

PAUL AND SACRIFICE IN CORINTH

PAUL AND SACRIFICE IN CORINTH: RETHINKING PAUL'S VIEWS
ON GENTILE CULTS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 8 AND 10

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LAY ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine Paul's instructions regarding various level of engagement in gentile cults in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. My thesis contributes to a new reading of these two chapters and I argue that 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 deal with two distinct, yet connected, issues. In the former chapter, Paul instructs Christ followers on how they should act when dining in temples dedicated to idols (something he in principle allows); in the latter, he instructs them to avoid all participation at the altar where the sacrifice takes place. By recognizing these two different contexts, Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 become more understandable, coherent, and consistent. In addition, I argue that Paul's instructions should be read within the wider context of Second Temple Judaism and early rabbinic Judaism, and not as evidence that Paul left Judaism.

ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that (1) Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 are coherent and consistent, and (2) that the apostle's instructions does not express his departure from Judaism.

For many years, scholars working on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 have struggled to explain how these two chapters are connected and what Paul's instructions within the two chapters are. I present a new reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 where I argue that these chapters are connected in a coherent way and that Paul deals with two separate, yet connected, contexts in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. In 1 Corinthians 8, he instructs the Corinthian Christ followers that they can take part in the dinners that often followed an animal sacrifice in antiquity, as long as it does not present an issue to another Christ followers. The key reason for this is the social capital at stake, would they not partake in these dinners. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul tells the Christ followers that they cannot participate at the altar when animals are sacrificed. Doing so would be a violation against their exclusive relationship with the god of Israel and Jesus Christ.

Many have read 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 as evidence for Paul's departure from Judaism. I push back against this understanding by placing Paul's instructions in the wider web of Jewish literature from the Second Temple period and the early rabbinic period. By comparing Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 to texts from these time periods, it becomes clear that Paul is part of an ongoing Jewish conversation about how someone could remain faithful to the god of Israel while living in a gentile society.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AGRW</i>	<i>Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook.</i> ed. Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi</i>
ASMA	Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.</i> 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BHGNT	Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament

<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRLA	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Berlin, 1862–
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBNT	Coniectanea Neotestamentica
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
<i>DHAsup</i>	<i>Dialogues d'histoire ancienne supplément</i>
<i>Did</i>	<i>Didaskalia</i>

<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>EC</i>	<i>Early Christianity</i>
EKKNT	Evangelischer-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExAud</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GNS	Good News Studies
<i>GOTR</i>	<i>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>
<i>GRA</i>	<i>Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary. II, North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor.</i> ed. Philip A. Harland. BZNTW 204. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>Hesperia</i>	<i>Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
HTA	Historisch Theologische Auslegung, Neues Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IJRR</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>

<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECH</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian History</i>
<i>JGRChJ</i>	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJMJS</i>	<i>Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRASup</i>	Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Serie
<i>JRCA</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Competition in Antiquity</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JSPL</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters</i>
<i>JSQ</i>	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KD</i>	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>

KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LCS	Library of Classical Studies
LibCL	Library of Classical Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996
NCB	New Century Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTL	New Testament Library
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTR	New Testament Readings
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>Numen</i>	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>

ONTC	Osborne New Testament Commentaries
OTS	Old Testament Studies
<i>PAAJR</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>P. Oxy</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
<i>RRE</i>	<i>Religion in the Roman Empire</i>
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
SAPERE	Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLECL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and Its Literature
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism
<i>SEÅ</i>	<i>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i>
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions

SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPB	Studia Post-Biblica
SPhilo	Studia Philonica
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religions</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>STRev</i>	<i>Sewanee Theological Review</i>
SupVC	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative: Jewish and Christian Traditions
ThH	Théologie Historique
THNZ	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

ZNW *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren
Kirche*

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

I, Martin Sanfridson, declare that this thesis has been researched and written by myself and myself alone.

Introduction

1 Corinthians 8 and 10 and Paul's Relationship to Judaism

In 1 Cor 8:8 Paul writes to the Christ followers in Corinth: “Food will not bring us before God’s judgement; we are neither worse off if we do not eat, nor are we better off if we eat.”¹ This, and the general gist of 1 Corinthians 8, has led several interpreters to ask questions about the apostle’s relationship to Judaism. Trent A. Rogers notes: “There is considerable debate in 1 Cor 8–10 whether Paul essentially reinforces Jewish teaching concerning idolatry or if he shapes early Christian teaching in a direction radically different than Judaism.”² Many scholars opt for the latter alternative and claim that Paul had severed his ties to his native Judaism. Peter J. Tomson remarks on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: “Our text serves as the *locus classicus* for the near-consensus in New Testament scholarship that Paul no longer attached positive significance to the commandments of his Jewish past.”³

The reason why scholars argue that 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 is to be understood this way is that since Paul allows the Corinthians to eat food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) he has taken a decisive step away from Judaism. In his commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ben Witherington makes the following statement: “[1 Corinthians] 8–10 make clear how *far from Judaism Paul had moved* on the matter of food.”⁴ With reference to Paul’s instruction that the Corinthians need not

¹ Unless otherwise noted all translation of New Testament texts are my own and based on NA28.

² Trent A. Rogers, *God and the Idols: Representations of God in 1 Corinthians 8–10*, WUNT II/427 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 205.

³ Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, CRINT 3/1 (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gocrum; Minneapolis, Fortress, 1990), 187.

⁴ Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1995), 199 (my emphasis).

inquire about the origins of the food they buy at the market in 10:25 (μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν), C. K. Barrett writes:

It is clear that only by careful inquiry (ἀνάκρισις) could a Jew satisfy himself on these points [regarding the origins of the meat]; and a quick reading of *Abodah Zarah* suffices to show the repeated investigations διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν that were incumbent upon the devout Jew. *Paul is nowhere more un-Jewish* that in this μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες.⁵

In a similar fashion, Gordon Fee asserts Paul's (supposed) un-Jewishness. Commenting on 1 Cor 10:26, where Paul quotes Ps 23:1 LXX ("for the earth and everything that is in it belongs to the Lord") in order to support his argument that the Corinthians need not ask about the origins of food, Fee argues: "[Paul's use of Ps 23:1 LXX] is *full of irony toward his Jewish heritage*. . . . Apart from Paul's radical statements on circumcision, it is hard to imagine anything more un-Jewish in the apostle than this."⁶ Witherington's, Barrett's, and Fee's reasoning seem to be supported by other ancient Jewish texts roughly contemporary with 1 Corinthians that deal with the eating of food that has come into contact with gentile cults and/or cultic objects.

To mention but a few examples, we clearly see how the rabbis who are recorded in the Mishnah strongly opposed the type of food Paul seemed so lax about. In *m. Avodah Zarah* 2.3, we read: "Flesh that is entering in unto an idol is permitted, but what comes forth is forbidden, for it

⁵ C. K. Barrett, "Things Sacrificed to Idols," *NTS* 11 (1965): 138–53, 146 (my emphasis).

⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 532 (my emphasis). Fee's point is that, whereas Ps 24:1 (= 23:1 LXX) was used by the rabbis in order to bless their food, which was, in Fee's words, "thoroughly investigated" before it was eaten, Paul used the words from the Psalm to justify the eating of all kinds of food, "even those forbidden in his own Jewish heritage." There are a couple of problems with Fee's argument. First, Paul's statements on circumcision are neither radical nor un-Jewish (for a counterargument against the notion that Paul was against circumcision, see my "Are Circumcision and Foreskin Really Nothing? Re-Reading 1 Corinthians 7:19 and Galatians 5:6; 6:15," *SEÁ* 86 [2021]: 130–47). Second, the approach of Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner (*The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 489) is more historical: "Paul's citation of Psalm 24:1 is consistent with the prevalent Jewish understanding of its relevance for the way God's people approach the food that he graciously provides. Paul is thoroughly Jewish and biblical in his understanding that creation is good and that the food we receive has been provided for us by God and should be received with thanksgiving (cf. 1 Cor. 10:30) and with the understanding that food, like everything else in creation, exists to fulfill the purpose God has in mind for it, namely, his glory (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31)."

is as the sacrifices of the dead.”⁷ In the pseudepigraphical work *Joseph and Aseneth*, Joseph refuses to kiss Aseneth due to the fact that her mouth has been in contact with food offered to idols.⁸ As he puts it in the narrative, he cannot kiss someone who “blesses dead and mute idols with her mouth and eats bread of strangling from their table and drinks from their cup of libation” (8:5).⁹ Indeed, Aseneth herself testifies to the defiling nature of food offered to idols in 11:9: “I ate from their sacrifices and my mouth has been defiled from their table.”¹⁰ The *Didache*, a text written with both Jewish and gentile Christ followers in mind, instructs Christ followers that they “make certain to stay away from food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος); for it is the worship of dead gods.”¹¹

Two additional examples will further demonstrate how inconceivable it was to some Jews in Paul’s time to eat food offered to idols. The author(s) of the Community Rule from Qumran does not only forbid members of eating food offered to idols, but prohibits any member of the community to “eat of *any* of their possessions, or drink of accept anything from their hands” (1QS 5.16).¹² According to Josephus, every member of the community strictly followed this rule—even those who the community expelled: “Those who are convicted of serious sins they [the community] expel from the order; and the ejected individual often comes to a most miserable end. For, being bound by their oaths and usages, he is not able to partake of the food of others, and so

⁷ Translation from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

⁸ There has been debate regarding the question if this is a Jewish or Christian text. The majority view today is that it is a Jewish text. Cf. John J. Collins, “*Joseph and Aseneth*: Jewish or Christian?” *JSP* 14 (2005): 97–112.

⁹ My translation, based on the Greek text from Eckhart Reinmuth, ed., *Joseph and Aseneth*, *SAPERE* 15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

¹⁰ My translation.

¹¹ My translation, based on the Greek text from *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed., ed. and trans. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

¹² Translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). The reference to “their” possessions, drink and anything from their hands seems to be a reference to everyone outside the Qumran community, not only gentiles. Cf. Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yahad: A New Paradigm of the Textual Development for The Community Rule*, *STDJ* 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 203.

falls to eating grass and wastes away and dies of starvation.”¹³ Our final example comes from the book of *Jubilees*. In a similar fashion to 1QS, *Jubilees* 22:16 instructs the Jewish reader to “separate from the nations, and do not eat with them.”¹⁴ The issue here, as in 1QS, is not only that Jews should stay away from food offered to idols, but from all food connected with gentiles.

When we read Paul’s seemingly lax statement about eating food connected to gentile cults in 1 Cor 8:8 alongside these texts, it appears as though Witherington, Barrett, Fee, and other like-minded scholars are correct in their remarks on how far Paul has moved away from Judaism.¹⁵ This provides a serious challenge to one of the more recent developments in Pauline studies: the Paul within Judaism school.¹⁶ In short, scholars in the Paul within Judaism school argue that Paul never left Judaism or his Jewish way of life; rather, the apostle remained a faithful Jew. Moreover, he never saw the Jewish law as invalid *per se*—it just did not apply to *gentile* Christ followers—

¹³ *The Jewish War* 2.143 (slightly altered from LCL). In addition to the community’s strict rules regarding what members were allowed to eat, the Damascus Document goes further and forbids members to “sell clean animals or birds, to the gentiles (לגויים) lest they sacrifice them” (CD^a 12.8–9; trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar). For discussions on the Qumran community, and especially the Essene-Qumran hypothesis, see Sidnie White Crawford, *Scribes and Scrolls at Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 269–308; John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

¹⁴ Translation from James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020).

¹⁵ The idea that Paul left Judaism for something else (which scholarship up to recently labelled “Christianity”) has been around almost since the time of Paul himself and can be found in the New Testament. The author of Acts describes how some are spreading a rumour about Paul and that he is teaching Jews to abandon the law of Moses: “And they have heard that you teach all Jews who are living among gentiles to defect from Moses, saying that they should not circumcise their children, not live according to the customs” (Acts 21:21). The elder of the *ekklesia* in Jerusalem tells Paul to prove this rumour to be false by purifying himself along with other four men, in order to show his faithfulness to the Jewish law. This Paul agrees to do. Later, in Acts 25:8 (cf. 28:17), Paul is brought before Festus in Caesarea and some Jews from Jerusalem starts accusing him. Paul answers by saying that he has done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews (τὸν νόμον τῶν Ἰουδαίων), the temple, or Caesar. These two reports in Acts show that there were from an early stage in the Jesus movement those who clearly thought Paul had acted in violation with the Jewish law and encouraged other Jews to do the same. However, it is also evident that this is not the picture the author of Acts agrees with, since he clearly rejects the rumours in Acts 21 and portrays Paul’s defence in 25:8 as something that represents the “true Paul.” According to Acts, Paul lives according to the law (cf. 21:24b). Cf. Karin Hedner Zetterholm, *Jewish Interpretation of the Bible: Ancient and Contemporary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 131; Matthew Thiessen, *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, & Identity in Ancient Judaism & Christianity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 119–20; Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 75.

¹⁶ Even though the Paul within Judaism school has in many ways gone beyond the conclusions of E. P. Sanders’ magisterial work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* published in 1977, and indeed has criticized some of Sanders’ conclusions, this work remains the foundation that set off the Paul within Judaism school.

and he still regarded Judaism as something positive and drew on his Jewish heritage when instructing gentile Christ followers with regards to how their life in the Jesus movement should look.¹⁷ This school has made several contributions to the re-reading of Pauline texts which non-Paul within Judaism scholars often have regarded as decisive texts in their argument that Paul abandoned his native Judaism. Despite this, the Paul within Judaism school has given little

¹⁷ For a selection of the key works produced by the Paul within Judaism school (and readings adjacent to it) see: Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015); Gabriele Boccaccini and Carlos A. Segovia, eds., *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016); Rafael Rodríguez and Matthew Thiessen, eds., *The So-Called Jew in Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016); Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); *idem*, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); *idem*, "Paul's Non-Jews Do Not Become 'Jews,' but Do They Become 'Jewish'?: Reading Romans 2:25–29 within Judaism, Alongside Josephus," *JJMJS* 1 (2014): 26–53; *idem*, "'Callused,' Not 'Hardened': Paul's Revelation of Temporary Protection until All Israel Can Be Healed," in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, LNTS 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 52–73; *idem*, *Reading Paul within Judaism* (Eugene: Cascade: 2017); Paula Fredriksen, "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2," in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 235–60; *eadem*, "Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul's Gospel," *NTS* 56 (2010): 232–52; *eadem*, "The Question of Worship: Gods, Pagans, and the Redemption of Israel," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 175–201; *eadem*, *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); Matthew Thiessen, "Paul's Argument against Gentile Circumcision in Romans 2:17–29," *NovT* 56 (2014): 373–91; *idem*, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); *idem*, "Paul, the Animal Apocalypse, and Abraham's Gentile Seed," in *The Ways that Often Parted: Essays in Honor of Joel Marcus*, ed. Lori Baron, Jill Hicks-Keeton, and Matthew Thiessen, SBLECL 24 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 65–78; Caroline Johnson Hodge, "Olive Trees and Ethnicities: Judeans and Gentiles in Rom. 11:17–24," in *Christians as a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City: Modes of Interaction and Identity Formation in Early Imperial Rome*, ed. Jürgen Zangenberg and Michael Labahn, JSNTSup 243 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 77–89; *eadem*, *If Sons, then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperOne, 2009); Anders Runesson, "Placing Paul: Institutional Structures and Theological Strategy in the World of the Early Christ-Believers," *SEÅ* 80 (2015): 43–67; *idem*, "Particularistic Judaism and Universalistic Christianity? Some Critical Remarks on Terminology and Theology," *JGRChJ* 1 (2000): 120–44; Rafael Rodríguez, *If You Call Yourself a Jew: Reappraising Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Eugene: Cascade, 2014); Matthew V. Novenson, "The Jewish Messiahs, the Pauline Christ, and the Gentile Question," *JBL* 128 (2009): 357–373; *idem*, "Paul's Former Occupation in *Ioudaismos*," in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospels, and Ethics in Paul's Letters*, ed. Mark W. Elliot et al (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 24–39; Kathy Ehrensperger, "'Called to be Saints'—The Identity-Shaping Dimension of Paul's Priestly Discourse in Romans," in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, LNTS 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 90–109; *eadem*, "The Question(s) of Gender: Relocating Paul in Relation to Judaism," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 245–76; *eadem*, *Searching Paul: Conversations with the Jewish Apostle to the Nations*, WUNT 429 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019); William S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (London: T&T Clark, 2008); *idem*, "Reading Paul in Relation to Judaism: Comparison or Contrast?" in *Earliest Christianity within the Boundaries of Judaism: Essays in Honor of Bruce Chilton*, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Craig A. Evans, Jacob Neusner, BRLA 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 120–50; *idem*, *The Nations in the Divine Economy: Paul's Covenantal Hermeneutics and Participation in Christ* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018).

attention to 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 and the challenge it provides to the Paul within Judaism school.¹⁸ This lacuna in the Paul within Judaism reading of Paul is somewhat strange, since, as Peter S. Zaas points out: “Paul’s treatment of the question of whether or not the Corinthians brethren are free to eat meat originating from pagan sacrifices ... is perhaps the most crucial case in point for understanding Paul’s need to promote his audience’s observance of the halakhic requirements for Gentiles.”¹⁹ The question is, then, does 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 provide a challenge to the Paul within Judaism school that bares its Achilles heel; or can we read Paul’s instructions in these two chapters of 1 Corinthians as something that belongs within Judaism? In contrast to Witherington, Barrett, and Fee, I think we can.

The way forward, I propose, lies in understanding the background and demography of the ancient city of Corinth, the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, and a nuanced understanding of animal sacrifice in Greek and Roman antiquity (and how these rituals affect our reading of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10). By paying close attention to these three things, we can (1) solve what has long been a quagmire in Pauline studies, namely the supposed contradictions between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 (see below), and (2) read the apostle’s instructions as something that belongs

¹⁸ Even though Romans and Galatians often are the focus of the Paul within Judaism school, scholars have dealt with parts of 1 Corinthians as well, see David Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews: Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016); Mark D. Nanos, “Paul’s Relationship to Torah in Light of His Strategy ‘to Become Everything to Everyone’ (1 Corinthians 9.19–23),” in *Paul and Judaism: Crosscurrents in Pauline Exegesis and the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Reimund Bieringer and Didier Pollefeyt, LNTS 463 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 106–40; Caroline Johnson Hodge, “Married to an Unbeliever: Households, Hierarchies, and Holiness in 1 Corinthians 7:12–16,” *HTR* (2010): 1–25; *eadem*, “‘Mixed Marriage’ in Early Christianity: Trajectories from Corinth,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Scholwaller, NovTSup 155 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 227–44; Anders Runesson, “Paul’s Rule in All the *Ekklēsiai*,” in *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesiastical Context and Biblical Foundations*, ed. David Rudolph and Joel Willitts (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 214–23. There are, however, to my knowledge only a handful of contributions to the reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, see chapters one and two in Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Corinthians and Philippians within Judaism* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2017); Kathy Ehrensperger, “To Eat or Not to Eat – Is this the Question? Table Disputes in Corinth,” in *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Luzia Sutter Rehman, and Kathy Ehrensperger, LNTS 449 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 114–33.

¹⁹ Peter S. Zaas, “Paul and the Halakhah: Dietary Laws for Gentiles in 1 Corinthians 8–10,” in *Jewish Law Association Studies VII: The Paris Conference Volume*, ed. S. M. Passamaneck and M. Finley (Atlanta: Scholars, 1994), 233–45, 236.

within Judaism and the ongoing debate on how to be faithful to the god of Israel when living in a city dominated by gentile norms, customs, and cults.

I argue that Paul was engaged in something many Jews were at the time, namely the question of how to relate to and fit into a mainly gentile society and not becoming socially ostracised. Furthermore, most likely Paul does not address Jewish Christ followers in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, but gentile ones (cf. 1 Cor 8:7), and he does not apply Jewish dietary laws, or other Jewish laws as seen in 1 Cor 7:18, to *them*. As Zaas notes: “[Paul’s] apostolic vocation forced him to wrestle with the question of the application of the halakhah to the community life of non-Jews.”²⁰ Consequently, 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 say nothing about Paul’s understanding of Jewish food laws as they apply to those they were intended for, i.e., himself and other Jews. In addition, there was no *one* view of food in the Judaism of Paul’s time and there existed many approaches to what Jews could eat and with whom they could eat.²¹ As Karin Hedner Zetterholm points out: “Far from declaring Jewish law null and void, Paul is engaged either in *establishing* a halakah concerning idol food for Jesus-oriented gentiles, or *teaching them an existing* local Corinthian Jewish halakah.”²² Hence, my view is that Paul is trying to navigate the gentile Christ followers’ status as exclusively committed to the god of Israel and to the Jewish Jesus movement on the one hand, and that he is trying to give them instructions that will allow them to continue their daily life

²⁰ Zaas, “Paul and the Halakhah,” 233.

²¹ On Jewish flexibility with regards to Torah, see Anders Runesson, “Entering a Synagogue with Paul: First-Century Torah Observance,” in *Torah Ethics and Early Christian Identity*, ed. David Miller and Susan Wendell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 11–26. With regards to food in particular, see E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 216; *idem*, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 281; David Rudolph, “Paul and the Food Laws: A Reassessment of Romans 14:14, 20,” in *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Carlos A. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 151–81.

²² Karin Hedner Zetterholm, “The Question of Assumptions: Torah Observance in the First Century,” in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 79–103, 99 (emphasis original). Hedner Zetterholm (*ibid*, 96) even notes that Paul’s type of reasoning in 1 Corinthians 8 “bears resemblance to the rabbinic idea of *mar’it ‘ain*, the principle according to which one must refrain from acts that are permitted but inappropriate because they may lead a less knowledgeable Jew to draw false conclusions and cause him or her to do something that is not permitted.”

in Corinth with as little disruption as possible on the other. Therefore, Paul has two interests in mind: the Jewish requirements of the Jesus movement and the demands that came with living in a predominantly gentile society.

Paul was not the only Jew in antiquity that tried to balance these two interests, and to argue that he has left his Jewish way of life behind because he allows his Christ followers to eat food offered to idols is, I think, unwarranted.²³ In addition, if we take into account that Paul is most likely addressing *gentile* Christ followers in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 (something I argue in chapter 3), it is even more problematic to say that Paul had abandoned his Jewish way of life or Judaism as a whole.²⁴ Rather, Paul's instructions were part of a *Jewish* discussion: "From a Jewish-legal point of view, Paul's position is highly intelligible, and it is consistent with both contemporary and subsequent Jewish attitudes toward Gentile observance of the halakhah."²⁵

The Interpretative Crux of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10

Virtually all literature on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 recognise that there are tensions between these two chapters.²⁶ The primary source for these tensions, as most scholars perceive it, is that Paul

²³ Alex T. Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy*, JSNTSup 176 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 154) points out that "it is not at all clear that the scrupulous inquiry about food, supposedly encumbering upon devote Jews, was something prevalent in first-century Diaspora Judaism, or became only the stance of the most zealous Rabbis after the two revolts. Paul's advice might be no more liberal than that of many Diaspora Jews of his time who wished to maintain their participation in the wider community."

²⁴ As Ehrensperger ("Called to be Saints," 106) notes: "That 'the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it' (Ps. 25.1) is not questioned in any way by the setting of the laws that regulate which parts of God's creation are at the disposition of the people of Israel. The impure animals are impure for the covenant people, as is emphasized in an almost mantra-like manner in Leviticus 11: 'it is unclean/impure for you (11.4, 5, 6, 7); 'they are unclean for you' (11.8); 'they are untouchable for you' (11.10–11, 12, 23) etc. As with other purity regulations, these apply to the covenant partner Israel and not to the nations. Gentiles are not required to keep purity laws, particularly not (all of) those that are related to ritual impurity, as these are only relevant for Jews in their relationship with God."

²⁵ Zaas, "Paul and the Halakhah," 237.

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 has been the focus of a number of studies. The more significant works on these two chapters in 1 Corinthians include, Gerd Theissen, "Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth: Soziologische Analyse eines theologischen Streites," *EvT* 35 (1975): 155–72; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief*, NTAbh 15 (Münster Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1982); Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*, SBLDS 68 (Chico:

allows, albeit reluctantly, the Corinthian Christ followers to eat “food offered to idols” (εἰδωλόθυτος) in 1 Corinthians 8. Two chapters later, however, he strictly forbids the Christ followers to eat it—this time expressed as drinking the cup of *daimonia* and partaking of the table of *daimonia* (1 Cor 10:21). Because of the contrasts between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, and due to this supposed contradiction in Paul’s instructions, scholars have offered a plethora of solutions.²⁷ I put forth a reading of Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 that seeks to resolve any tensions between the two chapters. Moreover, I argue that when we pay close attention to the historical context the Corinthian Christ followers would have found themselves in, the tensions others have found are in fact not there. Paul’s instructions are both consistent and coherent. Here, I present a brief outline below of the various views scholars have of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, and

Scholars, 1985; repr. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004); Herman Probst, *Paulus und der Brief: Die Rhetorik des antiken Briefes als Form der paulinischen Korintherkorrespondenz (1 Kor 8–10)*, WUNT II/45 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993); Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8–10 in Its Context*, SCJ 5 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993); Paul D. Gardner, *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8–11:1* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994); Christoph Heil, *Die Ablehnung der Speisegebote durch Paulus: Zur Frage nach der Stellung des Apostels zum Gesetz*, BBB 96 (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1994); Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth*, JSNTSup 169 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*; John Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1*, WUNT II/151 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Richard Lion-Seng Phua, *Idolatry and Authority: A Study of 1 Corinthians 8.1–11.1 in the Light of Jewish Diaspora*, LNTS 299 (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Rogers, *God and the Idols*.

There are also several studies that look into the rhetorical structure of 1 Corinthians, including chapters 8 and 10. Since my focus is on the historical situation and the practice of eating food offered to idols and the Greek and Roman practices of animal sacrifice, and how those practices can inform our reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, I do not engage with the rhetorical structure of the letter. Some of the more important works on this topic include, Wilhelm Wuellner, “Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation,” in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken, ThH 53 (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 177–88; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Rhetorical situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 386–403; John Fotopoulos, “The Rhetorical Situation, Arrangement, and Argumentation of 1 Corinthians 8:1–13: Insights into Paul’s Instructions of Idol-Food in Greco-Roman Context,” *GOTR* 47 (2002): 165–98; *idem*, “Arguments Concerning Food Offered to Idols: Corinthian Quotations and Pauline Refutations in a Rhetorical ‘Partitio’ (1 Corinthians 8:1–9),” *CBQ* 67 (2005): 611–31; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*; Probst, *Paulus und der Brief*. Joop F. M. Smit, “The Rhetorical Disposition of First Corinthians 8:7–9:27,” *CBQ* 59 (1997): 476–91.

²⁷ I will explore these under the next heading.

then offer a concise sketch of how my proposed reading both resolves many of the tensions others have perceived and differs from the majority of scholarship on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

Gregory W. Dawes perfectly catches the conundrum that faces the interpreter of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:

For many years chaps. 8 and 10 of 1 Corinthians have posed difficulties for interpreters. The principal difficulty has been that of finding a consistent teaching on the issue of ‘food offered to idols’ (8:1). At first sight, 1 Cor 8:7–13 would seem to imply that the eating of food offered to idols is itself a morally neutral act which should be avoided only because of the effect it may have on others. This position seems to be repeated in 10:23–11:1. Yet chap. 10 also contains a passionate denunciation of idolatry, and 10:14–22 suggests that eating food offered to idols is quite simply unacceptable.²⁸

Hence, the tension that arises from the contrast in Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8, and what he later writes in chapter 10, is the key in why these two chapters have presented scholars with an interpretative dilemma. The most common solutions are as follows.

Johannes Weiss proposed one solution to the tensions between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 in the early 1900s.²⁹ He suggested that the two chapters came from two different letters and that someone other than Paul joined together these two letters, which in turn led to the appearance that the apostle contradicts himself.³⁰ The predominant reason as to why some have suggested that 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 is made up of more than one letter is the disruptive nature of 10:1–22.³¹ Indeed, for Weiss the crux lay in Paul’s severe tone in 10:1–22 and the more lax, allowing tone in chapter 8

²⁸ Gregory W. Dawes, “The Danger of Idolatry: First Corinthians 8:7–13,” *CBQ* 58 (1996): 82–98, 82.

²⁹ Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, KEK 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910). Several scholars have followed Weiss, see, *inter alia*, Wolfgang Schenk, “Der 1. Korintherbrief als Briefsammlung,” *ZNW* 60 (1969): 219–63; Robert Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*, AGJU 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 23–27; Walter Schmitals, “Die Korintherbriefe als Briefsammlung,” *ZNW* 64 (1973): 263–88; L. L. Welborn, *An End to Enmity: Paul and the “Wrongdoer” of Second Corinthians* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 400; Khiok-Khng Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for a Chinese, Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic*, BIS 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

³⁰ Cf. David R. Hall (*The Unity of the Corinthian Correspondence*, JSNTSup 251 [London: T&T Clark, 2003], 46): “It is often asserted that 8.1–13 and 10.1–22 must belong to different letters because they present two inconsistent points of view.”

³¹ Cf. Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 149.

and 10:23–11:1.³² Even though the suggestion that 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 consists of more than one letter would provide us with a neat solution to the problem, scholars have, by and large, abandoned this suggestion and now view 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 as one, integral, and cohesive unit, and that these chapters of 1 Corinthians were meant to be read as such in its original context.³³ With that approach, however, comes the need to explain Paul’s seemingly inconsistent instructions in other ways.³⁴

Fee, who has written one of the most influential commentaries on 1 Corinthians, comments on how most scholars up to the publication of his own commentary in 1987 have understood Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: “For centuries the answer was that Paul is responding to an internal problem in Corinth between the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ over the question of marketplace food, since much of that food would have been previously offered in sacrifice to pagan deities.”³⁵

³² Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 212.

³³ Cf. Hall, *The Unity of the Corinthian Correspondence*; Kenneth E. Bailey, “The Structure of 1 Corinthians and Paul’s Theological Method with Special Reference to 4:17,” *NovT* 25 (1983): 152–81; Helmut Merklein, “Die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Korintherbriefes,” *ZNW* 75 (1984): 153–83.

³⁴ Mitchell (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 1) argues that “1 Corinthians is a single letter of unitary composition which contains a deliberative argument persuading the Christian community at Corinth to become reunified.” There are a couple of things to note when it comes to ancient letter writing in general, and the writing of 1 Corinthians in particular. First, even though I hold that Paul was the author of 1 Corinthians and that it was written as one, coherent text, I do not suggest that Paul himself wrote the text of 1 Corinthians, nor that he did so in one sitting. Second, Paul used a scribe to write his letters, and Paul was not the only author of his letters but co-authored some of them (1 Thess 1:1). With regards to 1 Corinthians, it is clear from 16:21 that Paul used a scribe to write down his letter, and the opening reference to Sosthenes in 1:1 suggests the possibility of a co-authored letter. However, 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 seems to be a part where Paul’s voice is the dominant one due to the several “I” references and the examples in 1 Corinthians 9, in which Paul only refers to himself as an example, not Sosthenes. Third, even though Paul used a scribe when composing his letters, and scribes worked within a spectrum where they did everything from merely transcribing what the author/sender said to composing the letter in the name of the sender, it is most likely that Paul’s letters contain his own voice and words, which the scribe wrote down. Ernest R. Richards (*Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004], 92) points out four reasons for this, of which I mention three: 1) Scribes most commonly did not compose letters in the name of the sender; 2) when the sender had something important to convey, he/she would make certain to have a large degree of control of what the scribe wrote; 3) composing a letter in someone else’s name was often used to deceive the recipient(s). In addition, even if Paul’s scribe added some material to 1 Corinthians, it is plausible that Paul himself still approved of the scribe’s addition, and that the addition therefore was in line with what Paul himself wanted to say. On the topic of Paul as a letter writer, see Ernest R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT II/42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*, GNS 41 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995); M. Luther Stirewalt, Jr., *Paul: The Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, JSNTSup 23 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

³⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 395.

According to this reading, Paul is trying to negotiate between the “weak” (who think that eating food offered to idols is tantamount to idolatry) and the “strong” (who eat food offered to idols with no scruples at all).³⁶ In 1 Corinthians 8 he urges the “strong” not to eat since it will hurt the “weak,” and in chapter 10 he agrees with the “weak” that eating food offered to idols in temples is idolatry and therefore strictly forbidden.³⁷ As Hans Conzelmann formulates this view:

Die Argumentation des Paulus scheint zu schwanken: In Kap. 8 und 10^{23–111} stellt er sich grundsätzlich auf die Seite der „Starken“: Das Opferfleisch ist ungefährlich, kann also gegessen werden. Die Grenze der Freiheit wird nicht durch das Fleisch gezogen, sondern durch das Gewissen, die Bindung an den „schwachen“ Bruder. Die starken werden ermahnt. In 10^{1–22} dagegen scheint Paulus im Sinne der Schwachen zu votieren. Das Essen ist gefährlich. Alle werden gewarnt.³⁸

There are primarily two weaknesses with this reading. First, there are no “strong” and “weak” parties in Corinth. Even though Paul refers to some Corinthians as “weak” (ἀσθενής) he does not refer to them as one, coherent group of weak members. More importantly, however, is the fact that, as Andreas Lindemann points out, “das Stichwort ‘Starke’ kommt überhaupt nicht vor.”³⁹ Second, even though cultic language is perhaps more present in 1 Cor 10:14–22, it is problematic to say that Paul addresses two very different contexts in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22 since

³⁶ Scholars differ on what aspects of the Corinthian Christ followers are “weak” and “strong.” Most, however, view these two categories as linked to either socio-economic status or the Christ followers’ belief in the god of Israel. I will discuss the notion that there were “strong” and “weak” members in the *ekklēsia* and what implications these two potential groups might have on 1 Corinthians 8 further in chapter 3. For a review of the most common scholarly proposals, see Volker Gäckle, *Die Starken und die Schwachen in Korinth und in Rom*, WUNT II/200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 3–22.

³⁷ This reading (and slight variations of it) is supported by F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1971), 78–102; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed., BNTC (London: A&C Black, 1971) 188–238; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *1 Corinthians*, DBC (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 80–83, 104–05; Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, THNZ 7 (Leipzig: Evangelische, 1996), 178–79, 234; Friedrich Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, NTD 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 110–11, 128–29; Christophe Senft, *La première épître de Saint-Paul aux Corinthiens*, CNT 7 (Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1979) 112–13, 134–35.

³⁸ Hans Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 11th ed., KEK 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 162.

³⁹ Andreas Lindemann, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, HNT 9/1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 186. It should also be noted that even though Paul refers to weak members, it is their consciousness (συνείδησις) that is weak with regard to the question of eating food offered to idols, and that Paul does not say anything about their overall role or status in the *ekklēsia*. I discuss the possible meanings of συνείδησις, and my reasons for translating it as “consciousness,” in chapter 3.

he clearly envisions a cultic setting also in 1 Cor 8:10 by stating that the Corinthians are eating food offered to idols “while reclining in idol temples (*ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον*).”

Fee himself offers another reading of 1 Cor 8:1–11:1. He argues that in 1 Cor 8:1–13:

Paul is dealing primarily with the eating of sacrificial food at the temple itself in the presence of the idol-demon. Furthermore, Paul’s answer best makes sense if this practice is something that the Corinthians, in their letter to Paul, are arguing for as a ‘right’. This means, further, that the prohibition in 10,14–22, rather than a digression, is in fact the main point, to which the whole argument of 8,1–10,13 has been leading. The question of marketplace food is then taken up after the fact as another issue altogether.⁴⁰

Consequently, Fee’s reading differs from the previous ones in predominantly two ways: (1) he sees no “weak” and “strong” factions which Paul is trying to reconcile; (2) the primary problem Paul is addressing is that of eating sacrificial food *in temples*. Fee presents a reading that seeks to seriously take into account the different settings and contexts of the situations Paul speaks into. As such his reading is a step forward in further nuancing and getting to grips with Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Many scholars have adopted the basics of Fee’s proposed reading; hence, this reading presents one of the most important contributions to the scholarship on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 after the late 1980s.⁴¹ This, however, does not mean that everyone is convinced by Fee’s proposed reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

Bruce N. Fisk critiques Fee’s reading on several accounts. “One of the greatest obstacles to Fee’s interpretation,” Fisk notes, “is its inability to explain Paul’s toleration in chap. 8 of an activity declared idolatrous in chap. 10. In stark contrast to the warnings in 10:1–22 about lapsing into idolatry (10:7, 14, 20–22), chap. 8 implies that some Christians can eat idol meat with not

⁴⁰ Gordon D. Fee, “Εἰδωλόθυστα once Again: An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8–10,” *Bib* 61 (1980): 172–97, 178–79.

⁴¹ Fee has composed a list on the reception of his reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 in the revised version of his 1987 commentary on 1 Corinthians, see Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 400–01.

transgression.”⁴² In other words, even though Fee’s reading is a step forward vis-à-vis what went before in that it further nuances Paul’s instructions, it still does not solve the main crux, namely why does Paul give seemingly different instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10? If the problem in these two chapters in 1 Corinthians is the eating of food offered to idols, it seems strange that Paul would first, at least in principle, allow the Corinthian Christ followers to eat such food only to then forbid it without exception. Hence, Fee’s argument that Paul discusses the eating of food offered to idols throughout 1 Cor 8:1–10:22 does not stand up to scrutiny.

Some scholars have proposed a solution where 1 Corinthians 8 is directed to eating food offered to idols in social contexts, but where there would be no overtones of cultic participation or worship, and that in 1 Corinthians 10 Paul turns his attention to meals that would be more strongly connected to cultic activities. For example, Wendell Lee Willis argues that the meals the Corinthian Christ followers attended were mainly social events and that they did not have cultic overtones.⁴³ The issue with such an approach, however, is that it does not take into account the fact that such a neat division is impossible to impose on ancient meals and gatherings. As Alex T. Cheung puts it: “It is anachronistic to argue that social events and religious events could be tidily separated in the Greco-Roman world to the same extent that they can be in modern Western world. One must not think in terms of ‘either–or’, but ‘both–and’.”⁴⁴ If both settings Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 would have had *both* social and cultic significance, it becomes impossible to

⁴² Bruce N. Fisk, “Eating Meat Offered to Idols: Corinthian Behavior and Pauline Response in 1 Corinthians 8–10 (A Response to Gordon Fee),” *TrinJ* 10 (1989): 49–70, 59.

⁴³ Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*. I critique this position further in the final chapter of the thesis. For the argument that Paul allowed “social” meals but proscribed “cultic” ones, see Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 209; John C. Brunt, “Love, Freedom, and Moral Responsibility: The Contribution of 1 Cor 8–10 to an Understanding of Paul’s Ethical Thinking,” *SBLSP* 20 (1981): 19–33; Hans Freiherr von Soden, “Sakrament und Ethik bei Paulus. Zur Frage der literarischen und theologischen Einheitlichkeit von 1. Kor. 8–10,” in *Das Paulusbild in der neueren deutschen Forschung*, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, Wege der Forschung 24 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 338–79.

⁴⁴ Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 37.

argue that the setting in 1 Corinthians 8 is social, and therefore Paul allows for the eating of idol food, whereas the setting in 1 Corinthians 10 is cultic, and participation in those kinds of meals Paul strictly forbids.

In light of these difficulties of how we are best to understand Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, my reading seeks to establish the various contexts with which Paul is concerned in order to demonstrate that his reasoning throughout the passage is both consistent and coherent. Typically, most interpreters see two contexts about which Paul speaks: in 1 Cor 8:1–13 and 10:14–22, he speaks about the eating of food offered to idols; in 1 Cor 10:23–33 (and verses 25–29 in particular), he speaks about buying meat from the market and eating in peoples' homes. In contrast, I argue that Paul envisions *three* contexts: in 1 Corinthians 8, he deals with the eating of food offered to idols in temples dedicated to idols (*ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον*, 8:10); second, in 10:14–22, he is concerned with those Christ followers who partake in the sacrifices made to the deities of gentile cults; finally, in 10:25–29, Paul discusses the buying of meat in the market and how Christ followers should relate to the food that is set before them when they are invited to dine with those who are not members of the *ekklēsia*.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ My study is not the first to suggest that Paul is discussing something else than the mere eating of food offered to idols in 1 Cor 10:14–22. In his monograph on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, Derek Newton also comes to a reading that is similar to mine vis-à-vis 1 Cor 10:14–22. However, with regards to the study of the Greco-Roman context of 1 Corinthians and in our reading of the whole passage of 1 Cor 8:1–11:1, I differ from Newton in two significant ways. First, whereas I argue that Paul allows the Corinthian Christ followers to eat food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8 since by not doing so they would have jeopardised their social place in the city, Newton takes a different view. He states: "A close reading of 1 Corinthians 8, however, does reveal not Paul's allowance of eating in temples or even his grudging toleration of it but rather, I contend, his probable rejection of it" (*Deity and Diet*, 312). Second, Newton's discussion of the Greco-Roman context deals with a multitude of aspects that could have affected Paul's and the Corinthians' understanding of the situations Paul describes in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 (e.g., the archaeological evidence for various cults present in Paul's time and the significance of images and food). Even though I agree that in order to understand 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, we must pay close attention to the surrounding context, I find that Newton's study of the context is too extensive and that his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, although informed by his study of the context, in the end gets too little space in his study. In addition to the lengthy research of the context, Newton has a c. 40 pages long chapter on a contemporary case-study, where he studies the Torajanese people of south Sulawesi, Indonesia, that does not add anything in terms of how we can better understand 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. In contrast to Newton, I focus mainly on the practices of Greek and Roman animal sacrifice (something he also takes up, but to a lesser extent), since I think that is the most important context that will help us gain a better and more nuanced

By introducing the argument that 1 Corinthians 8–10:22 is a discussion about two separate, yet connected, contexts, I resolve several of the tensions between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 previous scholarship have not.⁴⁶ In short, I argue that in 1 Corinthians 8 Paul allows the Corinthians to eat food offered to idols since that food does not do any damage and the food itself is not problematic. However, Paul cautions the Christ followers that they should not eat such food if it causes another *ekklēsia* member to eat the same food as though it was really tainted by the rites of sacrifice (1 Cor 8:7). But in principle, Paul has no problem with εἰδωλόθυτος. Later, in 1 Cor 10:14–22, Paul turns his attention to what he deems to be idolatry (φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας, 10:14). Here, Paul is no longer concerned with the eating of food offered to idols; rather, he is concerned that some Corinthian Christ followers are participating in the sacrifices—and the rituals that takes place during the sacrifice *before* the food is served. This, Paul vehemently prohibits in 10:21. The problem that has haunted so many interpretations of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, namely that Paul seems to contradict himself, is, I argue, resolved by my reading of the two chapters. Simply put, what Paul allows in 1 Corinthians 8 is not the same scenario as the one he prohibits in 1 Corinthians 10.

understanding of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Moreover, my research into Greek and Roman animal sacrifice takes into account the very latest research in the field; something Newton could not do given that he published his book in 1998.

In addition to Newton's monograph, there has, to my knowledge, been no other book-length study that argues the case that 1 Cor 10:14–22 is concerned with the Corinthian Christ followers being involved in the ritual performance of sacrifices in gentile cults. One can find brief suggestions that Paul is speaking about something else than just eating in 10:14–22 and this "something else" would constitute idolatry. Cf. David G. Horrell, "Theological Principle or Christological Praxis? Pauline Ethics in 1 Corinthians 8.1–11.1," *JSNT* 67 (1997): 83–114; Peder Borgen, "'Yes,' 'No,' 'How Far?': The participation of Jews and Christians in Pagan Cults," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (London: T&T Clark, 1994), 30–59; Fisk, "Eating Meat Offered to Idols," 63.

⁴⁶ Some scholars, aware of the contradictions between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, suggest that Paul must be addressing two different contexts. In the end, however, most, if not all, are unable to find a credible solution to the problem and reverts to the common suggestion that Paul discusses the eating of food offered to idols in both chapters. For example, Lion-Seng Phua (*Idolatry and Authority*, 152–53) comments: "Paul's statement in [1 Corinthians] vv. 20b and 21b suggests that the 'strong' have participated in some form of pagan sacrifices," however, he then goes on to say, "the 'strong', by *eating idol-meat* in the pagan temple, are in fact committing acts of idolatry which turn them into partners with 'demons'" (my emphasis).

Methodology and Approach

I have noted above that I read Paul as a Jew whose commitment to the Jesus movement and conviction that Jesus from Nazareth was God’s messiah did not lead him to abandon or oppose his native Judaism. This means reading Paul as drawing on his Jewish background and world view when he instructed his gentile Christ followers with regards to how they should live, behave, and act as members of a Jewish movement.⁴⁷ As such, I hold that Paul is best understood when we acknowledge and appreciate his Jewish nature and how this influenced his teaching, thinking, and construction of the world. Magnus Zetterholm comments on the impact reading Paul within Judaism has on our quest for how to understand the apostle to the gentiles: “It increases the complexity, and forces us to think in new, innovative ways. It leads to quite interesting new results in a discipline that has long been dominated by one fundamental perspective—the opposition between Paul and Judaism,” he continues by stating that “from historical and methodological considerations, this radical perspective on Paul—Paul within Judaism—is in great need of further examination.”⁴⁸ By reading Paul *within* Judaism I argue that Jewish texts written before, during, and after Paul’s time present the best comparative set of texts if we want to understand Paul better. But this does not mean that one must align Paul’s writings with these texts in the sense that if Paul says one thing in his letters, one must be able to find that very thing in other Jewish texts.⁴⁹ Just

⁴⁷ Mark D. Nanos (“Introduction,” in *Paul Within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015], 1–29, 9) articulates what perhaps is the most defining characteristic of the Paul within Judaism approach to Paul: “Research is undertaken with the assumption that the writing and community building of the apostle Paul took place *within* late Second Temple Judaism, *within* which he remained a representative after his change of conviction about Jesus being the Messiah (Christ)” (emphasis original). See also Magnus Zetterholm, “Paul within Judaism: The State of the Questions,” in *Paul Within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 31–51, 47–51.

⁴⁸ Zetterholm, “Paul within Judaism,” 51.

⁴⁹ Gabriele Boccaccini (“Introduction: The Three Paths of Salvation of Paul the Jew,” in *Paul the Jew: Rereading the Apostle as a Figure of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Carlos A. Segovia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016], 1–29, 3) reminds us: “In order to reclaim the Jewishness of Paul, we do not have to prove that he was a Jew like everybody else, or that he was not an original thinker.” Thus, Paul’s approach to and thinking about Judaism and

like other Jewish writers of his time, Paul applied his Jewish way of thinking to specific situations that led him to articulate himself in a distinctive way.

My methodological approach to the text of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 aligns with the historical-critical method of reading biblical texts.⁵⁰ Therefore, I am mainly interested in better understanding the context that most plausibly influenced Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. With regards to the specific instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, I focus my attention on the Roman colony of Corinth, the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, and Greek and Roman rituals of animal sacrifice in chapters one and two. The reason for this focus is that I hold that if one gains a clearer picture of these aspects—and, hence, the historical situation Paul is writing into—one can also gain a more historically nuanced understanding of the *Sitz im Leben* of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Therefore, my methodological approach to 1 Corinthians, as implied in the name historical-critical, is to critically assess the historical situations that had the most impact on Paul's instructions in chapters 8 and 10 of the letter.⁵¹

The strength in using this method is that it drives the scholar to critically evaluate the factors behind what he or she reads in any given text, and so come to and present a historically

his own Jewishness should not be streamlined to fit with some kind of “mainstream” Judaism of the first century CE. Rather, Paul's own relationship to Judaism and his Jewishness must be allowed to shine through and should not be conformed to what other Jews thought or wrote during the Second Temple period. This does not mean that Paul was un-Jewish even if we find something in Paul's thinking that is unheard of in the Judaism of his day. Boccaccini (*ibid*) continues: “To claim that finding any idea in Paul that is unparalleled in other Jewish authors makes Paul ‘non-Jewish’ would lead to the paradox that no original thinker of Second Temple Judaism should be considered ‘Jewish’—certainly not Philo or Josephus or Hillel or the Teacher of Righteousness, all of whom also formulated ‘original’ answers to the common questions of their age.”

⁵⁰ Jeannine K. Brown (*Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 281) explains the historical-critical method thus: “Historical criticism is analysis of the Bible that focuses upon what has been called ‘behind the text’ issues, such as the traditions, sources, and oral forms that were used by the biblical authors as they wrote. Historical criticism has also traditionally focused on determination of the original context of biblical books, including issues regarding authorship, dating, and audience as well as more general historical study of the time periods in which the biblical text was written.”

⁵¹ Brown (*Scripture as Communication*, 191–93) identifies four contexts that are of special importance when studying New Testament texts: “world context,” “cultural context,” “audience context,” and “dynamic context.” These contexts take into account anything from how a vast majority of people viewed and understood the world (“world context”), to how specific cultural norms affected certain people (“cultural context”), and to how the relationship between an author and the audience to which he or she wrote play out (“audience” and “dynamic context”).

anchored reading of the text.⁵² This means that before I turn to my reading and exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, I have already studied many of the parts that influenced Paul’s instructions therein. Moreover, I examine 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 in its historical context and with a sound knowledge of the social and cultural environment both Paul and the Corinthian Christ followers found themselves in. The historical-critical method should not, however, be seen as *the* method for interpreting the ancient texts that make up the Bible, and there are several other methods for approaching biblical texts that one could use.⁵³ Moreover, the historical-critical method will not answer all questions one might have about a text, and by using this method I pay less attention to other matters that pertain to the reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. For example, even though I discuss who the members of the Corinthians *ekklēsia* were, it would be possible to gain more knowledge with regard to this question by using a feminist reading of 1 Corinthians in order to highlight women members and their role in the *ekklēsia*.⁵⁴

My choice to use the historical-critical method is down to the fact that it best aligns with my research question of Paul’s instruction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Even though various approaches and methods of reading biblical texts certainly illuminates important aspects of these texts, the historical-critical method serves as the best overall approach to my study.

⁵² Amy Balogh and Douglas Mangum (“Introducing Biblical Criticism,” in *Social & Historical Approaches to the Bible*, ed. Douglas Mangum and Amy Balogh, Lexham Methods Series 3 [Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016], 1–20, 4]) point out: “The ultimate goal of biblical criticism is simply a better understanding of the text’s meaning.”

⁵³ See, e.g., Eryl W. Davies’ explanation of four methods (“reader-response criticism,” “feminist biblical criticism,” “ideological criticism,” and “postcolonial criticism”) that are common when interpreting biblical texts in *Biblical Criticism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Guides for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

⁵⁴ On feminist approaches to the Bible, see Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods, and Strategies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

Outline of Study

My thesis contains four chapters. In chapter one, I mainly focus on the city of Corinth and the Corinthian *ekklēsia*. In 44 BCE Julius Caesar made the city a Roman colony and several scholars have argued that Roman culture dominated the Corinth of Paul's day. Moreover, scholars have often thought of Corinth as a colony where Julius Caesar resettled military veterans. I argue, however, that the Corinth Paul visited was far more complex than this; and that even though the city had been a Roman colony for roughly 100 years when Paul sojourned there, there were also strong elements of Greek culture present in Corinth. For example, one can see this in the groups of people who lived in the colony. First, freedmen of Greek origins made up a significant part of the elite in the city; second, the negotiators or tradesmen who colonised Corinth came from Italy and were of Greek or eastern background; third, Benjamin W. Millis has persuasively argued that Greek was the language the common person used on a day-to-day basis, whereas Latin was used in official writing.⁵⁵ Based on archaeological findings, scholars have also demonstrated that both Greek and Roman cults were active during Paul's time, and that inhabitants rebuilt some Greek cults, which lay desolate after Corinth's destruction in 146 BCE. Consequently, Roman and Greek culture and cults lived side by side in Corinth when Paul visited the city.

I then turn my attention to the Corinthians *ekklēsia* in order to analyse the group Paul's letter is addressed to and the group's place in the city. Paul viewed the *ekklēsia* in Corinth as one (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1), even though it plausibly consisted of several sub-groups, and he uses familial language when referring to the members of the *ekklēsia* (e.g., by using the words ἀδελφοί and ἀδελφαί). Another important aspect of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* are the cultic elements, such as

⁵⁵ Benjamin W. Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel L. Scholwalter, and James C. Walters, NovTSup 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 13–35.

initiation rites (baptism), communal meals (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*), and regular gatherings. As a cultic group, the *ekklēsia* would have fit in well in Corinth and it attracted both men and women. Predominantly, the members came from a non-Jewish background. But there seems to have been at least a significant minority of Jewish members, as indicated by Paul's discussion on circumcision in 1 Cor 7:18–20. In addition to the varied ethnic background of the members, it is likely that the socio-economic status of the members also varied. However, as Richard Last argues, it is unlikely that any member lived under subsistence level, since the group survived on the economic contributions of its members.⁵⁶

The focal point of the second chapter is the ancient Greek and Roman rites surrounding animal sacrifice. I focus on animal sacrifice, including the dinner that often followed, because I think a deeper and more nuanced understanding of these practices is the key in better understanding Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Since both Greek and Roman cults were present in Corinth, I examine both Greek and Roman sacrificial practices. For even though they were similar in many ways some significant differences existed. My findings show that during an animal sacrifice only a small party of participants would take part in the actual sacrifice. After the sacrifice it was common to serve all or some of the meat to those who participated in the cult, but were not present at the sacrificial altar. Sometimes the meat was not eaten at all, but taken to a local market and sold there by vendors. Most crucially for my reading of 1 Cor 10:14–22 is the fact that it was common practice in the Greek rites surrounding animal sacrifice for those who participated in the sacrificial rituals to roast and eat the innards of the animal when the flames of the altar consumed the god's portion. Hence, one can make a distinction between eating the meat that came from the sacrificed animal and was served after the sacrifice and the partaking of the meat that took place

⁵⁶ Richard Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context*, SNTSMS 164 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 84.

at the time of the sacrifice, and therefore before the rest of the meat was served. I finish the second chapter with a brief inquiry into the cults that were active in Corinth during Paul's time: the Greek cults of Apollo, Asklepios, and Demeter and Kore; and the Roman imperial cult. My aim is to survey the cultic landscape of ancient Corinth in order to imagine what the contexts Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 may have looked like.

In the final two chapters, I turn my attention to 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 respectively in order to present my reading of the two chapters. My main argument vis-à-vis 1 Corinthians 8 is that Paul allows the Corinthian Christ followers to eat food offered to idols since not doing so would jeopardise their social status in Corinth. However, if a Christ follower's eating leads another Christ follower, for whom food offered to idols still is connected to idolatry, to eat, then the former must abstain. Hence, Paul is balancing between letting the Christ followers continue their previous life, including keeping their social connections, and living a life that takes into consideration the other members of the *ekklēsia*. In the first section of chapter three, I discuss how scholars have commonly interpreted 1 Corinthians 8. After that I turn to three examples where various groups were either accused by outsiders for not living according to the social norms or how groups who themselves knew they could not follow all the social norms of ancient society discussed these matters. These three examples inform my reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and how Paul allows the Christ followers to partake in dinners in gentile cults and temples, since it was virtually a necessity for them to do so if they did not want to become socially ostracized. Thus, when Paul allows Christ followers to eat food offered to idols, he does so not because he has left Judaism behind; rather, his allowance is a way for him to balance the Judaizing requirements of his message with the requirements of city life in antiquity.

In chapter four I deal with the question of how to read 1 Corinthians 10, and especially verses 14–22, in light of the findings concerning animal sacrifice in chapter two and my reading of 1 Corinthians 8 in chapter three. The primary concern of this chapter is to argue that when Paul forbids the Corinthians to drink the cup of *daimonia* and partake in the table of *daimonia* in 10:21 he is not referring to the eating of food offered to idols, but to the participation in the sacrificial rituals and the eating of the innards that took place during the sacrifice. There are three main reasons for this context. First, in 1 Cor 10:14–22 Paul discusses the topic of idolatry (cf. *εἰδωλολατρεία* in 10:14); second, the three examples he provides in 10:14–22 describe the most intimate rituals of the cults mentioned; third, Paul’s use of certain words, e.g., *θύω*, *ποτήριον*, and *τράπεζα*, indicates that the context he describes is not concerned with (only) eating. Hence, Paul’s prohibition concerning the drinking of the cup of *daimonia* and the partaking in the table of *daimonia* is something distinctly different from what he allows in 1 Corinthians 8. At the end of the chapter, I discuss Paul’s instructions concerning buying meat at the market (10:25–26) and how Christ followers should relate to the food they are served if dining with those outside the *ekklēsia* (10:27–30). A question I deal with here is why Paul seems to think it unproblematic for Christ followers to eat with non-members when the latter most likely performed some kind of cultic ritual during the dinner.

Chapter 1: Roman Corinth and the Corinthian *Ekklēsia*

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is two-fold. First, I examine what the Roman colony of Corinth may have looked like when Paul entered it sometime in the 50s CE. This examination takes, to a large extent, the form of a general survey of the colony’s history, but particular focus is given to one of the larger questions about ancient Corinth: namely, how much of the “Greekness” of the city had survived and to what extent Roman culture had impacted the city.⁵⁷ I explore this question by looking at different aspects of the city that disclose which culture was preferred among its inhabitants and why. Four questions are primarily dealt with in order to establish the Greek- and/or Romanness of ancient Corinth: from where (both geographically and socially) did the early settlers come? What language was used in the colony? Which cults existed in Corinth and how did the Romans facilitate the continuation or repurposing of them? And, in connection with this, how did the “new” Corinthians merge Roman and Greek cultic rituals and practices?

The second topic I deal with in this chapter is how the Corinthian *ekklēsia* might best be understood in the context of ancient Corinth. I am mainly interested in how the Christ group was structured within the context of ancient group formations and what kind of members—ethnically and socio-economically—the group hosted. Toward this aim, I will examine a number of aspects of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*: first, did Paul found the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, or did it consist of smaller, already extant, groups he joined together. Second, how are we to understand the *ekklēsia* among

⁵⁷ This is a crucial question to ask in order to gain a more nuanced and attuned historical understanding of ancient Corinth, as Barbette Stanley Spaeth (“Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth: A Response to Karl Galinsky’s ‘The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?’” in *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed, SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 61–81, 61) points out: “[Corinth] was in origin a Greek city that was later refounded as a Roman colony. It therefore had a dual Greek and Roman cultural identity, which has important implications for our understanding of its religious system.”

other ancient groups? Third, who would have been a member of the group and what does this tell us about the *ekklēsia*? Fourth, how did the group find the economic resources to keep meeting for their communal meals and to fulfill the collection to the “holy ones” in Jerusalem?

Corinth: A Greek and Roman City

The Roman general Leucius Mummius and his army destroyed Greek Corinth in 146 BCE; in 44 BCE Julius Caesar made the city a Roman colony.⁵⁸ Hence, when Paul arrived in Corinth sometime in the middle of the first century CE, the city was a Roman colony and had been so for roughly one hundred years.⁵⁹ Even so, there is good evidence that Greek culture and society still had a strong presence in Corinth, and that the Corinthians worshipped and honored Greek gods and cults alongside Roman gods and cults.⁶⁰ One would oversimplify the matter of how Greek or Roman Corinth was in the first century CE by stating that it had retained much of its previous Greekness, and therefore was Greek, on the one hand, or by saying that because it was a Roman colony since 44 BCE, it was predominantly Roman in the first century CE, on the other.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Laura Nasrallah, *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 144. From 146 to 44 BCE Corinth was *ager publicus* (Roman public land subject to taxation). Cf. Sarah A. James, “The Last of the Corinthians? Society and Settlement from 146 to 44 BCE,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Scholwaller, NovTSup 155 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 17–37, 19. Corinth was in many regards an attractive city due to its strategic placement on the Peloponnesos. Cf. Laura Nasrallah, “Grief in Corinth: The Roman City and Paul’s Corinthians Correspondence,” in *Contested Spaces: Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. David L. Balch and Annette Weissenrieder, WUNT 285 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 109–40, 112.

⁵⁹ For a detailed account of the founding of Roman Corinth, see Mary E. Hoskins Walbank, “The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” *JRA* 10 (1997): 95–130.

⁶⁰ Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price (*Religions of Rome: A History* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 1.315) note that “there were three principal types of provincial community under the empire: *coloniae*, *municipia*, and towns without any specifically Roman status at all,” and that it was mainly in the *coloniae* that Roman cults and worship was exported and recreated outside of Rome.

⁶¹ Richard E. Oster (“Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 7,1–5; 8,10; 11,2–16; 12,14–26),” *ZNW* 83 [1992]: 52–73, 54) chastises older New Testament scholarship on Corinth for not taking the interplay between Greek and Roman culture in Corinth into full account. Referring to some of the more well-known commentaries on 1 Corinthians, Oster notes: “They typically state that there were two Corinths, one Greek and one Roman, and then set forth a brief reconstruction of Corinthian history. This historical

Cavan Concannon articulates the division over the Greekness and Romanness of Corinth in scholarship in the following way: “The history of Corinth after its refoundation as a Roman colony has been imaged between two poles: the city was first ‘Romanized’ by the early colonists who crafted a city that was a ‘mini-Rome’ and then, by the second century CE, it was ‘hellenized’ by an influx of Greek inhabitants who diluted the Romanness of the colony’s early years.”⁶² The issue with such a characterization, Concannon maintains, is that “these two models of social change presume that what constitutes Romanness or Greekness is static, along with the ways in which these identities are imposed on a civic landscape. Such an approach views social, economic, and political change through the prism of a constant or essential ethnic identity, which allows us to determine easily where the Roman ends and the Greek begins.”⁶³ Avoiding the issues Concannon mentions, it is beneficial to look at aspects of Corinth where Greek and/or Roman culture were present in order to unveil the presence of these two cultures in the city, without stating that the cultural environment of Corinth was static or the same in all levels of society.⁶⁴

In light of this, I aim to demonstrate that Corinth was indeed *both* Greek and Roman by the time of Paul, and that there is ample evidence to show this.⁶⁵ One important question to consider

understanding of two Corinthians—often followed by Classicists also—has been significantly challenged recently by archaeological research.”

⁶² Cavan Concannon, *“When You Were Gentiles”: Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul’s Corinthian Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 63.

⁶³ Concannon, *“When You Were Gentiles”*, 63–64. Another problem with this generalized picture of ancient Corinth is that it does not cohere with some of the primary sources that describe the city. For example, Pausanias writes the following in the second century CE: “Corinth is no longer inhabited by any of the old Corinthians, but by colonists sent out by the Romans.” (*Description of Greece* 2.1.2; LCL).

⁶⁴ Oster (“Use, Misuse and Neglect,” 55) gives a similar caution: “As one surveys the religio-cultural landscape of Paul’s Corinth in order to seek antecedents and matrices for the issues that are treated in 1 Cor, it would be a grave error to suppose that the inhabitants of colonial Corinth lived in a setting which was mono-cultural and homogenous at the time of nascent Christianity.” One concrete example of Oster’s statement comes from some two blocks with archaic reliefs found in Roman Corinth. Scholars have not agreed on whether the gods represented on the blocks are Roman or Greek gods. See Barbette Stanley Spaeth, “Greek Gods or Roman? The Corinthian Archaistic Blocks and Religion in Roman Corinth,” *AJA* 121 (2017): 397–423.

⁶⁵ In this quest, I rely mainly on evidence that can be clearly determined as Greek or Roman. However, there is of course evidence that is hard to interpret since those who perhaps felt themselves to be more Greek could act Roman, and vice versa. As George Woolf (“Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994): 116–43, 128) comments on Greeks

is what we know of the demographic make-up of the city. Some primary sources suggest that between its destruction in 146 BCE and its founding as a Roman colony in 44 BCE Corinth lay desolate, which would suggest that the new inhabitants of the colony had no direct connections to those living there before 146 BCE.⁶⁶ This portrayal, however, as Mary Hoskins Walbank points out, “derives largely from the rhetorical and poetic contexts of works often written well after the event [of 146 BCE].”⁶⁷ Furthermore, Sarah James shows that Corinth was indeed populated to some extent between 146–44 BCE on the basis of archaeological evidence.⁶⁸ For example, of the Corinthians buildings that the Romans destroyed, the vast majority were those that functioned in a political capacity; buildings not related to the political functions of the city remained intact.⁶⁹ This suggests that it was Corinth as a political entity that the Romans destroyed, but that they left the city itself more or less intact. In addition, the traces of roads from the interim period suggests that Corinth was continuously inhabited between 146–44 BCE.⁷⁰ There is also data of “increasing

in the Roman east: “Greeks felt themselves to be Greeks, in a sense that was not wholly compatible with being Roman, while at the same times adopting much Roman material culture.”

The mixing of Greek and Roman cultures in Corinth continued well beyond the time scope I am here interested in. See Amelia E. Brown, *Corinth in Late Antiquity: A Greek, Roman, and Christian City*, LCS 17 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018).

⁶⁶ Strabo explains the fall of Corinth in 146 BCE and the state of the city up to 44 BCE in the following words: “The Corinthians, when they were subject to Philip, not only sided with him in his quarrel with the Romans, but individually behaved so contemptuously towards the Romans that certain persons ventured to pour down filth upon the Roman ambassadors when passing by their house. For this and other offences, however, they soon paid the penalty, for a considerable army was sent thither, and the city was rased to the ground by Leucius Mummius.... Now after Corinth had remained deserted for a long time, it was restored again, because of its favourable position, by the deified Caesar, who colonised it with people that belonged for the most part to the freedmen class (τοῦ ἀπελευθερικοῦ γένους).” *Geography* 8.6.23 (LCL). A similar description can be found in Pausanias: “Corinth was laid waste by Mummius, who at that time commanded the Romans in the field, and it is said that it was afterwards refounded by Caesar, who was the author of the present constitution of Rome” (*Description of Greece* 2.1.2; LCL).

⁶⁷ Hoskins Walbank, “The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 95. It should be noted that not all literary evidence paints a picture of a desolate Corinth before its colonization in 44 BCE. For example, Cicero writes that in his youthful days he had seen people living in Corinth (*Tusculan Disputations* 3.22.53).

⁶⁸ Hoskins Walbank (“The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 95–96) mentions that Corinth was destroyed by senatorial decree, but that “the intention must have been to destroy Corinth as a political entity but not to obliterate the city.... Such destruction made it clear to everyone that never again would Corinth be allowed to become a focus of opposition to Rome.”

⁶⁹ James, “The Last of the Corinthians?” 25. James also points out that Corinth produced significant amounts of taxes paid to Rome between 146 to 44 BCE and that it was “small landholders or tenant farmers” who remained in Corinth after it had been sacked by Mummius who were responsible for this revenue (*ibid*, 19).

⁷⁰ James, “The Last of the Corinthians?” 27.

archaeological evidence of human activity in the forum area.”⁷¹ Even though there would have been people who inhabited Corinth or stayed there for longer periods of time, Hoskins Walbank notes that “it is unlikely, however, that such habitation was substantial or officially sanctioned.”⁷²

Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence James and Hoskins Walbank mention point to the fact that Corinth was continually inhabited also after its destruction in 146 BCE and up to the point of it becoming a Roman colony.⁷³ Additionally, since we know that Greek culture and language existed in Corinth after 44 BCE (see below), it is plausible that at least some of those who lived in Corinth prior to this date were of Greek origin and had kept Corinth’s Greekness alive to some degree.⁷⁴ But perhaps the ethnic make-up of those who lived in Corinth prior to 44 BCE is not the most important subject; the more important question concerns the people who came to live in Corinth after 44 BCE.⁷⁵

It has long been thought that those who moved to Corinth after it became a Roman colony were military veterans resettled by Julius Caesar.⁷⁶ More recent scholarship, however, has

⁷¹ Hoskins Walbank, “The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 97.

⁷² Hoskins Walbank, “The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 97.

⁷³ Cf. David W. J. Gill, “Corinth: A Roman Colony in Achaea,” *BZ* 37 (1993): 259–64, 260–62; James Wiseman, “Corinth and Rome I: 228 B.C.–A.D. 267,” in *Politische Geschichte (Provinzen und Randvölker: Griechischer Balkanraum; Kleinasien)*, ed. Hildegard Temporini, ANRW II/7.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979), 438–548, 491–96.

⁷⁴ Guy Sanders (“Landlords and Tenants: Sharecroppers and Subsistence Farming in Corinthian Historical Context, in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Scholwaller, NovTSup 155 [Leiden: Brill, 2014], 103–125, 116–17) argues that between 44–146 BCE there were at least 400–500 families living in Corinth and that “many, if not most, of these people will have identified themselves as Corinthians and will have preserved at least some of the traditions and identity of Hellenistic Corinth.” Cf. Richard E. DeMaris, “Corinthian Religion and Baptism for the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:29): Insights from Archaeology and Anthropology,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 661–82, 670. James (“The Last of the Corinthians?” 29) suggests that even though it is hard to estimate the size of the community that stayed/existed in Corinth after 146 BCE, “500–1000 or more would not be unreasonable given the evidence at hand.”

⁷⁵ On the possible overlap between those who lived in Corinth before and after 44 BCE, Hoskins Walbank (“The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 107) comments: “There is no reason to think that there was any connection between the majority of these settlers and the previous inhabitants, since they or their families could have come from anywhere in the Mediterranean.” Nasrallah (*Archaeology and the Letters of Paul*, 151) makes a similar point, maintaining that “some inhabitants remained in the region between 146 BCE and the city’s refounding as a Roman colony in 44 BCE, Corinth also experienced an influx of newcomers.”

⁷⁶ Millis (“The Social and Ethnic Origins,” 13) criticizes earlier scholarship for not paying sufficient attention to the demographic make-up of Roman Corinth: “The population which inhabited the colony in the first century or two of

questioned this consensus.⁷⁷ In her review of the foundation of Roman Corinth, Hoskins Walbank argues against the idea that Roman Corinth was primarily a colony for veterans, and on the topic of where the colonists came from she writes: “It is clear from the literary sources that the majority of ordinary colonists were the urban poor of Rome and freedmen, with perhaps a sprinkling of veterans.”⁷⁸ Millis, followed by Concannon, goes one step further, insisting that “the evidence for veterans is practically non-existent.”⁷⁹ From where, then, did those who inhabited Corinth from 44 BCE and onwards come?

In what follows, I will dedicate most of my attention to the Corinthian elite, since that is the group about which we have the most information.⁸⁰ However, when I turn my attention to the linguistic facet of Roman Corinth later on, the non-elites will play a larger part.⁸¹ Concannon mentions two types of people, who would have made up the bulk of the Corinthian elite, that moved to Corinth after 44 BCE: “Greek freedmen and negotiators, Italian trading families that had

its existence has seldom been studied in its own right; far more often, scholars have treated the population as an appendage to studies of other aspects of Corinth.”

⁷⁷ Of the primary sources available, only Plutarch (*Lives*, 734.5) makes the explicit assertion that Corinth (and Carthage) were colonies dedicated to Rome’s veterans: “In the effort to surround himself with men’s good will as the fairest and at the same time the securest protection, he again courted the people with banquets and distributions of grain and his soldiers with newly planted colonies, the most conspicuous of which were Carthage and Corinth” (LCL). For scholars who disagree with this view, see, e.g., Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 51; Nasrallah, *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul*, 151; Hoskins Walbank, “The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 107; Millis, “The Social and Ethnic Origins,” 17–21. Antony J. S. Spawforth, “Roman Corinth: The Formation of a Colonial Elite,” in *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Roman Onomastics, Athens, 7–9 September 1993*, ed. A. D. Rizakis, MEΛETHMATA 21 [Diffusion de Boccard: Athens, 1996], 167–82, 170–71) also takes this view, although not as strongly as those previously mentioned, and points out that only 6% of the names from the duoviral coinage belong to veterans. Furthermore, Spawforth mentions that “only one veteran’s tombstone can be identified, that of M. Iulius Crispus, of the *legio II Adiutrix*,” and that “to detect this veteran element in the evidence for colonial magistrates is not easy.”

⁷⁸ Hoskins Walbank, “The Foundation and Planning of Early Roman Corinth,” 107.

⁷⁹ Millis, “The Social and Ethnic Origins,” 20. On the same page, Millis asserts that “the literary evidence characterizing Corinth as a veteran’s colony appears to be the result either of conflating Carthage and Corinth in an unwarranted manner, or of an attempt to make a rhetorical point about Caesar, or both.”

⁸⁰ The term “elite” might not be ideal for those who were at the top of Corinthian society, since as we will see they belonged to social strata that were not commonly thought of as elite. However, the term can be used since these groups were indeed at the top of Corinthian society, even though they did not come from or belong to the social groups that made up most of the elite in the contemporary society of comparable cities.

⁸¹ Concannon (“*When You Were Gentiles*”, 64) comments: “Language use in Corinth offers us an avenue along which to see how elite and nonelite citizens of Corinth situated and presented themselves with respect to Roman culture.”

been operating in the Greek East for several centuries and which also included a sizable number of freedmen.”⁸²

One of the reasons why we find freedmen as a significant part of the first colonists may be due to the fact that they were likely afforded better social and economic opportunities in a new colony such as Corinth.⁸³ Since Corinth was a Julian colony, which meant that freedmen could hold public offices, it was an attractive city to be in if one wanted to rise up through the social ranks.⁸⁴ In the words of Laura Nasrallah: “Corinth was a place of potential social mobility, and those of low status could attain wealth and position in colonial Corinth.”⁸⁵ The ratio of freedmen among the Corinthian elite was rather high and Antony Spawforth has shown that 19% “of wealthy and politically successful individuals classified as probably or certainly of freedman stock.”⁸⁶ A second reason why these freedmen, who were still connected to their Roman masters by the

⁸² Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 56. On the reason why so many freedmen were sent to Corinth, C. K. Williams (“Roman Corinth as a Commercial Centre,” in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period: Including the Papers Given at a Symposium Held at the Ohio State University on 7–9 March, 1991*, ed. Timothy E. Gregory, JRASup 8 [Ann Arbor, MI: Cushing-Malloy Inc., 1994] 31–46, 33) comments: “It should be emphasized that Corinth was not refounded for the purpose of settling ex-soldiers: rather, Corinth was populated mainly by ex-slaves. This type of resettlement programme obviously suited the policies of the aristocratic families in the Roman Senate who voted for the refounding of Corinth but who by law could not themselves operate the business of the new East-West trade route that Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis would service. The freedmen-agents were an important part of the population sent to Corinth, serving the wealthy families who foresaw the colony as a potentially strong commercial center. These freedmen were sent out to ensure Roman control of the markets at this point on the east-west trade route and to secure positions for interested Roman families in this new distribution center in the eastern Peloponnesos.” We know that these freedmen were of Greek background, for, as Millis (“The Social and Ethnic Origins,” 30) points out: “From a study of their names, as represented in the literary, numismatic, and epigraphic record, these freedmen were entirely Greek in origin.” For a more detailed survey than the one I will undertake here of the elite in Roman Corinth, see Benjamin W. Millis, “The Local Magistrates and Elite of Roman Corinth,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, NovTSup 155, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Scholwaller (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 38–53.

⁸³ Freedmen would not only have made up a significant part of the early colonizers, but Corinth would have proved to be a popular destination for freedmen also after the initial colonization of the city. Cf. Spawforth, “Roman Corinth: The Formation of a Colonial Elite,” 170.

⁸⁴ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 57; Nasrallah, *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul*, 151. Strabo’s comments on the colonization of Corinth and mentions that those who colonised it “belonged for the most part to the freedmen class (τοῦ ἀπελευθερικοῦ γένους)” (*Geography* 8.6.23; LCL).

⁸⁵ Nasrallah, *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul*, 151.

⁸⁶ Spawforth, “Roman Corinth: The Formation of a Colonial Elite,” 169. He comes to this conclusion by looking at the names of those in who held the office of *duovir* (the most prestigious administrative office) found on 24 emissions of bronze coinage. All in all, 42 *duoviri* had “signed” these coins from 44 BCE to roughly the middle of the first century CE.

patronage system, would have ended up in Corinth was that they were well suited to administer their Roman families' business in the area since the families themselves were legally barred from doing so.⁸⁷

The other group of early colonists, the negotiators or tradesmen, “were members of families that had been part of the expansion of Roman trade networks in the Greek East for generations by the time of the colonization of Corinth.”⁸⁸ The ethnic make-up of these negotiators would have been quite diverse: they came from Italy (they could be both native to Italy or foreign citizens residing in Italian cities) and were freedmen or slaves of Greek and eastern background. The glue that kept this group, made up of a variety of different people, together was their “familial and patronal linkages that defined trading relationships in the ancient world and a self-identification as Roman or Italian. In inscriptions, they often identify or are identified as ‘Ρωμαῖοι, Ἰταλικοί, or Italici.”⁸⁹ These negotiators were the ideal colonizers of Corinth, which connected the Greek East with Italy in the west, since they were able to navigate both Roman and Greek culture—which

⁸⁷ Concannon (“*When You Were Gentiles*”, 57) comments on why these Greek freedmen were the ideal choice as the first colonizers: “As Greek speakers they were able to manage trading interests for prominent patrons, acting as middlemen in the flow of goods that moved through the city. As freedmen they possessed Roman citizenship, a history of socialization within Roman households, and the backing of powerful patrons, occasionally including even the emperor himself. The economic success of these freedmen was translated into local acts of euergetism, or benefaction, that emphasized these connections through devotion to the imperial family and the deities that they favored.”

