has never been found doing the things of the world' (ποιήσης πρᾶγμα τοιοῦτο Ἀθηᾶτι χρηστιανή (= χριστιανή) οὔσα, διότι καὶ λαε[ι]κή (= λαική) οὔσα καὶ μηδέποτε <ποιοῦσα> εὐρέθῃ πράγματα τοῦ κόσμου), recto ll.2f<sup>2</sup>. It is suggested that Atheatis may be an ascetic and that χρηστιανή (= χριστιανή), l.2, 'bears a specific meaning', standing in contrast to λαική<sup>3</sup>. The syntax favours a synonymous sense between χρηστιανή and λαική but the close proximity of the words suggests some contrast. Χριστιανός/-ή is used of believers in general in this period and is not attested bearing the 'specific meaning' 'ascetic'. If this were this Atheatis' status, the descriptors μοναχή, παρθένος and ἀειπάρθενος were established by the late fourth, early fifth century and available to describe her. Further, λαικός/-ή which distinguishes a lay person from both clergy and monks/nuns<sup>4</sup> functions to deny an ascetic status and draw attention to Atheatis' extraordinary conduct as an ordinary Christian. The hypothesis that Atheatis is an 'ascetic' receives no support in the text.

**P.Neph.36, C4, Provenance: Hathor; BL 9.174**

Χήρα appears in Christian texts meaning a woman whose husband has died<sup>5</sup>; any woman not living with a husband<sup>6</sup> and an ascetic woman who belongs to an order of

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed examination of this text, see 251ff above.

<sup>2</sup> For this translation, see 252 especially n.73 above.

<sup>3</sup> Elrn (1989), 212; (1994, 2000), 236, 240.

<sup>4</sup> Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v. Λαική is the female equivalent of λαικός but is not listed in Lampe. λαικός in the papyri of this period has a distinguishing function that sets limits to a person's position in the church, Choat (1999), 114f.

<sup>5</sup> On widows, see 135-140 and 214ff above.

<sup>6</sup> Methuen (1997). Sexual chastity was expected of all unmarried Christian women. In the early post-apostolic period, an ascetic rejection of second marriage developed.

widows<sup>7</sup>. The term occurs in five fourth-century texts, in four of which there is no suggestion that the woman is an ascetic<sup>8</sup>. The other is P.Neph.36, a letter from Severus to the landlord Artemidoros, asking him to supply seven artabas of wheat from the store in the cemetery<sup>9</sup> (ἐν τῷ κοιμητηρίῳ), l.2, to Tauris, the widow (Ταῦρι χήρᾳ), l.3. No payment is mentioned, which has suggested that this may be a charitable gift<sup>10</sup>. The editors argue that Tauris is receiving the wheat on behalf of other widows and needy people to whom she ministers<sup>11</sup>. The evidence, however, allows other interpretations. There is no indication, for example, that Severus is a monk<sup>12</sup>, nor any suggestion, apart from its place in the Nephros archive, that Severus or Artemidoros or Tauris is Christian. Kramer and Shelton note the possibility that Severus is a rich landowner, Artemidoros a leaseholder, and Tauris a woman who happens to be a widow buying wheat. There is no inherent reason to reject this thesis and no statement that the transaction is a gift. It may be that the financial arrangements are in a lost document. Tauris may be collecting wheat on behalf of a relative who may be Severus, who has a document detailing payment. The store in the cemetery may not be exclusive to the monastery but a common granary<sup>13</sup> in which Tauris has wheat stored and which she now collects. There is insufficient evidence to accept the hypothesis<sup>14</sup>.

### **P.Oxy.56.3862, C5 or later, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus**

P.Oxy.56.3862 (C4/5 ed.pr.) includes greetings to 'the nun Athonis' (τὴν μοναχὴν Ἀθωνιν), l.19. The traditional opening and closing formulae are the reason for suggesting a date as early as the fourth century. Such formulae, however, though

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<sup>7</sup> On the order and ministry of widows, their role as givers and/or recipients of the church's charity, see Gryson (1976); Brown (1991), 148; Elm (1994, 2000), 166-170.

<sup>8</sup> BGU 2.412; P.Abinn.19, 244f above; P.Herm.17, 46f above; SB 18.13612, 61f above.

<sup>9</sup> BL 9.174. On κοιμητήριον see on P.Charite 40, 72 above.

<sup>10</sup> On Christian charity to widows and the practice of πρόνοια, see J. Harrison, 'Benefaction ideology and Christian Responsibility for Widows' in *ND* 8.106-116.

<sup>11</sup> The argument is based on Nephros' access to a wheat store in a cemetery in P.Neph.12, the store supposedly belonging to the monks, Artemidoros being their tenant farmer in charge of it, and Severus being a monk. They argue Tauris conducts a ministry from the amount of wheat to be given her, 7 artabas sufficient for an adult for 7 months according to the eds; or 14 months by the reckoning in Bagnall (1993a), 116. Whichever is correct, the quantity is large, sufficient for a considerable group. On this reading, Tauris and the other widows would have been expected to respond by living chastely, praying for the church and doing good works.

<sup>12</sup> See n.11 above.

<sup>13</sup> Paul's instructions to the monks about wheat owed by Papnuthis suggest such a possibility, P.Neph.1.20-22; 2.1-5; 4.25-28; 5.3-12; 6.11-23; 7.1-3.

<sup>14</sup> The eds note other papyri that refer to charitable gifts to widows. However, these are C6-C7.

rare and not entirely traditional, are known in fifth- and sixth-century texts<sup>15</sup>. Further, ἅγιος/ἅγια with a proper name<sup>16</sup> is not attested in certainly fourth-century documents. Prayer to τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, l.29, also suggests at least the fifth century when such address emerges as part of the Trinitarian controversies. I consider the papyrus outside the time period of this thesis.

#### **P.Vindob.Gr.G.39847=CPR V 26, Second half C5, Provenance: Skar**

P.Vindob.Gr.G.39847 is a lengthy tax list which includes a taxpayer whose name is lost but who has the title μοναχή. The text was dated to 388 on the basis of its value of gold but has more recently been redated to 433 or c.450 because of its reference to *keratia* as subdivisions of the *solidus* found only in the fifth century<sup>17</sup>, or to the second half of the fifth century<sup>18</sup>. The text lies outside the time limits of this thesis and is not included in the analysis but is discussed here because of the initial dating.

#### **SB 8.9746, early C4, Provenance: Unknown; BL Supplement; 2.2.131; 6.159; 11.209f**

#### **P.Oxy.14.1774, early C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus**

It is argued<sup>19</sup> that 'Didyme and the sisters' (Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί)<sup>20</sup> in SB 8.9746 and P.Oxy.14.1774 are members of an ascetic community writing to other ascetic women, 'Sophias my beloved sister' ([Σοφιάτι μ]ου ἀγαπητῇ ἀδελφῇ), SB 8.9746.1, and 'to the lady sister Atienateia' (κυρεία (= κυρία)<sup>21</sup> τῇ (= τῇ) ἀδελφῇ Ἀτιενατείῃ), P.Oxy.14.1774.1. The epithet ἀδελφή is widely attested in the papyri from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine period, in Christian and pagan texts. In pagan texts ἀδελφή can designate a natural sister, a wife or other relative, or a female friend. Generally it connotes a peer. In Christian texts ἀδελφή can refer, in addition, to a

<sup>15</sup> Eg P.Oxy.16.1870 (C5); 59.4004 (C5); 16.1860 (C6/7); P.Alex.inv.85 (C6?); PSI 8.887 (C6); P.Prag.2.196 (C6). All are closing formulae except P.Oxy.16.1860.

<sup>16</sup> τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου, τῆς ἁγίας Εὐφημίας, τοῦ ἁγίου Μήνα, τοῦ ἁγίου Πέτρου, τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουλιανοῦ, ll.26-28

<sup>17</sup> Bagnall (1987a), 248.

<sup>18</sup> Diethart, CPR 9.43a.

<sup>19</sup> Emmett (1984); Elm (1994, 2000), 241.

<sup>20</sup> Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί, SB 8.9746.2; Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί, SB 8.9746.verso; Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί, P.Oxy.14.1774.2f; Διδύμη σὺν ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς, P.Oxy.14.1774 verso.

<sup>21</sup> In the papyrus: κυρεία with α corrected to read κυρεῖ.

female member of the Christian community<sup>22</sup> or a member of an ascetic community<sup>23</sup>. This last meaning cannot automatically be read into occurrences but requires clear evidence in the text. These texts<sup>24</sup> contain greetings ἐν κυρίῳ, SB 8.9746.2, 34, using the *nomen sacrum*, and include the phrase ἀγαπητὴ ἀδελφή, SB 8.9746.1. They include standard prayer formulae but contain no other religious elements. There are no references to husbands or children associated with the women which may support an ascetic milieu. Further, the plural εὐχόμεναι, P.Oxy.14.1774.5, suggests the women pray together but there is no certain evidence that they share a common life. Διδύμη καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαί may equally be members of a family operating a small business<sup>25</sup>.

#### **SB 14.11532=P.Strasb.1900, C4, Provenance: Unknown; BL 8.371**

The letter is Christian, closing with a Christian prayer, 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all' (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν]), l.11. It refers to 'Kyria the teacher' (Κυρίαν<sup>26</sup> τὴν διδάσκαλον), l.5, (Κυρίαν τὴν διδάσκαλον), l.12, in fragments of the text that provide no further information about her and her relationship to the writer or addressee. The editor, understanding 'teacher' as a role within the church, proposed that the text is Gnostic<sup>27</sup> on the basis that a woman could not hold such a position in an 'orthodox' church. However, there is no indication of a 'Gnostic' connection. The editor also rejects the usual meaning 'teacher of letters' as unattested in the papyri for women, but ἡ διδασκαλική and also ἡ δεσκάλη ἡ δέσκαλος, modifying the vowel and dropping the reduplication, are regular<sup>28</sup>. It is also argued that Kyria is head of a Christian community<sup>29</sup> but the title does not occur elsewhere in the fourth-century papyri with this sense. It appears

<sup>22</sup> Eg Mark 3.35; Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 5.1. See Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.

<sup>23</sup> Eg HL 33; Basil, *Regulae Brevius Tractatae* 104, 108.

<sup>24</sup> The texts are discussed in detail in the chapters on texts written by Christian women above.

<sup>25</sup> See 235 above.

<sup>26</sup> Most likely a proper name. The κυρ(ία) in l.7 2x, is probably to be retained, rejecting καί 2x, suggested by Parsons (1986); BL 8.371. It indicates the name is regular.

<sup>27</sup> Nagel (1975). On the problematic category 'Gnostic', see 370f, n.51 below.

<sup>28</sup> Eg P.Mich.2.121 (42); 123 (2) (45-47); 128 (46/7); P.Oxy.41.2971 (66) all with ἡ διδασκαλική; P.Mich.8.464 (99) with δεσκαλή; BGU 1.332 (C2-3) ἡ δέσκαλος; P.Oxy.31.2595 (C3) ἡ δεσκάλη; SB 18.13305 (271) ἡ δέσκαλος. LSJ Supplement regards διδάσκαλος and δέσκαλος as equivalents, s.v.

<sup>29</sup> Elm (1989), 212.

likely, then, that the woman is a teacher of letters<sup>30</sup> and the text provides no certain information about her religious status.

**SB14.12173 = P.Mich.inv.346, C4, Provenance: Arsinoe**

Ἀμμά/ἀμμάς comes to be a title for ascetic women, and particularly for the heads of women's communities from the fifth century<sup>31</sup>. The word appears in pagan papyri for 'nurse', 'mother' and 'foster-mother'<sup>32</sup>. It does not, by itself, indicate a certainly Christian letter<sup>33</sup> or that the woman so designated is an ascetic<sup>34</sup>. An ascetic status has been suggested for some occurrences of ἀμμά in the fourth century<sup>35</sup>. Of particular interest is the woman named ἄμα Χ... in SB 14.12173.25, written to 'my lady mother Moirous' (κυρία μου μητρει (= μητρί) Μοιροῦτι), l.1, from Anonymos<sup>36</sup>. The difference in spelling between ἄμα and ἀμμά does not appear significant<sup>37</sup> and may reflect Coptic influence<sup>38</sup> or, in this text, an adaptation to conform with ἄπα in 'I greet Ama Ch ... and Apa Ganeis with their people' (ἀσπάζωμαι (=ἀσπάζομαι) ἄμα Χ ... [.. καὶ] ἄπα Γάνειν σὺν τοῖ[ς αὐτῶν]), ll.24ff. A second Apa is named in the address on the verso, 'deliver to the home of Apa Kyri son of Lolous, in the quarter of Hierakion' (ἀπ(όδο)ς εἰς τ[ὴν] τοῦ ἄπα Κῦρι Λολοῦτ<ο>ς εἰς ἄπμοδον [Ἱερ]ακίου), verso. The

<sup>30</sup> Cribiore (1996), 23; (2001b), 80f.

<sup>31</sup> Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v.; H. Leclercq, 'AMA, AMMA' in Cabrol and Leclercq (1924), 1.1306-1323, eg Amma (ἄμα) Sarah, Amma Syncletica and Amma Theodora, AP 71f, 171, 192-196; HL 34; P.Bodl.1.80 (C6-C7) with ἄμα; P.Oxy.16.1874 (C6/7); P.Lond.5.1807 (C7); 4.1421 (705); 1422 (707/8); 1416 (732/3); and most probably SB 6.9158 (C5) with ἀμμή and PSI 8.953 (C6), although these references may be to literal mothers. See also the Naldini (1968, 1998), 381; O'Callaghan (1963), 32.

<sup>32</sup> Eg P.Mich.3.208 (C2); 8.488 (C2); SB 14.12042 (C2); BGU 2.449 (C2/3). In none of these is ἀμμάς accompanied by a name.

<sup>33</sup> SB 8.9882 (C2/3) includes greetings from ἀμμάς Θαυβάριν καὶ ἄπας Δίος καὶ Ἦρων ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ Δίος ὁ υἱός μου, ll.5f. The epithets, occurring with names, function as titles. There is no indication of religious affiliation and no closing prayer. The opening section is lost. Given the date, it is unlikely to be a Christian letter. There is no reason to think this is other than a literal family although the titles perhaps signal that it is not the writer's natural family.

<sup>34</sup> In texts arguably dated C4, ἀμμά/ἀμμάς occurs in BGU 3.948 (C4/5); see 34 above. P.Gen.1.14 (323-642, ed.pr.) is, from its language, most probably C6. P.Oxy.56.3862 (C4/5, ed.pr.) is almost certainly later; see below in the discussion of μοναχή. Source *DDBDP*. In BGU 3.948, ἀμμάς refers to Kophaena or a nurse. In P.Oxy.56.3862, ἀμμάς means 'nurse' and occurs with a name, while, in the same text, a nun is ἡ μοναχή.

<sup>35</sup> Elm (1989), 212; (1994, 2000), 245f. Elm cites P.Oxy.14.1874, which mentions an Ammas Eva and which she dates to C4. However, the editors date it to C6 and it has not been redated according to *BL*.

<sup>36</sup> This is the only use of ἄμα for a woman in the papyri in the period. Source *DDBDP*.

<sup>37</sup> 'AMA/AMMA', H. Leclercq, Cabrol and Leclercq (1924), 1.1306-1323, who gives them the meaning 'abbesse'.

<sup>38</sup> Ama is common in Coptic texts where it denotes consecrated and otherwise exceptional Christian women, H. Leclercq, 'AMA, AMMA', in Cabrol and Leclercq (1924), 1.1306-1323. From inscriptional evidence, Leclercq identifies geographic preference for 'Ama' in Coptic Thebes, 'Amma' in Memphis. The spelling 'Ama' is the most frequent.

letter opens with a proskynema formula, unusual in not specifying the object of the obeisance. The text is accepted as Christian 'from the use of the characteristically Christian titles ἄμα and ἄπα'<sup>39</sup>. However, as noted above, ἄμα is not a certain criterion for classifying a text as Christian, and while ἄπα (sic) appears to be an almost certainly Christian title<sup>40</sup>, it occurs in the forms ἄπα and ἄπας in certainly pagan texts and should be evaluated with caution<sup>41</sup>. Even with the likely Christian classification of SB14.12173, ἄμα does not necessarily connote asceticism. Ama Ch... and Apa Ganeis would seem to be husband and wife<sup>42</sup>, and while they may be sexually continent in marriage, this is not suggested in the text. They are unlikely to be ascetics but may stand as spiritual mother and father to the writer, taking on the sense of 'exceptional Christian figures' known from Coptic use, or they may be close but non-kin. Ama Ch... is in a different category to Moirous where μήτηρ is used. Ama Ch... and Apa Ganeis are associated with a group called οἱ αὐτῶν but there is no indication of an ascetic community.

**SB 16.12525, 323-642, Provenance: Unknown; BL 10.214**

SB 16.12525 lists people in relation to quantities of grain. Maria μοναχή is named at l.11. She is the only person whose name is qualified by a descriptor. The text is dated 323-642. The names of the other people are almost exclusively Christian and suggest a date in the fifth or a later century.

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<sup>39</sup> Youtie (1978), 265; also Horsley, 'κατ' ὄνομα' in ND 3.77f. P.Oxy.59.3998 includes a Christian *proskynema* statement; see 263f above. P.Oxy.14.1775 (C4) is accepted as a Christian *proskynema* in Naldini (1968, 1998), 275ff, but is most uncertain.

<sup>40</sup> Source DDBDP. Lampe (1961, 1968), s.v., also cites only Christian use.

<sup>41</sup> The form ἄπας occurs in SB 8.9882 (C2/3); P.Mert.1.28 (C3), the latter certainly pagan; ἄπα occurs in BGU 3.714 (C2) also certainly pagan. Analysis of ἄπα and ἄββ̃ in the papyri suggests ἄπα is a variant of ἄπα or ἄββ̃, with no geographic pattern, Derda and Wipszycka (1994), 24, 28. Derda and Wipszycka date the earliest occurrences to the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of C4 and do not consider these earlier texts, 29. Ἀπα/ἄββ̃ show similar development to ἄμα/ἄμμά/ἄμμάς, becoming titles of clergy and monastics in C4. See also 182, especially n.45 above.

<sup>42</sup> Both are the direct object of the one verb, ἀσπάζομαι (= ἀσπάζομαι), ll.24f. Other greetings to family units both precede and follow the greeting to Ama Ch... and Apa Ganeis, with repeated use of ἀσπάζομαι (= ἀσπάζομαι), ll.23-29.



## CHAPTER 10

### EVIDENCE OF THE PAPYRI FOR THE RELIGIOUS LIVES OF JEWISH WOMEN

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I explore the contribution of the papyri to an understanding of the religious lives of Jewish women in Egypt from 100 to 400.

In the Introduction<sup>1</sup> I argue that 'religious life' includes the ethnic, cultural and political dimensions of women's lives as these are affected by religious affiliation, as well as the more narrowly transcendent dimensions of religious practice. This is especially germane in relation to Jewish women. A Jewish woman's political and cultural identity derives from her Jewishness just as her religious identity is inseparable from its political and cultural expressions. Jewish women pay tax, own property and engage in political, legal and commercial activity as Jews<sup>2</sup>. Roman attitudes to Judaism<sup>3</sup> confirm this complex of ethnic, political and transcendent dimensions. Judaism was a *religio licita*<sup>4</sup> which carried a number of political privileges including the right 'to follow traditional laws' (τοῖς πατρίοις νόμοις χρῆσθαι)<sup>5</sup>.

None of the Jewish papyri I have identified refers to the transcendent dimension of Jewish women's religious life<sup>6</sup>. None refers to prayer or God, and none addresses women's place in worship<sup>7</sup>. The reasons are difficult to determine, but the paucity of Jewish papyri in the period particularly concerning Jewish women due to the devastation wrought by the Jewish revolt (115-117)<sup>8</sup>; the difficulty in identifying

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<sup>1</sup> See 3 above.

<sup>2</sup> Simon (1996), 204.

<sup>3</sup> By Judaism I mean Jewish identity, belief and practice as distinct from specific reference to later rabbinic Judaism.

<sup>4</sup> Religious freedom was granted by Caesar and was effective throughout the empire. The right was confirmed and extended by Augustus and continued for over 300 years except for a brief period under Hadrian. It gave the right to assemble for worship and common meals, observe the Sabbath and festivals, follow the Torah, be exempt from the imperial cult and, from 43, from military service. See Smallwood (1981), 135.

<sup>5</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.195, 199, 213 etc.

<sup>6</sup> The same lack of transcendent religious reference marks the Babatha archive, *Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri, and Aramaic and Nabataean Signatures and Subscriptions* (1989), and the Salome Komaise archive, Cotton (1995).

<sup>7</sup> Kraemer (1986), 95, concludes the Jewish papyri are more useful for information on demographics and social life than on beliefs and practice. She does not examine papyri after 117.

<sup>8</sup> References to the 'Jewish revolt', 'revolt', 'Jewish war' and 'war' are to the 115-117 conflict unless otherwise specified.

Jewish texts<sup>9</sup> and possible ongoing reluctance to identify as Jewish in the post-war period<sup>10</sup> are significant factors. Always there is the random nature of preservation. I have identified no private letters from or to Jewish women, the likely sources for women's prayer and theological positions. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a clear Jewish identity in the papyri, and of Jewish communities with women members before and after the revolt. Evidence from these papyri gives insight into women's lives as Jews, with the focus on their experience rather than their belief and practice.

Given the different nature of the evidence for Jewish women's religious lives, I present the texts in a format that differs from that adopted for Christian women, commenting on the papyri in the context of the political, economic and religious position of Jews in Egypt from 100 to 400 and drawing particular attention to the ways in which these papyri, and the women in them, contribute to an understanding of the impact of religious identity politically and economically.

## **THE TEXTS**

Of the approximately 650 papyri referring to women's religious lives examined for this thesis, fourteen are classified as Jewish with varying degrees of certainty<sup>11</sup>. All are of a public nature including a census return<sup>12</sup>, lease<sup>13</sup>, property list<sup>14</sup>, petition<sup>15</sup>, manumission<sup>16</sup>, six references to the Jewish war and its effects<sup>17</sup>, and three records of the Jewish tax paid by women<sup>18</sup>. Only the petition and manumission arise from within the Jewish community and are of a standard legal form, without marks of Jewish belief. The papyri that refer to the Jewish war are all written from a Greek perspective and include women in a general way, without explicit reference to them.

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<sup>9</sup> On criteria, see the appendix to the Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> When and why people would identify themselves as Jews is unclear. Lieu (2002), 88, explores this issue in relation to the term 'proselyte' among Jews. Anti-Jewish sentiment is still evident in P.Oxy.4.705 in the period C2/3, below.

<sup>11</sup> The main source for Jewish papyri is CPJ. More recent Jewish, and possibly Jewish, papyri are listed in Fikhman (1997).

<sup>12</sup> P.Lond.3.1119a=CPJ 430.

<sup>13</sup> P.Würzb.14=CPJ 453.

<sup>14</sup> P.Petaus 126.

<sup>15</sup> PSI 8.883=CPJ 455.

<sup>16</sup> P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473.

<sup>17</sup> P.Brem.1=CPJ 438; P.Brem.11=CPJ 444; P.Giss.41=CPJ 443; P.Mil.Vogl.2.47=CPJ 435; P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450; P.Oxy.9.1189=CPJ 445; P.Oxy.3.500=CPJ 448.

<sup>18</sup> O.Deiss.33=CPJ 227; O.Edfu 114=CPJ 218; O.Edfu 156=CPJ 223.

The identification of another seventeen papyri as Jewish is arguable but not accepted. They rely on a name being Jewish in the period of transition from the third to fourth centuries<sup>19</sup>.

The papyri included in this chapter date from 105 to 291. I have found no certain Jewish papyri referring to women between 291 and 400.

## **JEWISH BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN EGYPT**

Synagogues play an important role in Jewish community life in the Diaspora, although their function is debated. In Egypt, ἡ συναγωγή generally denotes the group rather than the building for meeting, although both senses occur. The building is ἡ προσευχή, and one συναγωγή may have several προσευχαί. Synagogues become places for education, judicial and community activities<sup>20</sup>, as well as worship and study of the Torah. Inscriptions and papyri attest synagogues throughout Egypt<sup>21</sup>, although no archaeological evidence remains. A synagogue implies a reasonably sized and organised Jewish community<sup>22</sup>.

Judaism is one of a number of foreign religions in Egypt. Jewish monotheism, morality, Sabbath observance and esotericism attract non-Jews<sup>23</sup>. Conversions to Jewish faith and adoption of Jewish practices are regular<sup>24</sup> and synagogues are open

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<sup>19</sup> P.Abinn.49 (346) at 244f above; P.Abinn.56 (c.346); P.Brook.73 (C4); P.Cair.Isid.114=CPJ 474a (304); 115=CPJ 474b (306); P.Kell.1.71 (C4); P.Koln 5.239 (C4); P.Oxy.31.2599 (C3/4); 36.2770 (304); 48.3384 (331) and 3403 (C4); O.Douch 137; 148; 149; 150; 151; 152 (C4), at 69-77 above; P.Oxy.46.3314 (C4) at 260ff above.

<sup>20</sup> Levine (1996b); J. G. Griffiths, 'The Legacy of Egypt in Judaism', in Horbury, Davies and Sturdy (1999), 1032f.

<sup>21</sup> Eg P.Magdala 35=CPJ 129 (Alexandria Nesos, 218 BCE); P.Tebt.1.86=CPJ 134 (Krokodilopolis, C2 BCE); P.Ryl.4.590=CPJ 138 (Unknown, C1 BCE); P.Lond.3.1177 (Unknown, 131/2)=CPJ 432. For a list of synagogues, see Tcherikover (1957-1964), 1.8. See also J. G. Griffiths, 'The Legacy of Egypt in Judaism', in Horbury, Davies and Sturdy (1999), 1028-1036; Kasher (1985), 107-167. For inscriptional references to synagogues, see Horbury and Noy (1992), nos 9, 13, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 117, 125, 126. The temple at Leontopolis, erected in mid-C2 BCE, was destroyed after the first Jewish revolt, c.74.

