

STUDIA ANTIQUA

A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 1
FALL 2023

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

STUDIA ANTIQUA

A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

EDITOR
Ally Huffmire

HEAD OF FACULTY REVIEW BOARD
Jason Combs

ANES PROGRAM INTERIM COORDINATOR
Matthew Grey

October 2023

ISSN: 1540-8787

Studia Antiqua is an annual student journal dedicated to publishing the research of graduate and undergraduate students from all disciplines of ancient studies. The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Brigham Young University or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The continued publication of *Studia Antiqua* is made possible through financial contributions by Ancient Near Eastern Studies. Additional contributions were made to this volume by Classics and the Religious Studies Center.

Studia Antiqua accepts manuscripts for publication year-round. Manuscripts should be sent to studia_antiqua@byu.edu and should include a title page with the author's name, major, and year in school. For submission guidelines, please visit studiaantiqua.byu.edu.

STUDIA ANTIQUA

CONTENTS

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 1

FALL 2023

ABBREVIATIONS iv

PAUL BRYNER

The Carnavalesque and the Carmel Competition in I Kings 18 1

ALLY HUFFMIRE

Embodiment and Ritual Clothing:

Dressing the Israelite High Priest 17

HEIDYN VON BOSE

The Different Esthers of the Septuagint and Masoretic Text:

How the Inclusion of God Changes the Character of Esther 30

CAL CHRISTENSEN

Retracing the Historical Via Dolorosa:

An Exercise in Logistics in First Century Jerusalem 48

NICOLE FRANCIS

A Pauline Dress Code or a Roman Analogy:

Reinterpreting Paul's Discourse in 1 Corinthians 11:1–16 68

CHRIS COX

Towards Orthodox Polity: Episcopal Apology in

Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* 84

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are taken from *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed., 8.4.2.

AB	Anchor Bible
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
HBAI	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
HTS	<i>HTS Theological Studies</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IDS	<i>In die Skriflig</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JGRChJ	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Media Psychol.</i>	<i>Media Psychology</i>
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>

<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OCA</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Soc. Identities</i>	<i>Social Identities</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

THE CARNIVALESQUE AND THE CARMEL COMPETITION IN 1 KINGS 18

PAUL BRYNER

Paul Bryner recently graduated from Brigham Young University, majoring in Ancient Near Eastern Studies and minoring in Philosophy. His research interests include areas where theology and linguistics overlap in the biblical text. He plans to begin a JD degree in fall 2024.

Abstract: While humor is a difficult feature to identify in the Bible, the concept of the “carnavalesque”—a form of literary humor with sociological implications, coined by Mikhail Bakhtin — is much easier to apply. I argue for the presence of carnivalesque themes in the Elijah narrative of 1 Kings 18 which give a subtle, implicit social commentary on Israelite society.

INTRODUCTION

1 Kings 18 records a dramatic conflict on Mount Carmel between Elijah the prophet of Yahweh and 450 prophets of the Canaanite god Baal sanctioned by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Elijah arranges a contest to see who can call down fire from the sky to consume their sacrifice, and after he wins through Yahweh’s intervention, the prophets of Baal are slaughtered and the famine gripping the land is ended. The narrative can strike readers as inspiring, dark, or humorous. Could that combination of traits have been intentional to teach readers through inspiring dark humor? Much has been written on the broad subject of modern humor in the Bible.¹ However, narrower studies have been done in previous decades to search

1. A firsthand glance at the Bible evinces difficulty in finding any intentional humor with our modern understanding of it. Willie Van Heerden, “Why the Humor in the Bible Plays Hide and Seek with Us,” *Soc. Identities* 7 (2001): 75–96. Modern scholarship has sought to find humor within it by extending humor to literary devices like irony, which is much more abundant narratively and theologically. Kelly R. Iverson, “Incongruity, Humor, and Mark: Performance and the Use of Laughter in the Second Gospel (Mark 8.14–21),” *NTS* 59 (2013): 2–19. Modern humor studies attribute humor to “relief theory, superiority theory, and incongruity theory.”

for hints of the “carnavalesque” within the biblical text, a term coined by Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin denoting a specific set of humorous literary themes. Carnavalesque themes encompass many of the elements in the Elijah story which would be considered dark or humorous, but also allow us to draw conclusions about the social system portrayed by the author. The carnivalesque theme includes the following devices, which I argue are present in 1 Kings 18: social reversals, excessive force and violence, the profaning of the sacred, feasting, and conflicting narrative voices known as “polyphony.” Identifying these carnivalesque devices suggests social unease for the author and their society, which could potentially help us situate the author in a historical context and also make the story relatable to our power struggles in the modern day.

BACKGROUND

Although Bakhtin resisted any kind of formal systemization of his thoughts, scholars have synthesized them to define the literary devices that characterize the carnivalesque.² Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque evolved from his broader literary themes of “polyphony” and “serio-comical” literature, of which the carnivalesque is a sort of subcategory. Bakhtin loved the genre novel because of its competing voices, or polyphony, which create the novel’s meaning through dialogue and thus resist formalized meaning.³ Novels are not ancient, but Bakhtin saw them as a continuation of the tradition of classical writers who used humor and informality to subversively convey serious messages, known as serio-comical literature.⁴ Finally, through his study of carnivals and of carnival themes in literature,

Moniek Buijzen and Patti M. Valkenburg, “Developing a Typology of Humor in Audiovisual Media,” *Media Psychol.* 6 (2004): 147. This allows us to see humor analogs in jubilation, polemics, and irony, but it is still limited. See Hennie Kruger, “Laughter in the Old Testament: A Hotchpotch of Humour, Mockery and Rejoicing?” *IDS* 48 (2014): 1–10; Yaira Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (Boston: Brill, 2000); Carolyn J. Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009). Bakhtin’s view of a carnivalesque social phenomenon is much more expansive.

2. Further scholastic difficulty arises from the disputed authorship of texts attributed to Bakhtin and the obscurity of his texts (due to living the USSR) until the 1970s. It was posthumously asserted that the writings of Bakhtin’s associates Pavel Medvedev and Valentin Voloshinov were in fact written by Bakhtin. This group is often referred to collectively as the “Bakhtin Circle,” though the name Bakhtin will be used here generally. Mikhail Bakhtin, Pavel Medvedev, and Valentin Voloshinov, *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1–4. See also Kenneth Craig, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnavalesque* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 14–16. Helen Paynter, *Reduced Laughter: Seriocomic Features and their Functions in the Book of Kings* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 30–31.

3. This is the main topic of Bakhtin’s first book, a praise of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s writings and their exemplification of the ideal polyphonic novel. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, ed. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

4. This recounting of novelistic themes in ancient literature is the main topic of his

he developed the idea of the “carnavalesque” as a particular form of polyphony and seriocomical literature.⁵ Bakhtin’s writings have previously been applied to biblical studies, but these studies have focused almost exclusively on polyphony.⁶ Some innovative scholars have integrated the carnivalesque to biblical studies.⁷ Helen Paynter explores it broadly in the Book of Kings and has provided useful

essays “Novel and Epic” and “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse.” “Serio-comical” and “carnavalesque” will be used interchangeably from here forward. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, eds. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 3–83. Bakhtin writes: “In classical times this elemental popular laughter gave rise directly to a broad and varied field of ancient literature, one that the ancients themselves expressively labeled *spoudogeloion*, that is, the field of ‘serio-comical’... All these genres, permeated with the ‘serio-comical,’ are authentic predecessors of the novel. For the first time, the subject of serious literary representation (although, it is true, at the same time comical) is portrayed without any distance, on the level of contemporary reality, in a zone of direct and even crude contact... Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it... laughter means abuse, and abuse could lead to blows. Basically this is uncrowning.” Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 21–24.

5. Bakhtin does this particularly through his study of the rowdy literature of the French author François Rabelais, extrapolating the carnivalesque themes that give the books their character. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968). He writes, “Rabelais is difficult. But his work, correctly understood, casts a retrospective light on this thousand-year-old development of the folk culture of humor, which has found in his works its greatest literary expression... His novel must serve as a key to the immense treasury of folk humor which as yet has been scarcely understood or analyzed... Carnival festivities and the comic spectacles and ritual connected with them had an important place in the life of medieval man... they were sharply distinct from the serious official, ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonials. They offered a completely different, nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and a second life outside officialdom.” Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 4–6.

6. While polyphony will be treated here as a component of the carnivalesque, it seems to be the most cherished topic of Bakhtin’s work by the academic community. In fact, most of the existing research on Bakhtin and the Bible has focused primarily on polyphony occurring between conflicting biblical texts. See Roland Boer, ed., *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); Walter L. Reed, *Dialogues of the Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

7. See Bettina Fischer, “Bakhtin’s Carnival and the Gospel of Luke,” *Neot* 40 (2006): 35–60; Mathias Nygaard, “Bakhtinian Carnavalesque and Paul’s Foolish and Scandalous Gospel,” *BibInt* 26 (2018): 369–389; Kenneth Craig, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnavalesque* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 11–44; Nehama Aschkenasy, “Reading Ruth through a Bakhtinian Lens: The Carnavalesque in a Biblical Tale,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 437–453; Francisco O. Garcia-Treto, “The Fall of the House: A Carnavalesque Reading of 2 Kings 9 and 10,” *JSOT* 15 (1990): 47–65; Timothy C. McNinch, “Who Knows?: A Bakhtinian Reading of Carnavalesque Motifs in Jonah,” *VT* (2021): 1–17.

diagnostic material for carnivalesque elements.⁸ However, Paynter's treatment of the Book of Kings was necessarily limited in detail due to the large scope of the book.⁹ This essay intends to build upon her groundbreaking work by identifying a few particular elements of the carnivalesque in the Elijah story within the Book of Kings and some of the sociological implications.¹⁰

SOCIAL REVERSALS

Bakhtin's writings on carnivals and carnivalesque literature note the presence of "the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (*a l'envers*), of the 'turnabout,' of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear,... [and] comic crownings and uncrownings."¹¹ Carnivalesque scenes reverse social roles as the kings become lowly and the lowly become kings, fools are venerated and the venerated made foolish, facilitated by the power of the riotous crowd. Identities conceal themselves and are uprooted by means of "masking" and "foolery."¹² Bakhtin notes that this temporary reversal could be done either as a cathartic experience before continuing the

8. These are drawn as much as possible from Bakhtin's previously cited works but also relies on Helen Paynter's compiled diagnostic criteria and her useful sources. Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 60–61. See also Eugene P. Kirk, *Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism* (New York: Garland, 1980), xiv; Peter Stallybrass, "'Drunk with the Cup of Liberty': Robin Hood, the Carnivalesque, and the Rhetoric of Violence in Early Modern England," *Semiotica* 54 (1985): 113–114.

9. Helen Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 41–67.

10. The literary devices I discover here are by no means a complete summary of Bakhtin's assessment of polyphony, the seriocomical, or the carnivalesque, but rather the elements of most interest for studying Elijah. Many existing elements, specific to Socrates, Rabelais, or Dostoevsky, do not fit. Rather than seeing a precise fit with Bakhtin's imprecise theory, I use the carnivalesque as a lens through which to analyze certain literary and sociological phenomena. When strictly studying the carnival as an event and not a device, he notes "syncretic pageantry," "suspended...hierarchical structure," "carnivalistic mesalliances" or juxtapositions, "profanation," and "mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king." Bakhtin, *Problems*, 122–124. When noting elements of ancient seriocomic literature, he lists first the elements in Socratic dialogue: "dialogic nature of truth," "juxtaposition of various points of view... and provoking the words of one's interlocutor," "the heroes... are ideologists," "dialogue on the threshold," "the idea is organically combined with the image of a person." Bakhtin, *Problems*, 110–112. He then describes Menippean satire: "the comic element," "extraordinary freedom of plot... and use of the fantastic," "testing of a philosophical idea," "slum naturalism," "ultimate questions," "three-planed construction" of underworld, earth, and heaven, "experimental fantasticality," "abnormal moral and psychic state," "scandal scenes," "oxymoronic combinations," "social utopia," "inserted genres," and "concern with current... issues." Bakhtin, *Problems*, 114–118.

11. Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 10–11.

12. "Even more important is the theme of the mask, the most complex theme of folk culture. The mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to oneself. The mask is related to transition metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and nick-names... It reveals the essence of the grotesque." Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 39–40.

ordinary social roles, or it could be a sort of lasting rebellion against the existing social hierarchy; the latter seems to be the purpose of the carnivalesque events of the Carmel contest. The enthronement and dethronement of a carnival king would admittedly function differently than an actual coronation, but the more general carnivalesque element of social reversal is ubiquitous in 1 Kings 18 with power structures of gods and men being supplanted. Israel's King Ahab and the divine king Baal are temporarily dominated by Elijah and his divine king Yahweh, who upset the power structure and essentially become the carnival kings of the seditious contest – however, this is no trivial carnival.¹³

In the Elijah story, exchange of power happens not only in the divine realm but the human realm also. Elijah, a vagabond prophet dependent on crow food and widows,¹⁴ shockingly becomes the domineering organizer of the religious contest, but King Ahab acts subordinately to Elijah.¹⁵ One would expect that King Ahab would be the dominant individual in presiding over the events on Carmel; his address to Elijah upon greeting him makes it clearly that they are not on amiable terms, as does his servant Obadiah's fear of offending Ahab by mentioning Elijah. Yet Ahab does not attack or kill Elijah, but rather agrees to his challenge. Why is this? It is not clear, though Ahab tends to be a weak personality in general; his wife Jezebel seems to be the real power behind the throne, another surprising power upset, and is never so cordial with Elijah.¹⁶ Once the mountain contest begins, Elijah regulates how it will proceed; the bulls for sacrifice are brought at his demand. He kindly gives the prophets of Baal the choice of which bull they want and then he taunts them. His prayer to bring down fire intends to demonstrate not only that YHWH is God, but that Elijah is his prophet. While the roles of prophet and king are quite different, Elijah's dominance here over the actual king and the royal cult makes him temporary royalty in a functional manner.¹⁷ Conversely, Ahab plays a fool trope and is put to shame.

13. Assuming the Baal of 1 Kgs 18 to be the same Baal (Hadad) as in the Ugaritic Baal cycle, then Baal was the king of the gods after defeating his brothers Yam (Sea) and Mot (Death). Dennis Pardee, "The Baal Cycle," ed. William H. Hallo, *Context of Scripture* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 241–273.

14. 1 Kgs 17:6, 11.

15. John W. Olley, "YHWH and His Zealous Prophet: The Presentation of Elijah in 1 and 2 Kings," *JSOT* 80 (1998): 35–36.

16. Holt analyzes Ahab's surprising submission to his wife Jezebel, perhaps as a way of passing blame, and the ways in which he and Jezebel could be seen as tragic heroes. Else K. Holt, "...Urged On by his Wife Jezebel: A Literary Reading of 1 Kgs 18 in Context," *SJOT* 9 (2008): 83–96.

17. This is somewhat ironic considering that Elijah had been living in hiding just prior and returns to hiding immediately after. He is a sort of rightful ruler-in-exile, despite the incredible demonstration of divine power which he administrated. Elijah's flight after the contest is explained by some as a rearranging of sources, by others as the true narrative, and by others

On the divine side, Baal was seen as the head of the Phoenician pantheon,¹⁸ and thus his defeat by YHWH would mean a change in divine leadership. His failure to call down fire, a trait expected of him, displaced him from his accepted role as divine king and placed YHWH there instead. Baal, who had been empowered, is made into a powerless fool as well and is derisively mocked by Elijah; his priests are killed by the riotous Israelite populace, who are the facilitators in the shift of power. They are mocked by Elijah as well and rave madly, behaving like fools and harming themselves in ways unlawful to Israelites.¹⁹ Unfortunately, this symbolic enthronement of Elijah and YHWH on Carmel was temporary, just as in carnivals. Elijah returns to his fearful flight from the royal house and the Baal cult returns to the dominant societal position, enthroning Baal and the royal family once more. This carnivalesque contest was a subversive rebellion against the existing power structure but which did not last, to the grief of the ancient Yahwists. The ancient text must have led the Israelite audience to ask themselves if they were satisfied with who they established as their mortal and divine kings. If they were not satisfied, it assured them that the people have the power to subvert their rulers if they will only unify their opinions.

EXCESSIVE FORCE AND VIOLENCE

While violence is not listed directly as a characteristic of the carnivalesque by Bakhtin, both the “grotesque,” “carnavalesque numbers” of large size, revolutionary features, antagonism, and abnormal psychological states combine to create this category. A grotesque power shift of amusing proportions is apt to cause extreme and violent actions which go beyond what is comfortable or necessary; the excessive force and violence demonstrated in the Elijah narrative certainly falls within the realm both of the “grotesque,” and numerically within “fantasticity.” This rowdy narrative attitude may simply be a historic recounting of violent events, though it may be sending a message of societal discontent through the dark humor of overkill and exaggerated retaliation.

as a sort of attack on Elijah’s prideful insistence on being alone as a prophet. Word Commentary suggests Elijah’s disappearances as emblematic of God’s retreat as well. Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings, Volume 13*, eds. David Allen Hubbard et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2015), 218–231.

18. Some see Baal, or “Lord,” as being a title for the deity Melqart, with some conflating the two and others separating them. If he were not identical to Baal, the theology in play would be much different. Day argues convincingly that this Baal is “Baal Shamem,” the deity present at Ugarit. John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (New York: Sheffield, 2002), 68–90.

19. The word describing the frenzy of the Baal prophets is the verb form of the noun “prophet.”

The brutality of 1 Kings 18 is shocking if read in isolation, but it follows events of mortal magnitude in the previous chapter. Elijah declares a famine in 1 Kings 17 which, though not described as grotesquely as the later famine in Kings, is clearly international and evokes the image of thousands starving.²⁰ Elijah begs from a widow who was preparing her last meal, and Ahab's servant Obadiah only meet Elijah because even the royal herd is starving and they are looking for a place to graze.²¹ Thus, Elijah's story begins with a proclamation of violence through nature to quench Baalism, though it does not do so completely and requires more focused intervention. Also behind the scenes of 1 Kings 18 is Jezebel's murderous campaign to eliminate Yahwism and its adherents, which could have occurred in the narrative as a reaction to YHWH's extreme famine or perhaps the cause of the famine. Though Jezebel swears more vehemently to eliminate Elijah after the contest, Obadiah's off-stage harboring of Yahwistic prophet fugitives means they had already been hunted *en masse*. Elijah's emphasis on being a lone prophet reinforces the scope of the extermination, even if his aloneness was exaggerated.

The crowning display of excessive force, though, is YHWH's participation in the contest and the immediate aftermath. It should be noted that some see the contest and its results as Elijah's own initiative after simply being told to appear before Ahab and that God would send rain; however, the support of YHWH in the contest seems to confirm it as divinely sanctioned, if not the more explicit "let it be known this day... that I have done all these things at my word."²² The setup for the absurdly powerful demonstration allows the Baal prophets first choice of bull and all day to call on Baal; the derisive mockery Elijah employs (along with his earlier verbal sparring with Ahab) heightens the conflict element. Elijah then rebuilds the altar of YHWH with twelve stones and drenches the altar (and the trench surrounding it) with twelve measures of water (The reckless abandon with which he demands the water amidst a drought is surprising). After his prayer, fire comes from the sky and completely dries up all the water which had been poured and incinerates the offering, a provocative demonstration of abundant and excessive power on the part of YHWH that is comically extreme in its literary presentation. The reaction of Elijah and the people of Israel after the fact could be seen as even more extreme though. 450 people are led down to the brook and slaughtered at Elijah's command, perhaps a sort of retributive act against Jezebel. While the

20. 2 Kgs 6:24–30 tells of a famine several chapters later where women are driven to eat their children.

21. 1 Kgs 18:5.

22. Barrera explores the textual history of 1 Kgs 18 and surmises from analysis of the Old Greek and Latin that material has been added to emphasize Elijah's importance and to frame the chronology of the contest during the day, including this phrase. Julio Treballe Barrera, *Textual and Literary Criticism of the Book of Kings* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 247–263.

Hebrew Bible recounts the violent deaths of thousands in war, the mass execution after a religious contest seems grotesquely disproportionate as opposed to other passages.²³ Though the extremity of it shocks modern readers, it does not paint YHWH as unjust because the public consents to the contest. It was equal in scale with Jezebel's executions of the prophets of YHWH, or Jehu's later manipulative execution of Baal prophets.

Concluding the chapter is a description of Elijah's anticipation of torrential rain in response to the slaughter of the Baal prophets, mirroring the spilled blood of the Baal prophets. The rain falls in excessive amounts potentially dangerous to Ahab's chariot, and he is warned to leave quickly.²⁴ Yet in another miraculous display, Elijah runs ahead of Ahab, who is in a chariot, to Jezreel.²⁵ The extreme force and violence involved in the drought, the fire from heaven, the slaughter of Baal prophets, and the torrential rain are examples of carnivalesque actions which are fantastic in scope and humorously overbearing. These carnivalesque themes can symbolize the frustration of an oppressed people in their current social situation, or the author's depiction of it at least: Israelites and their God chafing under Baalism.

THE PROFANING OF THE SACRED

Bakhtin observed that medieval carnivals and seriocomical humor often inverted the world by bringing sacred things, people, and ideas into the world of the grotesque and made them human and accessible through mockery.²⁶ Thus, the profaning of the sacred is similar to carnivalesque social and political reversals but with religious authorities and ideas instead of the more civil ones. This profanation includes transgressing bodily barriers, the use of insults, and grotesque depictions, among others. Bakhtin notes that the profaning of the sacred as seen in the carnivalesque may not always be included as a *prescriptive* measure, as would not make sense in the defamation of YHWH, but rather a *descriptive* measure. In the contest of 1 Kings 18, the profanation of YHWH by the people is explicitly descriptive, while the debasement of Baal is a prescriptive polemic.

Unfortunately for Yahwism, the victory on Carmel against Baal is bookended by two periods of overwhelming Baalism during which YHWH is profaned. The pre-contest sacrilege of YHWH is easily seen in the treatment of Elijah, his

23. A few exceptions could be the Uzziah story found in 2 Sam 6:7, or the animal attacks in 1 Kgs 13:24; 20:35–36.

24. 1 Kgs 18:44.

25. Some have hypothesized that Elijah temporarily outran Ahab's chariot (which may have gotten stuck in the mud), and others assert that Elijah spatially ran out in front of Ahab's chariot as a sort of royal sanction. DeVries, *1 Kings*, 119.

26. Bakhtin, *Problems*, 123.

representative. He must subsist in obscurity on tidbits delivered by birds and then flee to the Gentile nation of Phoenicia to find someone who will feed him. He and his God are “the troubler of Israel” to Ahab, and Elijah is so notorious that misinformation about his location is liable to get Obadiah killed.²⁷ The other prophets of YHWH are no better off, hiding as fugitives in caves for their lives and being killed *en masse* by Jezebel. The altar on Carmel is broken down and YHWH’s people vacillate and stumble in their allegiance to him. During the contest, the Baal prophets respond to Elijah’s mockery with more sacrilegious behavior (to Yahwists): going into a frenzy, limping around the altar and “prophesying” in a blasphemous way as only Yahwist prophets are to prophesy.²⁸ The self-mutilation of the Baal prophets, usually a mourning practice but seemingly used to elicit Baal’s attention, is an activity illegal to Israelites.²⁹ Even worse, Baalism returns with a vengeance after the contest, driving Elijah into depressed hiding at Horeb. Elijah only receives a reprieve through the promise of a future violent administration in Israel, Aram, and the prophetic guild which will eventually eliminate Baalism.³⁰ Baalism thus stands as the popularly dominant religion in the Elijah cycle at the beginning and end, situating his life and in a time of religious and political oppression for Yahwists in Israel.

Yet interrupting the reign of the Baal cult is the carnivalesque Carmel contest of Elijah, where Baal is desecrated and YHWH glorified. The profaning of Baal occurs particularly on a theological level in his symbolic dethroning, as well as the evidence of his powers being defunct. Ugaritic texts illuminate our understanding of what the Phoenician religion of Jezebel may have been like.³¹ Baal, meaning “lord” or “master,” is depicted in the Baal cycle as being a storm deity and the son of El, meaning “god.” Baal is a contestant for the throne against Yam (“sea”) and Mot (“death”). Baal defeats and slays Yam but is then killed by Mot. Baal returns to life with assistance from other deities, though, and defeats Mot to take his place at the head of the pantheon. The seasonal lapse and return of rain are often thought to correspond to this conflict in an annual fashion. 1 Kings 18 is clearly a polemic on Baal’s godly powers in general (and perhaps even other Canaanite

27. 1 Kgs 18:12, 17.

28. The verb used for “limp” here is the same word used to describe the vacillation of the people earlier in the chapter as they stumble on two crutches. The verb used for their prophesying is often rendered as “rave,” though it is quite clearly the verb used when Yahweh’s prophets prophesy in other instances.

29. Cutting oneself is proscribed in Lev 19:28 and Deut 14:2, though it is mentioned descriptively in Jer 16:6.

30. 1 Kings 19:15–19.

31. This assumes that the early Iron Age descriptions of Baal and his pantheon were at all similar to the Baalism present in Israel hundreds of years later.

deities).³² However, an attack specifically on Baal's power as a storm god is also easily seen in the narrative. It is YHWH who stops the rain, who brings the rain, and who sends down fire from the sky. Perhaps Baal was still dead to them?³³ Maybe it suggested that he would always be dead.³⁴ Beyond these veiled hints of an intricate Baal polemic, Elijah is openly aggressive in his sarcastic mockery of the Baal prophets. The language is very derisive of Baal's anthropomorphism and suggests that simply yell louder ought to wake him from his sleep. One of the phrases Elijah uses (שֵׁי יָיִן וְיִשְׁכָּר) contains an uncertain Hebrew root and is widely considered to be scatological in nature: an assertion that Baal is defecating.³⁵ This insult is the most carnivalesque element of the narrative: transgression of bodily barriers, the grotesque, billingsgate (crude language), and profanation of the sacred are all present at once. The ultimate insulting statement to the royal cult, though, is the mass slaughter of the prophets after the contest by the Israelites and a total debasement of Baal by Elijah and the people.³⁶ For one precious and fleeting moment in the Elijah narrative, YHWH and his prophet are once again sacred to his people, while Baal has been profaned profusely.³⁷

32. Some see the Elijah cycle as a polemic against Mot as well, considering the constant presence and nearness of death throughout the narrative and YHWH overcoming it or distributing it. Hauser writes, "Drought is pictured as coming at the will of Yahweh, not as a result of his or Baal's submission to death. If, according to Canaanite mythology, Baal has to struggle periodically with death and lose, in 1 Kings 17–19 Yahweh confronts death, and wins. Yahweh is thus portrayed as the God of life who has ultimate control over death." Alan J. Hauser and Russell Gregory, *From Carmel to Horeb*, ed. Russell Gregory (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 11. This detail is subtle and seems to be a stretch, but the possibility of 1 Kgs 18 profaning two deities at once would certainly amplify the sense of the carnivalesque in the story. Certainly, Asherah is under attack as well since some of her prophets are at the contest.

33. "Since it was an assumed part of Canaanite mythology that Baal would periodically succumb to death, the idea of his being dead for a time would not be all that unusual. Chapter 18, however, goes far beyond that, using the detailed description of his total silence in w. 26–29 as one way of underlining the fact that he is permanently dead and has no power." Hauser and Gregory, *Carmel*, 46.