For more on patronage in ancient Rome, see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *Patronage in Ancient Society*, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 1 (London: Routledge, 1989); Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Rose MacLean, *Freed Slaves and Roman Imperial Culture: Social Integration and the Transformation of Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). On the relationship between the Roman patron and freedpersons, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (“Patronage in Roman Society: From Republic to Empire,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 1 [London: Routledge, 1989], 63–87, 76–77) comments: “It is not voluntary: the freedman neither has choice over whom to adopt as his patron, nor over whether to have one at all. The obligations of deference and service (*obsequium et officium*) were, unlike those of the client, enforceable by law. The freedman in fact is a special case, since the transition from slave to free is a special case of the transition from non-Roman to Roman. The obligatory nature of this patronage obviously protects the interests of the individual master; but it also has relevance for the relationship between the freedman and society at large. As a citizen, the ex-slave is a full member of Roman society; yet his membership is in some sense conditional, mediated through his patron who continues as a sort of sponsor. This patronal bond helps to account for the extraordinary ease with which slaves of diverse ethnic origins were assimilated into the fabric of Roman society.”

⁸⁸ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 57.

⁸⁹ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 57.

would have come into contact with each other on the narrow isthmus where Corinth was located.⁹⁰ Hence, both of the early colonizers, the freedmen and the negotiators, consisted of people who felt at home and were able to navigate both Greek and Roman culture. As such they were well suited for a Roman colony that had once been a Greek city and now connected the Greek East with the Roman West.⁹¹ Turning to those who did not belong to the elite, I will now explore the language used in the city, an examination that will tell us more about the cultural and/or ethnic groups present in the colony.

One signifier of both the Greekness and Romanness of ancient Corinth is the use of Greek and Latin. What is interesting regarding the use of these two languages, apart from the fact that they show that both Greek and Roman culture still existed in and had penetrated Corinth, is the way they were used: “Greek was probably the norm of daily usage in Corinth and could be used to mark Greekness as an identity or as a cultural commodity, Latin was the language of benefaction and administration.”⁹²

⁹⁰ On the geographic location of Corinth and its importance, Concannon (“*When You Were Gentiles*”, 25) comments: “In particular, its strategic location along the quickest and safest route between Italy and Greece made it a site for cultural and ethnic exchange as much as it was a site for the exchange of trade goods.”

⁹¹ Not everyone who came to Corinth, both in 44 BCE and later, would have belonged to these two groups, have been as willing to adopt or converge to Greek and Roman culture, or have come to Corinth by their own free will. Philip A. Harland (“Pausing at the Intersection of Religion and Travel,” in *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, ed. Philip A. Harland, SCJ 21 [Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011] 1–26, 4–23) proposes five reasons why people would travel to different places in antiquity: honouring the gods, promoting a deity or way of life, encountering foreign culture, migrating, or making a living.

⁹² Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 69. I do not suggest by my subsequent study of the use of Greek and Latin in Corinth that one had to be Greek in order to speak, write, or understand Greek or that only Romans wrote in Latin. It is plausible that both those who were “more” Greek and those who were “more” Roman could make use of and understand both languages. However, as Jonathan Hall (*Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 177) points out: “Language... cannot be regarded as criteria of ethnicity. That does not, however, prevent them from occasionally acting as indicia of ethnicity: in other words, the relationship between language and ethnicity is unidirectional.” On the bilingualism of Corinth, Concannon (“*When You Were Gentiles*”, 65) comments: “In all likelihood it was the local elite who were the most bilingual part of the population, as this flexibility allowed them to better negotiate the complicated trade routes on which Corinth sat, while the nonelite, the craftsmen, builders, merchants, farmers, and others sitting at or below the poverty line were primarily Greek speakers.” In addition to inscriptions with Latin or Greek text, there are several inscriptions from Corinth that contain *both* Greek and Latin text, see Bradley J. Bitner, “Mixed-Language Inscribing at Roman Corinth,” in *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth*, ed. James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn, SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 8 (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), 185–218.

Millis persuasively argues that Greek was the preferred language of the non-elites and in more personal writings (i.e., writings that were not inscriptions or public in any way and therefore reveal the writer's favoured language since there would have been no pressure from Rome to use a certain language), and he offers a number of substantive arguments for this.⁹³ First, he points to the apostle Paul and the fact that he wrote both of his letters to the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in Greek. This, Millis argues, would have been nonsensical to do if only a very limited portion of the *ekklēsia* was able to understand Greek.⁹⁴ A second strand of evidence is found in different kinds of graffiti. Although evidence from graffiti should be used with caution since it is often hard to date, survives only in small portions, and is seldom published, the graffiti from Corinth gives a fairly clear picture of the linguistic preferences of their "authors." More specifically, the graffiti that has survived on pottery, which "occurs at Corinth in sufficient quantity to offer a representative sample," can be dated to the first century BCE.⁹⁵ Looking at 24 pieces of graffiti on pottery that can be securely dated to the early period of the Roman colony, Millis notes that all but one example are in Greek.⁹⁶ This gives a ratio of 24:1, almost the exact same ratio, but in reverse, as that of public inscription (which is 25:1, favouring Latin). Based on this Millis concludes: "The graffiti strongly suggest that there existed at Corinth in the Early Roman period a significant portion of the population which, regardless of the language they may have used in public life, used Greek as the language of choice when communicating privately and amongst themselves."⁹⁷ This picture is strengthened

⁹³ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 23–30.

⁹⁴ Millis ("The Social and Ethnic Origins," 26) comments further that "Paul's letters were not necessarily aimed solely at his intimates, and so his use of Greek may reflect a desire to reach the widest possible audience, at least within that segment of the Corinthian population to which he was speaking." One other possibility as to why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in Greek is that he did not know Latin. There is, however, little evidence to support or deny Paul's knowledge of Latin. On this question Stanley E. Porter ("Did Paul Speak Latin?" in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies 5 [Leiden: Brill, 2008], 289–308, 308) concludes, "most of the evidence suggests that Paul *may* have spoken Latin, but it is far from requiring it" (emphasis original).

⁹⁵ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 27; Concannon, "When You Were Gentiles", 64.

⁹⁶ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 26.

⁹⁷ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 27.

by a third strand of evidence pointing toward the use of Greek language: the surviving masons' marks from the first two centuries of Corinth as a Roman colony.⁹⁸ In fact, among this strand of "writing" Millis can find only one mark that has been made using Latin characters among several dozens of masons' marks.⁹⁹ All of this makes it highly plausible that Greek was the language preferred by the people in Corinth when they wrote texts that were not official or meant to be read by the greater public (including the rulers of Rome).¹⁰⁰

Turning our attention to the other major language of Roman Corinth, Latin, one can see that this language was predominantly used by the elite of the city and when and where public manifestations of Corinth's Romanness were made (e.g., in inscriptions and on monuments). On the (mainly public) use of Latin in Corinth, Concannon comments: "Inscribed on the most prominent buildings in the city, and especially at the Forum, Latin was the language by which the city presented itself, to visitor and citizen alike."¹⁰¹ As noted above, the Latin inscriptions (including honorary inscriptions, dedications, accounts of benefaction, building inscriptions, etc.) in Roman Corinth from the first century BCE to the first century CE outnumber the Greek ones by 25:1. The only instance where we find solely Greek public inscriptions in public are those

⁹⁸ Just like graffiti mason marks would have originated with the lower classes; thus, they too give us valuable evidence of what language this stratum of society favoured. The term "mason's mark" is here used as a catch all phrase that encompasses all marks left behind by masons, builders, tradesmen, and workmen that include any form of text. For a discussion surrounding different mason's marks, see Margherita Guarducci, *Epigrafia greca III: Epigrafi di carattere privato*, 4 vols. (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1974), 3:377–93.

⁹⁹ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 28. Millis brings up the caveat with this type of evidence that the workmen who produced these marks may have been brought in from outside Corinth, but, he argues, "it seems highly unlikely, however, that all masons' marks can be accounted for in this fashion, and so a substantial number can most plausibly be attributed to the work of Corinthians."

¹⁰⁰ It should be noted that Rome, as far as we know, did not as a rule impose the use of Latin or ban local languages in the empire. However, as the Roman Empire expanded both geographically and in strength the Latin language became more and more attractive and other, local languages did eventually die out. Cf. James N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 114, 290; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 82.

¹⁰¹ Concannon, "When You Were Gentiles", 65.

inscriptions that concern the Isthmian Games.¹⁰² With regards to funerary inscriptions, another type of public inscription, we see that Latin was the favoured language among those living in Corinth. Here we find a ration of 5:1 in favour of Latin.¹⁰³ Thus, one can conclude that Latin was the preferred language when it came to public writings and when one wanted to mark one's status, as in the case of funerary inscriptions.¹⁰⁴ The evidence that I have discussed surrounding the use of Greek and Latin in Corinth leads Millis to suggest that whether Greek or Latin was the most dominant language in Roman Corinth should not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that (1) either language was the preferred one, or (2) that the dominance of one of the two languages indicates that Corinth was more Greek or Roman.¹⁰⁵ Rather, the different uses of language portrayed here suggest that Greek and Latin were used in different ways and for different purposes—but that both were ubiquitous in the city and dominated their respective spheres.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 23. For the relationship between Corinth and the Isthmian Games, see Mika Kajava, "When Did the Isthmian Games Return to the Isthmus? (Rereading 'Corinth' 8.3.153)," *Classical Philosophy* 97 (2002): 168–78. Elizabeth R. Gebhard ("The Isthmian Games and the Sanctuary of Poseidon in the Early Empire," in *The Corinthia in the Roman Period: Including the Papers Given at a Symposium Held at the Ohio State University on 7–9 March, 1991*, ed. Timothy E. Gregory, *JRASup* 8 [Ann Arbor, MI: Cushing-Malloy Inc., 1994], 78–94, 79–82) argues that the Games came under Corinthian control when the city was refounded as a Roman colony in 44 BCE.

¹⁰³ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 24. Millis also mentions a couple of examples where both Greek and Latin have been used in various ways (e.g., Greek written with a Roman formula; a bilingual grave monument; and a Latin inscription in Greek).

¹⁰⁴ Concannon ("When You Were Gentiles", 66) articulates this well: "To think of Latin not as a default but as an option in elite self-presentation is to think beyond assumptions about Corinth as either a Greek or Roman space." For an in-depth review of burial practices in Roman Corinth, see Christine M. Thomas, "Placing the Dead: Funerary Practice and Social Stratification in the Early Roman Period at Corinth and Ephesos," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Scholwalter and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 281–306.

¹⁰⁵ Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins," 23–24.

¹⁰⁶ Athanasios Rizakis ("Urban Elites in the Roman East: Enhancing Regional Positions and Social Superiority," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 317–30, 317–18) comments on the fact that closeness to Rome did not necessarily entail distancing oneself from one's native contexts: "Devotion to Rome and the emperor did not distance the provincial elites from the traditional cults of their cities, which they occasionally administered as a hereditary duty, nor did it diminish their attachment to their place of birth."

The last area, and most important for our purposes, to be considered vis-à-vis how Greek and Roman culture intersected in Corinth after 44 BCE is the cultic elements of the city.¹⁰⁷ Here too we will see that “cultural exchange in Corinth ... shaped a series of negotiations in cultic practice and priestly offices, creating hybridized practices and institutions.”¹⁰⁸ In his inquiry into cultic activity in Roman Corinth, and how Greek and Roman culture and cults intersected, Concannon pays special attention to the role of priestly offices and how the Corinthians were able to negotiate and mix Greek and Roman practices.¹⁰⁹ He focuses on two offices where priests of Roman gods carried Greek titles: the θεόκολος of Jupiter Capitolinus and the εἰρηνάρχης of Janus (these titles would have been transliterated into Latin as *theocolus* and *irenarches*).¹¹⁰ Concannon proposes that the reason these offices were expressed with Greek titles was that something in the way these cults were practiced in Corinth made the Greek titles more apt than their Roman counterparts.¹¹¹ Another example of the blending of Roman and Greek rituals Concannon brings

¹⁰⁷ Here I am most interested in the time period of the last century BCE and the first century CE. For a detailed account of what cults existed in Greek Corinth before the sack by Mummius, see Nancy Bookidis, “Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.” in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Scholwalter and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 141–64, 141–51; *eadem*, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” in *Corinth, the Centenary, 1896–1986*, ed. Charles K. Williams and Nancy Bookidis, vol. 10 (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2003), 247–59, 247–57.

¹⁰⁸ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 70.

¹⁰⁹ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 70–72. For evidence of Greek influence in the Roman Empire beyond Corinth, see William. E. Dunstan, *Ancient Rome* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 5–8. Thomas R. Martin (*Ancient Rome: From Romulus to Justinian* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012], 38) sums up Rome’s attitude to non-Roman cults and gods well: “So long as foreign religious cults avoided any appearance of threatening the stability of the state, however, they were permitted to exist. The government took no interest in these cults’ religious doctrines, only their worshipers’ loyalty to the state.”

¹¹⁰ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 70–71. Annette Hupfloher (“A Small Copy of Rome: Religious Organization in Roman Corinth,” in *Pathways to Power: Civic Elites in the Eastern Part of the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the International Workshop Held at Athens, Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, 19 December 2005*, ed. A. D. Rizakis and Francesco Camia [Athens: Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, 2008], 151–60, 156–57) argues that the use of this Greek title instead of a Latin one is down to that “it might have designated better than any other word the specific, the local conditions of worshipping *Iuppiter Capitolinus* at Corinth.” Consequently, the use of a Greek title for a Roman office demonstrates the mixing of Greek and Roman cults well. For the inscriptions containing references to a *theocolus* of Jupiter Capitolinus, see John Harvey Kent, *The Inscriptions: 1926–1950*, vol. 8, part 3 of *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 69, nr. 152; 86–88, nrs. 194–96, 198.

¹¹¹ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 71.

up is Apuleius's description of rituals connected to the cult of Isis, which was present in Corinth: "Then from a lofty platform he read aloud from a book verbatim, first pronouncing prayers for the prosperity of the great Emperor, the Senate, the knights, and the entire *Roman people*, for the sailors and ships under the rule of our world-wide empire. Then he proclaimed, in the *Greek language* and with *Greek ritual*, the opening of the navigation season."¹¹² In this text, Apuleius portrays the honoring of both Roman and Greek culture, people, and ritual as unproblematic; this hybridity encourages us to view Roman and Greek cultic activity as existing alongside one another in a way that did not exclude one or the other's cultic rituals but rather included both.¹¹³

Another way in which Greek and Roman cultic heritage converged was the rebuilding of important sanctuaries in Corinth that had been abandoned or ruined in the sacking of the city in 146 BCE.¹¹⁴ Christine Thomas writes:

Many of the most important sanctuaries were rebuilt and rededicated on the very spots that they once occupied in the Greek city. In many cases one can argue for cultic continuity as well. The god or gods honored at some of these temples seem to have been the same.... Sometimes clear evidence from inscriptions or dedications exists. The epigraphic record of the sanctuaries of Demeter and of Asklepios, for example, demonstrates that these two divinities continued to be worshipped in the traditional locations even in the Roman period.¹¹⁵

¹¹² *Metamorphoses* 11.17; LCL.

¹¹³ After this account, Apuleius adds that "the crowd's acclamation which followed confirmed that his words had been auspicious to all." Even though this passage is from the second century CE it clearly shows the merging of Greek and Roman practices; and since it post-dates the early time of the Roman colony it shows that the blending of Greek and Roman that existed previously survived well into the second century CE.

¹¹⁴ For an examination of the sanctuaries and cult in Corinth in the Archaic and early Classical periods, see Albert Schachter, "Policy, Cults, and the Placing of Greek Sanctuaries," in *Le Sanctuaire grec*, ed. Albert Schachter, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité Classique* 37 (Genève: Vandœuvres, 1992), 1–64, 14–17.

¹¹⁵ Christine M. Thomas, "Greek Heritage in Roman Corinth and Ephesos: Hybrid Identities and Strategies of Display in the Material Record of Traditional Mediterranean Religions," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel L. Scholwalter, and James C. Walters, *NovTSup* 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 117–47, 119. For a more in-depth analysis of Demeter's place and function in Greek and Roman Corinth, see Jorunn Økland, "Ceres, Κόρη, and Cultural Complexity: Divine Personality Definitions and Human Worshipers in Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel L. Scholwalter, and James C. Walters, *NovTSup* 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 199–229; on Asklepios: Bronwen L. Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel L. Scholwalter, and James C. Walters, *NovTSup* 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 37–66.

All in all, we have clear evidence that four traditional Greek sanctuaries which existed before Corinth became a Roman colony were rebuilt and rededicated to the same or equivalent god/gods that were worshipped there previously. These are the Temple of Apollo, the Temple of Aphrodite, the Asklepieion, and the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore.¹¹⁶ One should not imagine, however, that the Roman settlers took over the Greek temples and gods without adding their own distinct rituals and practices to them. Most of the temples, save the Asklepieion, were completely rebuilt with new foundations instead of the old Greek ones.¹¹⁷ With regards to the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, which had several already existing buildings that were renovated, Thomas notes that “it is clear that the focus of the temple changed dramatically. The Roman sanctuary was dominated by three small prostyle temples high on the upper terrace, structures that were absent in the Hellenistic sanctuary.”¹¹⁸

Roman influence was also carried into the sphere of the rituals that took place in these temples and sanctuaries. It is, of course, hard to pinpoint exactly what types of rituals were performed in these sanctuaries during the Greek and Roman periods respectively; some of the architectural evidence, however, indicates that there was a change in rituals with the Roman takeover of Corinth. For example, the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore shows signs of significant restructuring in the Roman period.¹¹⁹ From this one can deduce that the ritual space was used

¹¹⁶ Thomas, “Greek Heritage,” 119–20. She points out that “for each of these four sanctuaries, the case for cultic continuity is good.” For two of these sanctuaries, there are literary sources that mention their existence. First, Pausanias mentions a bronze statue of Apollo (*ἄγαλμα χαλκοῦν Ἀπόλλωνος*; *Description of Greece* 2.3.6) in passing; second, Strabo refers to a sanctuary dedicated to Aphrodite on a summit (*κορυφή ναῖδιον ἔχει Ἀφροδίτης*; *Geography* 8.6.21). Later in the life of the colony, however, even more sanctuaries were rebuilt, for as Jorunn Økland (*Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space*, JSNTSup 269 [London: T&T Clark International, 2004], 129) comments: “Towards the end of the first century CE, the ancient Greek sanctuaries that were not already restored were rebuilt and expanded. This is noteworthy, because it indicates that the old sanctuaries were still regarded as important.”

¹¹⁷ On Asklepieion, see C. K. Williams, “The Refounding of Corinth: Some Roman Religious Attitudes,” in *Roman Architecture in the Greek World*, ed. Sarah Macready and F. H. Thompson (London: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1987), 26–37, 32, 34.

¹¹⁸ Thomas, “Greek Heritage,” 120.

¹¹⁹ Thomas, “Greek Heritage,” 120.

differently since the sanctuary now had another focal point and the special emphasis had shifted. To name but one example, dining rooms were converted into cult rooms without any structures for dining, which leads Thomas to conclude that “the practice of cultic dining prevalent in the Classical period (5th–4th century) was apparently not resumed.”¹²⁰ In a similar fashion the Temple of Apollo was also rebuilt to better suit the cultic tastes of the Romans.¹²¹ C. K. Williams sums up his findings on the manner in which the Romans rebuilt the old Greek sanctuaries thus: “The Romans knew about and tried to revive the Greek sanctuaries of the city, if possible even on their original sites, but were not concerned to restore them to their original form or recreate their original Greek ritual with any precision or accuracy.”¹²² In other words, we can establish that the Roman settlers had both respect for and interest in some, but by no means all, of the Greek gods and sanctuaries that had been present for a long time in Corinth.¹²³ Perhaps one of the more important changes for this study that took place with the Roman takeover of some of the Hellenistic gods and sanctuaries is

¹²⁰ Thomas, “Greek Heritage,” 121. For a more detailed account on how the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore was rebuilt and repurposed by in Roman times, see Bookidis, “Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.” 161–62.

¹²¹ Williams (“The Refounding of Corinth,” 31) makes the following statement with regards to the Temple of Apollo: “The Temple of Apollo, securely seated on a limestone ridge overlooking the center of the city, was redesigned in the Roman style. Apparently the colonists were determined to reshape the Corinthian landscape more to their liking. No apparent sympathy was shown for the preservation of the Greek temple plan or of the operation of the cult as known in the Greek period.”

¹²² Williams, “The Refounding of Corinth,” 32. Økland (“Ceres, Κόρη, and Cultural Complexity,” 208) gives a slightly more positive statement on Rome and their relationship to the cults in places they ruled. On Corinth, she writes: “The great respect Romans showed to ancient cult places has been noted by many, and their care in restoring them has been taken as a strong indication that they understood their own cult in that place as a continuation of the pre-Roman phase.”

¹²³ On the Olympian cults, Bookidis (“The Sanctuaries of Corinth, 257) notes: “Insofar as we can document them, the preexisting Olympian cults continued to function after the refounding.” In her study of the cult of Melikertes-Palaimon, Elizabeth R. Gebhard (“Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon in the Early Roman Corinthia,” in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Scholwarter and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 165–203, 203) concludes: “There was thus both continuity and change in cult practice between the rites observed in Greek Corinth and in the Roman colony, but the debt to tradition seems to have been greater than previously supposed.” However, Bookidis (“The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” 257) points out that not all cults lived on after 146 BCE: “Peculiarly local Corinthian cults, such as the Heroon of the crossroads, the Sacred Spring, and the various stele-shrines, ended in 146 B.C.” On the subject of the offerings made to the sons of Medea in Greek Corinth, Pausanias comments in the second century CE that these were no longer being made under Roman hegemony: “After Corinth was laid waste by the Romans and the old Corinthians were wiped out, the new settlers broke the custom of offering those sacrifices to the sons of Medeas, nor do their children cut their hair for them or wear black clothes” (*Description of Greece* 2.3.7; LCL).

the role of dining in and around the sanctuaries (this seems to be one of the key issues Paul faces with his Corinthian Christ followers in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10). In her survey of pre-Roman Greek cults and cultic activity in Corinth, Nancy Bookidis finds that worship and dining often went hand in hand in Greek Corinth: “One aspect of pre-Roman worship that is well documented at Corinth is that of communal dining. . . . It is in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore that the most extensive provisions can be seen, far more dining buildings have been found here than in any other sanctuary in Greece.”¹²⁴ More than 40 dining rooms have been found from the Hellenistic period.¹²⁵ But after Rome had taken over the cult, the dining rooms in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore were all but done away with.¹²⁶ Most likely they were repurposed as plain cult rooms with nothing to facilitate dining, or they may have simply been deconstructed for other (unknown) purposes.¹²⁷

In Roman Corinth, there was one type of cult that would not have been present during Hellenistic times, namely the imperial cult.¹²⁸ The Roman imperial cult was centred around the emperor as a divine figure and they were worshipped and/or honored as divine beings.¹²⁹ Hoskins

¹²⁴ Bookidis, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” 255. For a detailed archaeological account of how some of these dining rooms looked like over time and what has been found in them, see Nancy Bookidis et al., “Dining in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth,” *Hesperia* 68 (1999): 1–54.

¹²⁵ Økland, “Ceres, Κόρη, and Cultural Complexity,” 204. She comments that “ritual dining by women worshippers was central to the cult.” Similarly, Ronald S. Stroud (“Religion and Magic in Roman Corinth,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, NovTSup 155, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Scholwalter (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 187–202, 190) draws the connection between the large number of dining rooms and women worshippers: “We have inferred from the form and large number of these dining rooms and from inscribed pottery found in them that they accommodated many women diners probably on festival days, perhaps for rites resembling the women’s Thesmophoria.” For more on women and cultic activity and sanctuaries in Roman Corinth, see Økland, *Women in Their Place*, 78–130.

¹²⁶ Bookidis, “The Sanctuaries of Corinth,” 257. Nevertheless, Økland (“Ceres, Κόρη, and Cultural Complexity,” 208) comments on the findings of kitchen vessels in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: “The number of kitchen vessels spread over the place may suggest that dining still continued in simplified forms, but it clearly did not take place anymore in a protected space.”

¹²⁷ Cf. Thomas, “Greek Heritage,” 121. Stroud (“Religion and Magic in Roman Corinth,” 193) suggests that some of the old dining rooms were used by magicians and/or sorceress to practice their craft in.

¹²⁸ J. Rufus Fears (“Ruler Worship,” in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons: 1988], 2.1009–25, 1013), however, argues that “ruler worship was . . . an established, accepted, and significant institution in the religion and politics of the Hellenistic world by the time the Romans began to impinge upon that world.”

¹²⁹ Fears (“Ruler Worship,” 1009) defines emperor worship as follows: “Sharply defined, ruler worship is the practice of offering sacrifice and other forms of cult homage to a mortal ruler, living or deceased.”

Walbank has shown that the imperial cult had a strong presence in Roman Corinth and that it enjoyed great popularity. Even though much of the epigraphical evidence is fragmentary and hard to date, she notes one inscription that, although fragmentary, clearly attests the existence of a cult dedicated to Julius Caesar. The inscription reads: *DIVO IUL[io] CAESARI [sacrum]*.¹³⁰ The imperial cult appears to have found a strong foothold early on in Corinth since the title Julius Caesar was given by the time of his deification in 42 BCE, *Divus Iulius*, is not used. This suggests that the Corinthians made the inscription before the official title of *Divus* had become well known in Corinth.¹³¹ Consequently, Hoskins Walbank dates this inscription to before 44 BCE.¹³² This indicates the establishment of the imperial cult early on in the life of Roman Corinth, and the inscription found during the early years of Nero's reign further suggest that this cult was active also when Paul came to Corinth. One of the major reasons as to the popularity and high esteem of the imperial cult was most likely due to the fact, as I discussed above, that a high percentage of the early colonists were made up of freedmen and "the strong, quasi-religious bond between freedman and *patronus* would have made the payment of cult honours to members of the imperial family a natural development."¹³³ The fact that these freedmen, who were of Greek origin, were

¹³⁰ Mary E. Hoskins Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult in Julio-Claudian Corinth," in *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Alastair Small, JRASup 17 (Ann Arbor, MI: Thomson-Shore, 1996), 201–13, 202. Inscription from Harvey Kent, *The Inscriptions: 1926–1950*, 32, nr. 50. Bookidis ("Religion in Corinth," 156) notes that a total of 62 inscriptions referencing the imperial cult have been found in Corinth. Hoskins Walbank ("Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 202) argues based on coinage displaying a hexastyle temple on the reverse and an inscription to the *Gens Iulia* on the architrave, that there probably was a temple dedicated to Julius Caesar. The finding of an inscription from the initial years of Nero's reign that gives honor to a *flamen divi Iulii* suggest both that there were other priests and quite possibly a temple where these priests served. Cf. Colin Miller, "The Imperial Cult in the Pauline Cities of Asia Minor and Greece," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 314–32, 330.

¹³¹ Hoskins Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 201.

¹³² Hoskins Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 201.

¹³³ Hoskins Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 209. Cf. Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 102. This "payment of cult honours" can predominantly be seen in the coinage of Corinth and in the many Julio-Claudian portraits and two altars found in the Julian Basilica (the east end of the forum). Bookidis ("Religion in Corinth," 156) concludes that these findings from the Julian Basilica suggest that this might have been the location of the imperial cult. Hoskins Walbank ("Evidence for the Imperial Cult," 210) disagrees and argues that the primary use of the building was commercial, not cultic, and that the statues were of a type that were often found in both public and semi-public buildings (she mentions the Building of Eumachia and the Macellum at Pompeii as examples).

proponents of the imperial cult indicates that Rome did not force this cult upon the Corinthians, at least not all of them, but that the Corinthians themselves accepted it as a natural part of the cultic activities of the Roman city.¹³⁴

As we saw previously, communal dining in cultic spaces was an important part of Greek worship before Corinth came under the hegemony of Rome and that during Roman times many cultic dining rooms, especially in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, were done away with in favour of other cultic spaces. Nevertheless, cultic dining still remained a pivotal part of Roman Corinth and John Scheid has shown that banquets played a substantial role in the cults of Rome.¹³⁵ Bookidis, building on the work of Scheid, contends that this would have been the case in Roman Corinth as well since all the material remains found in the forum that can be adequately interpreted show that “the cults in the forum are nearly all closely tied to the Roman state.”¹³⁶ Therefore, even if dining in and around sanctuaries and in connection with sacrifices was diminished in some parts of the cultic activity of Roman Corinth, it still took place in other.¹³⁷ This might be the cultic context that the Corinthian Christ followers found themselves in and that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ On the normalcy of the incorporation of the Roman imperial cult, Miller (“The Imperial Cult in the Pauline Cities,” 320) comments: “To an ancient Greek or Roman dwelling in one of the cities of Asia Minor or Achaia, the imperial cult would have been perceived as one cult among many and often would be indistinguishable from the cult of any other god.” Furthermore, Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 33) points out that the Roman imperial cult would not have been the only “foreign” cult in Corinth: “The cult in Roman Corinth was not confined to Greek deities only, but included foreign gods such as the Egyptian Isis and Sarapis, and also Artemis of the Ephesians.”

¹³⁵ John Scheid, “Sacrifice et banquet à Rome: Quelques problèmes,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Antiquité* 97 (1985): 193–206.

¹³⁶ Bookidis, “Religion in Corinth,” 157–58.

¹³⁷ On the events that took place in the imperial cult, Daniel McGraw (“The Imperial Cult: A New Paradigm for Understanding 2 Cor 2:14,” *ResQ* 52 (2010): 145–56, 154) notes: “The worship of the emperor was conducted with sacrificial processions linked with parades, public meals, and games.”

¹³⁸ Both Bruce W. Winter (“The Achaean Federal Imperial Cult II: The Corinthian Church,” *TynBul* 46 [1995]: 169–78) and Newton (*Deity and Diet*) suggest that the imperial cult was in fact the cultic backdrop for Paul’s comments in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

In conclusion, so far I have discussed three important facets of Roman Corinth (the demographic make-up of the first settlers, the languages used, and the [re-]building of cults in the city). By discussing these areas of Corinth, I demonstrated that Corinth, even though a Roman colony after 44 BCE, contained both Greek and Roman elements. Moreover, neither culture should be viewed as the most dominant in Corinth, but both cultures were influential when it came to the customs, traditions, and cults of the Greek city turned Roman colony. The insight of the multiculturalism in Corinth has some bearing on the context of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 since it will be important as we move forward to have this multi-cultural understanding of Corinth in mind—particularly so when it comes to the cultic rituals and sacrifices some of the Corinthian Christ followers evidently took part in. This leads us to the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and its place in the city.

The Corinthian *Ekklēsia*

In this section, I situate the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and assess its place in the city of Corinth. The primary evidence for the *ekklēsia* comes from the two surviving letters Paul sent to the Corinthians; I will also build upon the foundation laid earlier in this chapter in order to situate the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in its surrounding context of other groups, cults, and worshippers in Corinth.¹³⁹ To better understand the context the Corinthian *ekklēsia* found itself in when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to them, a number of topics will be dealt with below: Did Paul form the *ekklēsia* in Corinth or was it made up of already existing groups? How are we to understand the *ekklēsia* in the context of

¹³⁹ Even though we only have two extant letters sent from Paul to the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, it is clear that the correspondence between them included more letters than so. In 1 Cor 5:9 Paul mentions a previous letter (“Ἐγράψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ...”), making what we know as 1 Corinthians the second letter the Corinthians received from Paul (it is clear from 1 Cor 7:1 that this letter is a response to a letter the Corinthians sent to Paul; Περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε...). Then, before 2 Cor, Paul visited the *ekklēsia* (2 Cor 2:1) and wrote them another letter (2 Cor 2:3–4), making 2 Cor the fourth letter the Corinthian *ekklēsia* received from Paul. To avoid confusion, I will refer to what we know as 1 Corinthians as such or the first letter to the Corinthians and 2 Corinthians as such or the second letter to the Corinthians.

ancient group formations?¹⁴⁰ In terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status, who were the members of the *ekklēsia*?¹⁴¹ And how did the *ekklēsia* finance its activities?

Paul visited the city of Corinth sometime in the early to mid 50s CE and his sojourn in Corinth is also mentioned by Luke in Acts 18.¹⁴² He mentions that Paul was in Corinth during the time “Gallio was proconsul of Achaia” (Acts 18:12) and that Paul “remained there for many days” (Acts 18:18; verse 11 specifies it to one and a half years).¹⁴³ After Paul left Corinth, he sent (what we today know as) the first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus before Pentecost in the year 56/57 CE (cf. 1 Cor 16:8).¹⁴⁴ It is apparent from several instances in the letter that the Christ followers in Corinth experienced notable tensions within the *ekklēsia* (Paul refers to *σχίσματα* in the *ekklēsia* three times: 1 Cor 1:10–13; 11:18; 12:25), that they had misunderstood Paul’s teaching to some extent (5:9–11) or did not have sufficient knowledge of the apostle’s teaching (at least to Paul’s own mind; 5:1–2; 6:15–19; 11:2–16), and that they now were asking for clarification on a number of subjects (7:1; 8:1). Consequently, in this letter we find much of Paul’s thinking and the

¹⁴⁰ For example, was it a philosophical school, household assembly, a political assembly, a conglomerate of smaller assemblies, or a voluntary association? See Ralph J. Korner, “*Ekklēsia* as a Jewish Synagogue Term: Some Implications for Paul’s Socio-Religious Location,” *JMJS* 2 (2015): 53–78 for a review of some scholarly positions on this subject.

¹⁴¹ I use the term “socio-economic” since one’s economic status (i.e., surplus or lack of monetary assets) alone did not necessarily reflect one’s social status. As John S. Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019], 167) remarks: “Social standing was not so much a matter of one’s position on a ladder of status defined by income but rather on a ladder of *connectivity*. This does not minimize or deny that vast differences in status, power, honor, and wealth existed between the elite and the rest of the population. It does, however, mean that social standing depended on connectivity to sites of social power. The slave who belonged to a wealthy and powerful family was much better off, and had a much higher real social standing, than a freeborn worker or shop owner who was poorly connected.”

¹⁴² Suggestions concerning the date of 1 Corinthians vary: Fitzmyer (*First Corinthians*, 42) believes the letter was written 51 or 52 CE; David E. Garland (*1 Corinthians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003], 36) suggests 54 or 55 CE; Conzelmann (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 26–27) thinks 51 CE is the most likely. Kar Yong Lim (*Metaphors and Social Identity Formation in Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians* [Eugene: Pickwick, 2017], 193) thinks 1 Corinthians was written at least five years after the establishment of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*.

¹⁴³ Even though the historicity of Acts can be questioned, it seems that Luke has some correct knowledge of Paul’s stay in Corinth. For example, Luke mentions that Paul baptised a synagogue leader named Crispus (Acts 18:8); in 1 Cor 1:14 also Paul mentions a man named Crispus who he had baptised during his stay in Corinth. Another piece of evidence that strengthens the credibility of Acts 18 is the finding of a Greek inscription in a temple of Apollo in Delphi that mentions Gallio’s proconsulship (cf. Acts 18:12). Cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 40–41.

¹⁴⁴ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 42.

message he preached clarified for his audience and how Christ followers ought to put the apostle's instructions into practice in their daily lives.

One question that is raised in some of the literature on the Corinthian *ekklēsia* is whether this was a group that Paul founded or if it was an already existing group that Paul spread his message to. Concannon points out that Paul “claims not to have come merely to Corinth, where he preached, cobbled together a following, and formed a new community, but to have come ‘to you’ (πρὸς ὑμᾶς [1 Cor 2:1]). Paul’s phrasing leaves open the possibility that his first preaching in Corinth (1 Cor 2:1–5) was made to an existing association or cluster of groups.”¹⁴⁵ Concannon further notes that Paul uses πρὸς ὑμᾶς when writing his letter to the already established *ekklēsia* in Rome. Paul does not use the phrase when writing to *ekklēsiai* he himself founded.¹⁴⁶ Also the account in Acts 18 may lend credence to the idea that Paul did not found the *ekklēsia* in Corinth since Luke tells us that Paul proclaimed his message in two already established settings: first, the local synagogue (from where he was rejected; but some apparently took his message to heart, 18:8), and second, the house of Titius Justus where presumably a group used to gather (18:7). In addition, Burton L. Mack holds the view that Paul’s instructions regarding the communal cultic meal in 1 Corinthians 11 demonstrate “that the Corinthians were already in the practice of meeting together before Paul came along, that some kind of meal was part of the practice, and that Paul wanted to change that practice in order to align it with his conception of an *ekklēsia* in the name

¹⁴⁵ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 78. Cf. Jonathan Z. Smith, “Re: Corinthians,” in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, SBLECL 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 17–34, 28–29.

¹⁴⁶ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 224. Paul does use the term πρὸς ὑμᾶς when writing to the *ekklēsia* in Thessaloniki (1 Thess 1:9; 2:1–2). However, there is some evidence that Paul did not found this *ekklēsia* but that he had preached his message about Christ to an already existing group of people, see Richard S. Ascough, “The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 311–28; *ibid*, “Of Memories and Meals: Greco-Roman Associations and the Early Jesus-Group at Thessalonikē,” in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 64 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 49–72.

of Jesus Christ.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, Concannon suggests with regards to the *ekklēsia* in Corinth: “What may have started out as a loose affiliation of households, a regular gathering of workers of a similar trade, or migrants meeting to honor ancestral gods and deceased ancestor over a cultic meal could have developed into what Paul often calls the Corinthian *ekklēsia* through the activities of Paul, his coworkers (Timothy and Titus), and his rivals (Apollos and the ‘super-apostles’).”¹⁴⁸

The idea that Paul did not so much found as form the Corinthian *ekklēsia* by bringing different groups together does not change the fact that Paul himself viewed the Corinthian group(s) as one (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1). What it might give us insight into, however, is the reason why the members of the *ekklēsia* disagree on a number of topics and how these groups within the *ekklēsia* are “competing” with one another. A question that follows from this query of whether Paul founded the Corinthian *ekklēsia* or if he recruited members from different groups and parts of society is what kind of ancient group provides the best typology for the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and who the members of the *ekklēsia* were. These topics will now be dealt with in turn.

The suggestions regarding what kind of group the ancient Christ groups constituted abound in the scholarly literature. Here, I seek to gain a more nuanced picture of the *ekklēsia* and what

¹⁴⁷ Burton L. Mack, “Rereading the Christ Myth: Paul’s Gospel and the Christ Cult Question,” in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, SBLECL 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 35–73, 51.

¹⁴⁸ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 78. That the household and those who belonged to it was important to both Jews and gentiles, the groups from which the members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* came, is noted by Markus Öhler (“Das ganze Haus: Antike Alltagsreligiosität und die Apostelgeschichte,” *ZNW* 102 [2011]: 201–34, 226): “Sowohl für das antike Judentum wie für die pagane Welt waren Familie und Hausgemeinschaft ein ganz entscheidendes Element der Identität. Die Zugehörigkeit zur Familie und zu ihren Traditionen wurde wesentlich durch die im Haus geübte Religiosität begründet und zum Ausdruck gebracht.” Concannon also suggests that Paul’s language of the Christ follower in Corinth as being *one ekklēsia* might be wishful thinking and aimed more at creating an *ekklēsia* than reflecting the current situation in Corinth. This view is held by Stanley K. Stowers, “Kinds of Myth, Meals, and Power: Paul and the Corinthians,” in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, SBLECL 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 105–49, 109–10. This is in stark contrast to the words of Conzelmann (*Der erste Brief*, 28): “Auf der anderen Seite ist es nicht möglich, die Unterschiede zwischen den in Kap. 1 genannten Gruppen zu bestimmen. Und: die Gemeinde bildet nach wie vor eine Einheit.”

kind of group it was.¹⁴⁹ In what follows, I follow Philip A. Harland’s taxonomy of ancient associations and I mainly discuss two types of ancient groups: the household model and the cultic association model.¹⁵⁰

That “family networks and structures played a key role in the formation and expansion of some early Christian assemblies” is evident from 1 Corinthians and other texts produced by early Christ followers.¹⁵¹ For example, in 1 Cor 1:16 Paul mentions that he baptised the “household of Stephanas” (τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον) and in 16:9 he refers to an *ekklēsia* gathering taking place in the

¹⁴⁹ My approach is akin to that of John S. Kloppenborg (“Greco-Roman *Thiasoi*, the *Ekklēsia* at Corinth, and Conflict Management,” in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, SBLECL 5 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011], 187–218, 189) who writes: “rather than engaging rhetorical overstatement and claiming, for examples, that the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was a *philosophia*, or was a cult association, it is far more useful to compare particular aspects of Christian, Jewish, and pagan associative practices” (emphasis original).

¹⁵⁰ With respect to the different types of associations that were active in antiquity and their interests, Philip A. Harland (*Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in the Mediterranean Society* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 28–52) divides the overarching term of association into five sub-groups depending on their interests and/or where most of their members came from (socially, geographically, ethnically, etc.): “There were groups that drew primarily on (1) household connections, (2) ethnic or geographic connections, (3) neighborhood connections, (4) occupational connections, and (5) cult or temple connections.” As Harland points out, even though an association would typically have one of these five interests and/or connections as their main focus, these categories are not watertight, and one association could have interests or connections in more than one of the five sub-groups. Cf. Matthew Gibbs, “Trade Associations in Roman Egypt: Their ‘raison d’être’,” *Ancient Society* 41 (2011): 291–315, 291. Of these five categories, I find the first and fifth to have the strongest explanatory force when it comes to the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and will therefore focus on those two categories.

I have intentionally avoided the term “house church” since it comes with a lot of unnecessary (theological) baggage and since it has become evident in more recent years that the “house church” is not the most or only accurate group structure when it comes to discussing the structure and organization of early Christ groups. Edward Adams (*The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?*, LNTS 450 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark: 2013], 201–02) gives two reasons why the term “house church” is unbecoming: first, the term is not used in any of the NT texts; second, the term is too closely associated with the modern house church movement and by using the term “house church” for the early Christ groups it is all too easy to imply that the ancient “house church” is homologous to the modern house church. Adams concludes “that the category ‘house church/churches should be dropped altogether from New Testament and Early Christian Studies.” In addition, Last (*Pauline Church*, 45–54) shows that the “house church” model was, and is, in many ways a way for scholars to set apart the early Christ groups from its pagan and Jewish neighbors in antiquity by arguing that the “house church” was *sui generis* and that the Christ groups (what only later became the church) was morally superior to its pagan and Jewish counterparts. Take, for example, the following words of Roger W. Gehring (*House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* [Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004], 294): “Christian brotherly love, theologically rooted in the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, transcended all social barriers, including those separating masters from slaves and Jews from Gentiles. Through the penetrating power of the gospel, even the *oikos* structures underwent a partial transformation. In the small, family-like setting of the house church, individuals from extremely different social backgrounds were united into one new community. Inwardly, early house churches provided Christians with a training ground for practicing brotherly love and had a powerful integrating effect.”

¹⁵¹ Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 31.

house of Aquila and Prisca (τῆ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησία; cf. Rom 16:5; Phlm 2). In addition, Paul uses familial language by referring to the members of the *ekklēsia* as ἀδελφοί numerous times (1:10; 5:11; 6:6; 7:12; 8:11, 13) and as both ἀδελφοί and ἀδελφαί one time (7:15).¹⁵² This indicates that Paul conceptualised the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in terms of kinship and that the οἶκος was one of the meeting places for the *ekklēsia*.¹⁵³ However, John S. Kloppenborg points out that we should not imagine the οἶκος as the only place where the early Christ followers would have met. Paul speaks of the *ekklēsia* as being greater than just individual households.¹⁵⁴ This is suggested by Paul's references to *ekklēsiai* in specific cities, larger geographical areas, and more general references to *ekklēsiai* which all indicate that the *ekklēsia* should not be limited to the household: Rom 16:1, τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς; 16:4, πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἐθνῶν; 1 Cor 1:2, τῆ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ... ἐν Κορίνθῳ; 11:6, αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ; 16:1, ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας; Gal 1:22, ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας; 1 Thess 1:1, τῆ ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων. This is also indicated in 1 Cor 11:18 where Paul mentions that several households come together as an *ekklēsia* (ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ). Consequently, the *ekklēsia* in Corinth used houses as a meeting place, but Paul's use of the word *ekklēsia* suggests that he thought the *ekklēsia* was not constrained to meetings that took place in members' houses.

In light of the important role of family ties—both biological and fictive—the house as a meeting place of the Corinthian Christ followers should not be overlooked. But the household

¹⁵² As Harland (*Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 32) points out, this was not unique to Paul or the early Christ groups but took place in many groups where the members were not related biologically. For an in-depth analysis of Paul's use of ἀδελφός, see Paul Trebilco, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21–38.

¹⁵³ For a more in-depth investigation into Paul's language of kinship, see Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, then Heirs*; in early Christianity, see Denise Kimber Buell, *Why this Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁴ Kloppenborg, "Greco-Roman *Thiasoi*," 192.

model, even though it does shed light on how the Corinthians organized and on how Paul viewed them, does have its limitations and is not sufficient in and of itself to explain the structure and place of the Corinthian Christ group in ancient society.¹⁵⁵ Edward Adams discusses a more recent trend in scholarship that situates the Pauline Christ groups meeting places not only in houses but also in workshops, shops, gardens, and inns.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, in 1 Cor 11:20 and 14:23 Paul speaks of when the whole *ekklēsia* comes together (11:20 *συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν*; 14:23 *συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη*), which implies two things: first, these larger gatherings were made up of sub-groups within the *ekklēsia*; second, when the *whole ekklēsia* came together it did so not in a member's house, but elsewhere (cf. 11:22).¹⁵⁷ Whereas it is probable that some of these sub-groups “may well have worshipped in houses... others may have met in shops, workshops and perhaps other non-house settings.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, the role of the *οἶκος* is one important piece of the puzzle that is the reconstruction of early Christ groups. But in contrast to much of earlier scholarship on this topic, we must move beyond the household model as the only model for the early Christ followers and look elsewhere in order to gain a more complete and nuanced picture of how the Corinthian Christ

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Richard Last, “The Neighborhood (*vicus*) of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*: Beyond Family-Based Descriptions of the First Urban Christians,” *JSNT* 38 (2016): 399–425.

¹⁵⁶ Edward Adams, “Placing the Corinthian Communal Meal,” in *Text, Image, and Christians in the Graeco-Roman World. A Festschrift in Honor of David Lee Balch*, ed. Aliou Cissé Niang and Carolyn Osiek, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 176 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 22–35. On the topic where and how the Corinthians *ekklēsia* met, see Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (Minneapolis: Fortress; London, SPCK, 2009), 94; David L. Balch, “The Church Sitting in a Garden (1 Cor 14:30; Rom 16:23; Mark 39–40; 8:6; John 6:3, 10; Acts 1:15; 2:1–2),” in *Contested Spaces: Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. David L. Balch and Annette Weissenrieder, WUNT 285 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 201–35; Siri Sande, “Huskirker og tituluskirker – salmer i heimen eller i badet?” *Kirke og Kultur* 104 (1999): 7–18; Annette Weissenrieder, “Contested Spaces in 1 Corinthians 11:17–33 and 14:30: Sitting or Reclining in Ancient Houses, in Associations and in the Space of *ekklēsia*,” in *Contested Spaces: Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. David L. Balch and Annette Weissenrieder, WUNT 285 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 59–108.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Adams, “Placing the Corinthian Communal Meal,” 26–29. See also David G. Horrell (“Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre,” *NTS* 50 [2004]: 349–69) and his critique against much of the scholarship, mainly taking its lead from Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, that places this meal in a domestic setting.

¹⁵⁸ Adams, *Christian Meeting Places*, 26.

followers structured and viewed themselves (and how Paul structured and viewed them).¹⁵⁹ This leads us to the second ancient group construction in Harland’s taxonomy that I want to explore here: the cultic association.¹⁶⁰

The Corinthian *ekklēsia* performed and took part in several cultic elements. For example, they revered Jesus as their *kurios* (1 Cor 1:2);¹⁶¹ they used baptism as an initiation rite (1:13–16); they celebrated a meal in honor of their lord (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*; 11:17–32); and at least some of the *ekklēsia* members participated in cultic meals and rituals organized by non-Christ followers (8:7–13; 10:20–21). As a cultic association, the Christ group in Corinth would have fit in well in the city which, as we saw above, harbored several deities and cults both when it was a Greek city and as a Roman colony. In general, cultic associations were more inclusive than other associations might have been, and Kloppenborg makes the following statement with regards to groups that would have a deity, hero, or god as their focal point: “Cultic associations, because they were not necessarily linked either to an ethnic identity (like diasporic groups) or to a trade or craft (as with occupational guilds) had the capacity to attract the broadest spectrum of participants: citizens,

¹⁵⁹ Both Last (*Pauline Church*, 45–54) and Adams (*Christian Meeting Places*, 1–5) give in-depth reviews and overviews of how dominant the household model has been in previous scholarship and how its hegemony as *the* model for early Christ groups has affected the picture of the Pauline *ekklēsiai* and led to neglect of other evidence present in the Pauline corpus. Even though the trajectory of the household model can be traced back many centuries, Adams traces the more modern roots (1980s and onwards) of the dominance of the household model to Robert Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Cultural Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Hans-Josef Klauck, *Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum*, SBS 103 (Stuttgart: Katholische Bibelwerk, 1981).

¹⁶⁰ Harland (*Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 44) points out that “appropriately honoring gods and goddesses through offerings and rituals (sacrifices, prayers, singing mysteries) in a group setting was a concern of virtually all types of associations.” As such, the cultic elements of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* may not make it a cultic group *per se*; however, as Harland continues, he mentions that “there are associations whose membership appears to draw primarily from social networks connected with a specific cult or sanctuary, and whose continuing group identity, both in the view of members and of outsiders, was expressed in terms of devotion to the deity or deities.” I argue that the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was just such a group and that its core identity lay in its recognition of Jesus as the messiah.

¹⁶¹ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2003). On the Jewish roots and context of the Christology of the early Jesus movement, see Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); *idem*, *The Grammar of Messianism: An Ancient Jewish Political Idiom and Its Users* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Ruben A. Bühner, *Messianic High Christology: New Testament Variants of Second Temple Judaism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2021).

immigrants, women as well as men, slaves as well as freedmen/freedwomen.”¹⁶² This diversity certainly holds true for the *ekklēsia* in Corinth which consisted of women, men, married, unmarried, circumcised, uncircumcised, gentiles, Jews, slaves, and freedpersons (1 Cor 7:8, 10–13, 18, 21–22; 12:2, 13). Another aspect of Paul’s language that highlights the cultic elements of the Christ group—as well as the fact that the members of the *ekklēsia* came from many different facets of society—is his use of the language of calling: “he relied heavily on the notion that God has ‘called’ adherents of the Christ cult—using *kaleō* and its cognates. Members are in fact referred to as ‘the called’ (*hoi klētoi*, 1 Cor 1:2, 24).”¹⁶³ Thus, Paul’s understanding of the Christ followers in Corinth is that this diverse group made-up of various types of people has been called by God to form one *ekklēsia* of God which is “made holy in Christ Jesus” (1:2).

The various cultic practices (baptism, the Lord’s supper, reverence of Jesus Christ, etc.) undoubtedly made up the core of the Corinthian Christ group’s identity. This can be seen in the many controversies and debates present in the *ekklēsia* which often concerned cultic ritual and practices.¹⁶⁴ Baptism, which functioned as an initiation rite (1 Cor 12:13), seems to have led to divisions among the Corinthians who identified their place within the *ekklēsia* depending on whom they were baptised by (Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ). This runs contrary to Paul’s own intentions and understanding of baptism as a unifying act (cf. 12:13; Gal 3:27–28). In a similar way, the *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* in 1 Corinthians 11 is a ritual that brings about (or makes clear) divisions within the *ekklēsia* rather than unifying it. Consequently, the Corinthians are unable to celebrate it in an appropriate manner, according to Paul. Finally, in chapter 8 Paul implores those Christ followers

¹⁶² Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 29.

¹⁶³ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 87. He also points out that the rhetoric of a deity or hero gathering a group of people that performed cultic rituals to them or in their honor was a strategic way to “justify the existence of socially mixed groups that might otherwise be thought peculiar or even deviant.”

¹⁶⁴ Three times in the letter Paul urges the Corinthians that there be no *σχίσματα* in the *ekklēsia* (1:10; 11:18; 12:25).

who attend idol temples and the meals eaten therein to stop doing so if this negatively impacts their fellow Christ followers. These three examples concern cultic practices (both within and outside of the *ekklēsia*) and underlines just how large a role various cultic rituals played in the life of the *ekklēsia*. The instructions from Paul's side detail how the rituals should be either properly understood (so with baptism and the Lord's supper) or why one should consider not partaking in them (so with the eating in idol temples). Having discussed how the Corinthian *ekklēsia* might best be understood, I now focus on the members of the *ekklēsia* in order to gain a fuller picture of its membership and internal structure.

When reading 1 Corinthians, one gets the impression that most of the letter's recipients are gentiles. However, there are some indication that Paul is writing to a mixed audience constituted by both gentiles and Jews.¹⁶⁵ That the *ekklēsia* should be made up of people of various ethnic backgrounds (whether different non-Jewish ethnicities or both non-Jewish ones and Jewish) resonate well with the reconstruction of Roman Corinth above, and, as David E. Garland points out: "In Paul's time, Corinth had a mixed ethnic population of Roman freedmen, indigenous Greeks, and immigrants from far and wide."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ I agree with Johnson Hodge (*If Sons, then Heirs*, 9), who writes that "there is perhaps no more pivotal issue for determining one's reading of Paul than audience," and that by putting emphasis on the audience of the apostle's letters we can better understand his message. For example, I agree to a large extent with Lloyd Gaston (*Paul and the Torah* [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987], 23), who writes with regards to the question of Paul and the Jewish law: "Paul writes to Gentile Christians, dealing with Gentile-Christian problems, foremost among which was the right of Gentiles qua Gentiles, without adopting the Torah of Israel, to full citizenship in the people of God."

¹⁶⁶ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 23. I find Garland's understanding of Corinth as a "miniature of Rome" (a phrase from the second century CE writer Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights* 16.13.9) to greatly diminish the role that Greek heritage and culture would have played in Corinth even after it became a Roman colony. Garland's own thoughts on how the Corinthian *ekklēsia* would have looked is as follows: "The church Paul founded was diverse and socially stratified. It would have had a Jewish component (7:18) along with Gentile proselytes and God-fearers partial to Judaism... and former devotees of idols and folk religion (8:7). Some may have been Roman citizens. Some were better off, while others belonged to the disenfranchised (foreigners and slaves)" (*ibid*, 35). Even though I mainly focus on the question of whether both Jews and gentiles were present in the *ekklēsia*, Richard E. DeMaris ("Cults and the Imperial Cult in Early Roman Corinth: Literary Versus Material Record," in *Zwischen den Reichen: Neues Testament und Römische Herrschaft: Vorträge auf der Ersten Konferenz der European Association for Biblical Studies*, ed. Michael Laban and Jürgen Zagenberg [Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2002], 73–91, 83) is correct to point out that we should not conflate the various non-Jewish ethnicities into one single "gentile" category. This is down to the fact that there is a strong

The indication of a mainly gentile membership in the *ekklēsia* comes from the nature of the topics treated in 1 Corinthians and the fact that Paul addresses his recipients as gentiles (ἔθνη) either implicitly or explicitly in at least three instances. In 6:11 and 8:7 Paul professes that some of the Corinthians he is writing to had previously been taking part in acts and rituals that he deemed as unrighteous (ἀδικος, 6:9), and in both instances he includes the worship of idols.¹⁶⁷ Later on in the letter, in 12:2, Paul explicitly states that the Christ followers he is addressing were gentiles who used to worship idols (οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι).¹⁶⁸ Paul makes similar remarks about the Christ followers in Thessaloniki (1 Thess 1:9) and Galatia (Gal 4:8), both *ekklēsiai* that were made up of gentile Christ followers. There are also texts from 1 Corinthians, however, that give the impression that there were both Jews and gentiles present in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*.¹⁶⁹

possibility that tensions did not only arise in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* between Jews and non-Jews, but among Romans and Greeks and natives and colonists as well.

¹⁶⁷ That Paul is accusing only some of the Corinthians for this is clear from his use of *τινες*, the masculine plural nominative of *τις*. It is of course not impossible that Jews too are being accused by Paul here, but the accusation fits well with what Paul says about gentiles elsewhere, especially Rom 1:18–32; 1 Thess 1:9; 4:3–5; Gal 4:8.

¹⁶⁸ Here, Paul does not use the indefinite pronoun *τις* but appears to be addressing a wider part of the *ekklēsia* or the whole Corinthian group. The former is probably to prefer since, as will be discussed later, there is suggestions that Jews, too, were part of the *ekklēsia* and they would not have been the target of Paul's remarks in 12:2.

¹⁶⁹ It is unclear whether there was a Jewish diaspora in Corinth by Paul's time, and if there was, how big it was. To my knowledge, there are only two sources from the first to second century CE that mention Jews living in Corinth. The first one is Acts 18 where Luke mentions the presence of a synagogue (18:4). The second source is Philo (*The Embassy to Gaius* 281) who claims that there were Jews living in Corinth. The historical credibility of both of these accounts, however, can be doubted. Whether there actually were Jews living in Corinth during Paul's day, as Luke would have it, might be Luke reading in the situation during his time (which would be decades later than Paul's stay in Corinth) in the end of the first century when Vespasian replaced numerous Jews to the Isthmus on which Corinth lay (see Josephus's *Jewish War* 3.540). Concannon ("When You Were Gentiles", 259) thinks that it might be this event that led to a Jewish presence in Corinth and that Luke assumes that there were Jews living there earlier as well. The historical veracity of Philo's account is harder to establish. John M. G. Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], 10) takes Philo's word to be more or less correct, referring to Acts 2:9–11 and Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* 14.115, where Josephus quotes Strabo, as two other sources that agree with Philo (however, neither of these two sources mention that Jews lived in Corinth), even though Barclay admits that "an element of hyperbole may infect them all." Concannon ("When You Were Gentiles", 259) is more sceptical than Barclay and argues that Philo's claim that there were Jews living in Corinth is rhetorical and that the "point here is that Jews can be found in the best places in the Peloponnesos, Corinth and Argos being two prominent examples." Indeed, all sources (Philo's *Embassy to Gaius* 281, Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* 14.115, and Acts 2:9–11) attempt to overplay the extent to which the Jews had spread throughout the known world. In addition to Philo and Luke there is one more explicit mention of a Jewish presence in Corinth. In

In 1 Cor 7:18 Paul writes that if someone was circumcised at time of his calling, he should not undergo epispasm (i.e., have the foreskin restored) (περιτετμημένος τις ἐκλήθη; μὴ ἐπισπάσθω). Likewise if one was uncircumcised at the time of his calling to the Christ group, he should not get circumcised (ἐν ἀκροβυστία κέκληται τις; μὴ περιτεμνέσθω).¹⁷⁰ Now, it seems fairly straightforward to take the latter of these two groups, the ἀκροβυστία, to be gentile. The former group, however, could reasonably be made up of two groups: Jews who were circumcised at birth or gentiles who had become circumcised as adults, presumably as a way to indicate their adherence to the Jewish traditions. Joseph Fitzmyer reads the περιτετμημένος group as evidence that there were both Jews and gentiles present in the *ekklēsia*, understanding the verb περιτετμημένος and the noun ἀκροβυστία as two contrasting pairs with the former referring to Jews and the latter referring to gentiles.¹⁷¹ In a similar fashion, Garland comments on 7:18: “The Corinthians congregation included both Jews and Gentiles... Paul uses circumcision as an example to reinforce the principle

1898 an inscription that reads [Συνα]γωγὴ Ἑβραίων was found in Corinth, which has led several scholars to think that this supports the portrayal in Acts 18 and the existence of a Jewish community in Corinth during Paul’s time. For example, Conzelmann (*Der erste Brief*, 26) takes this inscription and seems to assume a date prior to Paul’s stay in Corinth and simply notes that “Die Anwesenheit von Juden ist durch eine Inschrift dokumentiert.” Adolf Deissmann (*Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, 2nd ed. [London/New York/Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911], 13), whom Conzelmann refers to, dates the inscription to anywhere between 100 BCE – 200 CE and takes the writing to strongly suggest that Acts 18:4 is historically accurate: “It is therefore a possibility seriously to be reckoned with that we have here the inscription to the door of the Corinthian synagogue mentioned in Acts xviii. 4.” Even though it is true that this inscription indicates that there were Jews present in Corinth, the inscription does not give any conclusive evidence vis-à-vis the date or place of this “synagogue of the Hebrews.” For, as Oster (“Use, Misuse and Neglect,” 56) points out, the inscription was not found *in situ* and its origins are unclear. With regards to the dating of the inscription, Benjamin Dean Meritt (*Corinth: Greek Inscriptions: 1896–1927*, vol. 8, part 1 of *Corinth* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931], 79) noted already in the early 1930s that “the style of lettering indicates that the inscription is considerably later than the time of St. Paul.” Consequently, this inscription should not be used in a reconstruction of the possible presence of a Jewish diaspora in Corinth in Paul’s day. This is not to say that there was not a Jewish population in Corinth when Paul visited the city, but that the literary and epigraphic evidence we have give no definitive answer to the question.

¹⁷⁰ On epispasm, see Robert G. Hall, “Epispasm and the Dating of Ancient Jewish Writings,” *JSP* 2 (1988): 71–86; Andreas Blaschke, *Beschneidung: Zeugnisse der Bibel und verwandter Texte*, TANZ 28 (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1998), 139–44.

¹⁷¹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 308. Cf. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 151. Fitzmyer refers to 1 Macc 1:15 and Josephus’s *Antiquities* 12.241 to demonstrate that there was some precedence among Jews to perform epispasm to conform with their gentile surroundings. Fitzmyer does not explain why the Jewish Christ followers mentioned in 7:18 would feel this urge as Paul’s words suggest.

he has just laid down: they are to remain in the condition in which they were called. Jews who responded to God’s call remained Jews, and Gentiles who converted to the Christian faith remained gentiles.”¹⁷² Paula Fredriksen takes another stance vis-à-vis the question of the ethnicity of those “having been circumcised” in 7:18, arguing that they are gentiles who were circumcised before Paul proclaimed his message in Corinth.¹⁷³ Her main argument for this position is that elsewhere Paul talks highly of circumcision (e.g., Rom 3:1–2; 9:4–5 [circumcision is implied here]; Phil 3:4–5) and therefore Paul cannot be implying that the circumcision of Israelites is nothing (1 Cor 7:19: περιτομή οὐδέν ἐστίν); rather, the circumcision that is “nothing” is that of gentiles: “Thus, those who received Paul’s gospel when “already circumcised” must be gentile proselytes, not born Jews.”¹⁷⁴

Even though I think Fredriksen’s reading is a salient one from the perspective that it manages to coalesce these otherwise seemingly contradictory stances taken by Paul on circumcision, her interpretation is not without its problems. For example, in 1 Cor 12:13, which also is a text where Paul wants to remind the members of the *ekklesia* of their equal status, Paul says that the members of the Christ group were all baptised in one Spirit into one body (ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν) and that all, Paul here includes himself, were made to drink of the same Spirit (πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν). The groups Paul mentions as having been baptised and made to drink of the Spirit are Jew and Greek and slave and free, the exact same two groups that he mentioned in 7:18 and 22 (if we understand περιτετμημένος as ethnic Jews). While it is correct that Paul values circumcision very highly when it comes to the circumcision of eight-day old Jewish boys, I do not think that 7:18—even if we take the περιτετμημένος as ethnic Jews—

¹⁷² Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 249.

¹⁷³ Fredriksen, *Pagans’ Apostle*, 107.

¹⁷⁴ Fredriksen, *Pagans’ Apostle*, 107.

necessarily speaks against that. Rather, Paul can be understood to say that neither circumcision nor foreskin have any value with regard to one's calling—i.e., one can be called in both states and one is not better off as circumcised or uncircumcised.¹⁷⁵ Here, the thing Paul takes issue with is not circumcision, but rather the question of calling, which is supported by the fact that this section continues to elaborate on how calling relates to other issues, such as slaves/free people.

Another statement by Paul that merits looking into vis-à-vis the question of whether Jews were members of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth is 1 Cor 10:1, where Paul claims that the Israelites who wandered in the desert with Moses are οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, and so includes the members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in the history of the Israelites. This begs the question of whether Paul is including the gentile members of the *ekklēsia* in the history of its Jewish members, or if he simply takes the Israelites' history and includes the Christ following gentiles in it without the presence of any Jewish members. Fitzmyer understands Paul's statement in the sense that he includes "the predominantly Gentile Christian community of Roman Corinth" in the history of Israel since for Paul, Fitzmyer holds, the gentile Christ followers are "the Israel of God" (cf. Gal 6:16).¹⁷⁶ I agree with Fitzmyer that Paul does include the gentile Christ followers in the history of Israel since there is no suggestion in the text or context of 10:1 that Paul is excluding the gentile part of the *ekklēsia*; however, I find Fitzmyer's understanding of the gentile Christ followers as "the Israel of God" to

¹⁷⁵ Paul's positive evaluation of circumcision is still upheld by 1 Cor 7:19b which states that keeping the commandments of God, which for Jews of course means circumcision on eight-day old boys, is important. Thus, as Anders Runesson ("Paul's Rule in All the *Ekklesiāi*," 216–17) puts it: "When Paul states that the circumcised must not reverse their circumcision, he rules that Jews 'in Christ' must remain Jewish and keep the Jewish law, since keeping the law is inextricably intertwined with circumcision and ethnicity." In support of this understanding of 1 Cor 7:18–19, Thiessen (*Gentile Problem*, 9) highlights Paul's language in 7:19: "In fact, Paul's use of the verb 'to keep' (τηρέω) with the noun 'commandment' (ἐντολή), a construction that other Jews used to signify faithful observance of the Jewish law (cf. Sir 32:23; *T. Dan* 5.1; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.120; Matt 19:17–19; Rev 12:17; 14:12), suggests that Paul signals the abiding relevance of law observance."

¹⁷⁶ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 381.

be less certain than he makes it out to be.¹⁷⁷ Concannon offers a more nuanced reading of 10:1: “The pasts of the Corinthians, like that of the Israelites, were always open to being recast, rewritten, and reinterpreted as part of constructing ethnic and civic identity in the present.... 1 Cor 10:1–13 write[s] new Corinthians into a history that was not originally theirs, but Paul uses that history as an example to encourage his audience to mark boundaries between themselves and others on the basis of particular cultic and dietary practices.”¹⁷⁸ Consequently, what Paul aims to do in 10:1 is to reimagine, rewrite, and retell the (hi)story of some in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* by adopting a clear narrative, that of the Israelites, and using it as the template for the whole Corinthian *ekklēsia*. This does not mean that Paul only rewrites his gentiles’ history, but this narrative (that of the Israelites) must already have had some basis or traction in the *ekklēsia*, otherwise it would not serve Paul’s intended purpose. Arguably, then, there were some Jews present with whom the phrase οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν would have resonated, but Paul now uses the term οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν to include all who are in the *ekklēsia*—Jew and gentile alike. So, with regards to the question of the ethnic make-up of the Christ group in Corinth there should be no doubt that gentiles made up a significant part of it, but as 7:18 and 10:1 indicate there were most likely Jewish Christ followers present as well.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Fitzmyer’s understanding of Gal 6:16 is shared among numerous scholars, see, e.g., H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 323; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 574–77; Wolfgang Kraus, *Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus*, WUNT 85 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 251–52. This is, I think, one possible, but not necessarily the best, understanding of Gal 6:16 and the phrase εἰρήνη ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ. The syntax of the sentence also allows it to be translated: “peace upon them, and mercy also upon the Israel of God.” For a fuller account of the arguments for the understanding that Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ is not the gentile *ekklēsia* in Galatia but the Jews, see Susan Grove Eastman, “Israel and the Mercy of God: A Re-reading of Galatians 6.16 and Romans 9–11,” *NTS* 56 (2010): 367–95. See also Ole Jakob Filtvedt, “‘God’s Israel’ in Galatians 6.16: An Overview and Assessment of the Key Arguments,” *CBR* 15 (2016): 123–40.

¹⁷⁸ Concannon, “*When You Were Gentiles*”, 159–60. It is not entirely clear to me whether Concannon believes Paul reimagines the past of all Corinthians, thus seeing the *ekklēsia* as made up of only gentiles, or if Paul reimagines a part of the *ekklēsia*’s identity. See also his “Negotiating Multiple Modes of Religion and Identity in Roman Corinth,” in *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth*, ed. James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn, SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 8 (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), 85–104.

¹⁷⁹ Another indication that there were Jewish Christ followers present in the *ekklēsia* are the many references Paul makes to the Hebrew Bible. Clearly, Paul assumes that his audience will understand these references and stories taken

I now turn to another crucial question when it comes to a fuller understanding of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*: what was the socio-economic status of its members? Before seeking to answer that question, however, it is worthwhile considering the size of the *ekklēsia* and how many members it had when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. The answer to these questions will affect our understanding of how many members may have come from the lower and/or higher strata of society and how big the different groups and divisions within the *ekklēsia* were.

Last points out that scholars tend to estimate that the Corinthian Christ group consisted of 40–100 members.¹⁸⁰ For example, Roger W. Gehring mentions that the Corinthian Christ group “was relatively large and consisted of not less than thirty and probably from fifty to ninety members.”¹⁸¹ In contrast to these suggestions about the size of the *ekklēsia*, Last gives a significantly lower number of *ekklēsia* members: 10.¹⁸² One of the issues in the attempt to assess

from the Hebrew Bible, and this may be further evidence of Jewish Christ followers. However, an audience largely made-up of “god-fearers” and gentiles interested in the Jewish life, including its scriptures, would also have understood these references to the Hebrew Bible. But since we have other evidence that there most likely were Jews present in the *ekklēsia*, it is quite possible that the group who would have understood the references to the Jewish scriptures were made-up of at least some Jews, even if there could also have been “god-fearers” present. Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations*, 85) argues that this is an indication of mixed membership: “In both Corinthian letters Paul routinely cites the Septuagint as proof-texts, which implies that at least part of his addressees were Judean and expected to understand references to Moses and key events in Israelite history.”

¹⁸⁰ Last, *Pauline Church*, 71. Cf. L. L. Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 377; Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 89; Robert J. Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Cultural Setting*, rev. ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 35; Craig Steven de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Communities*, SBLDS 168 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 204.

¹⁸¹ Gehring, *House Church and Mission*, 139.

¹⁸² This is for Last (*Pauline Church*, 73–77) the minimum number of *ekklēsia* members; there could, of course, be more than 10 members. However, giving a maximum membership number is more difficult and arbitrary than providing a minimum, since, as Last (*Pauline Church*, 76) argues: “We should imagine the Corinthian *ekklēsia* to have had a fluctuating number of members. In addition to a minimum of nine or ten core members, the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was rounded off by participants who came and, for various reasons, left. Aquila and Prisca moved to West Asia (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3–5), Chloe... and her people somehow affiliated themselves to the Christ group but Paul never mentioned them as members (1:11); Phoebe... lived about a two-hour walk Southeast and perhaps made occasional appearances but we cannot be sure (Rom 16:1–2); guests periodically dined with the group: Gaius (Rom 16:23), various itinerants (2 Cor 11:4–5), and unnamed individuals (1 Cor 14:16–24) joined in occasionally. The Corinthians’ guests may have been invited to replace the absence of regular members (1 Cor 14:16) or to fill in for those who were expelled after failing to change their misbehaviour (1 Cor 5:1–13; 2 Cor 7: 9–16).” Cf. Bruce J. Malina (“Early Christian Groups: Using Small Group Formation Theory to Explain Christian Organizations,” in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context*, ed. Philip F. Esler [London:

the number of members, Last points out, is that the minimum suggestion of thirty members is more or less arbitrary.¹⁸³ Kloppenborg has shown that the number of members in various associations in the Mediterranean between the Hellenistic and Roman periods could range from 4 to more than 150.¹⁸⁴ I think Last's suggestion is plausible. This is due to the fact that he has (1) situated the Corinthian *ekklēsia* within its ancient social context by looking at associations for comparative numbers, thus decreasing the arbitrary nature of the exercise; (2) he takes into account the fluctuating state of membership numbers, which could go both up and down; and (3) unlike many other scholars, Last's reconstruction is built upon the names and types of people mentioned in the letter (e.g., widows, wise, married persons, etc.), and not like in many cases on an arbitrary guessing game where it is assumed that the *ekklēsia* consisted of many members not mentioned by Paul.¹⁸⁵

Routledge, 1995], 92–109, 92) who argues that many of the groups Christ followers formed during the first generation of the Jesus movement “were essentially small, face-to-face groups.”

¹⁸³ Last, *Pauline Church*, 71–72. See also the critique in John S. Kloppenborg, “Pauline Assemblies and Graeco-Roman Associations,” in *Receptions of Paul in Early Christianity: The Person of Paul and His Writings Through the Eyes of His Early Interpreters*, ed. Jens Schröter, Simon Buttica, and Andreas Dettwiler, BZNTW 234 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018), 215–47, 231. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's calculation of the size of the *ekklēsia* can stand as one example. He mentions that we know of “the names of 14 male members of the Corinthian community” and that all of them must have been married, which “brings us to 28 persons, which is obviously the minimum figure.” He also points out that both Crispus and Stephanas were baptised along with their respective households and that “we have to add an indeterminate number of children, servants/slaves, and perhaps relations,” making his base figure of members in the *ekklēsia* around 50. Cf. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, GNS 6 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1983), 164–65. One issue with Murphy-O'Connor's calculation is that it is apparent from 1 Cor 7:25–38 that not all male, or female, members were married. Another problem is that he does not provide any evidence for assuming that there would be roughly 22 people in Crispus' and Stephanas' household together.

¹⁸⁴ John S. Kloppenborg, “Membership Practices in Pauline Christ Groups,” *EC* 4 (2013): 183–215, 211–15. Commenting on Roman Egypt, Philip F. Venticinque (“Family Affairs: Guild Regulations and Family Relationships in Roman Egypt,” *GRBS* 50 [2010]: 273–94, 278) points out that the normal range of members were usually between 10–25.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 164–65. A more nuanced approach is taken by Dennis E. Smith (“The House Church as Social Environment,” in *Text, Image, and Christians in the Graeco-Roman World. A Festschrift in Honor of David Lee Balch*, ed. Aliou Cissé and Carolyn Osiek, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 176 [Eugene: Pickwick, 2012], 3–21, 13) who argues that when it comes to estimating the number of members in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, “our starting point should be the potential capacity of the dining space,” and he notes that “the standard *triclinium* was designed for nine diners, three couches with three spaces for diners per couch.” Last (*Pauline Church*, 74) sees no reasons why one should assume that there were several members of the *ekklēsia* that Paul did not mention. Cf. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 99. Theissen's work on the social status of the *ekklēsia* members is but one example where it is clear that the unmentioned members read into the text by the scholar become problematic. He writes: “The result is clear. The great majority of the Corinthians known to us by name probably enjoyed high social

Consequently, even though we cannot ascertain the exact number of members of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth, it is reasonable to imagine a group that could have existed of no more than 10 stable members, made up of men, women, and children. A lower membership number than the ones often provided in the scholarly literature is further supported by Kloppenborg’s finding that the average number of members in cultic associations in the ancient Mediterranean was around 30—if one were to suggest that a Christ group deviated from this fairly stable average, one would have to provide significant supporting evidence, of which there is little to none.¹⁸⁶

status. We need not for that reason cast doubt on Paul’s statement that ‘not many’ Corinthians belonged to the upper strata (1 Cor. 1:26). In the letters it is understandably the important people who are most likely to be mentioned by name, who keep in touch with Paul (that is, were free to travel) and who exercise influence within the congregation. Thus we may conclude that in all probability the most active and important members of the congregation belonged to the οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς” (*The Social Setting*, 95–96). Later on, Theissen (*ibid*, 102) somehow makes the claim that “Paul makes it quite clear that the majority of Corinthian Christians come from the lower strata.” Theissen’s reasons for why Paul would only mention those of a higher social status does not hold up to scrutiny. For example, the idea that those of high(er) status would be the ones who exercised more influence in the *ekklēsia* does not make sense if we consider the fact that Paul, who certainly was of lower social rank than some of the members, e.g., Erastos in Rom 16:23 (see below), believes that he has a great deal of influence over the *ekklēsia*. Similarly, Paul writes in his final greetings that the *ekklēsia* members should submit to the household of Stephanas, not because of his high rank (of which Paul says nothing) but because Stephanas and his household has “placed themselves in service of the holy ones” (1 Cor 16:15–16). Nothing of the kind is said about Erastos in Rom 16:23, and, as Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations*, 90) points out, the fact that Erastos is mentioned at the end of the greetings in Romans suggests that he was not “a patron or prominent member of the assembly [in Corinth],” even though he was of a higher social status than the average person.

The Erastos of Rom 16:23 is sometimes equated with a certain Erastus (Latinized form of the Greek Erastos) mentioned on a donative inscription found in the late 1920s which reads: *Erastus pro aedilit[ate] s[ua] p[ro] pecunia stravit* (“Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense”; Harvey Kent, *The Inscriptions: 1926–1950*, 99–100, nr. 232). This has especially been the case since Theissen’s work in the early 1980s (Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 83). If the proposal that the Erastos in Rom 16:23 and the Erastus of the inscription was shown to be probable this would certainly put the Erastos mentioned in Romans at a high rank indeed. But the suggestion of Theissen and those who follow his lead cannot be maintained; in fact, such a suggestion was repudiated already two years after the inscription was found by Henry J. Cadbury (“Erastus of Corinth,” *JBL* 50 [1931]: 42–58). Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations*, 190–91) puts forth three reasons for this rejection: first, the date of the inscription is later than that of Romans; second, the initial argument that Erastos was uncommon and that this would lead to a high likelihood of the two Erasti being one and the same has been disproven; third, the Greek rendering of the Latin *aedile* would not have been οἰκονόμος but ἀγρονόμος. For a more in-depth analysis of scholarly attempts to link the two Erasti, and how they fail to persuade, see Steven J. Friesen, “The Wrong Erastus: Ideology, Archaeology, and Exegesis,” in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel L. Scholwalter, and James C. Walters, NovTSup 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 231–56.