<sup>22</sup> Philo asserts that many synagogues existed in all the sectors of Alexandria, *The Embassy to Gaius* 20.132. The assessment may reflect his enthusiasm.

<sup>23</sup> Eg Aristeas, *Letter of Aristeas* 9-11 states that the LXX was translated at Ptolemy II's initiative (C3 BCE) to supply the library in Alexandria with a copy of the Jewish Scriptures in Greek. Aristeas implies Greek interest in Jewish beliefs and that the translation was for the sake of the Greek community. He no doubt represents a Hellenised Jewish view. The LXX may also have met the needs of Greek-speaking Jews to have the Scriptures in their language and satisfy Jewish desire for Hellenisation. See Modrzejewski (1995), 100-104; also Tcherikover (1979). The views are not mutually exclusive.

<sup>24</sup> Plutarch, *Cicero*, 7.5; Horace, *Satires*, 1.4; Augustine, *City of God* 6.11, Martial *Epigrammata* 7.82; Juvenal, *Satires* 14. 96-106, Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.463, 6.427, 7.45. See Smallwood (1981), 205; Braun (1998), 154. See also John 12.20, Acts 2.10. Evidence for the popularity of Judaism is given by repeated bans on circumcision. Hadrian's ban was continued by Antoninus Pius as a ban on the

to non-Jews who live on the boundaries of Jewish community life<sup>25</sup>. Women in particular are presented as being attracted to Judaism and number among proselytes and sympathisers<sup>26</sup>. The extent of the conversions is undoubtedly exaggerated to present Judaism in a positive light but there is no reason to suppose the documenting of the women's conversions is purely fictional. Lieu argues that the prominence of women in conversion is a matter of rhetorical rather than statistical interest, to articulate in a non-threatening way a religion's respectability and independence<sup>27</sup>. The first-century *Conversion and Marriage of Aseneth*<sup>28</sup> tells of Aseneth's conversion and marriage to Joseph. While clearly a historical romance, the story may reflect first-century women's conversion to Judaism especially through marriage, and point to male concerns about mixed marriages<sup>29</sup>. There is evidence among Greeks and Romans of mockery, suspicion and despising of Jewish beliefs. Jews were charged with atheism, that is, rejection of pagan cults, and with impiety. The earliest use of 'godless' (ἄθεος) of the Jews comes in the first century BCE from Apollonios Molon<sup>30</sup>. It subsequently becomes a stock charge<sup>31</sup>. 'Unholy' (ἀνόσιος) is the common term applied to the Jews during and after the Jewish war<sup>32</sup>. Literary sources outside Egypt refer to Jews as anti-social, exclusive, mean, lazy for observing the Sabbath, ugly, credulous and the objects of ridicule<sup>33</sup>.

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circumcision of non-Jews aimed to discourage Jewish proselytism as well as circumcision itself, Simon (1996), 104. But circumcision of non-Jews continued, Braun (1998), 154. Rescripts of 335 and 339 banned Jews from circumcising Gentile slaves. This law was renewed in 417 and 423. See 354 especially n.233 below.

<sup>25</sup> Acts refers to the following: 2.5 ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς; 10.2, 10.22 φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν; 13.16, 26 οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν; 13.50 τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας; 17.4 τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων; 17.17 ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις καὶ τοῖς σεβομένοις, all non-Jews (except those named Jews in 17.17). The association of these 'godfearers' with Jewish communities is uncertain and the interpretation of them as 'semi-proselytes' is questioned, Lieu (2002), 49-68; Mitchell (1993), 2.31f; Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987), 45, 48-66 especially 53f; Schürer (1974-1986), 3, Part 1, 150-176; Smallwood (1981), 206.

<sup>26</sup> Eg Acts 13.50; 17.4, 12 highlight women associated with Jews in the Diaspora. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 20.17-53, 92-96, records the conversion of Helena, Queen of Adiabene; and *Jewish War* 2.559-61 asserts the mass conversion of the wives of men in Damascus. Women's conversion to Judaism involved a baptism, considerably easier than circumcision. See Braun (1998), 157.

<sup>27</sup> Lieu (2002), 94.

<sup>28</sup> No.113 in Kraemer (1988).

<sup>29</sup> Lieu (2002), 94f.

<sup>30</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.148.

<sup>31</sup> Pliny, *Natural History* 13.46 uses *gens contumelia numinum insignis*; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 34.1, 2, uses ἀσεβής. See also Smallwood (1981), 379.

<sup>32</sup> See P.Brem.1=CPJ 438 below.

<sup>33</sup> Anti-social, Tacitus, *The Histories*, 5.5; credulous, Horace, *Satires*, 1.5.100; lazy, Tacitus, *The Histories* 5.4; mean, Rutilius Namatianus 1.391f; objects of ridicule, Tacitus, *Histories* 5.4. For further

During the early Christian centuries, a complex pattern of conflation, co-existence, competition and conflict emerges among Jews, Christians and pagans and, with it, religious pluralism<sup>34</sup>. Studies generally refer to communities outside Egypt but the limited evidence from the papyri confirms the pattern as descriptive also of Egypt. Recent scholarship questions the 'parting of the ways' model proposing a general separation of Judaism and Christianity, and prefers the concept of 'partings of the ways' which takes into account the varied and specific evidence of local situations, partings and comings together<sup>35</sup>. Literary sources outside Egypt suggest that from the third century, Christian writers develop an anti-Jewish polemic that becomes increasingly formulaic<sup>36</sup>, and Judaism becomes a proselytising religion in the second and third centuries, with a dimension of competition absent in the first century<sup>37</sup>. It is difficult to determine the extent to which this reflects Egyptian realities. The situation immediately after the war is one where the Jewish community is all but destroyed and possibly the early Christian community with it. Evidence for the (re-)emergence of Christian communities appears from the second century while the rebuilding of Jewish communities is not well attested until the late third, early fourth centuries<sup>38</sup>. Millar suggests that Egypt during 312-380 is marked generally by co-existence and some competition among religious communities<sup>39</sup>. From 380 the religious climate becomes increasingly conflicted<sup>40</sup>, evident in imperial legislation of growing severity in relation to Jews<sup>41</sup>.

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references, see Simon (1996), 205; Smallwood (1981), 123, nn.15f. The *CT* uses terms for Jews and proselytism such as plague, contagion, defile, *execrandus*, disgrace, pollution. For a list see Linder (1987), 60.

<sup>34</sup> Lieu, North and Rajak (1992), 1-8; Millar (1992), 103; (2004), 3. The literature on Jewish/ Christian relations is considerable eg Bell (1924); Smith (1985); Klijn (1986); Lieu, North and Rajak (1992); Lieu (1996); (2002); Newsome (1992); North (1992); Simon (1996); Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987); Rajak (1992); Boyarin (1999).

<sup>35</sup> See Boyarin (1999), 1-21; Lieu (2002), 11-29.

<sup>36</sup> Lieu (1996), 1, suggests this may be evidence for Christian communities gaining their identity over against an 'other', the Jews.

<sup>37</sup> Goodman (1992), 74f.

<sup>38</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Millar (1992), 103.

<sup>40</sup> P. Brown, 'Christianization and Religious Conflict', in Cameron and Garnsey (1998), 632-664.

<sup>41</sup> Eg the increasingly severe penalties for Christian converts to Judaism, Millar (1992), 117.

## Jewish Women, Belief and Practice

Information on Jewish women's religious lives 100–400 comes from papyri, inscriptions, archaeology and literature, including rabbinic sources<sup>42</sup>. They yield varied pictures. In terms of chronology and geography, there are methodological difficulties in taking the Talmudim in particular as reflective of the lives of women in Egypt. However, there is little evidence for significant change for women in Jewish society in the Hellenistic, Roman or Byzantine periods. Further, sources suggest considerable interchange between Egypt and Syria/Palestine in trade and migration in the period of the Mishnah at least<sup>43</sup>. For example, during and after the war of 66–73 in Palestine, a suggested 97 000 Jewish captives came to Egypt<sup>44</sup>; and after the 115–117 war, the Jewish population was most likely to have been rebuilt through migration<sup>45</sup>. A remaining difficulty with the Talmudim as sources is the extent to which they describe actual experience as distinct from a rabbinic ideal<sup>46</sup>.

Rabbinic teaching maintains that the Torah regulates human relationship with God and yet it is not equally binding on all Jews.

R. Judah says: 'A person must say three blessings every day: Blessed be he who did not make me a gentile. Blessed be he who did not make me a woman. Blessed be he who did not make me an ignoramus .....who did not make me a woman because women are not obligated to fulfil the commandments. *tBerakoth 7.18*

The whole law binds only free adult males. Women, children and slaves are exempt in varying degrees.

The observance of all positive commandments that depend on time is incumbent on men but not on women, and the observance of all positive commandments that do not depend on time is incumbent both on men and on women. The observance of all negative commandments, whether they depend on the time or not, is incumbent both on men and on women ...

*mKiddushin 1.7*

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<sup>42</sup> The Mishnah (c.200); the Tosefta, (c.200); the Talmudim, Jerusalem (c.C5), Babylon (C6).

<sup>43</sup> Safrai (1996); Levine (1996a); Levine (1996b); Horbury (1999), 362f.

<sup>44</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.414–421. He records 60 000 Jews killed in Egypt during this period, 7.369. While Josephus tends to inflate figures, his account suggests considerable movement of Jews from Palestine to Egypt and general population upheaval.

<sup>45</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 10.

<sup>46</sup> See Margalit (2000); Zabin (1996); Ilan (1995); Peskowitz (1993); (1997); Wegner (1988); (1991b); Archer (1983, 1993); (1990); Radford-Reuther (1974a).

Positive, time-dependent commands tend to be those connected with ritual and liturgy, participation in pilgrimages and festivals, and attendance at synagogue. Positive, time-independent commands tend to be those connected with everyday life. Women are excluded from obligations that could interfere with their domestic duties. Indeed, men rely on women's exemption to obey the law's requirements. Significantly, women are exempt from the core of Judaism's spiritual heritage, study of the Torah, and from the saying of the *shema*, positive, time-independent commands. In saying, 'If anyone teaches his daughter Torah, it is as though he taught her lasciviousness'<sup>47</sup> of the trial by bitter water, it is evident that study and knowledge are perceived to lead to greater liberation for women. Women's exclusion from many of the commands is consistent with a male:public, female:private pattern of social relations and the closely linked values of honour and shame<sup>48</sup>. It is part of a man's honour that his wife confine herself to the domestic sphere.

Exemption from the full requirement of the law amounts to exclusion. The exempt can never stand in the same relationship with God as the obligated. The fact that women are excluded from obligation is crucial. Their exemption/exclusion makes them unfit to fulfil commands on behalf of those who are obligated<sup>49</sup>. Hence, women are excluded from representative leadership in community life. It may be that many women turn to magic<sup>50</sup>.

The picture of women's exclusion is not the whole of their religious experience. 'Scriptural' and rabbinic presentations of women's practice are more complex, affirming women's integral place in Judaism as significant figures of history<sup>51</sup> especially as wives, mothers, nurturers of faith and observers of home-based *niddah* and *kashrut*<sup>52</sup>, although the extent of observance outside pharisaic and Essene circles and distant from the temple is difficult to determine. Women also appear as significant benefactors of Jewish communities<sup>53</sup>. The evidence of papyrological, epigraphic and non-rabbinic literature especially from the Diaspora confirms this

<sup>47</sup> R. Eliezer, *mSotah* 3.4. See also Ilan (1995), 139, 191.

<sup>48</sup> MacDonald (1996), 27-41.

<sup>49</sup> *YBerakoth* 3.3; Wegner (1988), 153f; Horbury (1999), 399.

<sup>50</sup> Archer (1983, 1993), 284. See ch. 11 below.

<sup>51</sup> Eg Bar-Ilan (1998).

<sup>52</sup> See eg Kraemer (1999).

<sup>53</sup> Kraemer (1999), 64; Rajak (1996); Rajak and Noy (1993).

greater complexity. In Palestine, from an earlier period, there is evidence that women voluntarily fulfil time-dependent positive commandments<sup>54</sup>. They circumcise their sons, fulfil the command of phylacteries and take Nazirite vows<sup>55</sup>. The women's court of the temple is evidence of both women's inclusion in the worshipping community and constraint on their involvement. Women attend synagogues and participate in worship<sup>56</sup>; separation from men is uncertain but unlikely<sup>57</sup>. Rabbinic sources also record women attending the synagogue<sup>58</sup>. Synagogue services focus on the reading and exposition of 'Scripture' in a framework of common prayer and hymnody. Women no doubt participated in prayer and hymn-singing<sup>59</sup>, but their role in liturgical leadership and teaching is unlikely though debated. Brooten's study of inscriptions suggests that women participated in the public life of Jewish communities in positions of leadership<sup>60</sup>, in teaching, administration, decision making and financial management, and that women held the positions in their own right. Trebilco's study of Jewish and pagan women in Asia Minor reaches similar conclusions<sup>61</sup>. The implications of the terms have led scholars to seek alternatives<sup>62</sup>. Rajak suggests

<sup>54</sup> Luke 2.21-39, 41-50; John 19.25; Acts 1.14; *mMiddoth* 2.5; *tSukkoth* 4.1; *bSukkoth* 51b. The numbers of women attending the Festival of Tabernacles was such that a gallery was erected over the women's court to allow the men to dance and prevent women from mingling with them. See also Ilan (1995), 180.

<sup>55</sup> Circumcision, 1 Maccabees 1.60f; 2 Maccabees 6.10; 4 Maccabees 4.25; Nazirite vows, *mNedarim* 11.5, 6; *mNazir* 3.6; *Mekhilta de R. Ishmael Bo* 17 cited by Ilan (1995), 181f.

<sup>56</sup> Luke 13.10-17; Acts 16.12-14 where women gather as a synagogue (προσευχή). For the rejection of a gathering as a synagogue because women are present, see Brooten (1982), 140.

<sup>57</sup> Archaeological evidence for the practice of separation is ambivalent, and literary and epigraphic evidence in the period is sparse and unclear. Segregation appears a later practice that cannot be retrojected onto the Roman period. Only Philo refers explicitly to separation between the Therapeutai and Therapeutrides, *On the contemplative life* 32f. His explanation of the practice argues against its regularity. See Brooten (1982), 104-130; Horbury (1999), 383-388.

<sup>58</sup> *bAbodah Zarah* 38a-b, *yBerakoth* 5.4.3C; *Leviticus Rabbah* 9.9, *bSotah* 22a. See also Brooten (1982), 140f.

<sup>59</sup> Horbury (1999), 364f, 378f.

<sup>60</sup> Rufina (Smyrna, C2 or C3) ἀρχισυνάγωγος, CIJ 741; Sophia (Crete C4 or C5) πρεσβυτέρα καὶ ἀρχισυναγώγισσα, CIJ 731c; Mnema (Thessaly, ?) ἀρχηγίσις, CIJ 696b; Marin ἱέρισα (Leontopolis, C1 BCE), CIJ 1514. All cited in Brooten (1982), 5, 11, 35, 73.

<sup>61</sup> The Jewish women include Rufina (Smyrna, C2 or C3) ἀρχισυνάγωγος, CIJ 741; Jael (Aphrodisias, early C3) προστάτης, member of the δεκανία, although Jael's gender is debated; Sophia (Crete) ἀρχισυναγώγισσα and πρεσβυτέρα; Phthiotis (Thessaly) ἀρχηγίσσα; Rebecca (Thrace) πρεσβυτέρα, the latter 3 texts dated C2 BCE to C6, cited in Trebilco (1991), 104-111, who acknowledges that functions attached to the titles are uncertain. An clearly honorific position is given to Tatian (Phocaea, C3), builder of a synagogue for the Jews, who sits in the προεδρία.

<sup>62</sup> Eg that ἱέρισα in n.60 above is suggested to be the name of Marin's father, a genitive in 'α', or to indicate Marin's 'priestly family'. But such statement of familial connections is rare in inscriptions, Kraemer (1986), 93. The inscription is from the necropolis at Leontopolis, site of the temple of Onias (160 BCE to 73 CE) where Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.65-73, states the temple was served by priests and levites.



caution in accepting Brooten's conclusions<sup>63</sup>, noting that children as young as three appear in inscriptions as ἀρχισυνάγωγοι. She proposes that all examples of the title be regarded as honorific. Kearsley argues persuasively that women with the title ἀρχιερεῖαι in Asia Minor in the first three centuries CE are not just honorary title-holders but function in their own right<sup>64</sup>. Horbury argues that honorific titles, while perhaps not having been functional, nonetheless signify a role of influence in financial subsidy<sup>65</sup>. Rajak's findings do not necessitate that ἀρχισυνάγωγος in all instances be honorific, nor does she analyse other titles women hold. Her findings, however, are a reminder of the complexity and variety in the picture of Jewish communities that the sources reveal.

Women's active participation in synagogue life is evident in the number of benefactions made by women<sup>66</sup>. Kraemer suggests that benefactions lie behind the titles μήτηρ συναγωγῆς, *mater synagogae* and *pateressa*<sup>67</sup>. The use of familial titles, common in Greek and Roman religion, may be a device allowing women to participate in public life without disturbing the male:public, female:private pattern of their communities<sup>68</sup>.

The varied pictures of Jewish women's lives warn against the presumption that there is any one experience that belongs to all Jewish women in Palestine and throughout the Diaspora, or that one belongs to Palestine and one to the Diaspora. Rather there were varieties of belief and practice both in the Diaspora and Palestine<sup>69</sup>.

Philo, in the first century, implies that Jewish women in Alexandria are secluded, with public life suited to men<sup>70</sup>. While this accords with women's restriction in the Talmudim, it is also the ideal of Greek elite society to which Philo aspired and is unlikely to have existed, if at all, outside Philo's circle. Only the wealthy could afford slaves to free a woman from activity outside the home. Evidence for Jewish women's

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<sup>63</sup> Rajak (1992), 23.

<sup>64</sup> Kearsley (1986), 190.

<sup>65</sup> Horbury (1999), 388-399.

<sup>66</sup> Lifshitz (1967) records 15 donations to synagogues by women (C2-C4), including an entire synagogue by Tation, no.13 (Ionia, C3).

<sup>67</sup> CII 523, 496, 166, 639, 606, 619d (Italy), cited in Brooten (1982), 57-62.

<sup>68</sup> van Bremen (1983), 235-237.

<sup>69</sup> Levine (1996a), 140.

<sup>70</sup> Philo, *On the special laws* 3.169-175; *Flaccus* 89.

economic activity is slight. CPJ includes two wet-nursing contracts and two payments of loans by Jewish women<sup>71</sup>. These texts, though few, suggest Jewish women's participation in the world of women's economic activity revealed in the papyri<sup>72</sup>, although the extent to which the Greek way of life influenced Jewish women in Egypt is debated<sup>73</sup>. However, the paucity of texts may reflect a concern to preserve community honour through women's shame, so that Jewish women were more regulated within the Jewish community.

## ***THE HISTORY***<sup>74</sup>

According to the 'biblical' account, relations between Jews and Egypt date from the second millennium BCE<sup>75</sup>. The Elephantine papyri of the fifth century BCE provide the earliest evidence for a permanent Jewish presence, in a military colony<sup>76</sup>. Major Jewish migrations followed the Persian annexation of Egypt in 525 BCE<sup>77</sup>, the wars of the Diadochi 320-301 BCE, the Maccabean uprising 167-164 BCE<sup>78</sup>, with the civil war lasting until 65 BCE. Migration was occasioned by military activity<sup>79</sup>, over-population, land shortage, political developments<sup>80</sup> and economic relations between Palestine and Egypt<sup>81</sup>. Women, free and slaves, were part of these migrations.

Numbers of Jewish settlers were small until the start of the Ptolemaic period after which the Jewish population increased rapidly until Egypt, especially Alexandria, became a major centre for Diaspora Jews. Tension between Jews and Greeks in

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<sup>71</sup> Wet-nursing: BGU 4.1106=CPJ 146 (13 BCE); BGU 4.1153 (1)=CPJ 147 (14 BCE); loans: BGU 4.1155=CPJ 148 (10 BCE); BGU 4.1134=CPJ 149 (10 BCE).

<sup>72</sup> Eg women buy and sell property, rent houses, lend and borrow money, own camels, slaves, pottery and fulling equipment, engage in occupations eg wet-nursing, weaving and prostitution, Rowlandson (1998), 219-279.

<sup>73</sup> Tcherikover (1957-1964), 34, argues there was considerable influence. For alternative views, see Sly (1990), 33f.

<sup>74</sup> For the history of the Jews in Egypt eg Bowman, Garnsey and Rathbone (2000); Horbury, Davies and Sturdy (1999); Cameron and Garnsey (1998); Modrzejewski (1995); Kasher (1985); Smallwood (1981); Tcherikover (1957-1964).

<sup>75</sup> Genesis 12.10; 37.28; Exodus 1-13. C6 BCE Jeremiah 41-46.30; 46.14.

<sup>76</sup> Smallwood (1981), 220.

<sup>77</sup> Aristeas, *Letter of Aristeas* 13.

<sup>78</sup> 1 Maccabees 15.16-21.

<sup>79</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.487; *Against Apion* 2.42ff; Aristeas, *Letter of Aristeas* 13; Herodotus, 2.30, 154.

<sup>80</sup> Eg Matthew 2.13-23. Even if fictional, the story reflects a credible situation.

<sup>81</sup> Eg *Zenon papyri* Vol.1. See also CPJ 1.115-118 and nos 1-6.

Alexandria emerged in the late second century BCE when the two communities supported opposing sides of the civil war<sup>82</sup>. Hostility climaxed in the 115-117 revolt<sup>83</sup>. Josephus dates the tension between Jews and Egyptians from the Jews' support of Alexander<sup>84</sup>.

Relations between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria were strained as the second century began. Violence had erupted in 38, 41 and 66. The reasons are complex. Josephus gives the main issue as civic rights<sup>85</sup>. However, economic concerns, perceived Roman favour of Jews, Jewish exclusivity and the internal conflict between Hellenisers and Jewish nationalists<sup>86</sup> were factors<sup>87</sup>.

The question whether Jews were citizens of Alexandria is debated<sup>88</sup>. Current assessment of the evidence suggests that they were not<sup>89</sup>. The Jews, however, had the right to be a *πολίτευμα*<sup>90</sup> and the Jewish *πολίτευμα* in Alexandria is known from the second century BCE<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.49-64.

<sup>83</sup> Smallwood (1981), 223; CPJ 1.20f.

<sup>84</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.487.

<sup>85</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.487.

<sup>86</sup> The desire for a greater Hellenisation emerged among the elite of Alexandrian Jews such as Philo and Aristéas, and manifested itself in the issue of Alexandrian citizenship. At the same time a trend developed among the less privileged of Alexandria and the Jews of the *χώρα* towards a greater nationalism. Close-knit, more exclusive communities evident in the development of Jewish quarters, eg in Alexandria, Oxyrhynchus and Arsinoe, facilitated the nationalist spirit.

<sup>87</sup> Kasher (1985), 62; Smallwood (1981), 123f.

<sup>88</sup> Eg Jews were required to pay the *λαογραφία*, imposed about 24/23 BCE, from which citizens were exempt. Some Jews were citizens, known from the public offices they held, Smallwood (1981), 227. Citizenship could be obtained through a decision of the *polis*, nomination by the king, or a gymnasium education obtained legally or illegally. See Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 19.280ff; *Jewish War* 2.487 for his claim to citizenship for the Jews. On the issue, see Kasher (1985), 233-309; Smallwood (1981), 228-230; CPJ 1.70f; Bell (1924), 14f.

<sup>89</sup> The letter of Claudius, P.Lond.6.1912=CPJ 153 (41), addresses 'Ἀλεξανδρεῖς μὲν ... καὶ Ἰουδαίοις δέ, II.82, 88, and states Jews live ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ πόλει. The letter effectively disbars Jews from future citizenship by banning them from a gymnasium education. On the authenticity of the edict, see CPJ 1.70f.

<sup>90</sup> Taubenschlag (1955), 6f, defines a *πολίτευμα* as an ethnic group with judicial and administrative rights living within a *polis*. Honigman (2002) argues a *πολίτευμα* is primarily a cultic association, originally with a military connection, whose leaders perform administrative functions that develop judicial aspects particularly in relation to ancestral laws. He maintains that the old definition of complete internal autonomy is not sustained by the evidence. See also Smallwood (1981), 139. The letter of Claudius confirms the Jews' right to be a *πολίτευμα*. For non-Jewish *πολιτεύματα*, see Smallwood (1981), 226, n.23.

<sup>91</sup> Aristéas, *Letter of Aristéas* 310; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 12. 108. Jewish *πολιτεύματα* also exist in Athribis, Oxyrhynchus, Arsinoe and most probably Leontopolis.

## POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

At the beginning of the second century the Jews were a prosperous, well-organised and significant presence in Egypt, numerically, politically and culturally. Philo gives the number of Jews as one million or 15% of the total population<sup>92</sup>. The figure is to be treated with caution but suggests a major group<sup>93</sup>. Inscriptions and papyri confirm the presence of Jews throughout Egypt<sup>94</sup>.