34. As Hauser writes, "However, in these chapters Baal is not portrayed as a god who periodically must submit to death, only to rise again and restore life to the earth. Rather, Baal is shown to have no power at all in the realm that is supposed to be his, the sending of the annual rains. He is, in fact, quite dead (1 Kgs 18.26–29)." Hauser and Gregory, *Carmel*, 46.

35. "שֵׁי" is the unknown root. HALOT says, "hapax legomenon...according to the etymology שֵׁי means either to go away, to go to the side, or expulsion, defecation."

36. The word "slaughter" (שִׁחָה) is often (though not exclusively) used in situations of sacrifice and there may be an element of irony in view as priests who normally perform sacrifices to their false god are now sacrificed in the name of their true deity.

37. This defamation is somewhat comic in itself, as is the incomprehensibly foolish understanding of theology of the characters (to the reader) like Ahab thinking that Elijah is the troubler of Israel or the conception of Baal as a sleeping god.

FEASTING AFTER FASTING

Bakhtin saw feasting as an integral element of the carnivalesque: ancient carnivals had abundant food and drink, in contrast with the straits of daily life. Such an abundance needed some kind of occasion and was usually linked to “moments of death and revival” and sanctioned by “the world of ideals.”³⁸ Religion, social change, and seasonal change are all ample reasons, and the religious tone of 1 Kings and its consequential events render many mentions of eating as feasts nearing Bakhtin’s description.

The element of feasting as such initially eludes readers of 1 Kings 18. However, it is clear that food and water, or the lack thereof, are central to the Elijah cycle in 1 Kings 17–19. The presence of a burning drought causes general hunger, which allows for later feasting, and the conspicuous mentions of food and water during the famine show their import. The whole narrative of 1 Kings 17 consists of Elijah finding ways to eat and drink: he is miraculously fed by birds until his water source dries up, and then he is fed miraculously on the multiplied food of a starving widow. Finally, Elijah is fed miraculously by an angel after the events at Carmel. This narrative shows that YHWH is the provider of food, water, and feasts, and each occasion of Elijah eating is a small example of a feast; subsistence is a celebrated success more than an everyday luxury. However, YHWH does not prevent his prophets from suffering during the famine despite providing for them; Elijah only eats miraculously, and the other Yahwistic prophets are fugitives in caves and probably fed sparsely in secret by Obadiah. The irony is extended further when we learn that Jezebel feeds not only 450 Baal prophets but also hundreds of Asherah prophets at the royal table,³⁹ faring sumptuously while the people starve and the Yahwists survive miraculously. Thus the theme of feasting, as with power and sacredness, seems at first to be inverted: an oppressive minority eating well while many go hungry and feast on fading rations.

YHWH decides, however, that it is time to send the rain and end the fasting; this is done through the sacrificing of bulls and through the sacrificing of the Baal prophets themselves, bringing rainstorms reminiscent of their blood. The

38. “The feast had always an essential, meaningful content. No rest period or breathing spell can be rendered festive per se; something must be added from the spiritual and ideological dimension. They must be sanctioned not by the world of practical conditions but by the highest aims of human existence, that is, by the world of ideals. Without this sanction there can be no festivity... Moreover, through all the stages of historic development feasts were linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man. Moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led to a festive perception of the world. These moments, expressed in concrete form, created the peculiar character of the feasts.” Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 8–9.

39. 1 Kgs 18:19.

coming rain is the source of both drinking water and the staple crops which are the staff of life to the people. Thus YHWH's sending of rain is not only a weather phenomenon to overshadow Baal but also a declaration of a feast to all of famished Israel, declaring that hunger and thirst are over and that they can rejoice in the food and newfound purity after a partial purge of Baalism. Most striking is Elijah's explicit and ironic command to Ahab: "Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of rushing rain."⁴⁰ The impending rainstorm means that water, and the crops it provides, are imminent. Ahab is commanded to go home and feast, though he had trouble feeding even his royal herd earlier in the chapter.⁴¹ There is irony in this injunction: Ahab's table guests had formerly been the 450 prophets of Baal who feasted daily with the royal house but will do so no longer. The narrative element of who is hungry and who is fed forms a leitmotif throughout the story. The prize after the Carmel contest is an impending feast for everyone, to be brought by the rainstorm, except those Baal prophets who had been feasting. The so-called feast is provided by YHWH and his prophet in a turbulent carnivalesque with ritual sacrifice and a recommitment to high ideals, but in the process showing the discordant strata of Elijah's society.

POLYPHONY

Bakhtin encompasses the carnivalesque within the larger device of polyphony, broadly describing the opposing voices within the narrative, alternate registers of speech or *heteroglossia* (literally "different tongues"), and ambivalence on the part of the narrator who shares an incomplete story. As mentioned prior, the most popular aspect of Bakhtin's work in biblical studies is his work on "dialogism" and on polyphony. It is easy to see how one could take the Bible as a work whose component texts consist of competing voices. However, there does not seem to be much explicit polyphony within individual books, with discordant narrators and ambiguity of moral certainty.⁴² Thus, pure Bakhtinian polyphony as in novels is not present in the Elijah narrative, but it can be teased out in three lesser forms: the competing voices between textual sources in the story, the dualistic internal dialogue of the characters between Baalism and Yahwism, and the internal dialogue of the narrator seen in their mildly ambivalent treatment of Elijah.

The story of Elijah on Carmel can be treated textually in several layers: as part of a larger narrative history beginning in Deuteronomy, as part of the book of Kings, as part of the Northern Kingdom narrative in Kings, and within the

40. 1 Kgs 18:41.

41. 1 Kgs 18:5.

42. One exception may be the repeated speeches given by Job's friends, though their correction at the end of the book resolves into a sort of single voice.

Elijah cycle itself, with each of these layers being composite sources themselves. When scholars see a blatant contradiction within a layer of biblical text, it is often interpreted as the resulting compilation of component sources and the refusal or inability of the redactor to smooth it out. Unfortunately, the contrary voices in this intertextual dialogue may only be hypothetically identified as authors or redactors from different times who disagreed with one another. Most scholars agree that Deuteronomy through 2 Kings is a cohesive unit, the Deuteronomistic History (DH), though opinions differ widely in how many redactions occurred and the exact motives. The Northern Kingdom stories of Elijah, Elisha, and the conflicts with Aram are peculiar in the DH, which is thought to be largely Judean in nature. Were these perhaps adapted from an earlier Israelite source, weaved into the royal history of Judah? If so, how much editing occurred in their inclusion and how did it conflict with the current edition? Little can be conclusively surmised from textual criticism.⁴³ However, the notion of some polyphonic contradictions can be entertained. Is the language used specially within the Elijah, Elisha, and Aram cycles trying to create “heteroglossia” with an unusual register of language?⁴⁴ Probably not explicitly.⁴⁵ Is Elijah’s sacrifice on Carmel an attack on the injunction to only sacrifice in Jerusalem? Is there significance in the inflation of Elijah’s

43. Textual criticism does offer useful theories. Barrera discusses the academic history of the Deuteronomistic History and its implication on the Book of Kings generally, though not on Elijah specifically. Barrera, *Textual and Literary Criticism*, 1–11, 247–263. James Miller asserts that the prophetic narratives of Elijah and Elisha were folk stories appended to the royal narratives where it makes the most sense; his argument holds for Elisha, though Elijah’s direct interactions with Ahab and Jezebel make it difficult to pull him from this context. As far as specific changes in 1 Kgs 18, all that has been postulated is that emphasis was added to Elijah’s singularity as a prophet in his prayer and that the chronological markers of the day of the competition may have been a later addition. James Miller, *The Old Testament and the Historian* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 2–39.

44. Another potential argument, explored by Paynter, is that the author of Kings is using unique language as a form of “heteroglossia,” literally different tongues: using informal or foreign speech to create a certain literary effect; she reviews studies which point out a surprising amount of unique vocabulary in the Elijah, Elisha, and Aram cycles. Paynter examines and summarizes the extensive work of Rendsburg, who sees the unique language in this portion of the text as being from a peculiar Northern Kingdom dialect. Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 68–75. Cf. Gary A. Rendsburg, “The Mock of Baal in 1 Kings 18:27” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 414–417.

45. This language probably points to these being from a dialectically distinct Northern Kingdom source, as these stories all discuss Israel primarily. Paynter notes that a separate source can explain why distinctions occur, though why they remained through editing could be caused by specific motives: “Since the central section is probably from a different source, this may provide an aetiological explanation for the seriocomic features in the text how they arose. Indeed, this is more than likely. It does not, however, offer any explanation of the purpose of their presence, presuming that the text represents the skillful handiwork of an intelligent redactor, who was entirely at liberty to smooth, edit, and shape the final form as he saw fit.” Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 123.

importance from a hypothetical Old Greek source? Does this story describe Ahab more favorably than elsewhere, disagreeing about the extent of his wickedness? These answers remain conjectural, but the Elijah cycle as a literary unity lends its voice to the polyphonic assembly of biblical authors to create a Bakhtinian dialogue of meaning.

Another muted example of polyphony could be contrived from the constant presence of dualism within the religious conflict of the Elijah narrative. Though it is not true polyphony without multiple narrative voices being present, the narrator evidently recounts individuals opposing the protagonist whose arguments and motives can be extrapolated. The religions and moral systems of YHWH and Baal are in a dualistic conflict throughout the narrative, the theology of YHWH being richly discussed in the Bible while that of Baal is inferentially obtained. These two competing voices have been smoothed out into one primary voice and a suppressed second voice, but a conflict dialogue is obviously present. The prophets of YHWH and Baal are in opposition to each other, with Elijah typically squaring off against the Baalistic royal family in particular. The populace is torn between this conflict of voices and stumbles. This polyphonic society creates the setting for the carnivalesque contest where power, holiness, and feasting are suddenly reversed, and the carnivalesque situation momentarily resolves the polyphony.⁴⁶

However, a more complex polyphonic argument has been put forward by Paynter, Gregory, and Heller, among others.⁴⁷ Perhaps the text isn't so amiable to Elijah as we may suppose, and perhaps there remains a subtle criticism of Elijah in the way the events are depicted. Though once again a distinction from true Bakhtinian polyphony, the ambivalence displayed by the author towards the central character could be the result of conflicting opinions concerning the prophet and requires dialogue between the reader and the text to create meaning. All of Elijah's miracles as described in the narrative seem to certify that Elijah is YHWH's authorized prophet, a fact difficult to dispute. However, there are other elements

46. "The carnival threatens the very fabric of established society, but since it allows for the venting of all rebellious and oppositional sentiments, it also brings about social harmony and peace, such as that described at the end of the tale... This tone emphasizes heterogeneity and misalliances, puts social decorum and norms to mockery, and sanctions the comic release of the forces of disorder, thus reaching at the end a state of collective healing and communal union." Aschkenasy, "Reading Ruth," 442.

47. Paynter discusses the ethical ambiguity of the prophets in Kings generally but Elisha and the bears specifically, summarizing the history of apology as well as recent scholars who see the text as particularly non-exemplary. Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 17–22. Hauser, Gregory, and Heller are similar in seeing Elijah as a prideful individual who thinks he is alone and makes inappropriate actions of his own initiative. Hauser and Gregory, *Carmel*, 91–152. Roy L. Heller, *The Characters of Elijah and Elisha and the Deuteronomistic Evaluation of Prophecy: Miracles and Manipulation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 41–72.

of his ministry which have been criticized. YHWH had told Elijah that he had commanded a woman to feed him, and he went as told, though the woman he met mentioned nothing about being commanded by God to feed him – was she the right one?⁴⁸ Did Elijah simply promise her food and insist he be a priority because of hunger and laziness? The point does not stand well alone, but some see Elijah as having an inflated ego as God's prophet. He draws attention to the fact that he alone is taking on 450 men, that he alone is the prophet of YHWH in Israel, and twice introduces himself to YHWH as being alone.⁴⁹ However, it is evident to the reader (though perhaps not Elijah) that he is not alone as a Yahwist or even a Yahwist prophet; the hundred prophets whom Obadiah harbors are still alive, and God says he will spare at least seven thousand people who have not worshipped Baal in a forthcoming Baalism purge under new leadership.⁵⁰ If Elijah was aware, his alleged mistake would be taking too much responsibility and importance upon himself. If Elijah planned the contest of his own accord, it seems to be a violent solution which ultimately proved ineffective and morally questionable.⁵¹ However, the most glaring action of Elijah is his flight from Jezebel, notably not at the explicit command of YHWH unlike his other relocations, and his request for death.⁵² After the demonstrations to prove Elijah's authority and all the work done to keep him alive, his desire to die seems ungrateful. We may ask what the source of Elijah's depression was. While it seems to me to be portrayed as an exhausted man who feels defeated despite intense efforts, some see this as Elijah finally confronting his pride and preparing to stand before YHWH. If it is true that there is implicit criticism of Elijah in the narrative, then a sort of polyphony exists in how the narrator suspends judgment on Elijah and allows the events to create a dialogue, portraying Elijah as a complex character. The source multiplicity of Kings, societal disagreement of Elijah's day, and ambivalence towards Elijah all portray multiple voices in disagreement, which we must personally resolve through conversation.

CONCLUSION

We have explored 1 Kings 18 in depth, looking at its constituent elements and surrounding context to find diagnostic features of the “carnavalesque.” In doing so, we see particularly the shocking social reversals of Elijah and Ahab, absurdly intense actions in the execution of good and bad prophets, the profaning of both

48. 1 Kgs 17:10

49. 1 Kgs 18:19, 22, 36; 19:10, 14.

50. 1 Kgs 18:4; 19:15–18.

51. However, Jehu's slaughter of Baal prophets seems much more immoral and deceptive in 2 Kgs 10:18–31, and Elijah insists that his action is done at God's behest.

52. Compare Elijah's relocation in 19:2–4 with the previous three in 17:2–5; 8–10; 18:1–2; this could simply be an unintentional narrative detail or could perhaps have deeper meaning.

YHWH and Baal, a feast motif after the death of the Baal prophets, and a mild polyphony present in the sources, society, and authorial opinion of Elijah. The author of *Kings*, while certainly unfamiliar with medieval carnivals, was working with carnivalesque themes that show the social tensions created by Baalism and the hopeful reversal of these conditions as temporarily displayed upon Mount Carmel. Bakhtin's theories would not have been in the mind of the author as such, but the dark and extreme humor of the carnivalesque contest permeates the narrative to teach us about that society, the author, and ourselves. The change in leadership during the contest, the sacred loyalty, the celebratory feast following rain, and polyphonic resolution may have been temporary like a carnival, but they symbolize to readers ancient and modern the potential of societal unity and reversal of an upside-down system.

EMBODIMENT AND RITUAL CLOTHING

DRESSING THE ISRAELITE HIGH PRIEST

ALLY HUFFMIRE

Ally Huffmire is earning a BA from Brigham Young University in Ancient Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis in Hebrew Bible and a minor in History. She plans to pursue a graduate degree in biblical studies after graduating in April 2024.

Abstract: Exodus 28 and 39 contain a detailed description of the clothing God instructed to be made and worn by Israelite priests. In this essay, sacred clothing will be understood through the lens of ritual studies, characterizing clothing with a sense of liminality that defines and endows the human wearer with identity and power. The social meanings and implications of the high priest's dress will be reconstructed by engaging in sensory criticism, drawing upon insights from the greater eastern Mediterranean world. Given the ancient world's unique conception of a permeable body, ritual clothing had the ability to imbue the wearer with personhood, effectively transfiguring the priest into a mediator between God and the community. This examination of bodily adornment will show how ritual investiture was not merely symbolic but had substantial transformative value.

INTRODUCTION

Dress and adornment practices communicate far more than what initially meets the eye. The Hebrew Bible often features dress as a vehicle that carries the narrative forward. However, even when clothes do play a significant role in a passage of scripture (consider the skins covering Adam and Eve, Joseph and the ornate tunic, and Elijah's mantle), there is a general reticence in the text to discussing the details of what exactly these fabrics looked like and how they were worn. In this light, the extensive and detailed treatment of the high priest's regalia is conspicuous. In this paper, I will argue that the holy clothes interact with the body and with society in a distinct way. The peoples of the ancient Near East held a unique view of the body, characterized by a sense of permeability, and by virtue of this,

one can see that ritual clothing did not only express personhood from the inside out but had the power to define it from the outside in.¹ This phenomenon will be examined to show that the holy garments of the high priest did not merely hold symbolic meaning but had constitutive power that tangibly affected the individual.

METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

Dress and apparel serve to express identity. Dress has been defined by anthropologists as an “assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings.”² With this definition, textiles, jewelry, hair, tattoos, perfumes, and cosmetics can be considered “dress,” as they serve to reveal or conceal something about the personhood of the wearer with the surrounding society. Medals distinguish soldiers and officers of different ranks. Uniforms reveal occupation. Brands divulge social status. Clothing is employed to communicate the nonmaterial aspects of the world such as gender, emotion, class, ethnicity, religion, profession, belief, etc. Because of its portable and highly visible character, clothing has maintained a powerful ability to influence the fabric of culture.³ As a universal aspect of human behavior, clothing conveys essential aspects of the individual self.⁴ Thus, dress and social experience are intertwined.

If clothing indicates identity, the changing of clothing indicates a change in one's identity. The one who clothes is able to manipulate the status or identity of the recipient, be it in a positive or negative manner.⁵ In the Hebrew Bible, clothing is often regarded as a ritually efficacious object, facilitating the transformation of individuals to a new state by serving as a tangible conduit for change. As theorized by French scholar Arnold van Gennep, rituals primarily aim to transition individuals between states of being, with liminality representing the crucial in-between phase.⁶ British anthropologist Victor Turner expanded on this concept, delving into the transformative power of rituals, especially during rites of passage, where liminality fosters social ambiguity, ultimately leading to renewed social identity

1. See my argument below.

2. Joanne B. Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, “Definition and Classification of Dress: Implications for Analysis of Gender Roles,” in *Dress and Gender: Making Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, eds. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 15.

3. Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne Bubolz Eicher, eds., “Introduction to the Study of Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order,” in *Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order*, (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1965), 3.

4. See Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwarz, eds., *The Fabrics of Culture: Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, (New York: Mouton, 1979).

5. Laura Quick, *Dress, Adornment, and the Body in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford, 2021), 53.

6. Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

post-reintegration.⁷ Building on Turner's insights, anthropologist Clifford Geertz brought a symbolic and interpretive perspective to ritual studies, viewing rituals as cultural texts that can be analyzed like literary works.⁸ It is important, however, to acknowledge the limitations of this perspective. Geertz's emphasis on decoding symbols can lead to an oversimplification of complex cultural expressions. This reductionist approach can overlook the dynamic, context-dependent nature of rituals.⁹ Symbols within rituals are not always neatly defined and isolated from their surroundings; they are often intertwined with other elements, actions, and emotions that collectively shape their significance. By focusing solely on deciphering symbols, one risks missing the rich sensory and embodied dimensions of rituals, as well as the broader cultural contexts that give rise to their meanings.¹⁰ Catherine Bell revolutionized ritual studies by integrating a multidisciplinary framework that urges scholars to move beyond mere interpretation of symbolic significance and instead embrace the performative and experiential dimensions of rituals for individuals and communities.¹¹ Her perspective underscores the dynamic and multifaceted nature of rituals, encompassing cognitive, sensory, physical, and emotional elements. Bell illuminates the performative essence of rituals, wherein actions themselves actively contribute to meaning-making. Central to Bell's approach is the recognition of rituals as contextual, corporeal, and holistic occurrences. The evolution of ritual studies from Turner to Geertz to Bell reflects a shift from a focus on transformative experiences and symbolism to a more comprehensive exploration of rituals' contextual dimensions.

Building upon this foundation, I will focus on the conceptualization of clothing as a ritually liminal object. This perspective delves into how the garments of the high priest are imbued with profound significance and blur the boundaries of the body. In my study, I place a strong emphasis on the sensory dimensions and engage in interdisciplinary exploration, aligning more closely with Bell's structural framework rather than Geertz's interpretive approach. I intend to offer a new perspective on the intricate relationships between sensory experiences and cultural phenomena in the context of ritual dress.

7. For a critical reflection on Victor Turner, see Timothy Son, *Ritual Practices in Congregational Identity Formation* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

8. See Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62–72; cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

9. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 29–54.

10. Ithamar Gruenwald, *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 246.

11. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

The clothes and personal accouterments adorning an individual are characterized by liminality in that they signal the border between the self and society. In *The Social Skin*, anthropologist Terence Turner explains:

The surface of the body, as the common frontier of society, the social self, and the psycho-biological individual; becomes the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialization is enacted.¹²

Like a second skin, clothing is an indication of the boundary of the body. In the ancient world, the body was conceived of as a psychosomatic whole; the Platonic dualism between body and soul was foreign to the ancient Israelite. There was no dichotomous “material” versus “spiritual,” and things that a modern audience would consider abstract had real bodily origins to the ancients. Emotions, thoughts, and ideas all found corporeal place within the body.¹³ It is in this context that Laura Quick writes, “The physical body was incredibly vulnerable, not just as a somatic entity but also as a semi-permeable entity which determined the entire sense of personality and self.”¹⁴ The body took on characteristics of a permeable membrane, its entrances and exits porous and penetrable.¹⁵ Therefore, precisely because of its liminal location between the individual and social realms, the presentation of the body through dress and apparel had the ability to reveal, conceal, and inspire aspects of personhood.

The investiture and divestiture of clothing also bear the feature of liminality as the individual transitions from bearing one set of attire to a distinctly new one. With the understanding that ancient Israelites held the view of a porous body, the act of clothing infused the person with a new identity. In her exploration of ritualized bodies, Bell writes:

The molding of the body within a highly structured environment does

12. Terence S. Turner, “The Social Skin,” in *Not Work Alone: A Cross-Cultural View of Activities Superfluous to Survival*, eds. Jeremy Cherfas and Roger Lewin (London: Temple Smith, 1980), 112.

13. “The heart was the core of conscience and thought. Understanding and receptivity derived from the ears, thus to ‘hear’ something is to comprehend and accept it. Anger derived from the liver or nose. The Hebrew term *’ap* has the primary meaning of ‘nostril’ but is also used with the secondary meaning ‘anger’. Joy was located in the kidneys, which could also index right and wrong modes of behaviour. Although the Hebrew word *nepeš* encoded abstract conceptions of the self and hence is often translated as ‘soul,’ in its earliest sense it most likely described a part of the throat, and in certain biblical texts the meaning ‘neck’ is clearly in sight. Thus the body itself was understood to be a sentient object, the seat of personality.” Quick, *Dress, Adornment, and the Body*, 25–26.

14. Quick, *Dress, Adornment, and the Body*, 26.

15. The apprehension over the vulnerability of the body, especially at the orifices, is apparent in the biblical legal corpus. See Lev 15.

not simply express inner states. Rather, it primarily acts to restructure bodies in the very doing of the acts themselves. Hence, required kneeling does not merely *communicate* subordination to the kneeler. For all intents and purposes, kneeling produces a subordinated kneeler in and through the act itself...what we see in ritualization is not the mere display of subjective states or corporate values. Rather we see an act of production—the production of a ritualized agent able to wield physically a scheme of subordination or insubordination.¹⁶

In the same way, the ritualized act of investiture initiates a change that transfigures the individual both superficially and ontologically. It did not merely symbolize a change of identity but was the means by which the change was brought to fruition. This transformation of personhood as a result of the investiture and divestiture of clothing is apparent in various ritual contexts within the Hebrew Bible, most notably in the direction concerning the apparel of the priests.

The instructions for the priestly clothing along with the process of its creation are outlined in Exodus 28 and 39. Leviticus 8 also details the prohibitions and prescriptions for priestly attire, as well as what to wear during particular rituals.¹⁷ From these passages, we learn that all Israelite priests wore a linen tunic, a headdress, a girdle, and breeches. The high priest alone wore the robe, ephod, breastplate, and golden diadem. The priest's attire set him apart visually from the greater community. These clothes were skillfully designed and created by professional artisans—literally, those who were 'wise of heart.'¹⁸ Rather than taking a Geertzian approach and reducing the colors, fabrics, and accouterments of the priestly regalia to abstract symbols with fixed meanings, one may consider how they come together in a sensory and experiential manner. They are not isolated symbols to be deciphered but contribute to a holistic and sensory experience that resonated with the ancient Israelite and defined the identity of the priest. In her chapter on dress and identity, Laura Quick writes:

The extra-somatic world is experienced through our somatic senses. Bodily sensed triggers can encode various ideas, evoke certain emotional affects or even serve as a mnemonic device, inducing particular memories. Accordingly, practices of perception and the techniques of the senses may be manipulated by members of particular cultures in order to communicate certain ideologies or even achieve political ends. As an embodied practice, dress should not be understood apart from

16. Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 100.

17. Throughout this paper, I assume that Exodus and Leviticus were prescriptive texts composed during the First Temple Period. My engagement with the text therefore imagines the priest and temple in the city of Jerusalem and is not a reconstruction of the cultic program during the wilderness period.

18. Exod 28:3, 6. Own translation.

the bodily sensed triggers it evokes. Textiles are sensuous: we encounter them through touch, vision, smell, sound, and movement. Through these sensations, textiles embody ‘emotions of identity and define hierarchies of power and value.’¹⁹

Thus, it is essential to acknowledge the role of the priestly regalia in creating a comprehensive sensory and experiential encounter. Recognizing the impact of sensory experiences on culture and identity, we can now turn our attention to how these principles manifest in the priestly dress.

Regarding the sequencing of the clothing items discussed, I intend to adhere as closely as possible to the order presented in the source text. In certain instances, however, it may prove beneficial to arrange these elements thematically rather than following the text’s linear progression. In the instance of breeches, I abstain from delving into the experiential component, given the lack of substantiating evidence to support an argument.²⁰ The presentation sequence of the priestly garments will be structured as follows: the robe and ephod, the breastplate, the linen turban and medallion, the pomegranates and bells, and finally the oil and incense that perfumed his body.