¹⁸⁶ Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations*, 108) notes that data from Asia Minor and Egypt from the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE show that cultic associations all had less than 100 members, that the average was 29.29, the median 24, and the mode 15. Thus, he concludes that if one were to hold that a Christ group consisted of 100 members that “would make it the largest attested cultic group in the entire Mediterranean!” (*ibid*, 111). See also the discussion about the size of Pauline Christ groups in Richard S. Ascough, “Reimagining the Size of Pauline Christ Groups in Light of Association Meeting Places,” in *Scribal Practices and Social Structures among Jesus Adherents: Essays in Honour of John S. Kloppenborg*, ed. William E. Arnal et al., BETL 285 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 547–65.

When it comes to the question of what socio-economic status the members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* were there is evidence which gives the impression that the Christ group was “diverse and socially stratified.”¹⁸⁷ As we have seen, it was ethnically diverse, consisting of both Jews and non-Jews; it also encompassed both men and women (1 Cor 7: 1–16). Further, the members seem to come from different social backgrounds, with both slaves and freedpersons present in the *ekklēsia* (7:21–22; 12:13), and the greeting from Erastos the city manager (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως) in Rom 16:23 indicates that the *ekklēsia* “boasted at least one member who was connected to the civic administration.”¹⁸⁸ Therefore, any attempt to opine that the *ekklēsia* in Corinth was homogenous and almost only consisted of people from one socio-economic stratum will not have taken all the data into account.

When trying to assess the economic status of the members in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, Last argues that “since the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was a private cult group whose income came from the *surplus resources of individuals*, the lowest strata of individuals in current economic scales are irrelevant for modelling the economic stability of Pauline Christ believers because paid membership in a Christ group would seem out of the question for most of them.”¹⁸⁹ In other words, those who had no economic surplus would most likely not have joined a Christ group (or any other ancient group or association for that matter). That the Corinthian *ekklēsia* had some connections to/in the higher ranks of society is hinted at by the greeting from Erastos in Rom 16:23, but there

¹⁸⁷ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 35. Fitzmyer (*First Corinthians*, 32–33) takes Paul’s statement in 1:26 that not many of the *ekklēsia* members were wise, powerful, or of noble birth to suggest that some probably were; and that the four groups mentioned in 12:13, Jews and Greeks and slaves and free persons, probably made up the bulk of the *ekklēsia* members. For a critical review of some aspects of earlier scholarship on the socio-economic status of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, see Steven J. Friesen, “Prospects for a Demography of the Pauline Mission: Corinth among the Churches,” in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Scholwarter and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 351–70.

¹⁸⁸ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 86. Romans is considered by a majority of scholars to have been written in Corinth, see Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 18.

¹⁸⁹ Last, *Pauline Church*, 84 (emphasis original).

is no suggestion that the *ekklēsia* would have had connections in the highest ranks of society (the senatorial and equestrian classes).¹⁹⁰ Even though Erastos is the only person connected to the Corinthian *ekklēsia* who we can have some knowledge about with regards to his socio-economic status, there are at least two statements in 1 Corinthians from which scholars have sought to deduce some of the socio-economic status of its members. In what follows, I mainly focus on the *ekklēsia* as a whole, and do not pay too much attention to specific members.¹⁹¹

First, we have the reference to τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (“those not having”) in 1 Cor 11:22. The context for this is the communal meal that the Christ group gathers for in honor of Christ (κυριακὸς δεῖπνον). The labelling of some as οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες has often been taken literally as a reference to members who would have nothing in an economic sense.¹⁹² For example, Steven J. Friesen describes οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες as “desperately poor people within the Corinthian assemblies,” and that these “were people in the assemblies who did not even have food for the community meal.”¹⁹³ In this scenario, the group that has nothing makes up a significant part of the *ekklēsia*—even if they were not the majority they must have been a large enough group to catch Paul’s attention—and thus the conclusion is made that many in the *ekklēsia* would have been poor. Additionally, Garland

¹⁹⁰ Looking at an excess of 2,300 names from 29 rosters (*alba collegiorum*) from Italy Ulrich Fellmeth (“Politische Bewußtsein in den Vereinen der städtischen Massen in Rom und Italien zur Zeit der Republik und der Frühen Kaiserzeit,” *Eirene: Studia Graeca et Latina* 27 [1990]: 49–71, 53–54) finds that whereas occupational associations (Berufsvereinen) had some connections to the senatorial and equestrian ranks (persons from these strata of society would often act as patrons), the cultic associations (*sodalitates*) would not be connected to these higher ranks: “Während in den Berufsvereinen hohe und höchste soziale Schichten in erkennbaren Prozentsätzen zu finden sind, gibt es bei den *solidates* keine Vertreter höherer sozialer Schichten.” It is only when we look at those who served as local magistrates (so-called *decuriones* who would have served as town counselors or magistrates in a town) we find some presence in cultic associations.

¹⁹¹ A different approach is taken by Steven J. Friesen (“Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus,” *JSNT* 26 [2004]: 323–61) who looks at the individuals Paul mentions in his letters and what we can know of their economic status. Although this is understandably an attractive route to take, it leads Friesen to make several speculative suggestions which flaw the end result.

¹⁹² Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations*, 196) labels this a selective reading for the proof that many of the Corinthian Christ followers were very poor.

¹⁹³ Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 349. Cf. Theissen, *The Social Setting*, 96; Pheme Perkins, *First Corinthians*, ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 143; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 435.

here sees a clear division in the *ekklēsia* of the “have” and the “have-nots” and that these two groups seem to have been two fixtures within the *ekklēsia*.¹⁹⁴ Thus, according to this understanding, we have (at least) two groups in the *ekklēsia*, one rich and one poor, that come together for the communal meal and the poor group appears to either not have the resources to bring any food to the meal and they are bereft of any opportunity to eat of the food that the rich group has brought—this leads to the conclusion that the poor group lived under subsistence level.¹⁹⁵

The reference to οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες, however, might not be as straightforward as Friesen and Garland propose, and there are good reasons as to why we should not immediately jump to the conclusion that this phrase refers to *ekklēsia* members who lived at or below subsistence levels. First, it is not clear that the phrase οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες relates to the economic status of some of the Christ followers who attended the communal meal in Corinth. Judging from the context the phrase is found in, Markus Öhler states: “Nun sind allerdings im Zusammenhang der pln. Erörterungen der Mahlkontext und die zugespitzte Gestalt zu berücksichtigen. So ist deutlich, dass es Paulus um eine Polarisierung von Hunger oder Trunkenheit geht, nicht um grundsätzliche Aussagen über Reiche und Arme.”¹⁹⁶ In addition, Last devotes himself to a close reading of 1 Cor 11:18–22 and arrives at the conclusion that “those who have nothing” “were members who had nothing at the Corinthian Christ group’s recent banquets rather than those who had nothing to their name in their

¹⁹⁴ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 421. Cf. David G. Horrell (*The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement*, SNTW [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], 95) who also views Paul’s reference to τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας as evidence of separate groups in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*: “1 Cor 11.17–34 clearly shows that some in the community could afford lavish amounts of food and drink, in a way which contrasted them with other community members who are described as τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας, the ‘have nots’ (1 Cor 11.22).”

¹⁹⁵ For more on how we should understand this communal meal, see below.

¹⁹⁶ Markus Öhler, “Zwischen Elend und Elite: Paulinische Gemeinden in ökonomischer Perspektive,” in *Receptions of Paul in Early Christianity: The Person of Paul and His Writings Through the Eyes of His Early Interpreters*, ed. Jens Schröter, Simon Buttica, and Andreas Dettwiler, BZNTW 234 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018), 249–86, 274–75.

whole life.”¹⁹⁷ Those who ended up with nothing were the members who were supposed to take their portion last, but, Last argues, the leaders of the group who took their portions first (note *προλαμβάνει* in 11:21) had taken portions that were too large, so when it came to the latter members there was nothing left. Therefore, they had no food at the meal. Second, Kloppenborg notes that 1 Cor 11:21–22 is full of rhetorically hyperbolic statements.¹⁹⁸ He points out that Paul is exaggerating when he says that each one takes his/her own meal to eat since the problem is just the opposite situation: each one does not take his/her own meal; some do, leaving others without one. Consequently, 11:22 should not be used to reconstruct the socio-economic situation in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* since it is not a statement that is meant to disclose that kind of information, Kloppenborg maintains. In agreement with Öhler, Last, and Kloppenborg, I do not think that we can paint a picture of the socio-economic status of the members in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* based on the reference to *οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες* in 1 Cor 11:22. There is a second reason why we should not think that the majority of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was made up of members who had nothing: the Jerusalem collection.

This collection, which is mentioned in both of Paul’s letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:8–15; 9:1–15), and Paul’s request for the Corinthians to contribute to it reasonably shows that the Christ followers in Corinth did have some economic resources to spare, at least as a group.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, the collection for the “holy ones” in Jerusalem in and of itself demonstrates that the members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* did have at least some degree of economic surplus. In addition, Kloppenborg notes that “nothing in the tone of Paul’s letter in 1 Cor 16:1–4 suggests that

¹⁹⁷ Last, *Pauline Church*, 205.

¹⁹⁸ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 196–97.

¹⁹⁹ John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, JSNTSup 75 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 185) points out that “Paul seems to expect every member of the community to take part in this project.” This is indicated, as Chow notes, by Paul’s use of *ἕκαστος ὑμῶν*.

the Corinthians rejected the proposal for a collection out of hand; instead, they were concerned with the details of its security and delivery.²⁰⁰ Consequently, any issues the *ekklēsia* members had with the collection do not seem to be monetary. Strengthening this is Paul’s remark in 2 Cor 8:13–14, where he addresses the whole *ekklēsia* concerning the collection to those in Jerusalem, and the statement that the Corinthian *ekklēsia* should take from their abundance (τὸ ὑμῶν περίσσευμα) in order to support their fellow Christ followers in Jerusalem.²⁰¹ This, too, indicates that the members of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth did not suffer from a lack of monetary assets; rather, as a group they had an abundance of it.²⁰²

In addition to the Jerusalem collection, what other expenses might the *ekklēsia* have had? We have already noted the communal meal, and how the phrase οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες does not indicate the supposedly poor status of the *ekklēsia*; on the contrary, as John Barclay puts it: “Any group that holds common meals, as ‘believers’ did on a regular basis, will have to find some way of getting food to the table.”²⁰³ But how did the Corinthians fund their communal meal? Two scenarios are

²⁰⁰ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 260. Cf. Kloppenborg, “Fiscal Aspects of Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem,” *EC* 8 (2017): 153–98.

²⁰¹ Richard S. Ascough (“The Completion of a Religious Duty: The Background of 2 Cor 8.1–15,” *NTS* 42 [1996]: 584–99) argues that, contrary to the opinion of many scholars and commentaries, the collection to the holy in Jerusalem is not based on simple charity, but is viewed, both from Paul and the Corinthians’ perspective, as a religious duty. Thus, we should not view the collection as mere charity to those in Jerusalem on behalf of those in Corinth. Pace Klaus Berger, “Almosen für Israel,” *NTS* 23 (1977): 180–204.

²⁰² Contrary to my view, Friesen (“Poverty in Pauline Studies,” 350–51) takes Paul’s instructions regarding the collection to the holy ones in Jerusalem as a sign that the members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* were poorer, living at or just above subsistence level. Friesen’s argument for this is that unlike the benefactions of rich patrons in other groups and associations where one benefactor could donate a larger sum of money all at once, the Corinthians are asked to set aside what they can over a longer time period. This, however, does not negate the fact that the Corinthians are asked to set aside from their *surplus* (cf. 2 Cor 8:4) and that Paul’s instructions indicate that they did have a surplus to set aside every week. See Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 253–54 for a similar view to that of Friesen. Last’s (*Pauline Church*, 94) critique of both Friesen and Longenecker is to the point: “Both fail to take seriously the economic dynamics behind contribution to the Jerusalem collection. To be a donor to the Jerusalem *λογεῖα*, an individual needed to meet subsistence requirements and possess still more money each week for the collections, such people did not live at or below the level of subsistence.”

²⁰³ John M. G. Barclay, “Money and Meetings: Group Formation among Diaspora Jews and Early Christians,” in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 107–21, 114. As noted above, Barclay himself does not pursue the question of exactly how the *ekklēsia* went about finding the economic resources

dominant in the scholarly literature on the subject of how the *ekklēsia* paid for its food.²⁰⁴ On the one hand, Peter Lampe has argued that each of the members would bring and eat their own meal for the first part (τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον) and then, for the second part, “those who have nothing” would join the meal late due to work and other tasks that kept them preoccupied.²⁰⁵ By the time these members arrive at the second part of the meal, Lampe maintains, those of a higher socio-economic status, who are not preoccupied with work to the same degree, had already eaten what was supposed to be left for “those having nothing.”

Another viewpoint is presented in the work of Gerd Theissen who argues that a few Christ followers with more economic means would have made the communal meal possible: “Sie ermöglichten durch ihre Spenden erst das Gemeinschaftsmahl für alle.”²⁰⁶ Thus they would also have been the hosts of the meal and perhaps not found it strange that they should be given a larger portion than the other members who attended the meal—apparently, this portion was too big and resulted in the food running out before everyone could have their share. The main difference

to afford the food for their meals but refers to both Peter Lampe’s and Gerd Theissen’s explanations as feasible (discussed below).

²⁰⁴ The longevity and dominance of these two suggestions among scholars can be seen in Barclay (“Money and Meetings, 114) who mentions only these two options as the (most) likely ones with regards to the meal setting in 1 Cor 11:17–34 several years after the two suggestions were first made.

²⁰⁵ Peter Lampe, “Das korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenitisch-römischer Mahlpraxis und paulinischer Theologia Crucis (1 Kor 11,17-34),” *ZNW* 82 (1991): 183–213, 191–92. He writes: “Die später Kommenden kleinere Leute sind, die noch von ihrer Arbeit, ihrem Laden, ihrem Sklavendienst aufgehalten werden.” In contrast to Lampe, Dennis E. Smith (*From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 191–93) argues that τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον does not mean that each brought their own portion, but that each one took the portion they desired and not distributing the portions equally or according to the existing hierarchy in the group.

²⁰⁶ Gerd Theissen, “Soziale Integration und sakramentales Handeln. Eine Analyse von 1 Cor. XI 17–34,” *NovT* 16 (1974): 179–206, 191. For Peter Pilhofer (*Die Frühen Christen und ihre Welt: Greifswalder Aufsätze 1996–2001*, WUNT II/145 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002], 206) this free weekly meal was a major factor why those at or below subsistence level would join a Christ group: “Keine andere Gemeinschaft im Römischen Reich bot ihnen diese Möglichkeit, sich wenigstens einmal in jeder Woche satt essen zu können. In diese Hinsicht schlägt die christliche Gemeinde alle konkurrierenden Vereinigungen bei weitem.” In addition, Pilhofer believes that the Christ groups did not collect either enrolment fees (Aufnahmegebühr) nor monthly membership fees (Monatsbeitrag). Eva Ebel (*Die Attraktivität früher christlicher Gemeinden: Die Gemeinde von Korinth im Spiegel griechisch-römischer Vereine*, WUNT II/178 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], 163) also argues that compared to other groups and associations in antiquity “die Zugehörigkeit zu der Gemeinschaft der Christinnen und Christen in höchstem Maße attraktiv.” Both Pilhofer’s and Ebel’s conclusions are based on the idea that a/some wealthy Christ follower(s) would pay for everyone’s meal; thus making it entirely free for those of little to no economic surplus.

between these two reconstructions is that in Lampe’s view everyone should contribute to the meal (but οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες, of course, could not but were still welcome), whereas in Theissen’s reconstruction not everyone was supposed to bring food: only a few wealthy members did. There are some problems with both of these suggestions.

In a recent article, Kloppenborg argues against the views of both Lampe and Theissen and proposes a third approach to the meal setting in 1 Cor 11:17–34 based on comparison with Greco-Roman associations and their meal practices.²⁰⁷ He concludes that there are two models that appear more viable in light of 1 Cor 11:17–34 and the data collected from Greco-Roman associations than those Lampe and Theissen propose: the model of rotating liturgies and that of member contributions. According to the former, a “flat hierarchy” would be achieved by rotating the office that included the task of providing the food for the meal, and since this office rotated among members everyone would have to contribute equally to the meal (only the one[s] holding the office at the time would contribute with everything during their time in office). The latter alternative, member contributions, suggests that the members of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* were paying membership fees to a communal treasury which would be used among other things to fund the meals the group ate together. In both scenarios, every member of the *ekklēsia* was required to contribute financially to the communal meals. Both of these alternatives are more viable than the ones suggested by Lampe and Theissen since they find support in the practices of other ancient groups who gathered for communal meals; it is considerably more challenging to find good comparative support for Lampe and Theissen’s respective models, especially if we look to groups that were similar in size and status to the Corinthian Christ group.²⁰⁸ Consequently, being a

²⁰⁷ John S. Kloppenborg, “Precedence at the Communal Meal in Corinth,” *NovT* 58 (2016): 167–203.

²⁰⁸ One of Kloppenborg’s (“Precedence at the Communal Meal,” 179) main criticisms of Theissen is that benefactors who provided for a common meal permanently are unheard of among ancient associations and it would be highly unlikely that the Christ groups were the only ones in antiquity that had these kinds of benefactors. Against the view

member of the Christ group in Corinth likely entailed having enough money to contribute to the group's communal meal.²⁰⁹

The communal meal is one expense we know of that would have recurred; the Jerusalem collection was more of an *ad hoc* expenditure for the Corinthians. Since the *ekklēsia* as a whole had at least one regular expense, and we have dismissed the idea of a few wealthy Christ followers paying for this meal, how, then, did the Corinthians fund it? Logically, there must have been a steady flow of money into the *ekklēsia* from its members. How might we imagine this continuous income of the *ekklēsia*? One possible (and slightly controversial) answer to this question is that membership fees were collected in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*.²¹⁰

of Lampe, Kloppenborg (*ibid*, 193–98) points out that there is no reason to think that the *ekklēsia* members who were of lower status and had to work as slaves or craftsmen would come late to the Corinthians' meal.

²⁰⁹ One more possible expenditure in connection with the communal meal could have been the place where it took place. Paul does not state in what type of locale the meeting took place, but it is possible that the *ekklēsia* rented a place where they could meet. It does seem to be the case that they did not assemble at a member's house since Paul writes that they are coming together as an assembly (συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ) in 1 Cor 11:18 and, later in 11:22, asks a rhetorical question, expecting "yes" as an answer, to some of the members if they do not have their own houses where they can eat and drink so that they do not have to overindulge at the communal dinner. In addition, when Paul finishes up his instructions vis-à-vis the communal meal, he instructs that if a member is hungry "let him eat at home" (ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω). Based on 1 Cor 11:22 and 11:34 Adams (*The Earliest Christian Meeting Places*, 30) draws the conclusion: "The natural historical inference to be drawn from 11.22 (if we assume that Paul is accurately mirroring the situation at Corinth) is that none of the homes of the Corinthian believers, whatever physical form these domiciles took (including shop/workshop dwellings), served as the material space of the whole-church gathering.... Where then did it happen? One possibility is rented dining space, exemplified possibly by Corinth's Roman Cellar Building; other possibilities include a barn and a large garden." If the meeting of the whole *ekklēsia* took place in rented building, this would have added to the cost of communal dining. A third potential cost in conjunction with the meals, beside the food and possibly rented space, there is the question of entertainment. Smith (*From Symposium*, 179) points out that "a full, formal banquet that included both a *deipnon* and a symposium, as the Corinth banquet surely did, would have to include some form of banquet entertainment during the symposium." Smith suggests that the entertainment of choice among the Corinthians would have been worship, but Last (*Pauline Church*, 136) suggests that music performances were common during associations' meals and that the Corinthians might have hired a musician for their dinners.

²¹⁰ It is unlikely that the *ekklēsia* would not have had a steady stream of income from somewhere, since, as Last (*Pauline Church*, 129) notes, many Greco-Roman associations in antiquity "often required more money than they took in from subscription dues." Thus, if the suggestion of membership fees is dismissed, one must account for the income that was used for the expenses that quite possibly superseded the income that would have been yielded by membership fees in some other way. On the different ways in which associations could get an income John S. Kloppenborg ("Epigraphy, Papyrology and the Interpretation of the New Testament: Member Contributions to the Eucharist," in *Epigraphik und Neues Testament*, ed. Thomas Corsten, Markus Öhler, and Joseph Verheyden, WUNT 365 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 129–53, 136) comments: "Various sources of income were available to associations: entrance or initiation fees; monthly (or periodic) dues; required contributions by leaders, analogous to Roman *summa honoraria*; income from patrons and family trusts; endowments owned by associations themselves;

To be sure, Paul never mentions the collection of membership fees in any of his letters; hence, the overwhelming majority of scholars believe that no such fees were collected among the early Christ followers. Comparing the Christ groups to associations (“Vereinen”) Eva Ebel comes to the following conclusion:

Entscheidet sich jemand definitiv für die neue Gemeinschaft, ist der Unterschied zwischen den paganen Vereinen auf der einen Seite und den christlichen Gemeinden auf der anderen Seite unübersehbar: Für einen Vereinsbeitritt ist die Zahlung eines Eintrittsgeldes eine *conditio sine qua non*. Von einer solchen einmaligen oder in der Folgezeit gar monatlichen Zahlungsverpflichtung ist bei den Christinnen und Christen keine Rede.²¹¹

In a similar vein, Conzelmann comments on 1 Cor 16:2: “Die Anordnung des Paulus ist aufschlußreich für den damaligen Zustand der Organisation bzw. Nicht-Organisation seiner Gemeinden: Es besteht offensichtlich noch kein organisiertes Finanzwesen.”²¹² Although it is true that Paul makes no clear remarks as to exactly how this collection is to be organized, except that the Corinthians should put money aside each week, one may wonder if this lack of instructions possibly meant that the Corinthians already knew how to make such a collection and did not need any further directives from Paul.²¹³ Kloppenborg criticizes the position taken by Conzelmann:

We have epigraphic evidence from Achaia, the Isthmus, and the Peloponnese that groups of handworkers and resident aliens in those areas—that is, precisely the kinds of people who made up the majority of Pauline groups—had been engaged in collecting funds for at least four hundred years before Paul arrived in Corinth and that special collection of the sort in which Paul was engaged are particularly well known.... We scarcely need to suppose that Christ groups who wanted to assemble special collections needed either outside models or detailed instructions from Paul.²¹⁴

A third scholar who formulates the almost ubiquitous notion that membership fees were not collected in Christ groups during Paul’s time is Barclay. While he admits that the *ekklesia* in

and sundry income from rent, fines, charges to non-members for access to a temple, special bequests, and special donations from members.”

²¹¹ Ebel, *Die Attraktivität*, 217.

²¹² Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 354. Cf. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 271.

²¹³ John Coolidge Hurd (*The Origin of I Corinthians* [New York: Seabury Press, 1965], 200–06) argues that the Corinthians were not concerned with how to make the collection, but rather with the delivery of it to Jerusalem.

²¹⁴ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 246.

Corinth must have had some expenses, both regular and *ad hoc* ones, he still comes to the conclusion that “not surprisingly, there are no institutional structures concerning money apparent in the first generation of the Christian movement: without buildings to construct or maintain, and without a membership fee or annual dues to collect, there was no reason for the earliest Christians to handle money on other than an *ad hoc* basis.”²¹⁵ The arguments of Ebel, Conzelmann, Barclay, and others are often, however, based on the assumption that membership in Christ groups did not (or, perhaps, *should* not) cost anything, or on Paul’s silence about membership fees. But, as Kloppenborg aptly points out: “Silence cannot be used to argue that membership fees were or were not collected.”²¹⁶ Nevertheless, even though Paul is silent on the subject, is it possible to imagine from implicit clues in Paul’s letters and the surrounding context that membership fees were collected in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*? In addition, given the occasional nature of Paul’s letters, it is plausible to imagine that Paul would not mention the collection of membership fees unless there were some issues surrounding them (as it is with the collection to Jerusalem).

Last has made just such a suggestion through a close reading of 1 Corinthians and by using ancient associations as comparative material.²¹⁷ As we have seen, Ebel rightly points out that associations required membership fees from its members, and this appears to have been the case among virtually all associations.²¹⁸ In fact, Koenraad Verboven points out that “even the most

²¹⁵ Barclay, “Money and Meetings,” 114. As we have seen earlier, Barclay explains the communal meal in 1 Cor 11 by assuming that some wealthy Christ followers paid for everyone’s food or that the members brought their own food. Ebel (*Die Attraktivität*, 217) argues that all collections in the *ekklēsia* were made on a voluntary basis and that no regular collections, such as membership fees, were made in any of the Pauline *ekklēsiai*: “Freiwillige Zahlungen entsprechend den finanziellen Möglichkeiten jedes einzelnen Gemeindemitglieds werden jedoch erbeten und, wie die Kollekte für Jerusalem zeigt, anders als in Vereinen nicht nur für die eigene Ortsgemeinde verwendet.” Cf. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 271.

²¹⁶ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 4.

²¹⁷ See especially Richard Last, “The Myth of Free Membership in Pauline Christ Groups,” in *Scribal Practices and Social Structures among Jesus Adherents: Essays in Honour of John S. Kloppenborg*, ed. William E. Arnal et al., BETL 285 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 495–516.

²¹⁸ Cf. Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 233. John S. Kloppenborg (Edwin Hatch, *Churches and Collegia*,” in *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd*,

humble associations demanded relatively substantial financial contributions from their members and favoured the ‘better’ to do. The more important a *collegium* was, the more exclusive and expensive membership became.”²¹⁹ So, despite Paul’s silence on the topic on membership fees, one could argue that because such a vast majority of associations required membership fees to function, the burden of proof almost shifts to those who argue that Pauline groups were able to function without any steady income from membership fees. If these groups did not collect membership fees, how exactly did they finance the activities which we know from Paul’s writings took place, such as communal meals and banquets?²²⁰

Within the broader context of associations roughly contemporary with the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, Last makes the assertion that “an investigation into associations’ financial lives – their monetary pressures and funding strategies – makes it difficult to imagine how a Christ group would survive for long if it offered free meals and open membership.”²²¹ By examining 1 Cor 16:2, Last

ed. Bradley H. Mclean, JSNTSup 86 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993], 212–38, 36) also notes that the membership fee was not always paid with money; at times, members could supply a sacrificial animal instead.

²¹⁹ Koenraad Verboven, “The Associative Order. Status and Ethos among Roman Businessmen in Late Republic and Early Empire,” *Athenaeum* 95 (2007): 861–93, 882.

²²⁰ Additionally, the earliest purpose-built Christ-following meeting halls begin to appear already in the 200s CE. Kfar ‘Othnay is dated by the excavators to 230 CE, see Yotam Tepper and Leah Di Segni, *A Christian Prayer Hall of the Third Century CE at Kfar ‘Othnay (Legio): Excavations at the Megiddo Prison 2005* (Jerusalem: The Israel Antiquities Authorities, 2006), 50, and the renovations of the Dura Europos assembly hall as a Christ-following hall can be dated to 240–245 CE, see Anders Runesson and Wally Cirafesi, “Art and Architecture at Capernaum, Kfar ‘Othnay, and Dura-Europos,” in *From Celsus to the Catacombs: Visual, Liturgical, and Non-Christian Receptions of Jesus in the Second and Third Centuries CE*, ed. Chris Keith, Helen K. Bond, Christine Jacobi, and Jens Schröter, *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 3* (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 151–200, 183). The discovery of these buildings poses the question of how Christ followers in the third century financed the building and upkeep of their meeting places. Does it mean that the Christ followers started collecting membership fees in the third century? Or, was this a practice from the early days of the movement that continued into the third century, and which gave some sort of economic capital so that the various Christ groups could build or take over these, and potentially other, buildings for their meetings? Many thanks to Rebecca Runesson for directing my attention to this material. Unfortunately, we do not have any evidence of this kind from the third century CE in Corinth. It is first in the early fifth century CE that we find buildings that are distinguishably Christian. Cf. Richard M. Rothaus (*Corinth: The First City of Greece. An Urban History of Late Antique Cult and Religion*, RGRW 139 [Leiden: Brill, 2015], 93–104) for a discussion on these first, and subsequent, Christian buildings that appeared in the fifth century CE and onwards.

²²¹ Last, *Pauline Church*, 137.

makes the argument that we here have evidence of membership fees being paid to the *ekklēsia*.

The verse reads as follows:

κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου ἕκαστος ὑμῶν παρ' ἑαυτῶ τιθέτω θησαυρίζων ὅ τι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται, ἵνα μὴ ὅταν ἔλθω τότε λογεῖται γίνωνται.²²²

On the first day of the week, each of you should put aside money, whatever profit one makes, so that when I come a collection might not take place.

By looking at the temporal and spatial aspects of this verse, Last makes the argument that this verse does indicate that the *ekklēsia* members in Corinth did in fact pay membership fees. By the time Paul writes 1 Corinthians the *ekklēsia* appears to have a day of the week (κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου) when their gatherings normally would take place (cf. Acts 20:7 and Rev 1:10).²²³ Thus it makes sense that Paul would ask the Corinthians to put aside their voluntary contribution to the Jerusalem collection on the Sabbath since that would be the most natural day of the week for them to do so. Last points to the fact that several associations paid their membership fees on the day(s) they met and that this provides a plausible explanation as to why Paul instructs the members of the *ekklēsia* to put aside their money on the day of the week when they would typically meet. Hence, “it seems most likely that the ‘convenience’ of collecting money for Jerusalem on the day that the *ekklēsia* assembled comes from the reality that collections of subscription dues were already being made that day. Now, Paul instructs the Corinthians, members should bring payments both for the

²²² For the meaning of παρ' ἑαυτῶ (“aside”), see Stephen R. Llewelyn, “The Use of Sunday Meetings of Believers in the New Testament,” *NovT* 43 (2001): 205–23, 209–10. On the potential meaning of the verb εὐοδῶ, see Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL/ Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 313.

²²³ Cf. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2000), 1321; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 315.

ordinary (i.e., subscription) and voluntary (i.e., Jerusalem donations) accounts on the days they assemble.”²²⁴

Turning his attention to the spatial aspect, Last argues that the dative construction of *παρ’ ἐαυτῶ* indicates the location where the collection takes place and that the money raised to the Jerusalem collection should be placed by itself.²²⁵ This leads Last to ask why it mattered to Paul where the collection was placed. Comparing Paul’s instructions with those found in associations, Last notes: “Associations collected two types of fees: mandatory *συμβολαί* and voluntary contributions.”²²⁶ These two fees were meant to fund different aspects of the association’s life: the membership fees would pay the routine costs of the group (rent for meeting spaces, banquets, travelling costs, etc.), whereas the voluntary contributions could go towards one-off expenses or particular things that were not needed in the everyday life of the association. The problem, however, was if both the mandatory and the voluntary collections, which were supposed to cover different costs, ended up in the same place, since no one would be able to tell what money should be used for which expense. The solution adopted by associations to avoid this issue, and as possibly seen in 1 Cor 16:2, was to have two separate locations where these two different fees would end up; thereby making it perfectly clear what money should be used for what expenditure. Last concludes his analysis of 1 Cor 16:2 by stating:

The Corinthians probably understood Paul to mean that they should keep the money for Jerusalem away from the Christ group’s other income, which seems to have been typical practice in associations. The fact that Paul tells the Corinthians to keep the Jerusalem collection ‘separate’, moreover, raises the strong possibility that other collections were happening at the *ekklēsia* from which the Jerusalem collection should be kept apart. The

²²⁴ Last, *Pauline Church*, 141.

²²⁵ Last, *Pauline Church*, 141. Ancient Greek commonly uses the dative to indicate spatial location, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 153–55, 378; Jeremy Duff, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46.

²²⁶ Last, *Pauline Church*, 143.

most natural supposition is that these other collections were membership fees, which the group would have needed in order to stay alive.²²⁷

In conclusion, even though David J. Downs is correct in stating that there is no explicit “evidence that the members of Paul’s churches paid monthly or weekly membership dues,”²²⁸ Last presents a good case for understanding 1 Cor 16:2 as indicating that membership fees were indeed collected in the *ekklēsia*—a suggestion that we have no explicit evidence to the contrary—and this supplements our picture of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* as consisting of members who could at least afford both the mandatory membership fee and one extra voluntary collection to the holy ones in Jerusalem.²²⁹ This also helps us solve some other questions regarding how the *ekklēsia* funded its communal meal, potential rent for their meeting places, and the cost for writing and sending letters. If we imagine that membership fees were paid, the income needed for these expenses can be explained by these fees; if we reject the idea of membership fees, we must be able to account for where this these money came from, which is significantly more challenging (especially since there is no explicit sign of wealthy patrons that supported the *ekklēsia* financially).

This survey of the financial situation of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and its members demonstrate that they most likely had enough money to pay for the groups regular and unplanned expenses. Consequently, it is possible that the *ekklēsia* members had been members of other associations and cultic groups before they joined the Jesus movement, and as such they would have had social ties to these groups also after they joined the Jesus movement. Thus, it is likely that the Corinthian Christ followers moved around in circles which included non-Jewish cults and

²²⁷ Last, *Pauline Church*, 147.

²²⁸ David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts*, WUNT II/248 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 101.

²²⁹ Consequently, we have at least one piece of evidence for the collection of membership fees, even though it is not an explicit one.

temples prior to their commitment to the Jesus movement, and that they were keen on retaining those social bonds also as members of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on the city of Corinth and how it is best understood during the time from when it became a Roman colony in 44 BCE up to when Paul arrived in the city in the 50s CE. I demonstrated that even though Corinth had been a Roman colony for roughly one hundred years when Paul sojourned in the city, there is good evidence that both Greek and Roman culture had a strong presence in the city. This was seen in a number of areas: first, settlers who arrived in the 40s BCE were well-rooted in both Greek and Roman society and culture; second, both Greek and Latin are well represented in the city; third, there is evidence that the Greek cults of old were re-established and that some of the Greek temples were re-built, but the Romans also did a number of alterations to some of the cults, adding a distinct Roman touch to them.

In the second part of this chapter, I focused on the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in order to determine its place in Corinth and ancient society. My examination of the Christ group in Corinth was centred around three main areas. First, I argued that the two most fruitful ancient group structures with which to compare the *ekklēsia* are the household model and the cultic association, since the household—both the house as a location and the household/family—played an important role for the *ekklēsia* and because the group appears to have had certain cultic rituals at its core (e.g., Jesus reverence, baptism, Lord's supper, taking part in other cultic meals). Second, I explored the socio-economic status of the Christ group in Corinth and arrived at the conclusion that, as a group, the *ekklēsia* would have had a surplus of economic resources due to the fact that they had at least one permanent expenditure as a group, the communal meal, and one *ad hoc* expenditure, the collection

for the “holy ones” in Jerusalem. Third, and finally, following this I made the suggestion, based on the work of Last, that the way the Corinthian *ekklēsia* financed their expenses was through the collection of membership fees.

Therefore, I think that the best understanding of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth is that it would have fit in with the other cults present in the city. And, as 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 shows, perhaps some of the *ekklēsia* members were too well incorporated into the life of the city for Paul’s taste. The *ekklēsia* would probably have been a smaller group, possibly made up of no more than ten members, which consisted of members that could afford the expenses that came with being a part of the Christ group—a common meal, a collection for another group in Jerusalem, and possibly a membership fee. This indicates that the members lived above the subsistence level.

Chapter 2: Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek and Roman World

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore various sacrificial cults, rituals, and practices that were extant in the Greek and Roman world from the eight century BCE to the second century CE.²³⁰ The focus of this chapter is on the act of animal sacrifice since the issues Paul deals with in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 primarily concern animal sacrifice and the eating of sacrificial meat in one way or another (cf. 8:13 where he refers to *κρέας*, “meat/flesh,” and 10:27–28 and the instructions of what the Christ followers should do when invited to dine with those outside of the *ekklēsia*).²³¹ As such this chapter

²³⁰ I generally share Jennifer Larson’s (*Understanding Greek Religion* [London: Routledge, 2016], 200) understanding of the word “sacrifice.” She writes: “‘Sacrifice,’ broadly defined, refers to the process by which anything consumable (e.g., food, drink or incense) is offered to a god or set apart as sacred.” However, I would add unconsumable things as well, e.g., statues, and anything that could be dedicated or set apart for a god. On the importance of sacrifice in ancient Mediterranean religions, Sarah Iles Johnston (“Sacrifice in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, RGRW 141 [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 344–58, 344) comments: “Sacrifice was a *sine qua non* of establishing communication between mortals and greater powers.”

²³¹ My scope is limited to only animal sacrifice since it is that type of sacrifice Paul appears to be dealing with in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*. That animals were not the only thing sacrificed is demonstrated by, e.g., Lucian. He writes: “When they have established altars and formulae and lustral rites, they present the sacrifices (*τὰς θυσίας*), the farmer an ox (*βοῦς*) from the plough, the shepherd a lamb (*ἀρῆν*), the goatherd a goat (*αἴγριος*) someone else incense (*λίβανωτός*) or a cake (*πόπᾶνον*); the poor man, however, propitiates the god by just kissing his own hand (*κύσας μόνον τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δεξιάν*)” (*On Sacrifice* 12; slightly altered from LCL). See also Kathryn McClymond (*Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* [Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008], 65–130), who looks at vegetal and liquid offerings. Fredrik S. Naiden (“Sacrifice,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015], 463–75, 63) points out that vegetal offerings were very common in ancient Greece: “Vegetal offering occurred every morning and every evening, at home and in shrines, before voyages and other journeys.” Folkert T. van Straten (“Votives and Votaries in Greek Sanctuaries,” in *Le Sanctuaire grec*, ed. Albert Schachter, *Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 37 [Geneva: Vandœuvres, 1992], 247–90, 248–54) surveys the different kinds of Greek offerings made in the classical period and mentions votive statues, terracotta plaques, painted wooden pinakes, and bronze figurines as common offerings made to gods. For a review of various votive offerings and their place in the ancient Greek world, see Folkert T. van Straten, “Gifts for the Gods,” in *Faith, Hope, and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, ed. H. S. Versnel, *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 65–151. Richard E. DeMaris (“Sacrifice, an Ancient Mediterranean Ritual,” *BTB* 43 [2013]: 60–72, 65) notes that animal sacrifice probably was not the most common type of sacrifice in antiquity, but that objects such as “incense, vessels, utensils, figurines, plaques... and *pinakes*, votive tablets of painted wood, terracotta, metal or stone... very likely constituted the commonest type of sacrifice, at least in the ancient Greek world.” Cf. Carla M. Antonaccio, “Dedications and the Character of Cult,” in *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian: Proceedings of the Sixth International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Organized by the*

lays some of the groundwork for how one can better understand Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. For without a nuanced understanding of Greek and Roman sacrificial practices, one cannot properly understand the apostle’s instructions. Thus, my argument for my reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 is partly based on my findings in this chapter. Scholars who write on the topic of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 have also spent time on the context that surrounded the Corinthians Christ followers—including, the role of idols, how ancient Greeks and Romans perceived idols, the archaeological evidence for cults active during the first century CE, and various practices of animal sacrifices.²³² My inquiry into the ancient context for Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 stands out in three ways.

First, I focus solely on the ritual of Greek and Roman sacrifice and the dinner that followed. This is because I think that this is the most important context to examine if we want to get to grips with Paul’s instructions. This is especially the case when it comes to understanding the nuances and differences between 1 Corinthians 8, where Paul seems to allow the eating of food offered to idols, and 1 Corinthians 10, where Paul forbids the participation of the cup and table of *daimonia*.

Department of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, Göteborg University, 25–27 April 1997, ed. Robin Hägg and Brita Alroth, *Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series In 8°*, 58 (Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen, 2005), 99–112, 100. With that said, animals appear to have played a significant role in the conceptualisation and practice of sacrifice in the ancient Greek world. Gunnel Ekroth (“Bare Bones: Zooarchaeology and Greek Sacrifice,” in *Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017], 15–47, 15) writes: “Cutting out bones, freeing them from meat, wrapping them in fat and burning them were essential parts of any Greek sacrifice.” This view is supported by several scholars. See, *inter alia*, Jan N. Bremmer, *The World of Greek Religion and Mythology: Collected Essays II*, WUNT 433 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 303; Jacob Morton, “The Experience of Greek Sacrifice: Investing Fat-Wrapped Thighbones,” in *Autopsy in Athens: Recent Archaeological Research on Athens and Attica*, ed. Margaret M. Miles (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), 66–75, 66; Gunnel Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus Care about Burnt Thighbones from Sheep? Defining the Divine and Structuring the World Through Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greece,” *HR* 58 (2019): 225–50, 227, 231; *eadem*, “Men vad håller kentauren i handen? Avbildningar av och attityder till köttkonsumtion i antikens Grekland,” in *Kungl. Vitterhets historie och antikvitets akademiens årsbok* (2018): 165–82, 165; James B. Rives, “Animal Sacrifice and Euergetism in the Hellenistic and Roman Polis,” *RRE* 5 (2019): 83–102, 83; Jan N. Bremmer, “Greek Normative Animal Sacrifice,” in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. Daniel Olgen, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 132–44; Fritz Graf, “What Is New about Greek Sacrifice?” in *Kykeon: Studies in Honour of H. S. Versnel*, ed. H. F. J. Horstmanshoff et al., RGRW 142 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 113–25, 117.

²³² For a selection of the more in-depth studies on the context that would have influenced Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, see Newton, *Deity and Diet*; Gooch, *Dangerous Food*; Fotopoulos, “The Rhetorical Situation, Arrangement, and Argumentation of 1 Corinthians 8:1–13,” 165–98; *idem*, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*.

Second, this chapter contributes to the study of the Corinthian context since I examine the Greek and Roman contexts for animal sacrifices individually. The third contribution of this chapter is that it incorporates the latest research on animal sacrifice, which previous studies have not done to the same extent (mainly because most of them were written in the 1990s or early 2000s). Hence, this provides an up-to date survey of Greek and Roman animal sacrifice and how those contexts can further nuance and assist our reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 that previous studies lack.

This chapter falls into two parts. First, I focus on the performance and understanding of animal sacrifice in the ancient Greek speaking world.²³³ Following this inquiry, I will turn my focus to the Roman understanding and practices surrounding animal sacrifice.²³⁴ There are two

²³³ The bulk of my sources come from the eighth century BCE to the second century CE. Despite the fact that the ritual of animal sacrifice changed during these centuries with regards to special clothing, purification rites, and the procession preceding the sacrifice, as G. S. Kirk (“Some Methodological Pitfalls in the Study of Ancient Greek Sacrifice (in Particular),” in *Le sacrifice dans l’antiquité: Huit exposés suivis de discussions*, ed. Jean Rudhardt and Olivier Reverdin, Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique 27 [Genève: Vandœuvres, 1980], 41–90, 62–68) and Bremmer (*The World of Greek Religion*, 304–05, 310) point out, the actual sacrifice and subsequent dinner both seem to have stayed fairly similar during this time period. Cf. Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BCE to AD 200*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 40–42, 50–53.

I use the term “*thusia* sacrifice” to signify animal sacrifice in the ancient Greek world. In the Greek primary sources, *thusia* does not always mean “animal sacrifice” (its original meaning refers to the burning of any offering), but the word is commonly used by Greek authors when they mention animal sacrifice (as I highlight in the English translations). In modern scholarly literature on Greek sacrifice, however, the phrase “*thusia* (sacrifice)” is regularly used to denote animal sacrifice. The most substantive work on Greek sacrificial terms to date is, to my knowledge, Jean Casabona, “Recherches sur le vocabulaire des sacrifices en Grec des origines à la fin de l’époque classique,” (PhD diss., Université de Paris, 1966).

²³⁴ Something I do not engage in are the different anthropological theories surrounding the origins, meaning, and purpose of animal sacrifice (even if some of these aspects are dealt with from perspectives other than the anthropological). The most influential scholars and works of ancient Greek religion (who also put animal sacrifice at the centre of it) in the previous generation are Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythe*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 32 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972); Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*, Les textes à l’appui. Série : Histoire Classique (Paris: Librairie François Maspero, 1974); Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne, eds., *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, Bibliothèque des histoires (Gallimard: nrf, 1979). For comprehensive scholarly reviews and discussions of these works, see Phillips Steven Jr., “Anthropology and Sacrifice,” in *Diversity of Sacrifice: Form and Function of Sacrificial Practices in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Carrie Ann Murray, The Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology Distinguished Monograph Series 5 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 15–29; Fredrik S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3–15; Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 1–31; Einar Thomassen, “Sacrifice: Ritual Murder or Dinner Party?” in *Celebrations: Selected Papers and Discussions from the Tenth Anniversary Symposium of the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 12–16 May 1999*, ed. Michael Webbe, Papers from the Norwegian Institute at Athens 6 (Bergen: Paul Åströms förlag, 2004), 275–85; Patrick McMurray, *Sacrifice, Brotherhood and the Body: Abraham and the Nations in Romans* (London: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2021), 19–43. On more recent research on

reasons for treating ancient Greek and Roman animal sacrifice separately, and not exploring animal sacrifice in the “Greco-Roman” world.

First, Greek and Roman practices of animal sacrifice, even though similar on many accounts, have some differences that need to be highlighted. Second, my argument in the first chapter, that Corinth, even though a Roman colony since 44 BCE, can plausibly be understood as a city where both Greek and Roman culture and cults were found, suggests that animal sacrifice in Corinth could be practiced according to either Greek or Roman customs in the city. Hence, looking at both Greek and Roman sacrifice will prove helpful when seeking to gain a more nuanced understanding of the situation in Corinth and the situation the Corinthian *ekklēsia* possibly found itself in. At the end of this chapter, I will focus on Corinth itself in order to see if what we know of Greek and Roman sacrificial practices, rites, and cults can be applied to the city and how the cultic landscape in Corinth looked like in the first century CE.

When thinking of sacrifice in the ancient Greek and Roman world, one must be aware that different cults and places had their various, local practices. This is also true when looking at cults over multiple time periods: cults that took shape in Greek times and survived during Roman rule could change, even though the same god(s) were worshiped and the cult remained at the same location.²³⁵ For example, Richard DeMaris points out that the Greek way of worshiping Demeter in Corinth not only changed after 44 BCE when Rome made Corinth a colony, but that the worship of Demeter in Corinth looked different from how the people in Eleusis worshiped Demeter.²³⁶ In Eleusis, there was general continuity between the Greek and Roman periods; in Corinth there was

sacrifice in the ancient Mediterranean, see Daniel Ullucci, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Mediterranean: Recent and Current Research,” *CBR* 13 (2015): 388–439.

²³⁵ I discussed this briefly in chapter one.

²³⁶ Richard E. DeMaris, “Demeter in Roman Corinth: Local Development in a Mediterranean Religion,” *Numen* 42 (1995): 105–17, 106–07.

not.²³⁷ Notwithstanding these particularities in cults due to place and time, when I examine Greek and Roman sacrifice below, the specific will give way to the more general.²³⁸ Consequently, the picture of sacrifice that I put forth will emphasize the general aspects of Greek and Roman sacrifice. With that said, I have chosen to build this chapter around the specific sacrifice of animals since it most strongly relates to the situation Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. In order not to be too general, I will dedicate the last part of this chapter to looking at specific cults and sacrificial rituals in Corinth, both in connection to the more general picture of Greek and Roman sacrifice and in connection to the specific cults that would have existed in Corinth in and around Paul's time, since that is the ancient city that is of most importance to my overall project.

Ancient Greek Sacrifice

When it comes to Greek sacrifice, the most elaborate and detailed textual sources come from well before the time of Paul. But even though we do not have a full picture of how Greek sacrifices were performed during Paul's time, one can still gain a rather comprehensive picture by combining several strands of evidence.²³⁹ The source material I examine in this section mainly comes from

²³⁷ On Demeter in Eleusis, see Lary J. Alderink, "The Eleusinian Mysteries in Roman Imperial Times," in *Religion (Heidentum: Die Religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen [Forts.])*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, ANRW II/18.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 1457–98; Kevin Clinton, "The Eleusinian Mysteries: Roman Initiates and Benefactors, Second Century B.C. to A.D. 267," in *Religion (Heidentum: Die Religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen [Forts.])*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, ANRW II/18.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 1499–539.

²³⁸ Another reason for this, as will become clear throughout this chapter, is that detailed descriptions of how animal sacrifices were performed in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, let alone in specific cults, are few.

²³⁹ In order to gain the most nuanced and thorough picture of ancient Greek sacrificial rituals possible, one must take all types of extant sources into account since they will help us both broaden and deepen our understanding of how sacrifices were performed and functioned in the ancient Greek world. On the sources available, Ingvild S. Gilhus ("Sources for the Study of Animals in Ancient Greek Religion," in *Animals in Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Julia Kindt, Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies [London: Routledge, 2021], 41–58, 42) comments: "Sources include texts, material objects, images, and zooarchaeological material. Each of these categories contains several subgroups. Textual sources include inscriptions, literary sources – for example, epics, comedies, tragedies, novels, fables, poetry, hymns, and proverbs – magical texts, divinatory formulae, natural history, and philosophy. Material sources include temples, altars, ritual objects, such as statues, votive offerings, amulets, small personal items, such as jewellery, and coins. 'Art' includes mural images, votive reliefs, mosaics, and pots. Zooarchaeological sources are faunal remains, such as animals included in human burials or buried separately, and bones from places where animals were sacrificed." Even

the eighth century BCE to the second century CE. Gunnel Ekroth makes the following remarks with regards to Greek animal sacrifice:

Judging by our written and iconographical sources, the most common kind of animal sacrifice practiced by the Greeks was *thysia*. At this ritual, the animal victim was divided between gods and men; the deities received the thighbones and the tail section burnt on the altar, while the meat was consumed by the worshippers. In connection with *thysia*, the gods could be given offering of raw meat on the sacred table, *trapezomata*, or various kinds of cooked food at *theoxenia* rituals. Apart from these rituals, the Greeks performed holocausts at which the entire animal was burnt in the fire, as well as sacrifices in war on the battlefield, so-called *sphagia*, at purifications and at oath-takings. At these latter sacrifices, there was no meat for the participants to consume.²⁴⁰

Adding to the picture of the rituals of Greek animal sacrifice, Fredrik S. Naiden puts forth six events/procedures, mainly based on the Homeric *Odyssey* 3 and *Iliad* 6 (c. eighth century BCE), that would make up the sacrificial ritual: “First came the gathering of the worshippers and their purification; then the preliminary offering of barely and the like; then the prayer, the most

though I do not use all these sources, I do not exclude any type of sources as long as they can nuance and contribute to the picture of ancient Greek *thysia* sacrifice.

²⁴⁰ Ekroth, “Bare Bones,” 19–20. On *τραπεζώματα* and *θεοξένια*, see Paul Veyne, “Le sacré et le profane dans la religion gréco-romaine,” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* (2000): 3–42; Gunnel Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Hellenistic Periods*, Kernos Supplements 12 (Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège, 2002), 276–86; Michael H. Jameson, “Theoxenia,” in *Cults and Rites in Ancient Greece: Essays on Religion and Society*, ed. Allaire B. Stallsmith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 145–76. In support of the notion that the *thysia* sacrifice was both popular and important, Sarah Peirce (“Death, Revelry, and ‘Thysia,’” *Classical Antiquity* 12 [1993]: 219–66, 220) points out that there are at least 200 Attic vases on which this type of sacrifice is portrayed. On the meaning of the *thysia* sacrifice as the Greeks portrayed them, she concludes: “The function of the imagery of *thysia* on vases... is a visual metaphor for ideas of festivity, celebrations, and blessings” (*ibid.*, 260). More on ancient Greek vases and their depiction of *thysia* sacrifice, see the most definitive work on this subject by Folkert T. Van Straten, *Hiera Kala: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece*, RGRW 127 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), but also Anja Klöckner, “Visualising Veneration: Images of Animal Sacrifice on Greek Votive Reliefs,” in *Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017], 200–22; Jean-Louis Durand, “Bêtes grecques: Propositions pour une topologie des corps à manger,” in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, ed. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, Bibliothèque des histoires (Gallimard: nrf, 1979), 133–65; Jörg Gebauer, *Pompe und Thysia: Attische Tieropferdarstellungen auf schwarz- und rotfigurigen Vasen*, EIKON. Beiträge zur antiken Bildersprache 7 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002); Tyler Jo Smith, “The art of Ancient Greek Sacrifice: Spectacle, Gaze, Performance,” in *Diversity of Sacrifice: Form and Function of Sacrificial Practices in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Carrie Ann Murray, The Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology Distinguished Monograph Series 5 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 127–43. In addition to this, Ekroth (*The Sacrificial Rituals*, 289) points out that we have very little documented evidence in the form of inscriptions and literary sources that depict other types of sacrifices, e.g., holocausts or sacrifices where a larger part of the animal was burnt, and that “the iconographical material is dominated by renderings of *thysia* followed by dining.” See also Guy Berthiaume, *Les rôles du mégéiros: Étude sur la boucherie, la cuisine et le sacrifice dans la Grèce ancienne* (Leiden: Brill, 1982).

important; and then the disposition of the animal in divine and human portions, the release of fire and smoke, and the inspections of the entrails. Even the meal did not mark the end of the rite. Music and dances sometimes followed. All these phases addressed themselves to the god, and he or she responded to them all.”²⁴¹ In addition to this there were also certain standards that had to be met in order for the sacrifice to be acceptable in the eyes of the god(s). Naiden comments that “the offering should be *kalos*, physically attractive. The request should be unexorbitant. The worshipper should be *hosios*, pious, but also *kalos* in both a physical and a moral sense. All three facets—the animal, the request, and the worshipper’s standing—needed to be satisfactory.”²⁴² Thus, even though sacrifices and the rituals surrounding them could vary to some degree over time and space, there were certain things that were, more or less, non-negotiable when it came to performing an acceptable sacrifice (these facets that Naiden brings to the fore will be discussed further below).

The procedures and requirements of how to conduct a sacrifice that Naiden mentions pre-date Paul by several hundred years, and, as Maria-Zoe Petropoulou points out: “Nowhere [between 100 BCE – 200 CE] are we provided with a detailed description of the sacrificial procedure, similar to the Homeric descriptions.”²⁴³ There is, however, a fairly elaborate account of how sacrifices were made in the second century CE in Lucian’s work *On Sacrifice*. It contains a passage where the author sarcastically mocks the idea and procedures of how sacrifices were performed. Petropoulou notes that “to make his sarcasm at the sacrificial scene more acute, Lucian chose to

²⁴¹ Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 15.

²⁴² Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 63. Naiden mentions one instance where a god accepts the sacrifice even though the worshipper does not meet the above-mentioned standards (*Iliad* 2.420). This example, however, seems to be the exception that proves the rule.

²⁴³ Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 40. Graf (“What Is New,” 117) comments: “One should reconstruct an ideal type, but the variations make it difficult to judge what this norm should be. Still, an ideal form, or a grammar of sacrifice, must have existed in the heads of the Greeks and Romans.”

adopt colourful realism, which, ironically, proves extremely useful to a scholar looking for a textual sacrificial depiction.”²⁴⁴ The text reads as follows:

When they have established altars and formulae and lustral rites, they present their sacrifices (τὰς θυσίας), the farmer an ox from the plough, the shepherd a lamb, the goatherd a goat, someone else incense or a cake; the poor man, however, propitiates the god by just kissing his own hand. But those who offer (θύοντες) victims (to come back to them) deck the animal with garlands, after finding out far in advance whether it is perfect (έντελής) or not, in order that they may not kill something that is of no use to them; then they bring it to the altar and slaughter it under the god’s eyes (έν ὀφθαλμοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ), while it bellows plaintively—making, we must suppose, auspicious sounds, and fluting low music to accompany the sacrifice (θυσία)! Who would not suppose that the gods like to see all this? And although the notice says that no one is to be allowed within the holy-water who has not clean hands, the priest himself stands there all bloody, just like the Cyclops of old, cutting up the victim, removing the entrails, plucking out the heart, pouring the blood about the altar, and doing everything possible in the way of piety (εὐσέβεια). To crown it all, he lights a fire and puts upon it the goat, skin and all, and the sheep, wool and all; and the smoke (κνίση), divine and holy, mounts upward and gradually dissipates into Heaven itself.²⁴⁵

Even though this text does not confirm every facet of animal sacrifice that Naiden brought up, it does confirm some of them; and, perhaps more importantly, Lucian tells us nothing that is contrary to the six characteristics found in the Homeric descriptions of animal sacrifice.²⁴⁶ Consequently, it appears as though the practices surrounding ancient Greek sacrifices were more or less stable before, during, and after Paul’s time.

Notwithstanding the dearth of written sources that discuss and lay out the practice and rituals surrounding Greek animal sacrifice around the first century CE, we can gain a sufficiently detailed and nuanced understanding of Greek animal sacrifice from the combination of written, iconographical, and archaeological sources of sacrificial practices in ancient Greece. In what follows, I focus on the *thusia* sacrifice since, as mentioned above, that is the type of Greek sacrifice

²⁴⁴ Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 40.

²⁴⁵ *On Sacrifice* 12–13; LCL.

²⁴⁶ Petropoulou (*Animal Sacrifice*, 42) comments: “Even with the limitations which are evident in this passage, though, Lucian’s unique description of an animal sacrifice is the closest to completeness. So far as it goes, it shows no crucial difference from ‘classic’ older descriptions.”

that is the most similar to the practices described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Furthermore, Ekroth has noted that data from written and iconographical sources show that the *thusia* sacrifice was the most common type of animal sacrifice practiced in the ancient Greek world (see quote above). This makes it even more plausible that this type of sacrifice was the background for the cultic context Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.²⁴⁷ In order to gain a fuller understanding of the *thusia* sacrifice, I will explore a number of questions that focus on the performance and function of the *thusia* sacrifice and the meal that followed.²⁴⁸ First, how was the *thusia* sacrifice performed? And what did the subsequent dinner look like? Second, what did it mean—socially, culturally, and politically—to take part in the sacrifice and the meal that followed?

Ekroth comments on the importance and pattern of the *thusia* sacrifice:

The fundamental role of *thusia* sacrifice, i.e., animal sacrifice followed by a communal meal, has always been recognized in the study of Greek religion. This kind of sacrifice constituted the main ritual in the cult of the gods and formed the basis for the whole Greek sacrificial system, both on the official and on the private level. . . . The importance of the various actions making up the ritual and the treatment of the different parts of the victim are fundamental:

²⁴⁷ Ekroth, “Bare Bones,” 19.

²⁴⁸ It is impossible to know where and how this type of sacrifice came about. But in the ancient Greek sources, the myth that constituted the beginning of the *thusia* sacrifice can possibly be found in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (535–57), where Prometheus prepares an ox for Zeus. Prometheus deceptively hides the meat of the ox in its stomach, thus making it harder to spot and less attractive, but takes the white bones from the ox and covers them with the fat from the ox, and so makes the bones look like the portion that is to be favoured by Zeus. When it comes for Zeus to choose his portion, he sees through Prometheus’s scheme; nonetheless, Zeus still chooses the bones covered in fat. The myth ends: “And ever since then the tries of human beings upon the earth burn white bones upon smoking altars for the immortals” (LCL). Even though there is no certainty of when Hesiod lived, he is often viewed as a younger contemporary to Homer, which places him *c.* eighth century BCE. In fact, also Homer’s *Odyssey* (3.430–63) contains a description of the *thusia* sacrifice. The dating of the *thusia* sacrifice to the eighth century BCE is also strengthened by findings from the eighth to seventh century BCE of burnt thighbones and tails in the altar debris from Kommos and Eretria. From a couple of centuries later, the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, we have several vase-paintings depicting the tail (which was often offered together with the thighbones) of the sacrificial animal being sacrificed to the gods. Cf. Gunnel Ekroth, “A View from the Greek Side: Interpretations of Animal Bones as Evidence for Sacrifice and Ritual Consumption,” *JAJ* 7 (2016): 35–50, 36; *eadem*, “What We Would Like the Bones to Tell Us: A Sacrificial Wish List,” in *Bones, Behaviour and Belief: The Zooarchaeological Evidence as a Source for Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece and Beyond*, ed. Gunnel Ekroth and Jenny Wallensten, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series In 4°, 55 (Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen, 2013), 15–30, 19–21.

Even if one can possibly date the beginnings of the *thusia* sacrifice to the eighth century BCE, Sarah Hitch (“Sacrifice,” in *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, ed. John Wilkins and Robin Nadeau, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World [Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015], 337–47, 338) is correct in pointing out that, unlike other ancient cults, Greek sacrificial practices “were not based on or derived from canonical, authoritative texts,” as were, e.g., the sacrifices carried out in ancient Judaism.

the consecration, the handling of the grains and the knife, the *chernips*, the killing, the sprinkling of the blood on the altar, the burning of the god's portion, the grilling of the *splanchna*, the libations and, finally, the division of and dining on the meat.²⁴⁹

Since Paul makes a reference to meat (*κρέας*) in 1 Cor 8:13, the *thusia* sacrifice forms a plausible background to the type of sacrificial rituals, and the gatherings that followed them, that a number of the Christ followers in Corinth took part in.²⁵⁰ Even though the *thusia* sacrifice was not the only type of animal sacrifice carried out by the ancient Greeks, it appears as the most probable type of sacrifice in connection with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 due to the emphasis on eating in both the rituals of the *thusia* sacrifice and in Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. During other types of sacrifice, such as destruction sacrifices, blood rituals, and *θεοξένια* rituals, little or no meat was served after the sacrifice. Furthermore, Ekroth argues that these types of sacrifices "can never be considered as having been common, regular rituals aiming at collective participation but are rather to be connected with particular situations, recipients and festivals."²⁵¹

That Christ followers in Corinth attended *thusia* sacrifices is even more probable since, as Ekroth points out in the quote above, it was normally followed by a meal, which consisted, at least partly, of the animal having been sacrificed.²⁵² In fact, so important was the dining that took place in connection with the *thusia* sacrifice that the most common depiction on vases of the *thusia* sacrifice were of the meat of the animal and the various aspects of dining that followed the

²⁴⁹ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 287–88. Ekroth refers to the "cults of the gods," but she has also demonstrated that the *thusia* sacrifice was the most common type of sacrifice dedicated to other deities and divinities as well, e.g., in hero-cults (plausibly since these heroes, Ekroth argues, "occupied a similar place in the Greek religious system as the gods," *ibid*, 304). For a fuller account of how Greeks carried out the *thusia* sacrifice, see Walter Burkert, (*Griechische Religion: Der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, Die Religionen der Menschheit 15 [Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1977], 101–03).

²⁵⁰ Cf. Stephen Richard Turley, *The Ritualized Revelation of the Messianic Age: Washings and Meals in Galatians and 1 Corinthians*, LNTS 544 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 141.

²⁵¹ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 291.

²⁵² Although it is not impossible that Paul refers to other types of sacrifices than the *thusia* sacrifice in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, the fact that the Corinthian Christ followers seem to have attended these sacrifices and meals on a regular basis, at least regular enough to get Paul's attention, suggests that the *thusia* sacrifice is the most probable background.

sacrifice.²⁵³ Indeed, even though the *thusia* sacrifice was not practiced identically everywhere in the Greek world, Walter Burkert points out that dining on the meat from the sacrificial animal was a constant part of the sacrificial ritual: “In den Einzelheiten des Tieropferrituals gibt es Variationen, je nach lokalem ‚Väterbrauch‘; die Grundstruktur ist identisch und klar: das Tieropfer ist ritualisiertes Schlachten mit nachfolgender Fleischmahlzeit.”²⁵⁴

Concerning the performance of the *thusia* sacrifice, there are fewer ancient descriptions and material remnants available than one would have wished. Naiden maintains that the lack of written sources describing how the *thusia* sacrifice was performed is due to the fact that “Greeks thought it [sacrifice] widespread, so they seldom bothered to describe it either among themselves or abroad. Homer, for example, assumes that Ethiopians sacrifice as Achaeans do. Herodotus goes farther and says that Egyptians, Indians, Persians, and Scythians perform *thusia*; he never reports that any people lack this rite.”²⁵⁵ Hence, due to the (imagined, at least among Greek authors) ubiquitous practice of *thusia* sacrifices, descriptions of the ritual were thought redundant. With that said, there are clues and remarks in the ancient sources (both textual and non-textual) that can help us paint an informed picture of what the ancient *thusia* sacrifice rituals looked like.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 290–91.

²⁵⁴ Burkert, *Griechische Religion*, 103. Meals would also follow various Greek festivals: “Das natürlich-simple Ziel eines Festes ist reichliches Essen und Trinken; im griechischen Opferbrauch ist dies in jeden Falle mit gegeben” (*ibid.*, 174). Also Paul Veyne (“Inviter les dieux, sacrifier, banqueter: Quelques nuances de la religiosité gréco-romaine,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* [2000]: 3–42, 6) points out that the sacrifice of the animal and the eating of the meat that followed constitute the core of the *thusia* sacrifice: “Le sacrifice gréco-romain comprend, comme on sait, deux parties distinctes, mais inséparables : d’abord le sacrifice proprement dit, ou les dieux reçoivent leur part, qui est composée des bas morceaux et des or (ce qui amusait les poètes comiques) et qui est brûlée sur l’autel ; ensuite vient un banquet où les participants mangent le reste de la victime, c’est-à-dire la bonne viande.”

²⁵⁵ Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 280. The texts referred to in the quote are: Homer, *Odyssey* 1.22–25; Herodotus, 2.38–42; 3.99; 1.132; 4.7, 60, 62–63. Ekroth (*The Sacrificial Rituals*, 303) argues along the same lines as Naiden and states: “*Thusia* sacrifices were so universal that there was no need for any particular elaboration.”

²⁵⁶ James B. Rives (“The Theology of Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World,” in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wrigth Knust and Zsuzsanna Varhelyi [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 187–202) argues that a more elaborate and thought through theology concerning animal sacrifice appears first towards the end of the third century CE in Porphyry of Tyre’s *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*. According to Porphyry, animal sacrifices were to be avoided for two reasons: first, they are made to the *daimonia* who are controlled by their *πνεῦμα*, which leads them to be subject to the material world with its passions and appetites; second, as Ingvild S. Gilhus (*Animals, Gods, and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Romans, and Early Christian Ideas* [London:

The focal point of the sacrificial ritual was “the burning of thighbones and tails in order to create the savoury smoke, *knise*, the gods were so fond of.”²⁵⁷ In other words, the worshiping of

Routledge, 2006], 138) points out, according to Porphyry, animals were not the original thing sacrificed, but other inanimate things like vegetables and grains were, and the sacrificing of animals signaled a decline in sacrificial practices. This, however, does not mean that Porphyry is against the practice of making sacrifices to the gods. In contrast, he remarks that “we shall make, as is fitting, different sacrifices to different powers. To the god who rules over all, as a wise man said, we shall offer nothing perceived by the senses, either by burning or in words. For there is nothing material which is not at once impure to the immaterial. So not even *logos* expressed in speech is appropriate for him, nor yet internal *logos* when it has been contaminated by the passion of the soul. But we shall worship him in pure silence and with pure thoughts about him.... For his offspring, the intelligible gods, hymn-singing in words should be added. For sacrifice is an offering to each god from what he has given, with which he sustains us and maintains our essence in being... For the gods within the heaven, the wandering and the fixed... we should kindle fire which is already kin to them, and we shall do what the theologian says. He says that not a single animate creature should be sacrificed, but offerings should not go beyond barley-grains and honey and the fruits of the earth, including flowers,” (2.34.1–2, 4; 2.36.3–4; trans. Gillian Clark). Porphyry was not the only author who had opinions on how to understand and perform sacrifices. It was not uncommon for ancient authors to be against certain sacrificial practices, especially those that ran contrary to their own thoughts, philosophy, and theology about how animal sacrifices should be performed and what they meant. But this did not mean that they were against the practice of animal sacrifice as such, just some practices and rituals concerning animal sacrifices (unlike Porphyry who did not want animal sacrifices to take place at all in an ideal world). There were, however, groups, most notably the Pythagorean, Cynic, and Orphic groups, who, as far as we can tell, abstained from animal sacrifice. For a discussion of these three groups, see Rives (“The Theology of Animal Sacrifice,” 190–91), who comes to the conclusion that the Pythagorean, Cynic, and Orphic groups’ problem was not with animal sacrifice *per se*, but with the eating of ensouled (ἔμψυχος) beings.

²⁵⁷ Ekroth, “Bare Bones,” 23. What exactly the gods’ portions consisted of differ in the ancient sources. The written sources give a varied picture. Hesiod mentions that it was the “white bones” (ὀστέα λευκά) that Prometheus burnt on the altar for the gods (*Theogony* 535–41). In the *Iliad* (1.460–70; cf. *Odyssey* 3.456–60) Homer mentions that only the thighbones were wrapped in fat and sacrificed to the gods after the killing of the sacrificial animal; the rest of the animal was roasted and eaten. Sophocles (*Antigone* 1005–11), Herodotus (*The Persian Wars* 4.35), Pausanias (*Description of Greece* 1.24.2), and Lucian (*On Sacrifices* 3; *Prometheus* 19; *Timon, or the Misanthrope* 9) also mention only the thighbones as the part of the animal being sacrificed to the gods. Pausanias explicitly refers to the separation of the thighbones from the rest of the animal as a “Greek custom” (*Description of Greece* 1.24.2; τὸς μηρούς κατὰ νόμον ἐκτεμῶν τὸν Ἑλλήνων). According to Ekroth (“Bare Bones,” 23) the earliest reference to the sacrum bone and tail as part of the gods’ share, together with the thighbones, of the sacrificed animal is found in Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound* (496–99), which was written no later than 430 BCE. Also Aristophanes mentions both the thighbones and tail in *Peace* (1039–40, 1053–55). Menander (*Dyskolos* 450–55) criticizes those who only sacrifice the tailbone to the gods. The iconographical sources, mainly Attic vase paintings, further nuance our understanding of what the ancient Greeks sacrificed to the gods during the *thusia* sacrifice. On the one hand, vases where only the burning of the tailbone is depicted are common, which suggests that not everyone thought of the sacrifice of merely the tailbone as a negative thing. On the other hand, vases depicting the burning of thighbones are much rarer. On the topic of vases, see Folkert van Straten, “The God’s Portion in Greek Sacrificial Representations: Is the Tail Doing Nicely?” in *Early Greek Cult Practices: Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26–29 June, 1986*, ed. Robin Hägg, Nanno Marinatos and Gullög C. Nordquist, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series In 4°, 38 (Stockholm: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1988), 51–68. A third strand of evidence, the zooarchaeological findings, however, suggests that the most common part of the animal sacrificed to the gods were the thighbones of sheep and goats, and that tails of animals were less frequently sacrificed (for more on the osteological evidence, see Gunnel Ekroth, “Thighs or Tails? The Osteological Evidence as a Source for Greek Ritual Norms,” in *La norme en matière religieuse en Grèce ancienne: Actes du XII^e colloque international du CIERGA (Rennes, septembre 2007)*, ed. Pierre Brulé, Kernos suppléments 21 [Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège, 2009], 125–51). Consequently, what exactly the gods’ portion consisted of is still not certain, but, weighing the different pieces of evidence, it seems plausible that thighbones were the more common part of the animal to be sacrificed to the gods, with the tail being a somewhat standard, but less frequent, part of the animal to dedicate to the gods.

and sacrificing to the gods and deities who were the recipients of the sacrificial animals, or its thighbones and tail, lay at the center of this sacrifice. This is exemplified by Plato who writes that “to sacrifice is to give to the gods.”²⁵⁸ Ekroth gives a detailed description of how the *thusia* sacrifice was performed that, even though lengthy, is worth quoting:

The animal sacrificed at a *thusia* was one of the domesticated species (cattle, sheep, goat, or pig) and had to be perfect as well as suitable for the demands of the gods as to age, sex, and color. It was led in a festive procession, *pompe*, to the altar, where the worshippers would gather in a circle and perform initial rituals (*katharchesthai*). The person performing the sacrifice would dip his/her hands in the *chernips*, a vessel for keeping sacred water, and besprinkle the participants and also pour water on the head of the animal to make it move and show its vivacity and therefore suitability as a sacrifice to the gods. Grain was scattered over the worshipper and the victim, followed by the prayer where the aim of the sacrifice was defined. After this the animal was killed.... The blood was collected in a bowl, a *sphageion*, apart from a small quantity that was sprinkled on the altar.... The animal’s carcass was placed on its back on a table or hung from a tree and opened up and inspected to ascertain that it was a proper gift for the gods.... The next step was to cut out the thighbones (femora), *mēria* or *mēroi* in Greek, and wrap them in the omentum, the fat from the stomach, or the subcutaneous fat from the thigh and then place this ‘package’ in the altar fire. Also, the sacrum bone and the tail vertebrae, called *osphys* in Greek, were burned for the gods. Both the fat-wrapped thighbones and the tail sections would give rise to a fragrant and fatty smoke, *knisē*, and the gods were perceived as profiting from the sacrifice by inhaling this smoke through their noses.... After the burning of the gods’ portion or perhaps partly at the same time, the edible internal organs, *splanchna*, which consisted of the heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and spleen, were threaded onto spits and grilled in the altar fire.... When ready, the *splanchna* were immediately distributed and eaten by the worshippers standing closest to the altar.... The *splanchna* could also be given to the gods by placing them in the hands or on the knees of the statue of the divinity.... The fire in the altar was finally quenched with a wine-water libation, and the part of the sacrifice focused on the communication with the gods was concluded.²⁵⁹

In addition to the *thusia* sacrifice, two types of rituals were common if those performing the sacrifice wanted to show the gods extra honor. First, the *τραπεζώματα* ritual. This ritual could take

²⁵⁸ Plato, *Euthyphro* 14c: τὸ θύειν δωρεῖσθαι ἐστὶ τοῖς θεοῖς.

²⁵⁹ Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus Care,” 228–30. Cf. Michael H. Jameson (“Sacrifice and Ritual: Greece,” in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons: 1988], 2.959–79, 969–73) and Sarah Hitch (*Kind of Sacrifice: Ritual and Royal Authority in the Iliad*, Hellenic Studies Series [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009]) who describe Greek animal sacrifice as portrayed in Homer. For an in-depth review of Greek animal sacrifice, see Antoine Hermay et al., “Les sacrifices dans le monde grec,” in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, ed. Antoine Hermay and Bertrand Jaeger (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 1:59–134, 59–129.

place during an animal sacrifice and undertaking it meant that those who performed the sacrifice would dedicate more parts of the animal than just the prescribed thigh bones and tail to the god.²⁶⁰ Those who partook in the sacrifice would place these parts on the *τράπεζα* that was next to the altar as a sign that they consecrated these additional animal parts to the deity. On the topic of *τραπεζώματα*, David Gill comments:

It is far from certain that every *thysia* included offerings of *trapezomata*; but the practice seems to have been sufficiently common. The portions which could be offered on the *trapeza* were apparently not as rigidly determined as those that were burned on the altar. They differed from cult to cult and consisted for the most part of cuts such as the worshippers themselves would have gotten.²⁶¹

If the participants of the sacrifice carried out this ritual, where the god had its own portion on its own table (*τράπεζα*), at the same time they were eating their portions (i.e., the *σπλάγχνα*) it is easy to see how Paul could have understood the situation as one where the Christ followers and the deities of the cult (which, in Paul's opinion, were *daimonia*) were indeed sharing a *τράπεζα* (more on the eating of the *σπλάγχνα* below).

In the second ritual, the *θεοξένια* ritual, different types of cooked food (including inanimate offerings, e.g., oil, wine, fruit, grain, cakes, and bread) were offered to the gods.²⁶² During a *θεοξένια*, the worshipers would invite the god(s) as a guest and the divine guest would have been entertained, given a couch to recline on and a table on which was a meal in honor of the god.²⁶³ One important part of Greek animal sacrifice, to which I now turn, was the pouring of libations.

²⁶⁰ David Gill, *Greek Cult Tables*, Harvard Dissertations in Classics (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 13; *idem*, "Trapezomata: A Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice," *HTR* 67 (1974): 117–37.

²⁶¹ Gill, "Trapezomata," 125.

²⁶² The practice of *τραπεζώματα* and *θεοξένια* can possibly be traced back to the eighth century BCE and the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* (94–137), where Hermes handles the meat from the sacrifice in ways reminiscent of a *τραπεζώματα* and *θεοξένια*. Cf. Gunnell Ekroth, "Meat for the Gods," in *Nourrir les dieux? Sacrifice et représentation du divin*, ed. Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge and Francesca Prescendi, Kernos suppléments 26 (Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège, 2011), 15–41, 21.

²⁶³ *θεοξένια* appears to have been practiced in cults linked with numerous divinities and was a widespread practice in the ancient Greek world. The sacrifice could be performed after a *thusia* sacrifice, but it could also be performed on

The act of making a libation refers to the pouring of liquid. In the case of animal sacrifice wine is poured out into the flames of the altar, and the participants viewed it as an offering to the gods.²⁶⁴ A libation, when poured out during an animal sacrifice, was an integral part of the sacrifice and the person in charge performed at least one act of libation at end of the sacrifice.²⁶⁵ This libation typically consisted of wine.²⁶⁶ On the place of libation rituals in the first century CE, Meredith J. C. Warren comments: “It is clear that people living in first-century Greco-Roman locales (Jews and non-Jews alike) would have poured out liquid from bowls or cups, either at formal sacrificial events at temples or in more intimate dining settings.”²⁶⁷ In fact, the ritual of making libations seems to be one of the most ancient and universal rituals performed in cultic settings, including everything from private dinner parties to public sacrifices in temples.²⁶⁸ On the importance of libations in Greek cults, Kimberley C. Patton comments:

The libation was a vital form of proto-Greek religious behavior, dating from as early as 2000 B.C.E., is attested by the numbers of elaborately carved rhyta, libation vessels, from Minoan Crete.... Many seals and rings show sacrificial scenes including libation pitchers set out with bread and fruit offerings. The initial temporal or functional separation that seems to have existed in the Minoan period between drink offerings and animal sacrifice was later eradicates. A combination of the two forms occurs as early as the important fourteenth-century painted sarcophagus from Aghia Triadha in Crete with a rare depiction of animal sacrifice, in which a procession of men and women carry large buckets, while the priestess

its own, without any other type of sacrifice, and so provided a simpler, more economical way of sacrificing to the gods than did the *thusia* sacrifice. Cf. Michael H. Jameson, “Theoxenia,” in *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence: Proceedings of the Second International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Organized by the Swedish Institute at Athens, 22–24 November 1991*, ed. Robin Hägg, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series In 8°, 13 (Stockholm: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1994), 35–57, 55.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Kimberley C. Patton, *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 28.