P.Lond.3.1119a=CPJ 430 (105, Provenance: Arsinoe/Krokodilopolis/Ptolemais Euergetis, Arsinoite; *BL* 1.274; 3.96; 4.44; 10.103) is the damaged census return of a woman whose name is lost, 'daughter of Jesus whose mother is Ta ...' ( ἡτοῦ τῆς Ἰησοῦτος μητ(ρὸς) Τᾱ[<sup>95</sup>), l.2. Jesus is a Jewish name. While from the second century Jewishness is reckoned matrilineally<sup>96</sup> and the mother probably has an Egyptian name, a household normally follows the male head's belief, so it is likely that Jesus' daughter is a Jew. She has her husband Agathonikos as guardian. His name gives no indication of religious affiliation since Jews use biblical, Greek and Egyptian names. However, marriage within a religious community is the norm in late antiquity<sup>97</sup>, and commanded in Jewish Scripture and rabbinic teaching<sup>98</sup>. The ideal is not always followed, as the repeated injunctions indicate. Nonetheless, it is likely that Jesus' daughter married within the Jewish community, given the rise in Jewish nationalism in the first century reflected in family life<sup>99</sup> and probably resulting in a stricter policy on marriage within the community and a tighter control of women<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> Philo, *Flaccus* 43.

<sup>93</sup> There was no specific census of the Jewish population until 71/72 when the Jewish tax became payable. Philo's tendency is to positively exaggerate the position of Jews.

<sup>94</sup> CPJ 1.6-8.

<sup>95</sup> *BL* 1.274.

<sup>96</sup> See *mKiddushin* 3.12, *mYevamot* 2.5, 7.5. See also Cohen (1999), 306. Slavery was reckoned matrilineally, Taubenschlag (1955), 21, 72. The magical papyri also name their targets matrilineally, eg P.Koln inv.5514=Suppl.Mag.43; see also Suppl.Mag. comments to 13.6 and 14.3.

<sup>97</sup> See 206f above.

<sup>98</sup> Genesis 34.14; Ezra 9, 10; *bAbodah Zarah* 36b; *bKiddushin*. 66b, 68b. The rabbinic texts dating from a later period continue a long-established strict stance on marriage, observed or not. See also Simon (1996), 487, n.100.

<sup>99</sup> Eg there is an increased use of Jewish names, CPJ 1.84.

<sup>100</sup> The honour:shame value suggests that women and women's behaviour carry the public esteem of the community. In times of conflict, women are more tightly regulated.

The census return includes a person 'whose mother is Marous' (Ἰάρχου μητρὸς) Μαροῦτος), l.11, a Jewish name<sup>101</sup>, and possibly 'Sulam...' (Ἰσυλαμ( ) (ἐτῶν) λε), l.12, who may be a Jew<sup>102</sup>. The household being registered, then, appears to be Jewish, an example of the trend among non-elite Jews to live in communities and facilitate a life ordered by Jewish traditions.

The daughter of Jesus is the owner of the house, whole or part, in Arsinoe in the Fayum. There is mention of property 'in the quarter of Hermouthiak' ([ὑπ]αρχ( ) ἐπ' ἀμφόδου Ἑρμουθιακ(ῆς)), l.4<sup>103</sup>, perhaps Agathonikos' property or a second property of the daughter of Jesus, in addition to this property in 'the house census for the quarter of Apollonios' (κατ' οἰκ(ίαν) ἀπογρ(αφήν) ἐπ' ἀμφ(όδου) Ἀπολλ(ωνίου))<sup>104</sup>, l.8. Jesus' daughter appears to live in one location and to lease her house to another Jewish family whom she registers, an example no doubt of cooperative association within the religious community.

An important Jewish settlement existed in the Arsinoite nome from the third century BCE. When Arsinoe was known as Krokodilopolis, the Jewish community built a synagogue dedicated to the Ptolemaic royal family<sup>105</sup>. Two other synagogues are known in the city from bills for water supply in 113<sup>106</sup>. The existence of synagogues and the manner of billing indicate organised community life with its own leadership as in a *πολίτευμα*<sup>107</sup>. The fees for the synagogue's water are levied on the basis of a fixed fee which is abnormally high, where other businesses appear to pay for their approximate actual usage. This may indicate discrimination<sup>108</sup>. The daughter of Jesus, then, is part of an active, sizable Jewish community that may conduct its affairs in a climate of hostility.

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<sup>101</sup> The name appears also in a receipt for the Jewish tax, O.Edfu 127=CPJ 171 (75).

<sup>102</sup> The name may be a variant of Solomon, which occurs as Σουλαμιτίς in codices Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus, CPJ 2.218. The letters are almost certainly part of a person's name, being followed by the age.

<sup>103</sup> BL 10.103, restoring the original editor's reconstruction and rendering ἀνα]γρα(φομένης), l.4 BL 3.96; [ὑπάρχ(ει) μ(οι) ἐπ' ἀμφ(όδου) Ἱερ(ακείου) Ἀπολλωνίου μέρος οἰκίας], l.5 BL 4.44; and ἀνα]γρα(φομένης) BL 4.44 incorrect.

<sup>104</sup> Stud.Pal.4.71=4.pg.58-78.XI.433, 436, 451 (73) records the names of those liable for the Jewish tax in 'the quarter of Apollonios' camp', Arsinoe.

<sup>105</sup> CPJ 3.Appendix I, n.1532A; Modrzejewski (1995), 88f.

<sup>106</sup> P.Lond.3.1177 recto=CPJ 432 (113).

<sup>107</sup> Kasher (1985), 141.

<sup>108</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 2f.

The daughter of Jesus, a Jew and a woman, has the right to own property<sup>109</sup>.

Records of land tenure after the war suggest the extent of Jewish holdings in lists of land 'formerly owned by a Jew/the Jews'<sup>110</sup>. The daughter of Jesus' property is an example of the increasing proportion of land owned by women in the Roman period<sup>111</sup>.

The census registration indicates that the daughter of Jesus owns this property in her own right. Jewish tradition, as expressed in the Talmud, effectively makes the property a woman brings into and acquires during a marriage her husband's<sup>112</sup>.

Although strictly property that is not part of the dowry remains in the woman's disposition, this personal property practically comes under her husband's control<sup>113</sup>. Nonetheless, Jewish law guards a woman's property rights and in this respect treats her equally with men<sup>114</sup>. Because the census requires registration of property in the name of the owner, this text gives no information on the practical extent of the authority of the daughter of Jesus over her property, for example, whether she is able to dispose of it or lease it. Evidence from non-Jewish sources indicates that women in Egypt generally have full rights over their property, except their dowry where husbands have the right to the usufruct<sup>115</sup>. In effect husbands at times act as though they own their wives' property.

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<sup>109</sup> Babatha in Maoza, Arabia, also owns property, Cotton and Greenfield (1994). On women and land ownership, see Hobson (1983); (1985); Saavedra (2002).

<sup>110</sup> Eg P.Oxy.9.1189=CPJ 445 (117/8); P.Oxy.3.500=CPJ 448 (130); SB 12.10893 (C2). See also CPJ 1.89.

<sup>111</sup> In the Roman period women become able to gain land in dowries not just through inheritance, Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 304-308. The tax lists of Karanis, P.Mich.4 (171-174), indicate 40% of agricultural landowners are women. The census data for Soknopaios Nesos (early Roman) shows 33% of house owners are women, Hobson (1983), 315. In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods 40% of contractors in house sales are women, Montevicchi (1941), 144.

<sup>112</sup> Archer (1990), 231-234; Wegner (1988), 87f. The Talmudim are remote from Egypt in early C2, but this probably reflects reality, having much in common with Greek and Roman practice. See also Babatha's experience, Cotton and Greenfield (1994).

<sup>113</sup> Jewish marriage unlike Greek and Roman was based on a bride-price not dowry. A bride brought property either as *son barzel* or *melog*. The former became the property of the husband, recorded as part of or additional to the *ketubbah*. It or its value was returned at divorce. The latter remained the property of the bride or her family, but the husband had the right of usufruct, Llewelyn, 'A Jewish Deed of Marriage: Some Further Observations' in ND 9.86-98, here 88. See also Archer (1990), 231.

<sup>114</sup> Wegner (1988), 40-96, concludes that the Mishnah considers women are chattels in relation to sexual and reproductive function, and persons in other aspects of life and law.

<sup>115</sup> This is the case in Greek marriage but in Roman law the dowry belongs to the husband. Yet CJ 5.12.30 (539) makes it the property of the wife. The papyri in C4 favour this latter understanding, Taubenschlag (1955), 127f.

## THE POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There is little information on the political life of the Jews in Egypt from 70 to 115. The Jewish revolt in Palestine in 66-70 resulted in the imposition of a poll-tax on Jews (*fiscus Judaicus*, Ἰουδαϊκὸν τέλοςμα)<sup>116</sup>, imposed after the destruction of the temple in the second year of Vespasian and still being paid in the mid-second century<sup>117</sup>. The time of its abolition is not known. The tax replaced the half-shekel or *didrachmon* tax previously paid by Jews to the temple in Jerusalem<sup>118</sup>, now paid to Jupiter Capitolinus whose temple had been destroyed at the same time<sup>119</sup>. The Jewish tax was levied at a rate of 9 drachmai, 2 obols<sup>120</sup>.

O.Edfu 1.114=CPJ 218, O.Edfu 1.156=CPJ 223 and O.Deiss.33=CPJ 227 are receipts for payments of the Jewish tax by women. In five other receipts the person's gender is uncertain but some or all may be women<sup>121</sup>.

In O.Edfu 1.114=CPJ 218 (1 September 108, Provenance: Apollinopolis Magna), 'Zosime, slave of the sons of Perouris' (Ζωσίμη δούλ(η) υἱῶν Πεσουρίου), ll.1f, pays six drachmai<sup>122</sup> for the Ἰουδ(αῖκοῦ τελέσματος)<sup>123</sup>, l.3, through Melchion, son of Perouris. It is likely that Zosime's masters pay the amount rather than Zosime herself

<sup>116</sup> Or Ἰουδαῖον τέλοςμα, Manteuffel, cited in CPJ 2.112, n.1. Also *denarii duo Judaeorum*, τιμή δηναρίων δύο Ἰουδαίων, a name which disappears in 88-89, and *didrachmon*.

<sup>117</sup> P.Ryl.4.594, (145/6 or 167/8), the only record of payment of the tax in Egypt after the revolt.

<sup>118</sup> See Wallace (1969), 170f.

<sup>119</sup> Wallace (1969), 174f, argues that the *didrachmon* temple tax from Egypt went to the temple in the 'Land of Onias' from C2 BCE, and that the Jewish tax collected for Rome affected this temple adversely, adding to Jewish resentment and culminating in the revolt. Kerkeslager (2004), 4, adds that the tax heightened Jewish identity.

<sup>120</sup> The annual rate of the Jewish tax was 8 drachmai=2 denarii, plus 2 obols. The 2 obols were a fee imposed because payments were in local money not denarii. The additional 1 drachma was called ἀπαρχαί. Its nature is unclear but appears in literature as a tax sent by Diaspora Jews to Jerusalem, CPJ 2.115.

<sup>121</sup> Βόκχωρις, O.Edfu 3.377=CPJ 196 (102); Κλεπαρούς, O.Edfu 1.143=CPJ 204 (106); Μειοῦς, O.Edfu 1.68, 2.265, 1.69=CPJ 208 (107), 219 (109), 228 (116); Εὐνους, O.Edfu 2.265=CPJ 219 (109); Ἀρσοῦς, O.Edfu 2.284=CPJ 225 (115). CPJ assumes they are males but gives no reason. The names Bokchoris, Kleparous and Meious occur only here according to Preisigke (1967), Foraboschi (1967-1971) and *DDBDP*. Eunous occurs also in P.Tebt.880; P.Adler 16; SB 1.2236 but the gender is unclear. Arsous occurs 9x, including CPR 7.54.14, where a sister Arsous is greeted.

<sup>122</sup> The amount of the tax is paid in full or in part. See also O.Deiss.33=CPJ 227 below.

<sup>123</sup> Or Ἰουδ(αίου τελέσματος), see n.116 above. The papyrus reads, Ζωσίμη δούλ(η) υἱῶν Πεσουρίου δι(ὰ) Μελχίων(ος) Πεσουρίου Ἰουδ( ), ll.1-3. The reading Ἰουδ(αίου) in the *DDBDP* is unlikely. Ἰουδ( ) appears to be a further, and generally later, abbreviation of the regular Ἰουδ( ) τελ( ), eg CPJ 190 (93 or 109); 191 (95); 194-201 (98-104); 206-207 (106); 209-210 (107); 212 (107) with τελέσμ( ) Ἰουδ( ); 216 (108); which itself appears to be reduced from the earlier ὑπ( ) Ἰουδ( ) τελ( ), eg CPJ 189 (92/3); 192 (95); 193 (97). Ἰουδ( ) by itself also appears in CPJ 202-205 (105-6); 208 (107); 211 (107); 213 (108); 215 (108); 217-229 (108-116).

since slaves generally have little or no money. The phrase ‘through Melchion’ confirms this<sup>124</sup>. It is probable that liability for the tax depends on the beliefs of the master rather than the slave since payment by non-Jewish masters would be a disincentive to purchase Jewish slaves and a matter for protest of which there is no evidence<sup>125</sup>. It is likely and more punitive that Jewish masters paid the tax for all their slaves, Jewish and non-Jewish. Certainly the sons of Pesouris are known to be Jewish and pay the Jewish tax<sup>126</sup>. Whether Zosime herself is a Jew is unknown.

O.Edfu 1.156=CPJ 223 (28 February 114, Provenance: Apollinopolis Magna; *BL* 4.109) records the payment of the Jewish tax by ‘Maria also called Sacheios, daughter of Demas’ (Μαρία Δηνάτος τοῦ καὶ Σαχείου)<sup>127</sup> Ἰουδ(αῖκοῦ τελέσματος)<sup>128</sup>, ll.1f. Her brother Simon’s receipt is on the same ostrakon. They pay the full amount. O.Deiss.33=CPJ 227 (31 March 116, Provenance: Apollinopolis Magna; *BL* 10.292) records the payment by Maria, daughter of Abietos (Μαρία Ἀβιήτου Ἰουδ(αῖκοῦ)<sup>129</sup>, l.1. Maria pays 4 drachmai<sup>130</sup>. Maria continues to pay the Jewish tax during the revolt, suggesting that the tax has positive value for the Jewish community, perhaps, as Tertullian suggests, their ‘purchase’ of the right to follow their ancestral traditions<sup>131</sup>.

The didrachmon applied only to men, including proselytes, from 20 to 50 years, as prescribed in Exodus 30.13ff. Women, slaves and minors were specifically excluded as they were not numbered in the census of Numbers 1.2<sup>132</sup>. The Jewish tax, however, was levied on all women and men from age 3<sup>133</sup>, and probably on the slaves of a Jewish household. The maximum age for payment of the tax for women

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<sup>124</sup> Other receipts for slaves do not state ‘through ...’, O.Edfu 1.150 (104); 3.382 (106); 1.159 (116); SB 1.4429 (107).

<sup>125</sup> There is evidence in Rome of a Jewish slave of a non-Jewish master liable for the tax, Martial, *Epigrammata* 7.58.7f. See Smallwood (1981), 374.

<sup>126</sup> O.Edfu 105-109 (106-8), 89 (108), 90 (108), 112 (108), 111 (108), 117 (110/1)=CPJ 200, 205, 214, 215, 216, 217, 221, 332, 333, 338 (the numbers do not correspond, the O.Edfu texts are in chronological order; the CPJ texts in numerical order).

<sup>127</sup> Or Σαχαί(ου) *BL* 4.109, or Σαχαί(ρου), Tcherikover, note to l.2 in CPJ 223.

<sup>128</sup> See n.116 above.

<sup>129</sup> The editor proposes Ἰουδ(αίων τελέσματος). CPJ reads Ἰουδ(αῖκοῦ τελέσματος).

<sup>130</sup> Most frequent are 4 and 5 drachmai receipts, the 2 obols with either.

<sup>131</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 18 states the tax secured freedom for Jews.

<sup>132</sup> *mShekalim*. 1.3.

<sup>133</sup> The age to begin paying the tax was determined by an *epicrisis* in infancy. Wallace (1969), 174 concludes that the tax was originally levied from age 1, and first collected at age 3.



was possibly 62 years<sup>134</sup>. Roman citizenship offered no exemption from it. The Jewish tax was a heavy burden on families being required from men, women, children and slaves<sup>135</sup> with a punitive aspect.

While the reason for Rome to impose the Jewish tax on women as well as men was probably to increase revenue, it had the effect of acknowledging women as equal members of the Jewish community. However, this may not have been the affirmation of equality it appears from a modern perspective. The attitude of Rome to women's participation in foreign cults should warn against too positive an estimation. Women's involvement in the Bacchic rites which were seen to encourage absence from home, irresponsibility and immorality was regarded negatively<sup>136</sup>. Women were considered vulnerable and inclined towards excesses in religion<sup>137</sup>. The imposition of the Jewish tax on women equally with men may have acted symbolically in a negative way, to identify Jewish faith more overtly with women. It would appear, therefore, to add to its punitive dimension, particularly in the light of Jewish traditions concerning women's exemption/exclusion from participation in religious life.

### **The Jewish War 115-117**

In the 115-117 war<sup>138</sup>, the Jewish communities of Egypt, both in Alexandria and the *χώρα*, were virtually annihilated. The reasons for the conflict, its progress and results have generated a considerable literature<sup>139</sup>. None considers the role of Jewish women in the war or its effect on them. A problem is the lack of explicit reference to Jewish women in the sources and ambiguity in the references that exist. The papyri, all of which reflect a Greek and Roman perspective, name their opponents *οἱ*

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<sup>134</sup> Stud.Pal.4.71=4.pg.58-78.XII.463=CPJ 183 (73), records payment of the tax by Tryphaina, 61 years. For men, the tax may have been payable until death.

<sup>135</sup> In Egypt the *λαογραφία* applied only to men 14-62 years, with Romans and citizens of Alexandria exempt, Wallace (1969), 119. In Syria the poll-tax was levied on men 14-65, and women 12-65, Jones (1970), 257.

<sup>136</sup> Kraemer (1992), 36-49; Livy, *Annals of Rome* 39.8-18=110 in Kraemer (1988).

<sup>137</sup> Eg Plutarch, *Moralia* 140D; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 8f; Strabo *The Geography*, 7.3.4; Tacitus, *De oratoribus* 33; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.44; 6.24. Similarly 2 Timothy 3.6f. Juvenal *Satires* 6.306-48 condemns women's immorality committed under the guise of religion. See also Pomeroy (1975), 209f; MacDonald (1996), 60.

<sup>138</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 5, argues the revolt proper began in spring 116 with the arrival of militant Jews from Mesopotamia; the violence in 115 should be seen in continuity with earlier conflicts. The debate depends on differences in chronology between Dio and Eusebius. See M. Goodman, 'Judaea' in Bowman, Garnsey and Rathbone (2000), 669-670.

<sup>139</sup> Eg Kerkeslager (2004); Modrzejewski (1995), 198-205 and bibliography, 254; Smallwood (1981), 389-427; Fuks (1961); CPJ 1.86-93; 2.225-260.

Ἰουδαῖοι<sup>140</sup>. But the war clearly involved and affected Jewish women. From being payers of the Jewish tax<sup>141</sup>, engaged in commercial activity<sup>142</sup>, contractors of marriage and divorce<sup>143</sup>, Jewish women virtually disappear from the documentary record, as do Jewish men. Jewish women and men are killed or driven out. Determining the level of women's participation in the conflicts is partly a problem of language. To what extent are references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι exclusively masculine? While this is impossible to determine accurately, the particular nature of this war suggests women may have been involved in some situations. Fuks notes that the war began as a riot (στάσις) between Jews and Greeks and escalated to a battle (πόλεμος) between Jews and Romans both in Alexandria and the χώρα<sup>144</sup>. At the level of an ethno-religious στάσις, particularly at a village level, women can be assumed to have been actively involved<sup>145</sup>. P.Brem.1=CPJ 438 records Egyptian villagers fighting and suggests a conflict of neighbour against neighbour. Apollonios, the *strategos* of Apollinopolis Heptakomia, describes the devastation of his property in and around Hermopolis, indicating fighting in towns and villages<sup>146</sup>. While he could send his wife and daughter away for safety, such a solution was not open to the majority. Philo refers to women being involved in skirmishes in the first century. He writes to condemn them even when assisting their husbands, states that women are not allowed to participate in wars, campaigns and emergencies, implying that they did so, and concedes that a woman carried away by stress should 'limit herself to ways in which a woman can help'. Philo refers to women inflicting blows and injuries like boxers and 'taking hold of the genital parts of her opponent', an act that deserves having her hand cut off<sup>147</sup>.

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<sup>140</sup> Eg 'the battle of the Romans against the Jews', (πρὸ τῆς Ῥωμαίων π[ρ]ὸς Ἰουδαίους μάχης) P.Mil.Vogl.2.47=CPJ 435, ll.26f; 'the attack against the impious Jews' ([πρ]ὸς τοὺς ἀνοσίους Ἰο[υδαί]ους ὤσμη) P.Brem.1=CPJ 438, ll.4f; similarly P.Giss.41=CPJ 443, ll.4f; P.Brem.11=CPJ 444, ll.25f.

<sup>141</sup> O.Edfu 127=CPJ 171; O.Edfu 114=CPJ 171; O.Edfu 156=CPJ 223; O.Deiss.33=CPJ 227.

<sup>142</sup> For examples, see n.71 above.

<sup>143</sup> BGU 4.1102=CPJ 144 (13 BCE).

<sup>144</sup> Fuks (1961), 107.

<sup>145</sup> Evidence from ancient Greece indicates women participated in war: at home, in violent defence of family, property; in foreign campaigns, in support roles, eg weapons manufacture, nursing, catering, Loman (2004).

<sup>146</sup> P.Giss.41=CPJ 443 (117).

<sup>147</sup> Philo, *On the special laws* 3.172-5.

Among literary sources the most detailed account of the war is given by Eusebius<sup>148</sup>. He dates the start of the conflict to the eighteenth year of Trajan and gives Alexandria, the *χώρα* and Cyrene as its locations. He names the Cyrenian king of the Jews, Loukuas, as a chief player. Cassius Dio adds Cyprus to the areas of conflict and calls the Jewish king Andreas<sup>149</sup>. Both Eusebius and Dio write of the ferocity of the struggle and cruelty of the Jews.

The revolt was crushed at its beginning in Alexandria but continued until the first year of Hadrian in the *χώρα*. There was large loss of life with Q. Marcius Turbo killing many tens of thousands of Jews<sup>150</sup>, a figure which explicitly includes men, women and children. Jews almost vanish from the papyrological record<sup>151</sup>. The war resulted in the depopulation of the countryside<sup>152</sup> and the confiscation of Jewish property<sup>153</sup>, the latter both as punishment of Jews still alive and because Jewish landowners were dead and their estates *bona caduca*.

P.Mil.Vogl.2.47=CPJ 435, P.Brem.1=CPJ 438, P.Brem.11=CPJ 444 and P.Giss.41=CPJ 443 contain references to Jews that are likely to include Jewish women.

P.Mil.Vogl.2.47=CPJ 435 (January 113-14 October 115<sup>154</sup>, Provenance: Tebtynis; BL 8.220f; 9.165) is a damaged letter written to the Alexandrians possibly by the Prefect, Rutilius Lupus, most probably in the early stages of the revolt<sup>155</sup>. It refers to a past 'battle of the Romans against the Jews' (πρὸ τῆς Ῥωμαίων π[ρ]ὸς Ἰουδαίων μάχης), II.26f, when mob violence against Jews may have been tolerated and which, the edict implies, is continuing. It calls for maintenance of the restored order. If the dating is correct<sup>156</sup>, the violence was part of the racial riot called a *στάσις* in Eusebius, *HE*

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<sup>148</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 4.2.

<sup>149</sup> 68.32. Perhaps Λουκούας ὁ καὶ Ἀνδρέας.

<sup>150</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 4.2.4. Trajan perhaps ordered Turbo to exterminate the Jews in places of revolt, Kerkeslager (2004), 6.

<sup>151</sup> See below 'After 117'.

<sup>152</sup> P.Oxy.4.707=CPJ 447 (136); BGU 3.889=CPJ 449 (151).

<sup>153</sup> For examples, see n.110 above. Also P.Oxy.1.100=CPJ 454 (133) which refers to land in a Jewish street, possibly acquired by a *strategos* due to the war.

<sup>154</sup> BL 9.165.

<sup>155</sup> See CPJ 2.228f. Ed., Fuks, 228, n.3, notes parallels with known prefectural edicts.

<sup>156</sup> Fuks, CPJ 2.233 note to col.4.4, follows Schubart and Bell with Τραιανγοῦ not Ἀδριανγοῦ proposed by Musurillo. References to slave riots and a battle between Romans and Jews support this dating. See also P.Par.68+P.Lond.1.122 and BGU 1.341=CPJ 158a and b.

4.2.1-4 from which Jewish women could scarcely be excluded. It places Jewish women in situations of conflict, no doubt as givers and receivers of violent and illegal action. It indicates also that Jewish women and men were identifiable as Jews to their neighbours<sup>157</sup>.

P.Brem.1=CPJ 438 (December 115, Provenance: Hermopolis; *BL* 3.32; 5.19; 6.24) belongs to the archive of Apollonios, *strategos* of Apollonopolis Heptakomia<sup>158</sup>. The archive gives details of the revolt from the perspectives of a Greek administrative official who is a member of a wealthy family, members of that family and Apollonios' associates<sup>159</sup>.