SENSORY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE HIGH PRIESTLY VESTMENTS

The sacerdotal vestments are not simply clothes but requisite ritual objects in order for the ceremony to be efficacious, which in turn, transform the body of the priest into a ritual object. The vibrant hues of the ephod—white, crimson,

19. Quick, *Dress, Adornment, and the Body*, 111.

20. Exodus 28:42 stipulates that the priestly attire must include linen breeches, reaching “from the hips to the thighs.” The writers define the purpose of the underwear as “covering the flesh of nakedness.” The hermeneutical approach to understanding the undergarments has varied over the years. Some understand them as camouflage to blend the priest into the temple surroundings. See Jeremy Schipper and Jeffrey Stackert, “Blemishes, Camouflage, and Sanctuary Service: The Priestly Deity and His Attendants,” *HBAI 2* (2013): 458–478. Others understand the garments against the background of gender, obscuring the sexual characteristics of the priest and therefore concealing his gender identity. See Deborah W. Rooke, “Breeches of the Covenant: Gender, Garments and the Priesthood,” in *Embroidered Garments: Priests and Gender in Biblical Israel*, ed. Deborah W. Rooke, HBM 25 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 19–39. However, the breeches can be understood most reasonably in light of the culture of modesty. Throughout the ancient Near East, nakedness was a humiliating and socially stigmatizing force. Indecent exposure, coupled with the dangerous holiness that emanated from the sanctuary, yielding perilous consequences. The garments thus served to protect the priest from accidental exposure and the gaze of onlookers. See Christoph Berner, “Mind the Step!” (Exod. 20:26), or, Even Better: ‘Wear Breeches!’ (Exod. 28:42–42): The Issue of (Un-)Covering One’s ‘Shame’ in Cultic Legislation,” in *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*, eds. Christoph Berner et al. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2019), 417–433.

purple, blue, and gold—create a visually striking and immersive object, engaging the senses and distinguishing the high priest visually from other priests and worshippers. The colors and fabrics were worn in high-status contexts; Phoenician blueish-purple and reddish-purple dyes were exorbitantly priced and the color was worn almost exclusively by those in the imperial court and members of the aristocracy. It thus became an indicator of royalty, majesty, and wealth.²¹ Linen threads were fine to the touch and when woven together with thin gold metal, produced an elaborate garment that was both expensive and durable. Beyond being an indicator of wealth, gold's radiance and luster closely associated it with the divine realm. Crimson is closely associated with blood and therefore took on the symbolic code for life and fertility that blood naturally conveyed. Scott Noegel notes that in the cultic setting, the red fabric "likely also signified blood, and its atoning, protective, and fecund properties."²² The use of expensive dyes, fabrics, and metals incorporates "a systematic symbolism of status in the material world," as noted by Eleanor Guralnik.²³ Interestingly, the costume bears more affinity with the kingly costumes of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian royalty than it does to the plain white priestly apparel of these cultures.²⁴ Carmen Joy Imes finds it appropriate that, although YHWH alone was king,²⁵ "the regalia of the high priest, who represents YHWH, would communicate the prestige and power normally reserved for royalty."²⁶ The colored textiles of the temple proper also serve as a backdrop that informs the Israelite perception of the priesthood. The sanctuary is dressed in fine linens and fabrics of white, crimson, purple, blue, and gold. This same numinous palette and design characterize the multicolored apparel of the high priest, functioning to establish a visual connection with both kingship and the divine presence. The combination of woven fabrics, which the high priest alone was permitted to wear, serves to blend the boundaries and limits of the body.²⁷ As these garments marked the edges of the wearer's body, they similarly blurred the

21. Judg 8:26, Jer 10:9, Est 8:15.

22. Scott B. Noegel, "Scarlet and Harlots: Seeing Red in the Hebrew Bible," *HUCA* 87 (2016): 40. See also Wayne Horowitz and Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, "Urim and Thummim in Light of a Psephomancy Ritual from Assur (*LKA* 137)," *JNES* 21 (1992): 25–34, 40.

23. Eleanor Guralnik, "Fabric Patterns as Symbols of Status in the Near East and Early Greece," in *Reading a Dynamic Canvas: Adornment in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, eds. Cynthia S. Colburn and Maura K. Heyn (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), 100.

24. Carmen Joy Imes, "Between Two Worlds: The Functional and Symbolic Significance of the High Priestly Regalia," in *Dress and Clothing in the Hebrew Bible: "For all her Household are Clothed in Crimson,"* ed. Antonios Finitis (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 48. The high priest's apparel was also similar to garments that were used to dress cult statues. A number of biblical texts describe the dressing of idols; see Jer 10:9; Ezek 16:18.

25. Exod 15:18.

26. Imes, "Significance of the High Priestly Regalia," 48.

27. Quick, *Dress and Adornment*, 118

distinct lines around the identity and body of the high priest. This transformation turned the body of the priest into an accessible channel for divine interaction.

The priestly accouterments also held a profound ritualistic purpose. Among these elements, the high priest's breastplate, headdress, bells, and tassels shine as exquisite examples of instruments of transformation and expression. The breastplate was functionally designed to hold the *'urim* and *thummim*, and when worn correctly, gave the priest prophetic capabilities.²⁸ As a feature of the breastplate, twelve stones were borne by the priest over his heart and two onyx stones on his shoulders. In some Mesopotamian texts, precious gems are viewed as possessing sympathetic power; carnelian, lapis lazuli, silver, and gold took on agentic capabilities and even personified deity.²⁹ In the epic *Lugale*, a variety of red, blue, gold, and silver stones are personified and described to have participated in a mythological uprising against the god Ninurta. Kim Benzel notes other evidences of the mystical qualities of these colorful stones:

In one particular hymn to Inanna, carnelian and lapis lazuli are 'made stand to be admired,' in other words, worshiped—paralleling the act of the consecration of certain stones, as evoked in *Lugale*. Additionally, there is a passage from *The Descent of Inanna* which links the materials of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and boxwood with the life and death of Inanna herself, thereby seeming to suggest that the materials had both "life" and divinity of some sort and would "die," were she to die. A similar logic of 'living' stones is conveyed in other texts, where lapis lazuli is considered the stone of speaking and hearing, or communication with the gods.³⁰

The Bible also describes precious stones as a feature of the divine realm, as a means of channeling divinatory power, and as a memorial.³¹ The stones of the breastplate are described as "stones of remembrance,"³² and were engraved with the names of the eponymous founders of the twelve tribes of Israel, thereby reminding both the priest and God of their obligation to and responsibility for all of Israel.³³ Names have power and encode personhood and identity. Thus, this

28. 1 Sam 28:6 lists three modes of divine communication—dreams, prophets, and the *Urim* and *Thummim*. See also Exod 28:30, Lev 8:8, Num 27:21.

29. Noegel, "Scarlet and Harlots," 95–115. Exact identifications of these stones remain ambivalent.

30. Kim Benzel, "Puabi's Adornment for the Afterlife: Materials and Technologies of Jewelry at Ur in Mesopotamia" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013), 63–69, 77–78.

31. See Gen 2:12, Ezek 28:13–16; Num 27:21, 1 Sam 14:37–45, 28:6; Gen 28:20–22, Josh 4:20, 1 Sam 7:12.

32. Exod 28:12.

33. Quick, *Dress, Adornment, and the Body*, 110. See also Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 54.

vestment functioned to transform the priest into the embodiment of the nation of Israel as he performed ceremonial worship on their behalf. Quick reflects on this concept, writing that “[the priest] is no longer a private individual, but, when wearing the priestly dress, is able to become something more: a corporate body, personifying the larger community.”³⁴

The high priest also wore a linen turban decorated with a gold medallion, upon which the words “Holy to YHWH” were inscribed. The medallion functions to absorb any guilt unwittingly acquired as a result of flaws in the offering of sacrifices,³⁵ and the dedicatory phrase on the priest’s forehead mirrors the inscriptions on cultic implements. As Alice Mendell notes, the placement of the text “mimics the placement of inscriptions on the rims and upper extremities of ritual vessels in the southern Levant, which suggests that through these inscriptions, Aaron becomes, in a sense, a dedicated vessel in YHWH’s shrine.” The Hebrew term for the metal headdress (קִרְיָא) indicates a “blossom,” or a “flower,” and the botanical reference is preserved in the translation “rosette.” Flora and fauna decorated the sacred spaces of Mesopotamia and were the symbol of life and fertility par excellence. In the biblical text, the medallion is part of the “sacred diadem” or a “holy crown.”³⁶ Crowns are metonymically associated with kingship, thus further developing the regal aura that the priestly attire would have conveyed. In ancient Near Eastern iconography, these headpieces were worn by royalty and divine figures.³⁷ The priestly regalia, therefore, appropriated a defining feature of kings and gods, allowing him to function in a mediatorial position between the people of Israel and YHWH.³⁸

The inscribed stones of the High Priest’s breastplate and the dedicatory inscription adorning his diadem go beyond mere ornamentation; his inscribed body “becomes a material part of the cultic activity in the tabernacle.”³⁹ Mandell, in her work on Iron Age inscriptions, writes:

When these inscriptions are analyzed as multimodal objects, it becomes clear that they communicate their ritual power not merely through their words, but also through their costly and colorful materials, their design, the details regarding their script (in the manner of seal inscriptions), and

34. Quick, *Dress, Adornment, and the Body*, 110.

35. Exod 28:38.

36. Exod 39:30, Lev 8:9.

37. Joshua Joel Spoelstra, “Apotropaic Accessories: The People’s Tassels and the High Priest’s Rosette” in *Dress and Clothing in the Hebrew Bible: “For all her Household are Clothed in Crimson,”* ed. Antonios Finitis (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 85.

38. Spoelstra, “Apotropaic Accessories,” 85.

39. Alice Mandell, “More than the Sum of Their Parts: Multimodality and the Study of Iron Age Inscriptions,” in *The Ancient Israelite World*, eds. Kyle H. Keimer and George A. Pierce (New York: Routledge, 2023), 355.

their placement on the High Priest's uniform; to this, we can add that these inscriptions also derive meaning as texts made to move with Aaron when he wears this uniform in his ongoing cultic work in the Tabernacle. The focus on these particular facets of their design imparts significance to these inscriptions in this story that extends their authority beyond the meaning that YHWH ascribes them.⁴⁰

By focusing on a variety of compositional aspects of the High Priest's apparel, the significance of the dress as a transformative object becomes clear, signifying that the high priest is "authorized to do two forms of representational work in YHWH's shrine: to represent Israel and to fulfill the role of ritual vessels dedicated to YHWH's service."⁴¹ The material, design, placement, and mobility of the inscriptions on the high priest's uniform contribute to the overall creation, legitimization, and communication of priestly power and authority.⁴²

The anthropology of dress extends to other sensory aspects of the high priest's robes, particularly sound. Notably, golden bells adorned the skirt of the priestly mantle, tinkling as the priest moved through the sacred space. According to Exodus 28:35, the high priest wears the robe "when he ministers and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord and when he comes out, so that he may not die." Exegetes have interpreted these titivations as serving an apotropaic function, protecting the individual as they encroached on the divine space.⁴³ The clinging of the bells was not only directed to God but also drew the attention of others to the priest and his movements. This aural aspect of the priest's garb served as yet another way in which he was distinguished and set apart from others. It transformed not only the priest's person but also the soundscape around him.

Considering the larger cultic setting, sound played an important role in the creation of an immersive acoustic atmosphere that accompanied the ritual activities of temple priests and worshippers. The soundscape of the temple initially bore a sense of familiarity, featuring an overwhelming cacophony of sounds from the bleating of animals to the metal clanging of vessels and instruments. Levitical choirs and orchestras praised God with raised voices and melodies. Blasts of trumpets and horns reverberated through the air, retrospective of (and anticipating) encounters with the divine.⁴⁴ Thus, the symphony of sounds within the temple

40. Mandell, "Multimodality," 357.

41. Mandell, "Multimodality," 355.

42. Mandell, "Multimodality," 359.

43. C. Houtman, "On the Pomegranates and the Golden Bells of the High Priest's Mantle," *VT* 40 (1990): 223–229.

44. Exod 19:18–19.

complex not only facilitated the connection between the physical and the sacred but also served as a bridge between the earthly and the divine realms.

Though the Jerusalem temple was far from silent, silence did play a significant role in the context of ritual. Israel Knohl's work in *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* touches on the contrasting elements of silence and sound within the temple's rituals.⁴⁵ Knohl argues that the priests associated with the "Holiness School" celebrated the silence of God as an essential aspect of their religious practice. In this perspective, moments of silence held deep mystical importance within certain temple rituals, serving as opportunities for the priests to embrace the divine silence and to seek communion with the divine. The muting of tones to create a set-apart space is apparent when considering the sensory experience that accompanied the progression through zones of holiness in the temple complex. As the priest moved from the courtyard into the sanctuary, the volume levels of the ambient noise hushed, giving way to a reverent stillness that framed the gentle tinkle of bells, the rustle of fabric, and the shuffle of his bare footsteps. Christine Elizabeth Palmer writes,

A dimming of the sensory affordances produces a diminished sense of self-awareness, not by suggesting a grand scale to the divine body as in the vertical space of the open courtyard, but through the dimming of human perception. For the priests who are granted privileged access into the Holy Place, there is an intimacy to the encounter felt through the scripted motion of their daily service...Suspending the senses through which the world is experienced creates a space that defies definition.⁴⁶

The profound moments of silence inside the temple therefore acted as sacred interludes where priests could intimately engage with the divine, amplifying the significance of even the chiming of bells within the hallowed sanctuary.

Along with its colored fabrics and sonorous ornamentations, the uniform appealed to the olfactory senses. The priest was anointed with aromatic oils and, as a result of his cultic activities, saturated with the scent of burned animal fat and perfumed with fragrant incense. In the Hebrew Bible, the odor of the sacrifice is described as "an aroma pleasing to the Lord," to which he responds with goodwill and blessings.⁴⁷ A great emphasis is placed on the smell of the sacrificial smoke as a means by which Yahweh consumes the offering; while humans

45. Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 148–152.

46. Christine Elizabeth Palmer, "The Jerusalem Temple: A Sensory Encounter with the Sacred," in *The Routledge Handbook of Senses in the Ancient Near East*, eds. Kiersten Neumann and Allison Thomason (London: Routledge, 2021), 358.

47. Gen 8:20–21; Lev 1:9, 13.

eat food through their mouths, God eats with his nose.⁴⁸ The incense is made of frankincense and a mixture of spices and is described as “sweet-smelling,”⁴⁹ and the sacred anointing oil was made of olive oil mixed with myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia.⁵⁰ Given the foul atmosphere that would have been generated in the courtyard (consider the animal dung and blood, or the smoke and burning carcasses), the pleasant smells of incense and oil created an air of divinity that diffused through the temple proper and, by extension, the priestly robes. One scholar notes that the sweet-smelling oil and incense serve a dual function “as it underlines both sacred space and divine presence...the luxurious aromas in the sanctuary become both a way of mediating between the divine and human spheres as well as an indication of divine presence on earth.”⁵¹ In an odiferous world, the ancients naturally associated pleasant scents with divinity.⁵² Scent acted as an invisible but perceptible agent that ordered the cosmos: good smells indicated all things good, and bad smells indicated the obverse. Susan Harvey writes that the Mediterranean peoples’ cultural codes regarding smell “were not based on symbolism as a disembodied language, but on the concrete view that smells participated in effecting the processes they represented.”⁵³ In the minds of the ancient people, odors brought about cleansing and healing, pollution and danger. Likewise, dress perfumed with scent functioned in the same way in that it revealed and transformed the personhood of the individual—not merely in a symbolic way, but in actuality.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the sartorial elegance of the priestly costume has profound significance that transcends mere material clothing, serving as a conduit to produce and convey the priest’s distinct religious authority. The office of the high priest is introduced by describing his clothing in detailed ekphrasis, a level of attention unparalleled in other depictions of clothing found in the Hebrew Bible. Framed within the context of divine revelation, the legislative material regarding the uniform is thereby imparted with unique authority and profound transformative

48. See Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, “A Pleasing Odour for Yahweh: The Smell of Sacrifices on Mount Gerizim and in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Sensual Religion: Religion and the Five Senses*, eds. Graham Harvey and Jessica Hughes (Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2018), 29.

49. Exod 30:7–8.

50. Exod 30:22–25.

51. Gudme, “A Pleasing Odour for Yahweh,” 31.

52. See Gudme, “A Pleasing Odour for Yahweh,” 19–36; Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006); Deborah A. Green, “Fragrance in the Rabbinic World,” in *Smell and the Ancient Senses*, ed. Mark Bradley (New York: Routledge, 2014).

53. Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 1–2.

power to consecrate the priest and enable his access to serve in the divine sphere.⁵⁴ The understanding of the body as a permeable entity informs the investiture of ritual clothing; donning these garments facilitates a shift in identity and status, elevating the individual from the mundane to the sacred, from the ordinary to the priestly. Positioned at the boundary between the individual and social sphere, the threads of his apparel weave together a character of divinity and majesty that imbued the body, transforming him into a priest of God. These vestments fashion an ideology of fertility, sanctity, and power through sight, touch, sound, and smell. This multisensory engagement reveals the ways in which the priestly attire was imbued with a resonance that goes beyond the visual plane, tapping into deep-rooted cultural cues that shape perceptions, emotions, and memories. This phenomenon illustrates the intricate relationship between clothing, identity, and power in the ancient Near Eastern context. It underscores the pivotal role that clothing, as a vehicle for sensory experience, played in constructing ideologies, reinforcing hierarchies, and shaping the collective understanding of religious authority. Thus, the priestly costume stands not only as a narrative artifact but as a testament to the intricate interplay between the tangible and intangible in the realm of identity construction and cultic expression.

54. Exod 28:3.

THE DIFFERENT ESTHERS OF THE SEPTUAGINT AND MASORETIC TEXT

HOW THE INCLUSION OF GOD CHANGES THE CHARACTER OF ESTHER

HEIDYN VON BOSE

Heidyn von Bose is earning a BA from Brigham Young University in Ancient Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis in Hebrew Bible. She plans to graduate in April 2024 and pursue a graduate degree in Second Temple Period Judaism.

Abstract: The Book of Esther is a unique work that contains significant differences between the Hebrew and Greek versions of the text. One significant difference is the character of Esther herself. In the throne room scene of chapter five (or addition D in the LXX), the LXX Esther is more passive than the Esther of the Hebrew Bible because of the inclusion of God and more specifically the differences in the power structure between God, Esther, and the king. By analyzing the different characters' movements and the language describing them in chapter 5 or Addition D, the differences of Esther's character between the versions become evident and these differences can help readers to have a more informed reading of both versions of the story. Understanding the different Esthers can influence future readings and help show how the inclusion of God changes the narrative.

The Book of Esther is unique in the Hebrew Bible because it has no explicit reference to God.¹ In the Septuagint, however, God plays an integral part in the story. By analyzing the entrance into the inner courtroom of both the Esther of

1. There could be one implied reference to God in Esther 4, but this is debated. The HarperCollins Study Bible summarizes the debate by stating “absence of any direct mention of the deity in a story about Jews delivered from danger in an alien setting has provoked comment by scholars. The “other quarter” mentioned by Mordecai in 4.14 is sometimes understood as an oblique reference to the deity and providential guidance, and readers are free to assume the activity of the divine behind the so-called coincidences of the plot. Nevertheless, failure to mention God in any direct way lends a remarkably secular and contemporary tone to the story.” See W. Lee Humphreys, “Esther,” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 681.

the Hebrew Bible in Esth 5:2 and the Esther of the Septuagint in Addition D.6–12,² I will argue that the presence or absence of God in each version determines the character of Esther, creating the more active Esther in the Masoretic Text as well as the more passive Esther from the Septuagint. Who Esther is and how she acts in the throne room determines her relationship to the king and the power she holds as queen. In this paper, I will first review how scholars have articulated their views on the different presentations of Esther in the Hebrew and Greek Texts and emphasize how the role of God in the Greek versions has been largely overlooked. I will then analyze each Esther's entrance into the courtroom by breaking the scene down into four main movements, each focusing on the movement of the characters in the scene both linguistically and logistically. Finally, I will give examples of how each Esther's character has a different status and level of power despite both being the queen as a result of how God changed Esther's character.

The idea of different Esthers between the versions has previously been explored by scholars.³ In their analysis of the different Esthers, most scholars use the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible and two versions of the Greek text, the Old Greek and the Lucianic (also known as the Antiochene) recension. The terms Old Greek and Septuagint are often used to describe the same text and for this paper, the term Septuagint will be used to refer to the Old Greek. The Lucianic recension (normally abbreviated to "L" or "A") is sometimes considered a rewriting or correction of the Septuagint⁴ and offers insights into yet another version of Esther. For this paper, I will analyze the Septuagint as the initial translation of Esther's entrance into the inner court from Hebrew into Greek, making this translation the first time God is added to the story and the first time Esther is changed. Therefore, only the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text will be used. Throughout this paper, to differentiate between the two Esthers, the shorthand "LXX Esther" and "MT Esther" will be used.

2. For the versification of the Septuagint, I followed the Göttingen. For more on the Göttingen versification and the different Greek additions of Esther see A. Schenker, *General Introduction and Megilloth: Ruth, Canticles, Qoheleth, Lamentations, Esther*, BHQ 18 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004), 21–22 and 143.

3. See Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); Linda Day, *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Meredith Stone, *Empire and Gender in the LXX Esther* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 227.

4. Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 230. See also Schenker, *General Introduction and Megilloth*, 22.

SEEING DOUBLE, HOW SCHOLARS DESCRIBE ESTHER

Michael V. Fox laid much of the groundwork for the idea that there is a different Esther in each version of the text in his 1991 book *Character Ideology in the Book of Esther*.⁵ In a more recent chapter, “Three Esthers,” in the 2003 book *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, Fox revisits some of his main arguments from the first book as he discusses the differences of the character of Esther in each text.⁶ He attributes her differences to the authors of the Hebrew and Greek versions, explaining that the authors of the Greek versions of Esther were likely trying to fit Esther into a more Hellenistic role by changing how she behaves in the throne room.⁷ Although the author and audience play key roles in the different Esthers, Fox only focuses on these external sources for change and overlooks the influence of the addition of God to the narrative. Looking into the narrative and exploring how the character of God changes the character of Esther provides further insight into the changes between the Hebrew and Greek texts. This paper is not interested in identifying the possible intention of the author of the Book of Esther or the audience’s desire for the change, but instead is interested in how God as a character in the narrative creates the two different Esthers. A future project could link authorial intent, audience desire, and the narrative elements of the change behind the character of Esther, but the scope of this paper has a narrower approach: understanding why Esther is different by only analyzing the narrative, specifically in MT Esther 5 and LXX Addition D.

Second, Linda Day, tackles the entire Book of Esther and charts the differences between the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint (labeled Old Greek in her writing), and the Lucianic text in her 1995 book titled *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther*.⁸ In her book, Day argues that the “assessments of Esther’s character provided thus far” are “excellent,” but many are “inadequate to describe all three Esthers accurately and satisfactorily.”⁹ Thus resulting in the goal of her study to “address this deficiency in Esther scholarship” and her “closer look at the two Greek Esthers as well as the Masoretic Esther” provides clear perspective on all three Esthers.¹⁰ Due to the wide scope of Day’s book, each Esther is found to be different for multiple reasons including the external people such as audience and authors, Esther’s internal actions, and the other characters. Day’s research

5. Fox, *Character and Ideology*, 66.

6. Michael V. Fox, “Three Esthers,” in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, eds. Sidnie White Crawford and Leonard J. Greenspoon (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 50–60.

7. Fox, “Three Esthers,” 59.

8. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 9–11.

9. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 14.

10. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 15.

provides one basis for the differences addressed in this study, but came to differing conclusions concerning Esther's power as Queen.

Third, Meredith J. Stone, while primarily discussing LXX Esther, discusses how the different Esthers use their bodies in the throne room to negotiate, attributing most of the differences between the Esthers to a difference in negotiation tactics.¹¹ For example, the "feminine frailty" LXX Esther displays is a type of mask that she uses for negotiation.¹² Like Fox, Stone agrees that Esther is different in the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible, but their conclusions of why she is different fail to analyze the characterization and role of God in the story.

SYNOPSIS AND BACKGROUND

In her story, Esther must save her people, the Jews, from the wicked Haman by petitioning for their lives before the king in the inner courtroom. Within both versions, the inclusion or absence of God appears to create two different versions of Esther. In the Masoretic Text, God is not explicitly referenced, requiring MT Esther to enter and entreat the king alone. God's absence during the pivotal moments of the courtroom scene creates an active version of Esther.¹³ However, without God's higher power and influence, MT Esther will be stuck as a queen second to the king, making it necessary for her to appeal to both the king's personal opinion and his authority as monarch to save her people. On the other hand, in the Septuagint, God is not only mentioned, but is a key element of the narrative. LXX Esther is directly reliant on God and the power of God to save her and her people, thus creating a more passive Esther who becomes an equal to the king and appeal only to her personal standing in his eyes in order to save her people. Through analyzing the throne room scene in Esth 5 and Addition D, it is clear that the presence or absence of God determines the character of Esther and her role.

Before analyzing the two Esthers' entrance into the inner court room, it is important to understand the textual significance of chapter five and Addition D and why I have chosen to analyze these passages specifically. The books of Esther in the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text are largely the same except for six sections of text called the Additions in the Septuagint. The Additions, labeled A-F, contribute additional parts of the story that have no parallel in the Hebrew text (such as the prayers of Mordecai and Esther in Addition C) except Addition D. Addition D contains LXX Esther's entrance into the throne room and although it is greatly expanded (two verses become sixteen in total) the main elements of the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint are the same; Esther walks into the inner

11. Stone, *Empire and Gender*, 227.

12. Stone, *Empire and Gender*, 232.

13. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 175.

courtroom, gains the favor of the king, then the distance between them is closed, and Esther is accepted by the king with the lowering of his scepter. Addition D is one of “the most important” sections to see the character of Esther and the direct relation to the Hebrew text allows for a close analysis of how each version contains a different characterization of Esther.¹⁴

Along with the textual importance of chapter five and Addition D, the content of these sections is pivotal to the narrative, and it is important to gain a basic understanding of the drama the characters are facing as they enter this scene. Esth 4:11 describes the law established in the land that dictates who can enter the inner courtroom, and the basic form of this law is the same in both versions. Anyone who enters the inner (or innermost in the LXX) court of the king who is not called or summoned must be accepted by the king holding out his scepter to them, or they will suffer the consequences. The specifics of that consequence and other wording discrepancies will be addressed later in this paper. Regardless of the version, Esther is facing high stakes as she initially enters the inner courtroom to advocate for her people before the king.

ANALYZING THE FOUR MOVEMENTS OF THE TEXT

Esther’s entrance into the inner courtroom can be broken down into four main “movements”: (1) her initial steps into the room, (2) gaining the favor of the king, (3) closing the distance between her and the king, and (4) the lowering of the scepter in acceptance. For each part of this sequence, I will analyze both the logistical movement (how the characters take up space within the scene) as well as the linguistic elements (the Hebrew and Greek words themselves).

MOVEMENT ONE: ENTERING THE COURTROOM

5:2 ¹⁵ וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְּכָה כִּי עֲמִידָה בְּחֶצֶר ...	D.6 καὶ εἰσελθοῦσα πάσας τὰς θύρας κατέστη ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκάθητο ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶσαν στολὴν τῆς ἐπιφανείας αὐτοῦ ἐνδεδύκει, ὅλος διὰ χρυσοῦ καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν, καὶ ἦν φοβερὸς σφόδρα.
---	--

14. Fox, “Three Esthers,” 57.

15. To analyze these passages and other passages in this paper, both the Hebrew and Greek with accompanying translations will be presented and referenced. All biblical translations are the author’s own unless otherwise stated.

<p>It was when the king saw Esther the Queen standing in the court,</p>	<p>And after she entered all the doors, she stood before the king, and he was seated on his throne of his kingdom and he was clothed in all the clothing of his gloriousness, (made) entirely out of gold and precious stones and he was terrifying.</p>
	<p>D.7</p> <p>καὶ ἄρας τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πεπυρωμένον δόξῃ ἐν ἀκμῇ θυμοῦ ἔβλεψε, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἡ βασίλισσα καὶ μετέβαλε τὸ χρῶμα αὐτῆς ἐν ἐκλύσει καὶ κατεπέκυνεν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς ἄβρας τῆς προπορευομένης.</p> <p>And after standing, his face burned in glory and, in the pinnacle of anger, he looked and the Queen fell and her complexion changed into faintness and she bowed down to the head of the favorite slave who went before her.</p>

From the first main movement with the Esthers' opening steps into the inner courtroom, the differences between MT Esther and LXX Esther are evident. After MT Esther enters the inner court room, she stands in the doorway and remains on her feet throughout the scene. As Day states, "We are left with the impression that [MT] Esther is a strong person. No hint of weakness about her is evident. She goes lone, without need of others, to meet the king."¹⁶ MT Esther's action is described using the feminine singular qal participle from the root "מַעַן" meaning "to stand." MT Esther's active role is already seen as she enters and stands on her own before the king. This simple action is contrasted greatly by LXX Esther. She similarly begins by standing in the door, but quickly becomes overwhelmed by the glory of the king and falls on her servant in need of support. This puts LXX Esther into a vulnerable position that both Fox and Stone characterize as LXX Esther's "feminine frailty."¹⁷ Fox states that the expansion of Addition D is "to change Esther's character"¹⁸ and she demonstrates such weakness that she "removes any suggestion of threat to [the king's] masculine control"; this apparently

16. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 103.