²⁶⁵ Milette Gaifman, *The Art of Libation in Classical Athens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 25. My focus here is on libations in connection with animal sacrifice, but libations could be performed on several occasions. Milette Gaifman (“The Libation of Oinomaos,” in *Antike Mythen: Medien, Transformationen und Konstruktionen*, ed. Ueli Dill and Christine Walde [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009], 576–98, 587) notes that perhaps one of the most significant roles of libations in Greek antiquity was “the entrance into a covenant, which is witnessed by divinities.”

²⁶⁶ Gaifman (*The Art of Libation*, 25) distinguishes between the initial act of pouring water on the sacrificial animal, which is best understood as purification ritual, and the pouring of wine (i.e., the libation) at the end of the sacrifice. Even if wine is the liquid most strongly connected with libations, other liquids could also be used for libations depending on how and when it was made, e.g., milk, honey, oil, blood, and water.

²⁶⁷ Meredith J. C. Warren, “The Cup of God’s Wrath: Libation and Early Christian Meal Practice in Revelation,” *Religions* 9 (2018): 1–13, 2.

²⁶⁸ Patton, *Religion of the Gods*, 31.

is shown pouring a container of liquid into a large krater... Libations, of wine pure or mixed, of honey, oil, milk, water, or blood itself cascaded in and punctuated virtually every prayer and every public sacrifice in ancient Greece.²⁶⁹

So common were libations in Greek cultic life that the Greek language had four words for the act of pouring libations: *λοιβή*, *χολή*, *σπονδή*, and *νηφάλιος*. Of these four words, Greek authors used *σπονδή* most frequently when it came to referring to a libation performed in the context of animal sacrifice; and, unlike other types of libations where all of the liquid was poured out, the “*σπονδαί* moistened altars ... [and they] were often poured out in short drops, with the remainder consumed entirely.”²⁷⁰ Even if the sacrificial rituals stopped with the burning of the gods’ portions (the thighbones and tail) and the pouring of libations, the meal that ensued was an integral part of the larger ritual.²⁷¹

Dining on the Sacrificial Meat

There is ample evidence that a meal normally followed the *thusia* sacrifice.²⁷² Ekroth writes: “The fact that the meat was not destroyed, but kept and eaten, is clear from the direct evidence for the actual handling and division of the meat, dining facilities and references to eating. There is also a

²⁶⁹ Patton, *Religion of the Gods*, 32–33. On the archaeological evidence concerning libations in ancient Greece, see Erika Simon, “Archäologisches zu Spende und Gebet in Griechenland und Rom,” in *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstag-Symposium für Walter Burkert*, ed. Fritz Graf (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1998), 126–42.

²⁷⁰ Patton, *Religion of the Gods*, 33.

²⁷¹ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 303–04.

²⁷² Patrice Méniel (“Killing and Preparing Animals,” in *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World [Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015], 155–66, 160) notes that how one can see if the bones come from an animal that was eaten “is informed primarily by the butchery marks and the state of the bones.” There is, however, no certainty as to when these meals became an integral part following a *thusia* sacrifice. But the meal must have been practiced during Homeric times, as Roland Etienne (“Autels et Sacrifices,” in *Le Sanctuaire grec*, ed. Albert Schachter, *Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 37 [Geneva: Vandœuvres, 1992], 291–319, 311) notes: “L’un des problèmes qui restent ouverts est celui de la mise en place de la *thusia* grecque, comme banquet communautaire ritualisé. Il est clair, d’un côté, que les textes homériques font état d’un plein épanouissement de la pratique, mais il est bien difficile de définir dans le temps la société à laquelle renvoie l’épopée.”

number of cases, mainly epigraphical but also literary, in which it can be argued from the contexts in which the sacrifices are found, that dining must have formed a part of the ritual.”²⁷³ Writing in the early second century CE, Dio Chrysostom shows this by making the following remark: “What sacrifice (*θυσία*) is acceptable to the gods without the participants in the feast [that follows the sacrifice]?”²⁷⁴

Some scholars have claimed that all the meat consumed at these meals—indeed, *all* meat consumed by ancient Greeks—came from sacrificial animals. Marcel Detienne, a proponent of this view, states: “Il y a là un premier trait qui justifie la place centrale du sacrifice sanglant dans la pensée sociale et religieuse des Grecs: l’alimentation carnée coïncide absolument avec la pratique sacrificielle; toute viande consommée est une victime animale égorgée rituellement.”²⁷⁵ Recent scholarship, however, has questioned this.²⁷⁶ There are two main reasons for this: first, some animal sacrifices involved burning either the whole animal, as in a holocaust sacrifice, or discarding the meat in a way that did not include dining on the meat (e.g., in battle and oath sacrifices); second, there is strong evidence that not all meat eaten in Greek sanctuaries came from sacrificial animals. Naiden points out the difficulties in assessing whether the flesh of an animal

²⁷³ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 303–04.

²⁷⁴ *The Third Discourse on Kingship*, 97.

²⁷⁵ Marcel Detienne, “Pratiques culinaires et esprit de sacrifice,” in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, ed. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, Bibliothèque des histoires (Gallimard: nrf, 1979), 7–35, 9–10. Jean-Pierre Vernant (“À la table des hommes: Mythe de fondation du sacrifice chez Hésiode,” in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, ed. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, Bibliothèque des histoires [Gallimard: nrf, 1979], 37–132, 44) gives a similar view: “On ne peut normalement manger de la viande qu’à l’occasion et suivant les règles du sacrifice.” See also Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, trans. Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 33–34; Sitta von Reden, “Classical Greece: Consumption,” in *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris, and Richard Saller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 385–406, 394.

²⁷⁶ See, e.g., Robert Parker, “Eating Unsacrificed Meat,” in *Paysage et religion en Grèce antique: Mélanges offerts à Madeleine Jost*, ed. Pierre Carlier and Charlotte Lerouge-Cohen, Travaux de la Maison René-Ginouvès 10 (Paris: De Boccard, 2010), 139–47. For a discussion on the topic, see Scott Scullion, “Bones in Greek Sanctuaries: Answers and Questions,” in *Bones, Behaviour and Belief: The Zooarchaeological Evidence as a Source for Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece and Beyond*, ed. Gunnell Ekroth and Jenny Wallensten, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series In 4°, 55 (Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen, 2013), 243–55, 246–53.

was sacrificial or not: “First, a given kind of meat might or might not be of sacrificial origin, and so it would not surely be sacrificial. Second, sacrificial and other meat might be served together, and so the sacrificial would mingle with the profane. Third, meat might be preserved, ground, or stolen, and so its origin would be obscure. Some meat was ambiguous, some confused, and some dubious.”²⁷⁷

Both literary and other sources support the notion that not all meat eaten at the dinner that followed a *thysia* sacrifice came from the altar. For example, Aristophanes narrates the animals being prepared for a wedding feast: a sheep is prepared to be sacrificed for the dinner, but the rabbits and thrushes are simply cooked without any ritual. Both sets of animals, however, are to be eaten.²⁷⁸ The zooarchaeological evidence, i.e., the bones left on the sacrificial altar and around dining places, show that, whereas the finding from the altars are mainly from cattle, sheep, and goat, which were common sacrificial animals,²⁷⁹ the remnants from where the dining took place contain pig, horse, game, and dog remains, in addition to the animals found among the altar debris.²⁸⁰ Even though there are fewer pigs, horse, game, and dog remains than cattle, sheep, and goat found in the dining places, this indicates “that animals not treated in a *thysia* manner were

²⁷⁷ Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 242. In contrast to Naiden, Barttomiej Bednarek (“The Sale of Sacrificial and Non-Sacrificial Meat,” *Mnemosyne* 70 [2017]: 58–78, 62) suggests that Greeks might not have thought of meat as either secular/profane or sacred, but “it was just meat” to them.

²⁷⁸ *Peace* 929–38, 1191–97.

²⁷⁹ The most well-known sacrificial animals were cattle, sheep, goat and pig. But there were other animals that were sacrificed too. Alexandra Villing (“Don’t Kill the Goose that Lays the Golden Egg? Some Thoughts on Bird Sacrifices in Ancient Greece,” in *Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017], 63–101) notes that birds were sacrificed and Jennifer Larson (“Venison for Artemis?” The Problem of Deer Sacrifice,” in *Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017], 48–62) argues that the findings of deer bones in Greek sanctuaries evidence that also deer was sacrificed. In addition, Michael H. Jameson (“Sacrifice and Animal Husbandry in Ancient Greece,” in *Cults and Rites in Ancient Greece: Essays on Religion and Society*, ed. Allaire B. Stallsmith [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 198–231, 220) comments: “It may be suggested that in most of Greece... the sacrificial calendar was close to that of seasonal availability from the annual increase of young animals and the culling of older ones.”

²⁸⁰ Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus Care,” 245.

taken to sanctuaries to be eaten.”²⁸¹ Another indication that several types of meat were used is the way the meat was cooked.²⁸² Even though grilling the meat was seen as the most unadulterated and prestigious way to cook meat, the meat served in connection with a *thusia* sacrifice was often boiled.²⁸³ This has been worked out from the unburnt state of the bones found in Greek sanctuaries where dining would have taken place.²⁸⁴

Practicality was the main reason as to why the ancient Greeks boiled the meat: the process would make all meat tender (especially as the fat would stay in the water and not leave the animal in the same way would it have been grilled). Additionally, since the boiled pieces of meat lost their distinct appearances, it was easy to mix all sorts of meat without anyone knowing if what they ate was the sacrificial animal or if it also contained bits and pieces of dogs and horses.²⁸⁵ This would make it both easier and cheaper to provide a larger party with enough meat.²⁸⁶ Thus, the performance of a *thusia* sacrifice was focused on the burning of the thighbones and tails in honor of the gods, but the meal that followed seems to have played an equally important role for the

²⁸¹ Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus Care,” 245; *eadem*, “Meat in Ancient Greece: Sacrificial, Sacred or Secular?” *Food & History* 5 (2007): 249–72.

²⁸² Michael Mackinnon (“Tastes of Meat in Antiquity: Integrating the Textual and Zooarchaeological Evidence,” in *Taste and the Ancient Senses*, ed. Kelly C. Rudolph, The Senses in Antiquity [London: Routledge, 2018], 161–78, 174) notes that “the ancient Greek and Romans cooked meat in five basic ways: boiling or stewing, roasting, frying, grilling and baking (as in a casserole).”

²⁸³ Gunnel Ekroth, “Meat, Man and God: On the Division of the Animal Victim at Greek Sacrifices,” in *Mikros hieromnēmon: Meletes eis mnēmēn Michael H. Jameson*, ed. Angelos P. Matthaiou and Irene Polinskaya (Athens: Greek Epigraphical Society, 2008), 259–90, 274–76. For the preference of grilled meat over boiled, see Berthiaume, *Les rôles du mágeiros*, 15–16. Frank H. Stubbings (“Food and Agriculture,” in *A Companion to Homer*, ed. Alan J. B. Wace and Frank H. Stubbings [London: Macmillan, 1962], 523–30, 523) puts it like this: “Fighting is the hero’s work; eating and drinking are his proper pleasures, and *roast meat* and wine his proper food and drink” (my emphasis).

²⁸⁴ Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus,” 243.

²⁸⁵ This was also the reason why some viewed boiled meat with suspicion: one simply could not tell what was being boiled.

²⁸⁶ Ekroth (“Burnt, Cooked or Raw? Divine and Human Culinary Desires at Greek Animal Sacrifice,” in *Transformations in Sacrificial Practices: From Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. Eftychia Stavrianopoulou, Axel Michaels, and Claus Ambos, Performances: Intercultural Studies on Ritual, Play and Theatre 15 [Berlin: LIT, 2008], 87–111, 99) points out another reason for cooking the meat: equality. Since the different parts of meat became indistinguishable when cooked, it meant that those who ate could not know whether they ate a better part of the animal than the others, and this helped create a sense of equality.

worshippers.²⁸⁷ I now turn from the performance of the *thusia* sacrifice to the function of it in order to explore what role the sacrifice and meal played in ancient Greek society and cult. To that end, I will focus on where and by whom the *thusia* sacrifice was carried out; who partook in the sacrifice; how the worshipers related to the gods they sacrificed to; and, finally, what it meant to be present at the meal that followed the sacrifice.

With regards to how the *thusia* sacrifice functioned in Greek society, Vincent J. Rosivach distinguishes between three spheres where it would have been performed: the public, the private, and those made in voluntary associations.²⁸⁸ He points out that private sacrifices could work as an activity that would bind people together on a more intimate level than would the public sacrifices: “At a minimum private sacrifices can join others to the sacrifice through the common meal which the sacrifice occasions, and inviting an acquaintance to a sacrifice is surely the best way of getting

²⁸⁷ For more on how meat in Greek sanctuaries was cooked and treated, see Ekroth, “Burnt, Cooked or Raw?” 87–111.

²⁸⁸ Vincent J. Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice in Fourth-Century Athens*, American Philological Association: American Classical Studies 34 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 12. In this chapter I focus mainly on public and private sacrifices, but the importance of sacrifices in virtually all types of associations is clear, as Markus Öhler (“Mähler und Opferhandlungen in griechisch-römischer Vereinigungen,” in *The Eucharist, its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, WUNT 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017] 3.1416–39, 1420) notes: “Aus soziologischer Perspektive stellten Kult und Opfer offenbar ein unverzichtbares Element der Identitätsbildung und -erhaltung griechisch-römischer Vereinigungen dar.” I agree with Robert Parker (“Public and Private,” in *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World [Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015] 71–80, 71–73) and Christopher A. Faraone (“Household Religion in Ancient Greece,” in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, ed. John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan, The Ancient World: Comparative Histories [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008], 210–28, 222) that to label cultic activities in antiquity as “public” or “private” is inaccurate and unnuanced. However, I still hold that a distinction can be made between sacrifices that were publicly funded and took place in or close to a public temple, on the one hand, and sacrifices that were privately funded and took place in domestic or smaller settings and where one needed an invitation to partake, on the other. This is how I use and understand “public” and “private” in this chapter. Cf. Konrad Vössing (“Öffentliche Bankette und Bankette in der Öffentlichkeit,” in *The Eucharist, its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, WUNT 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017] 3.1537–54) who argues that the only clear distinction between public and private banqueting, a crucial part of any animal sacrifice where the whole animal was not burnt, i.e., in a holocaust, lays in the source of funding the sacrifice. For a discussion on “public” (öffentlich) and “private” (privat) in imperial Rome, see Aloys Winterling, “‘Öffentlich‘ und ‚privat‘ im kaiserzeitlichen Rom,” in *Gegenwärtige Antike – antike Gegenwart: Kolloquium zum 60. Geburtstag von Rolf Rilinger*, ed. Tassilo Schmitt, Winfried Schmitz, and Aloys Winterling (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005), 223–44.

oneself invited in return to his sacrifice and to the meal it will provide.”²⁸⁹ Xenophon of Athens’s *Memorabilia* illustrates this concept well in the dialogue between Socrates and Chaerecrates: “Then tell me, now; if you wanted to get an invitation to dine with an acquaintance when he offers sacrifice (ὁπότε θύοι), what would you do?’ ‘Of course I would begin by inviting him myself when I offered sacrifice (ὅτε θύοιμι).”²⁹⁰ Consequently, partaking in a privately hosted *thusia* sacrifice entailed an obligation to invite the host to your own sacrifice. But it was not only the private *thusia* sacrifices that played an important social role.

Public *thusia* sacrifices played a vital role in both Greek society and in the cultic system: “Animal sacrifice followed by dining was a ritual intimately linked to the social structure of society and the communal sharing of the meat at these rituals seems to have been a central feature of ancient Greek society.”²⁹¹ These sacrifices were often regulated by sacred laws and calendars.²⁹² In order to partake fully in the public sacrifices (i.e., be present for the sacrifice and the subsequent meal), one had to be a citizen.²⁹³ Going even further, Ekroth maintains that “it was the citizen’s

²⁸⁹ Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice*, 10.

²⁹⁰ 2.3.11; LCL. Even though this work predates 1 Corinthians by c. 400 years, this poses the question what it meant for Christ followers to attend sacrifices and their meals and if they were obligated to invite the hosts to a sacrifice or cultic meal of their own. Since we do not know if the sacrifice and meal the Corinthians partook in were private or not, this question has to remain unanswered for the time being. However, it is certainly possible that this was the case, if it was a private dinner the Corinthian Christ followers attended, since we know that the Christ followers in Corinth hosted at least one regular cultic meal (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, 1 Cor 11:20) to which they could invite others. That the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον should be understood as a cultic meal similar to those held in other associations is clear and Öhler (“Mähler und Opferhandlungen,” 1436) comments: “Für das frühe Christentum scheint klar zu sein, dass allein schon die Bezeichnung des Mahls als κυριακὸν δεῖπνον (1Kor 11,20) dieses als kultisches Mahl qualifiziert.” Cf. Konrad Vössing, “Das ‚Herrenmahl‘ und 1 Cor. 11 im Kontext antiker Gemeinschaftsmähler,” *JAC* 54 (2011): 40–72.

²⁹¹ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 291. Burkert (*Griechische Religion*, 105) strengthens the role of community vis-à-vis Greek sacrifice: “Ist für mythische wie für begriffliche Reflexionen problematisch, was solch ein Opfer den Gott angeht, so ist doch immer klar, was es für die Menschen bedeutet: Gemeinschaft, *koinōnia*.”

²⁹² Michael Gagarin, “Ancient Greek Laws on Sacrifice,” in *Diversity of Sacrifice: Form and Function of Sacrificial Practices in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Carrie Ann Murray, The Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology Distinguished Monograph Series 5 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 241–54. Several of these sacred laws (*leges sacrae*) can be found in Franciszek Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des Cités grecques*, École française d’Athènes: Travaux et mémoires des anciens membres de l’école et de divers savants (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1969).

²⁹³ The Greek city benefited from this since their citizens came together and honored the gods, and it is not a far-fetched thought that these sacrifices also helped keep the people united politically as well. Aristotle asserts that groups

duty to take part in the sacrifices.”²⁹⁴ Consequently, a public sacrifice was a powerful tool in order to both include and to exclude people and a way to demonstrate in public one’s citizenship and fidelity with the city and its gods.²⁹⁵ What the sacrifice meant to the city and participants is one part that constructed the meaning of the sacrifice; the other part consists of what it meant for the people and the gods they sacrificed to. Put differently, what did the worshipers hope to achieve vis-à-vis the gods, how did they relate to the gods, and what function was the sacrificial animal thought to have (were the parts dedicated to the gods purely ceremonial, or were they considered food for the gods?).

To think that the gods needed the thighbones and tail the worshipers dedicated to them is probably a mistake.²⁹⁶ In fact, Daniel Ullucci points out that the gods did not “need” anything from humans; it is humans that need the gods and the things they can provide, like protection and fertility.²⁹⁷ Despite the fact that parts of the sacrificial animal were dedicated to the gods and the smoke that rose from the altar was pleasing to them, the main thing given to the gods was not the animal parts, but the honor (τιμή) shown to them through these sacrifices.²⁹⁸ This can be seen in

that come together for sacrifices are one of the cornerstones of a flourishing city (*Politics* 3.5.35–39). The citizens, on the other hand, benefited since they received free meat.

²⁹⁴ Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals*, 291. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi (“Introduction,” in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 3–31, 9) also note the political side of Greek sacrifices: “Citizens of the polis were expected to participate in sacrifices, all political activities included a sacrifice followed by a meal, and filial relationships were established with colonies by means of such ritual meals.” Cf. Stanley K. Stowers, “Greeks Who Sacrifice and Those Who Do Not: Toward an Anthropology of Greek Religion,” in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, ed. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Fortress 1995), 293–333, 295, 328.

²⁹⁵ Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 118. Hence, and as I will argue further in chapter three, abstaining from participation in sacrificial cults was not an easy task since it would undeniably mark one as an outsiders and as disloyal to the city or group in whose sacrifices one thus far had taken part in. As Catherine M. Bell (*Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992], 215) puts it: “The only real alternative to negotiated compliance is either total resistance or asocial self-exclusion.”

²⁹⁶ As Daniel Ullucci (“Contesting the Meaning of Animal Sacrifice,” in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 57–74, 63) puts it: “For most in the ancient Mediterranean, the statement ‘the gods do not need sacrifice’ was a simple truism that derived from the nature of the universe. It was not a reason to abstain from sacrifice. Sacrifice was not an indication that the gods were beholden to humans for food, attention, or praise.”

²⁹⁷ Ullucci, “Contesting the Meaning of Animal Sacrifice,” 57.

²⁹⁸ Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus Care,” 248.

Plato's *Euthyphro*, where Socrates asks Euthyphro what the gods benefit from humans' worship.²⁹⁹ Euthyphro answers that the gods receive honor (τιμή), homage (γέρας), and gratitude (χάρης). Sacrifices could also be used to move the gods so that they would look favourably on those partaking in a sacrifice.³⁰⁰ For example, in *The Persian Wars* Xerxes asks the Athenian exiles who follow him to sacrifice (θῦσαι τὰ ἱρὰ) on his behalf in order to appease the gods for the burning down of a temple (ἱρόν).³⁰¹ In addition to this example, Naiden mentions that in the *Iliad* 1 and 9 and in the *Odyssey* 12, the gods' favour and/or mercy was sought by way of *thusia* sacrifice.³⁰² The notion that the gods will listen and be moved by human worship is explicitly stated in the *Iliad*: "Even the very gods can bend, though theirs is even greater excellence and honor (τιμή) and might [than that of humans]. These by incense and reverent vows and libations (λοιβή) and the smoke (κνίσση) of sacrifice do humans turn from wrath with supplication, when they transgress and err."³⁰³

It was not only, however, the gods who enjoyed the sacrifices. Humans, too, found great pleasure in the sacrifices. Thucydides mentions that among the things that help people relax from their daily labouring are games and sacrifices (ἀγῶσι μὲν γε καὶ θυσίαις). Not only are the games and sacrifices a way to relax, but, Thucydides maintains, "the delight (τέρψις) we each day find in these things drives away any sadness."³⁰⁴ Plato appears to refer to sacrifices to the gods as a pleasure (ἡδονή) for humans.³⁰⁵ In another work, Plato makes the following remark on sacrifice

²⁹⁹ 14c–15b.

³⁰⁰ Naiden (*Smoke Signals*, 102) points out that the *thusia* sacrifice was not the only type of sacrifice practiced by the Greeks when they sought their gods' favours. They could also perform, e.g., holocausts or σφαγία in order to gain the gods' benevolence.

³⁰¹ Herodotus, *The Persian Wars* 8.53.

³⁰² Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 102.

³⁰³ *Iliad* 9. 497–501; slightly altered from LCL. Cf. Plato, *Republic* 364d–e.

³⁰⁴ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.38; LCL.

³⁰⁵ Plato, *Republic* 2.364c, 365a.

and how it benefits humans: “Let us observe, this further rule,—and of all rules it is the noblest and truest,—that to engage in sacrifice and communion with the gods continually, by prayers and offerings (θύειν) and devotions of every kind, is a thing most noble and good and helpful towards the happy life, and superlatively fitting also, for the good man.”³⁰⁶ But the sacrifices are not only of great joy to the individual—the city and its people also benefit from these sacrifices.³⁰⁷ Plato sees the gatherings that will form at the time of a sacrifice as vital for the city’s well-being since the people attending them may “be friendly towards each other at the sacrifices (θυσιαῶν) and make friends and get to know one another, nothing is better for the city than for them [the people] to get to know one another.”³⁰⁸ Hence, we can see that sacrifices are to the benefit of both the gods and they have a positive effect on the people and the city.³⁰⁹

Another crucial part of the *thusia* sacrifice was the concept of reciprocity.³¹⁰ Ullucci argues that in order to understand “the basic logic on which the practice [of sacrifice] rests,” one has to understand how reciprocity worked in the arena of ancient Greek cults and sacrifices.³¹¹ Ullucci

³⁰⁶ *Laws* 4.716d; LCL.

³⁰⁷ The orator Lysias, when looking back on fifth century BCE Athens, credits the success, both past and current, of the city to the performance of proper sacrifices (*Against Nicomachus* 30.18–19).

³⁰⁸ *Laws* 5.738d–e; my trans.

³⁰⁹ On the political importance of sacrifice, Detienne (“Pratiques culinaires,” 10) comments: “Aucun pouvoir politique ne peut s’exercer sans pratique sacrificielle. Entrée en campagne, engagement avec l’ennemi, conclusion d’un traité, travaux d’une commission temporaire, ouverture de l’assemblée, entrée en charge de magistrats, autant d’activités qui commencent par un sacrifice suivi d’un repas. Tous les citoyens remplissant des magistratures offrent régulièrement des sacrifices.”

³¹⁰ The lack of gift giving to the gods was a dangerous business in the mind of the Greeks. This is seen in Sophocles’s *Ajax* where the chorus asks if Ajax’s insanity is because of his lack of giving the gods, in this case Artemis, her due: “Perhaps on account of some victory for which he had not given thanks (χάρης), cheated of glorious spoils, or of her gift after the shooting of deer” (176–78; slightly altered from LCL).

³¹¹ Ullucci, “Contesting the Meaning,” 62. Cf. Robert Parker, *On Greek Religion*, Townsend Lectures/Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 60 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 137; Thomas R. Martin, *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 159–60. Ullucci makes some cautionary remarks about concepts and thoughts we must free ourselves from in order to draw closer to a better, less anachronistic understanding of ancient sacrifice: “To understand this logic [of reciprocity], it is necessary to divorce ourselves from the most pervasive modern mode of exchange, economic exchange. It is also necessary to divorce ourselves from notions of altruism, egoism, and *do ut des* relationships. These categories are elements of a particular discourse about action. There are neither objective nor analytical and serve only to confuse discussion of sacrifice by imposing a secondary discourse upon it. All of these elements introduce categories and relationships that are foreign to the logic of reciprocity” (Ullucci, “Contesting the Meaning,” 62). Larson (*Understanding Greek Religion*, 40)

further asserts that the reciprocity enacted in ancient sacrificial rituals did not focus, or even sought, on creating a balance between the two parties since such a balance could not be achieved between humans and gods.³¹² Hence, the focus was not exclusively on what was being exchanged—since the gifts of the gods would always trump any human gift—but rather on the parties making the exchange.³¹³ One illustrative example of how the worshiper saw this reciprocal relationship to the gods can be found in the *Iliad*, where Chryses, whose daughter Agamemnon has just taken, prays with the following words to Apollo: “Hear me, you of the silver bow, who have under your protection Chryse and sacred Cilla, and who rule mightily over Tenedos, Smintheus, if ever I roofed over a pleasing shrine (χαρίεντ’ ἐπὶ νηδὺν) for you, or if ever I burned to you fat thigh pieces (πίονα μηρί’) of bulls or goats, fulfill for me this wish: let the Danaans pay for my tears by your arrows.”³¹⁴ Apollo answers straight away in the form of a brutal attack on the Danaans. In a similar fashion, an inscription on a seventh century BCE votive bronze statue dedicated to Apollo reads: “Mantiklos donated me as a tithe to the far shooter, the bearer of the Silver Bow. You, Phoebus (Apollo) give something pleasing in return.”³¹⁵

defines reciprocity in ancient Greek religion as follows: “Most religions envision superhuman agents who act intentionally in the physical world, and whose actions affect human lives. This in turn opens the way for a human response. When divine actions are beneficial, there may be praise, gifts of thanksgiving and requests for additional blessings. In response to harmful actions, there may be attempts to appease what is felt to be anger of the deity. When such ongoing relationships are perceived as mutually beneficial, they may be described as reciprocal.” For a more theoretical discussion on reciprocity, see Jan van Baal, “Offering, Sacrifice and Gift,” *Numen* 23 (1976): 161–78.

³¹² As Larson (*Understanding Greek Religion*, 43) points out: “The relationship between human and gods, however, was highly asymmetrical. Not only were the gods more far more [sic] powerful and knowledgeable than human beings, but also the benefits sought from and given by the gods ensured humans’ very survival. Even the most elaborate of gifts, the annual sacrifices of hundreds of animals at a time, or the construction of magnificent temples, could scarcely be perceived as equivalent in value.” According to Gary A. Anderson, this was the case also in the Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism (see his *Sin: A History* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009] and *Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013]).

³¹³ Ullucci, “Contesting the Meaning,” 62. In addition, we should not view the exchanges between humans and gods as a sort of commerce where human gift giving requires the gods to give back (*do ut des*, “I give that you might give”). Instead, we should think of something more akin to the exchange of gifts, since there is no assurance that the gift will be reciprocated and because the value of the gifts given was not perceived as equal.

³¹⁴ *Iliad* 1.35–42; LCL.

³¹⁵ Boston Museum of Fine Arts, “Ancient Greece and Rome,” https://collections.mfa.org/search/Objects/*/03.997/images?filter=collectionTerms%3AAncient%20Greece%20and%20Rome#filters. Accession number 03.997.

This focus on pleasing the gods is also quite possibly one reason as to why there were a number of different types of sacrifices, with various things being sacrificed, in the ancient Greek world: different sacrifices were fit for different gods and different occasions.³¹⁶ In fact, the gods themselves could instruct their worshipers in how they should honor and give thanks to them in particular. In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess both demands the worship of the people of Eleusis and instructs them on how to perform it: “For I am Demeter the honored one, who is the greatest boon and joy to immortals and mortals. Now, let the whole people build me a great temple with an altar below it, under the citadel’s sheer wall, above Kallichoron, where the hill juts out. As to the rites, I myself will instruct you on how in future you can propitiate (ἔρδοντες) me with holy performance.”³¹⁷

Since the *thusia* sacrifice was about honoring the gods and building a reciprocal relationship, it was not only the rituals or the sacrificial animal that had to be right and proper; the one making the sacrifice, and those present, also had to behave according to appropriate customs and be up to standard. In fact, if the gift given to the gods failed to move them, the reason for this divine rejection could often be found in the morality, or lack thereof, of those present at the

³¹⁶ Cf. Pierre Brulé and Rachel Touzé, “Le *hierieion*: *Phusis et psuchè* d’un *medium*,” in *Le sacrifice antique: Vestiges, procédures et stratégies*, ed. Véronique Mehl and Pierre Brulé (Rennes: Press Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 111–38, 124. For example, the ancient Greeks would perform different sacrifices for a number of different events or happenings, e.g., when the harvest was done, if one had caught an animal in a hunt, after being victorious in a war, before going to war, inaugural sacrifices for those serving a term of office, and there even was a special sacrifice offered after the approval by the gods of an initial sacrifice. Cf. Naiden, *Smoke Signals*, 100–01. Rives (“Animal Sacrifice and Euergetism,” 85) points out that “the ancient Greeks had an astonishingly rich repertory of practices that were meant to win the favour of the gods. A reasonably complete enumeration would include, along with animal and vegetal offerings, the dedication of durable objects (statues, altars, and shrines, as well as a virtually limitless range of votive offerings) and also various types of verbal and non-verbal performances (prayers, processions, songs, dances, athletic competitions, and theatrical performances).” On animal sacrifice Gunnel Ekroth (“Castration, Cult and Agriculture: Perspectives on Greek Animal Sacrifice,” *Opuscula* 7 [2014]: 154–74) points out that uncastrated males constituted the most prestigious kind of animal to be sacrificed.

³¹⁷ 268–74; LCL. See *Hymn to Apollo* 480–501, for a similar type of request and instruction from a god to humans.

sacrifice.³¹⁸ Plato makes the following remark: “From him that is defiled (*μιαρός*) no good man, nor god, can ever rightly receive gifts (*δῶρα*). Therefore all the great labour that impious (*ἀνόσιος*) men spend upon the gods is in vain, but that of the pious (*ῥσιος*) is most profitable to them all.”³¹⁹

Later on in the *Laws*, Plato gives the following example: “Suppose that, when a sacrifice is being performed and the offerings duly burned (*θυσίας γενομένης καὶ ἱερῶν καυθέντων κατὰ νόμον*), some private worshipper—a son or a brother—when standing beside the altar and the offering, should blaspheme most blasphemously (*βλασφημοῖ πᾶσαν βλασφημίαν*), would not his voice being upon his father and the rest of the family a feeling of despair and evil forebodings?”³²⁰ In *Alcibiades*,

Socrates lays out the moral requirements of the worshiper:

For it is not, I imagine, the way of the gods to be seduced with gifts (*δῶρα*), like a base usurer.... For it would be a strange thing if the gods had regard to our gifts and sacrifices (*δῶρα καὶ τὰς θυσίας*) instead of our souls, and the piety and justice (*ῥσιος καὶ δίκαιος*) that may be found in any of us. Far rather at these, I believe, do they look than at those costly processions and sacrifices (*θυσίας*) which are offered.... Certainly it would seem that justice and wisdom are held in especial honour both by the gods and by humans of intelligence; and wise and just are they alone who know what acts and words to use towards gods and humans.³²¹

³¹⁸ Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion*, 42. Larson (*Understanding Greek Religion*, 45) points out that this pattern of a god requesting the worship of humans and giving them instructions on how to do it is also found in the Hebrew Bible, Exod 6:7 and Lev 1:1–17, and thus it was not an uncommon thing for a god to make this type of request.

³¹⁹ *Laws* 4.716e–717a; LCL. On this passage, Ullucci (“Contesting the Meaning,” 64) comments: “Plato argues that, just as a good man would not accept gifts from a wicked man (and thereby enter into a reciprocal relationship with him), the gods will not accept sacrifices from a wicked man. Thus, sacrifices made by immoral individuals are useless because they will not produce the desired reciprocal relationship. The gods cannot be bribed with sacrifices to overlook wrongdoing. On the other hand, the sacrifices of good people will be accepted and will bring the favor of the gods. In other words, sacrifice does not automatically put the gods in debt; other factors are in play, just as in human relationships.”

³²⁰ *Laws* 7.800b–c; LCL.

³²¹ Plato *Alcibiades* 2.149e–150b; slightly altered from LCL.

Naiden points out that the notion of being pious (ὅσιος) was vital for those who made and attended a sacrifice. In *Euthyphro*, Plato has Socrates define piety as being able to sacrifice (θύειν) and pray (εὐχέσθαι) to the gods in a correct manner.³²²

So far, we have seen that the function of the *thusia* sacrifice was to create a reciprocal relationship between humans and gods and to honor the latter. In this, the final part on Greek sacrifice, I want to focus on two additional aspects concerning the *thusia* sacrifice and their functions. First, how the ancient Greeks perceive the sacrificed animal's role with regards to the gods to whom it was offered? Second, what was the function of the meal that followed a *thusia* sacrifice?

The parts of the sacrificial animal offered to the gods, the thighbones and the tail wrapped up in fat, were clearly inedible. The humans, however, got all the parts of the animal that were edible.³²³ This poses the question of what the relation was between the gods and the animal sacrificed to them. Any suggestion that the sacrifices functioned as food for the gods should be dismissed.³²⁴ Even though gods and humans had eaten together in a mythical past, after the institution of animal sacrifice, several Greek satirists made fun of the idea that the gods now ate of the animal offerings. For example, in c. 165 CE the satirist Lucian composed his work *The Double Indictment* in which Zeus ironically suggests that if humans stop their sacrifices to the gods, there will be famine and hunger among the latter.³²⁵ Instead of functioning as food for the

³²² *Euthyphro* 14c–d. Antiphon's *First Tetralogy* 1.10–11 supports the idea that impious humans can defile both places of sacrifice and worship and the others who are there: "It is against all your interests that this polluted wretch (μαρὸς) should profane the sanctity of the temples of the gods (τὰ τεμένη τῶν θεῶν) by setting foot within them or pass on his defilement to the innocent by sitting at the same tables as they" (slightly altered from LCL).

³²³ Unless the worshippers decided to also dedicate some of these parts to the gods in a *τραπέζωμα* or a *θεοξένια* ritual.

³²⁴ Daniel Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 51–56.

³²⁵ *The Double Indictment* 2. More on the nature of Lucian's satirical style, see Fritz Graf, "A Satirist's Sacrifices: Lucian's *On Sacrifice* and the Contestation of Religious Traditions," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Varhelyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 203–13. On animal sacrifice in Greek literature more broadly, see James Redfield, "Animal Sacrifice in Comedy: An Alternative Point of View," in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden

gods, the parts of the animal dedicated to the gods on the altar had another purpose, in addition to being gifts for the gods that provided them with honor. Ekroth argues that Greek animal sacrifice was a way to set humans apart from gods.³²⁶ The fact that the things humans sacrificed to the gods, e.g., bones, smoke, and raw meat, would be inedible for humans demonstrates this.³²⁷ The origin story of the *thusia* sacrifice as laid out in Hesiod’s *Theogony* discussed above emphasizes the separation between gods and humans through sacrificial rituals.³²⁸ Jan N. Bremmer argues: “Hesiod’s account clearly locates the origin of sacrifice at the precise moment that gods and mortals were in the process of parting their common ways. Sacrifice was *the* pre-eminent act of the ‘condition humaine,’ which definitively established and continued the present world order, in which men die and immortals have to be worshiped.”³²⁹ Additionally, and as noted above, the things offered to the gods were inedible—the thighbone and tail and the smoke rising up from

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 167–79; Albert Henrichs, “Animal Sacrifice in Greek Tragedy: Ritual, Metaphor, Problematizations,” in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 180–94.

³²⁶ Ekroth, “Meat for the Gods,” 16.

³²⁷ Despite the fact that additional meat could be offered to the gods at a *τραπεζώματα* or a *θεοξένια* ritual, these offerings did not function as a way of “feeding” the gods. Instead, these two rituals were also seen as a way to mark out the differences between humans and gods. The meat at a *τραπεζώματα* was raw, something humans would not eat (also, there is no evidence that the gods were invited to eat of the raw meat, and it was the priest or priestess who was allowed to take the meat after the ritual); and the meat at a *θεοξένια* was grilled, unlike the boiled meat that would usually be served to the human guests. Cf. Ekroth, “Why Does Zeus Care,” 241–44. Jameson (“Theoxenia,” 55–56) suggests that the *θεοξένια* offering was a “symbolic gesture” and that it and that it was use, among other things, “for securing the presence of the gods.” Additionally, Jameson (“Theoxenia,” 57) maintains that the addition of a *τραπεζώματα* or a *θεοξένια* ritual to the *thusia* sacrifice gave “the whole ceremony more weight, moving in the direction of what was in some respects, the most powerful rite, that of holocaust in which the whole animal was destroyed.” Thus, the honor of the gifts offered at a *τραπεζώματα* or a *θεοξένια* ritual seems to be what the gods actually received. Cf. Ekroth, “Meat for the Gods,” 40.

³²⁸ See fn. 248. Ekroth (“Why Does Zeus Care,” 244) comments: “The institution of *thusia* sacrifice marked the end of this era [of gods and humans eating together], and the smoke from the bones burning on the altar satisfied the gods henceforth.”

³²⁹ Bremmer, “Greek Normative Animal Sacrifice,” 140 (emphasis original). Cf. Apollodorus, *The Library* 1.7.2, for a similar connection of the start of sacrifice being connected with the creating of the hierarchical order between gods and humans.

them—which emphasised that the gods did not need food as humans did, but that the smoke from the burnt thighbones and tail were enough.³³⁰

The meal that followed the sacrifice, was, at least to the human participants, as important as the sacrifice itself.³³¹ For, as Fritz Graf puts it: “Animal sacrifice has a practical aim, the provision of edible meat.”³³² Consequently, the point of an animal sacrifice in the ancient Greek world was more than a mere cultic ritual.³³³ For example, animal sacrifices, when performed by the city, could be intimately linked with citizenship—and thus politically significant—since it was customarily only citizens who partook of the sacrificed meat in these public sacrifices.³³⁴ But

³³⁰ Ekroth, “Meat for the Gods,” 16. Despite the view held by most Greek writers that in their present day, the gods did not eat meat, there was, at least according to some extant Greek texts, a mythical past when gods and humans dined together. Cf. Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, “Quand les dieux font la fête,” in *Phileuripidès: Mélanges offerts à François Jouan*, ed. Danièle Auger and Jocelyne Peigney (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris, 2008), 65–92, 85–92; Lousie Bruit, “Les dieux aux festins des mortels : Théoxénies et xeniai,” in *Entre hommes et dieux: Le convive, le héros, le prophète*, ed. Annie-France Laurens, Centre de Recherches d’Histoire ancienne 86 (Besançon: Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon, 1989) 13–25, 13–17.

³³¹ Robert Parker (*On Greek Religion*, 136) notes that for ancient Greeks, the two facets of animal sacrifice, honoring the gods and dining together, were equally significant and must both be viewed as important parts of the ritual.

³³² Graf, “What Is New,” 120.

³³³ Oswyn Murray (“Conclusion: Greek Forms of Sociality,” in *The Symposium: Drinking Greek Style. Essays on Greek Pleasure, 1983–2017*, ed. Vanessa Cazzato [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018], 283–309, 284–85) encapsulates the meaning of the festivities that surrounded animal sacrifices well: “They serve to express the sense of community of the group of worshippers in a shared experience of pleasure and festivity, which includes both gods and men.”

³³⁴ On the division of the sacrificial meat, Gunnell Ekroth (“Sacred Meals in Ancient Greece? Dining in Domestic Setting as Compared to Sanctuaries,” in *The Eucharist, its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, WUNT 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017] 3.389–1411, 1391) comments: “Free adult men were the prime recipients of meat portions but certain sacrifices could be restricted to specific groups such as women or members of a certain cult association or clan, although women, foreigners and slaves could also be excluded from the distribution of the meat at particular festivals.” It is true that women appear to have been the recipients of sacrificial meat to a lesser extent than men, but Marcel Detienne’s (“Violentes ‘eugénies’ En pleines Thesmophories: des femmes couvertes de sang,” in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, ed. Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, Bibliothèque des histoires (Gallimard: nrf, 1979), 183–214, 187–88) argument that “de même que les femmes sont privées des droits politiques réservés aux citoyens de sexe mâle, elles sont tenues à l’écart des autels, de la viande et du sang,” and that “les femmes au sacrifice, surtout quand il est sanglant, ne peuvent être majeures. Cela est exclu de par la réciprocité qui s’établit dans la cite entre regime carné et pratique politique” is too limiting on the role of women in ancient Greece (even though Detienne admits that “certes, il y a des cas d’exception”). For a critique of Detienne’s argument, see Robin Osborne, “Women and Sacrifice in Classical Greece,” *The Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993): 392–405. Even though men played a greater role overall in the ancient Greek sanctuaries and rituals, there is evidence that also solidifies the role of women as important actors in ancient Greek cults. See, e.g., the third century BCE poet Herodas’s *Mimes* and the chapter *Women Dedicating and Sacrificing to Asclepius* and Strabo’s *Geography* 7.3.4. On women’s place in Greek religion more broadly, see Matthew Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (London: Routledge, 2001);

animal sacrifices could play other important roles as well when it came to displaying one's status in society or in the group who made the sacrifice.³³⁵ As Pauline Schmitt Pantel notes, the distribution of the meat after a *thusia* sacrifice was often divided in such a way that those of who held honorable roles in the society, were they present at the sacrifice, often got the better portions of the animal, whereas the rest of the animal was divided equally among the participants.³³⁶ However, even though the weight of the meat might have been equal, the quality of the meat could vary.³³⁷ Furthermore, on the division of the meat, James B. Rives comments: "Decisions about who consumed what kinds of meat in what circumstances, provided a complex and subtle means of defining and modeling social relations."³³⁸

For example, priests and priestesses could get choice portions of the meat, known as γέρας, as payment for their performance at the sacrifice.³³⁹ Notwithstanding the special role of priests and

in Roman religion, Sarolta A. Takács, *Vestal Virgins, Sibyls, and Matrons: Women in Roman Religion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

³³⁵ Cf. Gunnel Ekroth, "Mat, identitet och status. Om fördelningen av kött mellan människor och gudar i antik grekisk offeritual," in *Arkeologi och identitet: VIII Nordic TAG i Lund 2005*, ed. Bodil Petersson and Peter Skoglund, *Acta Archaeologica Lundensia* 8°, 53 (Lund: Institute of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University, 2008), 189–206, 190. It was probably not the case that all meat was eaten in cultic spaces and buildings. Plutarch describes the Aiginians (whom he calls οἱ μονοφάγοι) who hold a sacrifice to Poseidon in remembrance of those who died in the war against Troy which they celebrate alone at home (*Moralia*, 301.e–f).

³³⁶ Pauline Schmitt Pantel (*La cité au banquet. Histoire des repas publics dans les cités grecques*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 157 [Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1992], 49–50) mentions two systems of dividing up the meat that followed the *thusia* sacrifice: "Le premier est centré sur le privilège, le γέρας : privilège de viande. Les morceaux de choix : cuisse, hanche, épaule ou langue, sont attribués au prêtre, au roi, ou aux premiers magistrats de la cité. Dans ce cas l'art du boucher est de découper la victime en suivant les articulations naturelles, de détacher les membres l'un après l'autre. Au contraire dans l'autre système, homologue du modèle homérique du 'repas à parts égales', l'animal est semble-t-il découpé tout entier en morceaux de poids égal, dont la répartition se fait par tirage au sort. Mais déjà dans la société aristocratique de l'épopée, les deux systèmes, loin de s'exclure, se combinent : une fois prélevés le ou les morceaux de choix, représentant le plus de viande accordé à celui ou à ceux qui ont un honneur spécial ou une dignité particulière, le reste de la victime peut faire l'objet d'un partage égalitaire, en accord avec une certaine idéologie isonomique de la cité." David Whitehead (*The Demes of Attica 508/7-CA. 250 B.C.: A Political and Social Study* [New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986], 205–06) points out that also non-citizens could occasionally take part in the sacrifices.

³³⁷ Ekroth, "Why Does Zeus Care," 246; Berthiaume, *Les rôles du μάγειρος*, 51. This would have been noticeable primarily if the meat was raw. However, as I discussed above, if the meat was prepared by boiling it before it was distributed, the different parts of the animal would have been indistinguishable.

³³⁸ Rives, "Animal Sacrifice," 89. Cf. Ekroth, "Why Does Zeus Care," 248.

³³⁹ Jan-Mathieu Carbon ("Meaty Perks: Epichoric and Topological Trends," in *Animal Sacrifice in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017], 151–77, 152) notes that the hide and a leg were the most common parts of the animal given to the priest or priestess. For more on the meat

priestesses, Rives points out that animal sacrifice in particular enabled also non-specialists to take on a prominent role in the cults.³⁴⁰ For the wealthy, this was a perfect opportunity to display their riches and piety; for those of lower status, expertise in butchering could give them a job helping out at the animal sacrifice.³⁴¹ But it was perhaps the former of these two groups that stood to gain the most from their participating in, and especially sponsoring of, animal sacrifices, and so demonstrate their loyalty to the gods and their benefaction of the cult by providing it with a sacrificial animal and its participants with meat.³⁴² Hence, their economic standing helped them gain an elevated position in the socio-political hierarchies of the ancient Greek world.³⁴³

Oftentimes, the meals following the *thusia* sacrifice would have taken place somewhere in or around the sanctuary: “The meals ending the sacrifices could take place almost anywhere in a sanctuary. At some sanctuaries, particular dining rooms are found, but the worshippers could also eat in temporary tents or in the shade of trees, that is, in any area of the precinct where it was convenient.”³⁴⁴ However, meat that was left over after the meal was commonly sold or taken

given to priests and priestesses, see Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, “Greek Priests and ‘Cult Statues’: In How Far Are They Unnecessary?” in *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Joannis Mylonopoulos, RGRW 170 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 121–41, 134–35; Edward Kadlets, “The Tongues of Greek Sacrificial Victims,” *HTR* 74 (1981): 21–29. In fact, receiving meat from animal sacrifices—but also fiscal income—seems to have been one of the more beneficial aspects of being a priest or priestess in ancient Greece. Cf. Beate Dignas, *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 248–50, 257.

³⁴⁰ Rives, “Animal Sacrifice,” 88.

³⁴¹ Unlike other cults where only those especially appointed to perform the sacrificial rituals were qualified to do so, e.g., in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, Greek cults, generally speaking, did not have such a requirement. As Rives (“Animal Sacrifice,” 87–88) remarks: “Instead, anyone was ritually able to perform sacrifice. If the sacrifice was performed on behalf of a group, as they very often were, the person who presided was normally the person with the greatest authority or social prominences: heads of households in domestic contexts; priests, officials, or patrons in public or group contexts.”

³⁴² Rives (“Animal Sacrifice,” 89) highlights how the money of the wealthy could be exchanged for social positions: “Through participation in a traditional practice that served to win the favour of the gods for a particular community, the wealthy were able to transform their economic control of animal resources into a position of socio-political authority.” According to Rives, this practice of benefaction appears to have become popular in fourth century BCE and onwards.

³⁴³ Cf. Jörg Rüpke, “Gifts, Votives, and Sacred Things: Strategies, Not Entities,” *RRE* 4 (2018): 207–36, 207–08.

³⁴⁴ Gunnell Ekroth, “‘Don’t Throw Any Bones in the Sanctuary!’ On the Handling of Sacred Waste in Ancient Greek Cult Places,” in *Ritual Matters: Material Remains and Ancient Religion*, ed. Claudia Moser and Jennifer Knust, Supplements to the Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome 13 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press,

home.³⁴⁵ With regards to public sacrifices, i.e., those were open to citizens and not just those belonging to a particular cult or association, Rosivach asserts that the typical Athenian in the fourth century BCE could expect to take part in the meat from a sacrificed animal every eight or nine days on average.³⁴⁶ Even so, this did not mean that the average citizen feasted on large quantities of meat regularly. Using the calendar of Erchia from the fourth century BCE as an example, Michael Jameson argues that the meat provided in by the sacrifices laid out in it, and potential sacrifices organized in addition to the calendar, provided each person with *c.* 1.71 kg of meat annually.³⁴⁷

Perhaps the main function of the meal, especially for the more central participants, was not the meat one gained access to but the social aspect of eating together. For these meals—whether they took place with a more limited group in a smaller cult or association or on a larger scale in the public sacrifices—provided an important social meeting place. Jameson notes this aspect: “How the meat of sacrificial animals was distributed, that is, who was entitled to what, was important socially because it recognized membership in a defined community (not necessarily

2017), 33–55, 43. Public sacrifices, Martin (*Ancient Greece*, 163) notes, “were performed at altars placed outside in front of temples, where large groups of worshippers could gather.”

³⁴⁵ Graf, “What Is New,” 122. For example, Gerhard Forstenpointner and Martin Hofer (“Geschöpfe des Pan – Archäozoologische Befunde Faunistik und Haustierhaltung im hellenistischen Arkadien,” in *Forschungen in der Peloponnes. Akten des Symposions anlässlich der Feier “100 Jahre Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut Athen,” Athen 5.3.–7.3. 1998*, ed. Veronika Mistopoulous-Leon [Athens: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, 2001], 169–79, 175) notes that in the Hellenistic settlement at Lousoi there are no skeleton remains from cattle of the animal parts normally burnt in honor of the gods, which indicates that the meat came from sacrificial victims slaughtered in a close by temple but was eaten in the homes. That meat was taken home seems to have been the case particularly when meat was distributed to the participants after a public sacrifice. However, Scott Scullion (“Olympian and Chthonian,” *Classical Antiquity* [1994]: 75–119, 99–112) points out that participants were not always allowed to take the meat outside of the sanctuary. That meat was eaten directly after the sacrifice seems to have been the case especially in smaller cults. Cf. Jameson, “Sacrifice and Ritual: Greece,” 972. On selling of meat, see Christopher Michael McDonough, “The Pricing of Sacrificial Meat: *Eidolothuton*, the Ara Maxima, and Useful Misinformation from Servus,” in *Augusto augurio: Rerum humanarum et divinarum commentationes in honorem Jerzy Linderski*, ed. C. F. Konrad, *Altertumswissenschaften* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 69–76.

³⁴⁶ Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice*, 66.

³⁴⁷ Jameson, “Sacrifice and Animal Husbandry,” 222–23. For more estimations on how much meat a sacrifice could have yielded to the participants, see P. J. Rhodes and Robin Osborne, eds., *Greek Historical Inscriptions 404–323 BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 317, 403.

identical with the political community) and status and privilege within it.”³⁴⁸ On the meal that followed public sacrifices, Sitta von Reden comments: “Public sacrificial banquets offered a wider group of citizens participation in a culture of consumption otherwise reserved for an exclusive elite.”³⁴⁹ This bonding effect of sacrificing together would be felt most by those who participated at the sacrifice and partook of the *σπλάγχνα*, the inner organs of the animals roasted and eaten by the participants before the other parts of the animal were served.³⁵⁰ The ritual of roasting and eating the *σπλάγχνα* had the following features. First, a butcher carved up the dead animal on the table (*τράπεζα*) that was next to the altar. Second, the internal organs were roasted on the altar fire and the priest and those who assisted him ate them at the altar as the god’s portion (thigh bone and tail) was burning in the fire.³⁵¹ Third, the sacrificial party poured libations (*σπονδαί*) on the altar where the thigh bones and tail lay.³⁵² Even more so than the dining that followed the sacrifice, the eating of the *σπλάγχνα* was filled with cultic meaning and ritual.³⁵³ The eating of the other parts of the

³⁴⁸ Michael H. Jameson, “The Spectacular and the Obscure in Athenian Religion,” in *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, ed. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 321–40, 324.

³⁴⁹ Von Reden, “Classical Greece: Consumption,” 396.

³⁵⁰ Folkert van Straten, “Ancient Greek Animal Sacrifice: Gift, Ritual Slaughter, Communion, Food Supply, or What? Some Thoughts on Simple Explanations of a Complex Ritual,” in *La cuisine et l’autel: Les sacrifices en questions dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne*, ed. Stella Gorgoudi, Renée Koch Piettre, and Francis Schmidt, Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses 124 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 15–29, 23.

³⁵¹ On the eating of the *σπλάγχνα*, see Paul Stengel, *Opferbräuche der Griechen* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1910), 73–78.

³⁵² In the *Odyssey*, Homer explains what happened after the god’s portion had been put on the altar: “Then the old man burned them on billets of wood, and poured wine (*οἶνον* *λείβε*) over them, and beside him the young men held in their hands the fivepronged forks. But when the thigh pieces were wholly burned, and they had tasted the inner parts, they cut up the rest and spitted and roasted it, holding the pointed spits in their hands” (3.459–63; slightly altered from LCL).

³⁵³ Fredrik S. Naiden, “Blessèd Are the Parasites,” in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 55–83, 77. Van Straten (“Ancient Greek Animal Sacrifice,” 23) suggests that “the rite of the *splagchna* would appear not only to strengthen the horizontal bond between the individual worshippers, but also the vertical bond between the people making sacrifice on the one hand, and the god receiving sacrifice on the other.” We might conjecture that the situation Paul is addressing in 1 Cor 10:20–22 might have to do with the eating of the *σπλάγχνα* since Paul explicitly refers to the “table of demons” (*τραπέζης δαιμονίων*) that some of the Corinthian Christ followers seem to have taken part in. This is supported by the fact that, according to Aristophanes’s *Birds* (518–19) the *σπλάγχνα* were put in the hand of the gods, which indicates that statues of the gods would have been present (cf. 1 Cor 10:19, which suggests

sacrificial animal could, as noted above, be eaten in and around the sanctuary or be taken home to be eaten there. Either way, the meat and the meal the sacrificed animal provided created a social bond both between the human participants and the gods to whom it had been dedicated.

Having explored the role, performance, and function of the Greek *thusia* sacrifice and arrived at the conclusion that this type of sacrifice was both important and ubiquitous in the ancient Greek world, I now turn my attention to animal sacrifice as practiced by the Romans in order to see how their practices can illuminate what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

Ancient Roman Sacrifice

When dealing with the Roman practice of animal sacrifice, my sources will mainly be limited to the first century BCE through to the second century CE.³⁵⁴ As with Greek sacrificial rituals and practices, animal sacrifice did by no means constitute the only type of sacrifice for the Romans (or during Roman times). Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden point out that it is first in the early centuries CE, “that we find an ample literature that present animal sacrifice as a distinct practice, and as central to religious identity.”³⁵⁵ The notion that Romans viewed animal sacrifice

that representations of gods were present in the cultic situation some Corinthians found themselves in). Additionally, an inscription from Erythrai relating to the cult of Apollo and Asklepios reads: [ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν παρατιθέτω τῶι θεῶι ἑκατέρω]... [σπλάγγνα] (“let him place the innards to both gods on the table”) (inscription from, Helmut Engelmann and Reinhold Merkelbach, eds., *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien: Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai*, 2 vols. [Bonn: Rudolf Habelt Verlag, 1973], nr. 205). This inscription clearly connects statues of gods, the innards, and a table, demonstrating that Paul’s language in 1 Cor 10:21 fits with the context of what took place during an animal sacrifice.

³⁵⁴ There are two reasons for this. First, I want to explore the sources of Roman sacrifice that are as close to Paul in time as possible and focusing on these centuries will tell us the most about how Roman sacrifice in Corinth possible looked. Second, unlike the Greek sources that stretches back to the eighth century BCE, it is in the first century BCE that the Roman sources start telling us “something of the complexity of religion and its representations, the different perspectives interests, practices and discourses that constitute the religion of Rome” (Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1.117). For a review of the sources that provide information about early Rome, see Christopher Smith, “The Religion of Archaic Rome,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 69–80.

³⁵⁵ Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden, “Introduction,” in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden (Cambridge: Cambridge University

as one sacrificial practice among others can be seen in the conventional term for sacrifice, *sacrificare*, which refers to the dedication of something, not just animals, to the gods.³⁵⁶ As Scheid notes: “Depending on the context and on the divinities being honored, there was great variety in the way a sacrifice was performed, in its use of incense, liquid libations, vegetal offerings, or animal victims.”³⁵⁷ Nevertheless, animal sacrifice did play an important role in ancient Rome, and, as Ingvild S. Gilhus notes, animal sacrifice was a common event in the life of many Romans.³⁵⁸ Another component Roman animal sacrifice shared with its Greek counterpart is the dinner that normally followed the sacrifice of an animal.³⁵⁹ But in Roman animal sacrifices the banquet that followed played a more integral role in the sacrifice than it did in Greek animal sacrifice since, according to Roman thinking, the divinity was seen as sharing or giving the meat of the sacrificed

Press, 2012), 1–10, 5. They trace this heightened awareness of animal sacrifice to the Christian condemnation of animal sacrifice and argue that this led to “a new awareness of animal sacrifice as opposed to sacrifice of other kinds” (*ibid*, 4).

³⁵⁶ Faraone and Naiden, “Introduction,” 4. Macrobius, writing in the fifth century CE, comments that the “sacred” (*sacrum*) is “anything that is possessed by the gods” (*Saturnalia* 3.3.2; my trans.). This is a quote from Trebatius’s *On Religious Scruples*. If one can speak of a central act or ritual in Roman cult, it would most likely be the burning of incense. When Roman authorities suspected that someone refused to worship the emperor, the authorities asked them to offer incense and wine. Ovid, in a poem on the Roman cultic calendar, writes that animal sacrifice was not the “original” type of sacrifice but that “of old the means to win the goodwill of gods for humans were spelt and the sparkling grains of pure salt.... The altar was content to smoke with savine, and the laurel burned with crackling sound” (*Fasti* 1.337–38, 343–44; slightly altered from LCL).

³⁵⁷ John Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 289–97, 289 (trans. Jane E. A. Anderson).

³⁵⁸ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 114. Cf. R. M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus*, Ancient Culture and Society (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969), 43. However, Gilhus does concur with Faraone and Naiden that animal sacrifice was a more prominent feature of Roman cults in the first centuries CE. Gregory S. Aldrete (“Hammers, Axes, Bulls, and Blood: Some Practical Aspects of Roman Animal Sacrifice,” *JRS* 104 [2014]: 28–50, 28) labels animal sacrifice “a central component of ancient Roma religion.” Animals were not only important as sacrifices in the Roman Empire, but “animals were involved in many ritual practices throughout the Roman Empire, and this involvement already had deep roots in the provinces before their Romanization” (Ménier, “Killing and Preparing Animals,” 155).

³⁵⁹ One major difference, however, was that in Roman public sacrifices most citizens did not partake, and it was mainly the celebrants who took part in the banquet that followed the animal sacrifice.

animal to the worshipers.³⁶⁰ Even so, Greek and Roman animal sacrifice did have several affinities.³⁶¹

Similar to the previous section on Greek animal sacrifice, I will focus on two parts of Roman animal sacrifice. First, I focus on the sacrificial rituals by examining aspects relating to how it was carried out, by whom it was carried out, and what the gods' role or part was in the sacrificial ritual.³⁶² Secondly, I turn my focus to the banquet that followed the animal sacrifice in order to see how it functioned, who attended, and what it meant to attend the banquet.³⁶³

There are no extant detailed descriptions of how Romans performed animal sacrifice or how they conceptualised the events. The closest we come to a comprehensive description is in the writings of the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Writing in Greek and for a Greek audience he describes Roman animal sacrificial rituals, emphasizing how similar they are to that of the Greeks:

³⁶⁰ John Scheid, *The Gods, the State, and the Individual: Reflections on Civic Religion in Rome*, trans. Clifford Ando, *Empire and After* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 69; *idem*, "Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors," 293.

³⁶¹ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 114; John A. North, "Sacrifice and Ritual: Rome," in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 1988), 2.981–86, 981.

³⁶² I will focus most of my attention on the actual killing itself and questions surrounding it. I will spend less time discussing rituals and events that surrounded the killing, such as the procession and preparatory rites. However, since, in the words of Celia E. Schultz ("Roman Sacrifice, Inside and Out," *JRS* 106 [2016]: 58–76, 61), "Roman sacrifice was not a single act, but instead comprised a series of actions that gain importance in relationship to each other," I will discuss some of the rituals that surrounded the animal sacrifice when necessary. For fuller accounts of the sacrificial rituals from start to finish, see, *inter alia*, Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1.36–37; *idem*, *Religions of Rome: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.148; Scheid, "Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors," 289–92; *idem*, *Romulus et ses frères: Le collège des Frères Arvales, modèle du culte public dans la Rome des empereurs*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 275 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1990), 326–36; Valérie Huet et al., "Le sacrifice romain," in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, ed. Antoine Hermay and Bertrand Jaeger (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 1.183–235, 203–34; Valérie Huet, "Roman Sacrificial reliefs in Rome, Italy, and Gaul: Reconstructing Archaeological Evidence?" in *Ritual Matters: Material Remains and Ancient Religion*, ed. Claudia Moser and Jennifer Knust, Supplements to the *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 13 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 11–32, 12–17.

³⁶³ When discussing Roman animal sacrifice and the dinner that followed, I use the term "banquet" rather than dinner or meal, since the vast majority of scholarly literature uses this term. But the shift in terminology does not indicate that the meal/dinner/banquet which followed Roman animal sacrifice should be understood drastically different from its Greek counterpart.

After the procession was ended the consuls and the priests whose function it was presently sacrificed oxen; *and the manner of performing the sacrifices was the same as with us* (καὶ ὁ τῶν θυηπολιῶν τρόπος ὁ αὐτὸς ἦν τῷ παρ' ἡμῶν). For after washing their hands they purified the victims with clear water and sprinkled corn on their heads, after which they prayed and then gave orders to their assistants to sacrifice them. Some of these assistants, while the victim was still standing, struck it on the temple with a club, and others received it upon the sacrificial knives as it fell. After this they flayed it and cut it up, taking off a piece from each of the inwards and also from every limb as a first-offering, which they sprinkled with grits of spelt can carried in baskets to the officiating priests. These placed them on the altars, and making a fire under them, poured wine over them while they were burning. It is easy to see from Homer's poems that *every one of these ceremonies was performed according to the customs established by the Greeks with reference to sacrifices* (ἕκαστον δ' ὅτι κατὰ νόμους ἐγίνετο τοὺς ἀμφὶ θυσίαν ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων).³⁶⁴

Even though this description is not exhaustive, it provides us with a good starting point for our exploration of Roman animal sacrifice.

Animal sacrifice in the Roman world could take place both in public and in private settings.³⁶⁵ In the case of public worship, the sacrifice took place in close proximity to a raised altar that was within the precinct of the cult space and in front of the temple.³⁶⁶ If it took place in a private or domestic setting an altar could be temporarily installed in the communal space of a house.³⁶⁷ According to Scheid, the most crucial part of Roman animal sacrifice was the offering of a meal in the fire by the altar, consisting of meat and wine, to the gods in the way a banquet

³⁶⁴ *Roman Antiquities* 7.72.15; LCL. He wrote this just before the first century CE and even though his writings seek to reconcile Greeks to Roman hegemony, the portrayal he puts forth of Roman animal sacrifice is not too tainted by this. Modern scholarship on Roman sacrifice supports Dionysius's view. For example, Huet et al. ("Le sacrifice romain," 193) notes: "En réalité, ces sacrifices *ritu Graeco* semblent ne différer de sacrifices 'à la romaine' que pour des détails."

³⁶⁵ Public sacrifices were commonly connected to a calendar, festivals, and games: "Ces [public] sacrifices sont accomplis pour célébrer certains jours du calendrier... Des fêtes annuelles pour les divinités, des jeux publics ou encore pour des occasions spécifiques, par exemple la purification de la ville après la révélation d'un prodige ou l'acquiescement d'un vœu" (Huet et al., "Le sacrifice romain," 193). For a discussion on the similarities and differences between public and private cults, see John Bodel, "Cicero's Minerva, *Penates*, and the Mother of the *Lares*: An outline of Roman Domestic Religion," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, ed. John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan, *The Ancient World: Comparative Histories* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 248–75.

³⁶⁶ North ("Sacrifice and Ritual: Rome," 984) notes that in virtually every public festival and ceremony, "the central ritual was the sacrifice of an animal."

³⁶⁷ Scheid, "Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors," 289.

would have played out.³⁶⁸ Scheid describes it so: “First the celebrants presented the deity with meat and wine in the fire, then they offered it sweet wine on the sacrificial altar, anointed its statue with perfume, and crowned it.”³⁶⁹ These rituals created a hierarchy between the mortal humans and immortal gods who played a part in the rituals.

There were also other rituals and aspects that were important in order to provide the gods with a proper sacrifice.³⁷⁰ Two of them were especially important to the Romans and I study them in more detail here. The first ritual is prayer. Pliny the Elder comments that “sacrifice of victims without a prayer is supposed to be of no effect.”³⁷¹ Marcus Cato, writing a couple of centuries earlier than Pliny, emphasizes that before and along with the sacrifice of the *porca praecidanea* (the hog sacrificed before harvest) prayers and other offerings should be given to the gods.³⁷² The prayers that accompanied the sacrifice also served a practical function since they would have mentioned “who was making the offering, who was receiving it, and who would reap the reward for the ritual.”³⁷³ In the case of some sacrifices, e.g., when giving thanks to a god, prayer also played a performative role within the rituals of the sacrifice since one performed the thanksgiving not only through the sacrifice but also by the prayers.³⁷⁴ The celebrants also prayed when they consecrated the animal victim to the god(s)—a ritual known as *immolatio*—by sprinkling *mola salsa*

³⁶⁸ John Scheid, “Roman Animal Sacrifice and the System of Being,” in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice: Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Fredrik S. Naiden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 84–96, 86.

³⁶⁹ Scheid, “Roman Animal Sacrifice,” 86.

³⁷⁰ The rituals I am about to describe were not only important when sacrificing animals, but when sacrificing in general. However, my focus, as throughout this chapter, is on animal sacrifice.

³⁷¹ *Natural history* 28.10; LCL.

³⁷² *On Agriculture* 134.1–4.

³⁷³ Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 292.

³⁷⁴ Frances Hickson Hahn, “Performing the Sacred: Prayers and Hymn,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 262–75, 263–64.

(a mix of flour and salt) on the animal, pouring wine on the forehead of the animal, and killing it by passing the knife over its back.³⁷⁵

The second important aspect vis-à-vis Roman animal sacrifice was that the celebrants performed the rituals properly. The Romans were deeply invested in maintaining peace with their gods and one major part in maintaining the *pax deorum* was to perform the correct rituals in the correct manner. Perhaps this was the reason why animal sacrifices typically started with the priest proclaiming *hoc age* (concentrate on this). Livy comments that during the time of his ancestors, the magistrates outlawed all foreign cultic rituals, including sacrificial rites, except those that adhered to Roman sacrificial practices.³⁷⁶ “Indeed,” Livy writes, “the greatest experts in all divine and human law judged that nothing served to destroy our *religionis* as much as when sacrifice was performed according to foreign rather than our native ritual.”³⁷⁷ On the scrupulous attention to ritual details, John Ferguson comments: “The ritual of an offering had to be exact: the formulaic prayers word-perfect, the accompanying gestures without variance. Any mistake meant the

³⁷⁵ This act was what gave animal/blood sacrifice its Latin name. For an in-depth discussion on the practical elements surrounding the killing of sacrificial animals, see Aldrete, “Hammers, Axes, Bulls, and Blood”; Anna Viola Siebert, *Instrumenta Sacra: Untersuchungen zu römischen Opfer-, Kult- und Priestergeräten*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 44 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 25–116.

³⁷⁶ Livy, *History of Rome* 39.16.8. This is an idealisation on Livy’s part and does not reflect the historical situation on the ground. Georg Wissowa (*Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 2nd ed, Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft 5 [München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912], 43–47) surveys the historical development of cults and worship during the first three hundred years of the Roman Republic and demonstrates that the Romans did indeed adopt gods and cults from other cultures and societies.

³⁷⁷ *History of Rome* 39.16.9; LCL. This, however, did not mean that Romans would not incorporate new practices into their existing traditions. For example, the traditional Roman way to “read” the internal organs of the sacrificed animal and the Etruscan way differed. But, as time went on, they merged and Tacitus (*Annals* 11.15) records emperor Claudius’s concern over the Etruscan rite, which Claudius refers to as “the longstanding discipline of Italy,” and that it be maintained properly. Just like the Greeks, the Romans did not have a term that is equivalent to our “religion.” The Latin *religio*, George Heyman (*The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict* [Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007], 12) points out, “refers to the traditional honors paid to the gods by the state. There was no clear division between what we would term today, ‘politics and religion.’ *Religio* was the proper *behavior* that characterized the life of the Roman citizen” (emphasis original). One ancient author, Cicero, defines *religio* thus: *religione id est cultu deorum* (religion is the worship of the gods) (*On the Nature of the Gods* 2.8).

repetition of the whole ceremony from the beginning, or at the very least, an expiatory offering.”³⁷⁸

This also meant that not all animals were fit for sacrifice and each set of gods had their own particularities when it came to which animals were to be sacrificed to them (see below). Even though the Romans gave Rome special attention concerning proper worship, it was a concern throughout the whole empire.³⁷⁹ I now turn to the types of animals the Romans sacrificed. Then, I turn my focus to the participants of the sacrifice and what the gods were thought to gain by the sacrifices.

The majority of the animals the Romans sacrificed were domestic animals, especially sheep, goats, and cattle.³⁸⁰ Gregory S. Aldrete points out that bulls, cows, calves, and oxen were the most prestigious and costly animals to sacrifice.³⁸¹ All animals that were sacrificed had to be perfect (*purus*) and beautiful (*pulcher*).³⁸² Ideally, the animal should display its willingness to be sacrificed: “Demzufolge mußten die Opfertiere im römischen Kult freiwillig und ohne

³⁷⁸ John Ferguson, “Roman Cults,” in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons: 1988), 2.909–23, 909. We can see that this concerned the Romans in their own writings: Cicero dedicated the second book of his *On the Laws* to the issue of cultic law and how they would look in an ideal city; Valerius Maximus describes the zeal with which the Romans before the imperial times had followed the religious laws in his *Memorable Doings and Sayings*; in *Odes* (3.6) Horace writes about the suffering Romans now (c. 20 BCE) experience due to their ancestors’ lack of religious piety and adherence to religious law.

³⁷⁹ Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1.228.

³⁸⁰ Cf. Varro, *On Agriculture* 2.1.20–21; 5:10–11. Even though there is not that much work that has been done on the osteoarchaeological material from the Roman Empire (cf. Schultz, “Roman Sacrifice, Inside and Out,” 66) there are some notable studies on animal remains from various parts of the empire. These studies show that the sacrificial animals were not limited to sheep, goat, and cattle, but included a variety of animals. See Anthony King (“Animal Remains from Temples in Roman Britain,” *Britannia* 36 [2005]: 329–69) for a review of animal bones found in Roman Britain, which include not just sheep, goat, and cattle, but horse, dog, and chickens, etc. In Pompeii, which was destroyed in 79 CE, excavators have found remains of male birds, mainly cocks, sheep, and goats. Cf. Mark Robinson, “Domestic Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices at Roman and Pre-Roman Pompeii, Italy,” *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 11 (2002): 93–99, 94. See also the essays on Roman Gaul in Sébastien Lepetz and William van Andringa, eds., *Archéologie du sacrifice animal en Gaule romaine: Rituels et pratiques alimentaires*, Archéologie des Plantes et des Animaux 2 (Montagnac: Éditions Monique Mergoïl, 2008).

³⁸¹ Aldrete, “Hammers, Axes, Bulls, and Blood,” 28. This is predominantly true for public sacrifices. On private animal sacrifices, Huet et al. (“Le sacrifice romain,” 199) point out that “dans les fêtes privées, aussi des animaux plus petits, comme les poulets et même des œufs” were sacrificed.

³⁸² Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 117. Varro comments on cattle from Italy: “These are doubtless to be preferred for sacrificial purposes because of the splendour of their size and colour” (*On Agriculture* 2.5.10; LCL). Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 8:183.

Widerstreben zum Altar gehen.”³⁸³ If the sacrificial animal did not comply it was seen as a bad omen.³⁸⁴ The Romans were also particular with what animals were to be sacrificed to which god. Cicero, commenting on cultic law, writes: “No change should be made in the prescriptions of the pontiffs and soothsayers (*pontificum et aruspicum*) as to the offerings appropriate for each of the gods, as to which should receive full-grown victims, which suck-lings, which males, and which females.”³⁸⁵ In general, the sacrificial animal should reflect the nature of the god it was sacrificed to. Hence, gods would normally receive castrated male animals; goddesses received female animals.³⁸⁶ During public sacrifices, adult animals were preferred. White victims were given to the gods above on an altar during daytime; the gods below received dark victims sacrificed by night.³⁸⁷

During a public animal sacrifice various cultic personnel would have taken part.³⁸⁸ As Valérie Huet et al. comment: “Tout sacrifice nécessite l'intervention d'un personnel humain plus

³⁸³ Friederike Fless, *Opferdiener und Kultmusiker auf Stadtrömischen historischen Reliefs: Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie Funktion und Benennung* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1995), 72. Cf. Juvenal *Satire* 12:1–16. Roman art depicts the sacrificial animal being stunned with a hammer or axe in order to achieve this docile state. However, as Aldrete (“Hammers, Axes, Bulls, and Blood,” 30–35) points out, this is easier said than done.

³⁸⁴ Lucan, *Civil War* 7.165–67.

³⁸⁵ *Laws* 2.12.29; LCL.

³⁸⁶ Those who performed the sacrifices could have castrated the male animal as part of a ritual; but it could also be the case, as it was in Greek animal sacrifices, that castrated male animals were easier to come by than uncastrated ones since most farmers castrated their male animals in order to make them larger and easier to handle. Cf. Ekroth, “Castration, Cult and Agriculture,” 154–74. For example, Galen, a Roman physician who lived c. 129–210 CE, gives the following account: “In our part of the world people cut out the testicles of young pigs and oxen, but not for the same purpose; rather, those of pigs for the sake of eating (for the flesh of castrated pigs is also more tasty, more nutritious and better concocted), and those of oxen for their usefulness in farming (for bulls are difficult for them to manage). But they remove the testicles of goats and sheep for both reasons” (*On the Properties of Foodstuffs* III.6; translation from Owen Powell, *Galen: On the Properties of Foodstuff. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 121).

³⁸⁷ However, this was not a watertight system and gods could receive animals that did not reflect their nature. Cf. Celia E. Schultz, “*Sacrum Reddere*: Sacrifice, Consecration, and Dedication in Roman Religion,” *RRE* 4 (2018): 187–206, 192; Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 289–90.