The author of P.Brem.1 is an unnamed person in the field with first-hand knowledge of the war<sup>160</sup>. Its addressee is also unknown but is probably Apollonios or a member of his household<sup>161</sup>. The letter describes the desperation of non-Jewish communities at Jewish aggression. It reads, 'the one hope and remaining expectation is for the attack by the massed villagers from our side against the impious Jews' (μία ἦν ἐλπίς καὶ λοιπὴ προαδοκία ἡ τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ νομοῦ ἡμῶν ἀθρώων (= ἀθρώων) κωμητῶν [πρ]ὸς τοὺς ἀνοσίους Ἰο[υδαί]ους [π]υγμῇ<sup>162</sup>), ll.1-5. The result of the 'attack', however, is Egyptian defeat<sup>163</sup>. The description fits a grassroots war of local villagers where Jews, male and female, would be targets of their neighbours' violence and also perpetrators. Whether the 'successful' battles of the Jews involve women at the village level is

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<sup>157</sup> Distinctive aspects of Jewish lifestyle might include the location of homes in a Jewish quarter, Sabbath observance, non-participation in the pagan cult, dietary rules etc. See 1 Corinthians 8, 10 for the significance for Christians of non-participation in pagan community life.

<sup>158</sup> His official and private correspondence includes compelling descriptions of the war. Apollonios, a civil official, is mobilised, a rare occurrence and suggestive of escalation in conflict.

<sup>159</sup> Eg in P.Giss.19=CPJ 436 (August/September 115?), Aline, his wife, writes of her anxiety asking Apollonios not to go into danger unguarded; Eudaimonis, his mother, in P.Giss.24=CPJ 437.3f (June 116), prays 'that they not roast you' (οὐ μὴ σε ὀπτήσωσι), ὀπτάω meaning roast, cook by means of fire, *LSJ*, s.v., suggesting the savagery of fighting, and non-Jews' suspicion of Jewish atrocities. Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 68.32, states that Jews 'eat the flesh of their victims, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood and wear their skins for clothing ...'. See also Modrzejewski (1995), 202.

<sup>160</sup> Fuks rejects Roos' idea, cited in CPJ 2.237, that the author is Apollonios writing to Aline. The geographic references in his reconstruction of ll.12f do not fit.

<sup>161</sup> Meyer and Wilcken, cited by Fuks, CPJ 2.237, suggest Apollonios. Fuks proposes a member of the household.

<sup>162</sup> *BL* 6.24; [τολ]μή *BL* 3.32; ὥσμή original editor.

<sup>163</sup> Fuks, CPJ 2.238, identifies the ἀθρώοι κωμηται as Egyptian villagers now involved in the fighting after earlier Jewish victories. Prior to this, the fighting had been undertaken by the non-Egyptian population of Greeks and perhaps Romans living in the nome.

unprovable but the conclusion that Jewish women are killed alongside Jewish men is unavoidable.

Jewish women as well as men carry the charge, ἀνόσιοι<sup>164</sup>. 'Impious' is rare prior to the revolt but becomes a stock accusation during and after it<sup>165</sup>. The term, then, does not reflect long-standing religious hatred but comes to be used during the war, perhaps because of the Jews' concerted attacks on pagan temples<sup>166</sup>. Ἀνόσιος is consistent with the Jews' refusal to worship in the state cult, opening them to suspicion and charges of lawlessness and disloyalty<sup>167</sup>. The charges confirm that Jewish identity has a political dimension that, in times of tension, renders Jews suspect, women and men. Despite anti-Jewish sentiment, the conflicts of the first and second centuries, and the charge of impiety, Jewish belief did not cease to be a *religio licita*.

P.Brem.11=CPJ 444 (117/8, Provenance: Hermopolis) is a letter from Ammonios and Hermokles in the Lykopolite nome responding to Apollonios who complained that the two men failed to supply corn due to him. They protest that they were not able to because of 'the disturbances of the Jews ... there being a state of riot' (διὰ [το]ύς τ[ῶ]ν [Ἰο]υ[δα]ίων<sup>168</sup> θορύβους ... καὶ στασέως οὔ[σης]), ll.26, 30. Θορύβος and στάσις connote riot rather than battle (πόλεμος)<sup>169</sup> and suit conflict between ethno-religious groups at a community level, where women are likely to be victims and perpetrators. The picture is confirmed by Ammonios and Hermokles' description of disruption of everyday life which they blame on the Jews. The nature of the disruption is unclear, in a damaged section of the papyrus. The attitude of Ammonios and Hermokles, dated to the end of the war, suggests that the virtual extinction of the Jews did not mitigate the high degree of public antipathy towards them.

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<sup>164</sup> Manetho (C3 BCE) first uses the word against Jews for desecration of pagan temples, Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.248f. Manetho also uses ἄσημος 1.76. The essence of the charge is explained in, 'Why then if they are citizens do they not worship the same gods as the Alexandrians?', Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.65. Also P.Oxy.10.1242 (early C3).

<sup>165</sup> Apollonios, P.Giss.41=CPJ 443 (117), uses ἀνόσιος in official correspondence, CPJ 2.249. A search of the *DDBDP* confirms the frequency distribution.

<sup>166</sup> CPJ 2.249; Fuks (1953), 158, who suggests the element of desecration in ἀνόσιος may distinguish it from ἄθεος. Also Smallwood (1981), 398.

<sup>167</sup> The language echoes that associated with *crimen maiestatis*, Kerkeslager (2004), 6; Kasher (1985), 331.

<sup>168</sup> Fuks, ed., remarks [Ἰο]υ[δα]ίων is certain.

<sup>169</sup> *LSJ* s.v.

P.Giss.41=CPJ 443=Chr.Wilck.18=Sel.Pap.2.28 (28 November 117<sup>170</sup>, Provenance: Hermopolis; *BL* 4.33; 5.35) is a letter from Apollonios to the Prefect renewing a request for leave. In the appended original request, Apollonios gives as a reason 'the attack of the impious Jews' (παρὰ τὴν τῶν ἀνοσίων [Ἰου]δαίων ἐξέφοδον), col.2.4f, so that 'virtually everything I own in the villages of Hermopolite and the metropolis needs repairing by me', ll.5-9. "Ἐφοδος connotes assault<sup>171</sup>, battles and more violent clashes. At the levels of life in the village and in the metropolis which Apollonios cites, women almost certainly are involved. The legacy of blaming the Jews and the scale of conflict are of interest in this text.

P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450.1-53=Chr.Wilck.153.54-79=Chr.Wilck.407 (199/200<sup>172</sup>, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; *BL* 1.326; 2.2.96; 9.180) describes ongoing hatred for the Jews. The text contains copies of the petitions of Aurelius Horion of Oxyrhynchus, an *ex-strategos* and *archidicastes* of Alexandria, with answers to the petitions. In the first petition, ll.15-53, Horion plans to fund annual ephebic games in Oxyrhynchus, from which Jews were automatically excluded. The Emperors should assist because of 'the good-will, faithfulness and friendship to the Romans which they [the Oxyrhynchites] showed both assisting towards the war against the Jews and still also now celebrating the day of victory each year' (ἡ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους εὐχ[οι]ά τε καὶ πίστις καὶ φιλία, ἣν ἐνεδείξαντο κα[ὶ] κατὰ τὸν πρὸς Εἰουδαίους (= Ἰουδαίους) πόλεμον συμμαχήσαντες καὶ ἔτι καὶ νῦν τὴν τῶν ἐπινεικίων (= ἐπινικίων) ἡμέραν ἐκάστου ἔτους πανηγυρίζοντας (= πανηγυρίζοντες), ll.31-35<sup>173</sup>. Celebrating after such a period of time speaks of ongoing bitterness consistent with the destruction alluded to in papyri<sup>174</sup>. It is of interest that antipathy towards the Jews is seen as a sign of loyalty to Rome 80 years after the revolt in Egypt and more than 60 years after the Bar Kokhba uprising in Palestine. How the antipathy translated into everyday behaviour is difficult to determine.

The Jews were a significant presence in Oxyrhynchus in the early Roman period. The earliest reference is in P.Oxy.2.335=CPJ 423 (85), by which time there was a

<sup>170</sup> Fuks, CPJ 443; *BL* 4.33.

<sup>171</sup> *LSJ* s.v.

<sup>172</sup> *BL* 1.326; 2.2.96.

<sup>173</sup> The war is the most likely referent. Recent conflict under Hadrian is not of sufficient scale to warrant πόλεμος. If the 195-198 conflict in Judea is meant, it is difficult to know how Oxyrhynchus would be involved with Rome συμμαχήσαντες, CPJ 2.260.

<sup>174</sup> P.Brem.11=CPJ 444; P.Giss.19=CPJ 436; P.Giss.24=CPJ 437.

Jewish quarter<sup>175</sup>. P.Oxy.1.100=CPJ 454 (133) refers to a 'Jewish street' in the Cretan quarter, indicating that Jews live in other areas of the city<sup>176</sup>. The Jews of Oxyrhynchus are active in the revolt. P.Oxy.4.707=CPJ 447 (early C2) refers to buildings in the city burned by the Jews, and P.Oxy.9.1189=CPJ 445 (117/8<sup>177</sup>) to property formerly owned by Jews, the owners presumably having died or fled. There are also traces in first-century documents of Jewish military settlers from the Ptolemaic period in the nome<sup>178</sup>.

It is likely that a Jewish community exists in Oxyrhynchus in 199/200<sup>179</sup>. The annual commemoration of the war indicates tension between the communities, and no doubt suspicion and isolation of the Jewish minority. In societies with an honour:shame system, women are a focus for scrutiny in minority groups and their behaviour a measure of the group's respectability<sup>180</sup>. Such a focus leads to strict regulation of women's behaviour. Women in the Jewish community of Oxyrhynchus in the second and third centuries may have found their lives more constrained, with a greater requirement to adhere to Jewish traditions and to the male:public, female:private social division. An annual festival functions also to keep antagonism alive.

## After 117

Literary and documentary sources are unclear about the fate of the Jews. Evidence for the survival of the Jewish *πολίτευμα* in Alexandria has relied largely on one document, understood as a hearing of Alexandrian Jews before Hadrian in 119-120<sup>181</sup>. However, new research suggests this document should be dated prior to the revolt<sup>182</sup>. There appear to be no certain Jewish inscriptions in Egypt between 117 and

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<sup>175</sup> The text is registration of a sale of a house 'in the Jewish quarter' (ἐπ' ἀμφοδου Ἰουδιακοῦ). The buyers are 'among the Jews of Oxyrhynchus' (τῶν ἀπ' Ὀξυρύγχων πόλεως Ἰουδαίων) a legal entity implying a *πολίτευμα*, Kasher (1985), 150.

<sup>176</sup> The name no doubt dates from before the war.

<sup>177</sup> Fuks, CPJ 445; *BL* 4.61.

<sup>178</sup> Kasher (1985), 152 n.153.

<sup>179</sup> MacLennan (1968), 20f. A post-war papyrus dated C2 records a tax on Jewish commerce in Oxyrhynchite published in *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg*, xl, 1961, 201, n.299. There is no evidence of an influx of Palestinian Jews after the 135 war, even though the number of slaves caused a glut in Rome, Smallwood (1981), 457.

<sup>180</sup> MacDonald (1996), 150, 180, 258. See also MacDonald's analysis of Celsus' criticism of early Christian women, 94-120.

<sup>181</sup> 'Acta Pauli et Antonini', *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* 9A=CPJ 158. M. Goodman, 'Judeaea', in Bowman, Garnsey and Rathbone (2000), 671, argues a date under Hadrian.

<sup>182</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 7.

the early fourth century, and the papyri attest only isolated individual Jews<sup>183</sup> with one certain community at the end of the third century<sup>184</sup>. From literary sources, Clement of Alexandria, for example, gives no certain evidence of actual contact with Jews<sup>185</sup>, and Origen's contacts appear to date from his time in Caesarea<sup>186</sup>.

It is likely that Jewish communities were eventually rebuilt through migration<sup>187</sup>. In 335, Athanasius gives evidence of a Jewish presence in Alexandria, recording their involvement in the conflict between Arians and orthodox Christians<sup>188</sup>. Ambrose, in 388, states that a Christian basilica was burned in Alexandria by pagans and Jews<sup>189</sup>.

Other evidence supports the sparsity of the surviving Jewish population. CPJ includes 44 documents dated 117-337 compared to almost 450 for the Hellenistic and Roman periods to 117. Of the 44 papyri, nineteen belong to texts whose sole criterion for Jewish classification is the name 'Sambathion' which could belong to Jews or non-Jews<sup>190</sup>, leaving only 25 texts. Fikhman identifies a further five texts to the end of the fourth century as certainly Jewish and ten he classifies as possibly Jewish<sup>191</sup>. In Apollinarius Magna, ostraca bearing receipts for the Jewish tax cease with the revolt, suggesting the annihilation of the Jewish community. The classification as Jewish of one family in the town during 151-165 is not sufficiently clear to be accepted<sup>192</sup>. In Karanis, in the mid-second century, one man pays the

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<sup>183</sup> P.Petaus 126 (184); P.Harr.1.142=CPJ 451 (126), a woman; P.Würzb.14=CPJ 453 (132); PSI 8.883=CPJ 455 (137) a woman; P.Ryl.4.594=CPJ 460 (145/6 or 167/8); P.Oxy.1.43=CPJ 475 (295); P.Oxy.36.2745 (late C3) an onomasticon of Hebrew names; *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg*, xl, 1961, 201, n.299; possibly P.Princ.2.73=CPJ 469 (C3) with Isaac; BGU 2.585=CPJ 471 (C3) with Abram. Fikhman (1997), 295, lists SB 16.12553 (C2/3); P.Wisc.2.57 (C2/3); P.Col.8.230 (early C3); P.Koln 2.237 (mid C3) all with possibly Jewish names, but the names are too uncertain to be accepted.

<sup>184</sup> In Oxyrhynchus, P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 (291). Jewish communities are implied in P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450 (199/200); P.Gron.3=CPJ 467 (C2 or C3).

<sup>185</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 10. Clement of Alexandria cites the LXX about 1000x in *Stromateis/Les stromates*, see 'Indices of Scripture'.

<sup>186</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 11.

<sup>187</sup> Kerkeslager (2004), 10.

<sup>188</sup> *Epistola Encyclica* 3.2.7; 3.5.6; 4.1.1; 7.5.5. The Jews use the opportunity to plunder churches.

<sup>189</sup> *Letter* 40. The same letter refers to monks burning a synagogue in Callinicum Mesopotamia at the instigation of the bishop who must rebuild it. See also Millar (1992), 104.

<sup>190</sup> Fikhman (1997), 295; CPJ 3.43-87, especially 56. Some references in CPJ are multiple, eg CPJ 498, but the statistical difficulty does not affect the outcome. On the name, see also Youtie (1973b), 467-477.

<sup>191</sup> Fikhman (1997), 295f, includes P.Oxy.46.3314 which I consider Christian. See 260ff above.

<sup>192</sup> O.Edfu 169=CPJ 378 (10 January 162), 'Ρουφος ἀπελ(εύ)θερος Σάρ(ρας), l.1. 'Sarra' is 'only doubtfully read', CPJ 2.118f.



Jewish tax among more than 1000 males paying the *λαογραφία*<sup>193</sup>. P.Oxy.44.3203 (400) records a lease taken by a Jewish man from two apotactic nuns<sup>194</sup>, evidence of a Jewish presence in Oxyrhynchus 100 years after P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473.

P.Würzb.14=CPJ 453=P.Sarap.28 ter (19 October 132, Provenance: Magdola Mire, Hermopolite; *BL* Supplement; 8.338) indicates a continuing Jewish presence in the Hermopolite nome, providing an example of a Jewish woman landowner in the post-war period. Two women lease their katoikic land to two farmers. The name of one woman is lost. The other, Tryphaina, daughter of Nearchus, acts with her guardian, her son Hermaios, also called Phibion son of Onias (Ἑρμαῖος ὁ καὶ Φιβίων Ὀνίου (= Ὀνίου)), ll.20f, who also writes for her. 'Onias' is a Jewish name and it is reasonable to assume that Tryphaina is also Jewish<sup>195</sup>. In accordance with Roman law, women require a guardian in certain commercial and legal matters<sup>196</sup>, and Jewish women are not exempt, although 'biblical' and rabbinic teaching do not require it. In Jewish law, a woman, free of her father's control because of age, or her husband's because of divorce or his death as is likely in Tryphaina's case<sup>197</sup>, had full legal rights to deal with her own property<sup>198</sup>. The other woman has her husband, Ploutarchos, as guardian. The relationship between the women is not indicated. They appear to be joint owners of the land and may be related. Whether the wife of Ploutarchos is a Jew is unknown. Both women are illiterate<sup>199</sup>.

The Hermopolite nome included a number of military settlements during the Ptolemaic period. Tryphaina's katoikic land is no doubt part of one. It was an area of heavy fighting during the war<sup>200</sup>, suggesting a large and organised Jewish community<sup>201</sup>, but no information remains as to its nature.

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<sup>193</sup> P.Ryl.4.594.col.1=CPJ 460 (145/6 or 167/8); Smallwood (1981), 405f; CPJ 1.94.

<sup>194</sup> See 301 above.

<sup>195</sup> On marriage within the Jewish community, see P.Lond.3.1119a=CPJ 430 above.

<sup>196</sup> Taubenschlag (1955), 170f, especially n.7, and 241ff above.

<sup>197</sup> Given that the son acts as guardian, Beaucamp (2002), 38, concludes the most likely κύριος is a woman's husband, and when a son acts as guardian it is most likely the woman is a widow. Of the 5 papyri in CPJ where a woman acts with a guardian, the guardian is a close male relative: husband 2x, uncle 1x, son 2x.

<sup>198</sup> Wegner (1988), 87.

<sup>199</sup> On literacy, see 11-19 especially 15f above.

<sup>200</sup> See P.Brem.1=CPJ 438; P.Giss.41=CPJ 443, above.

<sup>201</sup> P.Amh.2.98=CPJ 468 (late C2) refers to a Jewish street in Hermopolis.

It is noteworthy that Tryphaina owns the katoikic land rather than her son. Women were not able to own katoikic land until the Roman period<sup>202</sup>. Given that women tend not to inherit real estate from their husbands<sup>203</sup> but rather maintenance for their lifetime and that they are more likely to inherit land than acquire it by purchase<sup>204</sup>, it is likely that Tryphaina inherited the katoikic land from her family or received it as part of her dowry. Her family may have been among the military colonists and she is among those who survived the revolt with their property.

It is unusual immediately after the Jewish war to find property owned by a Jew. The papyri attest large amounts of Jewish lands confiscated as a result of the conflict. It is debated whether confiscations affected all Jews or only those involved in the conflict<sup>205</sup>.

P.Oxy.9.1189=CPJ 445 (117/8, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; *BL* 4.61) is a letter from Aquillius Pollio, *strategos* of the Herakleopolite nome, to Apollonios, *strategos* of the Oxyrhynchite nome, with instructions 'about a schedule of property formerly belonging to the Jews' (περὶ γραφῆς τῶν τοῖς [Ἰ]ουδαίοις ὑπαρξάντων), ll.9f, and the schedule itself. Copies are sent to the *stratego*i of the Kynopolite and Lykopolite nomes. The text does not specify whether involvement in the war is necessary for confiscation. The circulation of the schedule, however, indicates a widespread policy. P.Oxy.3.500=CPJ 448 (2 October 130, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; *BL* 1.324; 6.98; 9.180; 10.139) also refers to land 'forfeited by Jews and from Greeks who died without heirs' (ἀπ' Ἰουδαίων ἀφειρη[μ]ένων καὶ Ἑλλήνων ἀ[κλ]ηρονομήτων)<sup>206</sup>, ll.11-12, without clarification. Swiderek argues that the extensive use of the category πρότερον Ἰουδαίων implies that confiscations affected all Jews<sup>207</sup>. However, the extent of the fighting suggests that the numbers of Jews involved directly in the war forfeit sufficient land to satisfy the category πρότερον Ἰουδαίων without necessarily including all Jews. It remains true, however, that the only example of Jewish ownership of land

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<sup>202</sup> The earliest example of a woman inheriting katoikic land is dated C1 BCE, Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 304f.

<sup>203</sup> Babatha in Maoza does not inherit property from her husband or parents when there are male heirs. Women rather gain land by deed of gift, Cotton (1995), 185; Cotton and Greenfield (1994), 211.

<sup>204</sup> Hobson (1983), 316.

<sup>205</sup> Only Jews active in the revolt, Smallwood (1981), 405. *Contra* Swiderek (1971), 62. Kerkeslager (2004) does not address the question, but argues that 'the vast tracts of confiscated land ... suggest(s) that the landholding Jewish aristocracy ... was not exempted from capital punishment', 7f.

<sup>206</sup> *BL* 9.180; 10.139, amending ἀφειρη[μ]ένων, Swiderek (1971), 62; *BL* 6.98.

<sup>207</sup> Swiderek (1971), 47, 60, 62.

after 117 accepted on the balance of probability is Tryphaina in P.Würzb.14=CPJ 453. CPJ includes a possible second example, Aurelia Ptolema, wife of Johannes an (ex-)gymnasiarch in P.Cair.Isid.114=CPJ 474a, (304), whose Jewishness depends on her husband Johannes' Jewishness. The only criterion is his name which, with his occupation, I do not consider sufficient to classify him as either Christian or Jewish<sup>208</sup>.

The evidence of the papyri, limited as it is, supports the hypothesis of the widespread confiscation of Jewish land. The retention of land by Tryphaina argues against forfeiture of all Jews' land, and suggests rather confiscation on the basis of direct involvement in the war. However, this conclusion is at best tentative and Tryphaina's status as Jew is less than certain. It is also the case that implementation of edicts is sometimes dependent on the inclinations of the local official. The fact that the single Jewish landowner is a woman is consistent with women's undoubtedly more limited participation in the conflict<sup>209</sup>.

P.Harr.1.142=CPJ 451 (26 May-24 June 126, Provenance: Sespitha, Oxyrhynchite; *BL* Supplement 86) is a fragment of three registered receipts from an official abstract. Their nature is unclear but the second concerns katoikic land. The third refers to a person 'whose mother is Herakleia daughter of Onias' (τῆς μητρὸς Ἡρακλείας Ὀνίου), l.16. The name 'Onias' is Jewish and it is likely that Herakleia and her son/daughter, whose name and patronymic are lost, also are Jewish<sup>210</sup>. The citation of Herakleia's name need not imply that she is alive. It is noteworthy that Herakleia's son or daughter is engaged in commerce within ten years of the end of the fighting and is no doubt subject to the tax on Jewish commercial activity identified in BGU 4.1102.

PSI 8.883=CPJ 455 (9 July 137, Provenance: Theadelphia; *BL* Supplement 232) is a petition 'from Isakous, daughter of Herakleides' (παρὰ Ἰσακοῦ(τος) τῆς Ἡρακλείδου), l.3, to the *strategos* of the Arsinoite nome. Isakous has her son, Timokrates son of Apion, as guardian. Isakous asks the *strategos* to investigate the theft of wheat from the threshing floor left to her by her dead husband. Isakous is almost certainly a Jew

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<sup>208</sup> See 24f, 29 above.

<sup>209</sup> Horsley, 'Forfeiture of Jewish Property' in *ND* 4.210-213, here 210 proposes that broad confiscation of Jewish land if correct, and if continuing, may account for the situation in P.Oxy.44.3203 (400); see 301 above. M. Harding, 'A Hebrew Congregational Prayer from Egypt' in *ND* 8.145-147, finds no evidence for ongoing confiscations.

<sup>210</sup> Probably following the pattern of l.14, ... τοῦ Ἡρακλείδου μητρὸς Ἡρακλείας. A metronymic alone can imply bastardy, slavery or polygamy, Horsley, 'Use of a double name' in *ND* 1.89-96, here 91.

given her biblically derived name. This is its only attestation<sup>211</sup>. Tcherikover suggests a growing sense of nationalism may account for the increased use of Hebrew biblical names in the Roman period. Isakous may well have been born about 115-117 and her name reflect the intense fervour of the period.

Isakous asks the *strategos* 'to order the chief policeman of the village of Theadelphia to make a proper search' (ἀξιῶ συντάξ[αι] τῷ τῆς κώμης Θεαδελφείας ἀρχεφώδῳ (= ἀρχεφώδῳ) ποήσασθαι (= ποιήσασθαι) τὴν καθήκουσαν ἀναζήτησιν), ll.15-18, and to punish the guilty. Ὁ καθήκων refers to one's due<sup>212</sup>. Her request implies that a less than proper search has taken place. No reason is given for Isakous' need to seek the *strategos*' intervention. It may be because she is a woman that her grievance has been neglected<sup>213</sup>. It may be because Isakous is a Jew, and that the lack of justice is a legacy of the animosity of the war evident in P.Oxy.4.705 (199/200). Although I have found no statement of such ethno-religiously based injustice, an attitude similar to that of the Oxyrhynchus community would facilitate an uncooperative stance in relation to Jewish residents subject to wrong.

P.Petaus 126 (184/185, Provenance: Ptolemais Hormu) is a five-column portion of a list of those receiving seed for agricultural land<sup>214</sup>, including 'Mariamme, daughter of Joseph' (Μαριάμνης Ἰ[ω]σήφου (ἀρούρης) υἱός), l.44. Mariamme's name and that of her father indicate that she is Jewish. There are the only Jewish names in the list of more than 130. Whether any of the Greek names belong to Jews cannot be determined. However, Mariamme's isolation as a Jew would be consistent with the evidence for individual Jews rather than communities in the post-war period<sup>215</sup>.

Mariamme leases her 1/16 aroura to Protarchos, son of Dorion<sup>216</sup>. Mariamme is not the owner of the land, which is cultivatable public land, as is most on the list, the

<sup>211</sup> Jews rarely call children by the names of patriarchs, Tcherikover (1957-1964), 84 but see Williams (1997). In the papyri, 'Isaac' occurs 4x in the Ptolemaic period; 6x in the Roman period, mostly before the revolt except P.Princ.2.73 (C3); 6x in the Byzantine period when it is exclusively Christian.

<sup>212</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>213</sup> Examples of women petitioners naming gender as the reason for their need include P.Oxy.6.899=CPJ 418e (200); BGU 2.522 (C2). Also P.Herm.17 (C4), 46f above; SB 14.11881 (C4), 60f above. See also 137, n.134 above.