17. Fox, "Three Esthers," 58–59; Stone, *Empire and Gender*, 232.

18. Fox, "Three Esthers," 58.

deliberate and exaggerated “feminine frailty” distinguishes LXX Esther from other members of the Persian court and her weakness allows the king to “respond with gracious condescension.”¹⁹ Meredith Stone agrees that LXX Esther deliberately used feminine frailty to achieve her goal. While MT Esther “displays the courtly respectfulness of a proper subject,”²⁰ LXX Esther’s feminine frailty opens the door for God to have a place in this version of the story and shape LXX Esther’s role in the kingdom. If LXX Esther had not collapsed, it can be assumed that the story would have played out more like the MT, without God stepping in and LXX Esther would have become another queen second to the king.

MOVEMENT TWO: GAINING THE KING’S FAVOR

5:2	D.8
...נְשָׂאָה הָן בְּעֵינֵי ...נִי.	καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραΰτητα, καὶ ἀγωνιάσας ἀνεπήδησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ, μέχρις οὗ κατέστη, καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὴν λόγοις εἰρηνικοῖς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ·
...she obtained favor in his eyes...	And God changed the spirit of the king to meekness and he was distressed, he sprang up from his throne and took her up in his arms until she quieted and he called to her peaceable words and he said to her:

Following the Esthers’ initial steps, the second main movement, obtaining the king’s favor, illustrates each of their individual relationships with the king and how they are shaped by God’s presence. As MT Esther stands before the king in Esth 5:2, her life in his hands, she is described to have obtained the king’s favor with the idiom *נְשָׂאָה הָן בְּעֵינֵי*. This idiom is often categorized as a variant of a similar idiom “מצא הן בעיניו.” When grouped together, this idiom family is found over fifty times in the Hebrew Bible²¹ with the expected verbal root *מצא* being used for the majority of cases.²² In the text following Esth 5:2, the verbal root *מצא*, meaning “to find,” is used which leads to an expected definition, “to find (=gain, secure) favor

19. Fox, “Three Esthers,” 59.

20. Fox, “Three Esthers,” 59.

21. Bernard Grossfeld, “מצא הן בעיניו—‘Finding Favor in Someone’s Eyes’: The Treatment of this Biblical Hebrew Idiom in the Ancient Aramaic Versions,” in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, eds. Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 52.

22. Grossfeld, “Finding Favor in Someone’s Eyes,” 61–65. There are 7 instances of this idiom family in the MT Book of Esther: 2:9, 15, 17; 5:2, 8; 7:3; 8:5. The last three all use *מצא*.

in the eyes of any one.”²³ In Esth 5:8, 7:3, and 8:5, each verse depicts MT Esther speaking and petitioning the king. In 5:8, she asks him to attend a banquet, and in chapters seven and eight, she asks for her life and the life of her people to be saved. By asking the king if she has found his favor with מִצָּא, MT Esther is asking if the king likes her, putting the decision and power in his hands which will be examined in more detail later in this paper. It is important for this movement in Esth 5:2 to understand that מִצָּא is the expected verb and MT Esther will use it later in her speech to ask the king for help.

Instead of מִצָּא, the verbal root נָשָׂא is used in Esth 5:2 and it has the meaning to lift up, but the root also contains the idea of taking and carrying away, hence MT Esther obtains the favor of the king,²⁴ or, as Day states, “she wins his favor.”²⁵ The use of both verbs in the Book of Esther allow for a closer analysis of how they differ in meaning. When a conjugation of נָשָׂא is used, the idiom is describing MT Esther. For example, in Esth 2:9 when she obtains the favor of the eunuch, Hegai, his approval is expressed in a variant of the idiom using the verb נָשָׂא (*naśa*):²⁶ וַתִּשָּׂא הָחַדָּה לְפָנָיו, which is translated “she obtained (or won) goodness in his eyes.” Another two instances are found in Esth 2:15 and 17 when MT Esther “asked for nothing except what Hegai the king’s eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised” (Esth 2:8 NRSV), resulting in everyone admiring her and her winning the king’s favor and devotion. The favor of both parties is expressed through the idiom with נָשָׂא.²⁷ Something about MT Esther whether it is how she acts, her obedience in the moment, her beauty, or another factor causes people to like her. This use of נָשָׂא shows that MT Esther was liked because of her own doing and, when contrasted with the LXX, it shows that she was liked without God’s help. How MT Esther obtains the favor of the king through her own actions shows her independence and active nature in the courtroom, but will lead to a relationship where she is second to the king.

In the Septuagint, LXX Esther gains favor through the power of God. After LXX Esther falls, God changes, as the nominative subject of μετέβαλεν (an aorist active verb meaning “to change”) the “spirit of the king” into “meekness,” which results in the LXX king going to Esther and offering peaceable words until she is quieted. LXX Esther is not mentioned as God changes the spirit of the king and the king’s approval is not defined as favor or grace here as it is in the MT, but there is a

23. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “מִצָּא,” BDB 592.

24. Brown, “נָשָׂא,” BDB 671.

25. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 103.

26. This example follows the general formula of the idiom, but uses חָדָה, meaning “goodness” or “kindness,” instead of חָן. See Grossfeld, “Finding Favor in Someone’s Eyes,” 55–59.

27. Unlike the last example in Esth 2:9, this example uses חָן as expected.

clear demonstration of acceptance and favor. The lack of any mention of favor and specifically the lack of the aforementioned idiom is odd. The Greek equivalent of the idiom uses conjugations of εὕρισκω, a verb meaning “to find” (like Hebrew’s מָצָא)²⁸ and in every instance surrounding 5:2 contained in the MT, the idiom is present in the LXX, but it is absent from Addition D. Furthermore, the LXX does not follow the same verb change the MT does. Instead of using a Greek verb like נָשָׂא, the LXX uses εὕρισκω (typically conjugated to εὔρεν or εὔρον) χάριν ἐνώπιον²⁹ throughout the Book of Esther. The omission of change in the verb likely indicates a level of passivity surrounding LXX Esther in the entire story, but the complete absence of the idiom in 5:2 despite its presence in the Book of Esther clearly conveys that LXX Esther is the passive. LXX Esther faints, allowing for God alone to come and change the king’s spirit. The king then bestows his approval and favor on LXX Esther in the form of peaceable words. It is important to the story that LXX Esther receives the king’s grace in this manner because God’s direct influence leads to LXX Esther’s increasing passivity as the recipient of favor. Additionally, God has initiated the series of events that lead to LXX Esther becoming an equal to the king.

MOVEMENT THREE: CLOSING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ESTHER AND THE KING

5:2 ...יָצְאָהּ מִן הַמִּצְרִי... ...she obtained favor in his eyes...	D.8 καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραΰτητα, καὶ ἀγωνιάσας ἀνεπήδησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ, μέχρις οὗ κατέστη, καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὴν λόγοις εἰρηνικοῖς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ. And God changed the spirit of the king to meekness and he was distressed, he sprang up from his throne and took her up in his arms until she quieted and he called to her peaceable words and he said to her:
--	---

28. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, “εὕρισκω,” *LSJ* 729–730.
29. Esth 2:15 uses the feminine singular participle: εὕρισκουσα and ἐνώπιον is absent from Esth 2:15, 17; and 8:5.

<p>...וַיִּשָּׂט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת־שֵׁרְבִיט הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ...</p> <p>...and the king held out to Esther the scepter of gold which was in his hand...</p>	<p>D.9-11</p> <p>τί ἐστὶν Ἑσθήρ; ἐγὼ ὁ ἀδελφός σου, θάρσει, οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃς ὅτι κοινὸν τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν ἐστι· πρόσελθε.</p> <p>“What is it Esther? I am your brother, take courage, you will not die because our decree is for the common (people). Come.”</p>
<p>...וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשֵּׁרֶבֶט:</p> <p>and Esther approached and she touched on the head of the scepter.</p>	<p>D.12</p> <p>καὶ ἄρας τὴν χρυσοῦν ῥάβδον ἐπέθηκεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτῆς καὶ ἡσπάσατο αὐτὴν καὶ εἶπε· λάλησόν μοι.</p> <p>And therefore, he placed the golden staff on her neck and he welcomed her and said, “Speak to me.”</p>

The third main movement is the physical distance between the king and each Esther being closed. In the MT, the king holds out his scepter and MT Esther approaches. The 3rd person feminine qal active verb קָרַב meaning “to approach” is used, indicating that MT Esther, the subject of this active verb, closed the gap between her and the king. Again, without God, MT Esther must be the active one, working to save her people. MT Esther’s approach will be discussed in greater detail following some analysis of LXX Esther.

In the Septuagint, the king, after God changes his spirit, will physically, metaphorically, and verbally make LXX Esther his equal.³⁰ Physically, the king, as the subject of the next two aorist active verbs, leaps up from his throne with ἀνεπήδησεν and takes LXX Esther up in his arms with ἀνέλαβεν. The verb ἀνέλαβεν means “to take up” and with the phrase “ἐπὶ τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ,” (meaning “in his arms”), the image of the king lifting or taking LXX Esther up in his arms is clear.³¹ The king closes the physical distance between him and LXX Esther. He also closes the

30. Day notes something similar in her book as she states: “[The king] speaks of a closeness or togetherness between them.... This closeness is threefold: emotional, in their brother-sister relationship; political, in their joint rule; and physical, in his request that she walk nearer to him.” See Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 101.

31. One of the first uses listed in the LSJ is to take up, take into one’s hands. This follows a similar idea, but instead of hands, there are the king’s arms. See Liddell, “ἀνέλαβεν,” *LSJ* 110.

metaphorical gap by springing up from his throne, his place of power, to go to LXX Esther and he lifts her from off her servant bringing her from a lower status up to him, thus metaphorically making her his equal. This series of actions begins with God's action of changing the spirit of the king. In contrast, MT Esther, without God and in the same manner as anyone visiting the court of the king, approaches the throne while the king never leaves his place of power.

The LXX king also verbally confirms that LXX Esther is an equal in Addition D verses 9–11. To fully understand the importance of these verses, we must go back to Esth 4:11 where the law of the inner court is first stated.

<p>4:11</p> <p>כָּל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם־מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ יָדְעִים אֲשֶׁר כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יָבוֹא־אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַחֹצֵר הַפְּנִימִית אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרָא אַחַת דָּתוֹ לְהָמִית לְבַד מֵאֲשֶׁר יוֹשִׁיט־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־ שֶׁרֶבֶיט הַזָּהָב וְחָיָה וְאִנִּי לֹא נִקְרָאתִי לְבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם:</p> <p>All the servants of the king and all the provinces of the king know that all men and women who enter to the king to the inner court who are not called, there is one law of him, to put to death. Only if the king holds out to them (sg) the scepter of gold then they will live. I have not been called to enter to the king these thirty days.</p>	<p>4:11</p> <p>Τὰ ἔθνη πάντα τῆς βασιλείας γινώσκει ὅτι πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἢ γυνή, ὃς εἰσελεύσεται πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἐσωτέραν ἄκλητος, οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ σωτηρία· πλὴν ὃ ἐκτείνει ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν χρυσὴν ῥάβδον, οὗτος σωθήσεται· καὶ γὰρ οὐ κέκλημαι εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα, εἰσὶν αὐται ἡμέραι τριάκοντα.</p> <p>All the nations of the kingdom know that every man and woman who goes in to the king in the innermost court uncalled, there is not deliverance for them (sg) except to whom the king stretches out the gold rod, this one will be safe; and I have not been called to enter to the king, in these thirty days.</p>
--	--

As seen in the text and briefly mentioned earlier, the basic form of the law in each text is the same. If someone enters the court of the king uninvited, they must either be accepted by the king (who will hold out or extend his scepter to them as a sign) or they must suffer the consequences. There are two phrases of the utmost importance within the law and the first is the penalty. In the MT, the penalty is לְהָמִית or “to put [them (sg)] to death.” The hiphil infinitive use of the root מוֹת means “to cause to die” or “to put to death.”³² In no uncertain terms the

32. Brown, “מוֹת,” BDB 559–560.

MT states that the trespasser will be put to death. The second key phrase is the interjection “וְהַחֵץ” which translates literally to “one of his laws” but, in context, the “his” refers to the king meaning “there is one law of his [the king’s].” In the MT, these two phrases show that the king has power to put any uninvited person to death and that the law is immutable for all who are subject to the king and that the only way to survive an unsummoned visit to the king’s inner court is for the king to accept the trespasser by holding out his scepter to them.

Both phrases are absent from the LXX, and it changes the power the king holds. Instead of sentencing the trespasser to death the LXX penalty is “οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ σωτηρία” which translates to “there is no deliverance for them [the trespasser].” This phrase is likely referencing deliverance from the death penalty, but any verb root meaning “to kill” or “die” is not present in this passage. Without the explicit terminal verb, the law loses some of the severity present in the MT and the relationship between the king and LXX Esther shifts, which will ultimately change her role of queen from MT Esther’s.

The absence of the second phrase “there is one law of [the king]” further changes their relationship from the MT and allows the king to reassure LXX Esther in D.9–11. After lifting her up, the king first tells LXX Esther that he is her brother, demonstrating a unique dynamic caused by God changing the spirit of the king. Earlier in the story, the king exhibits the opposite type of behavior and orders around his previous wife, Astin,³³ who is required to obey his every whim and is punished for disobedience.³⁴ Astin, “a comparative figure for Esther,”³⁵ loses her “royal rank” for not approaching her husband when summoned.³⁶ Esther, now disobeying by coming when not summoned, is regarded as an equal by the king. The change to meekness by God creates a different dynamic between the characters.

The king continues and states that the law does not apply to LXX Esther with the statement “οἷ κοινὸν τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν ἐστὶ.” Linda Day highlights the difficulty with translating the verse and specifically the word “κοινὸν” when she says:

κοινὸν could also signify a variety of things. Much like our English term ‘common,’ κοινὸς; can signify that which is ordinary, everyday, or profane, or that which is shared by more than one individual. It can also be used, in the singular, as a collective to refer to the general public or the masses. Either understanding of κοινὸν is logical within the context of the story. It may signify that Esther and the king mutually share the commanding of the kingdom or that Esther is exempted from harm because

33. Vashti in the MT.

34. See Esth 1:10–22.

35. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 203.

36. Esther with Additions 1:19, NRSV.

she is not one of the common folk.³⁷

Both of Day’s interpretations elevate and equalize LXX Esther, as she either mutually rules with the king and is therefore exempt from the rules of his inner court room or is exempt because she is not a common person. Either way, LXX Esther is lifted up to the status of an equal to the king.³⁸

Alternatively, MT Esther is subject to this one law that everyone in the court is subject to. She must wait for the king to hold out his scepter,³⁹ and only then does she approach him and begin to entreat him. She remains beneath the king in the social hierarchy even with her title of queen.

MOVEMENT FOUR: LOWERING THE SCEPTER

<p>5:2</p> <p>...שָׁזָהָהּ הֵן בְּעֵינָיו...</p> <p>...she obtained favor in his eyes...</p>	<p>D.8</p> <p>καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραΰτητα, καὶ ἀγωνιάσας ἀνεπήδησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ, μέχρις οὗ κατέστη, καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὴν λόγοις εἰρηνικοῖς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ.</p> <p>And God changed the spirit of the king to meekness and he was distressed, he sprang up from his throne and took her up in his arms until she quieted and he called to her peaceable words and he said to her:</p>
<p>...וַיִּשָּׂשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת־שָׂרְבִיט הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ...</p>	<p>D.9–11</p> <p>τί ἐστιν Ἑσθήρ; ἐγὼ ὁ ἀδελφός σου, θάρσει, οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνης ὅτι κοινὸν τὸ πρόσταγμα ἡμῶν ἐστι· πρόσελθε.</p>

37. Linda Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 94.

38. LXX Esther’s rise to status above Astin and equal to the king may be foreshadowed in Addition C (Esther’s prayer), but further research would need to be done before drawing any sure conclusions. Possibly seen in LXX Esth C.11–19.

39. The holding out and touching of the scepter are part of the fourth movement and will be analyzed in the following section.

<p>...and the king held out to Esther the scepter of gold which was in his hand...</p>	<p>“What is it Esther? I am your brother, take courage, you will not die because our decree is for the common (people). come”</p>
<p>וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשֵּׁבִיט: ...and Esther approached and she touched on the head of the scepter.</p>	<p>D.12 καὶ ἄρας τὴν χρυσὴν ράβδον ἐπέθηκεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτῆς καὶ ἡσπάσατο αὐτὴν καὶ εἶπε· λάλησόν μοι. And therefore, he placed the golden staff on her neck and he welcomed her and said, “Speak to me.”</p>

The fourth and final movement of the story deals with the scepter and will solidify each Esther's relationship with the king. In the MT, the act of holding out and the act of touching the scepter are divided by the MT Esther approaching the throne and closing the distance between her and the king. However, in the LXX, there is no act of holding out the scepter and the touching of the scepter occurs only after the king descends from his throne and approaches LXX Esther.

Before approaching the king, MT Esther waits for him to hold out his scepter. This is expected due to the law in 4:11. As an intruder in the inner courtroom, MT Esther must be accepted by the king or die. She waits for the king to execute the law and only approaches once she has been accepted by the king when he holds out his scepter to her. Accepted by the king, MT Esther approaches as seen in the previous movement and touches the scepter. MT Esther demonstrates many of the same attributes that her approach to the king does; without God, MT Esther is active as the one who touches. By following the courtly procedure, MT Esther acknowledges the power of the king, and subjects herself to it, just as anyone else who enters the courtroom would thereby making MT Esther less than the king and more equal to the others in the court.

On the other hand, LXX Esther was not offered the scepter before movement three when the king closes the distance between him and her. Instead, after the king comforts her, he places the staff as the subject of ἐπέθηκεν (a 3rd person singular aorist active indicative verb), on the neck of LXX Esther thus welcoming her into the innermost courtroom. LXX Esther *receives* this act of touching, once again illustrating the passive role she has filled during her entrance into the throne. The king touching LXX Esther draws the same type of conclusions as the king approaching LXX Esther in the previous movement. By being the one to touch LXX

Esther with the scepter, the king is acknowledging her equal status. Although there are differences between the laws, the LXX also states that the king must stretch out his scepter to any who trespass. Rather than simply holding out the scepter, the king goes a step further. By being the one to touch her, the king is again leaving his regular station and creating exceptions for LXX Esther. By accepting LXX Esther despite the courtly order and the law, the king is acknowledging that LXX Esther stands above the rest of the court.

Although the inclusion of God in the LXX Book of Esther may seem like an obvious difference, the influence on the story is significant. As each Esther faces the king, her experience is shaped by the presence or absence of God. MT Esther is active throughout the courtroom scene as she enters the throne room alone, gains the favor of the king through her own doing, and then she approaches the throne to touch the scepter. By performing these actions MT Esther has subjugated herself to the king's power, making her a queen second to the king. On the other hand, LXX Esther is passive because of the inclusion of God. As she falls in the doorway, she opens the way for God to enter the scene and change the king's spirit, thus granting LXX Esther the grace and kindness she needs from the king. After the king approaches her, he raises her up as an equal to himself and accepts her by touching the scepter to her neck. Each Esther's power in relation to the king become more evident later as she pleads with him to save her people. In the following examples, the result of God's influence on Esther's power is more evident.

EXAMPLES OF ESTHER'S POWER AS QUEEN

In the next two examples, the words of Esther will demonstrate her role as queen. Neither example comes from an Addition, rather both show how the LXX story differs slightly from the MT as a result of how her power as Queen was established in Esth 5 and Addition D.

<p>7:3</p> <p>וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֶם־מִצָּאֵתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תִּתֶּנִּי לִי נַפְשִׁי בִּשְׂאֵלָתִי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשָׁתִי:</p> <p>And Esther answered the king and she said, "If I found grace in your eyes, king, and if it is good according to the king, give to me my life by my request and my people by my petition."</p>	<p>7:3</p> <p>καὶ ἀποκριθεῖσα εἶπεν Εἰ εὗρον χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ βασιλέως, δοθήτω ἡ ψυχὴ μου τῷ αἰτήματι μου καὶ ὁ λαός μου τῷ ἀξιωματί μου.</p> <p>And answering, she said, "If I have found grace before the king, let my life be given by my request and my people by my petition."</p>
--	--

Esther 7:3 happens during the second feast of Esther when she is beginning to admit that she is a Jew and to expose Haman for his attempted murder. This verse is an example of Esther acting based on her position as queen. MT Esther, in 7:3, has two statements of appealing to the king. One relates to her personal standing with the king, if she has found grace in his eyes, and the other has to do with the authority of the king or the kingship, “if it is good to according to the king” or, in other words, if the king thinks it is a good idea and approves. First, MT Esther appeals to the king with a variant of the idiom discussed earlier, but instead of using נָשָׂא where MT Esther obtained the favor of various characters through her efforts and beauty, she asks with מָצָא which puts the action back on the king as she petitions for the life of her people. MT Esther asks if she has found grace in his eyes, essentially asking if the king has determined or found a reason to like her and give her his favor. If the king does not like her, he may not grant her both her own life and the lives of her people. Second, MT Esther, as second to the king, must appeal to the dominion of the king as the ruler of Assyria. By adding if it is good to the king, MT Esther is again subjecting herself to the power of the king and recognizing her position as second to his power. Including both statements demonstrates MT Esther’s need to both appeal to the king personally and acknowledge the power of the kingship in order to save her people.

In contrast, LXX Esther does not ask for the king’s approval, but instead she “appeals solely to her favored status by the king.”⁴⁰ In this critical moment of life and death for not only her, but all her people, LXX Esther determines that it is enough to ask the king for her life based solely on if he likes her, never seeking his opinion as monarch. Clearly LXX Esther feels comfortable and confident in her standing with the king to be able to skip over his judgement as monarch. Her boldness is evidence of her equal status to the king.

40. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 122.

<p>8:5</p> <p>וַתֹּאמֶר אֶם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב וְאִם-מִצְאָתִי חַן לִפְנֵי וְכִשֹּׁר הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְטוֹבָה אֲנִי בְּעֵינָיו יִכְתֹּב לְהַשִּׁיב אֶת-הַסְּפָרִים מִחֻשְׁבָּת הַמֶּן בֶּן-הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲגָגִי אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבְדֹת הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ:</p> <p>And she said if it is good according to the king and if I have found grace before him and this matter pleases before the king and I am good in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the writings/letter which Haman son of Hamdatha the Agagite devised with he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king.</p>	<p>8:5</p> <p>καὶ εἶπεν Εσθηρ Εἰ δοκεῖ σοι καὶ εὖρον χάριν, πεμφθήτω ἀποστραφῆναι τὰ γράμματα τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα ὑπὸ Αμαν τὰ γραφέντα ἀπολέσθαι τοὺς Ιουδαίους, οἳ εἰσιν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.</p> <p>And Esther said if it seems good to you and I have found grace, let [a letter] be sent to revoke the writings which were sent by Haman the letter to destroy the Jews who are in your kingdom.</p>
---	---

The last example comes near the close of the story in Esth 8:5. In this verse, Esther asks the king to reverse the letter of Haman.⁴¹ MT Esther's plea contains four different appeals to the king which "covers all her bases... appealing to whether the king likes either herself or her ideas, or if it seems either the right or the profitable thing to do."⁴² MT Esther, as in the previous example, uses both her personal standing before the king and expresses her respect for the king's power. In her second statement, "if I have found grace before him," using the idiom analyzed previously, MT Esther changes the structure slightly. Instead of saying "in your eyes," she says "לִפְנֵי," meaning "before him," which shows her concern to "find favor particularly before him... and not just in general."⁴³ She operates within her station to bring about the salvation of the Jews, requiring her to convince him as the king. LXX Esther again seems to be asking as more of an equal, appealing less to the king's kingship. She has only two considerations that mirror MT Esther's first two, and, on the surface, seem to cover both personal standing and respect of the kingship, but analyzing it further illustrates that LXX Esther is again asking more personally. The first appeal to the king, "if it seems good to you," is almost the same as MT Esther's request. However, LXX Esther uses second person pronouns rather than the same

41. Aman in Greek.

42. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 142.

43. Day, *Three Faces of a Queen*, 142.

third person honorific pronouns used by MT Esther. Although, it could be an appeal to the kingship, LXX Esther shows a familiarity that MT Esther does not, demonstrating a more personal request. One reason LXX Esther may be appealing to the kingship is she needs an official act of the king to be revoked, therefore the power of the king must come into play in this scene specifically. However, LXX Esther's use of the second person pronouns again shows less formality and a higher level of familiarity than MT Esther. LXX Esther's second appeal "and [if] I have found grace" is similar to LXX Esther's previous request as she uses her personal standing before the king to try to convince him. MT Esther requests the king's help in a similar manner but remains formal and must appeal to both the king and his authority as she works to free her people as the queen second to the king. On the other hand, LXX Esther appeals to the king with a familiarity missing in the MT, illuminating LXX Esther as an equal to the king.

In conclusion, the main difference between the Masoretic Text and Septuagint, the inclusion of God, creates two different Esthers, seen in how each acts to achieve her end goal and through her power as queen. MT Esther is active throughout the four main movements of the story, and by honoring the king's authority, her relationship with the king is established within her social context as one subservient to him. LXX Esther is passive throughout these movements, which allows God to act and change the spirit of the king, initiating LXX Esther's relationship to the king, a queen who is equal. The inclusion or omission of God in the courtroom scene determines Esther's actions and power as queen.

RETRACING THE HISTORICAL VIA DOLOROSA

A LOGISTICAL EXERCISE IN FIRST-CENTURY JERUSALEM

CALAN CHRISTENSEN

Calan Christensen is a senior at BYU earning a BA in Ancient Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis in the Greek New Testament. His research interests center around the archaeology of Roman-period Jerusalem and he plans to pursue a graduate degree in chaplaincy.

Abstract: Since the identification of Herod's palace on the Western Hill of Jerusalem as the *Praetorium* (πραιτώριον) of the Gospels, the notion of Jesus being tried at the Antonia Fortress, and the associated Via Dolorosa, has been relegated to mere tradition. This presented a prime juncture to responsibly reinform a tantamount Christian pilgrimage tradition through the lens of archaeology. Unfortunately, this opportunity has seemingly been neglected by the greater academic community. Any scholar that ventures to mention a plausible route from the *Praetorium* to Golgotha hastily assumes a route through the Upper City and neglects to cite any compelling evidence. This paper demonstrates the archaeological and logistical flaws with an assumed route through the Upper City and instead proposes a more probable alternate path for the Villa Dolorosa outside the western city walls, beginning at Broshi and Gibson's 'Essene Gate' and culminating near Taylor's location for Golgotha.

Since the Middle Ages, thousands of devoted Christian pilgrims have thronged to the Holy City to visit and, to some extent, relive the traditional sites memorializing the final week of Jesus's life.¹ The pinnacle of this pilgrimage experience arrives in the form of walking the Via Dolorosa, or 'Way of Sorrow,' which commemorates the ultimate journey the condemned Jesus took with his cross from the *Praetorium*,² where he faced condemnation, to Golgotha, the site of his

1. Mark D. Smith, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Thrill of Defeat, The Agony of Victory: A Classical Historian Explores Jesus's Arrest, Trial, and Execution* (London: Lutterworth, 2017), 187.