³⁸⁸ In domestic settings, the rituals were more modest and did not require cultic personnel in the same sense. Still, there were clear hierarchies and procedures also for cultic activities in the home. The father of the family (*paterfamilias*) “exerçait les principales fonctions culturelles. Il était libre de fixer les rites, le calendrier des fêtes et les dieux à honorer à l'intérieur de sa maison en fonction des traditions familiales et de ses décisions propres” (Sylvia Estienne et al., “Personnel de culte: monde romain,” in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, ed. Antoine Hermay and Bertrand Jaeger [Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005], 5.66–146, 143). Whole families could also take part in public sacrifices. Pliny the Elder mentions a freeman named Gaius Crispinius Hilarus who, in the procession leading to the Capitol, was preceded by eight children, twenty-seven grandchildren, eighteen great grandchildren, and eight granddaughters by marriage (*Natural History* 7.60).

ou moins nombreux, aux qualifications diverses.”³⁸⁹ At the top of the hierarchy, and those who commonly provided the sacrificial animal, we have what in French scholarship is known as “le sacrifiant.”³⁹⁰ These were people who had authority within the context in which the sacrifice was provided and included emperors, magistrates, consuls, the president of an association, priests, etc.³⁹¹ There would have been assistants who helped the “sacrifiant” to carry out the sacrifice. But neither the “sacrifiant” nor the assistants killed the animal victim. Those who carried out the killing of the animals were made up of a special group known as the *victimarii* and they were distinct from the one(s) who offered the sacrifice.³⁹²

The *victimarii* were most commonly “slaves or other low-status individuals.”³⁹³ Hence, they did not belong to the predominantly aristocratic magistrates or priestly sections of society who would provide and offer the animal victim. Handing over what was arguably one of the most pivotal acts in the ritual to these low-status individuals was, Aldrete notes, a peculiar move: “It is an oddity of Roman sacrifice that what might well be assumed to have been the symbolic highlight of the procedure, taking the animal’s life, was performed not by the central priest, but rather by

³⁸⁹ Huet et al., “Le sacrifice romain,” 196. The women of the house also played a role in the cultic activities of the household and family: “Der *matrona* kam bei den religiösen Ritualen im Rahmen der Familie eine zwar sekundäre aber durchaus wichtige Rolle zu” (Sylvia Estienne et al., “Personnel de culte: monde romain,” 143). Furthermore, when it came to banquets, women were commonly part of gathering in Roman society. Cf. Elke Stein-Hölkeskamp, “Class and Power,” in *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, ed. John Wilkins and Robin Nadeau, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 85–94, 86–87. On the place of women in connection to meals in the Greco-Roman and Jewish world (including the early Jesus movement), see Angela Standhartinger, “Women in Early Christian Meal Gatherings: Discourse and Reality,” in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentations, and Conflict at the Table*, ed. Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 87–108.

³⁹⁰ However, as Huet et al. (“Le sacrifice romain,” 196) point out, this is a heuristic term used by modern scholarship and not a term that appears in any of the Greek or Latin primary sources.

³⁹¹ For a list of those who were most likely to offer a sacrificial animal, see Huet et al., “Le sacrifice romain,” 196.

³⁹² Fless, *Opferdiener und Kultmusiker*, 70–74.

³⁹³ Aldrete, “Hammers, Axes, Bulls, and Blood,” 29. The slave status of at least some of the *victimarii* can be seen in a sacrificial relief on Trajan’s Arch at Beneventum (southern Italy) dedicated to Trajan by the senate in 114 CE where the *victimarii* are seen as being naked to the waist, unlike the other participants who are wearing togas. See Richard Gordon, “The Veil of Power: Emperors, Sacrificers and Benefactors,” in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John North (London: Duckworth, 1990), 201–13, 202–03. Even if the *victimarii* were of lower status, there is inscriptional evidence showing that the *victimarii* had their own associations (*CIL* 6.971).

anonymous servants.”³⁹⁴ The term *victimarius* is the general term referring to the group that assisted at the animal sacrifices. Within the *victimarii* there were sub-groups which had different functions.³⁹⁵ We know of such two such groups of assistants. First, the *popa* was the one who struck the animal victim with an axe or a hammer.³⁹⁶ The second sub-group of the *victimarii* were the *cultrarii*, which performed the cutting of the animal’s throat.³⁹⁷

Finally, one important group who attended the animal sacrifice were those who read the entrails, the *exta*, of the dead animal. This group performed a highly significant part of the sacrifice. Gilhus puts it like this: “This was the moment of truth that revealed whether the gods accepted the sacrifice or not. At this point, the animal was changed into a medium of communication between gods and humans.”³⁹⁸ Hence, the animal was both an offering to the gods and an instrument in

³⁹⁴ Aldrete, “Hammers, Axes, Bulls, and Blood,” 29. This, Aldrete suggests, might be the reason as to why there is relative silence about the moment of the animal’s death in the ancient sources.

³⁹⁵ Sylvia Estienne et al., “Personnel de culte: monde romain,” 115–16; Joan Frayn, “The Roman Meat Trade,” in *Food in Antiquity*, ed. John Wilkins, David Harvey, and Mike Dobson (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995), 107–14, 112.

³⁹⁶ Marietta Horster, “Living on Religion: Professionals and Personnel,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 355–65, 56. Incidentally, we only know of one *popa* by name, a woman named Critonia Q. I. Philema, from the extant sources (*CIL* 6.9824). Cf. Jörg Rüpke and Anne Glock, *Fasti sacerdotum: Die Mitglieder der Priesterschaften und das sakrale Funktionspersonal römischer, griechischer, orientalischer und jüdisch-christlicher Kulte in der Stadt Rom von 33 v. Chr. Bis 499 n. Chr. Teil 2: Biographien*, Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 12,2 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005), 933, nr. 1419.

³⁹⁷ Siebert, *Instrumenta Sacra*, 79–84. Suetonius tells a story of how Gaius Caligula once dressed up as a *popa* and, when the animal victim was close to him, he raised his hammer and killed the *cultrarius* (*Lives of the Caesars* 4.32.3). This grim story indicates that the *popa* and *cultrarius* would have been present at the same time during the killing of the animal.

³⁹⁸ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 118. Horster (“Living on Religion,” 360) comments on the purpose of divination in the Roman world: “The main aim of divination for the Romans can be seen: to learn about the will of the gods, especially to find out whether the gods are favorable to the Romans and are willing to help them and their leaders in case of war.” For more on divination in Rome in general, see John North, “Diviners and Divination at Rome,” in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John North (London: Duckworth, 1990), 49–71. Ovid shows that divination in its various forms was an important part of Roman society when he recounts the mythical origins of Rome and whether Romulus or Remus should be the founder of the city: “Romulus said, ‘There need no contest. Great faith (*magna fides*) is put in birds; let’s try the birds.’ The proposal was accepted [by Remus]. One of the two betook him to the rocks of the wooded Palatine; the other hied to morn to the top of the Aventine. Remus saw six birds; Romulus saw twice six, one after the other: they stood by their compact, and Romulus was accorded the government of the city” (*Fasti* 4.813–18; LCL). Cicero notes in passing that Romulus was a very talented augur and that no public engagement was made before taking the auspices (*On Divination* 1.1–2).

understanding their will.³⁹⁹ Obtaining a good sign from the *exta* was crucial and normal-looking entrails were favourable.⁴⁰⁰ Tibullus demonstrates the importance the reading of the *exta* played in an elegy: “My prayers are heard. See in the favouring entrails (*felicibus extis*) how the liver-markings bear a message that the gods are gracious.”⁴⁰¹ But not all entrails appeared favourable. Livy recounts the moment when two consuls each sacrificed an ox to Jupiter on their inauguration.⁴⁰² But in one of the consuls’ sacrificed animals there was no head of the liver to be found (*in iocinere caput non inventum*).⁴⁰³ The senate instructed the consul to keep performing the sacrifice until a favourable omen was given by Jupiter. Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the fourth century CE, tells the story of how Emperor Julian had prepared ten bulls for a sacrifice to Mars.⁴⁰⁴ Nine sank to the ground by their own will (*voluntate sua novem procubuere*) and the tenth bull ran away. When it was finally caught and slaughtered, the *exta* appeared ominous (*ominosa signa monstravit*). Julian died soon afterwards.

³⁹⁹ Huet et al. (“Le sacrifice romain,” 186) state: “Le sacrifice est donc un canal de communication entre les hommes et les dieux qui se crée autour d'une offrande que les hommes font passer dans le monde divin.”

⁴⁰⁰ Huet et al. (“Le sacrifice romain,” 228) point out: “L’inspection des *exta* a pour but de constater si les organes internes sont à leur place et ne présentent aucune anomalie. Si c'est le cas, cela signifie que les dieux acceptent le sacrifice (*litatio*).” Heyman (*The Power of Sacrifice*, 32) further comments on the purpose of these types of rituals: “The basis of these religious rituals could be found in the quest to recognize the dangers of disorder and chaos while attempting to neutralize them.” If a good sign could not be gained from the gods, it was important to act according to the gods’ will in order to, if possible, avoid whatever bad things might be coming. Cf. Christian St-Germain, “La question des augures à Rome: L’éthique du devenir incertain,” *Théologiques* 8 (2000): 85–104, 96. For example, Livy (*History of Rome* 23.36.10) recounts the story of a consul by the name of Fabius who, after making sacrifices and receiving unfavourable omens from the *haruspices*, decided to stay put with his army.

⁴⁰¹ *Elegies* 2.25–26; LCL.

⁴⁰² *History of Rome* 41.14.7–9.

⁴⁰³ Cicero gives the typical Roman explanation to the lack of vital organs in sacrificial animals: “It may be that at the moment when the sacrifice is offered, a change in the vitals occurs and something is added or taken away; for many things are added to, changed, or diminished in an instant of time.... Therefore, when those organs, without which the victim could not have lived, are found wanting in the vitals, we should understand that the absent organs disappeared at the very moment of immolation” (*On Divination* 1.52; LCL). Cicero himself, however, does not believe this explanation and ridicules it later in his *On Divination*: “Do you Stoics fail to see in choosing the victim it is almost like a throw of the dice, especially as facts prove it? For when the entrails of the first victim have been without a head, which is the most fatal of all signs, it often happens that the sacrifice of the next victim is altogether favourable. Pray what became of the warnings of the first set of entrails? And how was the favour of the gods so completely and so suddenly gained?” (2.15; LCL).

⁴⁰⁴ *History* 24.6.17.

Even though there were different traditions of reading the *exta*, the prevalent way to read them in the Roman world was the Etruscan way.⁴⁰⁵ Those who read the *exta* according to the Etruscan discipline were known as *haruspices* and they “were integrated into public and private Roman religion and cult.”⁴⁰⁶ As such they were spread out across the empire and were closely connected to the Roman cultic authorities and most likely earned a living by their practice.⁴⁰⁷ Having looked at the main figures and personnel that performed the animal sacrifice, I now turn to the role of the gods and how the animal sacrifices functioned in the relationship between god and human.

Similar to the Greek *thusia* sacrifice, the gods’ portion was limited to only a part of the sacrificed animal. However, it seems to have been more substantial and contained “better” parts of the animal than what was given to the gods in the Greek practice of animal sacrifice. According to the Roman practice, the gods received the vital organs (*exta*) and blood of the animal, which were cooked in a pot or roasted over the fire on the altar.⁴⁰⁸ In the case of the *exta* cooked in a pot, when done the one who cooked it put it on a plate on the altar in order for the meat to be given to

⁴⁰⁵ Livy (*History of Rome* 5.15) indicates this by writing that there are no *haruspices* to be consulted when the Romans and Etruscans were at war with each other. More on how the *haruspices* came to play a significant role in Roman divination, see Marie-Laurence Haack, *Les haruspices dans le monde romain*, Scripta Antiqua 6 (Pessac: Ausonius Publications, 2003).

⁴⁰⁶ Horster, “Living on Religion,” 360. Another common way to “read” animals in order to understand the will of the gods was to examine how the birds flew in the sky. This was done by the *auguris*. For other divinatory practices carried out by the Romans by means of animals, see Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 26–28.

⁴⁰⁷ Horster, “Living on Religion,” 361. Even though it was a legitimate practice to be a *haruspex*, and one which could lead to work in public Roman settings, there were also *haruspices* who were not connected to the authorities but offered their services to anyone who sought, and payed, them. Cicero argues that the senate had been wise in handing over six men of their own to the Etruscan tribes “for the study of divination, in order that so important a profession should not, on account of the poverty of its members, be withdrawn from the influence of religions, and turned into a means of monetary gain” (*On Divination* 1.41.92; slightly altered from LCL).

⁴⁰⁸ Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 292. Mika Kajava (“Visceratio,” *Arctos – Acta Philologica Fennica* 32 [1998]: 109–31, 117–18) claims that “there is evidence also that whole carcasses together with all the innards were roasted for dinner which means that the inspection of *exta* with the subsequent gift to a god was omitted.” For a critique of Kajava’s suggestion, see John Scheid, “Manger avec les dieux. Partage sacrificiel et commensalité dans la Rome antique,” in *La cuisine et l’autel: Les sacrifices en questions dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne*, ed. Stella Gorgoudi, Renée Koch Piettre, and Francis Schmidt, Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses 124 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 273–87, 275–77.

the god.⁴⁰⁹ The Roman understanding was not that the gods ate from the *exta*, since they were consumed by the fire on the altar; rather, “[the gods] did not chew and swallow the roasted meat but were fed by the aroma from those parts of the meat that had been burned at the altar.”⁴¹⁰ Instead the animal parts burnt for the gods were dedicated to the gods as gifts.⁴¹¹ Roman animal sacrifice had a similar end-goal to Greek animal sacrifice: to honor the gods and create a reciprocal relationship. Cicero describes the reciprocal relationship between gods and humans as follows: “But if on the contrary the gods have neither the power nor the will to aid us, if they pay no heed to us at all and take no notice of our actions, if they can exert no possible influence upon the life of humans, what ground have we for rendering any sort of worship, honour, or prayer (*cultus honores preces*) to the immortal gods?”⁴¹²

Humans, through the practice of sacrifices, sought to build, strengthen, or repair their relationship with the divine world. In that sense, an animal sacrifice was primarily a gift dedicated to the gods in order to solidify the relationship between the human and divine realm.⁴¹³ Indeed, the gods’ presence in the Roman empire were, for better and for worse, for many an unquestionable part of everyday life.⁴¹⁴ John A. North comments: “In a real sense, the Romans felt that the gods, through these rituals and consultations, participated in all the activities of the Roman state. The

⁴⁰⁹ Huet et al., “Le sacrifice romain,” 233. Scheid (“Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 292) notes that, whereas this might have been the “standard” practice for gods who were thought to reside above, if the animal was sacrificed to a chthonic god, the god’s portion was put on the ground, if to an aquatic god it was plunged in water.

⁴¹⁰ Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 115.

⁴¹¹ The parts of the animal that were not dedicated to the gods, which was the bulk of the edible meat, was, in Roman understanding, shared with humans by the gods. Cf. Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 293.

⁴¹² *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.2.3.

⁴¹³ See the following sources where an animal sacrifice either is a gift to the gods or is closely connected to a gift, e.g., a golden crown, given to the gods: Cato, *On Agriculture* 134, 139, 141; Livy, *History of Rome* 22.1.17; 29.10.6; 36.35.12; 44.14.3; *CIL* 6.32323.92–99, 105–06.

⁴¹⁴ Latin authors did not shy away from boasting about their and other Romans’ diligent care of their gods’ cults. In *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.3, Cicero writes that the Roman people, even though they might be average or even inferior to other people in some areas of life, when it comes to the worship of the gods (*cultu deorum*), they are far superior (*multo superiores*) to any other people. Livy writes, “there is no place in it [the city of Rome] that is without the proper worship of the gods (*religionum deorumque*)” (*History of Rome* 5.52; my trans.).

underlying belief was not that the gods guaranteed success, but that their help and approval were an essential precondition for any successful actions.... They [the gods] demanded piety, constant care and attention, and the scrupulous fulfillment of any obligations accepted.”⁴¹⁵ One illuminating example of how the gods could be perceived by Romans comes from Cicero: “So in the very beginning we must persuade our citizens that the gods are the lords and rulers of all things, and that what is done, is done by their judgement and will (*iudicio ac numine*); that they are likewise great benefactors of humans, observing the character of every individual, what he does, of what wrong he is guilty, and with what intentions and with what piety he fulfils his cultic duties; and that they take not of the pious and the impious (*piorumque et impiorum*).”⁴¹⁶ This conceptualisation of the world led the Romans to perform cultic rituals before any undertaking in order to either obtain the goodwill of the gods or to gain knowledge of any bad omens.⁴¹⁷ Seeking alliances with gods was also a way for humans to extend their own powers. As Jörg Rüpke puts it: “The human actor who introduced such [divine] agents and chose this mode of action, enlarged her or his own agency, either by forging an alliance with the divine or by reducing the agency of other human actors as a result of the superior capacities of the god(s) in determining a course of events.”⁴¹⁸

On the topic of why the gods receive sacrifice, Porphyry, an avid critic of animal sacrifice writes:

There are, moreover, three reasons altogether for sacrificing to the gods: to honour them, to give thanks, or from need of good things. As [we behave] to good men, so too we think we ought to offer the gods first-fruits. We honour the gods because we want evil to be averted from us and goods to be provided for us, or because we have had benefits from them, or simply to honour their condition of goodness. So also in the case of animals, if they should

⁴¹⁵ North, “Sacrifice and Ritual: Rome,” 2.982.

⁴¹⁶ *On the Laws* 2.15–16; slightly altered from LCL.

⁴¹⁷ Nicole Belayche, “Religious Actors in Daily Life: Practices and Related Beliefs,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 275–91, 278. Cf. Valerie M. Warrior, *Roman Religion*, Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2006), 5–6.

⁴¹⁸ Jörg Rüpke, *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome*, Townsend Lectures/Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 67 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 121.

be offered to the gods, they should be sacrificed for one of these reasons; for what we do sacrifice, we sacrifice for one of these reasons.”⁴¹⁹

In order to promote piety (*pietas*) towards the gods, Cicero points out that Greeks and Romans built their shrines and temples so that gods and humans could dwell together in the cities.⁴²⁰ According to Cicero, having shrines and temples in the cities would make it easier for people to think about the gods and act piously toward them.⁴²¹ Consequently, sacrificing animals, but also other things, constituted a cornerstone in both the daily life of the Roman world and the relationship between the people of Rome and their gods. Having explored how animal sacrifices were practiced and what their function were in ancient Roman times, I now turn to the banquet that followed an animal sacrifice in order to inquire about its function in Roman society and how it constructed the social world of ancient Rome.

⁴¹⁹ *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* 2.24; trans. Gillian Clark. Artemidorus mentions two reasons why people perform sacrifices: “For humans sacrifice to the gods either when they come upon good things or have avoided bad things” (*Oneirocritica* 2.33; trans. Harris-McCoy, slightly altered).

⁴²⁰ *On the Laws* 2.11.26. Belayche (“Religious Actors,” 279) points out that, contrary to the modern, westernised conception of piety, piety in antiquity “belonged to action and not to contemplation.”

⁴²¹ Similar to Greek sacrifice and the notion of being pious (*δσιος*), Roman sacrifices, and their favourable outcome, did not only rely on the appropriate gifts and rituals but on correct moral behaviour of those who made the sacrifice. Cicero puts it so: “The law commands us to *approach the gods in purity*—that is, purity of mind, for everything is included in that. This does not remove the requirement of bodily purity; but it ought to be understood that, since the mind is much superior to the body, and the requirement of bodily purity is observed, we ought to be much more careful about the mind. For in the former case impurity is removed by the sprinkling of water or the passages of a certain number of days, but a mental stain can neither be blotted out by the passage of time nor washed away by any stream” (*On the Laws* 2.24; LCL).

Banqueting on the Sacrifice

The banquet that followed the Roman animal sacrifice was an integral part of the sacrifice, perhaps more so than in the Greek equivalent.⁴²² Rüpke states: “Opfer und Bankett gehören zusammen.”⁴²³ In fact, Scheid sees such a close proximity between the sacrifice and the banquet that he states: “To sacrifice was to eat with the gods.... To sacrifice was to divide food into two parts, one of which was returned to the gods, the other given to mortals.... A sacrifice was a banquet, which offered men the opportunity to become familiar with their divine counterparts, to define their respective qualities and status, and, together, to address the matters in hand.”⁴²⁴ It was not everyone, however, who had the privilege of attending the banquets that followed the sacrifice after a (public) sacrifice.⁴²⁵ Peter Garnsey’s words are instructive: “At Rome the ceremonial eating

⁴²² Peter Garnsey (*Food and Society in Classical Antiquity*, Key Themes in Ancient History [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 128) observes that banquets in antiquity could gather different social group constellations: “[Banquets] brought together families and their guests, patrons and their dependants, politicians and their friends, aristocratic youth, members of occupational groups, social clubs, religious brotherhoods, the soldiery, the citizenry, the population of a town.” But banquets could also be held for just a selected few or for one single group, e.g., priests. Cf. Jörg Rüpke, “Römische Priestertermähler,” in *The Eucharist, its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, WUNT 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017] 3.1525–35. For an overview of general Roman dining practices, including those related to sacrifice, see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin and William J. Slater, “Roman Dining,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 438–66.

⁴²³ Jörg Rüpke, “Gäste der Götter – Götter als Gäste: Zur Konstruktion des römischen Opferbanketts,” in *La cuisine et l’autel: Les sacrifices en questions dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne*, ed. Stella Gorgoudi, Renée Koch Piettre, and Francis Schmidt, Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses 124 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 227–39, 227.

⁴²⁴ Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 295. Siebert (*Instrumenta Sacra*, 59) points out that “das Kochen der *exta* und des Fleisches war ein obligater Akt der Opfers,” which shows the intimate link between killing, cooking, and dining. Even if banquets following an animal sacrifice were commonplace in the Roman world, the references to the dinners are less frequent than in their Greek equivalent. Cf. Valérie Huet et al., “Le banquet à Rome,” in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, ed. Antoine Hermay and Bertrand Jaeger (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 2.268–97, 269.

⁴²⁵ Sacrifices with a following banquet could be hosted by several types of communities/groups, such as families/households, associations and guilds of varying kinds, and were not only performed in public by the state. Cf. Marleen Martens, “Communal Dining: Making Things Happen,” in *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 167–80, 170.

of sacrificial meat was reserved for the upper classes, and any residue was sold in the market.”⁴²⁶

In effect, this meant that those who were involved in the sacrifice ate their share—at the expense of the public—immediately after they had carried out the various rituals.⁴²⁷ Citizens who belonged to the lower classes did not typically take part in the banquet. But, if they had the monetary means, they could buy a part of the meat from the butcher.⁴²⁸ As a result, the social hierarchies of Roman societies became both evident and solidified at these banquets.⁴²⁹

In domestic and privately hosted sacrifices, which were both smaller and included participants who were more closely connected with each other (including the slaves of the household), the meat distribution was more egalitarian.⁴³⁰ The most common type of sacrifice in the domestic and private spheres were those that took place during, not before, a banquet.⁴³¹ The

⁴²⁶ Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 124. Cf. Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 293; Gilhus, *Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 116; Jørgen Podemann Sørensen, “The Sacrificial Logic of Cultic Meals in Antiquity,” *EC* 7 (2016): 447–67, 459.

⁴²⁷ There were also logistical reasons for the case of only a few taking part in the banquet. For example, the dining rooms would generally only fit a smaller gathering.

⁴²⁸ There were exceptional cases where the meat from the sacrifice was more widely distributed. For example, the sacrifice at the Great Altar of Hercules, which took place August 12, hosted two banquets: one in the morning where those performing the sacrifices and the senators took part and a second in the evening where all male citizens could partake. The reason for this was that the meat from the sacrifices had to be consumed by the end of the day and within the cult precincts. Angela Standhartinger (“‘And All Ate and Were Filled’ (Mark 6.42 par.): The Feeding Narratives in the Context of Hellenistic-Roman Banquet Culture,” in *Decisive Meals: Dining Politics in Biblical Literature*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Luzia Sutter Rehman, and Kathy Ehrensperger, LNTS 449 [London: T&T Clark, 2012], 62–82, 62–73 [trans. Martin Rumscheidt]) points out that, despite the fact that even public sacrifices in the Roman world often were for the exclusive few, public banquets where the masses could partake did take place. Even so, it seems to be the case that those higher in the social hierarchy rarely ate together with the ordinary citizens. Cf. John Scheid, “La spartizione sacrificale a Roma,” in *Sacrificio e società nel mondo antico*, ed. C. Grotanelli and N. F. Parise, Collezione storica (Roma: Laterza, 1988), 267–92, 282; Huet, “Roman Sacrificial Reliefs,” 18.

⁴²⁹ Scheid (“La spartizione sacrificale a Roma,” 276) comments: “Indeed, it is in this very banquet ... that social relationships are made, the civil hierarchy itself is defined, the principal dogmas of ancient theology are put into practice” (my trans.). Scheid (“Sacrifice et banquet à Rome,” 201) also points out that those higher up in the social hierarchy (e.g., the magistrates, priests, and others who presided over the sacrifice) could get as much as triple the amount of what the public would receive. The upholding of social hierarchies and divisions were also true in other types of communal eating in the Roman world. Cf. John F. Donahue, *The Roman Community at Table During the Principate*, new and expanded ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 21–23; Konrad Vössing, “Les banquets dans le monde romain: alimentation et communication,” *DHAsup* 7 (2011): 117–31, 127–28.

⁴³⁰ The cult of the *Lares* was particularly important to the slaves. Cf. Cicero, *On the Laws* 2.27; Horace, *Epodes* 2.61–66.

⁴³¹ But there are also examples of how the sacrifices are followed by a banquet or dinner. Cf. Cato, *On Agriculture* 83.

normal practice was to offer a part of the banquet, together with incense and wine, to the gods, the *Lares* and *Penates* (household gods), and, starting in the first century BCE, to the *Genius Augusti*, between the first and second course.⁴³² In the Roman houses of the more well-to-do, the *triclinium* was a dedicated room of the house where the banquet took place in the first centuries BCE and CE.⁴³³ Also in domestic settings, the rules of social hierarchies applied: “Manger à la même table est un signe indicateur du lien social et, en ce sens, la distribution des places dans le *triclinium* est importante.”⁴³⁴

It was not only humans who partook in these banquets, the gods themselves could also be invited to the banquet that followed the sacrifice in a ritual known as *lectisternium*. In this ritual, which has affinities with the Greek *θεοξένια* ritual, those participating in the sacrifice and banquet invited the god(s) to the banquet by preparing a couch for them to recline on.⁴³⁵ In practice, this meant that the Romans put the gods’ images on the couches and served them food from the sacrifice.⁴³⁶ According to Livy, the first ever *lectisternium* in Rome was held in 399 BCE, “and for the space of eight days [the people of Rome] sacrificed to Apollo, to Latona and Diana, to Hercules, to Mercury and to Neptune, spreading three couches for them with all the splendour then

⁴³² For mentions of the *Lares* and *Penates* in the house, see Tibullus, *Elegies* 1.3.34–35; Juvenal, *Satires* 12.83–92. On sacrifices to the *Lares* in connection to dinners, see Virgil, *Aeneid* 1:723–40; Horace, *Satires* 2.2.124. More generally on these divine beings, see Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003), 97, 119–23.

⁴³³ G. Anthony Keddie, “*Triclinium* Trialectics: The *Triclinium* as Contested Space in Early Roman Palestine,” *HTR* 113 (2020): 63–88, 66–74. The basic structure of a *triclinium* included three couches each holding three guests, two facing each other and one looking out into the room, and a table in the middle of the three couches. For a more detailed account of the *triclinium*, see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 38–40.

⁴³⁴ Huet et al., “Le banquet à Rome,” 279.

⁴³⁵ Huet et al., “Le banquet à Rome,” 274–76. *Lectisternium* comes from the Latin *lectum sternere*, which means “to lay out a couch.”

⁴³⁶ During two ancient and widely recognised festivals, the *Ludi Romani* and the *Ludi Plebeii*, priests would make sacrifices in the presences of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva whose images were reclining on couches. Cf. John F. Donahue, “Toward a Typology of Roman Public Feasting,” in *Roman Dining: A Special Issue of American Journal of Philology*, ed. Barbara K. Gold and John F. Donahue (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 95–113, 101.

attainable.”⁴³⁷ The reason for this first *lectisternium*, Livy tells us, was the severe weather conditions which led the senate to vote in favour of consulting the Sibylline books, which contained the instructions for the *lectisternium*.⁴³⁸ There was also a ritual called *sellisternium* in which specifically female divinities were invited to the banquet; however, the *sellisternium* shared many features with the *lectisternium* and it was therefore not regarded as a distinct type of ritual, but more as variant of the *lectisternium*.⁴³⁹ Neither of these rituals seems to have been very common, but performed during special circumstances when one wanted to show extra attention and devotion to the gods.

Concerning the meat at the banquets, not all the meat eaten during them came from the sacrificial animal.⁴⁴⁰ In Roman Gaul, remains of poultry, game, fish, and shellfish have been found, which leads Patrice Méniel to the following conclusion: “It is obvious that some of these animals cannot be the object of a bloody sacrifice, and that their presence reflects the acquisition of additional food in order to make these banquets more agreeable.”⁴⁴¹ In addition to the consummation of non-sacrificial animals at a banquet, Mika Kajava notes that also preserved meat was served and that it would be impossible to know if that meat came from a sacrifice or not.⁴⁴² Some of the meat from the sacrifices would end up at the market (Lat: *Macellum*; Gk: *μάκελλος*) and be sold there to whoever wanted a portion of the sacred meat.⁴⁴³ In the Roman market,

⁴³⁷ *History of Rome* 5.13.6; LCL. See Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 9, for a similar account and Macrobius’s *Saturnalia* 1.6.13 for a reference to the *lectisternium* in another context.

⁴³⁸ For an analysis of how the *lectisternium* rite developed during the Roman Republic, see Michèle Nouilhan, “Les lectisternes republicains,” in *Entre hommes et dieux: Le convive, le héros, le prophète*, ed. Annie-France Laurens, *Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon* 391/Centre de recherches d’histoire ancienne 86 (Besançon: Université de Besançon, 1989), 27–40. Nouilhan argues that the *lectisternium* rite started out as a way to show hospitality to strangers and gods by eating together. In the second century BCE, however, when Rome was more stable in many respects, the rite became an act of devotion and lost its original purpose.

⁴³⁹ Huet et al., “Le banquet à Rome,” 275.

⁴⁴⁰ Donald G. Kyle (*Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* [London: Routledge, 1998], 189–94) suggests that one source of profane meat came from animals hunted and killed in Roman arena games (*venationes*).

⁴⁴¹ Méniel, “Killing and Preparing Animals,” 161.

⁴⁴² Kajava, “Visceratio,” 117.

⁴⁴³ Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 134; Kajava, “Visceratio,” 117; Scheid, “Sacrifice et banquet à Rome,” 203–04.

sacrificial meat was sold alongside profane meat and Mireille Corbier argues that Roman meat eating was centered around two poles: the exceptional and sacred, on the one hand, and the common and profane, on the other.⁴⁴⁴

That both sacred and profane meat were in circulation is evident from 1 Cor 10:25 where Paul instructs Christ followers that they can buy and eat any meat that is for sale in the market (*μάκελλος*) without asking about its origins—i.e., whether it is sacrificial or profane meat.⁴⁴⁵ It also seems to be the case that both sacrificed and profane meat could be served by the hosts when they held dinners that were not preceded by a sacrifice (1 Cor 10:27).⁴⁴⁶ Thus, meat in both sacred and profane form seem to have been common in the ancient Roman world—both at sacrifices and in the market—and to distinguish between the two was not always easy.⁴⁴⁷ Adding to the difficulties on how to distinguish between sacrificial and non-sacrificial meat, Scheid claims that “every act of eating ... [was] linked to a ceremonial act of sharing with the gods” and that even if the meat did not come from a sacrificed animal the host could still have dedicated the animal to the gods by a simple prayer and given the gods a share of the animal.⁴⁴⁸ Consequently, even meat that was not

⁴⁴⁴ Mireille Corbier, “Le statut ambigu de la viande à Rome,” *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* 15 (1989): 107–58, 109. Gilhus (*Animals, Gods, and Humans*, 115) draws up a false dichotomy between Greek and Roman meat consumption by saying that in Greece only sacrificed meat was consumed, and hence the only type of meat one could buy at the market, whereas in Rome, both sacred and profane meat was eaten. As I have argued above, this picture does not hold up for Greek meat consumption.

⁴⁴⁵ Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 62.19) tells us how Nero sacrificed a multitude of animals for his own preservation (*σωτηρία*) as emperor and gave the meat to the market.

⁴⁴⁶ For Paul’s Christ followers this creates a conundrum since it appears to be impossible to distinguish meat from a sacrificed animal from profane meat (see my discussion on cooking practices in ancient Greece above). Nicole Belayche (“Religion et consommation de la viande dans le monde romain: des réalités voilées,” *Food & History* 5 (2007): 29–43, 32) notes that the origin of the meat sold at the markets in the ancient Roman world was obscure. Even if it were impossible to know the origins of the meat at times, e.g., when invited to a meal as the Corinthian Christ followers were, it was not hard to come to grips with whether one participated in a ritual meal that was dedicated to a or several deities. At such dinners the meat most likely came from a sacrifice. As Martens (“Communal Dining,” 170) comments: “The difference between ritual meals and daily routine meals, indeed, was emphasized by differences in practice and the material culture used.”

⁴⁴⁷ Indeed, Martens (“Communal Dining,” 170) comments on the many reasons why people might gather for a communal banquet: “There is a large variation in communal meals depending on the occasion and the cultic contexts: vows, sacrifices, initiations, acts of periodic worship, seasonal festivals, commemorations of dead ancestors and funerals.”

⁴⁴⁸ Scheid, “Roman Animal Sacrifice,” 93.

sacrificial in a strict sense could still have been dedicated to the gods and so rendered unfit for those, like Paul’s Christ followers in Corinth, who abstained from sacrificial meat when invited to dine with others.

To partake in a banquet was to show one’s affiliation and allegiance to the human and divine company present at the banquet. Marleen Martens comments: “As for the intentions, feasts signal common social and religious interests of the organizer(s) and the participants to endeavor to communicate with the supernatural by sharing food one way or the other with each other and with the gods.”⁴⁴⁹ The sharing of food between gods and humans also created, maintained, and emphasized the hierarchy that existed between humans and gods; to partake in the sacrifice and/or banquet in honor of a specific god or set of gods was a way of displaying this loyalty—both to humans and divinities.⁴⁵⁰ The emphasis on the gods’ superiority was indicated when their portion was consumed by the fire on the altar while those who performed the sacrifice, and were later going to eat from it, had to wait until the gods’ portion was fully consumed.⁴⁵¹ After the god had consumed his or her part, the one performing the sacrifice touched the sacrificed animal in order to indicate that he did not eat of the sacred parts dedicated to the god and that the god had agreed to share or give of the animal to the human participants.⁴⁵² Hence, the sacrificial banquet ordered both the human hierarchies and the hierarchies between humans and gods, and in that sense they were an integral part of the structure of Roman society.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ Martens, “Communal Dining,” 170.

⁴⁵⁰ Huet et al., “Le banquet à Rome,” 273.

⁴⁵¹ Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 292.

⁴⁵² Scheid, “Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors,” 293. However, in domestic settings, where most commonly the offering of a sacrifice was made by the participants between meals, the humans got to eat before the gods. Cf. John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 91.

⁴⁵³ Garnsey (*Food and Society*, 128) comments on the role of the banquets: “Large or small, these displays of commensality or collective consumption carried significance well beyond the nutritional function of the meal that was consumed.”

I will now turn to one specific cult that was present in the Roman empire. In chapter one, I briefly mentioned the fact that the imperial cult was present in Roman Corinth, and I now turn to the practice of emperor worship to see how some of the rituals discussed so far in connection with Roman cults and animal sacrifice remained the same or changed in this novel imperial cult.⁴⁵⁴

The Imperial Cult

The precise origins of the Roman imperial cult are shrouded in mystery.⁴⁵⁵ Additionally, it is hard to define exactly what the imperial cult was. Gwynnaeth McIntyre points out that this is partly due to the fact that the imperial cult (or any other name one gives it) “is a modern attempt to catalogue and define a collection of related practices and has no ancient equivalent.”⁴⁵⁶ One question is

⁴⁵⁴ Even though the term “imperial cult” can be questioned since the term presents the worship of emperors as something that was regulated to the extent that its practices and rituals were homogeneous across the Roman Empire, I will use the term since it is broad in its meaning and refers to the cult(s) of the emperors, and other deified individuals, and not a specific part of the cult, e.g., worship of the emperors. However, we must recognise that the imperial cult was not streamlined in the first centuries BCE and CE, nor can it be easily defined. Beard, North, and Price (*Religions of Rome*, 1.348) comment on the differences that existed within the imperial cult: “Various forms of what we call ‘the imperial cult’ are found right across the empire. The army sacrificed to the Capitoline triad on behalf of the living emperor and also to his officially deified predecessors; provincials performed *vota* to the gods and sacrificed the *taurobolium* to Magna Mater on behalf of the emperor; and (in the province of Asia) celebrated Augustus’ birthday as the start of their year. In other words ... cults of the emperor were not an independent element of religious life: sometimes the emperor was placed under the protection of the Olympian pantheon or linked with the traditional gods... Sometimes cult was offered directly to him. These forms of cult were rarely a separate export to the provinces from Rome, but developed in different ways in the context of the various forms of Romanized religion that operated there.” Cf. Gwynnaeth McIntyre, “Imperial Cult,” *Ancient History* 2 (2019): 1–88, 1–4. See also the collections of essays that discuss this topic in Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed, eds., *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011). Other terms used for the imperial cult in the scholarly literature include, e.g., “ruler cult,” “emperor worship,” and “Herrscherkult.” See Stefan Pfeiffer (“The Imperial Cult in Egypt,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christian Riggs [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 83–100, 83–85) for a discussion of the terminology surrounding (what I call) the imperial cult. For a defence of the term “imperial cult” and its “original” meaning, see Duncan Fishwick, *Cult, Ritual, Divinity and Belief in the Roman World*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (London: Routledge, 2016), 129–74.

⁴⁵⁵ Setting the origins and cultic meaning and purpose of the imperial cult aside, Karl Galinsky (“Continuity and Change: Religion in the Augustan Semi-Century,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world [Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011], 108–19, 117) points out that the cult was a way for the emperors to bring about unity in the vast empire. Since ruler worship already had existed in the Greek East for some time, the imperial cult was a natural expression of unity to adopt for the Greeks.

⁴⁵⁶ McIntyre, “Imperial Cult,” 1.

whether the imperial cult came from Hellenistic influences or if it was created out of Roman practices.⁴⁵⁷ Another issue is centred around the question whether Julius Caesar, the first emperor to become deified, was regarded a *divus* already before his assassination in 44 BCE or if he was regarded as such only after it. Despite the fact that we cannot answer this question with a yes or no, there are strong indications that people did regard Julius Caesar as someone who had come close to the status of being divine during his lifetime: he could have a priest (*flamen*) of his own cult and include images of himself in processions of images of gods.⁴⁵⁸ But it was only after his death that the Romans dedicated temples, altars, and sacrifices to him.⁴⁵⁹ Finally, in 42 BCE he was formally deified and became a *divus*.⁴⁶⁰

After Julius Caesar's assassination, a string of civil wars broke out. It was first in 27 BCE that Julius Caesar's adopted heir, Octavian (later Augustus), became the new emperor of Rome.

⁴⁵⁷ For Hellenistic influences, see Spencer Cole, *Cicero and the Rise of Deification at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); for local Roman practices, see Michael Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, Implications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Long before Julius Caesar was regarded a *divus*, Hellenistic cities had dedicated cults to various Romans. The first Roman citizen to receive such attention was Titus Flamininus in 199 BCE. Of what we can tell, the Greeks numbered Titus among the gods, but he was not thought of as a god (although, he was invoked as Titus Sōtēr which entails that the lines between human and divine were somewhat vague).

⁴⁵⁸ Beard, North, Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1.140.

⁴⁵⁹ Scholars usually date the official deification of Julius Caesar to January 1, 42 BCE (cf. Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 47.18.3–19.3). Polymnia Athanassiadi et al. ("Heroisierung und Apotheose," in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, ed. Antoine Hermary and Bertrand Jaeger [Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004], 2.125–214,195) present three different suggestions vis-à-vis the date of Caesar's deification based on the conflicting information in the primary sources. It was the officials in Rome who officially deified deceased emperors and who, at least on an official level, controlled the imperial cult. But the initiatives and wish for an imperial cult was not simply imposed from the top; rather, it "frequently originated among the people, in the cities and provinces – for it offered a way, through religion, of conceptualising the development and success of an altogether new type of political power" (Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, 164–65).

⁴⁶⁰ For a brief account of the Latin terminology used vis-à-vis the imperial cult, see Gwyneth McIntyre, "Deification as Consolation: The Divine Children of the Roman Imperial Family," *Historia* 62 (2013): 222–40, 224–25. On Greek terminology, see S. R. F. Price, "Gods and Emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman Imperial Cult," *JHS* 104 (1984): 79–95. Although I limit my discussion to cult performed in honor of emperors and the deification of them, it was not only emperors or men who were thought to become gods after their deaths. The first woman to be deified was Livia, wife of Augustus, after her death in 29 CE. All in all, from Julius Caesar to Constantine, thirty-six of sixty emperors were given the title *divus* and twenty-seven of their family members received the title *divus* or *diva*. On the practices and functions of deification in and around Paul's time, see M. David Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*, BZNW 187 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); *idem*, *Desiring Divinity: Self-Deification in Early Judaism and Christian Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Since he was the adopted son of Julius Caesar, Octavian adopted the title *divi filius*.⁴⁶¹ Cassius Dio writes that after the introduction of emperor worship by Octavian, it “has been continued under other emperors, not only in the case of the Hellenic nations but also in that of all the others, in so far as they are subject to the Romans. For in the capital itself and in Italy ... even there various divine honours are bestowed after their death upon such emperors as have ruled uprightly, and, in fact, shrines are built to them.”⁴⁶² Indeed, the imperial cult would survive as long as the sixth century CE in some places.⁴⁶³

Peter Herz offers four points that can establish a common denominator of what the imperial cult was: 1) it was a religious phenomenon which changed over time; 2) it was a social phenomenon that was shaped by the social contexts where it was practiced; 3) it took expressions in more rituals and practices than just belief and sacrificial rituals; 4) it had no geographical limits.⁴⁶⁴ Even if these four aspects of the imperial cult provide us with a somewhat vague picture of what the imperial cult was and how people perceived it during the first centuries BCE and CE, they give an idea of how the imperial cult may have looked and how people understood it.⁴⁶⁵ One

⁴⁶¹ Octavian himself had supported the interpretation of his adoptive father as a *divus* by interpreting a comet in the sky, which had appeared in 44 BCE, as Caesar’s soul’s ascending to divinity, see Pliny, *Natural History* 2.93–94. Octavian also built a temple of *Divus Julius*. Cf. Galinsky, “Continuity and Change,” 117; Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 79.

⁴⁶² *Roman History* 51.20.7–8; LCL.

⁴⁶³ The most recent example of a *flamen perpetuus* is dated to 526 CE from Ammaedara (modern-day Tunisia) (*CIL* 8.10516). It is unclear, however, what the exact role of this office was at this time. For a discussion of this find, see Gwynaeth McIntyre, *A Family of Gods: The Worship of the Imperial Family in the Latin West*, *Societas: Historical Studies in Classical Culture* 2 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 135–44.

⁴⁶⁴ Peter Herz, “Caesar and God: Recent Publications on Roman Imperial Cult,” *JRA* 18 (2005): 638–48. For more elaborate discussions, see the following foundational works on the imperial cult: S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, *Oxford Classical Monographs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, 3 vols., *RGRW* 145–48 (Leiden: Brill, 1987–2005); W. den Boer, ed., *Le culte des souverains dans L’Empire romain*, *Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 19 (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1973); Manfred Clauss, *Kaiser und Gott: Herrscherkult im römischen Reich* (München: K. G. Saur, 1999).

⁴⁶⁵ For a longer and more substantial discussion on how to view and define the imperial cult, see Karl Galinsky, “The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?” in *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed, *SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series* 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 1–21.

of the most salient points in Herz's outline is that the imperial cult in many ways did not differ from the already established patterns, rituals, and cults established throughout the Roman empire.⁴⁶⁶ Hence, McIntyre is correct in stating, "worship of the imperial family occurred at different levels, both publically and privately, and reflected the localized religious landscape and individualized components of ritual traditions."⁴⁶⁷ I now turn to the role of sacrifice and banqueting in the imperial cult since we know that the cult was present in Corinth during Paul's sojourn there.

Even though there is not nearly as much evidence regarding animal sacrifice in the imperial cult as there is for Roman animal sacrifice in general, we still have some indications of how worshipers performed and conceptualised sacrifice in the imperial cult.⁴⁶⁸ In addition to the importance of studying sacrificial practices in the imperial cult in connection to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, sacrifices of any type, as S. R. F Price puts it, "were a way of articulating a large body of unformulated thought concerning the emperor by means of subtle modification of

⁴⁶⁶ J. E. Lendon (*Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 160) strengthens this picture: "[The imperial cult] was carried on in public and in private.... It involved sacrifices, processions, games, and banquets; it seems to have included all the aspects of pagan religiosity of which testimony survives except dedications to divinity in exchange for a miracle." Beard, North, and Price (*Religions of Rome*, 1.360) see similar connections between the imperial cult and the already established cultic systems and point out that the imperial cult did not compete with or replace existing cults and gods: "Cults of the emperors, which were modelled on the traditional forms of civic cults of the gods, did not displace traditional cults; they fitted in alongside them.... The ancient cults of Rome were the context (if a modified one) within which the emperor fitted."

⁴⁶⁷ McIntyre, "Imperial Cult," 65. Cf. Heyman (*The Power of Sacrifice*, 46): "[The imperial cult] represented a matrix of collective religious expressions that encompassed the person of the emperor and the imperial family."

⁴⁶⁸ Price (*Rituals and Power*, 208) laments: "In no case do we know the full details of the slaughtering of the animal and the division of the parts between emperor, priest and others, an aspect of the process which could have been crucial evidence for the conceptions informing the sacrifices." My discussion will mainly focus on the imperial cult in the public sphere since the evidence concerning the imperial cult being practiced in private settings, e.g., in a *domus*, is very limited. This, however, should not be taken as evidence for the case that the imperial cult did not penetrate also the domestic sphere. Cf. Gradel, *Emperor Worship*, 199–207; Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann, "Religion in the House," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient world (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 219–31, 229. On the evidence of imperial sacrifice, McIntyre ("Imperial Cult," 66) comments: "Most of our evidence also comes from inscriptions (both descriptive and prescriptive) but these are similarly fragmentary and any attempt to reconstruct a particular sacrifice requires compiling the difference sources of evidence and reconstructing what is missing from other examples," the issue with this, McIntyre continues, is that "this assumes that all sacrifices follow the same format and ignores both geographical and chronological changes." Geographically, I focus on the Latin West and the Greek East, and chronologically, my focus is on the first centuries BCE and CE.

the practices of divine ritual.”⁴⁶⁹ George Heyman comments on the role of sacrifice within the imperial cult: “While the imperial cult precludes any type of facile reductionism, there is one overarching ritual feature that remained consistent in all of its expressions—sacrifice.”⁴⁷⁰ Hence, through a study of sacrificial rituals the imperial cult’s adherents made us of, one can extrapolate some of the thinking and reasoning that may not always be put on paper, but were nevertheless a foundational part of what it meant to offer animal sacrifice

Probably the most debated question concerning sacrifice (both animal and other) in the imperial cult is if the sacrifices were made *to* or *on behalf of* the emperors.⁴⁷¹ In some ways, this touches on the very core of whether the emperors who had been proclaimed *divi* were to be considered as equals to the already established gods.⁴⁷² One ancient inscription that discusses sacrifice in connection with the emperors comes from Gytheum in Greece. The most salient part of the inscription for our purposes read: ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ἡγεμόνων σωτηρία[ς].⁴⁷³ Scholars have often regarded this inscription, which among other things describes the sacrificing of a bull, as support

⁴⁶⁹ S. R. F. Price, “Between Man and God: Sacrifice in the Roman Imperial Cult,” *JRS* 70 (1980): 28–43, 29.

⁴⁷⁰ Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice*, 46.

⁴⁷¹ This in turn is most likely due to the at times ambiguous status of the deceased emperors (were they gods, humans, or something in between?). See James B. Rives (“Graeco-Roman Religion in the Roman Empire: Old Assumptions and New Approaches,” *CBR* 8 [2010]: 240–99, 254–55) for a review on some of the scholarly literature on this subject.

⁴⁷² This distinction of making sacrifices *to* or *on behalf of* the emperor proves to be an issue of some significance at times. When Philo together with Jews from Alexandria went on an embassy to the emperor Gaius, the emperor accuses Philo and his company of refusing to recognise his divinity. But the Jews answered that they had indeed sacrificed three times on behalf of Gaius. That, Gaius replies, is exactly where the problem lays: “These things are true, you have sacrificed. But to another, even if it was on my behalf (καὶν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ). What, then, is the benefit? For you have not sacrificed to me (οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τεθύκατε)” (*On the Embassy to Gaius* 44.349–67, quote from 357). This also demonstrates that whereas some in the Roman Empire had some reservations concerning the divinity of the emperors, the emperors themselves were less hesitant to accept this status. There were, however, variations also among the emperors, with some of them not accepting a godly status while still alive. For example, Suetonius records Tiberius as against many aspects of cult in his honor: “[Tiberius] forbade the voting of temples, flamens, and priests in his honour, and even the setting up of statues and busts without his permission; and this he gave only with the understanding that they were not to be placed among the likenesses of the gods, but among the adornments” (*Tiberius* 27; LCL). Taking another approach to his own divinity, Vespasian is recorded to have said on his deathbed: “Oh dear, I think I am becoming a god (*deus*)” (Suetonius, *Vespasian* 23.4; my trans.).

⁴⁷³ *SEG* 11.923, line 6. Compare with line 28–29, which reads: θετέωσαν οἱ ἔφοροι ταῦ[ρ]ον ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ἡγεμόνων καὶ θεῶν σωτηρίας καὶ αἰδίου τῆς ἡγεμονίας αὐτῶν διαμωονῆς (“The overseers sacrificed a bull *on behalf of* the emperors’ and gods’ preservation and the everlasting continuing of their hegemony”).

of the fact that emperors were sacrificed to.⁴⁷⁴ However, as Price points out, the sacrifices were not made to the emperors; rather, they were made on behalf of the emperor.⁴⁷⁵ In addition to the sacrifice of a bull, participants also offered incense to the images of Augustus, Livia, and Tiberius in a similar style to the *lectisternium* ritual.⁴⁷⁶ Based on what this Greek inscription tells us, Price concludes, “it is clear that no sacrifice was actually offered to the emperor at this festival in spite of the divine framework in which it was set.”⁴⁷⁷ In fact, sacrifices and other cultic rituals like prayers on behalf of the emperor seems to outnumber those that were offered to the emperor. McIntyre, after commenting on the Greek inscription found in Gytheum, writes: “Like many sacrifices and festivals, the rituals in this context focused on securing the continued health of the empire. Just as many oaths of allegiance which were sworn to protect the emperor and his health, as well as the *pro salute imperatoris* prayers and dedications, the divinity of the emperor was not explicitly invoked.”⁴⁷⁸

People did, however, at times make sacrifices and offerings *to* the emperor(s).⁴⁷⁹ One issue, though, appears to have been the unease those who participated in the imperial cult throughout the Roman Empire felt about making sacrifices to the living emperor.⁴⁸⁰ To prevent this, sacrifices could be made to the emperors as a group. If so, this would include emperors already dead and deified, to whom participants were more willing to make sacrifices since they had officially been

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Michel I. Rostovtzeff, “L’empereur Tibère et le culte impérial,” *Revue Historique* 163 (1930): 1–26.

⁴⁷⁵ See also Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 2.1.514.

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. Price, “Between Man and God,” 31.

⁴⁷⁷ Price, “Between Man and God,” 31. Price also points to the fact that there existed an imperial cult official who carried the title *προθύτης*. Even though the *προ*-prefix have several possible meanings, Price argues that the most logical explanation in the setting of the imperial cult is that the term refers to an official who sacrificed on behalf of the emperor, since this one of the common meanings of the verb *προθύω* (cf. Euripides, *Ion* 805; *Suppliant Women* 28–29; Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria* 37–38).

⁴⁷⁸ McIntyre, “Imperial Cult,” 66–67.

⁴⁷⁹ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 216–20.

⁴⁸⁰ Price (“Between Man and God,” 34) points to a distinction between Greek and Roman views of emperor worship: the Greeks were more comfortable with worshiping the ruling emperor and would have him as their focus, whereas the Romans seem to have felt more at ease with worshiping the dead, and hence deified, emperors.

recognised as *divi*.⁴⁸¹ Still, Duncan Fishwick notes that “even when sacrifices were made *to* him [i.e., the emperor] and these were in thanksgiving for temporal benefits he had bestowed on a city or institution, it is still clear that they were essentially honorific.”⁴⁸² This might be a general rule with regards to sacrifices in the imperial cult, but this picture needs some nuance. Karl Galinsky mentions that Augustus was worshiped “directly as a god” outside of Rome and that inscriptions in his honor used both *divus* and *deus*, which signaled that the distinction between the two Latin terms was becoming irrelevant.⁴⁸³ Furthermore, as Friesen mentions, sacrificing to and on behalf of the emperors should not be seen as two completely separate acts, since “they were two complementary aspects of the larger sacrificial system.”⁴⁸⁴

Notwithstanding the questions surrounding whether sacrifices were made *to* or *on behalf of* the emperors, sacrifice was an important role in the imperial cult; just as it was in the larger cultic system of Roman worship and the sacrifices made in the imperial cult appear to have differed little from those made in other cults or to other gods in the Roman Empire. Crucial for the imperial cult, however, was the fact that “sacrificial rituals associated with the imperial cult allowed the political and religious power of the emperor to be symbolically present from the street corners of

⁴⁸¹ Cf. McIntyre, “Imperial Cult,” 67. D. S. Levene (“Defining the Divine in Rome,” *TAPA* 142 [2012]: 41–81) argues that the key issue vis-à-vis the question whether emperors could be worshiped as gods or not was whether Romans thought that “divinity” and “human” were absolute or relative terms. If they are absolute, then it becomes harder for the participants of the imperial cult in geographical areas where this thinking prevailed to worship a human as a god; if they are relative, then there should be no problems for the emperors to enter the divine realm and be regarded, and worshiped, as gods. Levene arrives at the conclusion that, in Roman thinking, gods and humans were thought of in absolute terms. This, however, did not always show itself in practice and the worship of the emperors was mainly unproblematic in the contexts where the imperial cult was carried out. (See Clauss [*Kaiser und Gott*, 217–89] for a fuller discussion on the divinity of the emperors.) Lendon (*Empire of Honour*, 165–72) comes to a similar conclusion but asserts that the main reason as to why the people of the Roman Empire worshiped the emperors, even though that sometime ran contrary to their own convictions, was due to the honors gained by participating in the imperial cult (and, conversely, the potential shame in refusing to participate). Cf. Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1.361.

⁴⁸² Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 1.1.37.

⁴⁸³ Galinsky, “Continuity and Change,” 117.

⁴⁸⁴ Steven J. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family*, RGRW 116 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 150.

Rome to the edges of the empire.”⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, sacrificing to or on behalf of the emperor was a key ritual that expressed and solidified the notion that the once earth-bound ruler had now ascended into the heavenly realm of the gods.⁴⁸⁶

Before concluding this chapter, I will now dedicate some space to cults found in Corinth in and around the time of Paul’s visit there. I focus on gaining a clearer picture of the cults present in Corinth and what they can tell us of the ritual landscape that the Christ followers found themselves in. As before, focus is on if traces of animal sacrifice can be found in the city and/or banqueting in cultic environments.

Cults and Sacrifice in Ancient Corinth

In chapter one, I mentioned that we have evidence of Greek temples that survived the Romans’ destruction of Corinth that were rebuilt—with more or less remodeling to suit Roman needs—after 44 BCE: the Temple of Apollo, the Temple of Aphrodite, the Asklepieion, and the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore. There were also other cults, cults that did not have roots in Corinth before 146 BCE and the Romans’ sack of the city, the most significant of which, for our purposes, is the imperial cult. Here I will consider three cults that we know were active in Corinth during Paul’s time and that hosted banquets in connection with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: the imperial cult, the cult of Demeter and Kore, and the cult of Asklepios.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice*, 46.

⁴⁸⁶ Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice*, 79.

⁴⁸⁷ Corinth hosted several cults—Greek, Roman, and Egyptian—but I have chosen the imperial cult, the cult of Demeter and Kore, and the cult of Asklepios since we have at least some knowledge regarding animal sacrifice and dining in them. On the numerous cults in Roman Corinth, see Kar Yong Lim, “Paul’s Use of Temple Imagery in the Corinthians Correspondence: The Creation of Christian Identity,” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, LNTS 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 189–205, 189.

After the Romans made Corinth a colony, they built a temple (usually referred to as Temple E) in the centre of Corinth. On the role this temple played in the city, DeMaris comments: “If the Archaic Temple had once dominated city center because of its elevation and size, the Romans undid its dominance by blocking it off from the forum.... Now Temple E [which lay in the forum], a Roman creation, controlled the forum. The imperial cult was, therefore, the new religious focal point of Roman Corinth.”⁴⁸⁸ I argued in chapter one that Corinth is best viewed as a city which had strong ties to both Greek and Roman culture. The manner in which the people adopted the imperial cult (which arguably had both Hellenistic and Roman roots) is yet another demonstration of the Greekness and Romanness of Corinth. Annette Hupfloher points out that, on the one hand, the imperial cult as it looked like in its Roman form was adopted in Corinth, by, e.g., using the same epithets as those used in Rome (*Divus Julius* and *Divus Augustus*, etc.). On the other hand, the Corinthians also honored those who had not been deified in or by Rome, with one example being Octavia, the sister of Augustus and wife of Marcus Antonius.⁴⁸⁹ Hence, it is clear that the Romans made their mark—both culturally and structurally—on Corinth and that animal sacrifice according to the Roman custom could be offered in the city.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁸ DeMaris, “Cults and the Imperial Cult,” 82. By all accounts, Temple E was standing by the time Paul sojourned in Corinth. See John K. Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 104–25, 107. It is not entirely clear what the function of this temple was. A majority of scholarship has concluded that it was dedicated to the imperial cult and has often been taken as the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus or the Temple of Octavia and thus closely connected with the imperial cult in Corinth. But, as Mary E. Hoskins Walbank (“Pausanias, Octavia and Temple E at Corinth,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 84 [1989]: 361–94) argues, this is not necessarily the case (although she admits that any suggestion on what function Temple E had, including her own of it being the Capitolium of Corinth, must be tentative). Stanley Spaeth (“Imperial Cult in Roman Corinth,” 77) gives two reasons why the imperial cult appears to have been an important part of Corinth: first, as the capital of the province of Achaia, Corinth played a crucial political and geographical role as Rome’s face to the Greek East; second, the imperial cult provided the inhabitants of Corinth with a good way to stay close to the emperors and Rome itself through the patronage system which undergirded Roman society.

⁴⁸⁹ Hupfloher, “A Small Copy of Rome?” 154–55.

⁴⁹⁰ With this said, we should note that the Greek Archaic Temple, even though its role was diminished, still stood and could be used.

Even though we can establish that the imperial cult was both important and widespread in Corinth, not least due to the temple in the forum and the more than fifty surviving inscriptions that record the name of either an emperor or member of the imperial family (some of which mentions the divinity of the emperor), it is hard to find any clear evidence that the situations in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 are set within the imperial cult.⁴⁹¹ It is possible that it is the imperial cult Paul refers to, but the instructions he gives the Corinthian Christ followers does not unambiguously express that it is this cult his Christ followers are attending. Moreover, even though Paul may have hinted that the Christ followers were intimately linked with the imperial cult in some parts of 1 or 2 Corinthians, these suggestions remain just that, hints.⁴⁹²

The cult that has yielded the most information with regard to dining is the cult of the two goddesses Demeter and Kore, which lay just a short distance from the city centre of Corinth. By the fifth century BCE as many as 30 dining rooms existed within the precinct of the cult's sanctuary.⁴⁹³ But this number would be far less by the time Corinth became a Roman colony.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ Kent, *Corinth*, 8.31–34, 38–53 (nrs. 50–53, 55, 58, 69–118).

⁴⁹² McGraw (“The Imperial Cult”) argues that the Christ followers did in fact have close ties with the imperial cult based on 2 Cor 2:14 and Paul’s statement that God, in Christ, leads Paul and the Corinthians in triumphal processions (θριαμβεύω). This, McGraw asserts, is a reference to the processions carried out in the imperial cult in Corinth, and Paul, by using θριαμβεύω, implicitly criticizes the imperial cult and urges the Corinthian Christ followers to see that Christ is the real emperor, not the emperors in Rome: “Throughout his Corinthian correspondence, Paul constantly alludes to Christ as one who is higher than the Roman Emperor. Paul is calling the Corinthians to decide who reigns supreme in their lives: Christ or the Emperor” (McGraw, “The Imperial Cult,” 155). Another argument found in the scholarly literature is that Paul refers to the imperial cult in 1 Cor 8:5 by his references to κύριος and θεός. However, I agree with D. Clint Burnett (“Divine Titles for Julio-Claudian Imperials in Corinth,” *CBQ* 82 [2020]: 437–55) that one cannot make the argument that Paul refers to the imperial cult merely based on these two titles. For more on how Paul possibly combated the Roman empire, its political system, and the imperial cult in the letters to Corinth (but also in other Pauline letters), see the essays in Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000); John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, eds., *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’s Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004); Christopher B. Zeichmann, *The Roman Army and the New Testament* (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2018), 109–18.

⁴⁹³ Nancy Bookidis, “Ritual Dining at Corinth,” in *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, ed. Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (London: Routledge, 1993), 34–50; William van Andringa, “The Archaeology of Ancient Sanctuaries,” in *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 29–40, 37.

⁴⁹⁴ DeMaris, “Demeter in Roman Corinth,” 107.

Even though the ancient sources concerning the cult of Demeter and Kore are few, and no source gives an account of the rituals performed there or the festival(s) celebrated, Bookidis points out that “it is clear that dining within the sanctuary was not confined to the priestly staff but was practiced by the celebrating population as well.”⁴⁹⁵ This is in line with what we know of the Greek *thusia* sacrifice, as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Consequently, this cult appears to be a good match with what Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Moreover, DeMaris suggests that there was a close connection between the interest in death and the dead among the Corinthian Christ followers as well as among the participants in the cult of Demeter and Kore.⁴⁹⁶

There are, however, two potential caveats that need be taken into account when trying to situate the Corinthian Christ followers within the cult of Demeter and Kore. First, the cult of Demeter and Kore was in many places limited to the participation of women and in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 Paul does not indicate that the issues he deals with would include women only. For example, Pausanias mentions that in the temple of Demeter in Hermione, no men were present; at Pellene in Achaia, men could be present for parts of a seven-day festival but had to withdraw on the third day so that the women of the cult could perform a special ritual.⁴⁹⁷ Despite the fact that men played a less significant role in the cults of Demeter and Kore in general, men were allowed to participate in the cult of the goddesses in Corinth. This is suggested by five male names found among the dedicatory graffiti from the cult site and the forty terracotta statues of young men holding offerings.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ Bookidis, “Ritual Dining at Corinth,” 34. An invitation to dine in the temple of Demeter is found in the Oxyrhynchus papyri (*P. Oxy.* 1485). The papyrus is from the second to early third century CE and thus shows that dining in the temple continued well after Paul’s time. For text and translation, see Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898–), 12.243–44, nr. 1485.

⁴⁹⁶ See his “Corinthian Religion and Baptism for the Dead” and “Demeter in Roman Corinth.”

⁴⁹⁷ *Description of Greece* 2.35.8; 7.27.10. For a compilation of primary sources on this specific topic, see Theodor Wächter, *Reinheitsvorschriften im griechischen Kult*, RVV 9 (Gießen: Töpelman, 1910), 130–34.

⁴⁹⁸ Bookidis, “Ritual Dining at Corinth,” 38. Even though men could participate, the archaeological evidence shows that women played a more important role in the cult at Corinth than did men.

The second potential problem is that even though we know that dining and offerings of varying sorts took place in the cult, there is not much evidence suggesting that animal sacrifices were a significant part of the cult. According to the customs of the cults, the most common animal sacrificed to the goddesses was the pig.⁴⁹⁹ In the cultic site in Corinth, however, only a small collection of pig bones have been found from the pit where the animal would have been sacrificed, suggesting that animal sacrifices were a rarity.⁵⁰⁰ This, together with the fact that barely any bones were found in the dining rooms and the non-existence of garbage pits within the cultic precincts, leads Bookidis to conclude that meat was not part of the meal that followed the sacrifices.⁵⁰¹ In a later publication, however, Bookidis revises her conclusion and suggests that pig meat, but also fish, actually was eaten by the cult participants during the banquets.⁵⁰² Even so, it is hard to know whether the animal bones come from animals that have been eaten in a banquet or from animals that have been sacrificed, but not eaten. In other words, even if meat was eaten in the cult, it is difficult to determine how much of the banquet consisted of meat and how often festivals were celebrated at the cult. Moreover, Julie Hansen has noted that remains of several non-animal foodstuff are left among the debris in the cult precinct: barley, wheat, grapes, olives, lentils, figs, peas, grass peas, chickpea, bitter vetch, pomegranate, seeds of mint, caper, the daisy family, and millet.⁵⁰³ With this in mind, it seems as though meat was not commonly eaten in the sanctuary.

⁴⁹⁹ Bookidis et al., “Dining in the Sanctuary,” 42–43.

⁵⁰⁰ Ekroth (“‘Don’t Throw any Bones’,” 48) puts forward another suggestion, namely that the findings of small fragments of pig bones, but also other faunal remains, may indicate that the larger animal bones were cleaned up and discarded somewhere outside the cultic precinct. In turn, this opens up the possibility that more animals were sacrificed in the cult than what the remains tell us. There is, however, no strong evidence for such a view and it must remain a hypothesis. Bookidis et al. (“Dining in the Sanctuary,” 17) takes a more cautious view with regards to sacrifice and eating in the cult of Demeter and Kore in Corinth: “We know virtually nothing about the sacrifices performed in the sanctuary, except that pig was clearly the preferred animal. . . . Something was clearly eaten and cooked in the dining rooms, and the discovery of grinding stones, reused in later contexts on the site, clearly indicates that some grinding was done in situ.” However, later in the article, Bookidis et al. come closer to the view of Ekroth (“Dining in the Sanctuary,” 42).

⁵⁰¹ Bookidis, “Ritual Dining at Corinth,” 41.

⁵⁰² Bookidis et al., “Dining in the Sanctuary,” 17.

⁵⁰³ Bookidis et al., “Dining in the Sanctuary,” 51.

This poses a problem if we want to postulate that the Christ followers in Corinth attended these meals since Paul explicitly mentions that the issue is the eating of meat (*κρέας*, 1 Cor 8:13).⁵⁰⁴

Notwithstanding these two potential caveats, we cannot rule out the Christ followers' participation in the cult of Demeter and Kore. For even if the role of men was less significant than that of women, men could still partake in the cult at Corinth; second, even though meat seems to not have been the main source of food during the banquets in the cult, meat was still eaten by the participants, and conceivably only a small portion of meat could raise the question of idol meat among the Corinthian Christ followers. But, just as with the imperial cult, there is no clear or explicit evidence that puts the Christ followers in the cult of Demeter and Kore and any suggestions that they participated in the cult must remain a hypothesis.

The last cult I explore in connection with 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 is the cult of Asklepios. The cult of Asklepios was most strongly connected with health and well-being and a cult where the members frequently sought the god's healing powers.⁵⁰⁵ It was probably for this reason that the sanctuary was located at the northern edge of the city wall where several springs could be found. Even though the sanctuary of Asklepios itself was modest, the significance of the cult was not and it appears to have been present in the city from the late fifth century BCE to the late fourth

⁵⁰⁴ One aspect of the remains in the sanctuary that speaks in favour of seeing this cult as a possible setting for Paul's instructions in Cor 8 and 10 is the many findings of drinking cups. In 1 Cor 10:21 Paul remarks that his audience "cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of *daimonia*" since this would entail having company with both the Lord and the *daimonia* (10:20). Considering that it seems unlikely that meat was a large part of the meal in the cult of Demeter and Kore, but that pigs were sacrificed, it is possible, in accordance with the Greek *thusia* rite, that those who performed the sacrifice drank and ate the *σπλάγγνα* during the sacrifice but that the meat would not be enough for a full banquet.

⁵⁰⁵ Mabel L. Lang, *Cure and Cult in Ancient Corinth: A Guide to the Asklepieion* (Princeton: American Schools of Classical Studies at Athens, 1977). The emphasis on healing leads Newton (*Deity and Diet*, 232) to suggest that "involvement in the Asclepius cult would not have been primarily an attempt to worship a divinity, but rather an individual act of sheer desperation to seek health and therefore physical survival in a hostile world." Even though Newton is right to stress the importance of Asklepios as a god of healing, I think that the dichotomy between healing and worship is unnecessary and creates a false division vis-à-vis cultic participation. This is not to say that the participants of the cult had their health and well-being as their primary reason for joining the cult. Cf. Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1945), 2.191.

century CE.⁵⁰⁶ Annette Weissenrieder notes two pieces of evidence that indicate the importance of the cult of Asklepios in Corinth: first, more than one hundred votive objects dating back to the fourth century BCE have been found; second, after Corinth became a Roman colony under Caesar in 44 BCE, the cult of Asklepios was one of the first cults to be reinstated.⁵⁰⁷ The focus on healing in the cult did not exclude the practice of sacrifice and dining in the cult: both a sacrificial altar and dining rooms have been excavated in the cultic precinct.

In the three identified dining rooms, excavators have found mountings for eleven couches and seven tables. The dining rooms excavated at Corinth, R. A. Tomlinson points out, are constructed similarly to dining rooms found in cults of Asklepios found elsewhere and thus seem to have been standard within this cult.⁵⁰⁸ Indeed, Dennis E. Smith comments that it was standard practice to have several small dining rooms with seven, nine, or eleven couches in Greek temples.⁵⁰⁹ The remains of dining rooms and a sacrificial altar clearly points to the fact that sacrifices took place and that eating took place in the cult of Asklepios in Corinth. However, when it comes to the act of dining, the evidence is less clear, and it is difficult to gain a thorough understanding of who ate and what they ate. One issue, which Newton raises, is that “we do not know with certainty whether those rooms [i.e., the dining rooms] served the needs of worshipping incubants or the passing public who were using the recreational facilities of the precinct.”⁵¹⁰ Moreover, it is not only concerning the sacrifices and dining that we lack information, but there is

⁵⁰⁶ Carl Roebuck, *Corinth XIV: The Asklepieion and Lerna* (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1951), 159.

⁵⁰⁷ Weissenrieder, “Contested Spaces,” 84.

⁵⁰⁸ R. A. Tomlinson, “Two Buildings in Sanctuaries of Asklepios,” *JHS* 89 (1969): 106–17, 106–08. For a detailed analysis of the dining rooms, see Roebuck, *Corinth XIV: The Asklepieion and Lerna*, 51–55.

⁵⁰⁹ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 73.

⁵¹⁰ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 232.

not much information on any aspect of the cult of Asklepios in Corinth.⁵¹¹ Based on this silence of evidence, Carl Roebuck assumes that the practices of the cult of Asklepios in Corinth had no unusual features and that it did not differ much from other Asklepieia.⁵¹²

The paucity of evidence concerning virtually all aspects of the cult of Asklepios in Corinth makes it hard to know whether the Christ followers in Corinth attended this cult or not. Certainly, the findings of a sacrificial altar and dining rooms hinder us from excluding this cult as one potential cult in which the Christ followers participated in on the basis of what Paul tells them in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. But it remains a possibility, nothing more.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed different sacrificial rituals performed in the ancient world. Keeping with the picture of Corinth I presented in chapter one as a city where both Greek and Roman culture, customs, and cults existed, I focused primarily on animal sacrifice in Greek and Roman societies. The reason for excluding other kinds of sacrifice was that Paul's language in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 best fits with the sacrifices of animal, especially his concern over meat eating (*κρέας*) in 8:13. In both Greek and Roman cults animal sacrifice was an important cultic act, even if it was not *the* cultic act some scholars have argued it to be, in both private and public settings. During the killing of the animal a portion would be burned in honor of the gods to whom the sacrifice was made, and the participants would eat the rest of the animal (in Roman times, it was mainly those higher up in the social hierarchy who ate of the meat, whereas the Greeks had a more

⁵¹¹ Roebuck (*Corinth XIV: The Asklepieion and Lerna*, 152) notes that basically all the evidence is of archaeological nature. Only one author, Pausanias, mentions the temple, but even that remark does not yield any information about the cult, just that the temple of Asklepios is located near the gymnasium (*Description of Greece* 2.4.5).

⁵¹² Roebuck, *Corinth XIV: The Asklepieion and Lerna*, 157.

egalitarian meat division). However, not all meat was eaten in the sanctuary, and it could be brought home or sold in the market of the city. This led to uncertainties when invited to dinner, since the origins of the meat would be obscure; a problem Paul's Christ followers in Corinth seem to have been grappling with (1 Cor 10:27–28).

After the sacrifice, a dinner would normally take place, where both the meat from the sacrifice and other meat that had been brought in was served. To take part in the dinner was a display of loyalty to both the city—especially when only citizens could take part—and to the gods honored in the sacrifice. To not partake could potentially make one a liability to the city since one then possibly would endanger the relationship with the gods, who then could turn in anger. Looking at this situation from the Corinthian Christ followers' perspective, the situation must have been tenuous: partaking in the cultic rituals of the city might jeopardise their own relationship to the god of Israel and Jesus Christ; not partaking in the cultic rituals would mark them out as strange at best and dangerous at worst. (This tension will be more fully explored in the following chapter.)

At the end of this chapter, I assessed three cults present in Corinth during Paul's time there—the imperial cult, the cult of Demeter and Kore, and the cult of Asklepios—in order to see how likely it was that the Christ followers attended any of them. I arrived at the conclusion that we do not have enough information to make any strong connections between the Christ followers and any of these cults, but that it is possible that they did attend any or even all of them. However, this must remain a tentative suggestion.

Chapter 3: Adhering to the Social Norms of the Ancient City: Not Attending Cults as a Case of Social Disruption

Introduction

1 Corinthians 8 and 10 have presented an interpretive crux to scholars for many years. In this and the chapter that follows I present my reading of these two chapters in 1 Corinthians and my argument that any supposed tensions between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 can be resolved with a historically attuned understanding of the social relationships in the ancient world and the rituals and language of animal sacrifice. In this current chapter, I explore Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8; in the following chapter I turn to 1 Corinthians 10. The overarching aim of this and the following chapters are (1) to argue that 1 Cor 8, 10:14–22, and 10:23–33 depict *three* different contexts, (2) to present a reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–33 that takes the different contexts of both chapters into account, and (3) to show that Paul's instructions in these chapter of 1 Corinthians are coherent. My main argument is: in 1 Corinthians 8 Paul in principle allows the eating of food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος), he does so since it would be socially disruptive by the Christ followers to stop all their associations with non-Christ followers; in 1 Cor 10:14–22 he forbids the Corinthians to partake at the sacrificial altar of gentile cults and be active participants in their sacrificial rituals.

Against the background of my two previous chapters, and especially chapter two, I argue that Paul addresses three different situations throughout 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul deals with eating of food offered to idols in temples dedicated to idols; in 1 Cor 10:14–22, he instructs Christ followers that they cannot partake at the sacrificial altar in Greek or Roman cults; and in 1 Cor 10:23–33, Paul gives instructions on how Christ followers should behave when

they buy food in the market and when those who are not members of the Christ group invite them to dinners. Furthermore, the proper understanding of these three different contexts will lead to a clearer and more coherent understanding of what the apostle's instructions were to the Christ followers in Corinth.

In this chapter I make the argument that Paul's instructions, and permission, surrounding the attendance at cultic meals on the part of the Christ followers in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 8 is driven by a concern on Paul's part that they do not act in a way that jeopardises their place within the social web of ancient Corinth.⁵¹³ The only aspect more important than this is if an *ekklēsia* member with a weak (*ἀσθενής*) consciousness sees another Christ follower eating in an idol temple and because of that he/she eats of the food and is defiled (*μολύνω*, 1 Cor 8:7) and destroyed (*ἀπόλλυμι*, 1 Cor 8:11) due to the belief that what is being eaten is an act of idolatry. If a fellow *ekklēsia* member's obedience to Christ is jeopardised due to another's eating in idol temples, then that presents a valid reason, Paul argues, not to eat in such settings—indeed, such a situation requires one not to eat of the meal.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ E. A. Judge (*The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* [London: Tyndale, 1960], 72) argues that the fragile social status of the early Jesus movement in the first century CE was a driving force behind many “didactic and paraenetic passages in the New Testament” as a whole, and not only in 1 Corinthians.

⁵¹⁴ On the tensions between Christ adherence and participation in the social life of Corinth, Jerry L. Sumney (“Christ Died for Us’: Interpretation of Jesus’ Death as a Central Element of the Identity of the Earliest Church,” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, LNTS 248 [London: T&T Clark, 2010], 147–72, 150) comments: “First Corinthians is testimony to the difficulty believers had integrating their new beliefs into their communal and social lives.”

Paul puts forth a somewhat similar argument in Romans 14. However, he never mentions “food offered to idols” in Romans 14. Some scholars use Romans 14 when interpreting 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, but I do not address the relationship between Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. This is because I think 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 are best read on their own and in their own context, especially given the fact that 1 Corinthians was likely written before Romans. With that said, there are some similarities between Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 that I point out below. Traditionally, scholars have argued that Romans 14 demonstrates Paul's stance on the Jewish law and how it applies (or rather not applies) to those in Christ. For example, John M. G. Barclay (“Do We Undermine the Law? A Study of Romans 14.1–15.6,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, WUNT 89 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996], 287–308, 287) writes: “In Romans 14.1–15.5 we are given a valuable insight into the practical effects of Paul's stance on the law, even though the term *νόμος* does not appear in this passage.” If one takes this position, one could read 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 as further proof of this idea. However, as I argue, I do not think there is evidence

I begin this chapter with a history of research in order to identify what previous scholarship has said on the question of what Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 were in order to situate my argument. Then I examine other texts, such as Pliny's letters to Trajan and tractate *Avodah Zarah* from the Mishnah, with the purpose of grounding my argument that Paul did not want his Christ followers to behave in socially disruptive ways. In this part of the chapter, I show that behaving according to the social norms of the time of the various texts was both important and in the best interest of the groups behind the texts and/or the groups the texts describe. This, in turn, leads me back to 1 Corinthians 8 and the question of how best to understand Paul's instructions in the chapter.