<sup>214</sup> Part of the archive of Petaus, P.Petaus 1-127 (135/6-184/5), the illiterate κωμογραμματεὺς. See Youtie (1966).

<sup>215</sup> See n.183 above. CPJ does not list Ptolemais Hormu as having a Jewish community.

<sup>216</sup> In the same entry, Anonymos leases 1/8, 1/16 arourai to Protarchos, as do the sons of Papos and Aline, daughter of Sambas, with 1/4, 1/8, 1/32 arourai, l.32.

remainder being sacred land. Mariamme has the longer lasting right to it, while Protarchos is a sub-lessee<sup>217</sup>. The leasing and sub-leasing of agricultural land owned or controlled by women is common<sup>218</sup>. While leases of crown land could be assigned to individuals for forced cultivation, this is not the case with Mariamme's allocation, as women were exempt from such compulsion<sup>219</sup>. Her lease may be on the basis of 'sale' with an annual rent<sup>220</sup> or through inheritance<sup>221</sup>. There is no evidence for official restriction on Jews leasing crown land as a result of the war. This text supports its permissibility. The size of the plot she leases is too small to sustain a person<sup>222</sup> and suggests she has an alternate income.

A major political development that affected women is Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana* (CA) (212). The CA granted Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire, men and women, including Jews. Aurelius/Aurelia appear as names in Jewish papyri<sup>223</sup>. The Greek text of the CA gives as its purpose the greater honour of the Roman gods by increasing their worshippers<sup>224</sup>; Cassius Dio 78.9 gives increasing citizen taxation. Dio is probably correct since Jews received a citizenship of equal status and did not lose their exemption from the state cult<sup>225</sup>. Jewish women

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<sup>217</sup> On leasing crown and sacred land, see Johnson (1956), 74-78.

<sup>218</sup> Women did agricultural labour but less frequently than men. They are lessors more often than lessees of agricultural land, Pomeroy (1983, 1985), 308. Apollinarion in P.Oxy.6.899, a petition to be exempted from compulsory cultivation of inherited crown land, pleads not only that she is a woman (γυναικα οὔσαν) but also that she is without a husband or male helper (ἄνδρον καὶ ἀβοήθητον). She argues 'men are the persons suitable for the undertaking of the cultivation ... and it has been decided by prefects and the *epistratego*i that women are not to be forced to undertake this duty'. See also Bagnall (1993a), 68, 119-121.

<sup>219</sup> Johnson (1956), 28.

<sup>220</sup> See Taubenschlag (1955), 385ff.

<sup>221</sup> Examples of women inheritors of crown land are BGU 2.648 (164 or 196), where the woman seeks to retain the property at the same time as requiring her male next-of-kin to do the compulsory cultivation; P.Oxy.6.899 (200), see n.214 above.

<sup>222</sup> The nett produce of two arourai feeds one person. Three other women appear in the list of primary lease-holders: Muronis, 1/8 aroura, l.14, 1/64 aroura, l.64; Aline, 1/2 aroura, l.23, 1/2, 1/16 arourai, l.53; Ninnous, 1/8, 1/32 arourai, l.66. Men holding 200-400 arourai appear, eg ll.88, 94. Mariamme's name occurs once.

<sup>223</sup> Eg P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 (291); P.Oxy.12.1429=CPJ 477 (300). The meaning of χαρ[ις] τῶν [δε]δειτ[ι]κίων is debated but clearly does not apply to Jews. See Smallwood (1981), 503.

<sup>224</sup> P.Giss.40 (215).

<sup>225</sup> Other possible reasons for the CA include simplifying the law and administration between citizens and non-citizens, and replacing exclusive local citizen bodies with a universal citizenship, Jones (1936), 234.

became citizens, although, as for all women, this seems to have had limited impact<sup>226</sup>. Women continued to have no political rights<sup>227</sup>.

The Theodosian Code (CT) (437) includes laws from the mid-second century relating to Jews<sup>228</sup>. In the fourth century, it protects Christian converts from Judaism from attack by Jews<sup>229</sup>. Conversion to Judaism is banned in a ban on circumcision with penalties both for the circumcised and the person circumcising<sup>230</sup>. To what extent such a ban affected the conversion of women is difficult to evaluate<sup>231</sup>. Legislation also forbade or penalised non-Jews joining Jewish worship<sup>232</sup>. Jews were prohibited from owning Christian slaves and certainly from circumcising them<sup>233</sup>. Marriage between Jews and Christians became illegal in 388<sup>234</sup>. It is significant that legislation from 390 to 423 repeatedly aims to protect Jews from illegal persecution, indicating violence against Jews by Christians.

### **THE RE-EMERGENCE OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

Evidence for Jewish institutions appears again in the papyri from the second half of the third century<sup>235</sup>.

P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 (14 April 291, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 5.78; 6.100; 8.242) is a *manumissio inter amicos*, registering that 'we have set free and liberated Paramone, our house-born slave about 40 years, and her children ...' (μεταξὺ φίλων

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<sup>226</sup> Bassiouni (1992), particularly 244, concludes women gained Roman names, notably 'Aurelia'; rights to register children's births; rights under Roman wills, inheritance, and guardianship including the *ius liberorum* (9) so freeborn women with 3 children, and freed women with 4 children, had the right to act without a guardian. Citizens were exempt from scourging and the *λαογραφία* but were subject to other taxes including inheritance tax.

<sup>227</sup> Gardner (1993), 86; Taubenschlag (1955), 177. No woman had the right to vote, hold office or have *potestas* over a free person.

<sup>228</sup> Linder (1987), 67-86, classifies laws in relation to Jews in 3 groups: relations between Jews and the Roman government, eg recognition of Judaism as a *religio licita*; relations between Jews and non-Jews, particularly Christians, and especially about conversion to and from the Jewish faith; conflict and social relations.

<sup>229</sup> CT 16.8.1 (315, 339); 16.8.5; 16.9.1 (335); CS 4 (335-6).

<sup>230</sup> CT 16.8.1 (315); *Digest of Justinian* 48.8.11.pr. See also Coleman-Norton (1966), 1.66, 215, n.4.

<sup>231</sup> J. Lieu, 'The "Attraction of Women" in/to Early Judaism and Christianity: Gender and the Politics of Conversion', in Lieu (2002), 83-99. CT 16.8.6 (339) specifically forbids Jews from soliciting the conversion of women weavers indicating some women were converting.

<sup>232</sup> CT 16.8.1 (315, 339); 16.8.7 (352, 353); 16.7.3 (383).

<sup>233</sup> CT 16.8.5 (335); 16.9.1(335); CS 4 (335-6), CT 3.1.5 (384).

<sup>234</sup> CT 3.7.2 (388)=9.7.5.

<sup>235</sup> Eg an inscription for a synagogue in 270, CPJ 1.94.

ἡλευθερ[ώσαμεν καὶ ἀπελύσαμεν, II.5f<sup>236</sup>, Παραμόνην οἰκογενῇ δούλην ἐα[υ]τῶν ὡς (ἐτῶν) μ [κ]αὶ [τὰ ταύτης τέκνα ), II.4f. Payment of the ransom is 'from a community of the Jews' (παρὰ τῆς συνα[γ]ωγῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων), I.7. The Jews are styled συναγωγή not πολίτευμα, even though the community functions as a legal entity in this manumission.

There are two manumitters, an example of joint ownership of slaves in Egypt<sup>237</sup>. One is a woman whose father was an *exegete* and member of the Oxyrhynchus council. Her name is lost<sup>238</sup>. She acts with a *curator*, an indication that she is a minor<sup>239</sup>. The other manumitter, named first, is her half-sister/brother through their mother, also a Roman citizen<sup>240</sup> since the text refers to a public office in his own right or of his/her father. The offices raise questions whether, in 291, it is possible for Jews to hold public office and whether the woman and her sister/brother are fellow-Jews to Paramone. Legally they may be<sup>241</sup> but with most high public offices tied to wealth and land ownership<sup>242</sup>, the possibility of Jews in Egypt holding such office is difficult to determine. Tcherikover rules it out, giving as reason the owners' membership of the elite<sup>243</sup>. Not all public offices involve sacrifice so observant Jews might hold such offices. One of the representatives of the Jewish community in the manumission is a city councillor of Ono in Syrian Palestine, Aurelius Justus (καὶ Ἰούσ]του βουλευτ[ο]ῦ Ὠνειτῶν τῆς Συρίας Παλαιστεινῆς πατρὸς τῆς [συναγωγῆς]<sup>244</sup>), II.8f. This is noteworthy since sittings of city councils opened with sacrifice<sup>245</sup>. There is, however, no evidence

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<sup>236</sup> Taubenschlag (1955), 46, 99; Biscardi and Cantarella (1967), 77-84; Kasher (1985), 153-156; *BL* 6.100; 8.242. On manumission, see P.Edmonstone at 42ff above and 133ff above.

<sup>237</sup> See also P.Edmonstone noted immediately above.

<sup>238</sup> About 40 letters are missing from the left-hand margin.

<sup>239</sup> Under 25 years. See Arjava (1997), 29; Taubenschlag (1955), 179.

<sup>240</sup> Probably not Aurelius Theon in I.21, *contra* CPJ 3.35, note to I.2, as Theon appears as the third hand and second signatory to the document.

<sup>241</sup> 'The divine Severus and Antoninus allowed those who profess the Jewish faith (*Iudaicam superstitionem sequuntur*) to hold office, but also imposed on them only those obligations which would not damage their religion (*superstitionem*)', *Digest of Justinian* 50.2.3.3. Taubenschlag (1955) indicates no legal disability. Similarly Stemberger (2000), 22-26. Inscriptions of Aphrodisias record 9 godfearers but no Jewish councillors. The Jews may not have been local citizens. Inscriptions of Sardis in the same period confirm Jews as citizens and holders of public office, Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987), 124, 126.

<sup>242</sup> Bagnall (1993a), 135f; Johnson (1956), 609-611, who lists the wealth required for liturgies, 611, n.22.

<sup>243</sup> CPJ 3.35.

<sup>244</sup> *BL* 5.78.

<sup>245</sup> Stemberger (2000), 26.

of a Jew in Egypt holding public office or possessing the necessary wealth and land in the third century. Further, the manumitters have Paramone as their slave and yet the manumission of fellow-Jews is a duty prescribed by the Talmud<sup>246</sup>. While it is unlikely that all Jews observed this obligation, it argues against the woman and her sister/brother being Jewish.

With Aurelius Justus, the other representative of the Jewish community is Aurelius Dioskoros<sup>247</sup>. The reason why a member of a city council in Palestine should represent the Oxyrhynchus synagogue in Paramone's manumission is unclear<sup>248</sup>. It may be that Aurelius Justus has some connection with Paramone and is present with the specific purpose of arranging her manumission<sup>249</sup>. A question remains, however, why he would need the cooperation of the local synagogue unless they contribute funds. If Ἰούστου, l.8, is the correct restoration, Justus is also πατὴρ τῆς [. It is hardly likely that he is Paramone's father. Rather, reference is made to his offices.

Moreover, Paramone is named in l.4 with no patronymic or metronymic. If Justus is father of the woman manumitter he is the *exegete* and councillor of Oxyrhynchus, l.3. If he is father of the half-sibling, again his office in l.2 is in Oxyrhynchus. Both are unlikely for an active member of the Jewish community in Palestine. Tcherikover suggests πατὴρ τῆς συναγωγῆς be restored. This is a common title given in recognition of achievement<sup>250</sup>. Brooten argues that there is nothing necessarily honorific in the title but rather it is associated with high office, possibly control of the treasury<sup>251</sup>. This seems unlikely for Justus from Ono unless reference is being made to the community there. Rajak prefers to see such titles as part of the system of *euergetism*, which Jewish communities adopted though in a modified form<sup>252</sup>. The titles were given 'in exchange for' benefactions<sup>253</sup>, perhaps here in recognition of a

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<sup>246</sup> *mGittin* 4.9; *yGittin* 4.6.1.D-E; *bGittin* 40b-41a; *bKiddushin* 14b, 21a. See also Kasher (1985), 153. On the authority of the Talmudim for Diaspora Jews, see 'Jewish Women, Belief and Practice', 330 above. Manumissions of Jews are attested, eg CIJ 683, Panticapaeum in the Crimea; CIJ 690 Gorgippia in the Crimea. See also CIJ 709-711 for the 'sale' of slaves to Apollo in Delphi as a means of manumission.

<sup>247</sup> This papyrus with its two Jewish Aurelii is one of the few pieces of evidence that the CA extended citizenship to Jews.

<sup>248</sup> Kerkeslager (2004) assumes Justus is a Palestinian migrant, now synagogue official in Oxyrhynchus, but the text indicates his office in Ono is current.

<sup>249</sup> For a similar idea, Kasher (1985), 154.

<sup>250</sup> Kasher (1985), 154.

<sup>251</sup> Brooten (1982), 70.

<sup>252</sup> Rajak (1996).

<sup>253</sup> Rajak (1992), 22-24.



donation to the community, a preliminary to gaining its cooperation in negotiating Paramone's manumission.

Paramone is a house-born slave<sup>254</sup> aged 40<sup>255</sup>. Her name can mean 'the obligation to continue in service'<sup>256</sup> and is common among, although not exclusive to, slaves<sup>257</sup>.

The name may derive from *paramone* contracts which are common aspects of manumission by which a slave is freed but required to remain with the former owner for a specified time<sup>258</sup>. Given that slave children are named by their owner, Paramone's name may be a nickname<sup>259</sup>. It may also be a comment from the master of Paramone's mother, referring to the woman slave gaining her own freedom by producing a child whom she would leave in slavery<sup>260</sup>. Other types of clauses involve the freed slave in *paramone* obligations to the group providing the ransom. It may be that Paramone will be obliged to serve the Jewish community in some capacity. The likelihood of this is increased by the fact that the manumitters explicitly state that they have relinquished all rights and powers over Paramone and her children from the present day, l.6; that is, there are no *paramone* obligations.

Being freed with Paramone are some children, a child aged 10 years and Jacob aged 4 years (καὶ [τὰ ταύτης τέκνα - 22 letters - οὐλὴ τ]ραχήλω <ώ>ς (ἐτῶν) ι καὶ Ἰακ[ὼ]β ὥς (ἐτῶν) δ, ll.4f. The original editor restores τὰ ταύτης τέκνα but it may be that the children are not Paramone's own although they are almost certainly family. Her age would allow that they be either her children or grandchildren. A 35-letter break precedes the description of the 10-year-old and may identify a third child.

It is almost certain that Paramone is a Jew since the Jewish community pays her ransom. It is difficult to imagine a situation where a Jewish synagogue would

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<sup>254</sup> The word οἰκογενής denotes a person who is slave-born not necessarily owned from birth, or it can be used to 'cover' a fictional sale, Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 48.

<sup>255</sup> The age of slave-men is rarely given. Among women, age is infrequent, with the average 30 years, Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 146.

<sup>256</sup> *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>257</sup> Preisigke (1967) and Foraboschi (1967-1971) give no other example of 'Paramone' but several examples of 'Paramonos' with no necessary slave connotation, eg P.Tebt.3.815; 3.890.

<sup>258</sup> Samuel (1965); Harrill (1995), 54, 169f; Llewelyn, "He gives authority to his slaves, to each his work ..," Mark 13.34' in *ND* 6.60-63, here 61, n.69.

<sup>259</sup> Harrill (1995), 173, likening the name to 'Fido' for a dog, a means of humiliation.

<sup>260</sup> A. L. Connolly, 'A slave's bid for freedom' in *ND* 4.100-104, here 104.

manumit a non-Jew. I have found no example attested. Further, a boy is called Jacob, indicating Jewish or Christian beliefs, and here almost certainly Jewish<sup>261</sup>.

Paramone's connection with the Jewish community at Oxyrhynchus is unclear. It may be that Paramone was only recently acquired by her owners in Oxyrhynchus<sup>262</sup>. If she has been a slave in the city for 40 years, the community has not secured her freedom. It may be that, as a slave of non-Jews, Paramone has had little contact with the synagogue. Further, as a woman, she is permitted but not obligated to attend public worship<sup>263</sup>.

Paramone's price of redemption with her children, fourteen talents, is extremely high though comparable to sale prices<sup>264</sup>. She is clearly valuable to the community or to members of it. It raises the question why such a price would be paid. The price may point to difficulties in securing the manumissions. Justus, the prominent citizen of Ono, if he came to Oxyrhynchus to secure the manumission, may have contributed some or all of the funds. Some commentators presume the payment of fourteen talents indicates that the Jewish community was large and wealthy in 291<sup>265</sup>. The community's participation in the manumission as a legal entity implies it is sizable and well organised, but, given Justus' possible involvement, not necessarily wealthy. After the silence of the sources over more than 170 years, the existence of such a Jewish community is a noteworthy<sup>266</sup>.

Paramone's status as 'house-born' (οἰκογενής), l.4, indicates that her mother was also a Jewish slave since Jewishness is reckoned matrilineally<sup>267</sup>. Jewish women

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<sup>261</sup> Notably, the name given by the owner reflects Paramone's beliefs.

<sup>262</sup> See on 'house-born', n.254 above.

<sup>263</sup> Wegner (1988), 166, gives as reasons that women were a sexual distraction and a potential cultic contaminant because of menstruation, and dependent women (unmarried girls, wives) were the sexual property of a man and discouraged from appearing in public to encounter other men.

<sup>264</sup> Ransom prices of slaves: i) 268/270, 5000 dr, Johnson (1956), 279f (1 talent=6000 dr); ii) C3, 1600 dr, P.Oxy.43.3117, Biezunska-Malowist (1984), 336. Prices of slaves: i) 337-350 2400 silver talents (imperial money), P.Abinn.64; ii) 330, 1250 denarii, P.Lond.3.977; iii) 300, 913 silver talents (imperial money) and 200dr SB 5.8007; iv) 293, 15 silver talents (new money) Mitt.Chr.171; v) 285, 8 silver talents (new money) SB 6.9216; vi) 277-282, 7 silver talents (imperial money), P.Strasb.4.264, all cited in Biezunska-Malowist (1984), 335. See also, Biezunska-Malowist (1977), 165-167. Inflation does not account for the high ransom here.

<sup>265</sup> Kasher (1985), 153; Tcherikover (1957-1964), 94.

<sup>266</sup> Another συναγωγή τῶν Ἰουδαίων, is known in Zenobia in 270, OGIS 129.

<sup>267</sup> The matrilineal principle develops in C2. See 336 especially n.96 above. On οἰκογενής, see n.254 above.

came into slavery in contexts of war and misadventure<sup>268</sup>. People could also sell themselves into slavery to repay debt<sup>269</sup>. Further, the ban on enslavement of free men and women in the Ptolemaic era<sup>270</sup> is unlikely to have put an end to the lucrative slave trade. With Paramone 40 in 291, her mother was perhaps enslaved between 230 and 250, the period of confusion in Palestine following the Severan emperors. If Paramone's mother's family came from Ono, the political, administrative and economic chaos could account for her enslavement.

Paramone's life as a Jewish slave woman probably differed little from the lot of other women in slavery. She was the property of her owners and was available in terms of her labour and her body. Rabbinic teaching warns of the dangers of marrying a freed slave woman because of her past. She is 'by any measure a prostitute'<sup>271</sup>.

## **CONCLUSION**

A number of observations have been made about Jewish women's lives and the evidence of the papyri in relation to them. I draw on these in formulating the conclusions.

The first conclusion concerns the nature of the papyri as sources for information of Jewish women's religious lives that distinguish this material from that available for Christian women. The papyri contain no information about the nature of Jewish women's beliefs and practices. They contain no transcendent references, no statements of prayer or theological reflection. The papyri also make no reference to women's membership of a synagogue, participation in worship or involvement in other Jewish institutions. This lack reflects the paucity of extant Jewish papyri in the period, and their character as public documents belonging to Jews or documents that derive from a non-Jewish milieu. None is a private letter written by a Jewish woman or to a Jewish woman that might allow the expression of personal belief and practice.

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<sup>268</sup> The Zenon archive indicates a trade in slaves between Egypt and Palestine in the Ptolemaic period, V. Tcherikover, 'Palestine in Light of the Zenon Papyri', cited in Ilan (1995), 210. Sales of women and children follow the wars of 70 and 135, Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.304f, 6.384. Also Aristeas, *Letter of Aristeas* 14.

<sup>269</sup> Possibly with their children, Taubenschlag (1955), 70f. 1 Clement 55.2 tells of women selling themselves as slaves to buy food for others.

<sup>270</sup> SB 5.8008 (262/1 or 261/0 BCE).

<sup>271</sup> *tHorayot* 2.11C. See also Ilan (1995), 206.

The papyri give evidence of the existence of Jewish communities in Egypt<sup>272</sup>, and women's participation in community and worship life is not in question<sup>273</sup>. Such participation, especially in prayer and hymnody, is attested in epigraphic and literary sources outside Egypt. Evidence, particularly from Asia Minor, indicates women hold titles that connote positions of influence if not necessarily functional significance. The papyri provide no information about the roles Jewish women may have held in synagogues in Egypt and shed no light on the debate surrounding the nature of the roles identified elsewhere.

A second conclusion concerns the significance of Jewishness in Jewish women's self-identity. The papyri suggest that the Jews are a distinct and identifiable group in society. Documents refer to Jewish quarters and streets<sup>274</sup> where Jews apparently lived in distinguishable close, though not exclusive, community. P.Lond.3.1119a, a census return by the daughter of Jesus, indicates occupation of her house by another Jewish family and suggests close community and intra-group association. Documents of the war and its aftermath refer to 'the Jews', without further delineation beyond adjectives of negative appraisal, as the objects of fear and hatred, the perpetrators and victims of community violence, and the past owners of confiscated property<sup>275</sup>. Women's Jewishness places them in this distinctive ethno-religious category. The annual payment of the *fiscus iudaicus* no doubt served to strengthen the centrality of Jewishness to identity and may have functioned as a positive emblem. This may have been especially the case for Jewish women since the papyri attest women paid the tax<sup>276</sup> where no equivalent tax applied to non-Jewish women. This rendered Jewish women subject to an *epicrisis* in childhood from which the majority of women were exempt.

A third conclusion concerns Jewish women's contribution to, and experience of, relations between Jews and Christians and pagans. The papyri that refer to the Jewish war imply that Jewish women were active participants in the conflict, both as

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<sup>272</sup> In addition to those listed in n.21 above: P.Lond.6.1912=CPJ 153 (41); P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450 (199/200); P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 (291); P.Gron.3=CPJ 467 (C2 or C3). See also CPJ 3, Appendix I, n.1532A. Jewish communities are also implied by Jewish streets and quarters; see n.274 below.

<sup>273</sup> Horbury (1999), 376-383; 398-401.

<sup>274</sup> P.Oxy.2.335=CPJ 423 (85); P.Oxy.1.100=CPJ 454 (133); P.Amh.2.98=CPJ 468 (C2 or C3).

<sup>275</sup> Eg P.Mil.Vogl.2.47=CPJ 435; P.Brem.1=CPJ 438; P.Giss.41=CPJ 443; P.Oxy.5.707=CPJ 447 (all early C2); P.Oxy.3.500=CPJ 448 (130); P.Oxy.5.705=CPJ 450 (199/200).

<sup>276</sup> O.Edfu 1.114=CPJ 218; O.Edfu 1.156=CPJ 223; O.Deiss.33=CPJ 227.

victims of the violence attested by their disappearance from the papyrological record, and as its perpetrators. Much of the violence appears to have been at the village level of neighbour against neighbour, from which Jewish women would not have been exempt. Women's active involvement is consistent with Philo's description and condemnation of Jewish women's participation in the fighting in Alexandria<sup>277</sup>. The papyri attest animosity towards 'the Jews' before, during and after the Jewish war<sup>278</sup>. The animosity, which doubtless included Jewish women in its purview, is likely to have resulted in a tighter control of women's behaviour in accordance with the patterns of an honour:shame society. Animosity to Jewish women is suggested in PSI 8.883=CPJ 455 (137), Isakous' petition for justice to counter an earlier unsatisfactory investigation of theft.

A fourth conclusion concerns Jewish women's involvement in society. Jewish women appear as property owners, and lessors and lessees of property. The daughter of Jesus in P.Lond.3.1119a=CPJ 430 owns the property she registers in the census. She appears not to live in her house but to rent it to tenants who are fellow-Jews. Tryphaina in P.Würzb.14=CPJ 453 and the wife of Ploutarchos lease their katoikic land to two farmers, Heliodoros, son of Hermaios, and Mires, son of Panechotes. There is no indication of the men's religious affiliation although 'Hermaios' suggests that he is a pagan. Isakous in PSI 8.883=CPJ 455 owns the threshing floor from which wheat is stolen. She also owns the wheat and, therefore, presumably agricultural land. Mariamme in P.Petaus 126 leases cultivatable crown land that she then sub-leases. These Jewish women do not live a withdrawn life. On the contrary, they appear actively engaged in the commercial life of their society, a phenomenon that stands in some tension to the sense of separation otherwise attested. The papyri do not give evidence of identifiable Jewish women engaging in non-agricultural business activity. The small Jewish population in the period and the chance preservation of texts largely account for this silence. Nonetheless, it is interesting that the only evidence of Jewish women's commercial and legal activity concerns land, while all kinds of business generate written records, and some witness to Jewish women's involvement might be expected.

A fifth conclusion concerns Jewish women's status in Egyptian society. Jewish women appear as free women, payers of the Jewish tax and owners of property, and

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<sup>277</sup> Philo, *On the special laws* 3.172-5.