2. "The word *praetorium* might refer to a palace or a judicial or military seat, but it is likely that in Jerusalem it referred to the entire palace compound, which on the north included

crucifixion. Traditionally, the *Praetorium* and Golgotha are associated with the Antonia Fortress on the northwest corner of the Temple Mount and the modern-day Church of the Holy Sepulchre, respectively.³

Despite centuries of veneration for this sacred route, modern archaeology has challenged traditional interpretations regarding the locations associated with the Via Dolorosa. The once widely accepted identification of the Antonia Fortress as the *Praetorium* and the place of Jesus's condemnation has been replaced by evidence favoring Herod's Palace, near the modern-day Citadel, as Pilate's residence and headquarters during his stays in Jerusalem.⁴ Nevertheless, archaeological findings continue to support the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as resting on or near the likely location of Jesus's crucifixion and burial.⁵ By combining this supported destination with a reevaluation of the point of origin, we can trace a new historical Via Dolorosa through first-century Jerusalem.

This paper explores the plausibility of the historical Via Dolorosa as now suggested by scholars. The suggested route typically follows a path from Herod's Palace, traverses the Upper City, and exits via the Gennath Gate in proximity to Golgotha. While duly acknowledging their insights, I will also present an alternative model, informed by both archaeological evidence and literary sources, that attempts to resolve several logistical issues inherent in the aforementioned Upper City Model. This proposed route travels northward outside the city following along the westernmost section of the Hasmonean First Wall before heading eastward toward Golgotha near Herod's sizable defensive towers. By comparing the respective

palatial buildings used for residential purposes and on the south, military barracks." See Shimon Gibson, "The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence," in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of Faith*, ed. C.A. Evans (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 104.

3. The Antonia Fortress was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE during Titus' siege of Jerusalem and as such does not stand today. Modern reenactments of the Via Dolorosa typically begin at the Ecce Homo arch on Via Dolorosa Street.

4. For further information on the archaeological evidence supporting Herod's Palace as the *Praetorium* and the problems with the Antonia Fortress and the Ecce Homo arch, see Shimon Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 91. Alternatively, Bargil Pixner identifies the *Praetorium* as the old Hasmonean Palace and places the point of departure there. See Bargil Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah and Sites of the Early Church from Galilee to Jerusalem: Jesus and Jewish Christianity in Light of Archaeological Discoveries*, ed. Rainer Riesner, trans. Keith Myrick, Miriam Randall, Sam Randall (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2010), 313. Pixner's view seems to be contradicted by Philo of Alexandria's account of the episode of the votive round shields dedicated to Tiberias. Philo, *Embassy*, 38.299–305. See also Gibson, "The Trial of Jesus," 109.

5. See Joan E. Taylor, "Golgotha: A Reconsideration of the Evidence for the Sites of Jesus' Crucifixion and Burial," *NTS* 44 (1998): 180; See also Shimon Gibson and Joan E. Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem: The Archaeology and Early History of Traditional Golgotha* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1994), 59–63.

probabilities of these two routes, this research sheds light on the journey of the condemned Jesus and his entourage, providing a nuanced perspective on the ‘Way of the Cross’ in first-century Jerusalem.⁶

THE GATE OF JUDGMENT: THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

Between 1973 and 1978, Magen Broshi and Shimon Gibson conducted excavations along the outside of the western and southern walls of the Old City in Jerusalem, starting from the southern moat of the Tower of David Citadel and extending approximately 700 m to the south, near the vicinity of the Sulfur Tower.⁷

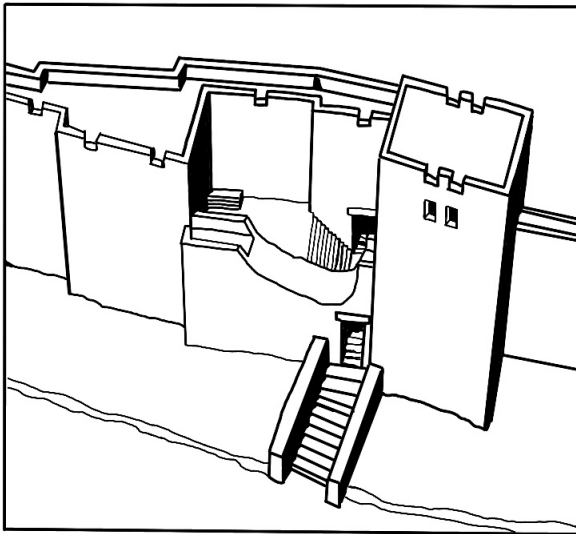


Figure 1: Reconstruction drawing of the ‘Gate of Judgment.’
Drawing based on Gibson, “The Trial of Jesus,” 114.

During their excavations, they revealed the foundations of a monumental stone staircase, dating back to the Herodian period. This impressive staircase led up to the remains of a paved platform, enclosed on all sides by large towers, adjacent to the modern city wall.⁸ This indicated the existence of a significant gate complex built by Herod the Great, using the extant Hasmonean walls, which was most likely destroyed during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE.⁹ Since then, the stones forming the staircase were robbed out during the

6. Any discussion venturing to follow the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth as he was led to his execution is a ‘risky enterprise’ (Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah*, 313), as it inevitably must make certain assumptions. Admittedly in this paper I will make three; the location of the *Praetorium*, the placement of the crucifixion and burial near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and that the execution procession followed a direct route between the two. To shore up the respective assumptions, both archaeological and textual evidence will be presented.

7. Magen Broshi and Shimon Gibson, “Excavations Along the Western and Southern Walls of the Old City of Jerusalem,” in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Hillel Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 147.

8. Broshi and Gibson, “Excavations Along the Western and Southern Walls,” 151–153.

9. See Figure 1.

Byzantine period and the modern walls were built over the foundations of the ancient gate complex.¹⁰

Gibson not only identifies this gate complex as the ‘Essene Gate’ mentioned by Josephus,¹¹ but also posits that the complex could be the setting of Jesus’s trial and condemnation by Pilate.¹² The three-meter-wide gate led directly into Herod’s palatial complex,¹³ specifically the barracks on the southern end of the compound, and the large open-air stone platform, measuring 30 x 11 m, provided ample space for public gatherings, such as reading of proclamations and criminal trials.¹⁴ Gibson believes that this platform satisfies the topographical features mentioned in John 19:13, corresponding to the description of the stone pavement (λιθόστρωτος) where Pilate sat on the judgment seat (βῆμα) before handing Jesus over to be crucified.¹⁵ Based on this evidence, the point of departure for the historical Via Dolorosa can reasonably be positioned at Broshi and Gibson’s Gate of Judgment.

GOLGOTHA: THE FINAL DESTINATION

Each Gospel author identifies a location called ‘The Skull’ (Golgotha) as the site of Jesus’s crucifixion. However, its precise location on an outcrop of rock or a hill remains unspecified and instead, it is simply referred to as a place (τόπος).¹⁶ Excavations have revealed that this ‘τόπος’ was a discontinued Iron Age rock quarry situated near the junction of the First and Second Hasmonean walls. Additionally, subsequent to its abandonment, parts of the quarry underwent a transformation into cultivated tracts of arable land, while another section retained

10. Gibson, “The Trial of Jesus,” 104.

11. For Josephus’s mention of a gate leading to an Essene Quarter see Josephus, *J.W.* 5.145. Gibson strongly challenges Pixner’s identification of another gate, excavated by Bliss and Dickie near Mount Zion, as Josephus’s Essene Gate. While this debate holds significance in the broader context, for the purposes of this paper, it becomes a matter of nomenclature in identifying Broshi and Gibson’s gate. Consequently, I shall refer to the gate complex excavated by Broshi and Gibson as the ‘Gate of Judgment,’ as Gibson often labels it in his illustrated reconstructions (see Figure 3). For an evaluation of the Essene Gate debate, see Gibson, “The Trial of Jesus,” 116; and Bargil Pixner, “The History of the ‘Essene Gate’ Area,” *ZDPV* 105 (1989): 96–104. See also Lee I. Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period (538 B.C.E.–70 C.E.)* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 333.

12. Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus*, 96.

13. Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus*, 99.

14. Gibson, “The Trial of Jesus,” 115.

15. “When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha.”

16. ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κήπος, καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καινόν... “Now there was a garden in the *place* where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb...” John 19:41 (emphasis added). See also Mark 15:22; Matt 27:33; and Luke 23:33. See also Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, 59.

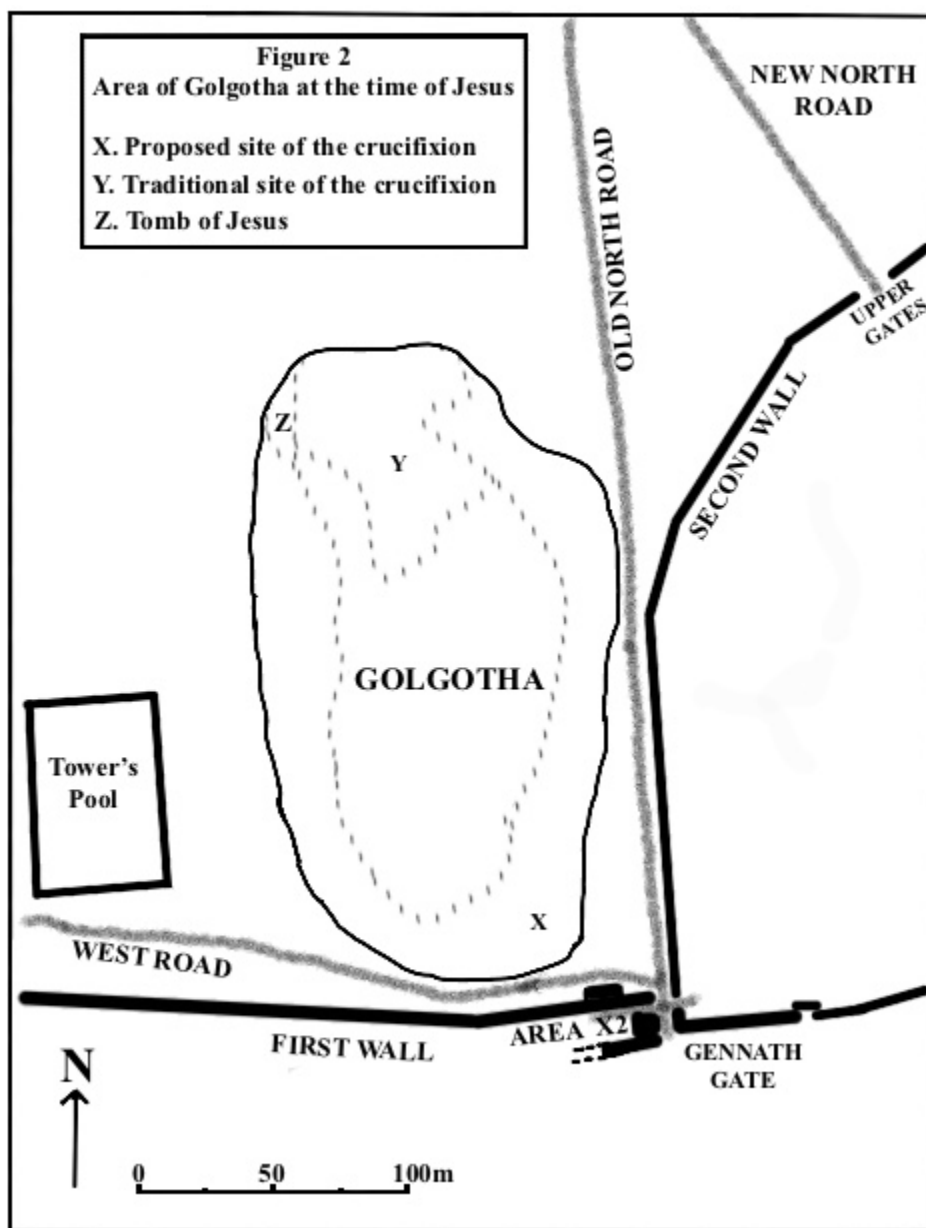


Figure 2: Reconstruction drawing of Golgotha. Drawing based on Taylor, "Golgotha," 185.

its original form, featuring rock-cut tombs.¹⁷ The Pool of Hezekiah (Tower's Pool) located to the west of the quarry probably served as a source of irrigation for these agricultural plots or gardens (κῆπος).¹⁸ The region of Golgotha covered a large area, approximately 200 x 150 m, and would have been bordered on the south and east sides by roads running parallel with the Hasmonean First Wall (east-west) and the Second Wall (north-south) before merging at the Gennath Gate.¹⁹

During the Byzantine period, around the 6th century, Golgotha began to be associated with a smaller area, namely the Rock of Calvary.²⁰ This rock, the traditional site of Jesus's crucifixion, was exposed during the Greek Orthodox excavations in 1988 where Shimon Gibson and Joan Taylor determined that the rock could not have served as a site of public Roman executions. They noted several logistical problems with the traditional Rock of Calvary. It presents a very steep ascent, measuring anywhere from 5–12.75 m above the ground level, and the summit, measuring 3.5 x 1.7 m, is far too narrow to accommodate the tradition that Jesus was crucified between two thieves.²¹ Furthermore, compelling evidence against the Rock of Calvary being the crucifixion site lies in its positioning within the rock quarry, far from any public roads during the first century. Roman crucifixion accounts consistently place executions near major roads to maximize impact and instill fear among the population.²² Additionally, by executing criminals near city gates, the display of imperial dominance was unavoidable for citizens entering or exiting the city. Utilizing the Rock of Calvary as a place of execution would have made it far too manageable for travelers to avoid and nullified the intended effects of public crucifixion. Moreover, Matthew and Mark both mention the derisive comments of passersby, a crucial part of the humiliation of crucifixion and a behavior that would have been easily facilitated by placing the crucified alongside major roads and near gate complexes.²³ In contrast, travelers would have had to deviate nearly 80 m from the road to approach the Rock of Calvary as a site of execution.²⁴

17. Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, 55.

18. So named due to its proximity to the three defensive towers of Herod's Palace: Hippicus, Phasael, and Mariamne. The Pool of Hezekiah could also serve as a water source for pilgrims during peacetime and as a defensive fortification during periods of conflict. David Gurevich, "The Water Pools and the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Late Second Temple Period," *PEQ* 149 (2017): 129.

19. Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, 59. See also Heb 13:12, "Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate . . .," this gate possibly being the Gennath Gate. See also Figure 2.

20. Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, 59. See 'Y' in Figure 2.

21. Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, 57–58.

22. "When we crucify criminals the most frequented roads are chosen, where the greatest number of people can look and be seized by fear." Quintilian, *Decl.* 274.13 (Bailey, LCL).

23. Matt 27:39; Mark 15:29.

24. Taylor, "Golgotha," 185. See Figure 2.

Instead, Gibson and Taylor argue that the most likely place for crucifixions would be just within the quarry adjacent to the road running west from the Gennath Gate parallel with the First Wall.²⁵ Taylor further suggests a more specific location approximately 200 m south of today's Rock of Calvary, placing the crucifixion site within 25 m of the road, still within the locality of the quarry, and in plain view for travelers on the crowded roads to read the titulus above Jesus's head.²⁶ With this evidence in mind, the location of Jesus's final destination should be placed near the Gennath Gate along the western road, just within the boundaries of the rock quarry.

TRACING THE ROUTE: CIRCUITOUS OR DIRECT?

The Gospel accounts of Jesus's journey from the *Praetorium* to Golgotha lack specific details, leaving us uncertain whether the route followed the shortest path or a longer, more circuitous course.²⁷ If the latter was the case, attempting to plot the exact way of the cross becomes an exercise in futility. The evidence suggesting a more circuitous route lies in the common process of Roman crucifixion, which often involved brutal floggings and a humiliating march through the city's most public precincts, with the victim stripped bare and culminating in a visible and agonizing death on a cross. This grisly exercise aimed to instill the utmost terror in the population, encouraging obedience to Roman rule.²⁸ Scholars who support the idea of a longer route taken by Jesus's executioners cite Josephus's account of an execution in Jerusalem, where a similar practice was employed.²⁹ Josephus records that "[Claudius] also gave order that Celer the tribune should be carried back to Jerusalem, and should be drawn through the city in the sight of all the people, and then should be slain."³⁰

However, there are several problems with this assumption. First, Claudius is reported to have ordered Celer to be slain. While the added provision that he

25. Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, 59. This would also more adequately satisfy the location described in Heb 13:12.

26. Taylor, "Golgotha," 188. See also 'X' in Figure 2. Additionally, Taylor suggests the likelihood of "thousands of Passover pilgrims" streaming into the city. Also note that no literary source, Gospel or otherwise, requires the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea to be adjacent to the place of crucifixion. See Taylor, "Golgotha," 184, 188. John is the only Gospel that suggests a relative proximity of the sepulcher to Golgotha (John 19:41–42).

27. Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah*, 313.

28. Mark Goodacre, "Scripturalization in Mark's Crucifixion Narrative," in *The Trial and Death of Jesus: Essays on the Passion Narrative in Mark*, eds. Geert Van Oyen and Tom Shepherd (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 36.

29. André Parrot and Edwin Hudson, *Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (London: SCM, 1957), 38–39.

30. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.136 (Thackery, LCL).

“should be drawn through the city in the sight of all the people” could imply execution via crucifixion as this was a common theme in Roman crucifixions, the order to slay Celer is ambiguous and is cautiously analogous to crucifixion. Secondly, Josephus simply says that Celer should be led through the city, presenting the opportunity for “all the people” to see him. This could just as easily have been done via a direct course through a bustling section of the city and there is no need for a singular interpretation. Third, the Gospel accounts of Jesus’s walk to Golgotha are barely mentioned, suggesting that this was a relatively short and uneventful journey.³¹ This is especially telling when compared to the detailed descriptions of the physical abuse Jesus suffered at the hands of the soldiers prior to being led to Golgotha and the vitriol thrown at him after his crucifixion.³² This stands in direct opposition to typical crucifixion narratives where the condemned individual is mocked and abused by the witnessing crowds.³³

Finally, the Romans exhibited a strong preference for the condemned individual to bear their own *patibulum*, or crossbar. Concessions to this practice were seldom granted, although cases where there were apprehensions surrounding the victim’s ability to endure the arduous journey could warrant one.³⁴ This might have been the case as the Synoptic Gospels all claim that Jesus did not carry his own cross and that Simon of Cyrene was conscripted for the task.³⁵ If this was due to the executioners’ concern for their victim perishing before maximum torture could be inflicted, it is unlikely that they would then proceed with a longer route than necessary. Therefore, it is more likely that a direct route was taken, and the Via Dolorosa should be traced in such a manner.

UPPER CITY MODEL

In the context of first-century Jerusalem, definitively determining the exact route taken by an execution detail lies beyond the scope of archaeology. However,

31. Save for the episode where Jesus addresses the mourning women. Luke 23:27–31.

32. It is likely that had Jesus’s crucifixion procession included mockery and abuse like he suffered in the *Praetorium* at the hands of the soldiers, the Gospel authors would have illustrated some of the events that occurred along the journey to Golgotha. Matt 27:39; Mark 15:29–32; Luke 23:35–39; John 19:1–3. John is curiously silent regarding the mocking witnesses of the crucifixion and gives a light treatment on the scourging in the *Praetorium*. Another possible interpretation for the lack of mention of the Way of the Cross in the Gospels is that Jesus was not paraded in front of gawking crowds in the busiest parts of the city like typical crucifixions.

33. David W. Chapman and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus: Texts and Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019), 280–288. See also John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 21.

34. Smith, *A Classical Historian*, 186–187. For an excellent treatment on the Latin term *patibulum* in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus see Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean*, 26–34.

35. Matt 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26.

Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus (30 CE)

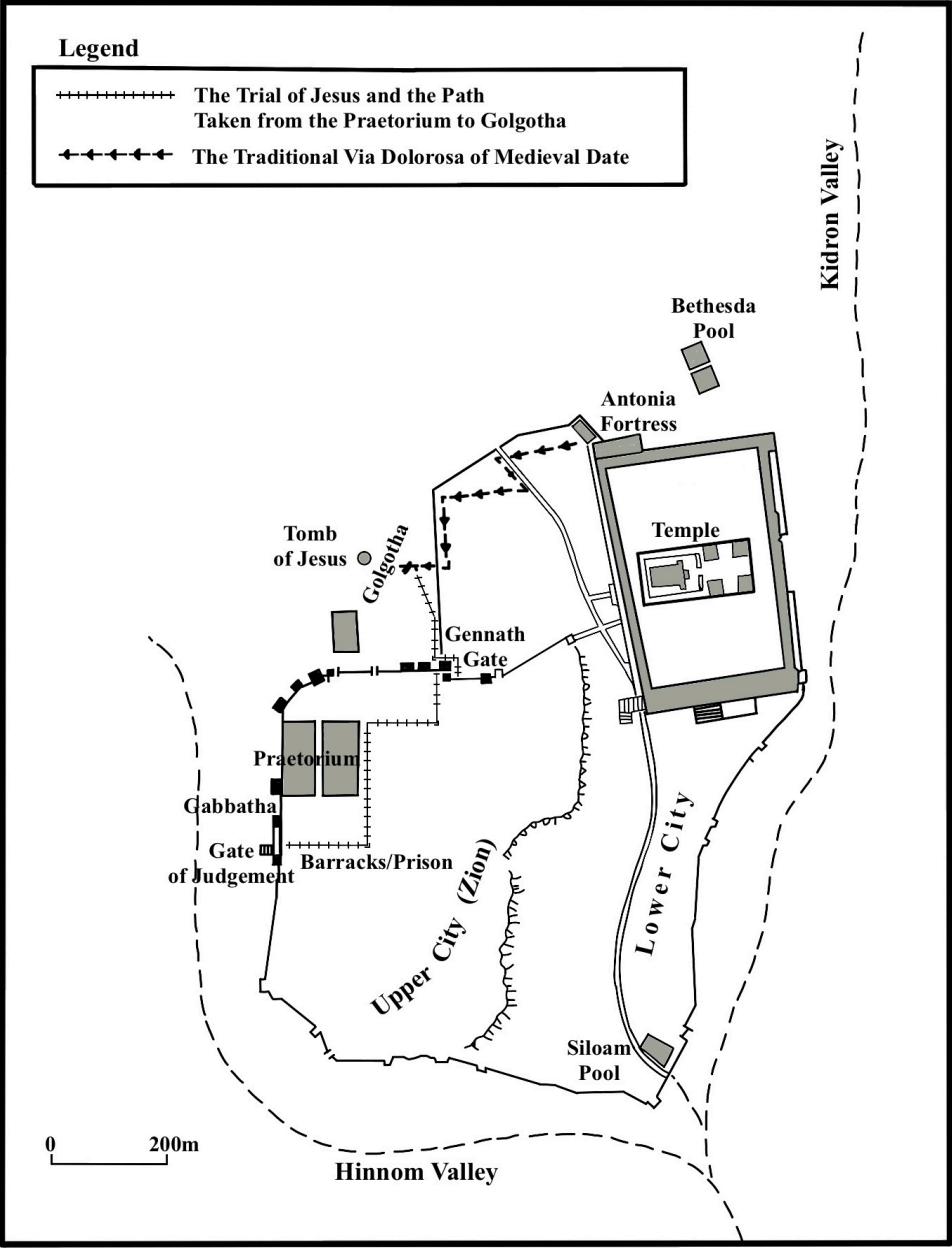


Figure 3: Map of Jesus's movements during his final week.
Drawing based on Gibson, "The Trial of Jesus," 101.

a rigorous examination of available archaeological and literary evidence enables the formulation of informed models reconstructing the plausible routes Jesus's executioners might have taken. These models can then be systematically evaluated, allowing the most probable scenarios to be identified. The Upper City Model for the Via Dolorosa, as suggested by most scholars, features a relatively direct route. Commencing at Gibson's Gate of Judgment on the outer western city wall, it then moves through Herod's palatial complex and into the Upper City. Then proceeding northward traversing the Upper City, and finally passing through the Gennath Gate before reaching the place of crucifixion identified by Taylor, located just off the western road leading to Jaffa and the coast.³⁶

Given the absence of absolute concrete evidence, references to this Upper City Model are often brief and typically appear as concluding remarks in discussions on the Passion narratives. For example, Pierre Benoit's full treatment on the subject is "[Jesus] would have left Herod's Palace, the present-day 'Tower of David', taken the present 'David Street' as far as the three parallel 'souks', [and] followed these northwards and ended up at the gate which now stands in the Alexander Hospice. Going out this gate, he would have been close to Calvary."³⁷ Steven Notley's synthesis is as follows, "Certainly [Jesus] was executed within the vicinity [of the Holy Sepulchre], and access from Herod's Palace, the *Praetorium*, would have led through the Gennath Gate –in all likelihood marking the line of the first-century Way of the Cross."³⁸ Gibson, directly involved in the archaeology of both the *Praetorium* and Golgotha, states that, "Jesus was most likely taken back to the prison of the praetorium barracks and from there would have been paraded down

36. See Figure 3. Curiously, Gibson depicts the route ending near the traditional Rock of Calvary, contrary to his analysis during the 1988 excavations. Additionally, this reconstruction has a common but inaccurate depiction of the Gennath Gate, inaccurately representing both the literary sources and the archaeology. See Josephus, *J.W.* 5.145–146 (Thackery, LCL); Nahman Avigad, Hillel Geva, and D. T. Ariel, *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem: Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 234; and Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Nelson, 1983), 50, 69. For further insight on a faithful rendering of the Gennath Gate see Taylor's comments in Taylor, "Golgotha," 187. "It is fairly common to site the second wall west of the Gennath Gate, so that another gate is required as an exit towards the west. In fact, nothing requires us to site the second wall west of the gate. If Josephus's comments are accurate, the wall began at the gate, but without necessarily closing it up. It would seem much more logical if the gate remained an exit to long-established west and north roads, and the new wall still allowed access to these exits from the northern part of the city." See also Figure 2.

37. Pierre Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), 165.

38. R. Steven Notley, *Jerusalem: City of the Great King* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2015), 45.

the streets of the Upper City to the Gennath Gate, where he was led out of the city to Golgotha.”³⁹ Additional analyses by other scholars follow in the same manner.⁴⁰

Although there seems to be a general consensus among scholars for the Upper City Model of the Via Dolorosa, several logistical problems must be addressed, with the most significant being the movement of the execution procession. To accurately assess how the cortège would have traveled, determining the composition of such a parade and its participants is necessary. The Lukan account depicts the most populated crowd at the trial of Jesus and the subsequent execution procession. He mentions an ‘assembly’ that brought Jesus to Pilate and accompanied him to his trial before Herod (Luke 23:1, 10) and that Pilate gathered “the chief priests, the leaders, and the people” to witness his verdict (23:13).⁴¹ The narrative includes the conscription of Simon of Cyrene (23:26) and claims that a “great number of people followed” the execution procession, which likely incorporated both the original accusers along with general citizens,⁴² including a group of women mourning for the condemned Jesus (23:27).⁴³ Additionally, Luke emphasizes that

39. Gibson, “The Trial of Jesus,” 118. Gibson’s book, written entirely on the last week of Jesus’s life, includes only this sentence and a diagram. See Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus*, 106.