Previous Research on 1 Corinthians 8

Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 have been a matter of dispute for some time and suggestions as to what the apostle meant to say in the chapter varies.⁵¹⁵ Here, I examine previous research into the chapter in order to map out its most common interpretations.⁵¹⁶ Scholars generally agree that Paul discusses the topics of idolatry and eating food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) in 1 Corinthians 8 since he knew that this was an issue in the Corinthian *ekklēsia*. This is indicated by the sudden shift from the discussion concerning marriage in 7:25–40 and the phrase *περὶ δὲ*, which starts chapter 8, and indicates that Paul is writing about a topic that both he and the Corinthians have

in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 to suggest that the two chapters show Paul's negative stance against the Jewish law. Additionally, some scholars argue that Romans 14 does not have anything to do with Paul's supposed negative attitude toward the Jewish law, and that the reading Barclay represents is flawed. See Ehrensperger, "Called to be Saints"; Rudolph, "Paul and the Food Laws."

⁵¹⁵ For a brief overview of scholarship since 1981, see Wendell Willis, "1 Corinthians 8–10: A Retrospective after Twenty-Five Years," *ResQ* 49 (2007): 103–12.

⁵¹⁶ For a brief overview of the "majority view" on this chapter, see Fisk, "Eating Meat Offered to Idols," 50.

previously discussed in one way or another.⁵¹⁷ Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch aptly capture the theme, issues, and character of 1 Corinthians 8:

This whole section deals with questions about food and eating. Eating is always a social act that makes sense according to culturally accepted patterns. These patterns form the ‘grammar’ of a meal. In terms of this grammar, eating makes human sense. The elements of this grammar include: who eats what, with whom, when, where, how, and why. In this section these elements come to prominence as Paul attempts to correct the Corinthian grammar so that in their eating they would express the set of meanings proper to those in Christ.⁵¹⁸

In connection to the understanding that the issues brought up in 1 Corinthians 8 are Paul’s response to the Christ following Corinthians’ questions, scholars have long argued that there were two factions in the *ekklēsia*: one “weak” group and one “strong.” The strong were eating food offered to idols since they possessed “knowledge” (γνῶσις, 8:1) and realised that eating food offered to idols was not idolatry.⁵¹⁹ In contrast, so the argument goes, the weak, did not have this knowledge—therefore, they thought of eating food offered to idols as idolatry—“and their weak

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 188; Fotopoulos, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 180–81; *idem*, “Arguments Concerning Food Offered to Idols,” 611–31, 618–20; Fee, “Εἰδωλόθυστα once Again,” 172–97; *idem*, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 403; Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester: InterVarsity, 2004), 136; Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 187–88.

Περί δὲ is used five times by Paul in 1 Corinthians, 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, and each time the phrase functions as an indication that Paul shifts his focus from one topic to another and most likely these topics have been brought up by the Corinthians in one way or another. In 7:1 Paul explicitly refers to the fact that he is answering a question the Corinthians had written to him about: *περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε*. It is unclear whether all the *περὶ δὲ* refer to something the Corinthians wrote to Paul about in their letter to him. For a survey of *περὶ δὲ* and its function in 1 Corinthians, see Margaret Mitchell, “Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians,” *NovT* 31 (1989): 229–56. She concludes (*ibid*, 256) that we cannot know if *περὶ δὲ* always introduces something the Corinthians wrote to Paul about, but that “what we can say definitely is that each of the topics Paul introduces with the formula *περὶ δὲ* (virgins, idol meat, spiritual people/things, the collection and Apollos) is readily known to both the Corinthians and Paul *from some element of their shared experience*” (emphasis original).

⁵¹⁸ Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 91.

⁵¹⁹ Some scholars have proposed that those who had γνῶσις were Gnostics. Cf. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 188; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Neue Theologische Grundrisse (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1953), 1.180. However, as Newton (*Deity and Diet*, 272–73), rightly points out, this cannot be the case since Gnosticism is a product of the second century CE. Newton’s own interpretations of γνῶσις is that it refers to the individual knowledge they all, both Paul and the Corinthians, had vis-à-vis cultic feasts. Newton contrasts γνῶσις in 8:1 with ἡ γνῶσις in 8:7, suggesting that all have their own γνῶσις of how cultic feasts and rituals function and what they achieve, but not everyone has ἡ γνῶσις which says that an idol is nothing or that one does not partake in idolatry simply by eating food offered to idols.

consciousness is defiled” (καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται, 8:7). The issue, according to this reading, is that the “weak” would conform to the “strong” and also eat of the food.⁵²⁰ Cheung articulates this view so: “It is usually understood that the ‘strong’ Christians are those who claim ‘knowledge’ and ‘freedom’ (8.1–4, 7–13) to eat idol food without qualms.... The ‘weak’, on the other hand, are either over-scrupulous Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians who continue to be haunted by their former pagan religious experience.”⁵²¹

There are, however, some problems with the view that divides the Corinthian *ekklēsia* into one strong group and one weak group. The most apparent is that, whereas Paul does mention some members as “weak” (ὁ ἀσθενῶν, 8:11) he does not call anyone “strong.” Fee dismantles the “strong vs weak” approach by arguing that Paul’s combative answer in 1 Cor 8 (but also in 10:1–22) indicates that the questions surrounding eating of food offered to idols were something that Paul and the Corinthians, or at least a part of the *ekklēsia*, had widely different opinions on, and not merely a question the Corinthians had presented to Paul.⁵²² Consequently, the imagined opposition of strong and weak members is flawed and does not give a true picture of the situation behind 1 Corinthians 8.⁵²³ A solution that lies closer to the text of 1 Corinthians 8 is that some *ekklēsia*

⁵²⁰ For the argument about and/or references to “weak” and “strong” (and similar two-fold divisions of the *ekklēsia*) in 1 Corinthians 8, see, *inter alia*, Theissen, “Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth; *idem*, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 130–31; Arnold Ehrhardt, “Soziale Fragen in der alten Kirche,” in *Existenz und Ordnung: Festschrift für Erik Wolf zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Thomas Würtenberger, Werner Maihoffer, and Alexander Hollerbach (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1962), 155–82, 157–59; Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 138–53; John C. Brunt, “Rejected, Ignored, or Misunderstood? The Fate of Paul’s Approach to the Problem of Food Offered to Idols in Early Christianity,” *NTS* 31 (1985): 113–24; Richard A. Horsley, “Consciousness and Freedom among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8–10,” *CBQ* 40 (1978): 574–89; Rogers, *God and the Idols*, 168–85; Khiok-Khng Yeo, “The Rhetorical Hermeneutic of 1 Corinthians 8 and Chinese Ancestor Worship,” *BibInt* 2 (1994): 294–311, 294–300; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Freedom or the Ghetto (1 Cor., VIII, 1–13; X, 23–XI, 1),” *RB* 85 (1978): 543–74.

⁵²¹ Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 86.

⁵²² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 395–96; *idem*, “II Corinthians VI.14–VII.1 and Food Offered to Idols,” *NTS* 23 (1977): 140–61, 151–52.

⁵²³ Following the lead of Gerd Theissen, several interpreters view the “weak” and “strong” in terms of social status and economic income. Cf. Sung Uk Lim, “The Political Economy of Eating Idol Meat: Practice, Structure, and Subversion in 1 Corinthians 8 through the Sociological Lens of Pierre Bourdieu,” *HBT* 34 (2012): 155–72. For a critique of Theissen’s socio-economic reading, which is perhaps the most influential, concerning “weak” and “strong” members, see Justin J. Meggitt, “Meat Consumption and Social Conflict in Corinth,” *JTS* 45 (1994): 137–41; Philip

members attended sacrificial meals since they, rightly Paul admits, understood that the food served there was not going to jeopardise their allegiance to the God of Israel or the Messiah; but not all members had this knowledge, and for them this presented an issue.⁵²⁴ These two positions most likely did exist in the *ekklēsia*, but it would be too rigid a reading to divide the whole Christ group into one “strong” sub-group and one “weak”; rather, as Newton proposes, it is better to understand the two views often associated with a “strong” and a “weak” party as views held by some in the *ekklēsia*, but that the members cannot all be put in one group or the other, nor was this a question that all members were concerned with.⁵²⁵ Paul’s aim, then, is to instruct those who attended the cultic meals in Corinth—and saw no problems at all in doing so—because it was a problem for some other members of the *ekklēsia*.⁵²⁶ Before continuing with the text of 1 Cor 8:1–13, I deal briefly with the translation of one important term in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: *συνείδησις*.

The question of how to translate *συνείδησις* is a much-debated topic in the scholarship on 1 Corinthians 8 with the most common translations of the word being “conscience,” “consciousness,” or “self-awareness.” However one translates *συνείδησις* it is clear that, in 1 Corinthians 8, *συνείδησις* refers to someone’s perception of how things are and that acting against

L. Tite, “Roman Diet and Meat Consumption: Reassessing Elite Access to Meat in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10,” *JSNT* 42 (2019): 185–222; Lee M. Jefferson, “The Pagan Feast and the Sacramental Feast: The Implication of Idol Food Consumption in Paul’s Corinth,” *STRev* 51 (2007): 22–47, 33–35.

⁵²⁴ Jason T. Lamoreaux (“Ritual Negotiation,” in *Early Christian Ritual Life*, ed. Richard E. DeMaris, Jason T. Lamoreaux, and Steven C. Muir [London: Routledge, 2017], 133–45, 135) points out that “knowledge” in 1 Corinthians 8 does not only have to do with theoretical knowledge, but that the knowledge Paul speaks of is concretised in the somatic experience of eating the food offered in the temple, “knowledge, including that of a spiritual nature, is therefore not simply an acquisition of words or visual input but is bodily realized and practiced.”

⁵²⁵ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 310. Pace Hurd (*The Origin of I Corinthians*, 125) who argues that the “weak” only functions as a hypothetical position within the *ekklēsia* so that Paul can make the argument that no members should eat food offered to idols.

⁵²⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 396. From the information Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 8 it is hard to determine if those who have knowledge shared similar traits with regards to background, social status, and so on. Kathy Ehrensperger (“To Eat or Not to Eat,” 120) suggests that “the reference to knowledge seems rather to be directed to people who are proud of their newly embraced insights and who are now keen to demonstrate this in their everyday life.” In other words, she proposes that those who have knowledge are gentile members of the *ekklēsia* who, with their newfound knowledge that there is only one God and Lord, feel that they can partake at the meals in idol temples without risking their relationship with the Messiah. This question will be dealt with more below.

it leads to defilement (cf. 1 Cor 8:7 below).⁵²⁷ I have chosen to translate *συνείδησις* as “consciousness” since translating it as “conscience” (from the Latin *conscientia*) suggests that Paul uses *συνείδησις* in primarily a moral meaning, and such a meaning does not, Tomson argues, make sense in all the contexts *συνείδησις* appears in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.⁵²⁸ It is, I argue, not the Christ followers’ morality Paul wants to protect, but their perception of how things are.⁵²⁹ Consequently, the issue with a weak *συνείδησις* is that those who have it in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* eat food offered to idols as though the sacrificial rituals had changed its nature. Therefore, for this group eating food offered to idols amounts to idolatry. The translation of *συνείδησις* as “consciousness” is most clearly demonstrated in 1 Cor 8:7. There, Paul says that not everyone has the knowledge that idols are nothing, and that those who lack this knowledge eat food offered to idols as part of idol worship and their weak consciousness is then defiled (ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὖσα μολύνεται).⁵³⁰

Whether one agrees or not with the hypothesis of a strong and a weak group in the *ekklēsia* most scholars take 8:1–3 as a dialogue where Paul partly quotes the *ekklēsia* (the strong group, if

⁵²⁷ The scholarly literature on this word and its meaning in 1 Corinthians 8 is vast and multi-faceted. For the most notable suggestions and proposals on how to understand *συνείδησις*, see Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms*, 402–46; H. Osborne, “*συνείδησις*,” *JTS* 32 (1931): 167–79; Ceslas Spicq, “La conscience dans le Nouveau Testament,” *RB* 47 (1938): 50–80; C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament: A Study of Syneidesis in the New Testament; in the Light of Its Sources, and with Particular Reference to St. Paul: With Some Observations Regarding Its Pastoral Relevance Today*, SBT 15 (London: SCM Press, 1955); Bruce F. Harris, “ΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΙΣ (Conscience) in the Pauline Writings,” *WTJ* 24 (1962): 173–86; Margaret Thrall, “The Pauline Use of *συνείδησις*,” *NTS* 14 (1967): 118–25; Paul W. Gooch, “‘Conscience’ in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 244–54; J. N. Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca*, *NovTSup* 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 84–102; Hans-Joachim Eckstein, *Der Begriff Syneidesis bei Paulus: eine neutestamentlich-exegetische Untersuchung zum “Gewissenbegriff”*, *WUNT* II/10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983).

⁵²⁸ Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, 195–96, 210–16. Tomson (*Paul and the Jewish Law*, 196) writes: “The only coherent way to explain chapters 8 and 10 seems to be to avoid any moral connotation in the word *συνείδησις*. We can avoid it with the translation ‘consciousness’.”

⁵²⁹ Cf. Karin Hedner Zetterholm, “The Question of Assumptions,” 95. On the use of the *σύννοια* word group in Paul, see Philip Bosman, *Conscience in Philo and Paul: A Conceptual History of the Synoida Word Group*, *WUNT* II/166 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

⁵³⁰ Thus it seems like *συνείδησις* functions as a term that is in contrast to *γνώσις*. If this is the case then “consciousness” captures the sense of *συνείδησις* better than does “conscience.”

one follows that theory) and corrects their thoughts by adding his own remarks. According to the traditional view, the Corinthian quote is the phrase “we all have knowledge” (πάντες γινώσκοντες ἔχομεν) which Paul introduces with οἶδαμεν ὅτι.⁵³¹ After quoting the Corinthians, Paul, in 8:1b–4a, responds to their position by arguing that knowledge is not as important as love. In 8:4b, Paul introduces a new quotation by the Corinthians, again with οἶδαμεν ὅτι: “we know that ‘an idol is nothing in the cosmos’ and that ‘there is no god but one’.”⁵³² Most interpreters take the following verses (5–6) as Paul’s affirmation that there is only one god, which the Corinthians are quoted as saying to him in 8:4b.⁵³³ One interpretative problem arises from Paul’s mention in verse 5 of gods (θεοί) and lords (κύριοι). The first part of the verse is more or less straightforward in that it seems to present a hypothetical case: “for even if (εἴπερ) there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth...”⁵³⁴ The second part of verse 5, however, presents a conundrum in the secondary literature. There, Paul writes, “just as there are many gods and many lords (ὡσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί),” which seems to confirm what is said in the first part of the verse (i.e., the hypothetical case is not only a possibility, but a reality). The interpretive crux partly stems from

⁵³¹ This understanding is also found in many English translations of the letter, cf. RSV, NRSV, ESV, NIV which all put this phrase in quotation marks. See also Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 402, 408; Charles H. Giblin, “Three Monotheistic Texts in Paul,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 527–47, 530; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 621, 629–30; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, EKKNT VII/2 (Solithurn: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 2.220–21.

⁵³² Some MSS, most notably κ^2 , K and L, reads οὐδεὶς θεὸς ἕτερος εἰ μὴ εἶς. The addition of ἕτερος is best seen as a gloss, and the reading without ἕτερος, which is supported by ρ^{46} , κ^* , A, B, D, F, G, P, should be preferred.

⁵³³ For other common approaches and understandings of idols and gods in ancient Judaism, see Richard A. Horsley, “Gnosis in Corinth: I Corinthians 8. 1–6,” *NTS* 27 (1979): 32–51, 38–40.

⁵³⁴ Εἴπερ can, according to LSJ (489), be translated as “if really,” “if indeed,” “even if,” and “even though.” BDAG (279) provides additional alternatives for εἴπερ (“if after all,” “since,”) and translates καὶ γὰρ εἴπερ in 8:5a as “for even if.” The translation of εἴπερ affects the understanding of what Paul is saying to some extent. On the one hand, if we translate it with “if” (“if indeed” or “even if”) it suggests that what follows is not the case, but “even if” (εἴπερ) it was, it will not make a difference (which Paul says in verse 6). On the other hand, if we translate εἴπερ with “even though” or “since,” the translation suggests that this is a reality but that it can be negotiated (again, by the statement in verse 6). I translate εἴπερ as “even if” since that seems to make most sense of the ὡσπερ εἰσὶν (“just as there are”) which follows in the second part of the verse.

the fact that Paul, after his statement in 8:5a, could have (1) not added the last clause of the verse and gone straight to the confession in 8:6, or (2) simply stated that there are no other gods and lords. But the fact that he does not do this creates a problem in the minds of several interpreters of 1 Corinthians.⁵³⁵

The issue, according to many scholars, is whether one should understand Paul's reference to "many gods and many lords" in 1 Cor 8:5 as an affirmation that there really are gods and lords beside the god and lord that Paul and the Christ followers in Corinth devoted themselves to (cf. 8:6), or if Paul is saying that "many gods and many lords" exist in the minds of those who worship them.⁵³⁶ On a fundamental level, this comes down to the question of monotheism in early Judaism and in the Jesus movement and whether Paul's imagination allowed for multiple gods and lords.⁵³⁷ Several commentators argue that Paul's use of "gods" and "lords" does not display the apostle's view that there are more than one god (the god of Israel) and one lord (the lord Jesus Christ), but that he is merely saying that there are, in a subjective sense, "many gods and many lords" in the minds of those who believe this to be the case. Consequently, "gods" and "lords" are often put within quotation marks to indicate the non-reality of these "gods" and "lords."⁵³⁸

In his influential commentary on 1 Corinthians, Fee writes: "Paul also recognizes the existential reality of pagan worship, and he knows that some within the Corinthian community are going to be affected by that reality. Thus he interrupts the concession [in 1 Cor 8:5a] with the affirmations 'as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords.'" He does not intend by this that

⁵³⁵ This interpretive problem is resolved if, as I argue below, we do not view Paul as a "monotheist" but as someone who, like virtually everyone in his day, thought of the divine realm as made up of more than just one god/deity.

⁵³⁶ Some of the Corinthian Christ followers were included in this group on the basis of 1 Cor 12:2 and those who still think of food offered to idol as idolatry presumably still belong to this group.

⁵³⁷ On other Jewish writers and their view on gods other than the god of Israel, see Lion-Seng Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 91–126.

⁵³⁸ Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 412; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 632; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 342.

the ‘gods’ actually exist as objective realities. Rather, as he goes on to allow (v. 7), they ‘exist’ subjectively in the sense that they are believed in.”⁵³⁹ Barrett takes a slightly more nuanced approach by arguing that Paul does not claim that there are no other spiritual beings beside the god of Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ, on the one hand, but that the “gods” and “lords” Paul mention are not realities in the sense that the god of Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ are, on the other.⁵⁴⁰ I think both Fee and Barrett are mistaken in denying that Paul could imagine there being multiple gods and lords in the cosmos in a very real, objective sense. To demonstrate that this is a plausible reading of Paul, I draw on two strands of evidence: other Jewish texts that were either authoritative or written around the time of Paul and Paul’s other letters.

The notion that Jews were monotheists in the first century CE has been pervasive in much scholarship, but such a position is now challenged.⁵⁴¹ First of all, the term “monotheism” as a modern concept cannot be applied to first century CE Judaism and is therefore an anachronistic term that obscures the historical realities of ancient Jewish constructions of the spiritual realm. In order to present a more accurate understanding of ancient Judaism, and therefore also the early Jesus movement, some have deployed terms such as “henotheism” or “monolatry” as labels for ancient Jewish worship practices. These terms suggest that Jews and early Christ followers acknowledged the existence of more than one god but only worshiped their own god. Even though this is a valiant attempt to further nuance our understanding of ancient cult and worship, Fredriksen is right in pointing out that the “the problem with all of this terminological finesse is the way that

⁵³⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 412. Dieter Zeller (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, KEK 5 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010], 289) takes a similar approach and understands Paul to take a gentile view of the spiritual world and admits, as a gentile would, that there exist multiple lords and gods.

⁵⁴⁰ Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 192.

⁵⁴¹ Most often, the “monotheism” of Judaism is thought of as in contrast to pagan “polytheism.” But as far as one can speak of “monotheism” in antiquity, it was not limited to Judaism. Cf. Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen, eds., *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Polymnia Athanassiadi and Micahel Frede, eds., *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

it obscures a simple historical observation: in antiquity, ‘monotheists’ were polytheists.”⁵⁴² This is borne out by a number of ancient Jewish sources. In Exod 15:11 we read, “who is like you among the gods (LXX: θεοῖς/MT: באֱלֹהִים), O Lord (LXX: κύριε/MT: יהוה),” and in Ps 82:1 (LXX: 81:1), “God (LXX: θεός/MT: אֱלֹהִים) stands in the assembly of the gods (LXX: θεῶν/MT: אֱלֹהִים), in the midst of the gods (LXX: θεοὺς/MT: אֱלֹהִים), he judges.”⁵⁴³ Another interesting example can be found in the Greek version of Exod 22:28: “Do not slander the gods.” The MT has the plural אֱלֹהִים for “gods” in Exod 22:28, which can refer both to the one god of Israel and to gods in the plural, and the LXX chooses to retain the ambiguous plural by translating אֱלֹהִים into θεοὺς (masculine plural accusative of θεός). When Philo comments on this verse, he does not seek to discuss or deny the existence of other gods; rather, he explains why slandering the gods of others is a bad idea.⁵⁴⁴ In addition, Philo also refers to the stars as gods, calling the stars a “mighty host of visible gods (θεοί).”⁵⁴⁵

Philo and the scribes who composed Exodus and the Psalms are not the only ones who confirm that the god of Israel is not the only deity or god in the cosmos. Paul himself speaks of

⁵⁴² Fredriksen, *Pagans’ Apostle*, 12. For other scholarly corrections of the concept of “monotheism” in ancient Judaism and in the early Jesus movement, see Michael S. Heiser, “Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism? Toward an Assessment of Divine Plurality in the Hebrew Bible,” *BBR* 18 (2008): 1–30; Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of “Monotheism”*, FAT II/1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 107–26; Peter Hayman, “Monotheism—A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?” *JJS* 42 (1991): 1–15; Paula Fredriksen, “Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go,” *SR* 35 (2006): 231–46; Michael C. Legaspi, “Opposition to Idolatry in the Book of Habakkuk,” *VT* 67 (2017): 458–69; Larry W. Hurtado, “What Do We Mean by ‘First-Century Jewish Monotheism’?” in *SBL 1993 Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Lovering, SBLSP 32 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 348–68; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 429–30; Peter Schäfer, *Two Gods in Heaven: Jewish Concepts of God in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020); Matthew V. Novenson, ed., *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, NovTSup 180, (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

⁵⁴³ On the “assembly of the gods,” Antti Laato (“The Devil in the Old Testament,” in *Evil and the Devil*, ed. Ida Fröhlich and Erkki Koskeniemi, LNTS 481 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013], 1–22, 5) comments: “In ancient Near Eastern texts the heavenly council represented the most authoritative decision-making entity in the divine and human world.” Cf. Min Suc Kee, “The Heavenly Council and Its Type-Scene,” *JSOT* 31 (2007): 259–73.

⁵⁴⁴ See Pieter W. van der Horst, “‘Thou Shalt Not Revile the Gods’: The LXX Translation of Ex. 22:28 (27), Its Background and Influence,” *SPhilo* 5 (1993): 1–8 for a fuller discussion of Philo’s interpretation of this text.

⁵⁴⁵ *On the Eternity of the World* 46 (LCL).

θεοί as real entities causing real problems.⁵⁴⁶ In 2 Cor 4:4, Paul mentions the “god of this age” (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) and how this god has actively “made blind the minds of those who do not believe.” Here, there seems to be no question whether the “god of this age” is real or not: the god of this age is a reality who acts in the world. In Gal 4:8, too, Paul makes a reference to θεοί; this time, however, the θεοί are not “gods by nature” (φύσει μὴ οὖσι θεοῖς), which presumably the god of Israel is.⁵⁴⁷ Paul’s claim that these gods are not gods by nature is somewhat elusive.⁵⁴⁸ It is clear from the apostle’s use of δουλεύω in 4:8 and 9 that it is the ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα he equates with that which are not gods by nature.⁵⁴⁹ Craig S. Keener contends that Paul’s reference to the Galatians previous worship of the sun, moon, and stars; these, Paul maintained, were not gods by nature, but had only become to be reckoned as such by those who worshiped them.⁵⁵⁰ Hence, what the Galatians had previously worshiped were *real beings and things*, but they were not, at least in Paul’s mind, *real gods*.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁶ Throughout his letters, Paul mentions other types of spiritual beings and powers that are active in the world: πᾶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, 1 Cor 2:8; ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, and δύναμις, 1 Cor 15:24; δαιμόνιον, 1 Cor 10:21; στοιχεῖον, Gal 4:9; ἄγγελος, Gal 1:8, 4:14; 2 Cor 11:14; Σατανᾶς, 2 Cor 11:14. On Paul’s view of the many powers that inhabited the cosmos, see Fredriksen, “The Question of Worship,” 176–77; *eadem*, *Sin: The Early History of an Idea* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012), 23; Dale B. Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” *JBL* 129 (2010): 657–77, 674.

⁵⁴⁷ It is noteworthy that Paul, just as in 1 Cor 8:5–6, asserts God’s oneness in Galatians 3:20 (ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν), but still calls other spiritual entities gods as well. This demonstrates that the god of Israel’s oneness is not in competition with other gods; both concepts can be upheld simultaneously by Paul.

⁵⁴⁸ On the topic of Christ’s divinity and how Christ followers became divine, Kathryn Tanner (*Christ the Key*, Current Issues in Theology [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], 25) comments: “Christ is by nature the divine Son who images the Father; human beings by the grace of the Holy Spirit become sons in the image of the divine image and thereby of the Father.”

⁵⁴⁹ On the meaning of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Gal 4, see Neil Martin, “Returning to the *stoicheia tou kosmou*: Enslavement to the Physical Elements in Galatians 4.3 and 9?” *JSNT* 40 (2018): 434–52.

⁵⁵⁰ Craig S. Keener, *Galatians*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 190–93. See also, Philip F. Esler, *Galatians*, NTR (London: Routledge, 1998), 92, 143, 208, 211.

⁵⁵¹ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 275.

This, however, does not mean that they are not real spiritual entities—for they still managed to enslave (δουλεύω) the Galatians before they came to know the god of Israel.⁵⁵² As Grant R. Osborne puts it: “When Paul speaks of ‘those who are not gods by nature,’ he is referring to real spiritual beings, not just idols fashioned of wood or stone.”⁵⁵³ In other words, Paul does not dismiss the possibility that there are θεοί besides the god of Israel, and that these θεοί are in fact real entities who are active in the world.⁵⁵⁴ Hence, I think we have strong evidence to think that when Paul says that there are “many gods and many lords” in 1 Cor 8:5, he means it.⁵⁵⁵ Thus, as Willis puts it: “Paul is in the awkward position of having to argue with some Christians (formerly pagans) for the reality of the pagan divinities.”⁵⁵⁶ This conclusion is borne out in a recent essay by Matthew V. Novenson on the topic of gods, monotheism, and the idea that ancient Greek, Romans, and Jews translated each other’s gods into their own: “There are, strictly speaking no ‘false gods’

⁵⁵² I think Paul’s use of θεός uncovers another flaw in the argument that the gods and lords in 8:5 are not real. As seen in 2 Cor 4:4 and Gal 4:8, Paul can use θεός to mean and signify beings that are real, spiritual forces; this, however, does not make them θεοί in the same sense as the god of Israel is a θεός (cf. 1 Cor 8:6, discussed below). Hence, it should be clear that Paul’s use of the word θεός is not a static category. In turn, this can make sense of Paul’s language in 1 Cor 8:4–6, where he says that there is only one god (8:4), then that there are many gods and lords (8:5), and finally that there is only one god and lord to him and the Corinthians (8:6). Exactly what Paul meant by θεός and κύριος in 1 Cor 8:5 is unclear, and I would hesitate to draw any strong connections to any other spiritual entities that existed in the mind of ancient Jews (e.g., angels) in order to say that by θεός or κύριος, Paul meant this or that spiritual being, *pace* Benjamin G. Wold, “Reconsidering an Aspect of the Title *Kyrios* in Light of Sapiential Fragment 4Q416 2 iii,” *ZNW* 95 (2004): 149–60. Even though I think it possible that Paul could be referring to the divinised men and women of the imperial cult with his reference to gods and lords, the evidence for such a suggestion is too limited and it must remain a tentative hypothesis, *pace* Ross Saunders, “Paul and the Imperial Cult,” in *Paul and His Opponents*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Pauline Studies* 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 227–38, 234.

⁵⁵³ Grant R. Osborne, *Galatians: Verse by Verse*, ONTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 88.

⁵⁵⁴ *Pace* Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 412. In that respect we can conceptualise Paul as a “henotheist” in the sense Malina and Pilch (*Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 377) defines the term: “Henotheism refers to loyalty to one God from among a large number of gods, like loyalty to one king from a large number of kings. It means each ethnic group or even each subgroup gave allegiance to its own supreme God, while not denying the existence of other groups and their gods. The king of Israel is one king among many other kings, so too the God of Israel is one God among the many Gods of other nations.”

⁵⁵⁵ Thus, Malina and Pilch (*Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 351) are correct in noting, “Paul is fully cognizant of the influence of stars and planets (elemental spirits, Gal 4:3, 9), of angels (the Persian/Israelites version of demons: Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 4:9; 6:3; 11:10; 13:1; Gal 2:18; 3:19), and of a hierarchy of angels (archangel, 1 Thess 4:16; principalities, Rom 8:38).”

⁵⁵⁶ Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 86.

at all in the Bible. The *idols* of the nations—that is the cult statues themselves—are considered futile and empty by many (but not all) of our biblical and Jewish sources, but that is an expression of contempt for iconism, *not a denial of gentile gods*. What we meet in our Jewish sources are not false gods but gentile gods (foolishly represented by statues).⁵⁵⁷

My argument that Paul thought there existed more gods than one, however, needs to be refined in light of the following verse, where Paul says “but to us, there is only one God, the father.... And one Lord, Jesus, the Messiah” (1 Cor 8:6).⁵⁵⁸ The questions in 8:5 is not whether there are more than one god and lord in Paul’s imagined cosmos, but what the place of these gods and lords is in the divine hierarchy; especially in relationship to the god of Israel and Jesus, the Messiah. On that question, Paul is clear: to him and the Corinthian Christ followers there is only one God and Lord that they confess as their god and lord.⁵⁵⁹ Several scholars argue Paul’s indebtedness to the Shema (Deut 6:4–5) in 1 Cor 8:6 and its confession of the one god of Israel when he formulated this “Christian version of the Shema,” as Richard Bauckham calls it.⁵⁶⁰ But

⁵⁵⁷ Matthew V. Novenson, “The Universal Polytheism and the Case of the Jews,” in *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Matthew V. Novenson, NovTSup 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 32–60, 59 (my emphasis).

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Eph 4:4–6. Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 412), who argues that the gods and lords in 8:5 only exist subjectively to those who worship them, makes the following comment on 8:6: “The strong adversative, ‘but,’ sets what is true about ‘us,’ that is, ‘us’ who believe in Christ,’ over against what has preceded.” This makes it sound like what is true for “us,” i.e., Paul and the Corinthians, is also subjective, since it is true for “us” and not for “all.” One would have expected Fee to interpret 8:6 as a statement which says that objectively, there exist only one god and one lord, in contrast to the many imagined gods and lords of others.

⁵⁵⁹ There is some debate whether 8:6 is a pre-Pauline creedal formula or if it originated with Paul. Conzelmann (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 170, fn.38) comments on the verse: “Die Formulierung ist nicht von Paulus ad hoc geschaffen. Ihr Inhalt ist nicht ‘paulinisch’; und er greift weit über den Kontext hinaus.” The most likely influences in this pre-Pauline formula, if it is to be regarded as such, come from Stoicism and Hellenistic Judaism. Cf. Eduard Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formen-geschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1913), 240–50; Rainer Kerst, “1 Kor 8:6 – ein vorpaulinisches Taufbekenntnis?” *ZNW* 66 (1975): 130–39; Richard A. Horsley, “The Background of the Confessional Formula in 1 Kor 8:6,” *ZNW* 69 (1978): 130–35; Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), 11–12; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 63–67; *idem*, “1 Cor 8., VIII, 6: Cosmology or Soteriology?” *RB* 85 (1978): 253–67.

⁵⁶⁰ Richard Bauckham, “Confessing the Cosmic Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6 and Colossians 1:15–20),” in *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Matthew V. Novenson, NovTSup 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 139–71, 140. For other scholars who also see the connection between Deut 6:4 and 1 Cor 1:5–6, see Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 97–98; Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 120–36; Erik Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment in First*

Paul’s use of the Shema does not mean that he perceives no other deities in the cosmos also known as gods and lords; these, however, are not on par with the god and lord of Paul and the Corinthians.⁵⁶¹ Additionally, the idea that there are several deities but that they are lower than the god of Israel finds support in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, Deuteronomy itself, where we find the Shema, acknowledges several gods. Deut 32:8 has come down to us in three differently worded variants (the MT, the LXX, and 4QDeut^f). The most high god (LXX: ὁ ὑψιστος/MT: עליון) is said to divide the geographical territories of the peoples according to number of “the sons of Israel” (בני ישראל) in the MT, “the angels of God” (ἄγγελων θεοῦ) in the LXX, and “the sons of God” (בני אלהים) in 4QDeut^f.⁵⁶² In addition, Psalm 95:5 LXX states: “All the gods of the nations are *daimonia* (πάντες οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἔθνῶν δαιμόνια).” Today, many view demons as “bad” and “evil” spiritual beings. In Paul’s time, there was a more nuanced view of demons; and people viewed them positively (e.g., they could be divinities of lower status) or negatively.⁵⁶³ In another Psalm “all gods” (כָּל אֱלֹהִים) bow down before the god of Israel (97:7).⁵⁶⁴ The idea of one high god who

Corinthians: An Intertextual Approach to Paul’s Re-Reading of Deuteronomy, WUNT II/253 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), passim; David Lincicum, *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy*, WUNT II/284 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 138–40; Hans-Josef Klauck, *1. Korintherbrief*, NEchtB 7 (Würzburg: Echter, 1979), 61.

⁵⁶¹ The questions surrounding 8:5–6 should not focus on whether Paul thinks that there exists more than one god and lord in the cosmos; rather, the focus of our inquiry is how the spiritual world is constructed, according to Paul, and where God, the father, and Lord, Jesus Christ fit into it. I find Malina and Pilch’s (*Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 94) view an apt one since it focuses on the message Paul is articulating in 8:5–6: “With this hymn [verse 6] Paul emphasizes that our God is the celestial patron (Father), the creator of all, and the reason for the existence of all that exists. As celestial patron (Father), God has an intermediary, a broker, who puts us in contact with the patron. This broker or mediator is Jesus, sole Lord of all, hence cosmic Lord, through whom God has created and through whom all existences as God’s is revealed and realized.”

⁵⁶² The text of 4QDeut^f is, most scholars agree, older than the one found in the MT. The LXX reflects a *Vorlage* that is similar to the text found in 4QDeut^f. Cf. Novenson, “The Universal Polytheism,” 50–51; Heiser, “Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism,” 7; *idem*, “Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God,” *BSac* 158 (2001): 52–74; Mark S. Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World*, FAT 57 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 195–212.

⁵⁶³ Cf. Fredriksen, *Pagans’ Apostle*, 39–40.

⁵⁶⁴ The LXX alters the meaning of the verse significantly by rendering it: “All his angels (οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ) worship him.”

ruled the spiritual realm is attested in both Jewish literature, as seen, but can also be seen in non-Jewish literature.⁵⁶⁵

Hence, the logic of 1 Cor 8:5–6, I argue, is as follows: Paul acknowledges that there are many gods and lords in the cosmos, even though an idol is nothing (verse 4), but to him and to the Corinthians, there is only one god and lord in the sense that they only worship one god and lord and only recognize one god and lord as the highest of gods and lords.⁵⁶⁶ As we have seen, this interpretation of the text fits in well with other Jewish texts that were being read and/or written during Paul’s time and Paul’s admission of the existence of several gods and lords does not in any way infringe upon his confession of the one god and lord of the Jesus movement’s adherents.⁵⁶⁷ In addition, Barrett is right by stating the following with respect to the use of θεός:

It would have been foolish to deny that the word *god* was in common use; in common opinion the ancient world was thickly populated with divine beings, who, though their natural home was *in heaven*, acted freely and from time to time also appeared *on earth*. Paul seems to go further than this. The word *god* as used by the heathen certainly does not denote the God of the Old Testament, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it does not follow from this that it denotes nothing, and that those beings whom the heathen call *god* have no existence.⁵⁶⁸

After Paul has finished the brief discussion surrounding the nature of idols, gods, and lords, and affirmed that to him and the Corinthians, there is only one god and lord, he mentions the situation in 8:7 that seems to be the issue in the *ekklēsia*, “not everyone has this knowledge,” and

⁵⁶⁵ For example, Philo, in his *On the Special Laws* (2:165), writes, “all Greeks and Barbarians confess one supreme father of both gods and humans (ὁ ἀνωτάτω πατήρ θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων),” (LCL). Dedicatory inscriptions to *Theos Hypsistos* (e.g., *AGRW* 91) demonstrate the existence of non-Jewish worship of a one high god.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92. On the Jewish background of this concept, see Vernon H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, NTS 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 34–41.

⁵⁶⁷ It appears that several scholars who work on this text think that Paul was a monotheist and therefore he could not have been serious with his statement in 8:5b, since that would be impossible given Paul’s monotheism. Surely, by claiming that Paul was a monotheist (which I have argued above that he was not because the concept did not exist at the time) and then interpreting the text obscures the historical reality of Paul’s message. For scholars who assert Paul was a monotheist, see Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 198; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 413; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 125–32.

⁵⁶⁸ Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 192 (emphasis original).

what consequences that might have for the wider community of Christ followers in Corinth. The knowledge Paul refers to is the knowledge that idols are nothing and that to those in the Jesus movement, there is only one god and lord that is worshiped and recognized as the highest god and lord. The lack of this knowledge leads some of the Corinthian Christ followers to eat food offered to idols as though it was different from the other, non-sacrificial food they would eat (τινὲς ... ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν), and that by eating from this food they really partake in idolatry.⁵⁶⁹ This leads their consciousness (συνείδησις) to being defiled (μολύνω).⁵⁷⁰ The problem is not, Craig A.

⁵⁶⁹ Εἰδωλόθυτος is most commonly translated as “food offered to idols” or “meat offered to idols.” That the word refers to edible things sacrificed to idols/images is clear, but whether the word is restricted to meat only, or encompasses all foodstuff, is a matter of contention. Ben Witherington (“Not so Idle Thoughts about *Eidolothuton*,” *TynBul* 44 [1993]: 237–54, 239) points out that there is no evidence of the term being used before Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians and that all instances of the word where we can be certain of the origin can be found in sources written by Christ followers. On the meaning of εἰδωλόθυτος, Witherington argues “that εἰδωλόθυτον in all its 1st century AD occurrences means an animal sacrificed in the presence of an idol *and eaten in the temple precincts*” (emphasis original). This argument, however, must be rejected in light of the existing evidence that points in favour of translating εἰδωλόθυτος with the broader meaning of “food offered to idols.” Even though it is definitely true that εἰδωλόθυτος could refer to meat offered to idols and the fact that Paul is concerned with meat eating in 1 Cor 8:13 (where he explicitly mentions meat, κρέας), we have no evidence that suggests that the term εἰδωλόθυτος was restricted to only meat or meat eaten only in temples. For example, in the cult of Demeter and Kore, where animal sacrifices took place, excavators have also found barely, wheat, grapes, olives, and so on within the cultic precinct (see chapter two). Presumably, these foodstuffs would also have counted as εἰδωλόθυτος. Moreover, and as I have mentioned in chapter two, animal sacrifices were by no means the most common types of sacrifices in the ancient Greek and Roman world, and inanimate foodstuff would most likely have been the more common type of sacrifice due to the expensive nature of an animal sacrifice. Consequently, εἰδωλόθυτος is best translated as “food offered to idols” (with the understanding that this also included meat). Cf. Jefferson, “The Pagan Feast,” 23; Gooch, *Dangerous Food*, 53–54; E. Coxe Still, “The Meaning and Uses of ΕΙΔΩΛΟΘΥΤΟΝ in First Century Non-Pauline Literature and 1 Cor 8:1–11.1: Toward Resolution of the Debate,” *TrinJ* 23 (2002): 225–34; Soo Kwang Lee, “The Issue of εἰδωλόθυτον in the Early Christian Church: A Lexical Semantic Study of εἰδωλόθυτον,” *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 105 (2017): 95–115; Sin-Pan Daniel Ho, *Paul and the Creation of a Counter-Cultural Community: A Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Cor. 5.1–11.1 in Light of the Social Lives of the Corinthians*, LNTS 509 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 144–45.

⁵⁷⁰ From reading 1 Corinthians, one gets the impression that the *ekklēsia* in Corinth was made up of several sub-groups (1 Cor 1:10–13). Paul also indicates that there was internal strife within the community several times. On these grounds some scholars have suggested that the aim of this letter is to unify the *ekklēsia*. Whereas this is one aim of the letter (cf. 1 Cor 1:10), I think Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner (“The Structure and Argument of 1 Corinthians: A Biblical/Jewish Approach,” *NTS* 52 [2006]: 205–18, 209–10) are right to point out that the concern for purity plays a crucial role in 1 Corinthians: “[Paul’s] focus on the issues of sexual immorality and idolatry suggests that purity issues are of greater concern to him than the issue of communal harmony.” Cf. Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 163. Michael Newton (*The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul*, SNTSMS 53 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 52–58) points out that Paul uses temple imagery in order to describe the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and that them being the Temple of God ensures “the presence of God in their midst.” However, if the temple that is made up of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* is defiled, God can no longer dwell among them; and sexual immorality and idolatry are two key sins that will lead to defilement and are thus dealt with at great length in 1 Corinthians. Cf. Christine E. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and*

Evans points out, that the food in itself would have a defiling effect.⁵⁷¹ Rather, as Dawes argues, the problem is that those who do not have the knowledge that idols are nothing eat the food as though it was part of cultic act of giving worship and honors to other spiritual beings than the god of Israel.⁵⁷² Hence, these *ekklēsia* members eat the food—which in itself is no different from other food—as if it was tainted by idolatry (ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, 1 Cor 8:7). In turn, this means that those who do have the knowledge that idols are nothing can eat food offered to idols, as Paul later affirms, since the food itself does not defile. This interpretation is supported by David Rudolph who has noted that the categorization of food as impure or unclean was neither static nor objective in ancient Judaism, and that there existed halakhic diversity among Jews.⁵⁷³ Consequently, in Paul's view the real issue with eating of the food offered to idols and the reason why those who believe that they can partake in such meals must abstain from them is if their participation leads to the defilement of a fellow Christ follower.⁵⁷⁴

A similar logic with regards to food and defilement is present in 2 Macc 6:18–31 and the martyrdom of Eleazar.⁵⁷⁵ This story narrates how Eleazar, a highly regarded and respected figure

Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93; Richard E. DeMaris, “Contrition and Correction or Elimination and Purification in 1 Corinthians 5?” in *The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation*, ed. Dietmar Neufeld, SBLSymS 41 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 39–50; Brian S. Rosner, “Temple and Holiness in 1 Corinthians 5,” *TynBul* 42 (1991): 137–45.

⁵⁷¹ Craig A. Evans, “Paul on Food and Jesus on what Really Defiles: Is there a Connection?” in *Who Created Christianity? Fresh Approaches to the Relationship between Paul and Jesus*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Aaron W. White (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2020), 256–72, 259.

⁵⁷² Dawes, “The Danger of Idolatry,” 90. Cf. Fisk, “Eating Meat Offered to Idols,” 60.

⁵⁷³ Rudolph, “Paul and the Food Laws.”

⁵⁷⁴ Pace Fee (*The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 418), who argues that merely *going* to temples is wrong since “it is not acting in love (8:7–13), and it involves fellowship with demons (10:19–22).” On Paul's conceptualisation of holiness and purity vis-à-vis the gentile Christ followers, see Paula Fredriksen, “Paul, Purity, and the *Ekklēsia* of the Gentiles,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity: A Collection of Articles*, ed. Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005), 205–17.

⁵⁷⁵ Daniel R. Schwartz (*2 Maccabees*, CEJL [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008] 11–14) dates 2 Maccabees to the 140s BCE. For various proposals on the dating of the text, see Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 14–15.

Even though Ancient Judaism did not have an independent genre of martyr acts at the time of 2 Maccabees, we find a lot of material about what we can call martyrs in 1–4 Maccabees. Cf. Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction*, AGJU 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 103. Moreover, Jan Willem van Henten (“Jewish Martyrdom and Jesus' Death,” in *Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament*,

among the Jews, refuses to eat pork, as it was against the Jewish law.⁵⁷⁶ Rather than eating unlawful meat, Eleazar chooses to suffer death. Those who oversaw the “unlawful eating of the innards from the sacrifices (τῶ παρανόμῳ σπλαγχνισμῶ)” try to persuade Eleazar to bring his own lawful meat to eat, pretending that it is pork and so stay alive. But he refuses for the sake of other Jews who might, unaware of the fact that he would secretly be eating lawful meat, follow his example and eat pork and so disobey the law of their god. The key concern I have highlighted in this narrative from 2 Maccabees is that Eleazar refuses to eat meat because those who saw him would think that he acted against the law, even though that clearly would not be the case as he can take from his own, lawful meat. This is similar to Paul’s concern: even though Christ followers would eat something that is not in itself problematic (food offered to idols), the optics of doing so would lead others to act in a way that would have negative effects with regards to *their* loyalty to the god of Israel.

1 Cor 8:8 sets forth the basic understanding of the eating of food offered to idols with regards to the Corinthians’ relationship to their god.⁵⁷⁷ The first point is that food will not “bring us before God’s judgement.”⁵⁷⁸ The second part of the verse elaborates on this point and expresses

ed. Jörg Frey and Jens Schröter, WUNT 181 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 139–68, 141) states: “Several of these early Jewish sources (Dan 3 and 6, 2 Macc 6,18–7,42, 4 Maccabees) may deserve the qualification ‘martyr texts,’ because they correspond to a functional definition of martyrdom and are consistently considered martyr texts in their reception history.” For a survey of what might be included in the category of “martyrdom” and its early development in the first centuries CE, see Jan Willem van Henten, “Noble Death and Martyrdom in Antiquity,” in *Martyriumsvorstellungen in Antike und Mittelalter: Leben oder sterben für Gott?* ed. Sebastian Fuhrmann and Regina Grundmann, AJEC 80 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 85–110, 91–95. The first time the Greek word μάρτυς (“witness”) occurs in a technical sense, meaning martyr, is in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 1.1 (cf. 2.1; 14.2). This text most likely dates to 155–70 CE. Cf. Timothy D. Barnes, “Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*,” *JTS* 19 (1968): 509–31, 510–14; Pierre Brind’Amour, “La date du martyre de saint Polycarpe (Le 23 février 167),” *Analecta Bollandiana* 98 (1980): 456–62; Gerd Buschmann, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp*, Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 39–40.

⁵⁷⁶ On the central theme of “law” in the two examples from 2 Macc, see Jan Willem Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*, JSJSup 57 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 132–35.

⁵⁷⁷ Paul here uses the more neutral and all-encompassing word βρῶμα rather than εἰδωλόθυτος. But nothing else suggests that he has changed topic from food offered to idols.

⁵⁷⁸ Παρίστημι can have several different meanings, with the most basic being “cause to stand” or “place beside.” But it can also refer to being brought before someone in a legal sense (e.g., for judgement) and I think that translation is

the second point, “we are neither worse off if we do not eat, nor are we better off if we eat.” Hence, eating food offered to idols, Paul says, is in principle not an issue.⁵⁷⁹ There is some discussion regarding if verse 8, either in part or as a whole, is something that should be attributed to the Corinthians, either as a direct quote or as something Paul knows that they hold true, or if this is Paul’s own words.⁵⁸⁰ Regardless of one’s understanding of this issue, Paul does not correct the view presented in verse 8—as he did with both the Corinthians quotes following the phrase *οἶδαμεν ὅτι* in verses 1 and 4—and therefore this position can be attributed to Paul as well (even if it originated with the Corinthians).

It would be wrong, however, to say that Paul does not further qualify the statement in verse 8. Verse 9 functions as an addition to the previous verse and starts with contrasting the verse: “But beware...” (*βλέπετε δέ*). Thus, even though “Paul does not dispute that the Corinthians have a right to eat such food, so far as the food is concerned,” he will go on to give guidance for when and how one should abstain from food offered to idols.⁵⁸¹ Even if some of the Corinthians have the “right” (*ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὐτή*) to eat without any scruples, Paul argues that the situation in which one should abstain is when the act of eating becomes an “offence to the weak ones” (1 Cor 8:9).⁵⁸² Hence, one *ekklēsia* member’s right (*ἐξουσία*) can become an offence (*πρόσκομμα*) to

apt for this present context. Cf. Thiselton, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 645–47; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Food and Spiritual Gifts in 1 Cor 8:8,” *CBQ* 41 (1979): 292–98, 297. No matter how one translates *παρίστημι*, the meaning is clear: food will not affect one’s status before God.

⁵⁷⁹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 199.

⁵⁸⁰ See discussions, with references to secondary literature, in Fee, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 422–24 and Thiselton, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 647–48. Those who argue that verse 8 is partly or wholly a Corinthian quote often attribute it to the “strong.” Cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2.259–61.

⁵⁸¹ Quote from Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 199.

⁵⁸² Most commentators agree that the phrase *ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὐτή* refers to something the Corinthians have claimed they have with regards to eating food offered to idols. Cf. Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 390. This has led some scholars to assert that Paul does not agree that the Corinthians have this right (it is they who claim *their* right, *ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὐτή*). However, Paul does not dispute this right, he gives a framework of how they should use it. As Schrage (*Der erste Brief*, 2.261) points out: “Bedeutung und Funktion der *ἐξουσία* werden an sich und als solche ebensowenig in Frage gestellt wie die *γῶσις*.” Furthermore, Turley (*The Ritualized Revelation of the*

another. As DeMaris rightly points out: “Rites, past or present, affect not only the subject of the rite but also a broad web of social relations in which the subject is embedded.”⁵⁸³ Paul will now further elaborate this principle during the rest of the chapter, and in chapter 9 Paul describes how he himself has abstained from many things for the benefit of others.⁵⁸⁴

The aim of verses 9–13 is to create social cohesion within the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and to create a common understanding regarding eating of food offered to idols that takes all members into account.⁵⁸⁵ This was common practice in the life of virtually all ancient associations, as Erin K. Vearncombe notes, and rules and regulations were especially important with regards to the meal of the association: “Communal meals were often the heart of ancient group life and membership, and many associations presented members with particularly detailed regulations around meal practice.”⁵⁸⁶ What is interesting about 1 Corinthians is that Paul sets forth rules for how and when the *ekklēsia* members are allowed to attend meals that were not hosted by themselves (chapters 8

Messianic Age, 137) observes that the right claimed by the Corinthians in chapter 8 must be real; if not, then chapter 9, where Paul says that he has given up his rights, loses its function.

Several suggestions are made as to the translation of ἐξουσία, e.g., freedom, liberty, authority, right. Even though ἐξουσία can have all these meanings, I think Bruce W. Winter (*Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994], 167) is correct to assert that, given the use of the word in 1 Corinthians 9, the translation “right” is the most fitting.

⁵⁸³ Richard E. DeMaris, *The New Testament in Its Ritual World* (London: Routledge, 2008), 24.

⁵⁸⁴ In this study, I do not deal with 1 Corinthians 9 since it does not alter my interpretation of chapters 8 and 10. I view chapter 9 as having two functions: first, Paul defends his apostolic credibility as an apostle; second, to describe how Paul has given up his right (ἐξουσία) to various things he could have claimed from the Corinthian Christ followers. I agree with Stanley K. Stowers (“Elusive Coherence: Ritual and Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 10–11,” in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack*, ed. Elizabeth A. Castelli and Hal Taussig [Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996], 68–83, 76–77) who comments on 1 Corinthians 9: “The whole of chapter 9 serves as an illustration of the principle [in 8:13] with Paul’s own example.” On 1 Corinthians 9’s function, see Joel R. White, “Meals in Pagan Temples and Apostolic Finances: How Effective Is Paul’s Argument in 1 Corinthians 9:1–23 in the Context of 1 Corinthians 8–10?” *BBR* 23 (2013): 531–46.

⁵⁸⁵ Pace E. Coye Still, “Paul’s Aims Regarding ΕΙΔΩΛΟΘΥΤΑ: A New Proposal for Interpreting 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1,” *NovT* 44 (2002): 333–43, 336, who, by looking at some dinner invitations found among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri (*P.Oxy.* 1755 and 2791) that do not explicitly mention that the dinner one is invited to will consist of food offered to idols, argue that it is not necessarily the case that the Corinthian Christ followers are attending meals where food offered to idols was served. The main problem with this reading of the papyri is that it assumes that every detail of the dinner the invitee was asked to attend was clearly mentioned.

⁵⁸⁶ Erin K. Vearncombe, “Rituals for Communal Maintenance,” in *Early Christian Ritual Life*, ed. Richard E. DeMaris, Jason T. Lamoreaux, and Steven C. Muir (London: Routledge, 2017), 92–111, 100.

and 10) and how they are to regulate their own communal meal (the *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* in chapter 11).⁵⁸⁷ 1 Cor 8:10 is the key when we consider the setting for the meals that the Corinthians are attending: Paul clearly states that they are taking place in an *εἰδωλεῖον*.⁵⁸⁸ Moreover, those who eat the meals do not simply go into the *εἰδωλεῖον* and take some meat with them, but they recline (*κατάκειμαι*) in the temple, presumably with the other participants.⁵⁸⁹ The term *εἰδωλεῖον* refers to a place dedicated to idols and cult images and is most commonly translated in 1 Cor 8:10 as “idol’s temple.”⁵⁹⁰ From Paul’s use of this term, one can deduce that the situation in 1 Corinthians 8 is not one where Corinthian Christ followers are going to peoples’ home or places that were not explicitly connected to cultic activities.⁵⁹¹ Instead, they are attending buildings that are explicitly dedicated to idols, and therefore cultic activity. This suggests that the Corinthian Christ followers who attended these meals saw nothing wrong in going to an *εἰδωλεῖον* for a dinner and that when they went there, they did so fully aware of what kind of building this was and what kind of food was

⁵⁸⁷ The fact that Paul has to give instructions on numerous topics in both 1 Corinthians and in his other letters shows that these associations probably had little in the way of any strong structure and/or regulations from their inception. On the behaviour of members in associations and their regulations, Andrew Monson (“The Ethics and Economics of Ptolemaic Religious Associations,” *Ancient Society* 36 [2006]: 221–38, 233–34) comments: “By joining an association, members signal to others that they are trustworthy and share the values of their peers. The rules of associations represent agreed norms of ethical behavior and embody shared values.” Clearly, the case of 1 Corinthians 8 reveals that these rules and norms were not in place in the *ekklēsia* at an early stage and that it is Paul’s norms and rules that apply to the group, not their own (at least in Paul’s own mind). In other words, Paul, not the individual *ekklēsia*, is the one who has the authority to set the rules for the life of the association (cf. 1 Cor 7:17–24). Cf. Lamoreaux, “Ritual Negotiation,” 138; *idem*, “Ritual Negotiation in 1 Corinthians: Pauline Authority and the Corinthian Community,” *Neot* 50 (2016): 397–422; Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 93.

⁵⁸⁸ As highlighted by the preposition *ἐν*.

⁵⁸⁹ I find it strange that Fee does not spend any time at all in his 982-page commentary on this fact. As I see it, the phrase *ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον* is pivotal in a correct understanding of not only 1 Corinthians 8, but 1 Cor 8:1–11.1 as a whole, and especially with regards to the distinction between chapter 8 and 10:14–22.

⁵⁹⁰ Cf. 1 Macc 1:47 where the Jews are ordered “to build altars, temples, idol temples (*εἰδῶλιον*, an alternative spelling of *εἰδωλεῖον*), and to sacrifice swine and unclean animals.” See also, 1 Esd 2:7; 1 Macc 10:83; *Test. Job* 5:2.

⁵⁹¹ However, as Paul states in 10:27, they were also possibly attending dinners in peoples’ home. But that is not the context discussed in 1 Corinthians 8.

on the menu. The verb Paul uses (*κατάκειμαι*) also gives further details as to what the Christ followers were doing there and to what degree they were incorporated in the cult and its activities.

Commenting on the verb *κατάκειμαι*, Anthony Thiselton asserts that “the translation can only be **seated at table**.”⁵⁹² However, the verb *κατάκειμαι* frequently refers to someone laying down (e.g., sick or on a bed) or to someone reclining at a table. Paul only uses the verb in this one instance but in the wider New Testament corpus, we find the verb used 11 times. Both previously mentioned meanings for *κατάκειμαι* are attested in the New Testament. For “laying down,” see Mark 1:30; 2:4; Luke 5:25; John 5:3, 6; Acts 9:33; 28:8; for “reclining (at a table),” see Mark 2:15; 14:3; 5:29; 7:37. Moreover, if Paul would have wanted to say, “sitting in an idol’s temple,” he could simply have used the verb *κάθημαι*, as he does in 1 Cor 14:30 when referring to the meetings of the *ekklēsia*.⁵⁹³

Since we have no further details about the place the dinner would take part in (e.g., there is no mention of couches, *κλῖναι*, or other seating arrangements), Thiselton’s suggestion should be dismissed since it lacks support in the text and because the verb *κατάκειμαι* does not mean “seated.” As Weissenrieder states: “In 1 Cor 8:10, it is clear that Paul is speaking about a *reclining* meal.”⁵⁹⁴ The fact that Paul says that the Corinthians are reclining in the temples indicates that they were somehow involved in the cult and that they ate from the sacrifices just like their non-Christ following neighbors.⁵⁹⁵ Here, we must reject the suggestions of Newton and David G. Horrell. In their view, the Corinthian Christ followers could have been present in idol temples, but

⁵⁹² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 653 (emphasis original). Thiselton does not provide any evidence for this reading.

⁵⁹³ Additionally, neither BDAG nor LSJ give “to sit” or “to sit at a table” as an alternative for *κατάκειμαι*.

⁵⁹⁴ Weissenrieder, “Contested Spaces,” 64 (my emphasis).

⁵⁹⁵ However, there is no indication that the Christ followers did anything more than partaking in the dinner in 1 Corinthians 8. As Bruce W. Winter (*Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians’ Responses* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015], 170) notes: “They were not there to offer up sacrifices on an altar but were reclining at a meal in a particular temple.”

they argue that the Christ followers could very well be there for reasons other than eating.⁵⁹⁶ Newton maintains that what it meant to participate in the meal, i.e., to recline at the table, lay in the perception of the individual and that participation at the meals did not necessarily indicate that one saw it as participation in the cult.⁵⁹⁷ However, to eat of the food recently sacrificed together with other members of the cult could hardly be understood as something other than participation in the cult. Moreover, Horrell suggests that the Christ followers “might eat other food, and might do so in adjacent rooms, or in the open air, or in other settings which evinced no close connection with the cultic act itself.”⁵⁹⁸ There are two flaws in Horrell’s reasoning: first, even if the Christ followers ate food that did not come from the sacrifice and even if they did so in nearby rooms or out in the open, they would still have eaten food with the participants of the cult and they would have done so in close proximity to the εἰδωλεῖον.⁵⁹⁹ Second, the phrase ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον excludes any notion that in Paul’s mind the Corinthians were not eating their meal in the temple.

Thus, the phrase ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον leaves little wiggle-room for where the Corinthians were and what they were doing (the latter is informed by Paul’s references to εἰδωλόθυτος): they were going to temples dedicated to idols in order to recline and eat from the food that had been offered to idols. Continuing in verse 11, Paul lays out the consequences of what will happen if someone with a weak consciousness eats of the food offered to idols.

⁵⁹⁶ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 298–305; David G. Horrell, “Idol-Food, Idolatry and Ethics in Paul,” in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 120–40, 125.

⁵⁹⁷ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 204. I admit that he is correct in that not everyone who attended the meals viewed them the same, as indicated by the Christ followers who ate without scruples and those who could not eat without being defiled. This, however, does not mean that those who ate, whatever their view of the meal was, were not intimately linked with the cult, since partaking in the meal was equal to partaking in the cult.

⁵⁹⁸ Horrell, “Idol-Food, Idolatry and Ethics in Paul,” 125.

⁵⁹⁹ One could also question why Christ followers would bring their own food and sit outside temples and eat it if they did not want to be seen as associating with the cult.

The dire effect of eating food offered to idols for those with a weak consciousness, Paul warns, is that they will be destroyed (*ἀπόλλυμι*).⁶⁰⁰ Hence, in Paul’s mind, the status of Christ followers is at stake and whether those with a weak consciousness eat of the food offered to idols is a matter of utmost importance. Perhaps the most important questions with regards to this verse in the scholarly literature is if the verb *ἀπόλλυμι* refers to destruction in an eschatological sense or if it refers to the case that someone will lose their faith in/faithfulness to Jesus Christ and leave the Jesus movement due to their belief that they now are worshiping multiple gods (which would lead to eschatological destruction in the long run). In 1 and 2 Corinthians, *ἀπόλλυμι* occurs six times in total (1 Cor 1:18, 19; 8:11; 10:9, 10; 15:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3, 9). In 1 Cor 1:18; 15:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3 it carries the meaning of eschatological or eternal destruction and in 1 Cor 1:19; 10:9, 10; 2 Cor 4:9 it refers to destruction in another sense (or is unclear).⁶⁰¹ Both meanings are attested elsewhere in the New Testament and, therefore, we have to judge what the most plausible meaning of *ἀπόλλυμι* in 1 Cor 8:11 is from its context.⁶⁰²

The reading that seems to cohere the most with the wider context in 1 Corinthians 8 is in all likelihood that Paul is referring to eschatological destruction.⁶⁰³ Even if one opts for a non-

⁶⁰⁰ In Rom 14:15, Paul makes a similar claim: “For if your brother is grieved because of food (*βρώμα*), you are no longer walking according to love. Do not let your food (*βρώμα*) destroy (*ἀπόλλυμι*) someone for whom the Messiah died.” The idea of “walking according to love” is not present in 1 Cor 8:11, but in the context of the whole chapter, it is clear from verses 1 and 3 that Paul has this concept in mind in 1 Corinthians as well.

⁶⁰¹ Pace Schrage (*Der erste Brief*, 2.265) who asserts, “*Ἀπόλλυσθαι* – hier emphatisch vorangestellt – ist bei Paulus immer das ewige endgültige Verderben, und es besteht keine Veranlassung, von dieser definitiven Bedeutung des Wortes hier abzugehen und an eine bloß innerzeitliche Verderbnis, an Schuldgefühle oder Gewissensbisse. Bei Fortsetzung des Tuns zu denken,” and Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 428) who writes that “elsewhere in Paul this word [*ἀπόλλυμι*] invariably refers to eternal ruin.”

⁶⁰² For eschatological destruction, see: Matt 10:28; 16:25; 18:14; Luke 9:25; 13:3; John 6:39; Rom 2:12; 2 Thess 2:10; 2 Pet 3:9. For other types of destruction, see: Matt 2:13; 5:29; 8:25; 12:14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:9; 11:51; 15:4; John 10:10; 18:9; Acts 5:37; 27:34; Jam 1:11.

⁶⁰³ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 393. Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 428) is correct in noting that, “Paul most likely is referring to eternal loss.” However, I find it interesting that he rejects the notion that *ἀπόλλυμι* could refer to an internal “falling apart” (his phrase) since this “idea is altogether too modern.” But when commenting on 1 Cor 8:5 and the idea that Paul thinks that there are “many gods and lords,” Fee uses modern concepts like monotheism in order to argue against any notion that Paul thought that there existed more gods

eschatological understanding of ἀπόλλυμι, it is still the case that what Paul is saying is that those who eat food offered to idols as though it really was tainted by the idols (cf. ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, 1 Cor 8:7) will be destroyed in a sense that would entail their falling away from their faithfulness to Christ and that they would again become worshipers of other gods and lords (cf. 1 Cor 12:2) than the god and lord of the Jesus movement.⁶⁰⁴ In turn, this would mean that those Christ followers would no longer be in Jesus Christ, which is the *locus* of eschatological redemption in Paul (cf. Rom 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1; 1 Cor 1:2, 4, 30; Gal 3:26; 5:6; Phil 1:1). Consequently, an eschatological understanding of ἀπόλλυμι appears to be the most plausible.⁶⁰⁵

This reading also fits well with the following verse, in which Paul says that it is not only against a fellow Christ follower those who eat in idol temples sin against, but against the Lord and Messiah of the *ekklēsia*; an eschatological understanding of ἀπόλλυμι in verse 11 suggests that the Messiah's death and resurrection was in vain for those who are destroyed by eating food offered to idols.⁶⁰⁶ Paul then draws what at least he thinks is the obvious conclusion to the situation that he has presented the Corinthians with in verses 9–12: if the food (βρῶμα) he eats is offensive (σκανδαλίζω) to a fellow Christ follower, Paul writes, then he will certainly never eat meat again (οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), in order not to offend his brother or sister in Christ (cf. Rom

and lords than the god and lord worshiped and revered by Christ followers. Moreover, Fee argues that the “many gods and lords” only exist subjectively in 8:5 but rejects such a subjective understanding of those who are “destroyed” in 8:11.

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 95.

⁶⁰⁵ This is the view favoured among a majority of scholars. Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 654; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 428; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2.265; Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 142; Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, SP 7 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 326.

⁶⁰⁶ A similar logic is at work in Heb 6:4–6: “For it is impossible to once again bring to light those who have tasted both the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Holy *pneuma*, and who have experienced the good word of God and the works of the age to come. And having fallen away, [it is impossible] to again restore them to repentance, themselves crucifying the Son of God and are publicly shaming him.”

14:21).⁶⁰⁷ Paul then elaborates on this attitude in 1 Corinthians 9 and stress that he has not made use of his apostolic rights (ἐξουσίαι) for the good of other Christ followers.

Socially Disruptive Behavior in the Ancient City: Consequences of Not Living According to the Social Norms

I now turn my attention away from 1 Corinthians in order to look at the social behavioral codes of ancient cities. I do so to lay the foundation for my subsequent argument in this chapter, namely that Paul was aware of the possibly damaging social consequences his instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 could have on the *ekklēsia* and its place in Corinthian society. My focus here is on groups, people, and persons who in one way or another stood out from the social norms imposed, whether it be officially or informally, by the city and its residents.⁶⁰⁸ I aim to demonstrate that behaving contrary to the social norms of the city was undesirable and that it could potentially put those who did so at risk—both in the sense that they would lose valuable social connections and that those who did so were viewed as strange, if not outright dangerous, by those who did follow and/or regulated the customs of the city. Malina and Pilch describes the ancient city in this way: “A city was a bounded, centralized set of social relationships concerned with effective collective action and expressed

⁶⁰⁷ During the course of 1 Corinthians 8, Paul uses three words for food: εἰδωλόθυτος, βρώσις/βρώμα, and κρέας. Despite this, I think it is a mistake to argue that Paul does not focus on food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) throughout the chapter. The phrase περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων indicates that the focus is on this type of food in the chapter. With that said, one can make the argument that Paul uses βρώσις/βρώμα and κρέας in order to broaden the discussion. That is, it is not only εἰδωλόθυτος that can offend another Christ follower and therefore should be abstained from, but other kinds of βρώσις/βρώμα and κρέας can potentially be offensive to other Christ followers and must be abstained from if that is the case (cf. Rom 14). Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 657; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 2.268.

On the emphatic negation οὐ + μή, Schrage (*Der erste Brief*, 2.268) comments: “Vgl. Das hyperbolische εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα und οὐ μή + Aor. Konj. Als stärkste Form der Negation von Zukünftigem.”

⁶⁰⁸ Based on the literature produced by the early Jesus movement it appears that the movement first established itself in cities. Cf. Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 265–66.

spatially in terms of architecture and the arrangement of places.”⁶⁰⁹ And on the topic of whom belonged in the city, they note the pivotal role of the social structure of a city: “In antiquity it was group membership on other than territorial criteria that determined who belonged in a given city, specifically some social relationship with ruling elite and other residents of the city. The alien or stranger was one who had no social relationship with ruling elites or other city residents.”⁶¹⁰

My inquiry will highlight how those who did follow the social rules of the city viewed other groups and people who did not fit in seamlessly in the city. Moreover, I will address other situations where defined groups (e.g., ethnic and cultic groups) perceives a situation that they encounter in the city as problematic or challenging, as the situation the Christ followers in Corinth found themselves in in 1 Corinthians 8 was seen as potentially problematic by Paul, and how they dealt with those situations. This examination of groups who stood out in antiquity will support my argument that Paul, in his instructions in 1 Corinthians 8, is balancing between two poles: on the one hand, he does not want the Christ followers to be socially ousted and seen as potential threats to the city by demanding that they do not participate in the cults in Corinth; on the other hand, he must make sure that the members of the *ekklēsia* are not acting in a way that runs contrary to the behavioural codes of the Jesus movement.⁶¹¹ This balancing act had been carried out by other Jews than Paul—and successfully so—before, during, and after his time, but Paul’s situation, in which he was guiding a mainly gentile *ekklēsia*, was perhaps more challenging due to the lack of a Jewish

⁶⁰⁹ Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 340. It is important to bear in mind that in the first century CE, group identity was often more important than one’s individual identity; indeed, the groups one belonged to in many ways decided whom you were as an individual (at least in the eyes of others). Cf. Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, rev. ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 67.

⁶¹⁰ Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, 340–41.

⁶¹¹ On the close proximity between cultic and social identity, Udo Schnelle (*Paulus: Leben und Denken* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003], 216) remarks: “*Religiöse Identität* verband sich in der Antike immer mit *sozialer, d.h. Gruppenidentität* (Familie, Polis), so dass Paulus den Korinthern zumutet, nicht nur einen neuen Glauben anzunehmen, sondern auch ihr gesamtes Verhalten zu ändern” (emphasis original).

background and identity on their part.⁶¹² In sum, Paul is trying to find the right approach to both these behavioural codes: the one of the Roman colony Corinth and the one of the Jewish Jesus movement.⁶¹³

Before I set out to explore this topic, I will briefly discuss my rationale for why I understand Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 as a way to balance the city's requirements, on the one hand, and the *ekklēsia*'s, on the other.⁶¹⁴ The key text for this understanding comes from earlier in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 5:9–13, Paul writes:

I wrote to you in the letter not to associate with sexually immoral people (*πόρνοις*), certainly not implying all the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and those who rob or idol

⁶¹² Even though some of the Jewish literature from the centuries before and after the first century CE is hostile toward non-Jews and those Jews who did not live according to what some groups thought of as being core Jewish values, there are several strands of evidence that show that many Jews lived a life which was well integrated with the Greco-Roman city. Two inscriptions from Cyrene (late first century BCE and the year 3 or 4 CE) record the *ephēbes* of the city (i.e., those adolescent males who attended then Hellenistic gymnasium with its Greek education and gods). Among the names are at least two Jewish men, Jesus son of Antiphilos and Eleazar son of Eleazar. A similar case can be found in a gymnasium in Techeira (in modern-day Libya) where Jewish names have been scratched on the walls. A third inscription (60s CE) tells of a El[e]azar son of Jason who was a *νομοφύλακας* (“guardian of the law”) in Cyrene. On this inscription, Barclay (*Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 235) comments: “It appears that Eleazar’s position entailed considerable responsibility, requiring education, experience and the confidence of the civic leaders.” Furthermore, Philo mentions that sacrifices are being made in the Jerusalem temple on behalf of the emperor (*The Embassy to Gaius* 280), just as in every other city and temple. For inscriptions and texts that tell of honoring of the emperors in synagogues, see Margaret Williams, ed., *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 91–92. For Jews as *ephēbes*, Greek and Roman citizens, councillors, magistrates, official envoys, contributors to civic projects, participants in non-Jewish entertainment, marrying Greeks, participants in the Roman military, see Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans*, 107–31, 143–48. Fredriksen (“The Question of Worship,” 181) sums up the situation of the Jewish diaspora well: “Simply by living in a Diaspora city, Jews lived *within* a pagan religious institution; and the evidently found ways to negotiate between their own god’s demand for exclusive worship and the regular requirements of ancient Mediterranean friendship, loyalty, patronage/clientage, and citizenship wherever they lived.”

⁶¹³ Paul was not the only leader of the early Jesus movement who made this balancing act. Philip A. Harland (“Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast: Participation in Civic Life among Associations (Jewish, Christian and Other) in Asia Minor and the Apocalypse of John,” *JSNT* 77 [2000]: 99–121, 115) points out that also “1 Peter explicitly encourages Christians to ‘honour the emperor’ and to engage in activities that may be perceived by rulers and other outsiders as good and worthy of praise (2.11–17). He maintains a distinction, however, between honour, on the one hand, and cultic honours or rituals, on the other, the latter being idolatry in his view (cf. 1.14–19; 4.3–5).” See also the discussion in John S. Kloppenborg, “Associations, Christ Groups, and Their Place in the *Polis*,” *ZNW* 108 (2017): 1–56.

⁶¹⁴ This balancing of social norms and requirements took place on all levels of a Christ follower’s life, from the private household to the public city events, as Rikard Roitto (“Act as a Christ-Believer, as a Household Member or as Both? – A Cognitive Perspective on the Relationship between the Social Identity in Christ and Household Identities in Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Texts,” in *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, ed. Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge, WUNT 227 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 141–61) notes. But since 1 Corinthians 8 describes a public context where Christ followers are taking part in dinners in public settings, the negotiating of the identity as a Christ follower and as a resident of Corinth is my main focus here.

worshippers (εἰδωλόλατραι), since then you would be obliged to exit the world. But now I write to you, do not associate with someone who is called a brother if he is sexually immoral, greedy, an idol worshiper, an abuser, a drunkard, or a robber. Do not even eat with such a one. For what do I have to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those on the inside you judge? God judges those on the outside. ‘Remove the evil one from among you’.⁶¹⁵

In this text, Paul makes two things clear to the Corinthian Christ followers. First, he instructs them to not associate with immoral people who are part of the *ekklēsia*.⁶¹⁶ From 5:9, we understand that he had already told the Corinthians this once before, but that they had misunderstood his precise meaning.⁶¹⁷ Second, Paul does allow the *ekklēsia* members to associate with immoral people who are *outside* of the Christ group in Corinth, since it would be impossible not to do so due to the nature of ancient society and city structure.⁶¹⁸ Indeed, Paul appears to tell the Corinthians that they should not even care about those outside the *ekklēsia* because it is God’s job to judge them. Hence, as J. Brian Tucker remarks, “Paul’s approach to mission [in Corinth] was one of social integration,” and not ostracization.⁶¹⁹ This can also be seen in the fact that Paul

⁶¹⁵ The initial ἔγραφα ὑμῖν could technically be read as an epistolary aorist (cf. Gal 6:11; Philem 19, 21), but the ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ that follows precludes this understanding. Cf. George Ossom-Batsa, “Responsible Community Behaviour or Exclusion: Interpreting 1 Cor 5:1–13 from a Communicative Perspective,” *Neot* 45 (2011): 293–310, 303–04. Therefore, the aim of these verses is two-fold. First, Paul gives the correct interpretation of something he has already written to the Corinthians. Second, these verses relate to what Paul has written earlier in 1 Corinthians 5, as Tobias Hägerland (“Rituals of (Ex-)Communication and Identity: 1 Cor 5 and 4Q266 11; 4Q270 7,” in *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, ed. Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge, WUNT 227 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 43–60, 50) notes. The quote at the end of verse 13 is most likely from Deut 17:7. For an analysis of the use of Deut 17:7 in 1 Corinthians 5:13, see Pasquale Basta, “‘So You Shall Put away the Evil from among You’: Exclusion from the Community in Deuteronomy and in the Early Pauline Churches (1 Corinthians 5–7),” *Bib* 100 (2019): 426–54.

⁶¹⁶ Cf. 2 Thess 3:6, 14. In 1 Cor 5:9–13, we see a clear instance of Paul’s concern for the purity of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth, as noted by Stephen C. Barton, “Paul and the Limits of Tolerance,” in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121–34, 129.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. Klaus Thraede, “Schwierigkeiten mit 1Kor 5,1–13,” *ZNW* 103 (2012): 177–211, 207.

⁶¹⁸ Derek McNamara (“Shame the Incestuous Man: 1 Corinthians 5,” *Neot* 44 [2010]: 307–26, 320–21) argues “that v. 10 indicates Paul’s anticipation of resistance, or it may be actual resistance voiced by the Corinthians.” However, I think this verse is better understood as Paul’s way of establishing clear boundaries for the *ekklēsia* and how they can and should view those inside and outside of it, as is the concern of this whole passage.

⁶¹⁹ J. Brian Tucker, “The Role of Civic Identity on the Pauline Mission in Corinth,” *Did* 19 (2008): 71–91, 71. Tucker is correct in noting that the Corinthian Christ followers appear to have had “significant contact with outsiders,” but that there is no strong evidence that those outside the *ekklēsia* took offence to the Christ group’s presence or activities in the city. This, however, might have changed if all of a sudden all or many of the Christ followers stopped attending the cults, markets, and private dinners mentioned in 1 Cor 8 and 10.