<sup>278</sup> P.Lond.6.1912=CPJ 153; P.Brem.1=CPJ 438; P.Oxy.4.705=CPJ 450.

as slaves and freed women. Paramone in P.Oxy.9.1205=CPJ 473 attests both. She is a woman born in slavery who seems to have maintained her Jewish identity in a non-Jewish household. Jewish identity continues in her children or grandchildren, in the bearing by one at least of a Jewish name. Paramone's manumission confirms that Jewish communities paid the ransom price of Jewish slaves. The Jewish community of Oxyrhynchus, however, neglects to do so until Paramone is 40 years old, presuming her ownership in the city. The interconnections between Paramone, the Jewish community of Oxyrhynchus, Paramone's ability to maintain her Jewish identity and Aurelius Justus of Palestine are difficult to determine and indicate the complex network of relations that might constitute a Jewish woman's belief, practice and experience.

No magical papyri by Jewish women were found in preparation of this thesis. The following chapter which focuses on magic papyri examines the evidence they provide for the religious lives of Christian women.

## APPENDIX

### TEXTS POSSIBLY WRITTEN BY, TO OR REFERRING TO JEWISH WOMEN BUT NOT ACCEPTED

This appendix contains texts where argument can be made that the woman is Jewish. They have been included in the CPJ, but the classification is not accepted and the texts are not examined elsewhere<sup>1</sup>.

The texts are on ostraca dated 150-161 written by Pollia Maria the younger<sup>2</sup>. Stern in the CPJ regards her as Jewish on the basis of her name. Her first name is Roman<sup>3</sup>. Maria also could be a Roman name from the *gens* Maria but Stern argues it would be most unusual to have a second Roman name and that the name is more likely to be the 'biblical' name Maria common among Jews<sup>4</sup>. There are many examples of women named Maria who belong to the *gens* Maria in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL). Inscriptions of women with a double nomen exist, such as Vibia Maria Maxima in CIL 1636 and Accia Maria Tulliana in CIL 31934<sup>5</sup>. Both appear to be from the senatorial class. The ostraca with Pollia Maria's name are documents dealing with the transfer of wheat to accounts in the public granary or cash payments to the government for taxes in arrears. The wheat transfers to Pollia Maria's account show that she had tenant farmers and so is a landowner. Pollia Maria is a wealthy woman in the period after the Jewish revolt when the confiscation of property affected many Jews. It makes her identity as a Jew unlikely, although women appear to have been less subject to confiscations than men<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, given that Pollia Maria is a Roman, it is more likely that 'Maria' is a Roman name in addition to 'Pollia'. Her archive is not included in this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> The appendices to ch. 2 and ch. 8 examine texts that include names from the LXX which may be Jewish or Christian and which cannot be classified.

<sup>2</sup> O.Deiss.56; O.Bodl.778, 784, 1433, 1435, 1436, 1437, 1455.

<sup>3</sup> CPJ 3.19.

<sup>4</sup> Eg O.Edfu 114: 156; Matthew 1.16; Mark 6.3; Luke 8.2; 24.10; John 11.1; 19.25.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in Horsley, '... a problem like Maria' in *ND* 4.229f, here 230.

<sup>6</sup> See P.Würzb.14=CPJ 453, 349f above; PSI 8.883=CPJ 455, 351f above; P.Petaus 126 at 352f above.





## CHAPTER 11

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN AND MAGIC

This chapter examines the magical papyri written in Greek by Christian women from 100 to 400. No magical texts certainly written by Jewish women have been found. There is also a body of Demotic, Coptic and bilingual magical texts<sup>1</sup> which, although not examined in this thesis, form the wider context for the Greek texts. The suppression of magic in the late imperial and early Christian periods makes it likely that only a small proportion of the original corpus has survived<sup>2</sup>.

The magical papyri are those which contain magical spells, formulae and rituals<sup>3</sup>. The division between pagan and Christian texts is at its most problematic among the magical papyri. The categories 'Christian' and 'pagan' exist on a continuum and classification is frequently uncertain. Nonetheless, Christian magical papyri are classified in this thesis as those which include Christian 'biblical' texts or concepts and/or prayer that is addressed to the Christian God and that contain magical signs and phrases<sup>4</sup>, but which do not include explicitly pagan elements<sup>5</sup>. In pagan texts so classified, Christian name/s for God<sup>6</sup>, 'biblical angels' and Christian saints, if these occur, appear commonly in lists of other beings considered powerful for magical purposes<sup>7</sup>. Examples of Christian magical texts include copies of the Lord's Prayer<sup>8</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Johnson (1986); 'Greco-Roman and Coptic Magic' in Brier (1981), 253-265. For a critique of Preisendanz's removal of Demotic elements from PGM, see Ritner (1995), 3359. The Egyptian background of the Greek magical papyri is accepted in Frankfurter (1998); Ritner (1995), 3334ff; Brashear (1995), 3391; Johnson (1986), lv; Bonner (1950), 8, 22f; (for a more extensive listing, Brashear (1995), 3391, n.6); the Demotic magical papyri derived from the Greek magic papyri, J. Dieleman, in a personal communication to me, dated 2 June 2004. For further discussion, Lexa (1925), 1.156-166. On magic and the development of Coptic, see Bell (1953), 72.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of suppression: eg P.Coll.Youtie 1.30 (198/9); Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 56.25.5; Suetonius, *The Deified Augustus* 31.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 28.1.16; 29.1.41. See also Frankfurter (1998), 25; Betz (1986), xli; Barb (1963), 102, 105.

<sup>3</sup> Major collections: PGM, also in *TLG*; Betz (1986); *Suppl.Mag.*; Lexa (1925). See also the Index, s.v., 'magic' in *ND*. For a survey of magical papyri, with annotated bibliography to 1994, Brashear (1995).

<sup>4</sup> See Maltomini (1982), 150, n.3.

<sup>5</sup> Roberts (1977), 82; Judge (1985), 340. Preisendanz identifies 38 magical texts as Christian, PGM P.1-24. Nine further certainly pagan texts labelled PGM contain Christian or Jewish elements. Daniel and Maltomini identify 21 texts as Christian, *Suppl.Mag.* 20-36; 59-62. A further 23 contain Jewish or Christian elements.

<sup>6</sup> 'Iao' is the most frequent divine name in the Greek magical papyri, Betz (1986), xlvii. Magic associated with foreign religion was especially powerful, Bonner (1950), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Lists characterise magical texts eg pagan: P.Berl.inv.21165=*Suppl.Mag.* 10 (C3/4); PGM I.295-347; Christian: P.Oxy.8.1151=PGM P.5b (C5). See also Rees (1950), 88.

<sup>8</sup> P.Ant.2.54 (C3); P.Oxy.3.407 (3/4); PGM O.4 (C4); P.Princ.2.107=PGM LXXXIII=*Suppl.Mag.* 29 (C5/6); P.Oslo inv.1644 (C4/5); PSI 6.719 (C4/5); P.Koln 4.171 (C5). For examples to C13, Horsley, 'The Lord's Prayer in a necropolis' in *ND* 3.103ff, here 104f.

credal statements<sup>9</sup> and biblical quotations<sup>10</sup> used as amulets<sup>11</sup>.

Search was made for Jewish magical papyri on the basis of Jewish 'biblical' texts or concepts and/or prayer addressed to the Jewish God, and evidence of magical signs and phrases in the absence of explicitly pagan elements. None was found although the distinction between Jewish and Christian magical texts is not always clear<sup>12</sup>. The magical papyri attest the highly syncretistic religious world of late antique Egypt<sup>13</sup>.

The syncretism, however, appears to be more than a haphazard mix of elements of different religions. It frequently has the character of a new religious system with unified beliefs, particularly its appeals to the forces of death to negotiate life<sup>14</sup>.

The magical papyri are included in this study of Jewish and Christian women's religious lives since magic is an integral part of the religious culture of late antiquity. While magic is attested from pharaonic times<sup>15</sup>, it reaches its peak in the first two centuries of the Christian era with forms that continue into the fifth century and beyond<sup>16</sup>.

A definition of magic for the purposes of this thesis is that magic is a ritual activity of words and actions performed in this world which are designed to effect another in order to work results in this world<sup>17</sup>. The most frequent objects of practice are elements of common life: health, wealth, love, victory and revenge, and occasionally

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<sup>9</sup> Eg P.Turner 49=Suppl.Mag.31 (C5/6); P.L.Bat.19.20 (C6?), both against illness.

<sup>10</sup> Eg P.Harr.1.55 (C2); BKT 8.17 (C3); P.Amh.1.3 (C3 late); P.Chester Beatty XIV (= 2150) (C4); P.Giss.Univ.Bibl.4.34 (C4); P.Oslo.inv.1644 (C4); P.Oxy.2.209 (C4); 34.2684 (C4); PSI 6.719 (C4/5); P.Princ.2.107=PGM LXXXIII=Suppl.Mag.29 (C5/6); P.Coll.Youtie 2.91=Suppl.Mag.30 (C5/6); PGM P.9=BGU 3.954 (C6). Of 38 Christian magical texts in PGM, 15 use of 'biblical' material. For other examples, see *Seven Ecumenical Councils* (1900) 94, n.16.

<sup>11</sup> On amulets, Bonner (1950), 2, but with few references to papyri. Also Metzger (1967).

<sup>12</sup> Eg P.Harr.1.55 (C2); P.Merton 2.58=Suppl.Mag.63 (C3), P.Princ.3.159 (C3/4); P.Warren 21 (C3/4). PGM IV.3019f (C4) refers to 'Jesus, the God of the Hebrews' and is pagan.

<sup>13</sup> With Jewish, Christian and pagan elements eg P.Oxy.8.1152=PGM P.6a (C5 or C6) with 'Ελωεϊ, 'Αδωναεϊ, 'Ιαὼ Σαβαώθ, Μιχαήλ, 'Ιησοῦ Χριστέ; PGM III.76f, 80 (C4); the love charm (C3) edited by S. Kambitsis in *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 76 (1976) 213-223.

<sup>14</sup> Eg the frequent focus on the gods of the underworld, Hecate, Ereschigal, Betz (1986), Introduction, xlv.

<sup>15</sup> Brashear (1995), 3390-3395; Brier (1981); Jacq (1985).

<sup>16</sup> Bell (1948); Bell (1953), 72; Bagnall (1993a), 273. Popular due to its return to past wisdom, Betz (1986), xlvii.

<sup>17</sup> For a recent discussion of definitions, see 'Introduction', Janowitz (2001), 1-8, also ch.1 'Greco-Roman, Christian and Jewish Concepts of "Magic"', 9-26. See also Jacq (1985), 4; Brier (1981), 10f; David (1985), ix, for words/images categorisation; Crasta (1979), 32, for defensive/offensive magic categorisation; Lexa (1925), 17.

knowledge of the divine and immortality. Materials used include magical gems, lead tablets, images and papyri. Users of magic come from all classes of society and are not restricted to the poorer and less educated strata<sup>18</sup>.

In accordance with the focus of this thesis, only magical texts written by women will be analysed, that is, texts which a woman has initiated. Magical texts technically are written by practitioners of magic following recognisable, relatively strict formulae indicating they are copied from model texts<sup>19</sup>. The gender of the magicians is not indicated. Magical texts initiated by men to operate on women, for example love charms or curses, do not require a shared belief in magic on the woman's part to be effective from the author's point of view. They therefore provide no information about the woman's belief<sup>20</sup> and are not included in this study.

## THE TEXTS

I have identified four magical papyri written by women from 100 to 400 for which argument can be made for a Christian classification<sup>21</sup>. I have found no Jewish magical texts by women. Pagan magical papyri written by women offer comparative material but are excluded from this analysis by definition<sup>22</sup>.

### P.Koln inv.2861=PGM C=Suppl.Mag.20, C4/5, Provenance: Unknown

This text is a charm opening, 'Lord God, Lord of all gods, heal Thaesa' (κύριε θε(ε)έ, κ(ύρι)αι (= κύριε) θεῶ<ν> πάντω<ν>, θεράπευσον Θαησᾶ [ ], l.3f<sup>23</sup>, using *nomina sacra*.

<sup>18</sup> Contra Aune (1980), 1521. Eg among elite BGU 4.1026 (380's); PSI 1.22-24 (c.376-385).

<sup>19</sup> Eg PGM IV, with multiple texts written for ὁ δεινᾶ. The models probably belong to magicians who are the actual scribes.

<sup>20</sup> Eg a possibly Christian love charm, SB 14.11534=P.Koln inv.5514=Suppl.Mag.43 (C4).

<sup>21</sup> Other magical texts by Christian women fall outside the bounds of this thesis but are cited here for interest: Youtie and Bonner (1937), no.1, (Byzantine; provenance, Palestine); P.Oxy.8.1151=PGM P.5b (C5); PSI inv.319=Suppl.Mag.24 (C5); P.Haun.3.51=Suppl.Mag.23 (C5); P.Prag.1.6=Suppl.Mag.25 (C5); P.Princ.2.107=PGM LXXXIII=Suppl.Mag.29 (C5/6); P.Coll.Youtie 2.91=Suppl.Mag.30 (C5/6); P.Turner 49=Suppl.Mag.31 (C5/6); Papyrusamulett in Musée du Caire 10696=PGM P.5c (C5 or C6); P.graec.19909 (Vienna)=PGM P.6d, (date unknown). Possibly also PGM XLIII (C5).

<sup>22</sup> Eg PGM VII.208f; VII.260-271; XV; XIXb.1-3; XXa.11-14; XXXII.1-19; XXXVI.320-332; XXXIX.1-21; XL.1-18; XLIII; LXIII.24f, 26-28; LXVIII; XCVIII.1-7; CIV.1-8; CXXX; PDM LXI.95-99.

<sup>23</sup> Reconstruction, Suppl.Mag., 1.55f. The editors note καί=κε=κ(ύρι)ε, in P.Rainer Cent.39.16, 23, 26. The original editor reads κύριε θε(ε)έ καὶ θεῶ πάντα θεράπευσον Θαησᾶ [ ], l.3, and suggests θε(ε)έ {καὶ} θεῶ<ν>, citing eg PGM II.53; XXIIb.20. Daniel and Maltomini note πάντα is πάντα, and that πάντα θεράπευσον Θαησᾶ is unidiomatic. Their reconstruction offers less emendation and is accepted. References to the 'God of gods' occur in the LXX, eg Deuteronomy 10.17; Joshua 22.22; Psalm 136.2 (LXX 135.2); Daniel 2.47; also 'Lord of lords', eg Deuteronomy 10.17; Psalm 136.2 (LXX 135.2).

The *nomina sacra* strengthen, but do not prove, the Christian classification of this text, as *nomina sacra* occur in pagan magical texts<sup>24</sup>. A Christian classification is established by the command, 'set free in the name of Jesus Christ' (ἀπόλυσον ὀνόματι Ἰη(σο)ῦ Χρ(ιστο)ῦ)<sup>25</sup>, l.5, again using *nomina sacra*. There is no invocation of pagan gods.

Daniel and Maltomini propose the person's name be read Θαησᾶ[ν....]<sup>26</sup>, l.4, repeated with the command at l.7, 'heal Thaesa, now now, quickly quickly' (θεράπευσο[ν] Θαησᾶ[ν ], ἤδη ἤδη, ταχύ ταχύ). The person's name, they suggest, is Thaesas (Θαησᾶς), a man's name<sup>27</sup>, with Θαησᾶ incorrect on the basis that it is elsewhere unattested. However, SB 6.9428 contains the name<sup>28</sup>. Daniel and Maltomini argue this is an incorrect listing for Θαησᾶς and that in the text Θαησᾶς should be regarded as a nominative for the genitive. There is no reason to think this, apart from the supposed lack of other occurrences. Further, Θαίσα is attested<sup>29</sup> and it possible that Θαησᾶ is a variant. Daniel and Maltomini may be correct, but there is no reason why the person should not be a woman named Thaesa. The text is included in this study.

The magical features of the amulet include: opening with magical vowels in a κλῖμα, the number of each increasing by one; the magical words ἀβλαναθαμαλα<sup>30</sup>, l.2, and ἀκραμμαχαμαρι<sup>31</sup>; a series of signs and letters, ll.6f; and the magical formula, ἤδη ἤδη, ταχύ ταχύ, l.7. The text offers insight into the processes of ancient magic. The magical signs are drawn by the same hand twice in a way that indicates the papyrus sheet was immersed in water after the manner of magical stele, so that the power of the magical words might wash into the water and be used. The papyrus sheet could then either be re-used by the magician or be taken, in this case by Thaesa, for use as an amulet, which the folds in the text suggest<sup>32</sup>.

The charm has Thaesa pray, in the imperative, to κύριε θε(ε)έ that God ἀπόλυσον ὀνόματι Ἰη(σο)ῦ Χρ(ιστο)ῦ, l.5, presumably from her current illness although this is not stated. The charm continues after the magical signs, θεράπευσο[ν] Θαησᾶ[ν], l.7.

<sup>24</sup> Eg of Anouth, PGM VII.243, 247; Helios, VII.537; Apollon, VII.735. See the list, PGM 2.270. Also SB 14.12113 below.

<sup>25</sup> Ὀνόματι instead of ἐν or ἐπὶ ὀνόματι, also eg PGM LXXVIII; P.Heid.inv.G 1101=Suppl.Mag.32 (C5/6). Ed.pr. ὀνόμα πατρὸς Χρ(ιστο)ῦ corrected after viewing the text, Suppl.Mag., 1.56.

<sup>26</sup> Suppl.Mag., 1.55f.

<sup>27</sup> Θαησᾶς c.25x Foraboschi (1967-1971), and Preisigke (1967), s.v. Θαησᾶς 1x, P.Tebt.Mich.123R.

<sup>28</sup> Foraboschi (1967-1971), s.v.

<sup>29</sup> P.Fouad 15 (C2); P.Alex.104 (Roman).

<sup>30</sup> A variant of the most frequent palindrome ἀβλαναθαναλβα eg P.Michael 27=Suppl.Mag.9 (C3/4); P.Berol.inv.21165=Suppl.Mag.10 (C3/4); P.Lugd.Bat.25.9=Suppl.Mag.47 (C5).

<sup>31</sup> Possibly 'uproot the magic spells' from Aramaic, Suppl.Mag., 1.28. Also eg P.Berol.inv.21165=Suppl.Mag.10 (C3/4).

<sup>32</sup> Wortmann (1968), 102f.

Θεραπεύω is frequent in the synoptic gospels of Jesus' healing<sup>33</sup> and occurs regularly in Greek literature and the papyri with the meaning 'heal'<sup>34</sup>. The word's general frequency makes derivation from the 'NT' uncertain.

Thaesa's prayer indicates that she understands her illness as a contrary power over which Jesus has superior power<sup>35</sup> and that by the water infused with magical power, and by the amulet itself, she can direct Jesus' power to her wish. It may be that Thaesa prays to God in the name of Jesus Christ or that she prays that God will act in the name of Jesus Christ, an unusual theological position but one not to be dismissed from magical texts and suggesting that Jesus' name functions as one to conjure with. The 'NT' attests the effectiveness of prayer and action in Jesus' name<sup>36</sup>.

#### **P.Lund.4.12=PGM LXXXIX=Suppl.Mag.13, C4, Provenance: Unknown**

This is a protective charm against fever, 'help little Sophia also called Priscilla'

(βοήθησον τῆς μεικρᾶς (= μικρᾶς) Σοφία ἢ (= Σοφίας τῆς) καὶ Πρειασκεύλλης  
(= Πρισκεύλλας))<sup>37</sup>, ll.5-7.

The name 'Sophia' is attested only in Christian texts<sup>38</sup> and suggests the author is Christian, a classification strengthened by Sophia's alternate name 'Priscilla'. While Priscilla occurs in both pagan and Christian texts, in association with Sophia it is likely to be derived from Prisca/Priscilla, the apostle Paul's fellow-worker<sup>39</sup>. Sophia's name strictly reflects the beliefs of her parents, but, given the general transmission of belief within families, it is likely that Sophia is Christian and her alias may reflect her own choice. Further strengthening a Christian classification is the verb καταργέω in the petition, 'seize and destroy the one coming to little Sophia also called Priscilla' (κατάσχῃσον καὶ κατάγῃσον τὸν ἐρχόμενον τῇ μικρᾷ Σοφίᾳ τῇ καὶ Πρειασκεύλλῃ)<sup>40</sup>, ll.7-

<sup>33</sup> Eg Matthew 4.23; 9.35; Mark 1.41; Luke 7.21; not in the Epistles.

<sup>34</sup> Attested from Plato, *Laws* 4.720D; Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1.13. See also H. Beyer, 'θεραπεύω' in *TDNT* 3.128-131.

<sup>35</sup> A frequent idea in the 'NT', eg Mark 7.34-36; Luke 11.22f; 13.10-12.

<sup>36</sup> Eg Mark 9.38; John 14.13, 14; 15.16; 16.23, Acts 3.6.

<sup>37</sup> Preisendanz, *Überlieferung* 212, suggests βοήθησον τῇ μεικρᾷ Σοφίᾳ ἢ καὶ Πρειασκεύλλῃ cited in Brashear (1995), 3565, but βοηθεῖν with the genitive occurs elsewhere, Suppl.Mag., 1.37, and Σοφία as a false nominative occurs in PGM XLIII.

<sup>38</sup> Bagnall (1982), 111; Wipszycka (1986), 175.

<sup>39</sup> Acts 18.2; Romans 16.3.

<sup>40</sup> In the papyrus: κατάσχῃσον καὶ κατάγῃσον τὸν ἐρξόμενον τῆς μεικρᾶς Σοφία ἢ καὶ Πρειασκεύλλης.

11, repeated at II.20-24, and κατάγησον at II.15 and 26f<sup>41</sup>. Καταργέω is not otherwise attested in the Greek magical papyri and the background to its meaning here appears to be the Pauline uses in the 'NT'<sup>42</sup>. The word is common in later Christian literature and frequent in exorcisms<sup>43</sup>. Its use here suggests that Sophia may have influence on the writer's choice of words, or she has consulted a Christian magician.

The editors of Suppl.Mag. classify this text as pagan because of the magical names and words it contains: Σω Σω Αβρασαξ Αβρασαξ<sup>44</sup>, II.1f, repeated at II.16f<sup>45</sup> and Αβρασαξ αβρασι χω ου<sup>46</sup>, II.3f, repeated at II.17-19<sup>47</sup>. The meaning of Σω is uncertain. It may be a magical word or the name of the Egyptian god Shu<sup>48</sup>. A magical word is not necessarily inconsistent with a Christian classification. The editor, E. Knudtzon, and also R. Kotansky<sup>49</sup> read σώσω and translate 'I, Abrasax, shall deliver'. The translation is possible and first-person declarations by the divinity occur in other magical texts<sup>50</sup>. However, the punctuation at I.16, σω·σω·Αβρασαξ·Αβρασαξ·, indicates that a magical name or word is meant at I.16 and likewise almost certainly at I.1. Αβρασαξ is a common name for the divine, especially in the magical papyri, and appears to be a name by which a Christian with 'Gnostic'<sup>51</sup> tendencies might invoke

<sup>41</sup> 'Αβρασαξ, κατάσχες appears formulaic, eg PGM IV.332; V.369.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Corinthians 6.13; 15.24, 26; 2 Thessalonians 2.8. See also G. Dellings, 'ἀργός, ἀργέω, καταργέω' in *TDNT* 1.452-454.

<sup>43</sup> Eg L. Delatte, *Un office byzantin d'exorcisme*, 59.21; 90.11 cited in Suppl.Mag., 1.38, with other examples.

<sup>44</sup> Not accented.

<sup>45</sup> Preisendanz, *Überlieferung* 212, reads 'Ιω 'Ιω 'Αβρασαξ, I.16, cited in Brashear (1995), 3565. 'Ιω possibly equates to Seth; used for Apollo-Horus, possibly a confusion of lao, or less likely lo, lau of Ras Shamra (14-12 BCE). See Brashear (1995), 3588.

<sup>46</sup> Letter divisions, Suppl.Mag. Αβρασιλουα, also PGM XII.112.

<sup>47</sup> Repetition of names and words characterises magical texts, eg PGM II.122-124 and examples at PGM XII.101. Letter divisions αβρασι χω ου are given by punctuation at I.19, the elements classified as magical words.

<sup>48</sup> Suppl.Mag., 1.37.

<sup>49</sup> PGM LXXXIX in Betz (1986), 302.

<sup>50</sup> Eg P.Mich.3.156 (C2).

<sup>51</sup> The terms 'Gnostic' and 'Gnosticism' have been questioned in recent scholarship. Customarily used to describe a variety of religious movements of the second and later centuries, their usefulness as a category has been eroded by their failure to carry any reliably identifiable meaning. Williams (1996) suggests the phrase 'biblical demiurgical traditions' to designate the common feature of the majority of the movements previously labelled 'Gnostic'. The expression would serve also to eliminate those movements whose features are more appropriately labelled with another term. Waldstein (2000) analyses the core features of Jonas' 'Gnosticism' and reaches similar conclusions. Holzhausen (2001) traces use of γνωστικίζειν, γνωστικισμός and γνωστικός among the Apologists and finds they designate 'false knowledge' in general. Certainly the status of 'Gnostics' as a clearly separate religious grouping necessarily outside Christianity is not supported by papyrological or literary evidence. Rather 'Gnostic' may at times refer to certain religious innovations within Christianity itself and Christian use of Abrasax

God in the fourth century<sup>52</sup>. It is noteworthy that the phrases Αβρασάξ·Αβρασάξ, II.1f, and Αβρασάξ αβρασι χω ου, II.3f, precede and follow the words ἐγώ εἰμι (= εἰμι), II.2, 17, which in the 'NT' have the significance of the Hebrew divine name YHWH<sup>53</sup>, although the phrase also occurs in relation to other gods<sup>54</sup>. While the balance of probability suggests a Christian classification for this text, the lack of other naming of God than 'Abraxas' means the classification is uncertain.