40. Other comments concerning a reconstruction of the Via Dolorosa say much the same thing. “If the Holy Sepulchre is the place of Jesus’s execution and burial, and if the praetorium was at the Herodian Palace to the southwest rather than the Fortress Antonia to the northeast, then we will need to invent a new route for the historical Via Dolorosa, proceeding in almost the opposite direction of the medieval route, along something similar to the small roads that now lead from the modern Citadel, from near the Jaffa gate to the Holy Sepulchre.” See Smith, *A Classical Historian*, 191–192. Pixner has a slightly longer treatment comprising half a page in Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah*, 313–314. The most comprehensive treatment on the topic is a Master’s dissertation by Ilka Gray, also suggesting the Upper City Model although favoring a more meandering, untraceable route as proposed Parrot. Nevertheless, Gray argues for the *Praetorium* and Golgotha as endpoints and the Gennath Gate as a midpoint. Ilka Knüppel Gray, “The Search for Jesus’ Final Steps: How Archaeological and Literary Evidence Reroutes the Via Dolorosa” (MA diss., Towson University, 2017), 1–123.

41. A translation for the Greek ‘πλῆθος,’ a singular noun frequently meaning a multitude, masses, or a great number. LSJ, s.v. “πλῆθος.”

42. During the first century it was commonplace for the death penalty to be carried out by the witnesses to the crime. See Chapman and Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus*, 50. As execution by crucifixion was strictly reserved for the Roman government, the chief priests, who frequently testified of their witness to Jesus’s many crimes (Luke 23:2, 10), could not carry out the execution themselves. In place of this, however, they were intentionally present at both Pilate’s and Herod’s interrogations and later, according to John 19:21, they complained about the *titulus* Pilate had inscribed. If the chief priests brought Jesus to Pilate, sat through both interrogations, called for a crucifixion in protestation against the not-guilty verdict, and later were present at the cross, it stands to reason that they followed the condemned Jesus to Golgotha, at the very least to ensure the fulfillment of the execution. See also Raymond Edward Brown, *The Death of the Messiah from Gethsemane to the Grave*, vol. 1 of *A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 744.

43. Possibly the “women who had followed him from Galilee.” Luke 23:49.

Jesus was not the only condemned man on this journey; the two criminals he was crucified between were also part of this grim parade (23:32).

In crucifixion processions, it was common for a soldier to carry the *titulus*, inscribed with the criminal's name and alleged crimes.⁴⁴ In this case, there would have been three *tituli*, one for each victim, possibly suggesting the need for three soldiers to prominently display them. Considering that soldiers were already responsible for crowd control and marching the prisoners, Eckhard Schnabel's assertion based on John 19:23 suggests that there would have been four soldiers guarding Jesus, and four others accompanying each of the other criminals. Including a centurion leading the group, the military detail could have totaled approximately thirteen.⁴⁵ Not accounting for additional figures later present at the crucifixion,⁴⁶ a conservative estimate for the number of people included in this procession could range anywhere from twenty-five to thirty-five or more people.⁴⁷

The Upper City Model places a group of approximately twenty-five individuals at the Gate of Judgment outside the western walls of the city during Pilate's verdict. However, this model faces significant challenges, particularly regarding the efficient relocation of this group from the Gate of Judgment back into Jerusalem to participate in the march through the elite residences of the Upper City. While the majority of reconstructions of the historical Via Dolorosa propose moving the group through this gate, this is highly improbable due to its direct access to the Herodian palatial complex, where Pilate and his Roman entourage resided.⁴⁸ The Gate of Judgment served as a private entrance exclusively for the governor of Judea, not a public thoroughfare, making it unlikely for a potentially volatile group of

44. Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus*, 109.

45. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Jesus in Jerusalem: The Last Days* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 307. See also John 19:23, "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier."

46. Matt 27:56 places Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, and several unnamed others at the cross. Mark corroborates the claim (15:40–41). John 19:25–27 includes the account of Jesus entrusting the care of his mother, present at the cross, to the "disciple whom he loved". Although it is entirely unclear if any of these figures were present during the Via Dolorosa, Benoit believes that it is likely that at least Mary the mother of Jesus was. "[T]he meeting with Mary is very probable; she is seen later at the foot of the cross. Mary must have followed her son as close as possible, and it is known that a condemned man had the right to speak to his relatives." See Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection*, 166.

47. There is compelling literary evidence based on the Markan use of 'φέρω' suggesting that as part of a protest against the injustice of his trial, Jesus refused to walk to Golgotha and was instead carried. If so, this would probably require additional Roman soldiers and would increase the number of people in the procession. See William Sanger Campbell, "Engagement, Disengagement and Obstruction: Jesus' Defense Strategies in Mark's Trial and Execution Scenes (14.53–64; 15.1–39)," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 295–296; and Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection*, 169.

48. See Figures 3 and 4.

lower-class people to parade through the governor's residence.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Pilate's strained relationship with his Jewish subjects and his aversion to his position in Judea diminish the likelihood of him allowing such a procession through his residence. Additionally, the chief priests, who were deeply invested in seeing Jesus's execution carried out, had previously refrained from entering the *Praetorium* during Jesus's initial trial for fear of ritual impurity during Passover. It is doubtful they would have abandoned these scruples now to enter the Roman palace, which would render them ritually unclean.⁵⁰

Alternatively, the only other gates providing access to the city from the Gate of Judgment would be the Gennath Gate to the northeast or, moving southwest, the gate adjacent to Mount Zion (Pixner's 'Essene Gate'). However, both of these options present significant detours, taking the group far away from the intended path through the Upper City, which the Upper City Model is supposed to follow.

Assuming the group manages to arrive back inside Jerusalem for the procession, the next step of the Upper City Model is to move through the Upper City to the nearest exit, the Gennath Gate. Unfortunately, archaeological excavations in this part of Jerusalem have been limited, leaving our knowledge of the road system scant at best. Some scholars suggest that Herod's adoption of Roman architecture and culture could have extended to his city planning and he would thus lay out a refurbished first-century Jerusalem in a Hippodamian grid pattern.⁵¹ Nevertheless, this view lacks substantial evidence, as Nahman Avigad's Jewish Quarter excavations present a different picture. Although Avigad says the excavations were insufficient to fully reconstruct the streets in the Upper City of Herodian Jerusalem, a few observations can still be ascertained.⁵² First, the orientation of the buildings suggests that the streets were far from uniform, influenced instead by the natural topography. Notably, an angle in the orientation of the buildings can be observed in the southwest.⁵³ Second, the scarcity of public structures unearthed during excavations points to the predominantly residential nature of the zone, with the extravagant homes indicating that it was reserved for the wealthy elites.⁵⁴ Lastly, the dense construction of these affluent homes left little room for anything more

49. Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection*, 114; Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus*, 99.

50. See John 19:28. This refusal on behalf of the chief priests to enter the *Praetorium* forced Pilate to move in and out of the complex repeatedly.

51. John J. Rousseau and Rami Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary* (London: SCM, 2015), 161.

52. The remains of one street were found, and while significantly large, they are on an east-west axis. Avigad believed this street led to Robinson's Arch, adjacent to the Temple Mount. See Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 93–94.

53. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 83.

54. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 83.

than narrow, residential alleyways, making it challenging for a party of two dozen or more people to navigate effectively.⁵⁵

What archaeology is currently unable to provide might be found in the ancient texts as Josephus describes the constricting streets that characterized first-century Jerusalem. Upon breaching the Second Wall during the siege of Jerusalem, the Roman forces were quickly confounded by the narrow winding corridors and, unable to escape in time, suffered heavy losses at the hands of the Jewish rebels.⁵⁶ This all seems to indicate that it would have been difficult for a major thoroughfare to have existed in the Upper City and the idea that the streets were laid out in a uniform grid pattern is conjectural.⁵⁷ This suggests that it would have been challenging, although not impossible, for a crucifixion procession of twenty-five or more people to navigate the cramped residential quarters of the Upper City. However, the narrow winding streets through a primarily residential sector would not be considered a prime location for the public humiliation or demonstration this practice required.⁵⁸

55. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 83.

56. Josephus, *J.W.* 5.336–340. For another look at Josephus's account see Levine, *Jerusalem*, 407. For further attestation to the narrowness of the first-century Jerusalem streets see Gustaf Dalman, *Sacred Sites and Ways; Studies in the Topography of the Gospels*, trans. Paul P. Levertoff (New York: Macmillan, 1935), 276.

57. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 83. Despite this, reconstructions of Jerusalem's streets in a Hippodamian pattern still garner support and even incorporate Avigad's archaeology. See John Wilkinson, "The Streets of Jerusalem" *Levant* 7 (1975): 118–136.

58. With this in mind, it is important to note that there are literary sources (rabbinic and Josephus) indicating the existence of an agora in the Upper City, likely adjacent to Herod's palace. Although there are no archeological findings corroborating these sources, due to the constraints placed on excavations in this part of Jerusalem, it can reasonably be assumed that an agora did in fact exist near this location. If so, such a marketplace would need to be supported by roads sufficiently large enough to facilitate public access. Such roads could possibly guide the execution procession to the Gennath Gate. However, until excavations provide further evidence, the current understanding of the Upper City serves as a poor precinct for the procession to travel through. For further information see Levine, *Jerusalem*, 334. See also, m. *Sheqalim* 8:1; t. *Hullin* 3:23 (ed. Zuckerman, 505) and Josephus, *J.W.* 2.305–306. Additionally, this Upper City agora could serve as a better location for Jesus's trial and condemnation than the Gate of Judgment. The episode of Florus setting up a tribunal is understood best in the context of a market and Gabbatha could refer to a similar structure on the east of Herod's Palace as it stood several meters above the ground level and was the highest point in Jerusalem both geographically and architecturally. See Ruth Amiran and A. Eitan, "Excavations in the Courtyard of the Citadel, Jerusalem, 1968–1969 (Preliminary Report)" *IEJ* 20 (1970): 13; and Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 709. Most importantly, this proposal resolves the previously mentioned issue of the public group's need to traverse through the *Praetorium* to access the Upper City after Jesus's condemnation, and consequently of how they arrive at the Gate of Judgment in the first place, as they would already be inside the city. In essence, the Upper City agora serves as an exceptionally compelling site for the trial of Jesus and a potential starting point for the Via Dolorosa. Unfortunately, it presently lacks any corroborating archaeological evidence.

Once the procession made it out of the Upper City, they would arrive at the Gennath Gate, likely named for its proximity to the gardens in the nearby inactive rock quarry. This would have been the point the western road, leading from Jaffa, and the northern road, coming from Damascus, converged and entered Jerusalem.⁵⁹ During the high feast days such as Passover, this would have been a bustling entry point into the city. The exact nature of the Gennath Gate is difficult to construct as, similar to the dilemma of the Upper City street system, the space is currently occupied by modern buildings. What Avigad's excavations did uncover in area X-2 was W.4205 and W.4214 which were interpreted as part of the Gennath Gate with W.4213, dating slightly later, possibly indicating the beginning of the Second Wall.⁶⁰ The gap between W.4205 and W.4214 is on an east-west axis and therefore would not exit to the gardens but the New City instead. However, the nature of these walls still allows for the possibility of a north-south positioned portal, which would lead to the gardens, and might indicate a similar construction.⁶¹

Regrettably, Avigad's excavation report lacks a specific measurement of the gap between W.4205 and W.4214, making it challenging to determine the width of the Gennath Gate for logistical analysis. However, by examining the photographs provided by Avigad of W.4205, Michael Knowles estimates the Gennath Gate's width to be approximately 4 m.⁶² If this assessment is accurate, then the crucifixion procession, with three men each lashed to a *patibulum*,⁶³ would be exiting the city at the same portal where the pilgrimage crowds from the western and northern roads would be entering, creating a bottleneck in a gate complex only 4 m wide.⁶⁴

One remaining logistical challenge concerning the Upper City Model involves the position of Simon of Cyrene's conscription. The Synoptic Gospels suggest that Simon was recruited near a gate or boundary line of Jerusalem and, at least in the Matthean and Lukan accounts, this event occurs relatively early in the journey.⁶⁵

59. See Figure 2. For further insights on the existence of a northern road parallel to the Second Wall see Taylor, "Golgotha," 187.

60. Regarding W.4213 as the departure of the Second Wall, they admit there is no way to demonstrate this due to very little of the wall being exposed. See Avigad, Geva, and Ariel, *Jewish Quarter Excavations*, 233–234. See also Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 69, and figure 30 on page 50.

61. See Joan Taylor's analysis in footnote 36 above.

62. Michael Knowles, "'Wide Is the Gate and Spacious the Road That Leads to Destruction': Matthew 7.13 in Light of Archaeological Evidence," *JGRChJ* 1 (2000): 195.

63. At this point, it remains uncertain whether Simon carried the *patibulum* for Jesus, and if he did, whether he was tied to it like the other victims might have been.

64. Chapman and Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus*, 285–287.

65. "As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene..." Matt 27:32 NRSV; "They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country..." Mark 15:21 NRSV; "As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country..." Luke 23:26 NRSV. The Gospel of John seems to be adamant that Jesus required no assistance with

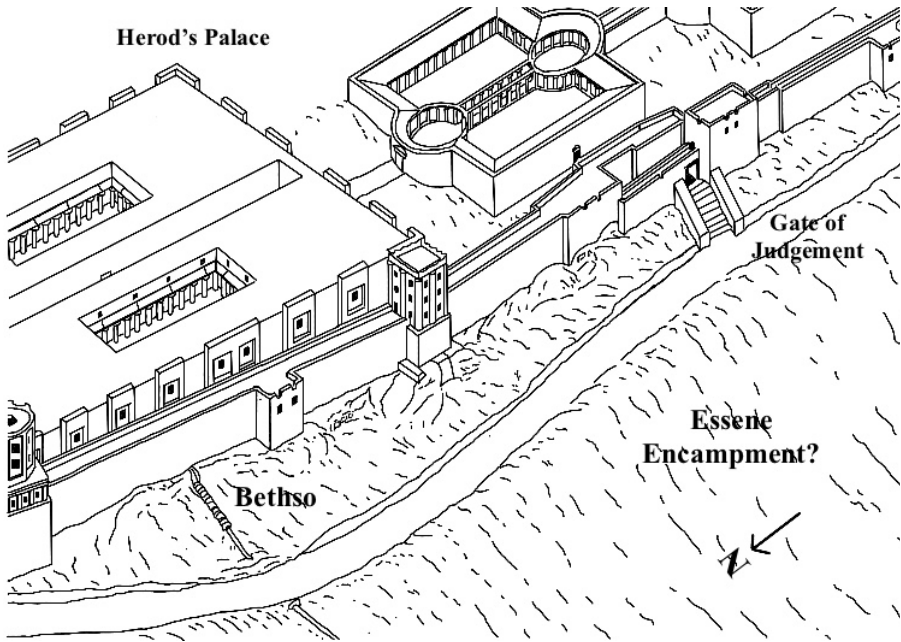


Figure 4: Reconstruction drawing of the place of the palace/Praetorium at the time of Jesus.
Drawing based on Gibson, "The Trial of Jesus," 111.

The Upper City Model allows for only one plausible location where Simon of Cyrene could have been enlisted, namely within the vicinity of the Gennath Gate amidst the associated pilgrimage traffic.⁶⁶ The possibility exists that Simon could have been enlisted into the procession amidst the bustle around the gate, however the true issue lies in the procession's proximity to Golgotha at this point. With Taylor's proposal for the crucifixion site in mind, the requisition of Simon near the Gennath Gate would have occurred within mere meters of the location.⁶⁷ It seems improbable that the entire cortège would have stopped and seized a bystander at this point when the destination was only a stone's throw away.

OUTER CITY MODEL

With these prevalent logistical challenges in the model proposed by many of today's researchers, it is requisite to explore alternative routes for the historical Via Dolorosa. One such path might bypass entering the city entirely, instead following

his burden, "So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself..." John 19:16–17 NRSV. This could be for theological reasons rather than a conflicting recounting of actual events.

66. Gray, "The Search for Jesus' Final Steps," 48.

67. See Figure 2.

the outside of the Hasmonean First Wall in a northerly direction, turning eastward near Herod's three defensive towers, and continuing until it reached Golgotha. The earliest and only suggestion for this route was in the late Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's review of Gibson's book 'The Final Days of Jesus.'⁶⁸ In his assessment of the Upper City Model, Murphy-O'Connor noted, "It would have been much easier for the execution party to leave the palace by the 'Essene Gate' and to go north around the palace in order to reach a point outside the Gennath Gate, where the publicity that deterrent required could be guaranteed."⁶⁹

To further expand upon Murphy-O'Connor's observation, the new route proposed for the execution procession begins at Gibson's Gate of Judgment and heads northward, following a road parallel to the city walls, and passing over Bethso.⁷⁰ Upon intersecting with the western road to Jaffa near Hippicus Tower the procession would turn toward the east. Along this course, the group would pass the other two Herodian defensive towers on the right (Mariamne and Phasael) with Hezekiah's Pool on the left. After passing the pool, this route leads them directly to the "Place of the Skull" on the left, just before the road reaches the Gennath Gate.

Schnabel, a proponent of the Upper City Model due to Luke's mention of Jerusalem citizens witnessing Jesus's walk to Golgotha, alludes to a similar route but with marked differences. According to Schnabel, "Jesus could have been taken through the gateway south of the praetorium where the tribunal had been set up, down into the Valley of Hinnom, and then, along the city walls, north to the quarry northwest of the Gennath Gate ..."⁷¹ However, Schnabel's view of the Upper City Model requires the procession to descend into the Hinnom Valley and, apparently, ascend out of the valley to enter the city. This seems unlikely since Herod's, and later Pilate's, private entrance would have been easily accessible for them and their entourage, rendering the need to traverse steep valleys unnecessary. Especially if this was a common place of public gatherings, accessibility would have been paramount. Moreover, this same route can be walked today in much the same fashion as the Outer City Model, without descending into the Valley Hinnom.⁷²

68. From which I have drawn extensively.

69. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, review of *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, by Shimon Gibson, *RB* (2010): 282–283.

70. See Figure 4. Uncovered during Broshi and Gibson's Western and Southern Wall excavation, Bethso is "believed to be the name associated with a substantial sewerage system of first century date uncovered immediately to the south of the Citadel and extending beneath the medieval Sultan's Pool," Gibson, "The Trial of Jesus," 112. See also Josephus, *J.W.* 5.145; and Broshi and Gibson, "Excavations Along the Western and Southern Walls," 147–155. This could possibly be the destination the runner had in mind for acquiring a sponge on a stick (*xylospongium*) as part of a satirical crucifixion trope in Matt. 27:48.

71. Schnabel, *Jesus in Jerusalem*, 307.

72. See Figure 4. This illustrates the reconstruction of the road parallel to the Hasmonean

A closer examination of the Outer City Model reveals its ability to resolve several logistical problems encountered in the Upper City Model. The challenge of moving the crowd assembled for Jesus's verdict is mitigated, as the procession no longer needs to navigate through the palatial complex or find an alternate way to reenter the city through a different gate. Instead, immediately after Jesus's condemnation, the procession could gather outside the Gate of Judgment and commence the journey to Golgotha, aligning more closely with the timeline presented in the Gospel accounts.⁷³

The concerns associated with navigating through potentially cramped residential areas in the Upper City are alleviated by the Outer City Model, where the procession can travel in a straight line along open roads, easily accommodating a group of twenty-five to thirty-five or more people. The demand for a public display of the condemned men can be better fulfilled in this setting, especially during the upcoming Passover feast when "thousands of Passover pilgrims ... were streaming into the city."⁷⁴ Additionally, since it was Passover, the large crowds that crucifixion processions usually sought to pass by, at least in Jerusalem, would have been congregated around the Temple Mount itself and the long pilgrimage road following the bottom of the Tyropoeon Valley leading from the Pool of Siloam up to the temple. Outside of those two locales, the most likely place to find a large populace would have been the roads surrounding the city, facilitating pilgrimage to the temple from various parts of Judea and the Diaspora.⁷⁵ In contrast, the Upper City might have been relatively desolate compared to the bustling activity around the City of David and Jerusalem's entry points.

The Outer City Model also provides ample opportunities for the crucifixion cortège to encounter Simon of Cyrene along the road as compared to the singular occasion afforded by the Upper City Model around the Gennath Gate.

wall. Notably, there is sufficient space between the edge of the Hinnom Valley (not labeled but near the 'Essene Encampment') and the western Hasmonean wall to accommodate a north-south running road.

73. In each Gospel, little time seems to be wasted between Jesus' condemnation and the actual movement of the procession.

74. Taylor, "Golgotha," 188.

75. As evident in the case of Simon of Cyrene. A Greek city in the province of Cyrenaica, Cyrene was located in northern Africa in eastern Libya. It had a large Jewish community there totaling around 100,000 Jews. For further insights on Simon being a Diaspora Jew on a Passover pilgrimage see Stephanie R. Buckhanon Crowder, *Simon of Cyrene: A Case of Roman Conscription* (New York: Lang, 2002), 85–91. For an opposing view that Simon was a resident of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus's crucifixion see Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection*, 163–165. For additional archaeological finds surrounding Simon and his sons Alexander and Rufus, see Craig A. Evans, "Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene: Assessing the Literary and Archaeological Evidence," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 338–340.

Luke's account provides some information on Simon's origin, mentioning that he "was coming from the country (ἄγρός)," ⁷⁶ suggesting that Simon was likely on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and about to enter the city when he was seized by Jesus's Roman entourage. ⁷⁷ Considering Taylor's assertion that the Gennath Gate served as a "major entry point for Jews coming from the coast, Egypt and Cyrenaica," it is plausible that Simon was traveling along the western road from Jaffa toward the Gennath Gate. ⁷⁸ However, he could just as easily have been on the road adjacent to the Gate of Judgment. Here the procession could have grabbed hold of him as he passed by the monumental steps and gate complex, or he might have been part of the crowd gathered during Jesus's condemnation. Another possibility is that they met Simon at the intersection with the western road near Hippicus Tower, or at any other point along the road since the Synoptic Gospel's indication of a gate or boundary line could have a broader interpretation in the context of traveling outside the city walls. ⁷⁹ In summary, the Outer City Model effectively addresses the logistical challenges presented by the Upper City Model, including providing a more plausible and dynamic scenario for Simon's involvement in the crucifixion procession.

CONCLUSION

With the identification of Herod's Palace on the Western Hill as the *Praetorium* mentioned in the Gospels, understanding of the setting for the trial and condemnation of Jesus of Nazareth changed dramatically. This discovery prompted a reevaluation of the historical Via Dolorosa in light of the new evidence, leading scholars to cautiously suggest a route resembling the Upper City Model.

This Upper City Model, favored by many scholars, offers intriguing possibilities for a historical reconstruction of the Via Dolorosa but encounters significant challenges concerning crowd movement and navigating the narrow residential areas of the Upper City. Despite its merits, the lack of a sufficient public display for a crucifixion procession in a residential zone and the difficulties in efficiently relocating the procession within the city raise doubts about the feasibility of such a route.

On the other hand, the Outer City Model seems to present a more practical and historically plausible approach. By following a road parallel to the Hasmonean First Wall and considering the flow of pilgrimage crowds during the Passover festivities, this model better aligns with the Gospel accounts and acknowledges

76. For an analysis on the Luke's use of 'ἄγρός' see Crowder, *Simon of Cyrene*, 85–91.

77. See footnote 75 above.

78. Taylor, "Golgotha," 187.

79. See footnote 65 above.

the archaeological evidence for the Gate of Judgment and Golgotha. The accessible exit point from the *Praetorium* and the likelihood of encountering Simon of Cyrene in several points along the road lends credibility to this reconstruction of the historical Via Dolorosa.

While it can be difficult to definitively ascertain archeologically the route of the historical Via Dolorosa, the available evidence allows the formulation of different models and to weigh their respective probabilities. Among these, the Outer City Model emerges as a compelling alternative to the Upper City Model, effectively addressing significant logistical and archaeological challenges. However, while resolving many of these challenges, it is necessary to acknowledge that the Outer City Model is just one alternative pathway.

Unfortunately, excavations in the Jewish Quarter and the Armenian Gardens, the modern-day locations of many crucial discussion points in reconstructing the 'Way of the Cross', have been extremely limited and further ventures might not be carried out for decades to come. Should additional research and archeological excavations in these localities come to fruition, they will no doubt continue to impact this discussion and provide further illumination. However, until further research becomes available, the Outer City Model seems to provide a more likely reconstruction of the historical Via Dolorosa and can be a plausible model to inform New Testament scholarship on the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

A PAULINE DRESS CODE OR A ROMAN ANALOGY:

REINTERPRETING PAUL'S DISCOURSE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1–16

NICOLE FRANCIS

Nicole Francis earned a BA in Ancient Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis on the Greek New Testament. She plans to pursue graduate work focusing on the influence of Greco-Roman literature and its impact on the reception of the New Testament and Early Christian texts.

Abstract: Historically, the debate surrounding 1 Corinthians 11 has focused on whether or not Paul is referring to women veiling their heads in church or simply wearing their hair up. This debate roots itself in a nearly universally accepted assumption that Paul is requesting a sort of dress-code standard for praying and prophesying in church. While this has been the dominant reading in scholarship for centuries, there are numerous compelling weaknesses in this interpretation. This paper will explore those weaknesses and provide an alternative reading: When confronted with group conflict, Paul attempts to reason his way through the hierarchical structure he presents by appealing to cultural norms regarding hair and hair coverings. In this way it is not so much Paul outlining a dress code for praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11, but rather appealing to cultural norms in order to rationalize the hierarchy that he presents.

The opening pericope of 1 Corinthians 11 has historically garnered debate. In this pericope, Paul begins by presenting a hierarchical structure that includes God, Christ, men, and women. He follows this with a description of veiling standards and practices for praying and prophesying in church. While it is shameful for men to cover their heads, it is shameful for women not to cover their heads. He then follows this discussion of head coverings by reiterating what his concept of structured gender performance should look like in verses 8–11. Much of the debate surrounding these verses focuses on two topics. The first is the level of

gender oppression present in the verses.¹ The second area of controversy, which some scholars have referred to as a “battleground,”² centers around whether or not Paul is referring to women veiling their heads in church or simply wearing their hair up.³ This second debate roots itself in the assumption that Paul is requesting a sort of dress-code standard for men and women when they are praying and prophesying in church. While this has been the dominant reading in scholarship for centuries, there are numerous compelling weaknesses in this interpretation.

One source of insight when considering Paul’s message in 1 Corinthians 11 is Galatians. In Galatians, Paul addresses two differing groups of people, namely Jews and Gentiles. To reason his way through what their ideal relationship should look like, he appeals to the story of Hagar and Sarah. Considering both these chapters in Galatians and 1 Corinthians gives instructive insight when the rhetorical content is considered. When examining how Paul employs a logical rhetorical pattern in Galatians 4, drawing parallels between Jews and Gentiles with Hagar and Sarah, and considering potentially similar rhetorical pattern in 1 Corinthians 11, where he discusses varying societal standards for men and women regarding head coverings, compelling similarities begin to appear. When confronted with another group conflict between two unknown persons or groups, possibly men and women, Paul attempts to reason his way through the hierarchical structure by appealing to cultural norms regarding hair and hair coverings due to the possibility that he may not have had an obvious scriptural text to draw upon. When contemporary cultural expectations and Pauline rhetorical patterns are considered, 1 Corinthians 11 reads not so much as Paul outlining a dress code for praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11, but rather appealing to cultural norms in order to rationalize the hierarchy that he presents.

THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION

To begin, it is helpful to examine the conversation and consensus that has formed around 1 Corinthians 11. Scholarship has historically interpreted Paul’s discourse as a request for women to veil when praying or prophesying in church. This

1. Stine Birk, *Depicting the Dead: Self-Representation and Commemoration on Roman Sarcophagi with Portraits* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2013) 123; Robin Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” *JAAR* 40 (1972): 283–303.

2. Robin Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited,” *JAAR* 42 (1974): 532.

3. For commentary, see John Barclay, “1 Corinthians,” in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, eds. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1125–1126; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 181–191; William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians*, AB 32 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 258–264.

was the predominant view among early Christian interpreters.⁴ As Dale Martin wrote, "We should give some weight to the evidence of ancient interpreters, who almost unanimously take Paul's words here to refer to veiling and unveiling."⁵ Similar to early interpreters, the majority of modern scholars tend toward this interpretation as well.⁶ This understanding finds its roots in the role that veils played in ancient Roman society. Heavily utilized both in sacred cultic settings and in wedding scenes, veils sent an important message about the wearer.⁷ The understood theory is that Paul was responding to an issue of women not veiling their heads as they were prophesying. Thus, sending an unwanted message about either men or women praying. David Gill argued this interpretation when he wrote,

If women do not have their head covered, then they are seen to shame their head, that is to say their husband. The clue to this may be found at v.10 where Paul talks about the authority (ἐξουσίαν) that is to say the veil, which is worn on the woman's head. The wearing of the veil said something about the wife's position in society: the lack of it at a meeting such as this would have been a poor reflection on her husband. Paul's encouragement to cover the head should be seen as an encouragement to retain some value systems of the secular Roman society.⁸

As discussed above, the common interpretation is that Paul was addressing an issue of women not veiling their heads within the Corinthian church, and he wanted to make clear the expectation. While many scholars interpret Paul's head-covering language to be a request for veiling, some have argued for an alternative interpretation.

Some scholars have argued that Paul is not discussing veiling, but instead is prescribing that women wear their hair up when they are praying and prophesying. Robin Scroggs was one of the first to present this alternative reading that Paul was arguing that "it is against nature for a man to have long hair and a woman to have short hair."⁹ This argument presents the issue that, as Martin wrote, "Corinthian women, it is thought, are letting their hair down, thereby uncovering the top of

4. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.8.2, Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 3.11, Tertullian, *Cor.* 14, and Augustine, *Ep.* 245.

5. Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 233.

6. See Martin's argument in *The Corinthian Body*, 232–240; David Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16" *TynBul* 41 (1990): 65; Cynthia L. Thompson, "Hairstyles, Head-Coverings, and St. Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth," *BA* 51 (1988): 99; Mark Finney, "Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2–16 in its Social Context," *JNTS* 33 (2010): 31–53.

7. See Douglas R. Edwards, *The World of Roman Costume* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 153.

8. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture," 254.

9. Scroggs, "Eschatological Woman," 298.

the head, when prophesying, much like the devotees of Dionysus or other gods and goddesses who inspired prophetic frenzy.”¹⁰ This again finds its foundation in the assumption that women in the Corinthian congregation are not abiding by the social norm of wearing their hair up. This hairstyle choice sends an inaccurate message about the situation in the house church. This explanation may also stem from the idea that, as Donald Engels wrote, “Paul also experienced difficulties with independent women, who prayed and prophesied in church, sometimes even with their heads uncovered — a disturbing practice to someone with Paul’s cultural background.”¹¹ Essentially, there is an alternative theory that women, as a sign of independence, are not putting their hair up. Whether Paul is requesting veiling specifically or for women’s hair to be worn up, both interpretations rely on the assumption that Paul is writing a type of dress-code. This reading presents a number of issues.

Whether one assumes that Paul is asking women to veil or to wear their hair up when they are praying or prophesying in church, the main problem with these interpretations is that they rely on one of two scenarios for Paul to be addressing. The first of these scenarios is that women are neither veiling nor wearing their hair up in church. Paul must then write to the Corinthians to correct this. There are a number of weaknesses in this interpretation to consider. The first is why Paul would need to correct a Gentile audience on such a scandalous practice if it were a commonly understood standard. According to Charles Cosgrove, “Letting down (a woman’s) hair would have been on a par with appearing topless in public.”¹² It can be assumed that if women were doing something on par with appearing topless in public, Paul would need to address it. However, this raises the question: Why on earth would a woman do something on par with appearing topless in public in the house church? Some may claim that independent women may have been seeking to rebel against the status quo, but such an extreme method of rebellion seems unlikely.

Not only would such drastic action be considered shameful, but it is also an indication of a lower status for a woman in society. As Morris Silver wrote,

With respect to distinctive hairstyle and dress, it is well to note that in antiquity visual cues or insignia were offered to signal social status and a capacity to engage in specialized transactions...in Mesopotamia, slaves and freemen were distinguished by their hairstyles.¹³

10. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 233.

11. Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 111.

12. Charles H. Cosgrove, “A Woman’s Unbound Hair in the Greco-Roman World with Special Reference to the Story of the ‘Sinful Woman’ in Luke 7:36–50,” *JBL* 124 (2005): 677.

13. Morris Silver, *Sacred Prostitution in the Ancient Greek World: From Aphrodite to Baubo to Cassandra and Beyond* (Münster: UgaritVerlag, 2019), 248.

Women wore their hair up or covered to differentiate themselves from women of low birth or morals, including freedwomen, slaves, and prostitutes, “as a social indicator rather than a sacred head ornament.”¹⁴ Again, with this context in mind, “some have taken the urge for women to wear veils as Paul ensuring that they were not mistaken for prostitutes.”¹⁵ Once again this assumption begs an important question: Why would a woman knowingly lower her status in society to dress like a prostitute? Prostitution was by no means a desirable status, and there are no compelling reasons as to why a woman would want to seem lower in society than she already was. The assumption that Paul needed to address women casually dressing like prostitutes feels far-fetched.

Another issue with the assumption that Paul is writing a sort of dress-code for his Corinthian audience is why he specifies that this is only necessary when they are προσευχόμενος (praying) or προφητεύων (prophesying) (1 Cor 11:4–5). If Paul is being prescriptive here in response to a concern about the appearance of evil in house churches, why does he only ask that they dress appropriately when praying or prophesying? It would be logical that if his concern were onlookers making assumptions based upon seeing women dressed promiscuously, it would be a concern not only when they are praying and prophesying. With the weaknesses in scenario one of Paul needing to remind Corinthian women how to appropriately dress considered, scenario two will now be considered.

The second scenario is that Paul was prescribing Christians to veil when they prophesy to mirror either a Roman or Jewish practice. In this way, he is not so much responding to an issue as much as he is projecting his ideal worship situation onto the Corinthians. While there are numerous examples of sacred veiling in both Roman and Jewish settings,¹⁶ the question remains why Paul did not use the word for veiling, κάλυμμα, when making this request to the Corinthians.¹⁷ It is also odd for Paul to request women veil in sacred settings in order to match Roman sacred standards when he asks the men not to veil, a common sacred Roman practice.¹⁸

14. Molly M. Lindner, *Portraits of the Vestal Virgins, Priestesses of Ancient Rome* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019), 101.

15. Gill, “Importance of Roman Portraiture,” 251.

16. For examples of women's veiling, see Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture,” 252; Lindner, *Portraits*, 100–103. For discussion of Jewish veiling practices, see Susan J. Wendel and David Miller, eds., *Torah Ethics and Early Christian Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 344.

17. It is interesting here to note that Paul uses this word in 2 Cor 3:13 when discussing the veil that Moses wore. This indicates that Paul was aware of this word and used it in a different letter to the same audience.

18. For examples of men's veiling, see figure 22.8 in Thompson, “Hairstyles, Head-Coverings, and St. Paul,” 99–115; Vanderpool, “Roman Portraiture,” 276; See also figure 1.12 and figure 1.16 in Kelly Olson, *Masculinity and Dress in Roman Antiquity* (New York: Routledge,

So if not requesting veiling for Roman purposes, then might Paul have been requesting this to match Jewish veiling practices? Requesting Gentiles to conform to a Jewish ritual standard of practice feels like a very un-Pauline thing to request when his feelings toward dietary restrictions and circumcision are considered. So, if there are considerable holes in the assumption that Paul is writing to implement a sort of dress standard for the Corinthian congregation, there is an alternative interpretation to be explored. This interpretation finds its footing when 1 Corinthians is read alongside another Pauline epistle, Galatians.

PAUL'S RHETORIC IN GALATIANS 4 AND OTHER EPISTLES

Throughout his epistles, Paul demonstrates numerous techniques of rhetoric.¹⁹ In considering possible rhetorical strategies Paul may be employing in 1 Corinthians 11, it is helpful to compare patterns from another Pauline epistle. These tools include authority and interpretations of Mosaic law, appeals to popular philosophical motifs, shared narratives on cultural decline, instruction on the performance of particular ritual actions, and requests for funds.²⁰ One demonstration of Paul's rhetorical habits is found in Galatians 4. Paul is presented with a group of Jewish and Gentile Christian converts struggling to find proper footing in their relationship with one another. Paul employs a popular scriptural account to compare being born into slavery under the law to being born into freedom by the power of the Spirit through faith in Christ. To illustrate this concept of slavery versus freedom, Paul engages the story of Hagar and Sarah as a comparison. In Galatians 4:2–5:1, Paul presents, “an appeal made to the Galatians’ reason (*logos*) to draw a deductive conclusion from scriptural examples in the light of Christ’s liberating work.”²¹ Paul appeals to a story familiar to his audience to help them grasp the relationship he is outlining in Galatians 4. This was critical because Paul was trying to create a sort of paradigm shift within the community on its views of the Mosaic law. To speak so directly on such a complicated issue, Paul needed strong evidence. Troy Miller writes, “The most likely logical reason for how Paul can so matter-of-factly present this highly charged, dualistic characterization of these two figures, is that his hearers and/or readers share with him a common knowledge of

2017), 30–43.

19. See George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 130.

20. Robyn Faith Walsh, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 38.

21. F. S. Malan, “The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants, Galatians 4:21–5:1,” *Neot* 26 (1992): 425–440.

Jewish traditions on these figures.”²² Paul displays an argumentative outline here where he addresses two groups of people in conflict and metaphorically outlines what their ideal relationship should be by referencing something the audience would be familiar with. Paul is not presenting new material to generate logic but instead utilizes accepted knowledge to sustain his point. He can simply allegorize a recognizable story to defend his position. This allows him to speak candidly because his reasoning is familiar and compelling.

While his appeal to a familiar story is an important element, one interesting aspect of Galatians 4 is that Paul's utilization of this passage does not align with popular contemporary commentaries. One example of such commentaries comes from Philo. As Miller discusses,

Philo's usage of the two figures is dominated by allegory and with them functioning as two types; types that are correlated with personal or mental qualities related directly to the Greek system of education and learning. In light of the other Jewish writings surveyed, Philo's qualitative distinction between the two figures stands in broad continuity with much of the tradition outside the Genesis tradition. Hagar represents the lower entity and Sarah embodies the higher qualities. Though the things that the Philonic Hagar represents are not despised, it is still clear that one figure (Sarah) consistently stands above the other (Hagar) when allegorizing them.²³

This presents an important takeaway that while the characters are familiar, Paul's conclusions about Hagar and Sarah are quite non-traditional. The predominant tradition regarded Hagar as a sort of antagonist, sometimes even as far as to consider her a villain, while Sarah is seen as the hero.²⁴ What Paul is presenting in Galatians 4 is a “distinct innovation within Jewish tradition.”²⁵ This demonstrates that Paul's arguments need not be conventional, but the structure of his reasoning needed to be established. The allegory did not need to be the common interpretation of the time, but one that amplified a specific argument. While Paul “capitalizes on the Galatians' reverence for the law to illustrate his point with a particular history recorded in scripture,”²⁶ he ultimately flips the script to demonstrate how Jews

22. Troy A. Miller, “Surrogate, Slave, and Deviant? ‘Hagar’ in Jewish Interpretive Traditions and Paul's Use of the Figure in Galatians 4:21–31,” in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality: Volume 2: Exegetical Studies*, eds. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, LNTS 392 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 150. For further commentary on Paul's argument here, see Malan, “The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants,” 425–440.

23. Miller, *Surrogate, Slave, and Deviant*, 148.

24. Miller, *Surrogate, Slave, and Deviant*, 148.

25. Miller, *Surrogate, Slave, and Deviant*, 139.

26. Malan, “The Strategy of Two Opposing Covenants,” 428.

and Gentiles should view their relationship. Thus, although Paul is working with common scriptures, it is not necessary for him to employ them in a common way.

Could this not be the case with 1 Corinthians 11? Paul presents a social hierarchy where Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman, and to reason this argument he points to cultural norms of his time. Men do not cover their heads with hair, but women do. For the same reasons we understand these gender differences to exist physically in our culture, socially they should present themselves the same way. Just as a woman's head should be physically covered, she should also in some way be socially covered by a male. Not necessarily a commonly established argument, but beneficial for this specific situation Paul is arguing for.

Galatians 4 is not Paul's only example of allegory. Paul uses several non-scriptural allegories to back up his writings. As Holloway noted, "(some) of these including the *sententia aliunde petita* (lit. 'A sentence taken from somewhere else') will be of particular interest in 1 Corinthians, where Paul makes use of a number of striking quotations, some from Scripture, some not."²⁷ This demonstrates that while Paul does engage with scripture in 1 Corinthians, he also utilizes other resources. These will include both quotations and allegories. One of the more memorable allegories is that of the body of Christ. As Byers wrote, "From the rich linguistic fund of the socio-political discourse of his day, Paul appropriated standard devices from *homonia* or *concordia* rhetoric —most notably the 'body' analogy—in an attempt to salvage a volatile church on the precipice of fragmentation."²⁸ Paul states that "the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!'" (1 Cor 12:21). He then reasons that just as differing body parts cannot claim they are without the need of one another, the members of the body of Christ are also in need of each other. This allegory is impactful because it accounts for something each person has: a body. This method of allegorizing a routine story or idea to reason through a prescribed outcome in a relationship, whether it is with Jews and Gentiles or members of the "body" of Christ, may be exactly what Paul is attempting to do in 1 Corinthians 11:1–16.

27. Paul A. Holloway, "Religious 'Slogans' in 1 Corinthians: Wit, Wisdom, and the Quest for Status in a Roman Colony," *JTS* 72 (2021): 133.

28. Andrew Byers, "The One Body of Shema in 1 Corinthians: An Ecclesiology of Christological Monotheism," *NTS* 62 (2016): 517. For further information on rhetorical practices common during Paul's authorship, see Holloway, "Religious 'Slogans' in 1 Corinthians," 125–142. *Homonia* literally, "oneness of mind," refers to a political ideal that essentially signifies concord with the polis or the achievement of unity against the barbarian. *Concordia* was the ancient Roman goddess of harmony and peace, and was a Greek rhetorical device used to argue for the same results.

HEAD COVERING AND UNCOVERING AS A RHETORICAL DEVICE

Before comparing the rhetorical strategy in 1 Corinthians 11 with that of other Pauline writings, it is important to frame the central claim of the pericope. Paul begins by stating, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you." (1 Cor 11:1–2). The reader is never given any identifying details as to what Paul is referring to here, so the first two verses are not of significant help in identifying the rest of the section. Paul then jumps into a discourse on how Christ is the head of every man followed immediately by the claim that man is the head of every woman. The argument essentially goes:

- i. Christ is to man as
- ii. man is to woman as
- iii. God is to Christ

It seems that Paul is seeking to establish a vertical hierarchy. The hierarchy goes (from top to bottom): God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman. Just as in the body of Christ metaphor, Paul is most likely employing the term "head" allegorically. As Scroggs wrote,

Obviously a metaphorical meaning is intended for the word "head," but which metaphorical meaning is the correct one? The word is ordinarily understood to mean ruler, authority, as is idiomatic to Hebrew and English. In Greek, however, the word "head" does not have that idiomatic meaning. A common metaphorical use of *kephale*, however, is to denote a "source" and it is this meaning that fits. Christ is the source of man and man is the source of woman.²⁹

Since Paul is using the head as an allegory in these first few verses, it is not a far stretch to read the following verses as allegorical as well. Paul would not be the first theologian to utilize the head in this metaphorical sense: "Philo, citing Plato, understood the head to be the body's most divine part, its master."³⁰ *Kephale* certainly carried with it further meanings than just the physical skull and brain. Just as Paul uses the concept of the head allegorically, discussions of its covering, or lack thereof, may also be metaphorical in nature. Instead of Paul dictating a seemingly obvious dress code for a Gentile audience, he rationalized his hierarchical argument through accepted veiling and hairstyle practices of the time.

29. Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 534.

30. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 3.33.184; Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 340.

Some have argued this hierarchical reading to be an inaccurate portrayal of Paul's message on the position of women. While the discussion of Paul's structure here and its impact on gender relations is an important topic of study, this paper will not seek to comment on this particular issue.³¹ Rather, it is important to establish that Paul is seeking to define some form of vertical hierarchy so that his claim is clear. This clear claim is important because it identifies the idea that Paul is seeking to reason through by referencing common hairstyle and veiling practices. There is evidence throughout the Corinthian letter that Paul is aware of the Roman background of his Corinthian audience. As Byers stated,

Paul launches his entire discussion concerning τῶν πνευματικῶν with a reference to the Corinthian Christians' previous experience of pagan religion when they existed in their former social category as ἐθνῆ: 'you know that when you were Gentiles you were enticed and led astray to voiceless idols. Therefore I want to make known to you.'³²

Paul was aware that he was talking to a heavily Romanized congregation. In light of this, it would make sense that utilizing Hebrew scripture as a rationale would not resonate with a pagan audience as it would with a Jewish Christian audience. As Byers wrote, "These Corinthian Christians were inevitably burdened with religious baggage from their pasts."³³ However, commonplace cultural standards would have been a resonating source of logic. The beauty of this theory is that it does not matter whether Paul was discussing veiling in these verses or simply women wearing their hair up. In either case, Paul's utilization of this hair expectation would have effectively reasoned his hierarchical argument. In this way, the structure of his argument goes from the historically accepted model of

- i. Paul presents the κεφαλή (head) hierarchy (1 Cor 11:3)
- ii. Paul prescribes a dress code
- iii. Paul reiterates the gender structure of men above women (1 Cor 11:8–10)

and instead reads as,

- i. Paul presents the κεφαλή (head) hierarchy (1 Cor 11:3)
- ii. Paul reasons this hierarchy through an appeal to cultural norms for head coverings

31. Martin provides an argument for the subjugation of women through this structure in *The Corinthian Body*, 283, while Scroggs provides evidence supporting the opposing perspective in "Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited," 532.

32. Byers, "The One Body," 528.

33. Byers, "The One Body," 528.

iii. Paul reiterates the gender structure of men above women (1 Cor 11:8–10)

This theory relies heavily on the notion that these head-covering practices were widely known and practiced. There are both textual and material pieces of evidence to support this claim. The scenario of veiling will be explored first.

VEILING IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

To begin with the topic of veiling, women veiled themselves predominantly in two settings: sacred cult settings and weddings. While the reasoning behind veiling in both situations contains a surprising amount of similarities, it is valuable to look at each separately. First, veiling in sacred settings was employed for several reasons. Women were often active participants in Roman cults, as Wayne A. Meeks writes, “both in cults that were exclusively or primarily practiced by women and in state or municipal and private cults that appealed to men and women alike. Inscriptions commemorate priestesses in ancient cults of many kinds.”³⁴ Veils were an intricate part of the religious experience of women. As Molly M. Lindner described, “For women, their *pallae* (cloaks) protected their modesty whenever they were in public, including at sacrifices. Covering one’s head showed reverence for the gods, and the Vestals too, pulled their *pallae* over their headdress when sacrificing.”³⁵ Vestal Virgins were not the only sacred women veiling in Corinth. There is evidence that there were thriving cults of Isis, Cybelle, and Jupiter also present.³⁶ Veiling was a common practice for these cults as well as a signal of reverence and respect, most primarily of modesty. Fabric head coverings were a virtue signal in many ways. As Lindner continues, “For non-Vestals, the *vittae* was less specific and signified that (the wearers) were freeborn and women with high morals.”³⁷ A head covering could both indicate a woman’s social status and modest nature.

This need to communicate a woman’s level of virtue publicly was especially relevant in Corinth. Both in antiquity and modernity, Corinth had a reputation for being a “sex-obsessed city with prostitutes freely roaming the streets,”³⁸ with some sources claiming one thousand sacred prostitutes of Aphrodite being present when Paul visited the city.³⁹ While the extent of cultic prostitution is debated, there is iconographic and literary evidence to support the notion that Corinth participated

34. Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 26.

35. Lindner, *Portraits*, 103.

36. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 100.

37. Lindner, *Portraits*, 104.

38. Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture,” 252.

39. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 97.

in cultic prostitution.⁴⁰ The city's close association with Aphrodite may have contributed to this reputation.⁴¹ Whatever the extent, the standard of dress expected in order to not be confused for a cultic prostitute would have arguably been a common piece of information. It is doubtful that Paul would have had to inform women on how to avoid the appearance of one of these prostitutes if hair and head coverings played such a crucial role in this distinction. Further indications of the chaste purposes of the veil are exemplified in its role in wedding ceremonies.

Veils were an intricate and important aspect of Roman wedding ceremonies. As displayed on one Roman sarcophagi, "The marital scene on the right end shows the husband with a portrait and the bride with her face covered by a veil."⁴² The veil was a symbol of a type of boundary. As Martin describes, "Each of these actions (veiling and unveiling) and the words used to describe them symbolize the breaking down of boundaries. The bride unveils herself before the groom and thus submits to his penetrating gaze."⁴³ The purpose for this barrier is based on gender assumptions in ancient Rome. These assumptions include the idea that when it comes to deception, "Women are in particular danger due to the nature of their bodies. They are more vulnerable than men to desire, danger, and pollution. Furthermore, the precarious nature of female physiology renders them a potential locus of danger to the church's body."⁴⁴ It was assumed that women needed extra protection against evil, and this was the protection that a veil provided. Paul even writes to this thought within 1 Corinthians 11 when he states, "It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels." (1 Cor 11:10). Paul cites here the possibility of women being penetrated in the head by angels, and thus needing to cover their heads. Paul here may be referencing this cultural understanding in regard to head coverings to rationalize the hierarchy that he presents. Just as men can pray without being veiled but women need extra protection, men must act as a social boundary protection for women.

This concern of penetration with veiling also alludes to its sexual nature in both a wedding and commonplace scenario. During a wedding, the idea behind veiling and unveiling was as follows:

For ancient Greeks, the veil not only symbolized but actually effected a

40. Silver, *Sacred Prostitution*, 156. For discussions that disagrees with this assessment, see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, GNS 6 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 55–57; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 2–3.

41. See Silver, *Sacred Prostitution*, 69, 157; Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 99.

42. Birk, *Depicting the Dead*, 61.

43. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 233.

44. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 233.

protective barrier guarding the woman's head and, by metonymic transfer, her genitals. For the upper-class, Homeric heroine, the veil functioned like her attendants, shielding her from touch, reproach, and even the gaze of anyone but her husband and immediate family members. To tear off the veils was to invite or symbolize sexual violation.⁴⁵

The act of unveiling was the act of opening oneself up for possible penetration either physically or metaphorically. Women were seen as needing to be protected from these penetrations until the appropriate setting. This may have been another reason that Paul viewed man as the head of woman. If Paul were referring to veiling when he was describing head coverings in chapter 11, the social explanations for this expectation regarding women would have been compelling logic for his hierarchical argument. If we are to assume, however, that Paul is not discussing veiling, the cultural implications of hair being worn up become important. The reading that Paul was referring to hair being styled up for women will now be explored.

HAIRSTYLES IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Hair was not only a fashion statement for women but an important indicator of status and fertility. To begin, "in the protestations by moralists about the 'natural' difference in hairstyles of men and women,"⁴⁶ it was viewed that hair was a natural indicator of gender discrepancies. Hair was highly connected to the notion of fertility. For this reason, it was considered incredibly shameful for a woman to shave her head, something that Paul references later in 1 Corinthians 11:6. It was understood that important fertility elements lay in the fabrics of the hair and that, "the wearing of a shorn or shaven hair by women was a mark of humility or humbling."⁴⁷ Just as a shaved head was seen as shameful, women only wore their hair down in erotic situations. It was the societal expectation that a woman wears her hair up in public places. This is exemplified in two statues of Roman women that are both "exemplifying this diversity (through) two heads relatively close chronologically, but widely divergent stylistically" who are both shown with their hair up.⁴⁸ A survey of much of the Roman art and material culture from the first century will demonstrate a pattern of women wearing their hair up. As one scholar notes,

The typical women's style throughout many centuries was to wear their hair long but to bind it in some way so that it did not hang down loosely.

45. Michael N. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition: A Study in the Oral Art of Homer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 234.

46. Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *HR* 13 (1974): 168.

47. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture," 256.

48. See figures 22.5 and 22.6 in Vanderpool, "Roman Portraiture," 374.

Often this involved plaiting or braiding. Cloth bands, pins, and combs were used to restrain the hair in a chaste and often ornamental way. In antiquity, a woman's unbound hair (and the act of unbinding the hair) often had sexual connotations.⁴⁹

Wearing the hair up was the rule and not the exception. While one could argue that due to the familial setting in the house church or in an effort to demonstrate independence, women may have felt comfortable wearing their hair down. However, as mentioned above, if wearing your hair down is essentially the ancient equivalent of going bare-chested in public, it is unlikely that a large group of women would feel relaxed enough to wear their hair down. Rather, it seems more likely that he is rationalizing his placement of men over women by comparing it to the natural reasons they wear their hair differently. Thus, if the case is that Paul is utilizing this societal norm to project an ideal hierarchy onto the Corinthians, the question then becomes why? Here, the conversation of the Pauline community and its role in Paul's rhetorical goals will be explored.

THE PAULINE GOAL OF COMMUNITY

A major point of concern within Paul's Corinthian epistle is community. Specifically, "factionalism is indisputably the overarching pastoral concern throughout the entire letter."⁵⁰ It seems critical to Paul that these factional issues within the Corinthian community are solved. On top of the factions created through baptism and mealtimes, Paul felt there was an issue regarding gender relations in Corinth. At the base, "what is clear is that Paul was actively engaged in an ongoing struggle, both to obtain authority and to coalesce disparate social actors into a more cohesive unit."⁵¹ If Paul's main concern seems to be surrounding factionalism within this letter to the Corinthians, it seems unlikely that his priority would be how Corinthians are dressing in the house church. Rather, it would seem that a more pressing issue would be that of establishing a community, and a major part of establishing a community is establishing identity.

Part of creating a new community is molding a new sense of identity both as a whole community and as an individual within a community. As Jeremy Punt wrote, "Paul's letters urged the followers of Jesus to take up a new, reformatted identity, not as an abstract ideal, but an identity closely connected to Paul's vision of a new community, establishing a reciprocal relationship between identity

49. Cosgrove, "A Woman's Unbound Hair," 678.

50. Byers, "The One Body," 517.

51. Walsh, *Origins*, 37.

and community.”⁵² While trying to establish a unified community as a whole, as exhibited by his body of Christ analogy, what Paul is seeking to do with this discussion of a hierarchy is clarify individual identity within the community: men and women are different. Just as hairstyles and head covering expectations differ, men and women contrast in this Christian community. This is not the only letter where Paul concerns himself with establishing identity. Back to his letter to the Galatians, Paul’s “reliance upon scriptural argument constituted a very important element in Paul’s efforts to establish a particular identity in Galatians.”⁵³ Paul employs the story of Hagar and Sarah to help establish a specific identity for both Jews and Gentiles. A group that, while having key differences, needed to come together as a whole community. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians, Paul is hoping to help both men and women understand how they can find identity and community in the Christian church in Corinth.