In 2 Cor 6:14–16, Paul appears to think that the Christ followers are now too intimate with those outside the *ekklēsia*, which is the opposite problem to 1 Cor 5:9–12. The text in 2 Corinthians 6 may have some connections to 1

is not only concerned that the Corinthian Christ followers behave in a way that do not jeopardize their position in the city when it comes to the question of with whom they can associate. James Walters draws our attention to 1 Cor 14:23–25, where Paul seems to assume a situation where those outside the *ekklēsia* could casually drop by or participate in the Christ group’s meetings.⁶²⁰

If, then, the whole *ekklēsia* is gathered and everyone is speaking in tongues, and outsiders or non-adherents (ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι) enter, will they not say you are mad? But if all prophesy, and a non-adherent or outsider enters, he/she will be exposed by everyone and examined by everyone. The hidden things of his heart will become apparent, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God, announcing: God is truly among you.

These subtle, yet crucial, considerations vis-à-vis the social rules and norms of ancient Corinth would lead to the *ekklēsia* members being well integrated in Corinthian society and not deemed suspicious or dangerous with regards to the interests of the city.⁶²¹ In fact, 1 Corinthians 8 suggests that the Christ followers were perhaps too socially and culturally intertwined with the norms and interests of the city, as far as Paul was concerned.⁶²² For whereas it is true that Paul

Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22 since Paul writes in 2 Cor 6:16, “what agreement does the temple of God has with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.” This may be indicative that the instructions Paul gave the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22 were misunderstood by the Christ followers and that they still were partaking in idolatry, which Paul prohibits in 1 Cor 10:14–22, or that members of the *ekklēsia* were led to idolatry by eating of the food offered to idols even though they thought of it as idolatry (1 Corinthians 8). However, Paul does not say that eating food offered to idols is the problem, but that idols, and presumably idolatry is the problem.

⁶²⁰ Cf. James Walters, “Civic Identity in Roman Corinth and Its Impact on Early Christianity,” in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Scholwaller and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 397–417, 399. Jan N. Bremmer (“Urban Religion, Neighbourhoods and the Early Christian Meeting Places,” *RRE* 6 [2020]: 48–74, 50) notes that the situation Paul describes in 1 Cor 14:23–25 most likely means that the *ekklēsia* did not meet in a house and that, therefore, the place where they were meeting was more accessible to passers-by.

⁶²¹ In other *ekklēsiai*, especially those in Thessalonica and Philippi, the social integration of the Christ groups was not as smooth and their place in the social web of the city was not as favourable. Cf. John M. G. Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 512–30; Mikael Tellbe, *Paul Between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians*, ConBNT 34 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001), passim; Peter Oakes, “Re-Mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians,” *JSNT* 27 (2005): 310–22; Steve Mason and Philip F. Esler, “Judaean and Christ-Follower Identities: Grounds for a Distinction,” *NTS* 63 (2017): 493–515, 504.

⁶²² Cf. John M. G. Barclay, “Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity,” *JSNT* 47 (1992): 49–74, 58; J. Brian Tucker, “Baths, Baptism, and Patronage: The Continuing Role of Roman Social Identity in Corinth,” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, LNTS 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 173–88, 176–77; Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Ralph Bruce Terry, *A Discourse Analysis of First Corinthians*, Summer Institute of Linguistics and The University of Texas at

does not want the Christ followers to become ostracized and give up all of their connections in the city, Paul's view, as Richard A. Horsley points out, is still that this world is evil and any Christ follower must be careful not to associate too intimately with the things of this world.⁶²³ In light of the Corinthians Christ followers' comfortable position in Corinth, Paul "desires to establish a distinct ethos of identity," which implies that those inside the *ekklēsia* are to be different from those outside of it; and it is those on the inside that the *ekklēsia* members can judge according to this ethos, not those on the outside.⁶²⁴ Put differently, Paul's aim is "to clarify the proper boundaries of his community," and the "key to Paul's logic is a distinction between insider and outsider."⁶²⁵

Therefore, we can be certain that Paul had two things in mind when he wrote 1 Corinthians. First, he was well aware of the fragility of the social web the *ekklēsia* in Corinth found itself in, especially in light of the situations in which the *ekklēsiai* in Thessalonica and Philippi found themselves in. Second, he was careful to navigate the Christ group members' identity as part of the Jesus movement and their exclusive commitment to its God and Lord, on the one hand, and their identity as residents of Corinth and participants in the city's daily life, on the other. Having

Arlington Publications in Linguistics 120 (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics; Arlington: The University of Texas, 1995), 57.

⁶²³ Richard A. Horsley, "Paul's Assembly in Corinth: An Alternative Society," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Scholwalter and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 369–95, 383–92. Cf. David G. Horrell, "Particular Identity and Common Ethics: Reflections on the Foundations and Content of Pauline Ethics in 1 Corinthians 5," in *Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ: Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik / Context and Norms of New Testament Ethics I*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Horn and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 238 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 197–212, 204.

⁶²⁴ Tucker, "The Role of Civic Identity," 84. Cf. Michael Wolter, "Ethos und Identität in paulinischen Gemeinden," *NTS* 43 (1997): 430–44; *ibid*, "'Let No One Seek His Own, but Each One the Other's' (1 Corinthians 10,24): Pauline Ethics According to 1 Corinthians," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt, BZNTW 141 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 199–217.

⁶²⁵ Joshua M. Reno, "Struggling Sages: Pauline Rhetoric and Social Control," *CBQ* 80 (2018): 491–511, 509. John M. G. Barclay ("Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context*, ed. Philip F. Esler [London: Routledge, 1995], 110–23, 119) suggests that "one may read the whole of 1 Corinthians as an attempt by Paul to define the boundaries of the Christian community in Corinth."

established that one's place in the ancient city was frail and needed to be considered when joining groups and associations, e.g., the *ekklēsia* in Corinth, I now explore various groups and peoples that acted contrary to the social behavioral codes and accepted norms of the ancient city in order to better assess what was at stake in not attending the sacrificial dinners mentioned in 1 Corinthians 8.

Pliny the Younger's Letter to Trajan

In Pliny's letter to Trajan (10.96) from c. 110 CE the former reports about how he has brought people suspected of being Christians (*Christiani*) before trial in order to establish if that is the case.⁶²⁶ In order to find out if the people brought before him are Christians or not, Pliny writes, "I have asked them in person if they are Christians, and if they admit it, I repeat the question a second and third time, with a warning of the punishment awaiting them. If they persist, I order them to be led away for execution."⁶²⁷ In fact, Pliny tells Trajan, the search for Christians has intensified and an "anonymous pamphlet" has started circulating with names of people accused of being Christians. Even though Pliny's approach is to "dismiss any who denied that they were or ever had been Christians," this pamphlet implies that the people who were not Christians were eager to turn in anyone who was or might be Christian.⁶²⁸ Hence, this lends credence to the idea that some viewed

⁶²⁶ Mason and Esler ("Judean and Christ-Follower identities," 506) point out that Pliny's letter "provides the earliest outsider's impressions" of the Christ cult. As such, this witness to how Christians were viewed by both regular people and citizens and the ruling authorities is an important piece in the search for how being a Christ follower could affect one's place in city and society (at least in the province of Bithynia Pontus, where Pliny was stationed). A. N. Sherwin-White (*The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998], 691) dates the letter to somewhere between September 18, 111 CE, and January 3, 112 CE.

⁶²⁷ LCL. The persecuted could demonstrate that he or she was not a Christian by invoking the Roman gods, offering wine and incense to the statue of Trajan (which was placed in the court alongside images of gods), and cursing the name of Christ. Duncan Fishwick (*Cult, Ritual, Divinity and Belief in the Roman World*, 123–24) notes that this was a common rite to perform in honor of the gods already under the Republic.

⁶²⁸ In Trajan's response to Pliny (10.97) he writes that the pamphlets should not be taken into consideration when accusing or prosecuting anyone of being a Christian.

Christians, only 60 or so years after Paul founded the *ekklēsia* in Corinth, as socially disruptive.⁶²⁹ As a matter of fact, the vast number of people being accused of being Christians is the very reason, Pliny tells us, why he is writing to Trajan: “The question seems to me to be worthy of your consideration, especially in view of the number of persons endangered; for a great many individuals of every age and class, both men and women, are being brought to trial, and this is likely to continue.”⁶³⁰

According to Trajan and Pliny, the Christians were best understood as an association among many and Pliny writes that many whom he had spoken to had stopped being Christians when Pliny had issued an edict, on Trajan’s behalf, banning all associations (*hetaeriae*). This ban on all associations is found in an earlier correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (10.33 and 10.34), where Pliny asks for permission to form a company (*collegium*) of firemen in Nicodemia due to a fire that ravaged the city. Trajan answer that he will not allow such a *collegium* to be formed since it is groups like these which have caused political unrest in the province Pliny is stationed in.⁶³¹

⁶²⁹ During Pliny’s times, there does not seem to be a coherent, written-down law against Christians (except for the fact that Trajan forbids associations of all kinds in letter 10.34, see below), as indicated by Pliny’s letter to Trajan in which he primarily seeks advise on how to handle the Christians. Cf. T. D. Barnes, “Legislations against the Christians,” *JRS* 58 (1968): 32–50; F. Gerald Downing, “Pliny’s Prosecutions of Christians: Revelation and 1 Peter,” *JSNT* 34 (1988): 105–23, 106. However, A. N. Sherwin-White (“Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted? – An Amendment,” *Past & Present* 27 [1964]: 23–27, 25) remarks that Trajan, in his response to Pliny, uses the word *actus*, a technical word for judicial procedure, when affirming Pliny’s handling of the situation (*Actum quem debuisti, mi Secunde, in excutiendis causis eorum*) and by doing so Trajan, in a way, establishes a legal approach to the Christians.

⁶³⁰ LCL. Cf. Angelika Reichert (“Durchdachte Konfusion: Plinius, Trajan und das Christentum,” *ZNW* 93 [2002]: 227–50, 30): “Das Problem liegt nicht primär darin, dass des Plinius Verfahrensweise sich nicht auf einschlägige Erfahrung stützen kann und darum der Weisung bedarf; das Problem ist vielmehr das rapide um sich greifende Christentum selbst und der dadurch verursachte Zerfall traditioneller Religions- und Kultaübung.”

⁶³¹ On the prohibition of the formation of new associations during the Roman era, Richard S. Ascough (“The Apostolic Decree of Acts and Greco-Roman Associations: Eating in the Shadow of the Roman Empire,” in *Aposteldekret und antikes Vereinswesen: Gemeinschaft und ihre Ordnung*, ed. Markus Öhler, WUNT 280 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 297–316, 302, 304–05) notes that “although official suppression of associations was maintained during the Roman era, no specific instance appears to have had any lasting effect.” On Christ associations, Ascough remarks: “[Rome] granted a general concession to new groups unless they obviously interfered with the state’s interests. The Jesus-groups were first tolerated under this general concession, before their belief in another god was thought to be proof of their incompatibility with the law and order of the Roman empire, which occurred generally in the second century although sporadically in the first. Like most associations after Augustus’s *Lex Iulia*, Jesus-groups were technically illicit but were tolerated as insignificant as long as they maintained the *pax*.” On associations in Roman law, see Wendy J. Cotter, “The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Association 64 BCE – 200

Trajan continues, “if people assemble for a common purpose, whatever name we give them and for whatever reasons, they soon turn into a political club,” which in the context of Pliny’s and Trajan’s letters is a negative thing. It appears that this is one of two reasons as to why Pliny is so concerned with capturing and prosecuting Christians: simply by congregating, they pose a threat to the order of the city.⁶³² But Pliny’s view of the Christians does not seem to have been wholly negative. Ullucci even argues that Pliny’s description of the Christians is somewhat positive in that it “is strikingly similar to his description of the ideal Roman man in other letters.”⁶³³

The other problem Pliny sees with the Christians, who by now have spread both in and outside of the city, is stated toward the end of the letter.⁶³⁴ The issue is that before the prosecutions of Christians, the temples had been standing empty, the sacred rites were ignored, and the markets that sold sacrificial meat were empty.⁶³⁵ But now, after the search and prosecution of Christians, the

CE,” in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 74–89.

⁶³² Cf. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 32. David G. Horrell (“The Label Χριστιανός: 1 Peter 4:16 and the Formation of Christian Identity,” *JBL* 126 [2007]: 361–81, 371) observes that “the confession of Christianity” is enough for prosecution. This confession of Christianity, however, should be understood as politically, socially, and culturally disruptive. Pliny notes that after having been given a description of what the Christians did during their meetings by former Christians (they chanted verses to Christ, gathered for harmless meals, promised each other not to commit robbery, adultery, be loyal, and to pay deposits when asked to do so) he still found it necessary “to extract the truth by torture from two slave-women, whom they call *ministrae*,” but, “[he] found nothing but a degenerate sort of cult carried to extravagant lengths” (LCL). The fact that Pliny tortured these two *ministrae* reveals his concerns that Christians were doing something subversive during their meetings, as J. Albert Harrill (“Servile Functionaries or Priestly Leaders? Roman Domestic Religion, Narrative Intertextuality, and Pliny’s Reference to Slave Christian *Ministrae* (Ep. 10,96,8),” *ZNW* 97 [2006]: 111–30, 114) remarks. Thus, what the Christians did during their meetings, Pliny thought, was not wrong in itself; but the fact that they did meet regularly meant they were a threat to the order of the province and its cities. On the activities of these meetings, see Graham N. Stanton, “Aspects of Early Christianity and Jewish Worship: Pliny and the *Kerygma Petrou*,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, ed. Michael J. Wilkins and Terence Paige, *JSNTSup* 87 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 84–98; Bradley M. Peper and Mark DelCogliano, “The Pliny and Trajan Correspondence,” in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr., and John Dominic Crossan, Princeton Readings in Religions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 366–71, 367–68; Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, *SupVC* 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

⁶³³ Daniel Ullucci, “Competition without Groups: Maintaining a Flat Methodology,” *JRCA* 1 (2019): 1–17, 15.

⁶³⁴ On the spread of Christianity, Pliny writes: “it is not only the towns, but villages and rural districts too which are infected through contact with this wretched superstition (*Neque civitates tantum, sed vicus etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est*)” (slightly altered from LCL).

⁶³⁵ For this to happen, the Christians of Bithynia and Pontus must both have been there for some time and been a rather large and/or influential group. It is hard to determine if this was the case. Klaus Thraede (“Noch einmal: Plinius d. J.

situation had changed drastically: “There is no doubt that people have begun to throng the temples which had been almost entirely deserted for a long time; the sacred rites which had been allowed to lapse are being performed again, and flesh of sacrificial victims is on sale everywhere, though up till recently scarcely anyone could be found to buy it. It is easy to infer from this that a great many people could be reformed if they were given an opportunity to repent [from Christianity].”⁶³⁶ Thomas Scott Caulley’s description of Pliny’s aim in the province is apt: “Pliny’s program in Pontus and Bithynia was aimed at reestablishing peace and order by reintegrating the errant Christians back into normal Roman social, religious, and economic life.”⁶³⁷

Both reasons for Pliny’s concern with the Christians in the province, potentially hostile gatherings and disruption of Roman cults and markets, have to do with the same thing: a concern that the Christians were socially disruptive and could potentially threaten the *status quo* of society, as they had already done with regards to the temples, cultic rites, and meat sales.⁶³⁸ As Scheid puts it: “En refusant de pratiquer le culte traditionnel, et surtout le culte impérial, expression la plus haute

und die Christen,” *ZNW* 95 [2004]: 102–28, 110) thinks it is evident that this could not have been the case: “Der hyperbolische [*sic*] Grundzug der Passage liegt auf der Hand.” There are some indications, however, that the Jesus movement had spread to Bithynia and Pontus fairly early. In 1 Pet 1:1 (c. 80 CE), the author greets the dispersed Christ followers in both Bithynia and Pontus and in Acts 18:2, Luke mentions a Christ following Jew by the name of Aquila who was from Pontus. Rather than thinking of the Christians as a large group, or at least dominant within the province, Ullucci (“Competition without Groups,” 12–13) asserts that, “it seems more useful here to consider Christianity *not to be a distinct group, but rather an idea* that spread through the area (prompting practices) and then faded” (emphasis original). Cf. Markus Öhler, “Graeco-Roman Associations, Judean Synagogues and Early Christianity in Bithynia-Pontus,” in *Authority and Identity in Emerging Christianities in Asia Minor and Greece*, ed. Cilliers Berytenbach and Julien M. Ogereau, *AJEC* 130 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 62–88, 77.

⁶³⁶ LCL. Sherwin-White (*The Letters of Pliny*, 697) thinks that it was “the civic magistrates interested in the sales of sacrificial meat” who instigated the prosecution of Christians. Hence, it is clear that merely being Christian did not merit prosecution, but what followed from being Christian (i.e., gathering in groups, not behaving according to the social codes of the city, and refusing worship of the Roman gods) was the real problem. Cf. Fredriksen, “Mandatory Retirement,” 240; Glanville Downey, “‘Un-Roman Activities’: The Ruling Race and the Minorities,” *ATR* 58 (1976): 432–43, 438–42. Pace Marta Sordi (*The Christians and the Roman Empire*, trans. Annabel Bedini [London: Croom Helm, 1983], 35) who argues that, by the time of Pliny, Christianity was deemed as *superstitio illicita* and in itself a crime.

⁶³⁷ Thomas Scott Caulley, “The Title *Christianos* and Roman Imperial Cult,” *ResQ* 53 (2011): 193–206, 198.

⁶³⁸ Richard Gordon (“*Superstitio*, Superstition and Religious Repression in the Late Roman Republic and Principate (100 BCE – 300 CE),” in *The Religion of Fools? Superstition past and Present*, ed. Stephen A. Smith and Alan Knight, *Past & Present Supplement* 3 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 72–94, 92) mentions that the Christians placed themselves outside of the imagined Roman community by not performing the sacrifices endorsed by the rulers.

de l'être collectif romain, du *consensus* politique, les chrétiens *confirmaient* leur appartenance à un mouvement considéré comme subversif.”⁶³⁹ The price those who persist in their confession as Christians paid was high: non-citizens were executed, and citizens were sent to Rome for trial. One aspect that perhaps made the Christians an even more dangerous threat to the social order and structure of the city was that even if many, if not most, of the Christians seem to have come from the lower classes (which is suggested by the two slave-women, *ancillis*, who were *magistrae*) and were non-citizens. However, the fact that *some* of the Christians were Roman citizens, Glanville Downey notes, implied that the association of Christians had advanced from being a group that consisted of only people from the lower classes and had started to attract people higher up in Roman society.⁶⁴⁰ This made Christianity in Bithynia and Pontus “a characteristic setting for a secret society that might become a center for political mischief, and, potentially, a revolutionary movement.”⁶⁴¹

Consequently, what we find in Pliny's letter to Trajan is a good and very clear example of what it meant to disobey the social codes of ancient society and the price one might have to pay for doing so. Even though the situation in early second century CE Bithynia and Pontus differed from the context the Corinthian *ekklēsia* found itself in roughly sixty years earlier, this letter from the hand of Pliny provides a suitable example. For the Christians Pliny refers to had in their choice to remain adherents of the Christ cult lost the position they might have had or could possibly gain in the city by virtue of being part of an association that met regularly and had its own social norms. Moreover, what makes this example particularly interesting is that in this letter we see the concrete consequences of what it possibly could have meant for the Christ followers in Corinth to stop

⁶³⁹ John Scheid, “Le Délit religieux dans la Rome tardo-républicaine,” in *Le Délit religieux dans la cite antique: (Table ronde, Rome, 6–7 avril 1978)*, ed. M. Torelli, Collection de l'École française de Rome 48 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981), 117–71, 163 (emphasis original).

⁶⁴⁰ Downey, ““Un-Roman Activities,”” 441.

⁶⁴¹ Downey, ““Un-Roman Activities,”” 441.

attending all cultic events and to refrain from buying food at the market. Even though Paul was no longer alive when Pliny dealt with the situation described in his letter, it is not impossible to imagine that Paul knew of the grave consequences that could have faced the Corinthian Christ followers if he had strictly forbidden any and all participation in local Corinthian cults and markets.⁶⁴² Hence, being socially disruptive came at a high cost and Paul knew it.

In fact, in Acts 19 Luke records a situation where Paul's message about Jesus disturbs the social and economic balance of Ephesus to the degree that people start rioting. Even though we do not know if Luke's report in Acts 19 accurately recounts events that took place in Paul's ministry, it is quite possible that something like the events Luke describes in Acts 19 did take place sometime during Paul's career as an apostle of the Jesus movement. For example, in 2 Cor 11:23–33 Paul reveals some of the things he has suffered from both Jews and gentiles, both in and outside of the city, so the account in Acts 19 could very well be based on a historical event.⁶⁴³ Additionally, Paul indicates in 1 Cor 15:8 and 16:8–9 that he has run into trouble in Ephesus.⁶⁴⁴

Luke presents two issues that cause the riots: (1) Paul's ability to convince people that idols are not gods threatens the economic income of the silversmiths and those who made the idols; (2) because of this people might think poorly of the goddess Artemis's temple. C. L. Brinks comments: "In first-century Ephesus ... such an uproar would have been not only plausible but understandable in light of the Artemis cult."⁶⁴⁵ Furthermore, as Jeffrey M. Tripp points out, it is probably the threat

⁶⁴² As I have mentioned above, other *ekklēsiai* founded by Paul did suffer at the hand of outsiders due to their being a part of the Jesus movement.

⁶⁴³ For a discussion on the historical plausibility of Acts 19, see Scott Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19*, BZNW 133 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005); Stephan Witetschek, "Artemis and Asiarchs: Some Remarks on Ephesian Local Colour in Acts 19," *Bib* 90 (2009): 334–55; Alexander Weiss, "Der Aufruhr der Silberschmiede (Apg 19,23–40) und das Edikt des Paullus Fabius Persicus (I. Ephesos 17–19)," *BZ* 53 (2009): 69–81; Morna D. Hooker, "Artemis of Ephesus," *JTS* 64 (2013): 37–46.

⁶⁴⁴ The events Paul recounts in 1 Corinthians are probably not the same situation Luke describes in Acts 19, but it indicates that Paul did run into trouble in Ephesus.

⁶⁴⁵ C. L. Brinks, "'Great Is Artemis of the Ephesians' Acts 19:23–41 in Light of Goddess Worship in Ephesus," *CBQ* 71 (2009): 776–94, 776.

to the cult of Artemis, not the economic threat, that poses the greatest issue to the inhabitants of Ephesus.⁶⁴⁶ Indeed, the Ephesians seem to have paid reverence to Artemis like few others: “Artemis’s close ties with Ephesus are woven into the fabric of ancient literary, inscriptional, and numismatic sources. Artemis may have had many admirers throughout the world, but none of them could match the Ephesians, whose city history was closely tied to the origin of the Artemis cult and the temple of Artemis.”⁶⁴⁷

As someone who proclaimed a message that was not always compatible with the prevailing norms and behavioral codes of the ancient city, Paul knew what was at stake when joining the Jesus movement with its exclusive commitment to the god of Israel. Thus, if Acts 19 is based on a historical event, which is possible, Paul had first-hand experience of what it meant to upset the social, economic, and cultic harmony of a city.

The Mishnaic Tractate *Avodah Zarah*

The tractate *Avodah Zarah* deals with questions surrounding what constitutes idolatry; hence the name which translates into strange or foreign worship.⁶⁴⁸ In the tractate, we find a detailed guide of how Jews should relate to their gentile neighbors and their idols. Not only that, the tractate is concerned with how “close” a Jew can come to the presence of idols and idolatry but still remain faithful to a Jewish way of life. The text deals with situations where idols and/or idolatry might not be the primary problem, but where the things bought by Israelites might have come in contact with

⁶⁴⁶ Jeffrey M. Tripp, “A Tale of Two Riots: The *synkrisis* of the Temples of Ephesus and Jerusalem in Acts 19–23,” *JSNT* 37 (2014): 86–111, 100–01.

⁶⁴⁷ Carl. R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 381.

⁶⁴⁸ On the kinds of idols discussed in this tractate, Amit Gvaryahu (“A New Reading of the Three Dialogues in Mishnah *Avodah Zarah*,” *JSQ* 19 [2012]: 207–29, 221) comments: “Worship of idols in the tractate is usually centered on statues (called *tzelem*, ‘image,’ or *tzurah*, ‘figure’), sometimes associated with a temple (*bayit shel avodah zarah*) or a grove (*asherah, avodah zarah she-haytah lah ginah*).”

idolatry or where things the Israelite might do, e.g., helping a gentile making wine from grapes, could end up being used in idol worship. Therefore, this tractate is concerned with two things: (1) to prevent Jews from contributing to idolatry in both a direct and an indirect manner and (2) to draw the line for what is considered to be idolatry. In that sense, *Avodah Zarah* is an important document for the purposes of better understanding rabbinic approaches to the non-Jewish world and its idols and for gaining a more nuanced insight into the social maze those who wanted to stay clear from the worship of images and statues during the early centuries CE—like Jews and Christ followers—had to navigate.⁶⁴⁹ Even though there are differences between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 and *m. Avodah Zarah* in their intended audience (1 Corinthians 8 and 10 is primarily addressed to non-Jews, whereas *m. Avodah Zarah* is an intra Jewish discussion) and the situations their audiences found challenging (e.g., Paul’s gentile Christ followers do not appear to have kept kosher laws, while most Jews did), *m. Avodah Zarah* can still help us to gain a better understanding of Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. The primary reason for this is that, despite their differences, Paul and the authors of *m. Avodah Zarah* are interested in the same thing: how can a person who is only worshipping the god of Israel navigate various situations where this exclusive relationship to Israel’s god might be jeopardized. Moreover, both texts discuss how a Christ follower or a Jew can be in a

⁶⁴⁹ The view(s) presented in the Mishnah is that of the rabbis, i.e., the Jews highest up in the hierarchy the rabbinic strand of Judaism and did not necessarily cohere with the views or thoughts of “ordinary” Jews (even if they did, we still do not know whether “ordinary” Jews could or would follow these rules in real life). On this topic, see E. E. Urbach, “The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries in the Light of Archaeological and Historical Facts,” *IEJ* 9 (1959): 229–45; Lee I. Levine, “Synagogue Art and the Rabbis in Late Antiquity,” *JAJ* 2 (2011): 74–114. For an essay on how the “actual” situation of rabbinic Judaism might have looked, see Seth Schwartz, “The Political Geography of Rabbinic Texts,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 75–98; *ibid.*, “The Rabbi in Aphrodite’s Bath: Palestinian Society and Jewish Identity in the High Roman Empire,” in *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 335–61, *passim*; Shaye J. D. Cohen, “The Place of the Rabbi in Jewish Society of the Second Century,” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 157–73.

context where idolatry is likely to be present but without becoming a participant in idolatrous practices.

Avodah Zarah is often defined as something that has to do with gentile cults and their rituals and sacrifices.⁶⁵⁰ But Daniel H. Weiss argues that even though “such actions certainly represent the core halakhic category associated with *avodah zarah*, what is often overlooked is the extent to which rabbinic texts treated basic claims of political rulership as inherently bound up with a form of (illegitimate) divine service, alongside the concrete acts of sacrifice to which such claims were often linked.”⁶⁵¹ The questions *Avodah Zarah* discusses are concerned with how Jews who lived under Roman hegemony could navigate that reality in a way where they did not give up their Jewish values.⁶⁵² As such, this tractate, “reflects a reality of two communities, Jewish and pagan, entangled with one another, within the setting of the Hellenistic cities of the land of Israel.”⁶⁵³ The close proximity of these two communities can be seen in *m. Avodah Zarah* 3.6 where we read of a Jewish man who owns a house that shares a wall with an idol’s shrine. The aim then of the tractate, Moshe Halbertal observes, is “to regulate the norms of such a shared social space.”⁶⁵⁴ Therefore, tractate *Avodah Zarah* and 1 Corinthians 8 are very much concerned with the same things: how should someone who is and wants to remain faithful to the god of Israel live in a society where one inevitably will come into contact with idolaters, idols, and situations where one might—implicitly or

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. Guy G. Stroumsa, “Tertullian on Idolatry and the Limits of Tolerance,” in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 173–84, 179–80.

⁶⁵¹ Daniel H. Weiss, “The Christianization of Rome and the Edomization of Christianity: *Avodah Zarah* and Political Power,” *JSQ* 25 (2018): 394–422, 396. Cf. Tziona Grossmark, “Laws Regarding Idolatry in Jewelry as a Mirror Image of Jewish-Gentile Relations in the Land of Israel during Mishnaic and Talmudic Times,” *JSQ* 12 (2005): 213–26, 213.

⁶⁵² For a more in-depth inquiry into this question than the one I carry out here, see Tessa Rajak, “The Jewish Community and Its Boundaries,” in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 9–28.

⁶⁵³ Moshe Halbertal, “Coexisting with the Enemy: Jews and Pagans in the Mishnah,” in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 159–72, 159.

⁶⁵⁴ Halbertal, “Coexisting with the Enemy,” 159.

explicitly—further the worship of idols.⁶⁵⁵ The Mishnaic tractate is much longer than Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 (and 10) and the guidance and discussions in the tractate take into account a vast array of situations never discussed by Paul and scrutinize every angle of them. There are, however, two situations described in *Avodah Zarah* that bear some resemblance to the situation Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 8 and that are informative when it comes to better understand the view(s) put forth in the tractate. The first one deals with the status of images and statues (צלמ) and the second with how one should behave in a bathhouse where idols are present.

In *m. Avodah Zarah* 3.1–3 we find the rabbis' instructions on how they think Jews should relate to images depicting gentile gods and divinities:

All images/statues (הצלמים) are forbidden because they are worshipped once a year. So R. Meir. But the Sages say: Only that is forbidden which bears in its hand a staff or a bird or a sphere.⁶⁵⁶ Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: That which bears aught in its hand. If a man found fragments of images/statues (צלמים), these are permitted. If he found [a fragment in] the shape of a hand or the shape of a foot, these are forbidden, since an object the like of these is worshipped. If a man found objects on which is a figure of the sun, a figure of the moon, or a figure of a dragon, he must throw them into the Dead Sea. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: If [the figures are found] on objects of value these are forbidden, but if on worthless objects they are permitted. R. Jose says: One should break them into pieces and scatter them to the winds, or throw them into the sea. They said to him: Even so they would become manure, and it is written, *And there shall cleave nought of the devoted thing to thine land.*⁶⁵⁷

Due to the composite nature of the Mishnah and the fact that it does not contain only *one* or *the* opinion of the rabbis it leaves room for interpretation.⁶⁵⁸ Even so, a couple of things are clear

⁶⁵⁵ On the understanding of idols presented in this tractate, and other early rabbinic literature, Jonathan Klawans (*Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 114) comments: "Even as these [textual] sources articulate the ritually defiling force of idols, they nowhere articulate or assume that idolatrous behavior is ritually defiling in any way.... Even though idols are ritually defiling, the act of idolatry is itself viewed in tannaitic *halakhah* as a crime, and not as a source of ritual defilement."

⁶⁵⁶ These three symbols all symbolise that the one who held any of these things in his/her hand was the ruler of all. Cf. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 440.

⁶⁵⁷ Trans. Danby.

⁶⁵⁸ To a certain extent this demonstrates the point that what Paul was doing should not be placed outside Judaism or in opposition to it; rather, just as the rabbis of the Mishnah had various—and at times opposite—halakhic interpretations and rules, Paul too engaged in an ongoing Jewish discussion of how to best deal with the social and cultic obligations of a non-Jewish society.

from this text. First, any statue or image that depicts a god is forbidden.⁶⁵⁹ This can be seen in the words of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, whose attitude to a צלם is that only “that which bears aught in its hand” is not permissible. Weiss points out that emperors, gods, and various divinities were often depicted as holding something.⁶⁶⁰ From this, Amit Gvaryahu draws the conclusion that, according to 3.1, images that depict “natural phenomena are permitted.”⁶⁶¹ Later on, in *m. Avodah Zarah* 4.4, this rule appears to be modified: “The idol (אסורה) of a gentile is straightaway forbidden, but that of an Israelite is not forbidden unless it has been worshipped.”⁶⁶² The logic behind this statement is similar to the one found in 1 Cor 8:4 (“an idol is nothing in the cosmos”), since, as Tziona Grossmark comments, “it was the cultic rite performed with the idolatrous object that place it in the category of idolatry, and not the object in itself.”⁶⁶³ Second, fragments of statues are permissible, but fragments of statues that have the shape of a hand or a foot, are forbidden since they could have been part of a statue which was worshiped by gentiles. Third, objects with figures of the sun, moon, or a dragon must be thrown into the Dead Sea or scattered in the wind. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, however, allows for the objects to be retained if they are worthless (which presumably would indicate that they were not used in worship).

⁶⁵⁹ Holger Zellentin (“The Rabbis on (the Christianisation of) the Imperial Cult: Mishnah and Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah 3:1 (42b, 54–42c, 61),” in *Jewish Art in Its Late Antique Context*, ed. Uzi Leibner and Catherine Hezser, TSAJ 163 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 321–57, 323) comments that the use of צלם is a reference to any representation (i.e., both images and statues) of deities.

⁶⁶⁰ Weiss, “The Christianization of Rome,” 401. John Ferguson (*The Religions of the Roman Empire*, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970], 41–42) describes Jupiter depicted as holding a sceptre in one *aureus*, a globe in another, with an eagle in front of him. According to Cicero (*On the Nature of the Gods* 1.29.81), the way many gods were depicted and represented (he explicitly mentions Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Neptune, Vulcan, and Apollo) seems to have been standardised by his time. Price (*Rituals and Power*, 178) points out that images of people who did not receive cult could also be placed in temples. Presumably, these images would not count as idols according to *Avodah Zarah*.

⁶⁶¹ Gvaryahu, “A New Reading,” 219–20.

⁶⁶² Trans. Danby.

⁶⁶³ Grossmark, “Laws Regarding Idolatry,” 221. Cf. Gerald Blidstein, “Nullification of Idolatry in Rabbinic Law,” *PAAJR* 41/42 (1973/74): 1–44, 26.

Hence, the view of idols—in the broad sense of the term—is that they are off limits for Jews. For even though the voices of various rabbis differ in what is permissible and what is not, they all agree that when something has been used as an idol or part of an idol it is forbidden. The difference lay in what they believe has been used for idolatry. For example, R. Meir seems to hold that all statues are worshiped and therefore out of bounds. The sages and Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, however, argue that only those statues which have something in their hands are used as idols.⁶⁶⁴ But both forbid that a Jew benefits from an idol and idolatry.⁶⁶⁵ This leads us to the second example, which discusses how Jews should behave when in close proximity to idols.

Immediately after the discussion on idols in 3.1–3, a story about Rabban Gamaliel follows.⁶⁶⁶ The context is as follows: while in a bathhouse, Proklos the son of Philosopos asks the rabbi why he is bathing in a bathhouse with a statue of Aphrodite.⁶⁶⁷ Gamaliel answers that the bath is not for Aphrodite, but Aphrodite is merely an adornment for the bath; or as Gamaliel himself puts it: “I came not within her limits: she came within mine!”⁶⁶⁸ Furthermore, Gamaliel argues that since the statue of Aphrodite is placed by the mouth of the gutter, that men walk in front of her naked, and even urinate in her proximity, she is not treated as a god.⁶⁶⁹ Therefore, it is permissible to be in the

⁶⁶⁴ As discussed in Yaron Z. Eliav, “Viewing the Sculptural Environment: Shaping the Second Commandment,” in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, ed. Peter Schäfer, TSAJ 93 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 3.411–33, 422–23.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Eliav, “Viewing the Sculptural Environment,” 424.

⁶⁶⁶ Lee I. Levine (*Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* The Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998], 107) dates this story to c. 100–120 CE.

⁶⁶⁷ According to Katherine M. D. Dunbabin (“Baiaurum Grata Voluptas: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 [1989]: 6–46, 23), Aphrodite was one of the most common deities that decorated the bathhouses.

⁶⁶⁸ Trans. Danby.

⁶⁶⁹ Catherine Hezser (“Palestinian Rabbis’ Encounter with Graeco-Roman Paganism: Rabban Gamliel in the Bathhouse of Aphrodite in Acco (M. A.Z. 3:4),” <https://jnjr.div.ed.ac.uk/primary-sources/rabbinic/palestinian-rabbis-encounter-with-graeco-roman-paganism-rabban-gamliel-in-the-bathhouse-of-aphrodite-in-acco-m-a-z-34/>) correctly points out that this is the view of Rabban Gamaliel, and not necessarily that of the gentiles. Hezser comments, “they [Rabban Gamaliel’s answers to Proklos] were probably meant for fellow scholars and served as a self-justification for visiting the baths despite the presence of pagan statuary.”

bathhouse and the statue's vicinity.⁶⁷⁰ Then follows an example to highlight and explain what Gamaliel just said to Proklos. The example serves to explain that even if gentiles were to worship a mountain or a hill, these are not forbidden for the Jew. What is forbidden are the idols that stand on top of the mountains and hills. Why? Whatever has been created by humans for the purpose of worshipping, the text explicitly mentions *Asherah*, is out of bounds since it is an idol; but the hills and mountains are made by God and not (according to the logic of this text) the object of worship. What this short dialogue between Gamaliel and Proklos expresses is that Jews can be in situations where they will be in close contact with idols as long as these idols are not treated as gods (as in the bathhouse) or if the idol is placed on top of a natural thing (as a mountain or hill).⁶⁷¹

This text, then, does not forbid a Jew from being in close proximity to idols.⁶⁷² Yaron Z. Eliav argues that "Rabban Gamaliel's position takes the above-mentioned distinction [on what

⁶⁷⁰ The tractate gives instruction on how to relate to bathhouses in two additional places. In 1.7, we read: "One may help them [i.e., the gentiles] to build public baths or bathhouses; yet when they have reached the vaulting where they set up the idol it is forbidden [to help them] to build." Later on, in 4.3, the tractate reads: "If a garden or a bath-house belonged to an idol, they may be used if there is no need to offer thanks, but not if there is need to offer thanks. If they belonged both to the idol and to others, they may be used whether there is need to offer thanks or no need" (Danby). Both these texts seem to contradict Gamaliel's words in 3.4, since they both imply that idols were worshiped and treated as gods in bathhouses. But there is no attempt in the tractate to make the two views come together and both views are seemingly equally valid. For a fuller description of how statues functioned in Roman bathhouses, see Yaron Z. Eliav, "The Roman Bath as a Jewish Institution: Another Look at the Encounter between Judaism and the Greco-Roman Culture," *JSJ* 31 (2000): 416–54, 431–38.

The Roman theologian Tertullian (c. 160–230 CE) wrote a treatise with the title *De Idolatria*, which deals with how Christians should relate to the Roman bathhouses. Many similarities can be found between the Mishnaic text and that of Tertullian. One example that relates to both 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 and *m. Avodah Zarah* comes from chapter 16, where Tertullian writes: "There is no objection against visits at private and social festivities, like those of the assuming of the *toga virilis*, of betrothals, of weddings and namegivings, although there is some breath of idolatry around them... But if I am invited to participate in the sacrifice that takes place at that occasion, I am not allowed to go" (trans. J. H. Waszink and J. C. M. van Winden). This reasoning is similar to both that of Paul's in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 and to *m. Avodah Zarah* since Tertullian allows Christians to partake in festivities and settings where idols and idolatry might be present but forbids them to partake actively in any idolatrous activities. For a detailed analysis and comparison, see Stéphanie E. Binder, *Tertullian, On Idolatry and Mishnah Avodah Zarah: Questioning the Parting of the Ways between Christians and Jews*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 22 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

⁶⁷¹ This is markedly different from the attitude toward idols found in parts of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish texts of the Second Temple period (e.g., Deut 12:2–3; 13:12–17; 1 Macc 5:68; *The Jewish War* 1.648–53). On this topic, see Yair Furstenberg, "The Rabbinic View of Idolatry and the Roman Political Conception of Divinity," *JR* 90 (2010): 335–66.

⁶⁷² Eliav ("Viewing the Sculptural Environment," 419) comments that examples like the one of the bathhouse dialogue, "were seen by scholars as rabbinical innovations that were intended, for whatever reason, to create a compromise between the fundamental principles that guided Jewish life and the non-Jewish environment," but Eliav questions

kinds of statues were considered to be idols] of the rabbis a step further, adding the practical function of a statue to the previous criterion of identifying signs [the staff, bird, or sphere].”⁶⁷³ Not only is the bathhouse dialogue a further adjustment to the instructions in 3.1–3 about which statues and images should be viewed as idols, Gamaliel’s instructions are also set in a situation that most likely many Jews in the Roman empire would have found themselves in since going to the bathhouses was a common part for many of the inhabitants in the Roman empire—rich and poor alike.⁶⁷⁴ Indeed, Rabban Gamaliel’s point goes beyond the setting of a bathhouse. His final comment to Proklos’s question is: “What is treated as a god is forbidden, but what is not treated as a god is permitted.”⁶⁷⁵ Thus, as Lee Levine puts it: “[Rabban Gamaliel’s] statement does not deal with the particular circumstances of the Acco bath or of Aphrodite, but is cast as a general principle applicable anywhere: if the statue is intended for idolatrous purposes, it is forbidden; otherwise it is permitted.”⁶⁷⁶ In turn, this would have enabled Jews to be present in contexts which were dominated by others than themselves—which included a lot of settings in the Roman Empire—and allowed them to act in a way where they were deemed more socially acceptable by others and could make important social connections outside of their own group.⁶⁷⁷ Hence, the

“whether such incompatibility was really the whole case.” He also finds the common scholarly approach that suggests that the rabbis viewed statues as either “religious” or “non-religious/secular” or as either “decorative” or “non-decorative” as flawed (cf. Azzan Yadin, “Rabban Gamaliel, Aphrodite’s Bath, and the Question of Pagan Monotheism,” *JQR* 96 [2006]: 149–79, 162–66). Eliav’s own argument is that the rabbis “differentiated between statues on the basis of those that were the objects of pagan worship and those that were not” (“Viewing the Sculptural Environment,” 421). This certainly seems to be the case in the story of Rabban Gamaliel and the bathhouse.

⁶⁷³ Eliav, “Viewing the sculptural Environment,” 424.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. Eliav, “The Roman Bath,” 421.

⁶⁷⁵ Trans. Danby.

⁶⁷⁶ Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity*, 108. Levine also points out that it was not everyone who shared this viewpoint and that other rabbinic texts took a less lenient stance on idols and what counted as idolatry. On the topic of the multiple attitudes toward images and idols within ancient Judaism and beyond, see Boaz Cohen, “Art in Jewish Law,” *Judaism* 3 (1954): 165–76.

⁶⁷⁷ Gerald J. Blidstein (“R. Yohanan, Idolatry, and Public Privilege,” *JSJ* 5 [1974]: 154–61) comments on the fact that if Jews were to avoid all contact with idols—both direct and indirect—it would seriously hamper their ability to live and move freely in cities. Thus, Blidstein (*ibid*, 155) argues that “in response to such problems, a tradition developed that excluded the realm of public services and the like from the stigma of idolatry.” Seth Schwartz (“Gamaliel in Aphrodite’s Bath: Palestinian Judaism and Urban Culture in the Third and Fourth Centuries,” in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, ed. Peter Schäfer, TSAJ 71 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998], 1.203–17, 207–

accommodating attitude that is presented in the Mishnah evidences the point that some Jews sought to find a way to live in accordance with their non-Jewish environment as much as possible. Moreover, the various opinions of the rabbis that are recorded in the Mishnah also show that Jews took a variety of approaches to the issue of how to live in a non-Jewish society.

The Roman Concept of *Superstitio*

I now turn my attention away from the situation of early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism and how they were either deemed as dangerous or socially disruptive. Instead, I will now focus on how Romans viewed those who practiced *religio* and cultic activities in an excessive, wrong, or illegitimate way. These, the Romans labelled *superstitio*.⁶⁷⁸ The examples I discuss below do not have many explicit similarities with Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Even so, the Roman concept of *superstitio* highlights the dangers involved in not adhering to the social and cultic norms of ancient society and how those in power viewed those whose *religio* had become inappropriate, which I argue is something Paul is mindful of when writing 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Therefore, the discussion around the concept of *superstitio* has some bearing on Paul and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 in that it shows the social and cultic context Paul had to take into account and navigate around when writing his instructions, lest the inhabitants of Corinth would accuse his Christ followers of *superstitio*.

08) argues that the rabbis, in their attempt to prohibit idolatry, on the one hand, and winning over the Jewish inhabitants of the cities to their version of Judaism by allowing Jews to live an integrated life in the city, on the other, limited gentile idolatry to only entail cultic activity but deemed “religious aspects of urban culture acceptable.”

⁶⁷⁸ The word *superstitio* is purely Roman in origin. But the Greek word δεισιδαιμονία (literally, fear of the gods/*daimonia*) appears to have been used in a similar way by Greek authors. However, the concept of δεισιδαιμονία could also be used in a positive way, in the sense that fear of the gods was understood as reverence or respect. For the background of the usage of *superstitio*, see Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present*, Critical Issues in History, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 19–20.

The term *superstitio* is an etic term applied by those who both established and followed the social and cultic norms of the time (or that is at least how they viewed themselves).⁶⁷⁹ Moreover, there was never one clearly defined, strict definition of what exactly *superstitio* was or what it took to be labelled as such.⁶⁸⁰ Stephen A. Smith makes the following remark on the term *superstitio* and its use in history:

Historically, *superstitio*—along with its non-Christian cognates—has proved a remarkably flexible and capacious category that has performed a wide variety of ideological functions and communicated a wide variety of social concerns and anxieties. From a historical perspective, superstition appears primarily to be a pejorative label applied by adherents of a particular religious or ideological orthodoxy to beliefs and practices of which they disapprove, usually those of the less educated and less powerful members of society. As a category of ascription, it may tell us more about those doing the ascribing that it does about the people so described.⁶⁸¹

Consequently, one might wonder: “Is it even possible to reconstruct a consistent discourse as to the limits of acceptable religious behaviour?”⁶⁸² I explore this concept in order to highlight how those who were deemed to be *superstitio* were also perceived as practicing socially and/or cultically inappropriate behaviour and how they constituted a precarious, if not dangerous, part of society. For one of the key components among those who were thought to be *superstitio* was that they were seen as deviating from the norms, in this case cultic, but as a consequence also social and political, that were followed by the majority of the given society’s population, and in particular, the norms of the cultic, social, and political elite. As Rüpke comments on the tensions between the cultic practices of the Roman elite and those of the ordinary populace: “[The term *superstitio*] was able to articulate

⁶⁷⁹ For example, Christians could be deemed to be *superstitio*, as Pliny does in his letter to Trajan, but this was of course not how the Christians viewed themselves.

⁶⁸⁰ The same could be said for Christianity and Christians in the first example from Pliny’s letter to Trajan and with regards to (rabbinic) Judaism in the second example. Even though these groups were more well-defined than those generally labelled as *superstitio*, there were no such thing as only one expression of Judaism or Christianity by the time of the examples discussed above.

⁶⁸¹ Stephen A. Smith, “Introduction,” in *The Religion of Fools? Superstition past and Present*, ed. Stephen A. Smith and Alan Knight, Past & Present Supplement 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7–55, 10.

⁶⁸² Jörg Rüpke, *Religious Deviance in the Roman World: Superstition or Individuality?*, trans. David M. B. Richardson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 3.

the real tension that existed between the religion of the elite, calculate, in its public form, to legitimate the expansion of hegemony, and the religion of the general populace, with its function of managing the contingencies of everyday life.”⁶⁸³

Having established an elementary framework for how to understand *superstitio* in antiquity, I now turn to a discussion of how ancient writers deployed the concept of *superstitio* (and its closest Greek term, *δεισιδαιμονία*). The earliest extant mention of “superstition” comes from the pen of the Greek philosopher Theophrastus (c. 370–285 BCE) and the chapter “Superstition” (*δεισιδαιμονίας*) in his work *Characters*.⁶⁸⁴ In this text, Theophrastus speaks of the “superstitious man” and his many habits and doings. Most of them have to do with being very, or perhaps overly, cautious when it comes to maintaining a state of purity, observing proper cultic behaviour, and leading a life that is, to the point of obsession, in line with the wishes of the gods. However, as Dale B. Martin notes, several of these activities were commonplace and carried out by many in the public sphere.⁶⁸⁵ Nor is Theophrastus against displays of piety toward deities or the observance of proper cultic behaviour. What, then, lays at the heart of Theophrastus condemnation of the “superstitious man”?

As Martin sees it, there are two problems with the “superstitious man.” First, his actions relating to cults and deities are excessive and not in accord with how one should act. Second, these overly cautious and excessive acts stem from a fear of the deities (*δειλία πρὸς τὸ δαιμόνιον*, 16.1) that

⁶⁸³ Rüpke, *Religious Deviance*, 8–9. Gordon (“*Superstitio*, Superstition and Religious Repression, 89–90) argues that the elite and general populace thought of *religio* in two different ways: the former “owed their success and their health to their piety,” whereas the latter “had a mainly instrumental attitude towards religion: for them, its function was the ‘magical’ (again in Weber’s sense) guarantee of agrarian productivity and protection from evils, above all serious illness.”

⁶⁸⁴ There is also a treatise on superstition by Plutarch (*περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας*) that deals with many of the same topics as Theophrastus’s text.

⁶⁸⁵ Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 24.

in turn leads to his own humiliation.⁶⁸⁶ Thus, “Theophrastus’s rejection of many popular beliefs and practices as ‘superstition’ is at base a matter of ethics expressed as etiquette: superstitious beliefs are wrong because they cause people to act in ways that are socially inappropriate, embarrassing, and vulgar.”⁶⁸⁷ In many ways, the portrayal of the “superstitious man” that Theophrastus puts forth is that of a man that is a bit strange, eccentric, and that does not behave according to the norms—neither social nor cultic—he was expected to adhere to.⁶⁸⁸ But, even though he behaves socially disruptive and one might want to not socially engage with him for that reason, he does not present a danger to the social order and norms of the city.

The connection of *superstitio*/δεισιδαιμονία with fear and shameful behaviour is also found in Roman writings. Seneca writes, “*Superstitio* is the misguided idea of a lunatic; it fears those who it ought to love; it is an outrage upon those whom it worships. For what difference is there between denying the gods and dishonouring them?”⁶⁸⁹ Cicero mentions that if humanity was liberated from *superstitio*, “all fear of the divine power or divine anger would have been banished.”⁶⁹⁰ This fear of gods that stems from *superstitio* comes, some Roman authors argue, from false beliefs of how the gods act and behave. Again, Cicero’s writings are instructive. He says that one common false belief that has its roots in *superstitio* is the belief that the gods are subject to feelings and passions, which make them unreliable very much in the same way that humans are.⁶⁹¹ *Superstitio*, then, is the very

⁶⁸⁶ Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 26–30. Martin also points out that these two aspects are related to the social hierarchy of Greco-Roman society and that men of higher status, such as Theophrastus himself and his intended audience, should not act in the manner of the “superstitious man.”

⁶⁸⁷ Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 34.

⁶⁸⁸ As Hugh Bowden (“Before Superstition and After: Theophrastus and Plutarch on *Deisidaimonia*,” in *The Religion of Fools? Superstition past and Present*, ed. Stephen A. Smith and Alan Knight, Past & Present Supplement 3 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 56–71, 59) puts it: “It is not the actions themselves that are indictive of superstition, but their context.”

⁶⁸⁹ *Epistles* 123.16; LCL.

⁶⁹⁰ *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.17.45; LCL. Cf. Seneca, *Epistles* 121.4.

⁶⁹¹ *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.28.70.

opposite of *religio*.⁶⁹² These expressions, both the ones discussed by Theophrastus and by the Roman authors, hardly merit any kind of worry from officials or the elite since these demonstrations of *superstitio* (and *δεισιδαιμονία*) did not pose a threat to anyone and those who behaved in these ways only made themselves look strange in their respective society. Simply put: they were strange, not dangerous. There were, however, those whose *superstitio* was.

In the Roman use of *superstitio* we see an almost uniquely use of the term: the idea that *superstitio* could refer to anti-Roman and subversive political ideas.⁶⁹³ For example, Livy writes of a group which was carrying out superstitious rituals and holding secret councils. It is clear from the narrative, that Livy did not view them as just another strange group with peculiar beliefs; rather, they were politically dangerous and had to be stopped.⁶⁹⁴ Also the nascent Jesus movement was deemed by some to be a case of *superstitio*. We have already seen in Pliny's letter to Trajan discussed above that Pliny referred to Christianity as *superstitio* when he describes the cult's spread throughout the province. In contrast to Theophrastus's "superstitious man," who was a mere eccentric, the Christians and their ideas, Pliny holds, are harmful to the welfare of his province. Pliny was not the only Roman author who thought the Jesus movement was an example of *superstitio*. After the fire that lay waste large parts of Rome in 64 CE, Tacitus describes how Nero, who was accused of having started the fire, put blame on the Christ followers.⁶⁹⁵ Tacitus notes that they had been under control

⁶⁹² Cicero states: "Not only did the philosophers but also our ancestors make a distinction between superstition and proper worship (*superstitionem a religione separaverunt*)" (*On the Nature of the Gods* 2.28.71–72; my trans. cf. 1.42.117). Thus, Rüpke (*Religious Deviance*, 8) is correct in noting that, "*superstitio* is improper and inappropriate, not technically false or ineffective. We accordingly find as antonyms such diverse terms as *religio* and, although rarely, *pietas*." *Superstitio* should not be seen as equivalent to *impietas*. On *impietas* in the Roman world, see John Scheid, *Religion et piété à Rome*, Sciences des religions (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 29–45.

⁶⁹³ Martin (*Inventing Superstition*, 130–31) notes that this understanding is almost never found in connection with the Greek word *δεισιδαιμονία*.

⁶⁹⁴ *History of Rome* 10.39.2–4.

⁶⁹⁵ *Annals* 15.44. Richard Carrier ("The Prospect of a Christian Interpolation in Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44," *VC* 68 [2014]: 264–83) discusses the possibility of one part of 15.44 as a Christian interpolation made in the fourth century CE. However, the line in 15.44 under discussion is the reference to *Christus* and the death sentence given by Pilate; even if that part is a later interpolation (which Carrier thinks), it does not invalidate the whole passage. See also the discussion in Anthony A. Barrett, Elaine Fantham, and John C. Yardley, eds., *The Emperor Nero: A Guide to the*

for a while, but that the “superstition was again breaking out” (*superstitio rursus erumpebat*); this time it was not only in Judea, but in the very capital of the Roman empire. Members of the Christ cult were arrested, primarily for “their hatred of the human race” (*odio humani generis*), and either killed by dogs or crucified and burned. Suetonius also mentions how Nero suppressed Christ followers, whom Suetonius referred to as “a new and malignant superstitious race of humans” (*genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae*).⁶⁹⁶ Similar to Pliny, Suetonius “considered Christianity not only a public nuisance but a threat to the health of the state. Its suppression was necessary for the well-being of the body politic.”⁶⁹⁷

Thus, for Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius, the early Christ cult was not only a strange group that consisted of eccentric worshipers who might take cultic rituals a bit too serious. Instead, they viewed its members as a politically and socially dangerous group of men and women which, although it had at times been contained, spread like a virus throughout the provinces, cities, and countryside.

Ancient Sources (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 161–66. Larry W. Hurtado (*Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016], 21) comments on the overall report in 15.44: “Historians of all stripes tend to treat Tacitus’ report as basically accurate.”

⁶⁹⁶ *Nero* 16.2. Even though both Tacitus and Suetonius refer to *Christiani*, there is also the possibility that there were Jews included in this group since there was of yet no clear distinction between Christianity and Judaism (at least not in the eyes of the Romans). Indeed, Tacitus (*Histories* 5.5) describes the Jews in a way akin to how he describes the Christians, as being full of “hatred and hostility toward everyone else” (*omnis alios hostiles odium*). Cf. Carrier, “The Prospect of a Christian Interpolation,” 269. Even if that is the case, the important thing for my purposes in this chapter is to demonstrate that those who did not act according to the social, political, and cultic norms—whether they be Jews, Christians, or something else—of the larger society were deemed both strange and dangerous. John M. G. Barclay (“‘Jews’ and ‘Christians’ in the Eyes of Roman Authors c. 100 CE,” in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, CRINT 13 [Leiden: Brill, 2014], 313–26, 325) argues that “the label ‘Christian’ was in a different category than the label ‘Jew’ in the Roman mind of the late first/early second century, at both a literary and a popular level,” and thus maintains that when these Roman sources mention *Christiani* they do so fully aware that this is a distinct group. Cf. E. A. Judge, “Did the Churches Compete with Cult Groups?” in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White, NovTSup 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 501–24, 516.

⁶⁹⁷ Martin, *Inventing Superstition*, 3. Both L. F. Janssen, (“‘Superstitio’ and the Persecution of the Christians,” *VC* 33 [1979]: 131–59, 154) and Michael R. Salzman (“‘Superstitio’ in the Codex Theodosianus and the persecution of Pagans,” *VC* 41 [1987]: 172–88, 175) think that Suetonius’s reference to the Christ cult as *superstitio* indicates that he thought the cult was devoted to dangerous, magical practices.

Even though we here have three early accounts of persecution of Christ followers, it was not until the reign of Decius (249–251 CE) that Christ followers were more systematically persecuted. Cf. Fergus Millar, “The Imperial Cult and the Persecutions,” in *Le Culte des souverains dans l’Empire Romain*, ed. Willem den Boer, Entretiens sur l’Antiquité classique 19 (Vandœuvres-Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1973), 145–75, 145.

As L. F. Janssen puts it: “The Romans did not apply to Christianity a qualification they had merely borrowed from Greek philosophy [i.e., the concept of *δεισιδαιμονία*] – such a course cannot explain their (esp. Tacitus’) extremely sharp condemnation of this phenomenon – they indeed considered it as a downright injury to their most solemn institutions.”⁶⁹⁸ This is probably the reason why some members of the Jesus movement started to put forth a picture of themselves as a peaceful and obedient group from the second century CE and onwards. One such example comes from *The Epistle to Diognetus*, probably written c. 150–225 CE, in which the anonymous author emphatically stresses that Christ followers are no different from the rest of the cities and societies they live in. *Diognetus* 5:1–5 states:

For Christians are not distinguishable from the rest of humanity by country, language, or what they eat. For, nor do they live in their own cities, nor do they speak with a different dialect, nor do they engage in a distinguishable lifestyle. This is not some invention or thought of inquisitive people, taught to those who have discovered it; nor do they put forth human doctrines, as some do. But living in Greek and barbarian cities as each one was called and following the customs of the countries in both clothing and food and in the rest of life’s aspects, they remarkably, and admittedly paradoxically, demonstrate the institution of their own citizenship (*ἑαυτῶν πολιτεία*). They live in their own countries, but as non-citizens (*πάροικοι*); they partake in everything as citizens (*μετέχουσι πάντων ὡς πολῖται*) and endure everything as foreigners (*ξένη*).⁶⁹⁹

The Roman elite’s understanding of the Christ cult as a politically and socially subversive movement is perfectly understandable when viewed from a Roman perspective. Two aspects of the Jesus movement can highlight the Roman suspicion towards the growing number of Christ followers. First, the early Jesus movement had its foundation in Jewish apocalypticism, and the view of Rome in Jewish apocalyptic literature was decidedly negative.⁷⁰⁰ The Book of Revelation is perhaps the

⁶⁹⁸ Janssen, “‘Superstitio’ and the Persecution of the Christians,” 154–55.

⁶⁹⁹ My translation, based on the Greek text from Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*.

⁷⁰⁰ This anti-Roman rhetoric can be found in various works from the Second Temple period, for example the Psalms of Solomon and the Dead Sea scrolls (e.g., 1QpHab, 1QM). On Jewish apocalyptic literature as a form of resistance, see Richard A. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes: Resistance and Apocalyptic Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010); Anthea Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

most striking in its anti-Roman rhetoric (cf. Rev 17), but also other texts and passages from the New Testament could be read as anti-Roman by those outside the Jesus movement, even if they perhaps were not intended as such.⁷⁰¹ Second, the person whom the Christ followers viewed as their κύριος was a man who had been crucified by the Roman authorities on grounds of claiming to be “the king of the Jews” (Mark 15:26; Matt 27:37; Luke 23:38; John 19:19), which was a political claim that posed a threat to the leadership of the Roman empire.⁷⁰² Due to these two features of the early Jesus movement, it is easy to see why the Roman powers saw the *ekklēsiai* of Christ followers as a potential threat to the political, social, and cultic stability and order of the empire.

Having shown how behaving socially, politically, and culturally disruptive could have a negative effect on peoples’ and group’s social standing in ancient society through the examples of Pliny’s persecution of Christians, the Mishnah’s discussions surrounding how Jews could be part of the city-life without running the risk of benefiting from idols and idolatry, and the ways in which those deemed to be *superstitio* by the Roman social and political elite were viewed as strange and eccentric and even persecuted and killed, I now turn to 1 Corinthians. The three above examples

⁷⁰¹ On Revelation, see Steven J. Friesen, “Apocalypse and Empire,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 163–79. For examples where a Roman reader could see a potential political and social threat, one can point to Paul’s reference to the “rulers of this age” who are being abolished in 1 Cor 2:6. This could easily be read as anti-Roman, even if that was or was not Paul’s intention. There were, of course, texts that could be read to suggest that Christ followers presented no threat at all to the Roman rulers, e.g., Rom 13:1–7. For in-depth discussions on Paul and the imperial cult, see Ekkehard W. Stegemann, “Coexistence and Transformation: Reading the Politics of Identity in Romans in an Imperial Context,” in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, LNTS 248 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 3–23; Mark T. Finney, “Christ Crucified and the Inversion of Roman Imperial Ideology in 1 Corinthians,” *BTB* 35 (2005): 20–33.

⁷⁰² E. P. Sanders (*The Historical Figure of Jesus* [London: Allen Lane, 1993], 273) remarks on why Pilate had Jesus crucified: “He probably regarded him as a religious fanatic whose fanaticism had become so extreme that it posed a threat to law and order.” Despite the potential political threat of Jesus, Paula Fredriksen (*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish life and the Emergence of Christianity* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999], 9) is right to point out that, at the time of Jesus’s crucifixion, Rome probably was not too concerned with Jesus, since his followers were not killed with him. But from texts that tell the story of Jesus’s adherents after his crucifixion (some of them have been mentioned above, e.g., 1 Peter, Revelation, and the three accounts in Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius) it is clear that they too became subject to persecution, punishment, and death.

will form the background for my proposed reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and Paul’s instructions therein.

1 Corinthians 8 and Maintaining Social Ties

I argue that there is one key concern in 1 Corinthians 8 beside the questions of how a Christ follower should relate to another Christ follower with a weak consciousness in cultic settings outside the *ekklēsia* and what is permissible for the Corinthian Christ followers when they participate in the cultic activities of others. This key concern for Paul in 1 Corinthians 8 is to give his Christ followers instructions that will allow them to remain acceptable—socially, politically, and cultically—in the city.⁷⁰³ I argued above that the reference *ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον* in 1 Cor 8:10 meant that the Christ followers were reclining in temples during the dinners in which they partook. Kar Yong Lim points out the significant role temples played in Corinth in and around the first century CE: “Much of life in Corinth centred on the temples and their associated activities. Apart from being places of worship, temples were also centres for social activities, providing platform for expanding one’s social network. As such, encounters or participation in activities within the temples and shrines in Corinth were almost unavoidable for the Christ-believers.”⁷⁰⁴ Moreover, Joop F. M. Smit makes the following comment on the role of meals in antiquity: “Sacrificial meals held within the precincts of the many temples form the heart of social life in the

⁷⁰³ I do not suggest by my proposed reading that the social place of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth is the only or the most prominent issue in 1 Corinthians 8. Therefore, I agree with Ehrensperger (“To Eat or Not to Eat”) who argues that Paul is concerned about the holiness of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*. I do, however, think that the aspects of the possible social ramifications Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 could have are often overlooked and that this is often due to a too narrow focus on (1) what Paul meant with his reference to those with a “weak consciousness,” and (2) the relationship and (in)coherence of chapter 8 and 10:14–22.

⁷⁰⁴ Lim, “Paul’s Use of Temple Imagery,” 190. Richard A. Horsley (“1 Corinthians: A Case Study of Paul’s Assembly as an Alternative Society,” in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley [Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997], 242–52, 247) also points out how deeply rooted temples and sacrifices were in the social relationships of ancient Roman society.

city of Corinth. Integration or segregation depend on participation in such meals.”⁷⁰⁵ To stop attending and participating in all temple related activities would have a serious effect on social—and most likely familial—ties, especially given the fact that some Christ followers were married to men and women who were not part of the Jesus movement (1 Cor 7:13–14). Jason T. Lamoreaux formulates what was at stake for the Corinthian Christ follower:

Participation in sacrifice and sacrificial meals establishes and maintains familial ties and identities. In asking the Corinthians to abstain from idol meat, Paul does not simply ask the knowledgeable to avoid idolatry or contamination from such things.... If ritual is an indicator of identity, Paul is asking—commanding, really—the knowledgeable to distance themselves from familial activities and their ties to households outside of the Jesus group.... So what Paul demanded of them amounted to *social violence*, an act that would cut them off from social, as well as material, resources.⁷⁰⁶

As I discussed in the previous section of this chapter, Paul shows that he is aware of the fragile social place of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in other parts of 1 Corinthians (5:9–12; 14:23–25) and it is therefore probable that the apostle had this in mind in chapter 8 as well, especially given the central nature of cults in ancient societies and the serious consequences that could follow if one were too disruptive in these situations.⁷⁰⁷ In order to make this argument, I will deal with

⁷⁰⁵ Joop F. M. Smit, “The Function of First Corinthians 10,23–30: A Rhetorical Anticipation,” *Bib* 78 (1998): 377–88, 378–79.

⁷⁰⁶ Lamoreaux, “Ritual Negotiation,” 143 (my emphasis). Cf. John North, “The Development of Religious Pluralism,” in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992), 174–93, 177–78; Joel Marcus, “Idolatry in the New Testament,” *Int* 60 (2006): 152–64, 153–54. The effects of this “social violence” carried out toward oneself can also be seen in the Gospels and the Jesus saying in Mark 13:12: “And a brother will deliver a brother to death, and a father his child, and children will raise up against parents and kill them” (cf. Matt 10:35–36; Luke 12: 52–53). On the Markan passage, see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), 518; Robert H. Stein, *Jesus, the Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 80–85.

⁷⁰⁷ Even though Paul does not explicitly mention any social implications of his instructions in 1 Corinthians 8, the fact that he is aware of the social implications of either his instructions or the *ekklēsia* members’ behaviour elsewhere in the letter means that this was something Paul was mindful of. The pragmatic approach Paul takes was not unique. Bruce W. Winter (“In Public and in Private: Early Christian Interactions with Religious Pluralism,” in *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism*, ed. Andrew D. Clarke and Bruce W. Winter [Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1991], 112–34, 124–27) argues that both Stoic and Epicurean teachings were against the cults with their idols and temples in imperial Rome, but that they took a pragmatic approach to the cults in order to retain their followers and not look too suspicious in the eyes of the Roman leaders.

several questions related to 1 Corinthians 8, starting with what is perhaps an often overlooked question: why did the Christ followers attend the cultic meals at all?

Peter Arzt-Grabner has carried out a comprehensive study of Ptolemaic and Roman invitations to festivals and dinners in order to explore why Christ followers participated in idol meals even after they joined the Jesus movement.⁷⁰⁸ He concludes that many of the invitations exhibit enthusiasm and joy over the prospect to gather for festivals and dinners and that these types of invitations also would have gone out to the early Christ followers. Hence, Arzt-Grabner answers the question of why Christ followers, such as those in Corinth, still attended the festivals and dinners of other cults: “Against the background of letters of invitation and formal invitations, the question why early Christ groups still attended ‘idol’ meals may be answered quite clearly: because their non-Christian relatives and friends continued to invite them to celebrate private and religious events with them.”⁷⁰⁹ Arzt-Grabner’s study shows that where those outside the Jesus movement invited the early Christ followers to their festivities and dinners, the Christ followers were well integrated in the cities in which they lived and had a social network that extended the *ekklēsia*.⁷¹⁰ Indeed, Paul even explicitly mentions that his Christ followers in Corinth were invited to dine with non-Christ followers in 1 Cor 10:27: “If someone of the non-faithful invites you, and you want to go...” (εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ θέλετε πορεύεσθαι).⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁸ Peter Arzt-Grabner, “Why Did Early Christ Groups Still Attend Idol Meals? Answers from Papyrus Invitations,” *EC* 7 (2016): 508–29. Chan-Hie Kim (“The Papyrus Invitation,” *JBL* 94 [1975]: 391–402) carried out a similar study in the 1970s, but it was shorter and used less data.

⁷⁰⁹ Arzt-Grabner, “Why Did Early Christ Groups,” 529.

⁷¹⁰ Soham Al-Suadi (“The Power of an Invitation: Early Christian Meals in Their Cultural Context,” in *Decisive Meals: Table Politics in Biblical Literature*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Luzia Sutter Rehman, and Kathy Ehrensperger, LNTS 449 [London: T&T Clark, 2012], 134–50, 134–35) also notes the social aspect of eating together: “Communal meal gatherings are contexts for highly developed social skills that allow a person’s religious, social or cultural transformation.”

⁷¹¹ I will deal with 1 Corinthians 10 more in-depth in the chapter that follows.

Furthermore, as Tessa Rajak points out, there was no shortage of festivals and dinners (and sacrifices) in and around the first century CE. Even if the dinner in 1 Corinthians 8 took place in an εἰδωλεῖον, eating in a cultic context “was not merely a question of temple ceremonial; athletic and musical contests for professionals and for locals, oratory and theatrical performances, clowning and pantomime, public feasts and processions, all were included among the festivities dedicated to the local deities, to major gods, or to the divine emperor—or to all three. Not only temples, theatres and stadia, but even the town squares would be taken over. Sacrifice was an integral part of these public celebrations.”⁷¹² This not only demonstrates that the chances to take part in a cultic meal abound in antiquity; it also shows how much was at stake if one declined all invitations to festivals and dinners and stopped attending the sacrificial meals. As Rajak continues, “to be outside of this was to be effectively outside the city.”⁷¹³ The importance of fitting into society was something Jews like Paul were very much aware of, as seen in the discussion in *m. Avodah Zarah*. Moreover, even if some Greco-Roman authors accused Jews of antisocial and disruptive behaviours (such as keeping the Sabbath), Fredriksen points out that there are several pieces of evidence that demonstrate just how well many Jews adapted to life in the diaspora and what it meant to live in a largely non-Jewish society.⁷¹⁴ Hence, many Jews knew what was at stake when they inevitably had to decide how involved in the life of the city they could be; and it seems as though many found a balance where they could be loyal to the god of Israel and their ancestral customs and be an integrated part of city life.⁷¹⁵ Paul’s situation is slightly different from that of

⁷¹² Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue*, 359.

⁷¹³ Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue*, 360.

⁷¹⁴ Fredriksen, *Pagans’ Apostle*, 38–49. See also my discussion in fn. 612.

⁷¹⁵ Jews would have had different views on how to strike the right balance. Late in the second century CE or early third century CE, the two emperors Severus and Caracalla made it imperial law that Jews did not have to take part in the public cults of the Roman empire or anything that ran contrary to their *superstitio*. This law is recounted by Ulpian: “The Divine Servus and Antoninus permitted those that follow the Jewish religion (*Iudaicam superstitionem*) to enter offices, but also imposed upon them liturgies such as should not transgress their religion (*superstitio*)” (*Digest*

many other Jews in that he is instructing gentiles who by all accounts were fully integrated in the social and cultic life of Corinth, but who now, like many Jews, had to find a balance between the (Jewish) demands of the Jesus movement and those of the city. Thus, the instructions from Paul on how the Christ followers in Corinth should conduct themselves with regards to the cultic dinner they attended could have very damaging effects on the place of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth. Theissen's description of the situation is apt: "Einschränkungen auf dem Gebiete des ‚Götzenopferfleisches‘ waren Kommunikationsschranken. Mit ihnen war das Problem des Verhältnisses der Christen zur antiken Gesellschaft aufgeworfen."⁷¹⁶

Theissen further argues that it was the Corinthian Christ follower who were wealthy and of high social status who had the most to lose by not attending the dinners hosted by other cults. Of the *ekklēsia* members in Corinth, we know of one that would have held a higher position in Corinth: Erastos, the city manager (Rom 16:23). Theissen's reasoning is expressed so: "Öffentliche und berufliche Verpflichtungen führten dazu, daß die Christen mit gehobenem Sozialstatus wohl mehr in die heidnische Gesellschaft integriert waren als die Christen aus kleinen Verhältnissen."⁷¹⁷ On the "weak" members (which for Theissen also are poor and of lower status) he argues that they would have had a much easier time giving up their participation in the cults outside of the Jesus movement, since "die unteren Schichten fanden in der Gemeinde völligen Ersatz für das, was sie anderswo aufgaben, ja sie fanden noch mehr."⁷¹⁸ In addition, he claims that those of lower status did not have as much to lose as those who were wealthy and of higher status.

50.2.3.3; trans. Amnon Linder). This indicates that most Jews found participation in the public cults, or at least some of its rituals, problematic and that this was something they were not willing to do.

⁷¹⁶ Theissen, "Die Starken und Schwachen," 163.

⁷¹⁷ Theissen, "Die Starken und Schwachen," 164.

⁷¹⁸ Theissen, "Die Starken und Schwachen," 164.

Thus, in Theissen’s reconstruction, it is the rich, socially, and politically well-connected *ekklēsia* members who attended—and wanted to keep attending—the sacrificial meals.

There are, however, some issues with Theissen’s reconstruction. First, even though Erastos appears to have had a higher social ranking than the average person in Corinth, he is the only *ekklēsia* member that we know of who had these ties.⁷¹⁹ Any other knowledge of the socio-economic status of the *ekklēsia*, let alone individual members, is tentative at best. Second, I think Theissen is correct in pointing out that those who had connections among the higher-ups of the city had much to lose if they suddenly stopped engaging in what was a key part of ancient society, but the idea that poorer, lower status individuals had nothing to lose by cutting their ties to previous cults seems inaccurate. Surely, if they attended one other cult than the Christ cult and gave up their membership and participation in that cult, it would result in a significant loss of both social connections and (depending on the menu of that cult) dinner opportunities.⁷²⁰ In connection with this very concrete loss of social relations and dinners, Smith comments on the loss of status: “Ancient clubs and associations were organized in such a way that individuals from a low status in society could achieve a higher-status designation at the club banquets based on their rank within the club.”⁷²¹ Consequently, it seems as though the poor and low status individuals of a society had just as much, *if not more*, to lose if they gave up their participation in the cults, associations, and

⁷¹⁹ I discussed this briefly in chapter 1. On Erastos’s socio-economic status, see Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 189–92.

⁷²⁰ Surely, in a world where meat was not consumed as often as it is today, this would have been a bigger loss for the poorer *ekklēsia* members who might not have afforded or wanted to spend their money on meat. But not attending other cultic dinners they possibly would have given up a significant portion of the meat they consumed.

⁷²¹ Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 11. It seems as though Theissen completely fails to note that an individual could have one status in relation to the city and its political and social elites, and one very different status in relation to the cults, associations, and other groups he or she might be a member in. For a critique of Theissen’s somewhat rigid understanding of status in ancient Roman society, see Verboven, “The Associative Order,” 869–88. In Greek society, see Ilias Arnaoutoglou, “*Ils Étaient dans la ville, mais tout à fait end hors de la cité*.” Status and Identity in Private Religious Associations in Hellenistic Athens,” in *Political Culture in the Greek City after the Classical Age: Introduction and Preview*, ed. Onno M. van Nijf and Richard Alston, Groningen-Royal Holloway Studies on the Greek City after the Classical Age 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 27–48.

clubs of the city. A third reason is put forth by Öhler, who makes the following remarks on 1 Cor 8 and 10:25–31:

Die Ausführungen zum Götzenopferfleisch bzw. zum Ein-kauf im Makellon setzten gewisse ökonomische Möglichkeiten voraus. Bei Einladungen oder bei Banketten in Tempeln (im Rahmen von Vereinigungen) dabei zu sein, schließt ein, dass die Christusgläubigen in Korinth eine gute Verankerung in der Umgebungsgesellschaft hatten. Völlig Mittellose wurden zu solchen Feiern mit einiger Gewissheit nicht geladen bzw. konnten sie nicht mitfinanzieren. *In seinen Erörterungen zum Götzenopferfleisch bedenkt Paulus allerdings nur religiöse Gründe, keine ökonomischen.* Eine Gruppe von Personen, die zu arm waren, um Fleisch kaufen zu können, ist nicht im Blick.⁷²²

In other words, the fact that Paul even brings up the topic of how the Corinthian Christ followers should act in temples and in the market indicates that they could afford to be members of cults and buy meat at the markets—both of which cost money. Hence, Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 would have affected *all* members of the *ekklēsia*, and it is clear that rich and poor alike would have suffered from abstaining from the dinners offered in other cults.⁷²³

So far, then, we can draw at least two conclusions surrounding the Christ followers’ participation in cultic dinners outside their own *ekklēsia*: first, they attended these meals because they were invited to do so by non-Christ followers in Corinth; second, every member in the *ekklēsia*, regardless of socio-economic status, would have lost social capital if they suddenly stopped attending these meals. But can we say more regarding the social reasons why Christ followers were still attending cultic meals outside of the Christ cult? In what follows, I argue that to stop all participation in outside cults would not only be socially disruptive to the outside world,

⁷²² Öhler, “Paulinische Gemeinden in ökonomischer Perspektive,” 277–78 (my emphasis).