Sophia is described as μικρά on each occasion her name appears, II.5f, 10, 23. The word occurs as a term of endearment for both young and old. Sophia is not specified by the name of her mother, contrary to usual magical practice. The editors of Suppl.Mag. suggest that this may be due to Christian influence<sup>55</sup>.

The charm, using a verbal doublet typical of magical texts<sup>56</sup>, commands that God 'seize and destroy' (κατάσχησον καὶ κατάγησον), II.7f, the cause of illness designated by the personal τὸν ἐρχόμενον, I.9. The cause is further described as 'whether shivering' (ἤται ῥίγος), II.11f, 26; 'whether a phantom' (ἤται σκειάν), I.13; 'whether a demon' (ἤται δεμόνιον), II.14f, 27f. Each petition uses κατάσχησον αὐτόν, II.12, 13f, 15, or κατάσχησον, II.26f, 28. The text is followed by a drawing of what might be a prostrate figure<sup>57</sup>.

#### **P.Oxy.6.924=PGM P.5a, C4, Provenance: Oxyrhynchus; BL 1.329**

This text is a charm against fever for a woman named Aria.

The text is classified here and in PGM as Christian. While the god being addressed is not indicated in the opening section, the end of the text is a complex display of Christian names of God, which uses some *nomina sacra* and includes a reference to 'mother', Ἰ(ησο)ῦ πατὴρ υἱὸς μήτηρ Χ(ριστο)ῦ, π(νεῦμ)α ἅγιος, I.15, written below together with magical vowels (excluding ε)<sup>58</sup>, the letters α and ω, a cross and,

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cannot be ruled out. See Boyarin (1999), 16; Bauer (1971), 59. For a detailed analysis of 'gnosticism' and current scholarship, see Williams (1996); Waldstein (2000). The literature is extensive.

<sup>52</sup> On 'Abraxas', see the Conclusions.

<sup>53</sup> John 8.58. 'Εγώ εἰμι is coupled in John's gospel with descriptors in a format similar to this charm, John 6.35; 8.12; 10.7, 11; 11.25; 14.6.

<sup>54</sup> Eg P.Mich.3.156, ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι 'Αβρασάξ; Εἴσις ἐγώ εἰμι, I.Kyme 41.3a (Kyme C1/2, Thessalonike, C1/2, Ios C3). See Horsley, 'A personalised Aretalogy of Isis' in *ND* 1.10-21, here 18f; Zabkar (1988), 140, also M7; 41; 42 where ἐγώ εἰμι has as complement functions attributed to Isis, 149, 151.

<sup>55</sup> Suppl.Mag., 1.38.

<sup>56</sup> See Horsley, 'Love Charm' in *ND* 2.45f, here 45.

<sup>57</sup> It is indecipherable, Suppl.Mag., 1.38.

<sup>58</sup> On magical vowels, see Daniel (1983). Strings of vowels may be isopsephisms and 'meaningless' strings of letters, anagrams, Bonner (1950), 12.

beneath all this, the name Ἀβρασάξ<sup>59</sup>. The name Ἀβρασάξ suggested to the editors that the amulet is Gnostic rather than Christian<sup>60</sup>. However, such a categorisation of Christianity into 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' elements that can be labelled 'Christian' and 'Gnostic' in the fourth century does not reflect the religious realities<sup>61</sup>.

The text opens with petitions, expressed in the subjunctive with the force of imperatives<sup>62</sup>, using a verbal doublet, φυλάξης καὶ συντηρήσης Ἀρίας (=Ἀρίαν), 'guard and keep Aria', ll.1f. The charm aims to ward off fever elaborated typically in terms of its different types, quotidian, night-time and slight<sup>63</sup>, ll.2-8.

The amulet states the basis for Aria's appeal, 'All this you (God) will graciously do according to your will first, and according to her faith, since she is a servant of the living God, and in order that your name may be glorified for ever', (ταῦτα ἐν[μενῶ]ς [π]ρῶ[ξ]εις ὅλως κατὰ τὸ θέλημά σου πρῶτον καὶ κατὰ τὴν πίστιν αὐτῆς ὅτιδούλη ἐστὶν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, καὶ ἵνα τὸ ὄνομά σου ᾗ διὰ παντὸς {η} δεδοξασμέν[ον]), ll.7-14.

**SB 14.12113=P.Yale inv.989=P.Yale 2.130=PGM CXIV.1-14, C3 or C4,**

**Provenance:Unknown; BL 10.212**

In this text, the female user's name is to be inserted, 'keep a certain woman, Lord' (φύλα]ξον τῇ[ν δε]ῖνα, κ(ύρι)ε), l.1. According to Daniel's reconstruction<sup>64</sup>, the text conforms to the general pattern of a φυλακτήριον<sup>65</sup>, a charm characterised by a command to a god to protect a person from evils which may or may not be specified<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> See the conclusions below.

<sup>60</sup> Similarly PGM LXXXIII.1-20=P.Princ.2.107=PGM LXXXIII=Suppl.Mag.29 (C5/6), ed. It cites Psalm 90.1f, the Lord's Prayer incorrectly and incoherently, invokes angels, the Pantocrator Sabaoth, Jewish patriarchs and includes strings of vowels. There is nothing distinctively 'Gnostic'.

<sup>61</sup> See n.51 above.

<sup>62</sup> See Moulton and Turner (1906, 1976), 3.93f.

<sup>63</sup> ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπιημερινοῦ φρικὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ καθημερινοῦ (= τῆς καθημερινῆς) φρικὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ νυκτερινοῦ (= τῆς νυκτερινῆς) φρικὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ λεπτοῦ {το<υ> λεπτον} πυρε[τοῦ καὶ ἀκαλή]φης. For the reconstruction, BL 1.329. Also eg BGU 3.956=PGM XVIIlb.1-7 (C3); P.Berl.inv.21165= Suppl.Mag.10 (C3/4); P.L.Bat.19.20 (C6).

<sup>64</sup> Daniel (1977), re-edited from Proulx and O'Callaghan (1974), using common magical formulae though some reconstructions are speculative. Maltomini (1980) amended Daniel's text, but not so to substantially change the interpretation or affect the analysis here, 174f notes to ll.6f, 9f.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel (1977), 145. Classified an atypical magical Christian prayer, Proulx and O'Callaghan (1974).

<sup>66</sup> Eg, διαφύλαξον τὸν δεῖνα ἀπὸ πάσης κακίας, PGM IV.923f; also PGM LXXI.6f; P.Rein.2.89=Suppl.Mag.80. For φύλαξον, φύλασσε, φυλάξαι in amulets, see Bonner (1950), 45f.



The Christian classification<sup>67</sup> is suggested by the use of the *nomen sacrum*, κ(ύρι)ε, l.1. However, *nomina sacra* are not necessarily conclusive of Christianity in magical texts<sup>68</sup>, but in this text, there is no invocation of other divine beings. The text may be Jewish but there is no positive indication of this and *nomina sacra* are not attested in Jewish documentary papyri in Egypt<sup>69</sup>. This φυλακτήριον is, therefore, more likely to be Christian. It is unusual in its simple naming of God since in this period Christian magical papyri commonly follow the pattern of pagan magical texts in elaborate namings of the divine<sup>70</sup>.

The woman seeks protection 'from all evil deeds' (ἀπὸ πάντων πον]ηρῶν πραγμάτων), ll.1f, 'from every (demonic) visitation' (ἀπὸ παντὸς συναντήματος), l.3, and 'from every attack of a phantom' (ἀπ[ὸ πάσης σκιασ]μοῦ πτώσε[ω]ς)<sup>71</sup>, l.5, by spirits including Hecate, mute demons and other spiritual beings, and from various types of illness: epileptic fit (ἀπὸ πάσης ἐπιλήμψεως), l.8, epilepsy (ἀπὸ παντὸς σ]εληγισμοῦ), l.9, and bodily disease (ἀπὸ παντὸς νόσου σώ]ματος), l.10. The reconstructions are uncertain but follow the patterns of other charms. The reading φύλα]ξον, or with equal probability διαφύλα]ξον, l.1, is likely, following the pattern of a φυλακτήριον, but not certain<sup>72</sup>. Many words would fit the available letters. In particular, Maltomini suggests ἀπάλλα]ξον<sup>73</sup>. In support of his reading, Daniel cites the standard formula for a φυλακτήριον, notes that either ζ or ξ can be read, and that there is space only for three letters between η and ι<sup>74</sup>.

Daniel's reconstruction of this text has the charm designed for use by a woman, φύλα]ξον τῇ[ν δε]ῖνα, κ(ύρι)ε, l.1. Maltomini notes that this is the only example he knows where a model φυλακτήριον specifies the person seeking protection in the feminine but he agrees that

<sup>67</sup> A Christian milieu is rejected for insufficient evidence, Daniel (1977), 145; accepted but no reasons given, Proulx and O'Callaghan (1974), 84.

<sup>68</sup> See on P.Koln inv.2861=Suppl.Mag.20 above.

<sup>69</sup> Roberts (1977), 29-35. He states C4 examples of κύριος contracted exist in Jewish texts but are exceptional. He gives no examples, 31. *Nomina sacra* occur in two C6 synagogue inscriptions from Palestine and Samaria, due probably to christianisation, Horsley, 'Nomina sacra in synagogue inscriptions' in *ND* 1.107-112, here 107-110. Also in LXX papyri (C3/4) which may be Jewish or Christian, Horsley, 'The Greek OT – new fragments' in *ND* 3.95-97, here 96.

<sup>70</sup> Eg Christian: PGM P.3=P.gr.5 (Oslo) (C3 or 4); PGM P.5a=P.Oxy.6.924 (C4); PGM P.5b=P.Oxy.8.1151 (C5); PGM P.13=P.Cairo 10263 (C4 or 5); PGM P.13a=*Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine* 2.67188.169f (Byzantine); PGM P.14=P.gr.1359 (Heidelberg) (C3/4); PGM P.21=Pap.Blatt. (300). Less elaborate invocations eg PGM P.16 (C4); PGM P.6c=P.Oxy.7.1059 (C5).

<sup>71</sup> Or ἀπ[ὸ πάσης τῆς μήτρας] μου πτώσε[ω]ς, R. Merkelbach cited in Daniel (1977), 147. Daniel's argument that the first 7 lines deal with attacks by types of demons is persuasive.

<sup>72</sup> Ed.pr., στενά]ζοντι [ἐξάπ]ινα, κ(ύρι)ε, [ὁ ἐξαλε]ῖφον πράγματα [τὰ ἐμοῦ πονηρά, ll.1f, a prayer for forgiveness, Proulx and O'Callaghan (1974), 84f. They cite ἐξάπινα in Psalm 63.5, 72.19; Mark 9.8; The Shepherd 84.6, and ἐξαλείφω in Psalm 50.3, 11; Acts 3.19 as the reason.

<sup>73</sup> PGM V.125, 130, Maltomini (1980), 173. Also PGM XCVIII.1-7.

<sup>74</sup> Daniel (1977), 146.

ὁ δεῖνα is not a possible reading given the letter traces. Current publications, however, attest model charms for ἡ δεῖνα<sup>75</sup>. Daniel's reconstruction appears likely and is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

Jewish and Christian attitudes to magic in late antiquity are not the focus of this thesis which is rather to examine the magical papyri for the information they provide on Christian women's religious lives, and Jewish women's religious lives had this been possible. Questions of attitude are discussed in detail elsewhere<sup>76</sup>. It is sufficient to note that the attitudes are complex and fluid. Evidence attests Jewish condemnation of magic<sup>77</sup>, and domestication of its forms, function and practice<sup>78</sup>. The evidence suggests that magic which could not be eliminated was recast into approved modes of piety, for example substituting the names of pagan gods with the names of the Jewish God and angels<sup>79</sup>. The early church similarly did not deny the power of magic<sup>80</sup> but officially condemned its use<sup>81</sup>, thus providing evidence of its practice at a popular level among the ostensibly Christian population<sup>82</sup>. Evidence of popular practice also exists in the actual examples of Christian symbols, Scripture and substitution of the names of the Christian God, angels and saints for the names of pagan gods in ritual magic which is not otherwise pagan<sup>83</sup>. Judge's analysis of

<sup>75</sup> Eg pagan: P.Rein.2.89=Suppl.Mag.80 (C4); Christian: P.Coll.Youtie 2.91=Suppl.Mag.30 (C5/6), ed.pr., ἡ δεῖνα for δεινατο, l.7, proposes the text was a model for a man or woman, ll.4, 7. See Suppl.Mag., 1.83f; Horsley, 'Christian amulet' in *ND* 1.102f.

<sup>76</sup> Frankfurter (1998), especially 219-221, 224-232, 234-237; 'Appendix: Egyptian Magic and Christian Magic' in Jacq (1985), 151-154; Goldin (1976); Rees (1950); Nock (1929).

<sup>77</sup> 2 Maccabees 12.40; *tShabbat* 6, 7; *mSanhedrin* 10.1. See also Goldin (1976), 120.

<sup>78</sup> *tShabbat* 6.9 states that whatever heals is not an 'Amorite Way' and is not forbidden, but the distinction between 'Amorite Ways' and what is sanctioned is unclear. See Janowitz (2001), 20-26. Jewish influences in the Greek magical papyri include use of divine names, LXX, patriarchs etc, Betz (1986), xlv, liif, n.47, with bibliography; Bonner (1950), 26-32. At least 180 LXX verses appear in magical texts, Goldin (1976), 124.

<sup>79</sup> Goldin (1976), 123.

<sup>80</sup> Eg *HL* 17.6-9, St Macarios' magical transformation of a woman become a horse; as a story about perception, see Frankfurter (2001).

<sup>81</sup> Acts 19.19; Didache 2.2; 3.4; 5.1; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 16.21f; Augustine, *City of God* 10.9f; Chrysostom, *Homily on Colossians* 3.5-7; *Adversus Judaeos* 8.7.5, 8; Council of Ancyra (315) Canon 24; Council of Elvira (312) Canon 6; *Canons of Athanasius* 71-73. The Council of Laodicea, Canon 36 (mid C4) forbade clergy to be magicians, charmers, soothsayers, astrologers or makers of amulets, with users to be cast out of the church. See also Janowitz (2001), 16-20.

<sup>82</sup> *CT* 9.16. 7, 8, 11, 12 (364, 370/373, 389, 409); 11.36.7 (348); 9.42.2 (356); *CJ* 9.18.2-9 (c.300, 312; 321; 357; 358; 365; 389). Egypt was a centre for magic and magicians in C4-C7, Frankfurter (1998), 215-217. But magic features in only 2% of 'beneficial tales' C4-C7 including the *HM*, *HL* and *AP*, Wortley (2001), 293.

<sup>83</sup> See notes 9-11 above. See Crasta (1979), 35f; Papaconstantinou (1994); Frankfurter (1998), 29, 49, 180-183, 193-197. Eg P.Oxy.6.925 (C5/6); 8.1150; 16.1926 and P.Harr.54 (all C6). PSI 1.22-24 (c.376-385) are horoscopes for Christians. *Nomina sacra* need not indicate Christianity.

magical texts indicates that 14% of all Christian literary texts from Egypt, in the opinion of their editors, contain magical elements. As early as the turn of the third and fourth centuries, magic appears in 10% of Christian texts, rising to a peak of 25% of Christian texts in the sixth century. The rate falls to 10% in the eighth century<sup>84</sup>.

This examination of magical texts written by Christian women leads to a number of tentative conclusions, tentative in the sense that the number of texts on which they are based is extremely small. The small number is counter to the presentation of women in Jewish and Christian literature as the main practitioners of magic<sup>85</sup>.

Nonetheless, the conclusions contribute evidence specifically of Christian women's use of magic to current scholarship.

The first conclusion concerns the complex relation between magic and religion in the ancient world. A similarly complex and overlapping relation exists between magic and ancient science and medicine<sup>86</sup>.

Thaesa in P.Koln inv.2861=Suppl.Mag.20 uses the aorist imperative twice in her prayer to the Lord God, *θεράπευσον*, l.3, and *ἀπόλυσον*, l.5. Such imperatives are frequent in both magical and non-magical prayer, and in both Christian and pagan texts<sup>87</sup>. The prayer form is unexceptional in Christian terms, at the same time as the text is plainly magical. Thaesa exhibits a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of her prayer and a need to strengthen her ability to influence God through magic. Whether this uncertainty is related to Thaesa's gender is not easy to determine. Christian men also use magic in combination with what might otherwise be considered non-magical Christian prayer<sup>88</sup>. Nonetheless, women's sense of powerlessness to influence public authorities, frequently attested in literary and papyrological sources, may enhance the attractiveness of magic. A further aspect of the complex relationship between magic and religion is evident in this text. While the 'NT' encourages prayer 'in the

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<sup>84</sup> Judge (1985).

<sup>85</sup> See Janowitz (2001), 86-96.

<sup>86</sup> Eg Augustine of Hippo distinguishes medicine from magic as the difference between drinking tea and hanging herbs around the neck unless the latter effect a cure, *De doctrina christiana* 2.29.45. See also 'La relation entre la magie et la science' in Lexa (1925), 1.131-133.

<sup>87</sup> See the third conclusion below; also Graf (1991), 195.

<sup>88</sup> Eg P.Koln 6.257=Suppl.Mag.21 (C4/5) combines magical elements with *θεραπεύσατε* addressed to the Trinity, l.1f, 8f.

name of Jesus Christ', it appears that Thaesa understands this more in the sense of a name to conjure with.

Sophia, also known as Priscilla, invokes Abrasax consistently in P.Lund.4.12= Suppl.Mag.13, naming the god six times. The name is frequent in the magical papyri. Sophia also uses the repetitive phrasing typical of magical texts. Abrasax, also spelt Abraxas, is a popular deity attested in Egypt, Syria and Judea/Palestine<sup>89</sup>. The name, it is argued, was created to replace the unmentionable name of the Supreme Being and, in Syria, is a form of *Iao*, the Hebrew name of God<sup>90</sup>. In PGM V.363-369, Ἀβρασᾶξ occurs with *αω* and in a sequence with Ἰαεω. Kenyon understands the name as a corruption of the Hebrew blessing *habberakhah dabherah*<sup>91</sup>. The name is also explained as having an equivalence in the magical number 365 and to correspond to the 365 heavens that Basilides, an early second-century 'Gnostic', taught exist between the Supreme Being and the world. Abrasax is their ruler<sup>92</sup>. Tertullian states that Basilides used the term 'Abrasax' for God<sup>93</sup>. In Persia, Abrasax is understood as a sun god and is identified with various other names of gods. As P.Oxy.6.924=PGM P.5a also suggests, the use of 'Abrasax' cannot be excluded from the vocabulary of a person who considers him/herself as Christian in the fourth century. If, then, Sophia is a Christian, as her name and prayer vocabulary suggest, her belief accommodates the use of the magical name Abrasax for God, and the use of magic to bind God to do as she wants.

Sophia prays, using the aorist imperatives typical of both non-magical and magical prayer<sup>94</sup>, that God will act to protect her from demonic activity, κατάσχησον καὶ κατάγησον, ll.7f, κατάσχησον αὐτόν, ll.12, 13f, 15, and κατάσχησον, ll.26f, 28. The charm is evidence of Sophia's lack of confidence in prayer unaided by magic.

P.Oxy.6.924=PGM P.5a gives evidence of the sophisticated and non-mainstream Christian belief of its author, Aria, that accommodates a magical dimension. The

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<sup>89</sup> A snake-footed or snake-legged creature, the body of a man, armoured, the head of a cock, Bonner (1950), 162f; Betz (1986), 331. On Abrasax, see Merkelbach and Totti (1989-1995).

<sup>90</sup> Coulter and Turner (1997), 8.

<sup>91</sup> Cited in K. F. Smith, 'Magic: Greek and Roman' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (192?), 8.278.

<sup>92</sup> T. McFadden, 'Abraxas' in Meagher, O'Brien and Aherne (1979), 1.16; Suppl.Mag. 2.12.

<sup>93</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus omnes haereses* 1.5.

<sup>94</sup> Graf (1991), 195.

opening section of the charm exhibits what has the appearance of an 'orthodox' prayer for protection against illness, specifically, fever. Prayer for protection expressed in the imperative and using φυλάξω occurs regularly in Christian texts<sup>95</sup>. Aria exhibits her knowledge of Scripture and biblical theology in her appeal to a series of reasons for her confidence that God will respond to her prayer. Her reasons all echo grounds named in Scripture: God's will<sup>96</sup>, her faith<sup>97</sup>, her devotion<sup>98</sup> and her goal as God's glory<sup>99</sup>.

The display of the names of God and of vowels beneath the prayer signals that this is a magical text rather than an 'orthodox' prayer. Aria ends the display with the name Ἀβρασάξ which is consistent with the essentially magical nature of the text and indicates that Aria's Christian belief accommodates elements that, in time, come to be regarded as heterodox but which, in the third and fourth centuries, are almost certainly part of the broad mix of Christianity. The 'being' designated 'mother' in Aria's naming of God may be Mary, mother of Jesus. Her inclusion within the display of God's names would be unusual in this period<sup>100</sup>. The liturgical fragment P.Bodmer 12 exhorts, ἄσατε τῇ μητρὶ παρθένοι, 'the mother' most probably meaning the church<sup>101</sup>. It may also be that the Father/Mother name reflects an understanding of God as a dyad who embraces both masculine and feminine elements and can be named both Father and Mother<sup>102</sup>. Such an understanding of God is considered heretical by church authorities but again, as with 'Abraxas', cannot be excluded from the broad category of 'Christian' in the fourth century.

It is interesting that this text includes explicit magic, prayer and reasons why God should do as Aria asks. Aria does not consider the magic sufficient in itself to bind God to comply. There is need also for persuasion that recognises God's freedom to act according to God's will, although Aria is certain that she knows God's will. The

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<sup>95</sup> See SB 14.12113 above.

<sup>96</sup> Romans 8.27; 1 Peter 3.17.

<sup>97</sup> Matthew 9.29; Luke 7.50; 18.42.

<sup>98</sup> Luke 12.37f; 19.17. See also PGM LI, a letter to the dead from a suppliant ὁσίου ὄντος εἰς θεούς.

<sup>99</sup> 1 Corinthians 10.31; Ephesians 1.12, 14.

<sup>100</sup> Invocations of Mary from C5 and later typically address Mary as ἡ δεσποίνη, ἡ θεοτόκος, ἀειπάρθενος; for example SB 1.4763, 4767, 4816, 4862. P.Berl.inv.21230 (C5) is a prayer addressed to Mary in her relation to Christ, λαβοῦσα χάριν ἐκ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου υἱοῦ, ll.1f.

<sup>101</sup> The church as mother appears from C3, Lampe, s.v.

<sup>102</sup> Pagels (1979), 49f. Eg Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.11.1; Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 5.6.

text also attests Aria's Christianity and her uncertain belief in the power of prayer without magic and persuasion to elicit God's help.

The texts analysed in this chapter illustrate the complexity of the relation between magic and religion, and confirm that magic and religion in the fourth century exist along a continuum rather than being discrete. The modern distinction between magic and religion as unapproved and approved practice in spiritual matters is anachronistic in the examination of ancient sources<sup>103</sup>. It is to be noted, however, that the differential suppression of magic and pagan religion by successive Christian emperors in the fourth century indicates that the ancient world distinguished magic and religion at least in certain respects<sup>104</sup>. Evidence also indicates that the church labelled Egyptian and Greek religion, that is, the traditional religion they sought to suppress, as magic<sup>105</sup>.

A second conclusion concerns the women's belief in demons as the cause of illness, a view attested in Christian, Jewish and pagan texts<sup>106</sup>, and the women's belief in the potential of magic to restrain demonic powers by compelling the help of a more powerful being, the Christian God or Jesus.

Sophia in P.Lund.4.12=Suppl.Mag.13 understands illness as caused by demonic activity<sup>107</sup>. Her fever is the result of ὁ ἐρχόμενος, l.9, τὸ δαιμόνιον = δαιμόνιον, ll.14f, σκιά, l.13, and ῥίγος, l.12, understood in personal terms. The spirit is later clarified as 'fever and every kind of chill, quotidian, tertian and quartan, and every evil', ll.34-38. Sophia's command that Abrasax κατάσχησον καὶ κατάγησον, ll.7f, 12, 13f, 15, 26, 28, the demon is an example of that magic where a more powerful spirit is prevailed upon to thwart one of lesser power<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>103</sup> See Goldin (1976), 122; Nock (1972), 1.341f; Barb (1963); 'La relation entre la magie et la religion' in Lexa (1925), 1.123-129. Proposed distinctions: religion involves submission, magic coerces, Frazer (1922, 1950), 48-60; Barb (1963), 101; Bell (1953), 12: magic is a deviant alternative to sanctioned religion, Aune (1980), 1512f, 1515; magic is prior to religion eg Frazer (1922, 1950), 48-60, posterior to religion eg Crasta (1979), 33; Aune (1980), 1515. I consider that magic is understandable only in relation to religion so is posterior to it. That magic was not considered illegal or deviant but was used by the gods and a gift to benefit people, Ritner (1995), 3353f, with illegality coming with Roman rule, 3355.

<sup>104</sup> Barb (1963), 109f.

<sup>105</sup> Frankfurter (1998), 235f; Crasta (1979), 34f.

<sup>106</sup> See 124, especially n.40 above.

<sup>107</sup> Similarly P.Oxy.8.1151=PGM P.5b (C5).

<sup>108</sup> See also Barb (1963), 122; Nock (1929), 226.

Thaesa in P.Koln inv.2861=Suppl.Mag.20 similarly understands her illness as caused by an entity that holds her in its power and can be forced to 'release' her, ἀπόλυσον ὄνοματι Ἰη(σο)ῦ Χρ(ιστο)ῦ. Her belief that the Lord God is Lord of all gods, if this is the correct reading, suggests her understanding that the power behind her illness is inferior to the Christian God and can be compelled to let her go.