There are two possible reasons Paul would want to address this issue of identity. The first is that there were already present identity issues within the Corinthian community. This is reflected in the Corinthian correspondence. Punt wrote to this when he said, “Identity issues were therefore generally perilous and fraught with danger, as reflected in Paul’s fluctuating fortunes in the Corinthian correspondence encompassing a few years’ interaction.”⁵⁴ If identity was critical in creating a community, and the Corinthian identity was constantly in danger, it would be important for Paul to clarify gender identity roles within his correspondence. The second possibility is that Paul was not responding to a current issue, but instead seeking to prevent a future one. As Punt continues, “Given the volatile and fragile nature of identity in the changing 1st century environment, defining communal identity was a precarious undertaking.”⁵⁵ The Christian community was a recent construction with much of its identity still in the works. Paul may not only have been fixing but also molding his Christian communities. In this way, he would have been a lot less concerned with dressing practices as he would have with clarifying God’s role to man and man’s role to women.

One other piece of evidence to support this notion of community concern is the chapter directly preceding 1 Corinthians 11. As Byers wrote, “In the multivalence of the term ‘one,’ the context suggests that the immediate concern addressed by Paul’s application of oneness here in chapter 10 is not the church’s failure to be

52. Jeremy Punt, “Hermeneutics in Identity Formation: Paul’s Use of Genesis in Galatians 4,” *HTS* 67 (2011): 1.

53. Punt, “Hermeneutics in Identity,” 2.

54. Punt, “Hermeneutics in Identity,” 3.

55. Punt, “Hermeneutics in Identity,” 7.

socially unified but its failure to be socially unique.”⁵⁶ In the chapter right directly preceding 11, Paul is addressing an identity issue. There may have been practices by women in the Corinthian community that concerned Paul, but it seems more likely that these issues were in regard to relations between the genders and not with dressing standards. It seems out of place for Paul to present a hierarchy, briefly discuss dressing standards, and then return to discussing gender relations. It seems more likely that Paul presents the gender structure, logically argues for it, then reiterates once again the structure. Following the discussion in 1 Corinthians 10, it is logical to interpret that Paul would continue his train of thought into chapter 11, further clarifying what it meant to be a Christian for men and for women.

CONCLUSION

Though tradition has assumed Paul to be encouraging a dress-code policy for the Corinthians, there is a more compelling conversation present in the letter. It seems unusual that Paul would need to tell a Roman audience how to dress appropriately for a Roman setting. There are also crucial questions as to why women would have been intentionally lowering their social status to dress as prostitutes when attending their house churches. It seems probable that just as Paul reasoned his way through Galatians 4 with the story of Hagar and Sarah, Paul needed to reason his way through the vertical hierarchy he presented in 1 Corinthians 11. Without being able to rely on Hebrew scripture to justify his stance, he needed to rely on something that would resonate with a Gentile audience. By employing hair expectations as a rationale for his hierarchy, Paul utilizes powerful logic in his efforts to help the Corinthian community understand their identity, especially with regard to expectations for gender relations.

56. Byers, “The One Body,” 526.

TOWARDS ORTHODOX POLITY

EPISCOPAL APOLOGY IN EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA'S *ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY*

CHRIS COX

Chris Cox graduated from BYU in Ancient Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis on the Greek New Testament in April 2023. He is currently a researcher at the BH Roberts Foundation and will begin graduate school in 2024.

Abstract: During the last twenty years Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* has received some examination by scholars as a work of apology. In this paper, I propose that one element of Eusebius' apologetics is a defense of the episcopal polity which existed during his lifetime. This is evident through the priority which the episcopacy is given throughout *Ecclesiastical History*'s narrative, and the authority that Eusebius presumes the episcopate holds from its origin. Additionally, it is possible that groups which Eusebius considered heretical and who rejected the authority of orthodox bishops may have motivated his episcopal emphasis.

Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* is an apology of fourth-century Christian episcopal polity.¹ A study of the writings of Apostolic and Church Fathers show that the organization of the Christian communities was not consistent from congregation to congregation, and it evolved over time as Christianity spread and required greater regulation.² In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius presents a history of Christianity that takes for granted that the polity of the church in his lifetime was ancient.³ His history established a clear narrative that validated the fourth-century

1. In this paper polity is defined as the ways in which Christianity is led and how that leadership is structured. Thus, episcopal polity will be defined as the governance of the church by bishops. Edward LeRoy Long, "Polity, Ecclesiastical," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 262–265.

2. Everett Ferguson, "Bishop," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, eds. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris (New York: Garland, 1999), 183–185.

3. It is not clear whether Eusebius was unaware of the changes the structure of the church had gone through (i.e., he was unconsciously biased), or if he deliberately wrote the structure

church's claim to orthodox polity against groups such as the Donatists who pushed back against the legitimacy of clergy accused of being *traditores*. Eusebius' apologetic intent will be shown through analysis and comparison of Christian leadership in the New Testament, Apostolic Fathers, and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.

EUSEBIUS' *ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY* AS APOLOGY

Over the last few decades, a few scholars have begun to explore the apologetic elements within Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (hereafter *HE*). Arthur Droge stated, "In the *Ecclesiastical History* we encounter Eusebius not only as a historian, but also as an apologist, seeking to defend the truth of his religion against its detractors and competitors on historical grounds."⁴ Droge's study focused on the *HE*'s first book (the history leading up to the establishment of the church) and he argues that it is strongly apologetic against the accusation that Christianity was a novel religion. "Eusebius' point is that while the incarnation may have occurred only a short time ago, Christ, as the eternal Logos, has been active since the beginning. Indeed, it was Christ who was responsible for the creation of the world."⁵ Droge is concerned with enemies outside of Christianity and sees Eusebius as responding to their attacks. While most of his examples come from *HE* book I, Droge observes that Eusebius does not spend much time writing about heretical issues throughout the *HE*.⁶ This does not detract from the hypothesis that Eusebius intended to write apologetic history because the time he spends defending what he considers to be orthodox indicates that there were those who disagreed with his beliefs.

Verdoner argues, much like Droge, that the apologetic elements of book I establish the ancient rather than recent roots of Christendom. She adds that book V and other portions of the history defend Origen and his school as orthodox (which was a growing question in the fourth century).⁷ Unlike Droge, Verdoner considers that the *HE* was written as a response to growing heterodoxy within the Christian movement. Thus, she argues that Eusebius wrote about the church as a unified body which "contrasts sharply with the diversity of the 'heresies' and it thus follows that the church of the *HE* to a large extent is constructed as a mirror-opposite to 'heresy.' This might suggest that the *HE* should be regarded as a defense

of the fourth-century church into the history of Christianity.

4. Arthur J. Droge, "The Apologetic Dimensions of the *Ecclesiastical History*," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 492–493.

5. Droge, "Apologetic Dimensions," 495.

6. Droge, "Apologetic Dimensions," 504.

7. Marie Verdoner, "Transgeneric Crosses: Apologetics in the Church History of Eusebius," in *Three Greek Apologists: Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius = Drei Griechische Apologeten: Origenes, Eusebius und Athanasius*, eds. Anders-Christian Jacobsen and Ulrich Jörg (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), 78.

of 'orthodox' Christianity directed against types of Christianity conceived of as heretic...⁸ Verdoner suggests that it is far more probable that a Christian audience would read the *HE* than non-Christians, so Eusebius was most likely writing to give Christian readers points which they could bolster their own dedication to the faith or defend against attacks which were brought against them.⁹

Most recently Michael Hollerich has observed that Eusebius' *HE* contains apologetic strains, and that, "The *HE* is thus first of all an expression of Eusebius' conviction that the apostolic succession of the bishops is foundational in Christianity."¹⁰ He asserts that Eusebius' extensive use of outside sources and quotations from those sources were used in an apologetic manner to establish the validity of Eusebius' view of God's divine plan.¹¹

These scholars emphasize that Eusebius had the intention of providing an impartial history of Christianity; however, his *HE* served diverse agendas. Despite receiving attention, scholarly recognition of the *HE* functions as an episcopal apology has been limited. This paper proposes an aspect of Eusebius' apologetic approach and identifies his defense of fourth-century episcopal polity. This perspective becomes evident through his consistent emphasis on the episcopacy throughout the narrative, asserting its authority from its inception. It is likely that Eusebius responded to heretical groups that rejected orthodox bishops, which motivated his pronounced emphasis. This underscores his intent to validate the governance of fourth-century Christianity in the face of dissident groups like the Donatists. This exploration uncovers a less-explored facet of Eusebius' work, enriching our understanding of early Christian history and thought.

DEVELOPMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

The New Testament's understanding of polity does not indicate that the earliest Christians had a unified church structure. The word ἐπίσκοπος is found only five times within the New Testament; however, it is most likely only used as a title in Philippians and the pastoral letters.¹² On the other hand, Acts and the catholic

8. Verdoner, "Transgeneric Crosses," 83.

9. Verdoner, "Transgeneric Crosses," 86.

10. Michael Hollerich, *Making Christian History: Eusebius of Caesarea and His Readers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 34, 38–39.

11. Hollerich, "Eusebius," 39.

12. It is a matter of ongoing debate whether Paul meant ἐπίσκοπος as a title here or whether he meant to use it as a generic term (as it appears elsewhere in the New Testament). From my reading of this passage and other ἐπίσκοπος passages in the New Testament, I believe that Paul was writing about a specific office. For a fuller treatment of the possible interpretations of ἐπίσκοπος in Philippians 1:1 see John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 86–89. For a discussion of ἐπίσκοπος in Acts see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of The Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New

epistles use the title *πρεσβύτερος* to designate the leaders of Christian communities. The writings of some of the Apostolic Fathers show some ambiguity between the titles and roles of bishop and elder, but Ignatius of Antioch clearly favors a strong episcopacy.¹³

The Didascalia Apostolorum

Moving forward in time, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (DA) is a Christian text which is generally dated, with much debate, to the third century.¹⁴ Unlike many church order texts, the DA is not primarily focused on liturgies; rather, Stewart-Sykes observes that “[the] DA has a fundamental pastoral interest in dealing with the real challenges of Christian life in the period in which it was written, but... this is largely because of the material which is used in its construction.”¹⁵ Whatever the intention of the author or authors, the DA writes about bishops and presumes their contemporary authority is of ancient origin:

Thus, bishop, you are to teach and to rebuke and to loose by means of forgiveness. And know that your place is that of Almighty God, and that you have received the power to remit sins. For it was to bishops that it was said, ‘All that you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and all that you loose shall be loosed.’ Since you have thus received the power of loosing, be mindful of your life, of your conduct and your words in this existence, that they should be fitting to your place.¹⁶

This excerpt of the DA makes clear that its author considered the apostolic office and the episcopal office to be fundamentally similar—if not the same—as does Eusebius (e.g., *HE* II.1.2). It stands in stark contrast to the New Testament wherein only Peter is said to receive the power of loosing in heaven and earth (Matt. 18:18) and the bishops receive no clear role or responsibilities.

OPPOSING POLITIES

An apology must be a defense against something, and during Eusebius’ lifetime there were two ideologies in particular that he may have considered

York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 678–679.

13. 1 Clem. 42–44; Did. 15:1; Herm. Vis. 13:1; Ign. *Magn.* 12–13; Ign. *Trall.* 2–3, 7; Ign. *Smyrn.* 8.

14. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “Introduction,” in *The Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 3, 49–51.

15. Stewart-Sykes, “Introduction,” 3. See also Georg Schöllgen, “Die literarische Gattung der syrischen Didaskalie,” in *IV Symposium Syriacum: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, eds. H. J. W. Drijvers, et al., OCA 229 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1987), 229.

16. *Did. apost.* 7.2–3.

threatening enough to merit a response: those expressed in the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter and those held by the Donatists. These presented different challenges to the growing church order and were considered very threatening to those who faced them.

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter was one of the texts found at Nag Hammadi. Probably originally written during the second or third centuries C.E., it was still in use during the fourth century. The apocalypse relates a vision given to Peter of the Savior.¹⁷ As a Gnostic writing,¹⁸ it is critical of many of the more proto-orthodox teachings of Christians.¹⁹ In addition to being critical of teachings, the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter also attacks the validity of the leaders and teachers of many communities:

Others will wander from evil words and mysteries that lead people astray. Some who do not understand the mysteries and speak of what they do not understand will boast that the mystery of truth is theirs alone.... Many others, who oppose truth and are messengers of error, will ordain their error and their law against my pure thoughts.... And there are others among those outside our number who call themselves bishops and deacons, as if they have received authority from God, but they bow before the judgment of the leaders. These people are dry canals.²⁰

The writer of this apocalypse did not put much stock in some Christian teachers and leadership. Their language against the bishops and deacons is especially strong and indicates a rejection of the system developing among most Christian communities (i.e., bishop and deacon were among the first titles mentioned among Christian communities, see 1 Timothy 3:1–13). They deny the Ignatian suggestion that the episcopacy should be connected to the apostles or even to Jesus himself.²¹

17. Jan N. Bremmer, "The Suffering Jesus and the Invulnerable Christ in the Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter," in *The Apocalypse of Peter* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2003), 187–200.

18. For a discussion on the use of Gnosticism and Gnostic to describe a set of beliefs in early Christianity, see Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2003), 5–19.

19. Proto-orthodoxy is a term scholar Bart Ehrman uses repeatedly in his work *Lost Christianities: The Battle for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. He uses the term to describe beliefs held by the many Christian communities and which were standardized through creeds and councils. See Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battle for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 185–188.

20. Marvin W. Meyer and Wolf-Peter Funk, eds., "The Revelation of Peter," in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 494–495.

21. Ign. Trall. 7; Ign. Smyrn. 8.

The *DA*'s bold pronouncement that the bishop stood at the head of the church as God does²² is scoffed at in phrase "as if they have received authority from God."

We do not know if Eusebius was familiar with the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter, but this text represents a view held by some Christians in the time of Eusebius. Concerned with proving the antiquity of Christianity and its divine dominance over other religious systems, Eusebius would have been eager to add a defense against alternative Christian voices which challenged the polity that Constantine—and by association, the Roman system—was beginning to accept and adopt. His *HE* was the perfect format to establish that the episcopal polity which he was a part of was the original and apostolic structure of Christianity. As will be demonstrated, Eusebius did so with his emphasis on episcopal elections, successions, and sayings. While the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter is not clearly connected to a specific community, Donatism was a widely attested movement.

Donatism

The threat posed by the Donatists was quite different than that of the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter. The Donatists followed the teachings of Donatus who rejected the validity of sacraments performed by clergy who had complied with the order to participate in sacrifice during the Diocletian persecutions (known as *traditores*). They considered *traditores* who were clergy to be unworthy to return to their offices and broke with the local church when a *traditore* was elected to the bishopric.²³ This led to their rejection of the election of the bishop of Carthage, who they alleged had complied with the Romans, and the election of their own bishop which led to disagreements with neighboring bishops who did not believe that a bishop could be elected without ordination by other bishops. The Donatists then called upon Constantine asking for his intervention in a dispute between their bishop and the other ("orthodox") bishop who challenged their claims.²⁴ While receiving antagonism from local Christians who disagree with their beliefs, the Donatists wrote a letter to Constantine asking that he arbitrate the situation. Mutie describes Constantine as "reluctant to get involved," so he asked the bishop of Rome to lead a church court to decide on the case, and the bishop of Rome (himself an anti-Donatist) found case against them.²⁵ The Donatists being unhappy with

22. *Did. apost.* 7.2–3.

23. W.H.C. Frend, "Donatism," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, eds. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris, (New York: Garland, 1999), 343–46.

24. Jeremiah Mutie, "A Critical Examination of the Church's Reception of Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan of AD 313," *Perichoresis* 19 (2021): 43–44.

25. Mutie, "A Critical Examination," 44; H. A. Drake, "The Impact of Constantine on Christianity," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Emmanuel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 117.

this decision once again appealed to Constantine who then called a more general council at Arles. In this declaration, Constantine made it clear that the council's decision on this matter would be binding upon the entire church.²⁶ While Arles upheld the Roman council's rejection of Donatism, the group continued to exist through the fifth century C.E.

The Donatists would have appeared to be an imminent threat to Eusebius. Their movement was popular enough to survive official Christian and imperial rejection, and their precedent of electing their own bishop was a threat to what Eusebius considered the traditional establishment. This could also explain his emphasis on the bishops throughout the historical narrative. By listing episcopal successions and tying contemporary bishops to their predecessors,²⁷ Eusebius could successfully defend the orthodoxy of his polity against those like the Donatists who challenged the structure without challenging orthodox dogma.

Because of the threat that Donatism would have presented to Eusebius' orthodoxy, one could expect him to explicitly mention it within the *HE*, but this is not the case. The only (oblique) references to the movement are found in *HE* X.5.12–24. Therein Eusebius records two letters that Constantine wrote calling councils to decide the problem raised by the Donatists. In the first letter, Eusebius asserts that Constantine calls the bishop of Rome to decide the matter because the emperor “feel[s] it to be a very serious matter that... the general public should be found persisting in the wrong course as if it were split in two, and the bishops divided among themselves.”²⁸ The second letter, written to Bishop Chrestus of Syracuse, calls for a second council on the same matter because certain individuals “have forgotten both their own salvation and the respect due to their most holy religion, and have not ceased even now to keep alive their private enmities.” Indeed, these people “refuse to accept the decision already reached,” and “the very persons who ought to display brotherly unity and concord are estranged from each other in a way that is disgraceful if not positively sickening.”²⁹

It is clear how Eusebius, through Constantine, feels about Donatism. He considers their ongoing disagreements with the decisions of the first council to be dangerous to Christianity because “they give [non-Christians] a pretext for mockery.”³⁰ It is also evident that Eusebius believed that decisions made by a council of bishops should be binding upon the church. This is indicative of the spiritual power he

26. Drake, “The Impact of Constantine,” 118.

27. E.g., *HE* II.24.1.

28. *HE* X.5.18. Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, ed. Andrew Louth, trans. G. A. Williamson (London: Penguin, 2004). All future English quotations of the *HE* will come from this translation.

29. *HE* X.5.22.

30. *HE* X.5.22.

believed that Constantine held, and indirectly suggests the power bishops held in the fourth century. It is still unclear why he leaves the Donatists unnamed. Perhaps he did not have a name for their movement, or he did not want to give them the dignity of being named. Another possibility is that since this was a contemporary controversy, he assumed that without naming the groups involved his audience would recognize them. It was in this environment of differing opinions about the proper form of church leadership that Eusebius wrote the *HE*.

EUSEBIAN POLITY

Eusebius begins the *HE* by stating:

The chief matters to be dealt with in this work are the following: The lines of succession from the holy apostles, and the periods that have elapsed from our Saviour's time to our own; the many important events recorded in the story of the Church; the outstanding leaders and heroes of that story in the most famous Christian communities; the men of each generation who by preaching or writing were ambassadors of the divine word.³¹

Eusebius states that he will be mentioning a number of different types of individuals throughout his history, but foremost amongst them are those who succeeded the apostles. This suggests the importance with which Eusebius placed the episcopacy (the lines of successions from the apostles) in his crafting of an ecclesiastical history.

The first narrative concerning the episcopacy appears at the beginning of book II. Eusebius recounts that the apostles added Matthias to their numbers, called seven deacons, and that James the Just (Joseph's son and the "brother" of Jesus) "was the first... to be elected to the episcopal throne (τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς θρόνον) of the Jerusalem church."³² This stands in contrast to the account found within the New Testament. First, while an elder named James has a leading role during the Jerusalem council,³³ nowhere is he given the title ἐπίσκοπος. It seems that this James is the person whom Eusebius is referring to as James the Just. During the fourth century, a bishop would have the kind of authority to make the kind of

31. *HE* I.1.1.

32. *HE* II.1.2.

33. James is the one who makes the final decision on the conditions which gentiles must meet to join with the Christians, "Therefore I [James] have reached the decision that we should not trouble those gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from sexual immorality and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every Sabbath in the synagogues" (Acts 15:19–21 NRSV).

decision that James did at the council, so Eusebius seems to attribute the episcopal office to him. This addition to the information from the New Testament clearly shows Eusebius adapting history to fit his conception of polity.

To emphasize the importance of this first episcopal election Eusebius quotes Clement of Alexandria's *Outlines* book VI, "Peter, James, and John, after the Ascension of the Saviour, did not claim pre-eminence because the Saviour had specially honoured them, but chose James the Righteous as Bishop of Jerusalem."³⁴ This text considered the office of the episcopate to be different than that of the apostleship which Jesus had bestowed upon twelve of his followers; however, it is considered important enough that it is worth clarifying that none of the apostles claimed it for themselves. Eusebius' reference to the episcopal throne and this quotation from Clement highlight the value he places on that office. For Eusebius, the importance of the office does not appear late in the first three centuries of Christianity, but it is at its very roots just after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

Θρόνος is used throughout the *HE*, and with few exceptions,³⁵ Eusebius is referring to the episcopal throne (τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς θρόνον). The use of τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς θρόνος to describe the office to which James the Just was chosen by Peter, James, and John suggests Eusebius' belief in the power of the episcopacy: an episcopate sits upon a throne just like a king or judge. Within his history, neither governors, kings, nor emperors (not even Constantine, the imperial patron of Christianity) are mentioned in conjunction with this physical reminder of authority. Through this simple use of throne language, Eusebius reminds his audience just how powerful bishops are in this polity. And when did this polity begin? In the first century with James the Just's ordination under the hands of Peter, James, and John.

Eusebius' clear origin for the episcopal structure of the church contrasts with the New Testament's unclear understanding of Christian leadership where different groups of believers are variously led by elders, bishops, and deacons. Eusebius' addition of James' episcopacy to the information from the New Testament shows Eusebius adapting history to fit his conception of polity.

Episcopal Elections, Successions, and Sayings

In *HE* II.17 Eusebius claims that Philo of Alexandria was not only familiar with the Christian movement but that he also wrote extensively about it. In a work he ascribes to Philo (*On the Contemplative Life or Suppliants*), Eusebius claims that

34. *HE* II.1.3.

35. E.g., *HE* I.2.24 (Quotation of Daniel); *HE* I.3.14 (Quotation of a psalm); *HE* VIII.1.9 (Quotation of a psalm); *HE* X.4.8 (Quotation of Luke); *HE* X.4.44 (Reference to thrones in a temple); *HE* X.5.23 (Generally translated as elders or presbyters, but literally those "of the second throne," τοῦ δευτέρου θρόνου).

Philo wrote “about the comparative status of those entrusted with the ministries of the Church, from the diaconate to the highest and most important office, the episcopate.”³⁶ Eusebius’ belief in episcopal polity is underscored in the passage he attributes to Philo. Just as with the election of James the Just, Eusebius is using first-century texts to support his belief that the episcopacy has always held the highest position (after the apostleship) in the church. By referencing Philo in this way, Eusebius is suggesting that he is a sort of proto-apologist of the Christian faith. This is another example of Eusebian use of history to defend his polity. Not only can he turn to Christian texts to prove the antiquity and orthodoxy of his polity, but even non-Christian Jewish writers like Philo could also be called upon as evidence.

A common feature throughout Eusebius’ narrative are lists of the succession of bishops of some churches (including Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria).³⁷ These lists have been called the “milestones” along his chronology.³⁸ Eusebius seems to think that an important way to demarcate the passage of time from the beginning of the Christian movement is by the one who sat upon notable episcopal thrones. Once again, this emphasizes the role of the bishop in his polity. Roman emperors are mentioned throughout the *HE*, and their reigns were surely more easily identifiable milestones than the succession of bishops, but they do not receive the same list treatment as the episcopates. An example of this is book V.12:

In their time was a noted bishop in Jerusalem who even now is famous almost everywhere—Narcissus, fifteenth in the succession from the time of the siege of the Jews under Hadrian.... After him, as shown by the local succession—lists, came Bishop Cassian, followed by Publius, Maximus, Julian, Gaius, Symmachus, a second Gaius, then another Julian, followed by Capito, Valens, and Dolichian; finally Narcissus, the thirtieth from the apostles in unbroken succession.

Eusebius’ intent is to talk about Bishop Narcissus and to do so he places him in time by referencing Hadrian as well as several of the bishops who preceded Narcissus. This formula is repeated throughout the earlier books to introduce various bishops and to list their successions.

Among the many quotations and references to the works of earlier Christians, Eusebius recorded some writings by bishops. These quotations are used to give his narrative more authority than the credibility bestowed by the non-episcopates

36. *HE* II.17.23. This may be inspired by a reading of Isaiah 60:17 from the Septuagint, which ends with the phrase καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.

37. E.g., *HE* II.24.1; III.14.1; IV.1, 4, 5, 10, 19; V.6, 9, 12; VI.10, 21; VII.2, 28.

38. David J. DeVore, “Genre and Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*: Toward a Focused Debate,” in *Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations*, eds. Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Hellenic Studies, 2013), 33.

he quotes. For instance, Eusebius includes three quotations confirming that Peter and Paul died at the same time. The last of the three is from Bishop Dionysius of Corinth, "For both of them [Peter and Paul] sowed in our Corinth and taught us jointly: in Italy too they taught jointly in the same city, and were martyred at the same time."³⁹ After this quotation, Eusebius explains that "These evidences make the truth of my account [of Peter and Paul's deaths] still more certain."⁴⁰ In Eusebius' mind, the words of another bishop verified the truth of a matter. Similarly, in a list of Christian writers Eusebius includes a number of bishops and then asserts, "In every case writings which show their orthodoxy and unshakeable devotion to the apostolic tradition have come into my hands."⁴¹ This indicates the connection he made between the continuance of the apostolic order and the bishops. Among the many competing voices for what it meant to be a Christian, bishops could be relied on as sources of traditional and orthodox teachings.⁴²

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one of the apologetic elements within Eusebius' *HE* is the defense of his polity. He does this by rewriting the history of Christian polity to begin with the election of a bishop. This contrasts with the unsystematic polity found within the New Testament.⁴³ To support his position, Eusebius began his post-accession history with the election of James the Just as the first bishop of Jerusalem (a position just as honorable as the apostleship). He reminds his readers of episcopal authority by referring to the episcopal throne throughout the *HE*. Eusebius also uses bishops as trustworthy sources of information about Christianity through time. Lastly, he condemns alternate polities such as that found in *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* and Donatism by including letters from Constantine ordering orthodox bishops to address their heresy. Thus, among the

39. *HE* II.25.7. See also *HE* III.23.4; III.31.1–3; IV.24.

40. *HE* II.25.8.

41. *HE* IV.21.1.

42. It is worth noting that this mixed list of bishop and non-bishop Christian writers indicates an Origenian vein of thought in Eusebius' writing. Origen considered the Christian theologian to carry similar if not the same authority to the bishops, and even seems to have considered the bedrock of his authority not to be his episcopacy but his scholasticism. See Hans von Campenhausen, "Church Office in the Time of Origen," in *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, trans. J. A. Baker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 238–264. As an academic descendant of Origen, it is not surprising to find similar thoughts within Eusebius' writing. This is not to say that the episcopacy did not hold special authority in Eusebius' mind, it is evident that office did hold special honors, but rather that the transmission of orthodoxy could be accomplished by both bishop and theologian.

43. *HE* I.1.1; II.1.2.

many reasons for writing an ecclesiastical history, Eusebius emphasized the role of bishops as a purposeful defense of his conception of episcopal.