A third conclusion is perhaps a sub-category of the first, on the relation between magic and religion, in this case specifically the issue of classification. Caution needs to be exercised in analysing the Christian magical texts, as it cannot be presumed that a magical dimension always applies. It is not necessarily the case that Christian amulets, for example, function in a magical way for the wearers, considered powerful to effect outcomes in and of themselves. It may be that amulets are used for personal reassurance or public witness. The motivation of a particular wearer is not indicated and is impossible to determine.

SB 14.12113=PGM CXIV.1-14 cannot be classified as magical with certainty. The woman's imperatival φύλαξον may allow a different interpretation from the magical command of a pagan φυλακτήριον and may signal that this is a Christian prayer that uses the forms of a φυλακτήριον. Christian prayer frequently involves imperatives, for example the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, δὸς ἡμῖν, ἄφες ἡμῖν, μὴ εἰσενέγκης ἡμᾶς, ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς<sup>109</sup>. Christian letters among the papyri use direct command to express prayer for divine protection, although the verbal form is regularly the infinitive functioning as an imperative<sup>110</sup>. There is no magical connotation to these petitions. It may be that SB 14.12113=PGM CXIV.1-14 is not a charm but a prayer for divine protection, the written text serving as a reminder for personal assurance<sup>111</sup>. It is noteworthy that Graf's examination of prayer (εὐχή) in PGM and in religious texts and ritual finds that there is no essential difference in form and intention between them<sup>112</sup>. The difference in verbal form between this text and the certainly Christian letters may

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<sup>109</sup> Mathew 6.12f.

<sup>110</sup> See Moulton and Turner (1906, 1976), 78f. Eg SB 8.9746; P.Heid.1.6=SB 1.2266 (C4); P.Ross.Georg.3.9 (C4). The *DDBDP* attests no letter with a prayer containing φύλαξον or διαφύλαξον.

<sup>111</sup> Reference to demons need not imply a magical expectation but reflect common belief. For a similar difficulty in interpretation eg SCO 22, 1973, 27-29, cited in Horsley, 'The "prodigal son" parable spiritualized' in *ND* 3.99f (C6).

<sup>112</sup> Graf (1991), 194f, but he notes difference in the function of ritual, 196. 10 elements identified in magical prayers include compelling (rather than requesting), repetition, enumeration and reference to authorities, Szepes (1976). Where few elements are present, as here, it is difficult to make classification with certainty.

be significant and the use of the imperative may signal that this is a charm but it is uncertain.

SB 14.12113=PGM CXIV.1-14, therefore, leaves open the question as to whether it is a prayer or a charm, and whether a woman acquiring and personalising a copy of it would have a magical or non-magical understanding of its operation. It also raises the possibility that the distinction between 'prayer' and 'charm' is anachronistic. The text indicates that there was either a model prayer or a charm for use by Christian women for their protection from demonic attack and from the physical manifestation of demonic activity in epilepsy and bodily illness<sup>113</sup>. It confirms Christian belief in the demonic and in human vulnerability to demonic influence, a belief women hold no differently from men. It also confirms Christian belief in God's superior power to demons and God's active opposition to demons in order to protect suppliants. If the text is a prayer without magical connotation, it indicates that Christians adopted pagan forms of dealing with the supernatural, but reinterpreted them within the limits of 'orthodoxy'. If the text is a charm, it reveals the magical understanding of God's actions in the world held by the women using it and, indirectly, serves to highlight the non-magical nature of the beliefs of the Christian women already studied.

A fourth conclusion concerns the limited evidence for Christian women's use of magic. This examination of the Greek magical papyri has identified three magical texts, P.Koln inv.2861=Suppl.Mag.20, P.Oxy.6.924=PGM P.5a and P.Lund.4.12=Suppl.Mag.13, that appear to have been written by Christian women. The small number is undoubtedly affected by the chance nature of textual preservation but invites further explanation. The existence of Christian magical texts attests the use of magic in the Christian community and there is no reason to think that women used magic less than men. On the contrary, it seems likely that magic became the particular domain of women in answer to their exclusion from ministry and power in the church. It may be that other known magical texts were written by women but are not identifiable as such. Magical texts, by their nature, frequently do not identify the user. Of the 34 Christian magical papyri included in PGM, 27 do not specify the gender of the user, three are written by men<sup>114</sup> and four by women. In Suppl.Mag., of 21 Christian magical texts, ten are written by men, five by women, two allow for either

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<sup>113</sup> Common in the 'NT' eg Matthew 17.14-20; Luke 11.14. See also Proulx and O'Callaghan (1974), 87, note to I.8.

<sup>114</sup> P.Oxy.7.1058=PGM P.6b (C4/5); P.Oxy.8.1150=PGM P.8b (C6); BGU 3.954=PGM P.9 (C6)



a man or woman to wear the amulet, and four do not specify gender. However, most anonymous texts are excluded<sup>115</sup>.

A fifth conclusion concerns the function of magic in giving confidence to the women who use it in their dealings with God. Aria in P.Oxy.6.924=PGM P.5a composes what has the appearance of a non-magical prayer to which she appends a magical display of divine names. Her prayer, to her mind it seems, is insufficient to secure God's intervention to protect her from illness. Prayer needs the additional power of magic to bind God to act. Aria's use of magic is noteworthy alongside the reasons she cites for attracting God's intervention. Her reasons focus as much on her deserving, that is, her faith and devotion, as on God's will and glory. Aria's reasons differ from the more common *δύνασαι γάρ τοπος*, by which a person seeking God's help reminds God that God has the power to do the thing being asked<sup>116</sup>, but both function to persuade. Her reasons indicate that Aria considers herself worthy of God's intervention. She has a positive assessment of her Christian piety and is confident of her theological understanding. Nonetheless, Aria secures her prayer with magical formulae and secures the magic with persuasive arguments.

Thaesa in P.Koln inv.2861=Suppl.Mag.20 displays a similar ambivalence in confidence of approach to God. She supplements her prayer with magical signs, letters and words to conjure God's power. Prayer by itself is insufficient to guarantee God's intervention in her illness. There is also evidence that she adopts magical practice in using water infused with the power of the words on her amulet to enhance the potency and effectiveness of her approach.

Sophia in P.Lund.4.12=Suppl.Mag.13 asks for Abrasax's intervention using aorist imperatives that she repeats eight times. Prayer requires the supplement of magic and the logic of magical formulae gives Sophia the confidence to badger Abrasax with her requests. If Knudtzon's and Kotansky's reading of *σώσω* is correct, Sophia is sufficiently confident to name Abrasax's response as the positive, 'I, Abrasax, shall deliver'. However, the reading is unlikely.

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<sup>115</sup> A criterion of selection, eds, ix. Texts excluded include nearly all of those listed in van Haelst (1976).

<sup>116</sup> Common in Christian writing, eg P.Coll.Youtie 2.91=Suppl.Mag.30 (C5/6); P.Turner 49=Suppl.Mag.31 (C5/6).

The women's attitudes differ markedly from the lack of confident approach to God of, for example, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 who must use Appa Paphnouthios as an intermediary. Their confidence resembles that of Taouak in P.Neph.18 who can declare, 'you will see God'.

This examination of the magical papyri ends the analysis of the perspectives of the papyri on the religious lives of Jewish and Christian women. The final chapter draws a series of conclusions that synthesise and summarise the findings.

## CHAPTER 12

### CONCLUSION

This examination of the perspectives offered by the Greek papyri of Egypt on the religious beliefs, practices and experiences of Christian and Jewish women from 100 to 400 suggests a number of conclusions. Before outlining them I make some preliminary observations. The first is cautionary. The chance and uneven nature of the survival of papyri and the small sample size of documents by, to and referring to Christian and Jewish women mean that the conclusions are offered with caution and are necessarily provisional. The second observation relates to the methodology employed in the thesis. The methodology has been one whereby the women's religious beliefs, practices and experiences are embedded within the broader life concerns of each woman as these can be ascertained from the documents. This has been to avoid the historiographical difficulties of reducing women to a single entity 'woman' separate from 'real history'. The methodology has ensured that the conclusions acknowledge the individuality and specificity of women as writers and receivers of texts and has allowed an exploration of the interconnections among the three dimensions of the topic. At the same time the very ordinariness of the situations and concerns dealt with in the texts allows that the women be representative of others for whom the conclusions also apply. The women are not to be isolated from their communities.

The first conclusion concerns the nature of the papyri as sources of information for the religious lives of Jewish and Christian women, and their value for the integration and comparison of the results. The Jewish and Christian texts are different in nature if not always in kind. They differ in date by an average of 200 years, and offer different perspectives on the women's religious lives.

Sixteen texts have been identified as written by, to or referring to Jewish women. All but one date from the second century<sup>1</sup> and eleven to the period before 117 or immediately after, dealing with the effects of the war of 115-117. The small number across the period 100-400 and the concentration in dating reflect the devastation of the Jewish population during the war and provide evidence in the disappearance of texts referring to Jewish women as well as men from the historical record, for Jewish women's inclusion in the war and its outcomes. Only one text, a petition, is written by

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<sup>1</sup> P.Oxy.9.1205 dates to 291. P.Oxy.4.705 is dated 199/200.

a Jewish woman, while a further four texts arise directly from Jewish women's lives: three receipts for the Jewish tax and a census return. Those that refer to Jewish women consist entirely of public documents: four reports on the Jewish war, three documents about its effects, two items of official correspondence referring to Jews, a manumission and a receipt. Of these only the manumission originates from within the Jewish community. The other texts arise from those outside, mostly commenting on 'the Jews' as a group. There are no surviving private letters written by Jewish women and no surviving texts addressed to Jewish women. Therefore there is little information on the women's religious beliefs and practices but the papyri yield valuable evidence for their experience as Jewish women.

By contrast, 57 texts concern Christian women, 26 written by Christian women, 18 of which are private letters. A further 31 texts are written to or refer to Christian women, of which 20 are private letters. All originate from within the Christian community. The texts date from the late third/early fourth century to the late fourth/early fifth century.

The Jewish and Christian texts both locate women in broader contexts, allowing their religious lives to be embedded in social, economic and political networks, although differently. Jewish women emerge as integral members of a group, 'the Jews'. Christian women appear as members of families and part of the broader society. The papyri are silent about the Jewish women's beliefs and practices. The texts associated with Christian women, and in particular those written by Christian women, by contrast, yield information on the women's religious beliefs, practices and experiences, confirming the value of women's own writing for insight into their religious subjectivity. These differences in the nature of the texts do not allow a comparative analysis of Jewish and Christian women's spiritual practice, experience and subjectivity. However, the texts integrate into two contrasting social paradigms for religious communities and indicate that Christian and Jewish women participate in their communities in ways that are at times similar and at times dissimilar, as outlined below.

A second conclusion, then, concerns the contrasting social paradigms that emerge in relation to the Jewish and Christian communities in the period. While the texts all relate to women in various ways, this conclusion derives from elements not related to gender but with implications for it.

The picture that emerges from the Jewish papyri is of the Jews as a clearly identifiable, separate community within Egypt to whom the general population relate as a distinct group apart, and who themselves identify and function as a relatively separate group. Documents deriving from the war of 115-117 make consistent reference to 'the impious Jews' as the enemy and source of disrupted life. All but the census return P.Lond.3.1119a and receipt P.Harr.1.142 refer to 'the Jews', including Jewish women, as a recognised, separate and identifiable group. The Jews, in turn, live in close proximity to one another in locations that can be labelled 'the Jewish Quarter' and 'Jewish Street', although there is no evidence that these areas are exclusive. The papyri suggest Jews act in a cooperative association in which women participate. The Jewish tax further differentiates Jews as a separate group and specifically implicates women in this differentiation by their liability for it. Women are among those who continue to pay the tax even in war, perpetuating its 'purchase' of identity, freedom and distinction.

While deriving from a very few texts and of limited range in type, this perspective confirms the evidence of literary sources. The Roman authorities see the Jews as a distinct national and religious grouping, functioning for example in Alexandria at the beginning of the second century as a *πολίτευμα*. Jews enjoy the status of a *religio licita* that marks them apart, being exempt from requirements to sacrifice and having the right to follow their traditions including the right to circumcise, to observe the Sabbath and to refuse liturgies that compromise their customs. The picture from the papyri nuances that which has emerged in recent scholarship regarding the open, outward-looking character of Jewish communities in the Diaspora and their self-representation in terms of Hellenic and Roman culture<sup>2</sup>. While this picture itself has been modified to account for individual as opposed to group processes of integration, and of elite as opposed to non-elite self-identity, the picture from the papyri tends to support that suggested by later rabbinic sources of a boundary between local Jewish communities and their immediate contexts<sup>3</sup>, based on religious rather than ethnic identity in the late antique period, yet without implying a rigid barrier or closed community.

Two observations suggest themselves. Firstly, such a separate community has implications for Jewish women consistent with a gendered allocation of space, power

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<sup>2</sup> Eg Lieu, North and Rajak (1992); Lieu (1996); (2002); Várhelyi (2000).

<sup>3</sup> Várhelyi (2000), 476.

and honour. In such a paradigm women carry the burden of a family or community's respectability and acceptance. Jewish women then are likely to experience greater constraint and regulation of their behaviour, dress and contact with the broader society<sup>4</sup>. The paucity of papyri documenting Jewish women's occupations and commercial activities is consistent with such a circumstance. As a second observation, the separateness of the Jewish community may contribute to an understanding of the silence of the historical record about the existence of the church in Egypt to the second century. According to Acts 2.10 the earliest Christians in Egypt were Jewish, and the pattern of the Acts record and the evidence of scholarship elsewhere indicate that churches developed in association with Jewish communities. Following the 'partings of the ways' model of Jewish and early Christian relations and the recognition of the variety within Judaism itself in the first and early second century, it may be that the earliest Christians in Egypt were not perceived as a group distinct from the Jews but came to be involved in the conflict willingly or not, and to share the Jews' fate. The Epistle of Barnabas appears to have been written into such an intertwined Jewish/Christian community, calling for differentiation. While the Epistle's origin is unknown, its composition in the late first or early second century and its association with Alexandria or at least Alexandrian theology are suggestive of the hypothesis.

The picture that emerges from the texts of Christian women in the fourth century is of Christians who are integrated members of Egyptian society and not a separate group<sup>5</sup>. The finding is supported by two methodological observations: firstly the difficulty in identifying texts as Christian and distinct from those receiving a pagan classification; secondly the problem of assigning a date to many Christian texts with a greater specificity than 'fourth-century'; that is, the Christian texts cannot be dated in relation to the Edict of Milan, so that integration rather than separation marks the Christian community both before and after this date. The evidence of the papyri confirms what is known from literary sources which indicate that integration in society is a source of Roman difficulties with Christians and of persecution. Christians are

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<sup>4</sup> Zabin (1996), in her study of inscriptions in the West, concludes that Jewish women are identified primarily by their membership of the Jewish community rather than by their families.

<sup>5</sup> The picture that emerges from a comparison of the organisational structures of Jews and Christians in Ephesus tends to support the conclusion of this thesis. Trebilco (1999) notes Jews organised themselves in a city-wide structure within which Jews saw themselves as members of one group, and hence distinct. However, Christian groups were small and separate within the city, organised on the house-church model with no overarching organisational structure and no formal relationships, and hence were more integrated.

peoples' neighbours, yet they refuse to sacrifice and do not have exempt status. They are a *religio illicita*. Their religious customs are a novelty, not continuous with Jewish traditions from which they originate. The picture of an integrated Christianity need not contradict the hypothesis of Christians' early close connection with the Jewish community but suggests a (re)development in Egypt after 117 on the basis of an identity independent from Judaism. Christian women reflect this integrated paradigm in a number of their religious practices and attitudes which lack a distinctively Christian formulation<sup>6</sup>. Ascetic practice and its associated theology mark Christianity as distinct.

If greater integration correlates with less strict regulation of women, the papyri confirm the new choices that Christianity offered women to live independently of men as consecrated virgins in an ascetic alternative to marriage and motherhood. Christian women also appear as widows but the theological dimension of their status is unclear. Paradoxically, it is precisely ascetic women who later become most strictly regulated and bear the church's ideals of purity, silence and submission. Monasticism perpetuates patriarchal structures with control of women's lives vested in men who exercise authority, administer women's communities and mediate with the world while ascetic women continue domestic and private. The ascetic women in these papyri represent what appears a relatively early stage in monastic development, evidenced in the range of terms used and living situations attested.

A third conclusion concerns Jewish and Christian women's places within their respective communities. The papyri indicate that both Jewish and Christian women are active members of their communities but provide different perspectives on their Jewish and Christian identities.

The evidence of the Jewish papyri shows that Jewish women are integral and active members of the Jewish community. Jewish women are recognised as Jews by Roman law and their neighbours, and identify themselves as Jews. The papyri indicate that they pay the Jewish tax. They are involved in the Jewish war, not perhaps as formal combatants, but at the level of local village riots. Jewish women die alongside men, virtually disappearing from the historical record for the next two centuries. They are affected by the war, equally bearing the label 'impious', equally the objects of long-term resentment evident in ongoing anti-Jewish celebration and

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<sup>6</sup> See the third conclusion below.

suggested perhaps by unjust treatment. The papyri imply that Jewish women may not suffer the same loss of land through confiscations as men, supporting the hypothesis that confiscation of land applies to those directly involved in conflict and that women's participation is less formal. Jewish women maintain Jewish identity even as slaves and, as slaves, may be recognised by the Jewish community and manumitted by fellow-Jews although this does not appear a consistent practice. The papyri offer no information about Jewish women's spiritual life of prayer, scriptural formation and theological positions, but it is consistent with their Jewish identity and membership of the community to suppose their participation in synagogue worship and their function in the traditional female roles of domestic liturgical observance and management according to the purity laws of Jewish culture. The papyri offer no evidence of Jewish women holding titles of significance in local synagogues.

The papyri similarly show Christian women to be active participants in their faith communities. They attend church, which some state explicitly and others imply through allusions to the 'Bible' and liturgical practice. Their use of 'Scripture' is consistent with an oral transmission suggesting exposure to public 'Bible' reading. Women are commended by one faith community to others, indicating their recognised membership of churches, with most letters being ἐπιστολαὶ εἰρηνικαὶ not the ἐπιστολαὶ συστατικαὶ of the elite. Such letters signal that the women are not clergy. The one ἐπιστολὴ συστατικὴ, P.Got.11, commends women being led to the ἐπίτροπος. Use of such a letter is noteworthy in light of debate about the women's possible identity as martyrs or confessors.

The papyri indicate the women are also personally active as Christians. They pray, integrate 'biblical' language, identify with 'biblical' characters and situations, possess Christian books, consult spiritual 'fathers', use clergy and ascetics to achieve goals in the spiritual and secular realm, dedicate themselves as ever-virgins, believe in healing and providence, and adopt theological positions consistent with the 'NT' about marriage and family obligation, slave ownership, and care of widows and orphans. Their attitudes and practices, however, are frequently not articulated in ways that distinguish them from their pagan society. In particular, the women's formulations lack a clear Christian identity in prayer and naming of God. References to God as Father and as Trinity are missing, except one possible invocation, ...ας καὶ τῷ ἀγαθ[ῷ ἡμῶ]ν σωτῆρι καὶ τῷ οἰ[τῷ] (= υἱῷ) αὐτοῦ τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, P.Oxy.8.1161.2-4. The lack of Trinitarian references may be due to the time of the



documents' composition, prior to the major Trinitarian controversies of the fifth century. However, the absence of references to God as Father in light of the prominence of the invocation in the Lord's Prayer and the evident knowledge of that prayer, is less easily accounted for. It is possible, but unknowable, that the conventions of epistolography through the influence of scribes led to the use of formulae that are consistent with Christianity rather than those that are distinctive. Such an interpretation supposes significant scribal interference. Moreover, also missing are references to God as the source of grace, hope, love, peace etc., and prayers reflecting both a broader concern than the merely personal and a more specific concern with the inner life. The women's religious belief and practice as these are articulated in the papyri lack the transformational perspective of the 'NT' directed towards personal and social change, and appear consistent with the pagan cultic aim of safeguarding the status quo, a theme not entirely absent from the 'NT' but less marked than the notion of challenge.

Christian women's vocabulary, particularly in their naming of virtues, similarly shows a lack of distinctiveness with the absence of key 'NT' words and an increasing adoption of the vocabulary for values and virtues of pagan society. This process is the parallel face of integration and enculturation. Nonetheless, in the texts that survive the women do not use *abaskanta* and *proskynema* formulae. The women also give evidence of adopting the church's theology of asceticism as a superior way, an attitude not found in paganism. Where the papyri may yield evidence for Christian distinctiveness in alluding to reasons for action arising from faith, the women generally offer no formulations of their motivation. Nonetheless, the papyri indicate distinctive perspectives in the women's use of 'biblical' allusion and in their identification with 'biblical' characters and situations. This information is evident only in the texts written by women themselves.

As with Jewish women, the papyri offer no evidence of Christian women in formal ministries in the church, except for those who are 'virgins of God', that is, consecrated ascetic women. The finding supports the evidence of literary sources which indicate that asceticism represented an alternate vocational structure for women to that of being ordained clergy restricted to men. The papyri offer no examples of women or men consulting ascetic women for prayer, advice or mediation, suggesting the gendered roles of male public authority are rehearsed in

the ascetic world which is rhetorically configured as symbolic of gender transcendence.

A fourth conclusion concerns the women as religious women and applies only to the Christian women, being derived from information available only in the texts written by women themselves. The Christian women are generally assertive and at the same time live and understand themselves within the honour:shame, public:private, authority:power paradigm of the Mediterranean world<sup>7</sup> and early church<sup>8</sup>. The very act of writing documents to ask for help, assert need and maintain relationship establishes the women as active agents in their life and community. Their uses of the convention of women's weakness function as acts of power for their benefit, remind (male) ascetics of their 'NT' obligations and pressure the ascetics to respond favourably. At the same time the papyri confirm the evidence of other sources that attest women's real legal and social disadvantage. The sense of agency is reflected in some women's spiritual lives but is lacking in others, while some exhibit confidence in the spiritual realm that is less apparent in 'ordinary' lives. For example, Valeria in P.Lond.6.1926 and Taouak in P.Neph.18 provide evidence, from opposite positions, that Christian women's sense of themselves and their power in their religious and 'ordinary' life may be distinct. The solution for which some Christian women opt is magic where powerful agency is exhibited, with magic supplementing prayer, sometimes further supplemented by reason.

The infrequent reference to marital status among the Christian women's texts is noteworthy. The finding may support the hypothesis that marriage was not a primary status category among Christians. Certainly, if these women are married, it indicates that they have no sense of needing to refer to, or identify themselves by the men in their lives. Other explanations are possible. The finding may reflect an imbalance in the numbers of women over men in the church hinted at in these papyri. It may reflect ascetic conviction to which the texts also bear witness. There is insufficient evidence

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<sup>7</sup> The papyri reveal that negative appraisals of women from classical literature formed part of the corpus of copy-texts given to children learning to read and write, eg P.Bour.1 (C4) 'sea, fire, woman, a triple evil'; 'when he (Diogenes) saw a woman deliberating with (another) woman, he said, "An asp that gets its poison from a viper"; when Diogenes saw a woman learning language, he said "Just as a sword is sharpened"'. See also MPER, NS, 1.18 (C1); MPER, NS, 3.24 (C1); P.Ant.2.60 (C2/3); P.Oxy.15.1880 (C2/3); P.Amh.2.26 (C4), cited in Ibrahim (1992). The formal inculcation of such attitudes began in childhood.

<sup>8</sup> Negative attitudes to women appear in Christian 'Scripture', eg Barnabas 12.5; 1 Timothy 2.14, and in church teaching circulating in Egypt, eg P.Oxy.17.2073 (late C4); P.Oxy.13.1603 (C5/6). At the same time, women's faith from the past is recognised and praised, eg women martyrs and the persecuted, 1 Clement 6.3f; Rahab, 1 Clement 12; Judith, Esther, 1 Clement 55.

to draw a conclusion among these alternatives. The finding is in tension with other evidence in the papyri for the primary place of family among the women's needs and concerns. Even the practice of prayer functions frequently in the women's texts to express, maintain and order their family relationships. The apparent absence of men in the texts is matched by the emergence of the church and clergy as alternate family for women, with (male) ascetics and clergy assisting women in public tasks most frequently performed by close male family members. These same ascetics and clergy adopt, and are endowed with, the roles of patriarchal authority.

The extent to which Christian women's self-understanding as women is informed by 'biblical' and church teaching is not formulated in the papyri. However, the very statement assumes that there is a univalent Christian understanding of what being a woman may be, and on the contrary, 'biblical' literature presents a multivalent understanding. The image from the household codes (*Haustafeln*), sections of the gospels, Pauline corpus, Pastoral Epistles and The Shepherd is consistent with the honour:shame, public:private, authority:power paradigm, with social ideals of modesty, obedience and silence. Other sections of the gospels and Pauline corpus give rise to the image of women's equal personhood and active leadership developed in the apocryphal *Acts*. The evidence of the papyri confirms the variety of Christian women's religious beliefs, practices and experience. Excepting active leadership roles in ministry, the Christian women in the papyri display the range of 'biblical' possibilities.

This thesis aimed to explore the religious beliefs, practices and experiences of Christian and Jewish women as they are attested in the Greek papyri of Egypt from 100 to 400. The papyri written by women give an access to women's voices unavailable elsewhere. The papyri nuance and sometimes reconfigure the pictures of women that emerge from literary, almost universally male-authored, texts. The study has allowed an examination of the ways in which 'real women' articulate their relation to God and religious institutions, their identities as Jewish and Christian women and the interaction between their religious beliefs, practices and experiences and their 'ordinary' life. The perspectives offered by the papyri provide a unique dimension to the study of women in the ancient world.



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