⁷²³ Cf. Ehrensperger, “To Eat or Not to Eat,” 122–23. One can also critique Theissen’s slightly oversimplified division of higher status, rich *ekklēsia* members and lower status, poor members. In antiquity, one’s social status was made up of a myriad of factors. Verboven (“The Associative Order,” 861) notes how social status was conceived in the ancient Roman society: “Roman social order was multi-dimensional with various coexisting social fields and complex hierarchies. Status was measured by sets of different criteria, as birth, gender, wealth, education, ethnicity, skill, etc., each contributing to assigning specific social positions.” Cf. Valerie Hope, “Status and Identity in the Roman World,” in *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*, ed. Janet Huskinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 125–52.

but that attending sacrificial meals was part and parcel of some of the Corinthians Christ followers' identity, and that to stop all such participation would be both atypical and undesirable for at least some members of the *ekklēsia*.

If we cannot determine which *ekklēsia* members were present at the cultic meals under discussion in 1 Corinthians 8 on socio-economic grounds, perhaps we should look at other types of subdivisions within the *ekklēsia*. I am here thinking of the ethnic division of gentile Christ followers, on the one hand, and Jewish Christ followers, on the other.⁷²⁴ Along with Kathy Ehrensperger, I think that those Christ followers who attended these idol meals most likely were gentile Christ followers.⁷²⁵ There are several indications as to why this is the most plausible solution. First, in 1 Cor 8:7 Paul says that those who do not have knowledge have until now been so used to idols in their lives that they eat the food offered to idols as food that really was tainted by these idols (τινὲς δὲ τῆ συνηθεία ἕως ἄρτι τοῦ εἰδώλου ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν). This indicates that those who did not have knowledge were gentile Christ followers, since they apparently had eaten food offered to idols fully convinced that it was different from any other food.⁷²⁶ Even though Paul says nothing about the identity of those who have knowledge, it is likely that they too were gentile Christ followers who had gained a knowledge about these food offerings with which they did no longer think of it as different from any other food.⁷²⁷ Second, as Ehrensperger notes, Paul never seems concerned with the purity of what was being eaten at these meals and we know that

⁷²⁴ On the ethnic make-up of the Corinthian *ekklēsia*, see chapter 1.

⁷²⁵ Ehrensperger, "To Eat or Not to Eat," 119–22.

⁷²⁶ Cf. Hedner Zetterholm, "The Question of Assumptions," 95. Pace Richard E. DeMaris ("Ritual Transgression," in *Early Christian Ritual Life*, ed. Richard E. DeMaris, Jason T. Lamoreaux, and Steven C. Muir [London: Routledge, 2017], 146–66, 153) who thinks they are of "Judean extraction." Mark D. Nanos ("The Polytheist Identity of the 'Weak,' and Paul's Strategy to 'Gain' Them: A New Reading of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1," in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Pauline Studies* 5 [Leiden: Brill, 2008], 179–210) makes an interesting argument that those who are weak are not members of the Jesus movement at all, but rather "non-Christ-believing polytheists." Even though his suggestion is intriguing, I think it is more plausible that those Paul call "weak" are members of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth.

⁷²⁷ Hence, it appears as though Paul is trying to reconcile the views of gentile Christ followers within the *ekklēsia*.

during the meals that followed animal sacrifices, one could never be sure of what kind of meat was being served.⁷²⁸ If Jewish Christ followers were attending these cultic meals, this would potentially have been a problem.⁷²⁹ Tractate *Avodah Zarah* (2.3) explicitly states that meat that enters an idol temple or comes to an idol is allowed, but any meat that comes out from an idol's temple—and, one can assume, meat served in such a temple—is strictly forbidden.⁷³⁰ Another possible problem if we imagine that Jewish Christ followers attended the meals is the question of sharing the dinner table with gentiles.⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ Margaret Froelich (“Sacrificed Meat in Corinth and Jesus Worship as a Cult among Cults,” *JECH* 10 [2020]: 44–56, 49) points out: “There is no indication that the issue in Corinth is the consumption of pork or other halakically unclean meats.” Pace Dennis E. Smith (“Food and Dining in Early Christianity,” in *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, ed. John Wilkins and Robin Nadeau, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World [Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015], 357–64, 359) who writes that the problem in 1 Corinthians 8 “was likely concerned with dietary laws.”

⁷²⁹ On this topic, see Jordan D. Rosenblum, *The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); *ibid*, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 35–102. For Jewish texts that deals with dietary restrictions, see, e.g., the *Letter of Aristeas*; Philo, *Special Laws*, 4.100–02; Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.281–84.

⁷³⁰ Even though this text was written later than Paul's letter to the Corinthians, and we have no way of knowing how influential the Mishnah's opinion would have been in Corinth during the first century (if at all influential), it still presents us with an opinion that probably had some traction within Jewish circles before it was written down in the Mishnah. Hedner Zetterholm (“The Question of Assumptions,” 101) comments on the connections between 1 Corinthians and *Avodah Zarah*: “The rabbinic parallels are instructive because they illustrate that Paul's reasoning fits nicely into the Jewish context of halakah as it developed among the rabbis, including how to deal with the challenge to avoid idolatry in a society permeated with the cult of Greco-Roman gods.”

On views of food and Jewish dietary laws in Jewish texts from the Second Temple period and rabbinic Judaism, see Jordan D. Rosenblum, “Jewish Meals in Antiquity,” in *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, ed. John Wilkins and Robin Nadeau, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 348–56; Jodi Magness, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish daily life in the Time of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 77–84. Some Jewish texts written during the Second Temple period, e.g., *Jubilees*, the Book of Daniel, Tobit, etc., speak against the eating of gentile food, and there were Jews who did not eat with gentiles during this time. But it would be a mistake to assume that this was the case everywhere and at all times during this period, especially outside the land of Israel. Furthermore, David C. Kraemer (*Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages*, Routledge Advances in Sociology [London: Routledge, 2007], 29) argues that most of the works that forbid the eating of gentile food originated within Judea during the second century BCE. At the time Jewish identity, Kraemer notes, “was an increasingly vulnerable construct” and setting up clear boundaries between acceptable and non-acceptable practices was crucial for the survival of the Jewish identity. The question of how closely Jews of the time adhered to these food restrictions, however, is hard to know (and the fact that these restrictions were written down in several works indicate that the authors were battling a situation where Jews did eat gentile food).

⁷³¹ On the question of table-fellowship between Jews and gentiles, Magnus Zetterholm (*The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Sociological Approach to the Separation Between Judaism and Christianity*, Routledge Early Church Monographs [London: Routledge, 2003], 155) writes: “As for table-fellowship between Jews and Gentiles, we have seen that it did exist and was perfectly possible, given the right circumstances, which must have depended on the specific individual's degree of halakhic observance. This may have varied for different groups and probably even geographically. We have noted that some groups may have considered all table-fellowship with Gentiles abominable while other groups had a more open attitude.” Cf. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, 231. According to *Avodah Zarah*

A third reason it seems more plausible to suggest that it was gentile Christ followers who attended the dinners is that, for them, this would have been their natural milieu before joining the Jesus movement. Moreover, since Paul did not demand that they fully adapt to a Jewish way of life—instead, he argues against it in 1 Cor 7:17–24—and encouraged socialising with those outside the *ekklēsia* in 5:9–12, it would have been perfectly reasonable for gentile Christ followers to keep going to the cults they were members in prior to joining the Jesus movement.⁷³² One could question to what extent Jewish Christ followers, even though they were well integrated into Hellenistic and Roman society, were likely to attend gentile temples of worship as envisioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8.⁷³³ We know that Jews had their own associations and clubs where they could meet

5.5, Jews and gentiles could eat together (“If an Israelite was eating with a gentile at a table...”). The problem the tractate foresees is not table-fellowship, but what might happen during the communal dinner (wine libation to gentile gods is specifically mentioned).

⁷³² On Paul’s somewhat peculiar position, Campbell (*Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity*, 59) comments: “It is small wonder that Paul’s gentile mission had a stormy passage in the earliest days. He was in many respects apparently moving simultaneously in two differing directions. He claimed through the Christ-event a share in the covenant for gentile Christ-followers and argued for their new way of life from the scriptures and traditions of Israel, especially as these indicated the obligations of gentiles in any association with Israel. Yet he fought fiercely against their full assimilation to Judaism and opposed all who dared to impose the full demands of the Torah upon them.”

Ehrensperger (“To Eat or Not to Eat,” 120–22) holds that the gentile Christ followers who attended the dinners in 1 Cor 8 were “gentiles who has in some form already been in touch, familiar with, or even associated with Judaism, as God-fearers.” As God-fearers, it was unproblematic for them to both attend Jewish gatherings and remain loyal to their non-Jewish cults. As gentiles in Christ, however, this became a highly sensitive problem, and Paul demanded exclusive loyalty to the god of Israel and the lord Jesus Christ (even if this probably were not always clear to his Christ followers, since they were not allowed, according to Paul, to adapt all expressions of the Jewish way of life). As Ehrensperger (“To Eat or Not to Eat,” 121) formulates the situation of the gentile Christ followers: “If they were not supposed to become Jews, why then could they not continue to practice their previous loyalty rituals?” A similar line of thought is expressed in Magnus Zetterholm, “Purity and Anger: Gentiles and Idolatry in Antioch,” *IJRR* 1 (2005): 1–24, 11. On the elusive status of God-fearers in first century CE, see Dietrich-Alex Koch, “The God-Fearers between Facts and Fiction: Two Theosebeis-Inscriptions from Aphrodisias and Their Bearing for the New Testament,” *ST* 60 (2006): 62–90.

⁷³³ This is not to say that Jews in general lived secluded lives or did not participate in Hellenistic and/or Roman activities. Some Jews led secluded lives, perhaps most famously the community at Qumran, and the Maccabean literature portrays how some Jews sought to live a life untainted by the surrounding culture. But this was not a feasible strategy if one wanted to live in a city or in a society. Eric S. Gruen’s (“Jewish Perspectives on Greek Culture and Ethnicity,” in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, ed. Irad Malkin, Center for Hellenic Studies Colloquia 5 [Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies: 2001], 347–73, 348) comments apropos the two-sided nature of Judaism’s place in the ancient world are fitting: “[The Jews] represent a different culture, background, tradition, and history, but in the Hellenistic era, and indeed in the Greek East of the Roman period, they were part and parcel of a Greek cultural community.” On Jewish interactions with non-Jews, see Karl-Gustav Sandelin, “Dragning till hednisk kult bland judar under hellenistisk tid och tidig kejsartid,” *Nordisk judaistik* 10 (1989): 27–38; Borgen, “‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘How Far?’,” 30–59.

and practice their ancestral customs, but it is also possible, if not plausible, that some Jews found themselves in social constellations that resulted in varying degrees of participation in gentile associations with cultic aspects (and vice versa).⁷³⁴ The question is where on the spectrum the Jewish Christ followers in Corinth would have found themselves.

However, some Jews did regard too close interactions with gentiles as something negative. Philo has this to say about anyone who tries to coax Jews into fraternising too closely with their gentile neighbors: “If a brother or son or daughter or wife or a housemate or a friend however true, or anyone else who seems to be kindly disposed, urge us to a like course, bidding us to fraternize with the multitude, resort to their temples, and join in their libations and sacrifices, we must punish him as a public and general enemy.”⁷³⁵ Weighing the evidence, it seems more plausible that it was gentile Christ followers who attended the cultic meals in view in 1 Corinthians 8. The question is, then, how does the notion that it was the gentile Christ followers who attended the cultic dinners in 1 Corinthians 8 affect the possible reasoning behind their going to the idol temples?

⁷³⁴ There is much evidence for purpose-built Jewish associations, among which is *GRA* 2.113. This inscription is particularly interesting in this context since it highlights that even though the Jews in Akmoneia had their own association, they were clearly integrated with non-Jewish aspects of the area since the building was founded by a woman called Julia Severa, who was a high priestess in the local imperial cult, cf. Lee L. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 119–20. Additionally, Richard Last (“The Other Synagogues,” *JSJ* 47 [2016]: 330–63) has argued that our understanding of the term “synagogue” as referring to the gathering place of predominantly ethnically homogenous groups of Jews is to be challenged due to the fact that several “Judean-deity groups” (his term) were heterogenous and did not only contain ethnic Jews.

⁷³⁵ *On the Special Laws* 1.58.316 (LCL). This, however, does not mean that Philo was completely against Jews joining associations and clubs that were run by non-Jews. In his *On Drunkenness* (6.20), Philo seems to think it is acceptable for Jews to join non-Jewish associations and clubs: “As for contributions or club subscriptions, when the object is to share in the best of possessions, prudence, such payments are praiseworthy and profitable” (LCL). On this text Peder Borgen (“‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘How Far?’” 46) comments, “Philo is of the opinion that Jews might join non-Jewish social clubs and be permitted to keep their own customs and standards of behavior. He does not specify how this could be done, however. As to the problem of the cultic aspects (sacrifices, etc.) in club activities, Philo does not specify how a Jew should behave in order to avoid taking part in idolatrous worship.” Cf. *ibid*, *Philo, John and Paul: New Perspectives on Judaism and Early Christianity*, BJS 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 227. It is clear from *On Drunkenness* 24.95 that Philo does not expect Jews to take part in the meals and worship of these associations and clubs.

As I mentioned in chapter 2, the gods people in the Roman world worshiped were believed to be an ever-present part of society, and their involvement in the undertakings of everything from the private household to the public duties carried out by the emperor himself was both unquestioned and pivotal. Hence, changing gods, which led to the cessation of the performing of proper cultic rites (*religio*), was not easily done.⁷³⁶ Fredriksen comments on the close connection between the human and divine realm in the ancient world: “In antiquity, gods were local in a dual sense. They attached to particular *places*... and gods also attached to particular *peoples*; ‘religion’ ran in the blood. In this sense, one’s *genos* was as much a cult-designation as what we, from a sociological or anthropological perspective, see as an ‘ethnic’ one: ethnicity expressed ‘religion’ (acknowledging the anachronism of both terms for our period), and religion expressed ‘ethnicity’.”⁷³⁷ Two ancient examples illuminate this very well. First, Josephus’s *Against Apion* depicts Apion questioning Josephus on why Jews who are citizens of Egypt and live in Alexandria do not worship the same gods as the Alexandrians.⁷³⁸ This brief comment from Apion showcases the close connection between geographical place and the divine as well as the idea that when one moved to a new location, one was expected to pay tribute to the gods of that location. Another example comes from the ancient Greek author, Herodotus, who formulates his view of what constituted the Greek ethnos in the fifth century BCE: “Being Greek (Ἑλληνικός) is sharing the same blood (ὄμαιμός), same language (ὁμόγλωσσος), the shrines of the gods (θεῶν ἰδρύματα),

⁷³⁶ Indeed, some even deemed it impossible. For example, Thiessen (*Contesting Conversion*, 108) has shown “that there was a constant stream of Jewish thought” that opposed the idea that non-Jews could become Jews.

⁷³⁷ Paula Fredriksen, “What ‘Parting of the Ways’? Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City,” in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 35–63, 39 (emphasis original). Ethnicity, or kinship, also had profound impact on other parts of ancient societies, e.g., politics (which, in turn, also was dependent, so ancient Greeks and Romans thought, on good relationships with the gods). Cf. Christopher P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World*, *Revealing Antiquity* 12 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁷³⁸ *Against Apion* 2.65. A similar logic is at work in *Jewish Antiquities* 12.126, where some Greeks argue that if Jews are to be citizens with the Greeks, they should worship the same gods as the Greeks.

common sacrifices (*κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι*), and the same customs (*ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα*).⁷³⁹ This did not mean that ethnicity was not malleable in antiquity; Paul himself includes gentile Christ followers in the history of Israel in 1 Cor 10:1 by claiming that the Israelites who left slavery in Egypt were *οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν*. Even so, if gentile Christ followers were to give up their cults when they joined the Jesus movement, this would not only affect their social connections in the city, but it would also alter how others perceived them and how they lived their lives. Perhaps this was even more problematic since Paul refused the possibility of these Christ followers to seek to become Jews.⁷⁴⁰ Ronald Charles articulates the intricacies of Paul’s situation: “Paul occupies a fluid and complex social space in the diaspora.... He is busy trying to generate new social and dynamic networks among different ethnic and dispersed groups, using localized communities of believers within the Roman Empire.”⁷⁴¹

If we turn the focus more narrowly to 1 Corinthians 8, we are now in a position to ask, and answer, some questions about how Christ followers’ social interactions with those outside of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth could have been affected by Paul’s instructions and how the apostle balanced between keeping the Christ community and its members away from any spiritually harmful situation, on the one hand, and how he allowed them to still be an integral part of the society they

⁷³⁹ *The Persian War* 8.144 (my trans.). The full Greek reads: *αὐτίς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὼν ὁμαιμὸν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματα τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα*. On this passage, see Rosalind Thomas, “Ethnicity, Genealogy, and Hellenism in Herodotus,” in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, ed. Irad Malkin, Center for Hellenic Studies Colloquia 5 (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies: 2001), 213–33; Rosaria Vignolo Munson, “Herodotus and Ethnicity,” in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Jeremy McInerney, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 341–55.

⁷⁴⁰ With reference to the gentile Christ followers in Galatia and their wish to circumcise, Karin B. Neutel (*A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul’s Declaration ‘Neither Jew Nor Greek, Neither Slave Nor Free, Nor Male and Female’ in the Context of First-Century Thought*, LNTS 513 [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015], 99) remarks: “Gentiles who gave up their gods [when joining the Jesus movement] but did not circumcise could be seen to enter an ethnic no man’s land.”

⁷⁴¹ Ronald Charles, *Paul and the Politics of Diaspora*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 128. Commenting on the boundary making Paul is doing in 1 Corinthians 8, Judith Lieu (*Christian identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 127) comments: “The realities of social life in the Graeco-Roman society would, as they did for other Jews, demand careful articulation of how, when, and where this particular boundary [of turning away from idols] was to be policed.”

lived in, on the other. Lamoreaux highlights that 1 Corinthians 8 touches upon both cultic and social issues: “For the Corinthians, this is not a purely religious matter in the sense of interacting with an idol (8:7, 9). Rather, *it is inevitably social*.”⁷⁴² This leads us to the topic of communal dining.

Dining together in antiquity was one of the most common, significant, and visible ways—visible to both those one was eating with and those who knew or saw who one was eating with—in which one could express comradeship, fellowship, and allegiance. Since some Christ followers in Corinth dined at several tables, so to speak, they displayed their attachment to at least one other cult than the Christ cult. As Lee M. Jefferson puts it: “Community, or *koinonia*, is the goal and the result of dining, and the *koinonia* for Paul is threatened by the Roman dining practice of consuming idol food.”⁷⁴³ Going one step further, Kloppenborg comments on how eating together also indicated adherence to similar behavioural codes: “The Christ assembly in Corinth used ritual eating as a way to mark belonging and compliance with the group’s ethical codes.”⁷⁴⁴ This is strikingly clear in 1 Cor 5:11 where Paul instructs the Corinthians on how to interact with someone who calls himself a brother but does not abide by the ethical codes of the Jesus movement: “Do not even eat with such a one” (τῷ τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν).⁷⁴⁵ Consequently, if the *ekklesia* of Christ followers shared a way of life, expressed in their communal meals, it is reasonable to think

⁷⁴² Lamoreaux, “Ritual Negotiation,” 141.

⁷⁴³ Jefferson, “The Pagan Feast,” 23. Cf. Matthias Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft: Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern*, TANZ 13 (Tübingen: Francke, 1996), 155.

⁷⁴⁴ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 156. Cf. L. Michael White, “Regulating Fellowship in the Communal Meal: Early Jewish and Christian Evidence,” in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne Sigismund Nielsen, ASMA 1 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 177–205, 179.

⁷⁴⁵ Cf. Gal 2:11–14 and the many times Jesus is questioned in the Gospels on the grounds of with whom he eats, e.g., Matt 9:10–11; 11:19; Mark 2:15–16; Luke 5:30; 7:34; 19:6–7.

that those who attended other cultic meals understood their engagement with those cults as going deeper than just a shared meal.⁷⁴⁶

In light of the discussion on how disruptive it would have been for the Christ followers in Corinth to stop attending their previous cults now when they were part of the *ekklēsia*, how are we to best understand Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8? In what follows, I argue that Paul does not order an absolute ban on attendance at the dinners he discusses in the chapter; rather, he accepts that going to these dinners is in many ways a necessity for some Corinthian Christ followers and that they only need to avoid these situations when someone who would eat the food offered to idols as though the sacrificial ritual really had changed the status of the food was present. With that said, I will not provide a full account or interpretation of the chapter, I have already pointed out some of the more important questions where I differ from previous scholarship above. Instead, I focus on how Paul viewed the food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) and what it meant to eat of it. My argument is this: Paul did not view εἰδωλόθυτος as different from any other kinds of food; consequently, eating from it is not inherently problematic. Moreover, I argue that Paul's approach to the situation of Christ followers attending other cults' dinners is comparatively relaxed when compared to other texts produced by early Christ followers. In order to make this argument, I will deal with three things: Paul's conception of idols and how they affect the food offered to them, if at all; what Paul thought about food offered to idols; and, finally, Paul's overarching approach to the subject, and issue, of visiting idol temples in order to dine there.

Paul mentions idols both in 1 Cor 8:4 and 10:19. In both instances, Paul claims that an idol is nothing. In 8:4 he specifies the *locus* where an idol is nothing by saying οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ,

⁷⁴⁶ This particular theme will be further developed in the next chapter and on 1 Cor 10:14–22.

thereby suggesting that there is no place in the entirety of the cosmos where an idol is anything.⁷⁴⁷ Outside of these two key verses, Paul gives a similar picture. Later on in 1 Corinthians, Paul describes some of the *ekklēsia* members having been led astray “to speechless idols” (πρὸς τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ ἄφωνα). In his earliest letter, Paul speaks of how well the Thessalonians received Paul’s εὐαγγέλιον and how they “turned to God from idols to serve a living and genuine god” (ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ, 1 Thess 1:9).⁷⁴⁸ A similar contrast between idols and the living god can be seen in 2 Cor 6:16: “But what agreement does the temple of God has with idols? For we are the temple of the living God” (τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων; ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος).⁷⁴⁹ Based on these references to idols by Paul, we can generate a picture of how the apostle viewed idols.

1 Cor 8:4 and 10:19 are probably the most telling in this regard.⁷⁵⁰ In both verses, the idol “is nothing,” nor does it seem to do anything. It is merely a representation of something; in itself, however, an idol “is nothing.”⁷⁵¹ 1 Cor 12:2 strengthens this picture in two ways: first, Paul indicates the idols’ lifelessness by labelling them as speechless (ἄφωνος); second, Paul writes that the Christ followers were led “to/toward” (πρὸς) these idols, not “by” (ὑπό) them, signaling that

⁷⁴⁷ Technically, Paul does not say “an idol is nothing” in 1 Cor 10:19. Instead he phrases it as a rhetorical question (τί οὐ φημι; ὅτι... εἰδῶλόν τί ἐστίν), expecting a negative answer.

⁷⁴⁸ Some have argued that 1 Thess 1:9–10 is a pre-Pauline text, but Morna D. Hooker (“1 Thessalonians 1.9–10: A Nutshell – But What Kind of Nut?” in *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996], 3.435–48) has established the Pauline authorship of these two verses.

⁷⁴⁹ There are also references to idols in 1 Cor 8:7 and Rom 2:22. But in both of these cases, Paul does not say anything about the idols; hence, these two passages give no clue to how Paul viewed them.

⁷⁵⁰ I noted above that many scholars think that Paul quotes the Corinthians when he writes: οἴδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἰδῶλον ἐν κόσμῳ. I do not intend to analyse if this is the case or not, but either way, it is clear that Paul agrees with the statement, even if it did not originate with him.

⁷⁵¹ What idols represent, however, is not nothing. Paul says, in 1 Cor 10:20, that even though idols are nothing, they represent something: *daimonia*. Rev 9:20 also connects demons with idols: “And the remainder of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent from the works of their hands, and they did not stop worshiping the demons and the idols (προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα) of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, nor are they able to hear or to walk.”

the idols did not have the power to act. The two references to idols in 1 Thess 1:9 and 2 Cor 6:16 draw a contrast between the god of Israel, who is a living and genuine god, and idols.⁷⁵² If the god of the Jesus movement is a living and genuine god, this presumably means that idols are neither alive nor genuine.⁷⁵³ This further corroborates Paul's statement in 1 Cor 8:4 and 10:19. Hence, it appears that in Paul's mind idols are simply material representations of, at least, demons, but possibly other divine beings as well, and the idol itself is of no concern to Paul since it has no life and is an inanimate entity.

Paul's view of idols is similar to that of his ancestral tradition and other Jewish texts written during the Second Temple period.⁷⁵⁴ Even though there was more than one approach to or

⁷⁵² On the contrast between the god of Israel and idols, Antonio Pitta ("A Peg to Hang 1 Thessalonians on? Nature and Function of 1 Thess 1,9–10," *Bib* 101 [2020]: 87–106, 98) comments: "To serve God is to give up idols." Hence, one of Paul's main objectives with his preaching to gentiles was to make sure that they gave up their idols in favour of exclusive worship of the god of Israel. Cf. Carey C. Newman, "God and Glory and Paul, Again: Divine Identity and Community Formation in the Early Jesus Movement," in *Monotheism and Christology in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Matthew V. Novenson, NovTSup 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 99–138, 136; Mark D. Nanos, "The Question of Conceptualization: Qualifying Paul's Position on Circumcision in Dialogue with Josephus's Advisors to King Izates," in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 105–25, 127. David G. Horrell ("Religion, Ethnicity, and Way of Life: Exploring Categories of Identity," *CBQ* 83 [2021]: 38–55, 52) points out that "'turning to God from idols' is more than a matter of purely religious realignment, as if such commitments could be neatly separated from other aspects of identity and practice.... Rather, the 'turn' involves a more socially consequential withdrawal from a set of practices that were part of everyday life and constitutive of a sense of identity." The problem in Corinth, Bruce W. Winter ("Theological and Ethical Responses to Religious Pluralism—1 Corinthians 8–10," *TynBul* 41 [1990]: 209–26) points out was that Paul's preaching "did not however extract converts from life in cities where religious pluralism was woven into the very fabric of every daily life."

⁷⁵³ Cf. Gottfried Nebe, "Die Kritik am εἰδωλα-Kult in 1Thessalonicher 1,9–10 im Rahmen der paulinischen Missionstätigkeit und Soteriologie: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis von ‚Tora-Gesetz‘ und ‚Natur-Gesetz‘," in *Das Gesetz im frühen Judentum und im Neuen Testament: Festschrift für Christoph Burchard zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Dieter Sänger and Matthias Konrad, NTOA 57 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2006), 191–221.

⁷⁵⁴ The term "idol" is here understood as all representations of the divine (images, statues, figurines, etc.). I note that I am specifically interested in Jewish views of idols only, not gods or *daimonia*. The separation of this triad can seem artificial, but it is justified by our examination of only idols in this part of the study and by the fact that Paul distinguishes between what an idol is (nothing) and what it represents (*daimonia*). Ambrose Thomson ("Voiceless Idols, Speaking People: 1 Corinthians 12–14 and the Accessibility of Divine Presence," *JSPL* 10 [2020]: 72–90, 77) notes that "in Paul's own writing, there is a clear distinction between idols and the spiritual beings they represent." Moreover, Hanna Tervanotko ("Searching the Book of Law: Jewish Divination in 1 Maccabees 3:48," in *The Early Reception of the Torah*, ed. Kristin De Troyer et al., DCLS 39 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020], 121–37, 130) points out that Paul was not the only Jew to view idols as something separate from, e.g., gods or *daimonia*: "It is significant, in thinking about terminology, that the Jewish texts draws [*sic*] a distinction between 'god' and 'idol,' a distinction that is not as apparent in the classical Greek context."

understanding of idols both within Judaism during Paul’s time and in older Jewish scriptures, Emma Wasserman is right to point out that, “Paul resembles the biblical polemicists in working with certain theological premises but they amount to basic commitments, not some imagined Jewish thought world or rigidly construed intellectual tradition.”⁷⁵⁵ A few texts will be used to highlight how Paul’s rhetoric surrounding idols fits into the wider Jewish context.⁷⁵⁶ Psalm 135:15–17 (LXX 134:15–17) is an illustrative example of the view that idols are, contrary to their appearance, nothing and so capable of nothing. It reads: “The idols (LXX: εἰδωλα/MT: עֲצָב) of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear. Indeed, they have no spirit (LXX: πνεῦμα/MT: רוּחַ) in them.”⁷⁵⁷ The prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible is perhaps the type of literature in which the ridicule of idols is the most pervasive.⁷⁵⁸ An elaborate example of idol polemics in the prophetic literature is found in Isa 44:9–20. In this chapter, the prophet makes fun

⁷⁵⁵ Emma Wasserman, “‘An Idol Is Nothing in the World’ (1 Cor 8:4): The Metaphysical Contradictions of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1 in the Context of Jewish Idolatry Polemics,” in *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology*, ed. Susan E. Myers, WUNT II/321 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 201–27, 203. On idol polemics in the Hebrew Bible, see Thomas A. Judge, *Other Gods and Idols: The Relationship between the Worship of Other Gods and the Worship of Idols within the Old Testament*, OTS 674 (London: T&T Clark, 2019).

⁷⁵⁶ Even though Jews are perhaps the most noteworthy and written about group in ancient times that spoke out against idols, the idea that idols were lifeless and that the worship of them was vain can be found in non-Jewish literature as well. Plato writes, “some of the gods whom we honour we see clearly [i.e., the stars]; but of others we set up statues as images, and we believe that when we worship these, lifeless (ἄψυχος) though they be, the living gods (τοὺς ἐμψύχους θεοὺς) beyond feel great good-will towards us and gratitude” (*Laws* 931a; LCL). Heraclitus also criticizes the worship of statues: “And to these statues (ἄγάλματα) they pray, as though they were conversing with houses, not knowing what gods and heroes are” (*On the Universe* 126; my trans.). On views of statues and images in Greek and Roman thought, see Deborah Tarn Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Stijn Bussels, *The Animated Image: Roman Theory on Naturalism, Vividness and Divine Power*, Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus 11 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag; Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012).

⁷⁵⁷ Verse 17 in the LXX adds more objects that the idols have but cannot use: “They have ears, but cannot hear; they have nostrils, but cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot touch; they have feet, but cannot walk; they cannot shout with their throats for there is no spirit/breath in their bodies.” Nijay K. Gupta (“‘They Are Not Gods!’ Jewish and Christian Idol Polemic and Greco-Roman Use of Cult Statues,” *CBQ* 76 [2014]: 704–19, 713) points out that the reference to idols as lacking πνεῦμα/רוּחַ is a frequent motif in the Hebrew Bible, cf. Jer 10:14; 51:17; Hab 2:19.

⁷⁵⁸ On this topic, see Michael B. Dick, “Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image,” in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Michael B. Dick (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1–54; Michael C. Legaspi, “Opposition to Idolatry in the Book of Habakkuk,” *VT* 67 (2017): 458–69; Wolfgang M. W. Roth, “For Life, He Appeals to Death (Wis 13:18): A Study of Old Testament Idol Parodies,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 21–47.

of what he perceives to be the absurdity of making idols from various raw materials. Of the carpenter, Isa 44:15–17 says that he uses some of the wood to light of fire in order to warm himself and bake some bread and prepare his food; from what remains of the wood, the carpenter makes an idol, to which he kneels and worship. The point of Isaiah’s critique is, as Paul would put it, that an idol is nothing else than an ornate piece of wood or any other material.⁷⁵⁹ The view of idols as dead pieces of material found in the Hebrew Bible continued in the writings of the Second Temple period.⁷⁶⁰

Wisdom of Solomon contains one of the starkest critiques of idols (and those who worship them).⁷⁶¹ In three full chapters (13–15) the author attacks the making of idols and the subsequent worship of them.⁷⁶² David A. deSilva describes Wisdom’s critique of idols as “typical of Jewish anti-idolatry satires and polemics.”⁷⁶³ Deeply rooted in the scriptures of the Hebrew Bible, Wisdom develops the theme and understanding of idols in its critique of them.⁷⁶⁴ As in Isa 44:9–

⁷⁵⁹ The Latin author Horace makes a similar remark in his *Satires* (1.8.1–3) where a wooden idol says: “Once I was a fig-wood stem, a worthless log, when the carpenter, doubtful whether to make a stool or a Priapus, chose that I be a god. A god, then, I became” (LCL).

⁷⁶⁰ Jewish critique of idols and idolatry abound in the literature of this period, see Wisdom of Solomon 13–15; The Letter of Aristeas 134–139; Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.239–49; Philo, *On the Special Laws* 1:13–31; 2.255–256; *On the Decalogue* 52–81; Bel and the Dragon 1–40; The Letter of Jeremiah 2–73; Rom 1:18–32; 1 Cor 12:2; Gal 4:8–10; 1 Thess 1:9; 4:3–7; Sibylline oracles 3.19–34, 545–55, 586–90, 604–6.

⁷⁶¹ Although full certainty as to the dating of this text has not been reached, scholars commonly date it to the second or first century CE, with the first century CE being the more favoured. Cf. William Horbury, “Wisdom of Solomon,” in *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Apocrypha*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 45–67, 48–49; Samuel Cheong, “Examining the Date of the Wisdom of Solomon,” *Korean Journal of Old Testament Studies* 9 (1995): 259–71.

⁷⁶² *Wisdom* 13–15 is remarkably similar to Rom 1:18–32, and a link between the two texts most likely did exist. Cf. Jonathan A. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation*, NovTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 93–121; *idem*, “Announcing the Human: Rethinking the Relationship Between Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 and Romans 1:18–32,” *NTS* 57 (2011): 214–37; Paolo Iovino, “‘The only Wise God’ in the Letter to the Romans: Connections with the Book of Wisdom,” in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*, DCLY, ed. Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 283–305.

⁷⁶³ David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 145. For other texts that present a similar view on idols, see John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 209–11.

⁷⁶⁴ Maurice Gilbert (*La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse (Sg 13–15)*, AnBib 53 [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973], xiii) writes, “Trois chapitres du livre de la Sagesse (13–15) forment le développement le plus important que l’Ancien Testament consacre à la critique des manifestations religieuses du paganisme.” On the use of the Hebrew

20, Wisdom understands idols as the work of human hands (ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων, 13:10) that are both soulless (ἄψυχος) and dead (νεκρός) (13:17–18; 14:29; 15:17). The origins of idols, Wisdom maintains, is a father who, after mourning the loss of his son, made an image (εἰκῶν) of him and honored him as a god (ὡς θεὸν ἐτίμησεν), even though the image is lifeless.⁷⁶⁵ Noting the strong language about idols in Wisdom, Drew J. Strait writes, “the Wisdom of Solomon’s *digressio* on pagan idolatry... represents the most sophisticated use of the *topoi* in early Judaism.”⁷⁶⁶

Hence, the idea that Paul thought idols in themselves were nothing but the materials they were made of is well attested in other Jewish writings from both the time before Paul and during his lifetime. Further, Paul seems to have been directly inspired of other Jewish works and their critique of idols and idolaters, especially by Wisdom 13–15. This Pauline understanding of idols, I argue, lays the foundation for his halakhic understanding of food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος), and subsequently why he allows the Corinthian Christ followers to eat such food. However, before turning to Paul’s instructions on εἰδωλόθυτος we will examine the view presented by other texts produced by Christ followers during the first and second century CE and their view of food offered to idols.

In the literature of the early Jesus movement, there are three other works in addition to 1 Corinthians that mention the term εἰδωλόθυτος: Acts 15:29; 21:25; Rev 2:14, 20; and *Didache* 6:3.

Bible in *Wisdom*, see Patrick W. Skehan, “Borrowing from the Psalms in the Book of Wisdom,” *CBQ* 10 (1948): 384–97; *idem*, “Isaiah and the Teaching of the Book of Wisdom,” *CBQ* 2 (1940): 289–99.

⁷⁶⁵ Claudia Bergmann (“Idol Worship in Bel and the Dragon and Other Jewish Literature from the Second Temple Period,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, Septuagint Research 53, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden [Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2006], 207–23, 211) identifies five reasons for the origin of idols according to texts from the Second Temple period: “The reasons why human beings create idols are” (1) the influence of the ‘cruel spirits’; (2) grief for a dead person who is now remembered in a divinized statue; (3) adoration of a ruler who is removed from one’s own location and must be worshipped in an image; (4) yearning for profit; and maybe also (5) Israel’s wish to have gods ‘as other nations have’.”

⁷⁶⁶ Drew J. Strait, “The Wisdom of Solomon, Ruler Cults, and Paul’s Polemic against Idols in the Aeropagus Speech,” *JBL* 136 (2017): 609–32, 610.

In Acts 15:29, Luke reports that εἰδωλόθυτος is, together with blood, that which has been strangled, and sexual immorality, one of the things that the leaders of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem have agreed that gentile Christ followers need to abstain from.⁷⁶⁷ The decree is repeated in Acts 21:25. In both instances in Acts, the language surrounding food offered to idols is unambiguous: they are to stay away from it under all circumstances.⁷⁶⁸ One interesting aspect concerning food offered to idols in Acts is that in 15:20, where the prohibition of the four things occurs for the first time, there is no mention of food offered to idols; instead, what gentile Christ followers should abstain from is “the pollution of idols” (τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων).⁷⁶⁹ Hence, the understanding in Acts seems to be that food offered to idols is inherently problematic due to the pollution idols convey.

The Book of Revelation presents an equally stringent view of food offered to idols as does Acts. In Rev 2:14 and 20, the *ekklēsia* in Pergamum is chastised for their eating of food offered to idols. In verse 14 this is because some of the members in the *ekklēsia* hold to “the teaching of Balaam,” which includes eating food offered to idols and practicing sexual immorality.⁷⁷⁰ The *ekklēsia* in Thyatira receives a similar accusation in Rev 2:20 as did the *ekklēsia* in Pergamum; the

⁷⁶⁷ The prohibition of “that which has been strangled” (πνικτός) is not present in some textual witnesses in all three accounts of the Decree in Acts. However, the inclusion of πνικτός is most likely the more original reading. Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 118. For a text-critical discussion of the three occurrences of the Decree in Acts, see Christian B. Amphoux, “Les variantes et l’histoire du ‘décret apostolique’: Actes 15,20. 29; 21,25,” in *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Festschrift J. Delobel*, ed. A. Denaux, BETL 161 (Leuven: Peeters; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 209–26, 209–16.

⁷⁶⁸ The background to the Decree in Acts 15 has often been argued to lay in the Noahide commandments or Lev 17–18. For a discussion on possible backgrounds, see Emanuelle Steffek, “Some Observations on the Apostolic Decree in Acts 15.20, 29 (and 21.25),” in *The Torah in The New Testament: Papers Delivered at the Manchester-Lausanne Seminar of June 2008*, ed. Michael Tait and Peter Oakes, LNTS 401 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 133–40.

⁷⁶⁹ Beverly Roberts Gaventa (*The Acts of the Apostles*, ANTC [Nashville: Abingdon, 2003], 221) points out that this category is greater than only food offered to idols, but that food and drink offered to idols is most strongly in view.

⁷⁷⁰ In giving the instructions to the *ekklēsia* in Pergamum about food offered to idols, Jesus is recorded as saying that this “teaching of Balaam” taught Balak to put a stumbling block (σκάνδαλον) before the sons of Israel (Num 31:16, which refers back to Num 25:1–2). Paul seems to be working under the same logic as the author of Revelation in 1 Cor 8:9 when he writes, “but make sure that this right of yours do not become a stumbling block (πρόσκομμα) to the weak ones.” Even though Paul and the author of Revelation use two different words, they are similar in meaning (and Paul uses the verb σκανδαλίζω in 8:13).

Christ followers in Thyatira have also been led astray by false teachings, this time by a certain Jezebel who “says she is a prophet,” and they practices sexual immorality and eat food offered to idols (φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα).⁷⁷¹ In Revelation, the eating of food offered to idols (coupled with sexual immorality) is inspired by inaccurate teachings and appears to be inherently contrary to the proper behaviour of Christ followers.⁷⁷²

The *Didache* is the third text produced by early Christ followers that mentions the term εἰδωλόθυτος. In 6:3, we read: “Now concerning food, endure what you are able. But make certain to stay away from food offered to idols; for it is the worship of dead gods.”⁷⁷³ Like Acts and Revelation, the *Didache* is unambiguous in its ban on food offered to idols.⁷⁷⁴ Indeed, Huub van den Sandt and David Flusser argue that *Did.* 6:2–3 is a later addition to the *Didache*—which is grounded in Acts 15—made by Jewish and gentile Christ followers in order to inform the latter that they need not keep the whole of the Jewish law, only what they are able to and to avoid food

⁷⁷¹ Just like Balaam and Balak, the name Jezebel refers to a person in the Hebrew Bible who led Israel astray (cf. 1 Kgs 16:31; 21:25).

⁷⁷² Since Revelation does not tell us anything about the context in which this food was eaten, unlike what we have in Paul, it is impossible to determine if it is the eating in itself that is the issue, or if it is the things that accompanied the eating that is problematic or a problematic factor (e.g., being in a temple dedicated to idols, participating in other kinds of cultic rituals, and associating with other cults). However, I think G. K. Beale (*The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999], 248) is correct in pointing out that the problem has to do with a situation where Christ followers are eating food offered to idols “in the context of idolatrous worship.” For a fuller discussion, see Jan Willem van Henten, “Balaam in Revelation 2:14,” in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, ed. George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten, TBN 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 247–64, 257–60.

⁷⁷³ Περὶ δὲ τῆς βρώσεως ὃ δύνασαι βάστασον ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ εἰδωλοθύτου λίαν πρόσεχε λατρεία γὰρ ἐστὶν θεῶν νεκρῶν. Cf. Mishnah, *Avodah Zarah* 2.3.

⁷⁷⁴ Based on this, Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 165–215) argues that the view that Paul, in contrast to Acts, Revelation, and the *Didache*, allowed Christ followers to eat food offered to idols is wrong since it does not cohere with later writings produced by Christ followers. There are three main problems with Cheung’s position: first, it is anachronistic to argue that because writings that post-date 1 Corinthians forbid Christ followers to eat food offered to idols, Paul most necessarily do so too; second, neither Acts, Revelation, nor the *Didache* indicate in any way that they are building on the work of Paul by quoting or referring to him; third, both Acts and the *Didache* are written as documents that are trying to lay down rules for and speak to a wider audience of Christ followers. Paul’s instructions on food offered to idols, on the other hand, writes only to the Christ followers in Corinth in order to discuss a particular situation.

offered to idols.⁷⁷⁵ If one takes the three texts that contain a prohibition against food offered to idols, it is interesting to note, as do van den Sandt and Flusser, that in Acts εἰδωλόθυτος, sexual immorality, meat from strangled animals, and blood are forbidden. In Revelation, only εἰδωλόθυτος and sexual immorality is forbidden. Finally, in *Did.* 6:3 εἰδωλόθυτος is the only thing that is explicitly forbidden. This trajectory seems to suggest that of the four things mentioned in Acts, assuming that it is the earliest form of the prohibitions applied to gentile Christ followers, food offered to idols was either the most important to abstain from or it was the component in society that was most present where the Christ followers were and therefore needed extra attention.⁷⁷⁶ We now turn to Paul's understanding of εἰδωλόθυτος in 1 Cor 8, and I will argue that his approach to this kind of food is quite different from the one seen in Acts, Revelation, and *Didache*.⁷⁷⁷

1 Corinthians 8 is primarily a chapter about food offered to idols, as evidenced by the initial change of subject in 8:1: *περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων*. Altogether, Paul uses the word εἰδωλόθυτος four times in the chapter, and one more time in chapter 10.⁷⁷⁸ What he seems to argue is that since an

⁷⁷⁵ Huub van den Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in early Judaism and Christianity*, CRINT 5 (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 238–70.

⁷⁷⁶ The strong rejection of εἰδωλόθυτος seen in Acts, Revelation, and the *Didache* continued well after these writings and David Freidenreich (*Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011], 102), through a study of the rejection of εἰδωλόθυτος among the early Church Fathers, argues that “Abstention from *eidōlothuton* in particular constituted one of the most important markers of Christian identity in the centuries immediately following Jesus’ death.”

⁷⁷⁷ As I have argued throughout this chapter, Paul was concerned that his instructions in 1 Corinthians 8, but also in the letter as a whole, did not make the Christ followers social outcasts. Ehrhardt (“Soziale Fragen,” 164) confirms that not eating food offered to idols would have just that effect on early Christ followers and their communities: “Das Verbot solches Fleisch zu essen, sonderte die frühen Christen nicht nur von ihren heidnische Nachbarn ab und machte sie zu Ausgestoßenen, sondern es zog auch die allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit auf sie.”

We do not know whether Paul knew of the Decree from Acts 15 or not. Matti Myllykoski (“Ohne Dekret: Das Götzenopferfleisch und die Frühgeschichte der *Didache*,” in *Aposteldekret und antikes Vereinswesen: Gemeinschaft und ihre Ordnung*, ed. Markus Öhler, WUNT 280 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 113–38, 118) does not rule out the possibility, but thinks it unlikely due to Paul's more lenient position on εἰδωλόθυτος. See also the discussion in Friedrich Avemarie, “Die jüdischen Wurzeln des Aposteldekrets: Lösbare und ungelöste Probleme,” in *Aposteldekret und antikes Vereinswesen: Gemeinschaft und ihre Ordnung*, ed. Markus Öhler, WUNT 280 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 5–32, 27–29.

⁷⁷⁸ The word εἰδωλόθυτος is only found in texts produced by Jewish and Christ following communities (see 1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19; Acts 15:29; 21:25; Rev 2:14, 20; 4 Macc 5:2). Moreover, εἰδωλόθυτος is a polemical take on ἱερόθυτος, which would be the standard term non-Jews used to designate food that had been sacrificed to the gods (Aristophanes,

idol is nothing, eating food offered to idols is not an issue *per se*. Paul knows this, as do at least some of the Corinthian Christ followers; “but not everyone has this knowledge” (ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γινῶσις, 8:7). Hence, they eat the food offered to idols as though it were truly different from other food (ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν, 8:7) which leads to their consciousness being defiled (ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται, 8:7). This is the key problem concerning food offered to idols. However, for Paul and those who know that idols are nothing, food offered to idols presents no problem: neither to their consciousness nor to their relationship with God, the father, or the Lord Jesus. Simply put, for Paul and those who have knowledge, εἰδωλόθυτος is merely ordinary βρῶμα. Indeed, Paul does not even seem bothered by the fact that some Christ followers are going to idol temples (8:10), only by the fact that someone who has a weak consciousness might see the former dining in an idol temple and that this person would be built up to eat of the food offered to idols (which he/she would think of as spiritually different from non-sacrificed food).⁷⁷⁹ Paul has this rather permissive attitude since an idol is nothing, and therefore “food will not bring us before God’s judgement; we are neither worse off if we do not eat, nor are we better off if we eat” (8:8).

Concerning food offered to idols, Arnold Erhardt goes as far as saying, “Paulus selber bei seinem ersten Aufenthalt in Korinth Götzenopfer-Fleisch gegessen hatte.”⁷⁸⁰ Furthermore, Bremmer thinks it reasonable that the Christ followers in Corinth, and presumably elsewhere, brought meat sacrificed in the city’s cults and temples to the communal dinner described in 1

Birds, 1265; Plutarch, *Moralia*, 729c). Paul also uses the term ἱερόθυτος in 1 Cor 10:28 when he portrays a non-Christ follower who invites a Christ follower to dine on sacrificial food.

⁷⁷⁹ Fisk (“Eating Meat Offered to Idols,” 61) points to the fact that Paul only mentions something to be a sin (ἁμαρτία) one time in 1 Corinthians 8 (verse 12). There, it relates to the event of a fellow Christ follower with a weak consciousness who is encouraged to eat food offered to idols by seeing another Christ follower doing so. Consequently, the only sin Paul speaks of is if one were to eat food offered to idols in an idol temple while knowing that another Christ follower, for whom eating the same food would amount to idolatry, is watching.

⁷⁸⁰ Arnold Ehrhardt, “Soziale Fragen,” 157.

Corinthians 11.⁷⁸¹ At first, this might seem a strange suggestion. But based on Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 10:25, where he tells the Corinthians to buy any food they want at the market without questioning whether it came from a sacrifice or not, this is not an unlikely scenario.⁷⁸² With regards to 1 Cor 10:25, one can see that there is nothing inherently problematic or wrong with food offered to idols, since Paul gives no guidelines to Christ followers when it comes to eating food where the origin is unknown. Surely, if food offered to idols was in itself defiling or if the act of eating it was regarded by Paul as idolatry, then he would instruct the Corinthian Christ followers to make sure that anything they ate did not come from a sacrificial altar.⁷⁸³ Hence, Paul does not argue that the Corinthian *ekklēsia* members are forbidden to eat of any food that has been offered to idols; rather, in 1 Corinthians 8, he acknowledges that one who knows that an idol is nothing and that therefore food offered to them is nothing can eat of such food.⁷⁸⁴

One common reason why some interpreters miss this point and instead argue that Paul strictly forbids food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8 is that they read 1 Cor 10:14–22, where partaking in the cup and table of *daimonia* is forbidden, back into 1 Corinthians 8.⁷⁸⁵ The issue with this, as I will elaborate on in the next chapter, is that Paul is describing two different contexts in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22, and that the instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22 should

⁷⁸¹ Jan N. Bremmer, “Early Christians in Corinth (A.D. 50–200): Religious Insiders or Outsiders?” *ASE* 37 (2020): 181–202, 193. Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 112) also entertains this idea.

⁷⁸² Pace Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 108), who writes: “Paul never says that it is acceptable to eat idol food.” Barrett (“Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 143) points out that Cheung’s view is incorrect: “At no point in 1 Cor. viii, ix, x does he [Paul] admit the view that a Christian must never eat what has been sacrificed to an idol, still less that he must never eat meat that has not been slaughtered in conformity with the Jewish regulations. On the contrary, he specifically states that sacrificial food may be eaten.” Barrett refers to 1 Cor 10:25 (πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε) and 10:27 (πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε).

⁷⁸³ This point is corroborated by the fact that if a Christ follower is told that what he/she is eating has been offered to idols in 10:25–29, the problem is not that he/she who eats it will be defiled, but that someone who sees the one who eats will be defiled.

⁷⁸⁴ Cf. Still, “Paul’s Aims,” 336.

⁷⁸⁵ E.g., Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 417.

be viewed separately. If then, the food offered to idols was not itself the issue Paul addressed, what was the problem with food offered to idols?

The heart of the problem in 1 Corinthians 8 is the situation where someone who thinks that eating food offered to idols is equal to idolatry sees a fellow Christ follower dining in an idol temple and eating the food that has been offered to the idol(s) is encouraged to eat of the food do so. For this Christ follower, eating the same food as the one who was seen eating in the idol temple amounts to idolatry and separation from Christ. Hence, the problem does not lay in the food, but in what one thinks one is doing by eating the food. As Kloppenborg puts it: “Paul’s advice in 1 Corinthians 8–10 indicates that meat sacrificed to idols, which in Judea was sanctioned entirely, was no longer treated as something intrinsically defiling. It was instead problematic only to the extent that eating it would offend or ‘injure the consciousness’ of a weaker member of the assembly.”⁷⁸⁶ As far as actual food goes, Paul does not appear to be bothered with what enters the body. In 1 Cor 6:13, Paul writes, “food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for the food; but God will destroy both of these things,” which suggests that he was not too concerned with what entered the Christ follower’s body.⁷⁸⁷ Karl Olov Sandnes makes the following remark in relation to 1 Cor 6:13: “Food and stomach are not matters of real interest in this Pauline text. They serve as a foil or transition to the question which is Paul’s real concern: sex with prostitutes or *hetairai*.”⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁶ Kloppenborg, *Christ’s Associations*, 88. This is also emphasised in Stegemann and Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 272–73; Fisk, “Eating Meat Offered to Idols,” 60; Ehrensperger, “To Eat or Not to Eat,” 126–27; Dustin W. Ellington, “Imitating Paul’s Relationship to the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 8.1–11.1,” *JSNT* 33 (2011): 303–15, 305–06; Wasserman, “‘An Idol Is Nothing in the World,’” 217; Paul J. Achtemeier, “Gods Made with Hands: The New Testament and the Problem of Idolatry,” *ExAud* 15 (1999): 43–61, 54–55.

⁷⁸⁷ This verse is often taken to be a quotation from the Corinthians (e.g., Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 280; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 462). Even if it is so, Paul does not deny that this is the case, but instead focuses in on the body and how sexual immorality affects it negatively, not food.

⁷⁸⁸ Karl Olov Sandnes, *Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles*, SNTSMS 120 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 194.

If Paul would have argued that food offered to idols was intrinsically defiling in 1 Corinthians 8, he could have used the same logic as he does earlier in 1 Corinthians 6, where he argues that Christ followers cannot visit prostitutes on the basis that their union is defiling. But Paul does not argue that this is the case with food offered to idols. Instead, the problem lies not with the food, but with those who eat it as though it was equal to worshiping idols and whose weak consciousness is defiled, as Paul puts it in 1 Cor 8:7 (ὡς εἰδωλόθυτον ἐσθίουσιν καὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενῆς οὕσα μολύνεται).⁷⁸⁹ Paul’s instruction concerning idolatry in 1 Cor 10:14, however, is clear: φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας.⁷⁹⁰ Thus, given that Paul views the Corinthians as God’s temple (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19) and their bodies as limbs in Christ’s body (1 Cor 6:15; 12:17), if they do something that is defiling, they will defile God’s temple and Christ’s body, as they would by going to prostitutes and worshiping idols; but merely eating food as ordinary food does not convey such defilement (cf. 1 Cor 10:25, 27).⁷⁹¹

Consequently, the problem with eating food offered to idols was that another Christ follower for whom eating of the food was equal to worshiping idols might do the same; the problem with not eating was that those who realised that the food offered to idols was no different than any other food would both jeopardise their social place in Corinth and the relationships they had with those outside the *ekklēsia*. These are the two realities Paul tries to balance in his instructions in 1 Corinthians 8.

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. Rom 14:14: “I have come to know and have been persuaded in Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean (κοινός) in itself, except to the one who thinks that something is unclean (κοινός), to that one it is unclean (κοινός).”

⁷⁹⁰ Here we see a similar logic to 1 Corinthians 6, and a similar instruction: φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν (6:18).

⁷⁹¹ The opposite logic, that Christ followers spread holiness (ἀγιάζω), can be seen in 1 Cor 7:13–14. Cf. Johnson Hodge, “Married to an Unbeliever”; *eadem*, “‘Mixed Marriage’ in Early Christianity.” On the Corinthians as God’s temple and Christ’s body, see Morna D. Hooker, “‘The Sanctuary of His Body’: Body and Sanctuary in Paul and John,” *JSNT* 39 (2017): 347–61.

The argument that it is not the food *per se* that is the problem coheres well with 1 Cor 10:25–29, which is partly the focus of the next chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused in on 1 Corinthians 8 and Paul’s instructions regarding food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος). The main argument of this chapter was two-fold. First, I argued that Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 did not categorically forbid Christ followers in Corinth to “recline in idol temples” (ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον) nor did he forbid the eating of food offered to idols. The only time when one should abstain from food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8 is when an *ekklēsia* member who still thinks that eating of the food is equal to idolatry can see another member of the Christ cult eating of the food offered to idols. Second, I made the case that Paul allows the eating of food offered to idols since not doing so would jeopardise the place of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in the city. I demonstrated that groups and communities that did not adhere to the social norms of their time in antiquity, like the Christ followers would have done by not attending their previous cults, were often deemed as strange outsiders; sometimes, they were even persecuted and killed. Thus, Paul is balancing between two worlds: on the one hand, he aims to make sure that no one in the *ekklēsia* will be separated from Christ by another’s eating; on the other, he does not want the *ekklēsia* to alienate itself from the society in which they live. Against this background, I think that Paul’s enigmatic instructions in 1 Corinthians 8, which have puzzled scholars for some time, can be better understood. Furthermore, as I hope to demonstrate in the next chapter, my reading of 1 Corinthians 8 will also help us to better understand Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 10:14–22, which many interpreters have concluded is incompatible with the instructions in chapter 8.

Chapter 4: Flee the Worship of Idols! Paul's Instructions in

1 Cor 10:14–33

Introduction

In the preceding chapter I argued that Paul allows his Christ followers in Corinth to eat food offered to idols. Such a reading might seem to be at odds with what he goes on to say in 1 Cor 10:14–22. In fact, many view Paul's instructions in 1 Cor 10:14–22 as incoherent with what he says in 1 Corinthians 8. This conclusion arises because modern readers miss the fact that Paul is describing two different situations in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22. In this final chapter, I turn to 1 Corinthians 10 and Paul's instructions regarding cultic participation in 10:14–22 and how Christ followers should act when buying food in the marketplace or when their fellow Corinthians, who are not members of the *ekklēsia*, invite them to dinner, which is the focus in 10:25–29. With regards to 10:14–22, I argue that Paul's instructions concern the performance of and participation in sacrifices and libations in other cults. Hence, I propose that Paul is now envisioning a different situation than the one he describes in 1 Cor 8, and that this reading of 10:14–22 creates a coherent pattern in the apostle's reasoning in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1. Put simply, what Paul opposes in 1 Cor 10:14–22 is the participation of Christ followers in the sacrifices that gentiles perform in idol temples, not merely their presence in these temples or their eating of the food offered to idols. Knowledge of these two distinct contexts, I propose, is key if we are to understand the apostle's instructions in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22.

The other text I will examine is the passage that follows immediately after 10:14–22, namely 10:25–29. Paul explicitly states the two different situations he addresses in 10:25–29: first, he gives instructions regarding what Christ followers can buy in the market; second, Paul deals

with the situation where someone who is not a member of the *ekklēsia* (ἄπιστος) invites a Christ follower to dinner and how the latter should act.⁷⁹² In these two contexts, just as in 1 Corinthians 8, eating food offered to idols is unproblematic in and of itself; the only time a Christ follower should abstain from eating is if someone informs them that the food in question comes from a sacrifice (ἱερόθυτος).⁷⁹³ The reason, just as in 1 Corinthians 8, is the “consciousness” (συνείδησις) of the other.⁷⁹⁴ Hence, in this chapter of the thesis, I argue that 1 Cor 10:14–22 and 25–29 are consistent with the logic of 1 Corinthians 8, that Paul does not contradict himself, and that we resolve any supposed contradictions when we take the various contexts of 1 Cor 8, 10:14–22, and 10:25–29 into account.

“Flee the Worship of Idols”: Paul’s Prohibition in 1 Cor 10:14–22 Aimed at Participation in Animal Sacrifice

1 Cor 10:14–22 starts a new sub-section in 1 Corinthians 10.⁷⁹⁵ Unlike in 1 Cor 8:1, where Paul introduces the theme of food offered to idols (περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων), he starts 10:14–22 with an imperative: “Flee the worship of idols!” (φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας). This is a first

⁷⁹² The exact relation between the ἄπιστος and the Corinthian Christ followers is unclear. T. J. Lang (“Trouble with Insiders: The Social Profile of the ἄπιστοι in Paul’s Corinthian Correspondence,” *JBL* 137 [2018]: 981–1001) suggests that the ἄπιστος was someone who had close social relations with members of the *ekklēsia* and that Paul did not view their presence as something negative. For mentions of relationships between Christ believers and ἄπιστοι in 1 Corinthians, see 7:12–15; 10:27; 14:22–25.

⁷⁹³ As I discussed in chapter 3, ἱερόθυτος is the term for food offered to idols that Greeks would have used. Paul’s use of εἰδωλόθυτος is a polemical take on ἱερόθυτος and can only be found in texts produced by Jews and Christ followers.

⁷⁹⁴ I will discuss the identity of whose consciousness it is that the Christ follower should take into account since that is not readily clear from the context in 10:28.

⁷⁹⁵ The connection between 10:1–13 and 10:14–22 is grammatically emphasised by διόπερ (“therefore,” cf. 1 Cor 8:13) and the words εἰδωλόλατρης in 10:7 and εἰδωλολατρεία in 10:14. Cf. Nikolas Walter, “Christusglaube und heidnische Religiosität in paulinischen Gemeinden,” *NTS* 25 (1979): 422–42, 431.

indication that Paul expounds on a different topic than the one he envisages in chapter 8.⁷⁹⁶ Moreover, as Fisk argues, for Paul eating of the food offered to idols does not seem to be tantamount to the worship of idols.⁷⁹⁷ Paul carries over the topic of idolatry (*εἰδωλολατρεία*) in 10:14–22 from the previous section of 10:1–13. There, Paul elaborates on the Israelites journey from Egypt to the promised land and how they rebelled against God in the desert.⁷⁹⁸ There are three lessons from the examples of the failures of the Israelites, Paul writes: do not take part in sexually immoral acts (*μηδὲ πορνεύωμεν*, 10:8), do not put Christ to the test (*μηδὲ ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν*, 10:9), and do not become idolaters (*μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε*, 10:7). Hence, even though the topic of idolatry is the focus of 10:14–22, it is not a new topic Paul introduces; rather he singles it out of the topics he has previously mentioned in chapter 10. Therefore, even if 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22 deal with similar topics and situations, the two contexts described in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22 are not identical.⁷⁹⁹ Before dealing with the content of 10:14–22, I highlight some of the

⁷⁹⁶ Pace Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 144, 147) who argues that both 1 Cor 8 and 10:1–22 are concerned with “idolatry, expressed in the act of eating idol food.” I find Cheung’s (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 147) suggestion that *εἰδωλόθυτος* and *εἰδωλολατρεία* are the same thing to Paul less than convincing since Paul clearly states that the latter is something to flee from (10:14), whereas the former is nothing (10:19).

⁷⁹⁷ Fisk, “Eating Meat Offered to Idols,” 58.

⁷⁹⁸ Wayne A. Meeks (“‘And Rose up to Play’: Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22,” *JSNT* 16 [1982]: 64–78) argues that 1 Cor 10:1–13 is a homily composed prior to 1 Corinthians with a handful of Pauline additions (e.g., “and the rock was Christ”). Cf. Gary D. Collier, “‘That We Might Not Crave Evil’: The Structure and Argument of 1 Corinthians 10:1–13,” *JSNT* 55 (1994): 55–75; Ulrich Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, BEvT 49 (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1968), 116–23. J. Smit (“‘Do Not Be Idolaters’: Paul’s Rhetoric in First Corinthians 10:1–22,” *NovT* 39 [1997]: 40–53, 49) opposes this suggestion based on the notion that 1 Cor 10:1–13 is “completely adapted to the actual rhetorical situation.” No matter how one reconstructs the origin of 1 Cor 10:1–13, it is evident that Paul draws on the narrative of the Golden Calf from Exodus 32. On the scriptural allusions in 1 Cor 10:1–10, see Bart J. Koet, “The Old Testament Background to 1 Cor 10,7–8,” in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, BETL 125 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 607–15; Marika Pulkkinen, “Teaching through the Psalms: Allusions to the Wilderness Tradition in 1 Corinthians 10,1–10 and the Origin of the Passage,” *SJOT* 33 (2019): 244–63.

⁷⁹⁹ Smit (“‘Do Not Be Idolaters,” 40) is correct in pointing out that the overarching theme of the longer passage 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 is the topic of food offered to idols, but that 1 Cor 10:1–22 is a separate section within 1 Cor 8:1–11:1. Furthermore, Walter (“Christusglaube und heidnische Religiosität,” 427) notes the differences in topics and language in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22: “Darum fragt Paulus hier gar nicht nach der Reaktion von Mitchristen (so in Kap. 8) oder Heiden (so in 10.27 ff.) und nach deren *συνείδησις*, sondern nach der ‚Reaktion‘ des *κύριος* selbst (V. 22). Und so geht es hier nicht um ein Problem von ‚Schwachen‘ oder ‚Starken‘ in der Gemeinde und um Parteinahme für eine der beiden Gruppen oder um einen Kompromiß zwischen ihnen. Sondern hier steht der Glaube selbst auf dem Spiel. Es geht um

linguistic aspects of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22 that signify the similarities and differences between the two chapters.

Starting with the similarities, on a basic level, Paul starts a discussion about things that have to do with idols in both chapters. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul introduces the topic of εἰδωλόθυτος, and in 1 Cor 10:14, the topic of εἰδωλολατρεία. Paul also denies that an idol (εἶδωλον) has any power in both chapters (8:4; 10:19). Finally, Paul claims that εἰδωλόθυτος is not in itself impure or tainted (8:4, 8; 10:19). The differences in Paul’s language in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22, however, outweigh the similarities. Despite the fact that both 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22 are concerned with things that have to do with idols, they are concerned with idols in two different ways: εἰδωλόθυτος in chapter 8 and εἰδωλολατρεία in chapter 10:14–22.⁸⁰⁰ Moreover, whereas one of Paul’s aims in 1 Corinthians 8 is to protect those with a weak consciousness (ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενής, 8:7), he addresses the whole *ekklesia* in 10:14–22. This is indicated by Paul’s use of verbs in the second person plural at several instances, his reference to ἀγαπητοί μου in 10:14, and the plural of σύ.⁸⁰¹ Paul also introduces three terms in 10:14–22, that he has not used in chapter 8: κοινωνία/κοινωνός, θύω, and δαιμόνιον. Finally, when Paul does mention something that seems to refer to drinking and eating in 1 Cor 10:21, he refers to “cup” (ποτήριον δαιμονίων) and “table” (τραπέζης δαιμονίων), not εἰδωλόθυτος.

Continuing his address to the Corinthians in 10:15, Paul writes, “I speak as to intelligent people. Judge for yourselves what I say.” With this sentence, Paul starts his reasoning that will

den πειρασμός (V. 13), um die Frage des Abfalls von Christus und des Rückfalls in das Heidentum (V. 20b), und da ist jeder Kompromiß ausgeschlossen.”

⁸⁰⁰ Additionally, whereas Paul gives instructions about εἰδωλόθυτος in 1 Corinthians 8, he gives the Corinthian Christ followers a clear demand in 10:14–22: flee from εἰδωλολατρεία.

⁸⁰¹ In addition, Paul never singles out any special group in 1 Cor 10:14–22. Unlike in 1 Corinthians 8.

continue until verse 22. We should not understand the reference “I speak as to intelligent people” (ὡς φρόνιμοις λέγω) ironically.⁸⁰² Rather, the use of φρόνιμος is Paul’s appeal to the Corinthian Christ followers’ intelligence and understanding (which, in Paul’s mind, means that they will come to the same conclusion as does he regarding the matters he will discuss).⁸⁰³ Paul’s reference to the Corinthians as “my beloved” (ἀγαπητοί μου) in 10:14 indicates this; a reference that seems strange if he then immediately goes on to make fun of them.⁸⁰⁴ In what follows, Paul will first, in 10:16–18, elaborate on the blessing of the cup and the breaking of bread in the cultic meal of the *ekklēsia*, and then the participation of the Israelites who eat of the sacrificial animals on the altar.⁸⁰⁵ This will establish a logic that Paul will utilise in 10:19–22 when it comes to the participation in other cults, and why such participation is inconsistent with participation in the blessed cup and bread. In Paul’s discussion, as I highlight below, even when he takes into account eating and drinking, the focus is not so much on the actual consummation of food offered to idols—as it was in 1 Corinthians 8—but the focal point is the *κοινωνία* those who partake in the sacrificial rituals have with the reality that they represent.⁸⁰⁶ As Nikolas Walter comments on the contrast of topics between 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22:

Ganz anders liegt es in Kap. 10. 14–22. Hier geht es nicht um Fleisch, das möglicherweise ἱερόθυτον bzw. εἰδωλόθυτον ist; es geht überhaupt nicht um Fleisch und Fleischessen. Vielmehr geht es um εἰδωλολατρία, wie V. 14 eindeutig genug sagt, und das heißt doch: um

⁸⁰² Paul can use φρόνιμος ironically and does so in Rom 11:25; 12:16; 1 Cor 4:10; 2 Cor 11:19.

⁸⁰³ Cf. Smit, “Do Not Be Idolaters,” 52; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 471.

⁸⁰⁴ In 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul deals with the coming resurrection and corrects some of the views the Corinthians have in a straightforward manner, he ends his instructions with calling them “my beloved brothers” (ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί) in order to indicate that they are all on the same side of things.

⁸⁰⁵ Members of the Jesus movement most likely practiced the cultic meal of the cup and the bread, and several early texts mentions it: 1 Corinthians 11; Mark 14; Matthew 26; Luke 22; *Did.* 9:1–5. On the practice of the cultic meal in the early Jesus movement and its relation to the surrounding milieu, see David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, eds., *The Eucharist, its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, 3 vols., WUNT 376 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

⁸⁰⁶ I will discuss the meaning of *κοινωνία* below.

die Teilnahme von Christen an heidnischen Kulthandlungen, also um ein Verhalten, das von vornherein überhaupt nicht anders denn als ‘Bekenntnisakt’ zu verstehen ist.⁸⁰⁷

In order to set up the premise for his argument against participation in the worship of cults outside of the Jesus movement, Paul begins his reasoning by explicating the cultic meal that the Corinthian *ekklēsia* practiced and was, by all accounts, familiar with. 10:16–17 reads:

τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλάωμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν.

The cup of blessing that we bless, does it not give us participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, does it not give us participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all take part of the one bread.

In order to properly understand these verses, and the whole of 10:14–22, it is crucial that we recognise the role of the word *κοινωνία* and its meaning.⁸⁰⁸ Norbert Baumert articulates the central interpretative issue *vis-à-vis* *κοινωνία*: “Bedeutet das zweimalige *κοινωνία* in V 16 Teil-

⁸⁰⁷ Walter, “Christusglaube und heidnische Religiosität,” 427.

⁸⁰⁸ Harm W. Hollander (“The Idea of Fellowship in 1 Corinthians 10.14–22,” *NTS* 55 [2009]: 456–70, 457) points out: “The key in this passage seems to be the *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* word group.” Cf. Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 335. Because Paul uses the example of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 10:16–17, several of the discussions about the meaning of *κοινωνία* often fail to limit the scope to the historical context of 1 Corinthians and take into account later theology regarding how various church traditions view the wine and bread of the Eucharist. This means that Christian scholars of a more Protestant persuasion tend to view *κοινωνία* as denoting some kind of community between Christ followers and that whereas one might have community with Christ through the cup and bread, one does not participate *in* Christ. Scholars who belong to the Roman Catholic tradition often have the opposite view, as their view of the Eucharist is that the participants actually take part of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. To mention one example, Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 515), who is a minister of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church, writes in his influential commentary on 1 Corinthians: “But what the evidence [surrounding the use of *κοινωνία*] does not seem to allow is a sacramental understanding of the meal itself, as if they were ‘participation in the Lord’ by the actual eating of the food, as though the food were the Lord himself.” Fee’s dismissal of this reading of *κοινωνία* without much evidence displays the problematic influence later theology can have on our historical reconstruction of the early Jesus movement. In what follows, I attempt to stay clear of such anachronistic readings and suggest what the main emphasis of Paul’s use of *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* was, without claiming that Paul used the word in only one sense in 1 Cor 10:16–20.

habe, Teil-nahme oder Gemeinschaft?”⁸⁰⁹ BDAG gives four meanings for *κοινωνία*: 1) we can understand it as a “close association involving mutual interests and sharing,” and where this is the meaning, BDAG suggests translating *κοινωνία* with association, communion, fellowship, or close relationship; 2) *κοινωνία* can signify a close relationship that stems from an positive inclination to the other and we should then translate it as generosity, altruism, or fellow-feeling; 3) writers can use *κοινωνία* as an abstract term for something concrete, such as sign of fellowship, proof of brotherly unity, gift, or contribution; 4) *κοινωνία* can describe participation or sharing in something.⁸¹⁰ BDAG classifies 1 Cor 10:16 under the fourth translation alternative (“participation in...”) but does not rule out option three, in which case the translation should be “close relationship (with the blood/body of Christ).”⁸¹¹ Outside of our passage, Paul uses the term *κοινωνία* several times and he employs it in a variety of ways, including all the translations given in BDAG (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:16; 2 Cor 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:13; Gal 2:9; Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; Phlmn 6).⁸¹²

The translation of *κοινωνία* in 1 Cor 10:16, 18, and 20 that seems most natural is the fourth option in BDAG, with the meaning of participating or partaking in something.⁸¹³ There are two reasons for this. First, by looking at inscriptions from the fourth century BCE to the second century CE, Julien M. Ogereau notes that the most common use of *κοινωνέω*, the verbal form of *κοινωνία*,

⁸⁰⁹ Norbert Baumert, “KOINΩNIA TOY AIMATOS TOY XPICTOY (1 Kor 10,14–22),” in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, BETL 125 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 617–22, 617.

⁸¹⁰ BDAG, 552–53.

⁸¹¹ BDAG, 553.

⁸¹² On *κοινωνία* in Paul, see Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 167–222; Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, eds., *‘In Christ’ in Paul: Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation*, WUNT II/384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); Julien M. Ogereau, “Paul’s *κοινωνία* with the Philippians: *Societas* as a Missionary Funding Strategy,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 360–78; *idem*, *Paul’s Koinonia with the Philippians: A Socio-Historical Investigation of a Pauline Economic Partnership*, WUNT II/377 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); George V. Jourdan, “KOINΩNIA in 1 Corinthians 10:16,” *JBL* 67 (1948): 111–24.

⁸¹³ In my translation of 1 Cor 10:16–17 above, I translated *κοινωνία* as “participation in”; however, I think that the translation in verses 18 and 20 does not need to use the same English word as long as the translation carries the same meaning of “participation in.”

in this period is the combination *κοινωνέω* + partitive genitive.⁸¹⁴ This is exactly what we find in 1 Corinthians 10: *κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, verse 16; *κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου*, verse 18; *κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων*, verse 20.⁸¹⁵ Moreover, Ogereau stresses that the general meaning of this grammatical construction is one where “the genitive generally identifies either the object of participation or that which is shared or held in common.”⁸¹⁶ Since all four of Paul’s *κοινωνία* statements include a subject, it is highly plausible that the correct understanding of *κοινωνία* and *κοινωνός* in 1 Cor 10:16, 18, and 20 is that the subject(s) of each statement participate in something.⁸¹⁷

A second reason as to why we should understand *κοινωνία* as “participate in” is that none of the other three options BDAG gives appears to fit the context of 1 Corinthians 10. The first alternative in BDAG denotes a close and mutual association or relationship between two parties. This translation, even though possible, seems less natural since Paul’s reference to the cup and bread in 1 Cor 11:23–26 he quotes Jesus as saying that the contents of the cup and the bread really are his blood and flesh.⁸¹⁸ Hence, the one who drinks from the cup and eats from the bread

⁸¹⁴ Julien M. Ogereau, “A Survey of *κοινωνία* and Its Cognates in Documentary Sources,” *NovT* (2015): 275–94, 278.

⁸¹⁵ In 10:18 and 20 the form *κοινωνός*, not *κοινωνία*, is used. Both *κοινωνία* and *κοινωνός* function as nouns. The difference is that the latter refers to the person(s) who take part in something. In 10:18 *κοινωνός* refers to *οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας*, and in 10:20 it refers to *ὑμεῖς*.

⁸¹⁶ Ogereau, “A Survey of *κοινωνία*,” 278.

⁸¹⁷ This is also the conclusion of Henk Jan de Jonge (“Koinonia, Koinonoi and Metechein in Paul’s Prohibition of Christian Participation in Pagan Cult Meals (1 Cor 10:14–22),” in *Paulus – Werk und Wirkung: Festschrift für Andreas Lindemann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Paul-Gerhard Klumbies and David S. du Toit [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 45–60) who goes through several Greek texts that use the word *κοινωνία* and *κοινωνός* with a following genitive and all the *κοινωνία* and *κοινωνός* with a genitive in Paul’s letters.

⁸¹⁸ Pace Hollander (“The Idea of Fellowship”) who argues that *κοινωνία* is best understood to mean that one has partnership with the different groups that are represented in 1 Cor 10:16 (the *ekklesia*), 18 (Israel), and 20 (gentiles). Hence, according to Hollander, the problem is not that the Christ followers in Corinth would be partners with *daimonia*, but that they would become “the associates of a cult devoted to idols” (*ibid.*, 459). Hollander’s suggestion appears even less plausible in the light of 1 Cor 5:10, where Paul explicitly writes that the Christ followers do not need to cut their ties to those who worship idols.

Many hold that Paul is referring to the communal meal of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 10:16. Cf. Phillip Sigal, “Another Note to 1 Corinthians 10.16,” *NTS* 29 (1982): 134–39.

participates *in* Jesus’s blood and bread. BDAG’s second option does not fit the context of 1 Corinthians 10 at all and can be dismissed. The third possible translation, which would be something in the style of “sign of a close relationship,” is possible. However, since Paul is setting up a contrast between the *κοινωνία* with the blood and body of Christ and the *κοινωνία* with demons, the contrast loses some of its force if there is no real participation with Christ, on the one hand, or *daimonia*, on the other, at stake, but only a sign of participation.⁸¹⁹

Hence, the best reading of *κοινωνία* in 1 Cor 10:16, 18, and 20 is one where those who have *κοινωνία* in the given object participate *in/with* that object, as with the blood and body of Christ in 10:16 and the *daimonia* in 10:20, or that they partake *in* the object, as with the altar in 10:18.⁸²⁰ Such an understanding of *κοινωνία* also coheres well with Paul’s “in Christ (Jesus)” language as the spiritual, yet real, locus where Christ followers find themselves (cf. Rom 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1, 2, 39; 15:17; 16:3; 1 Cor 1:2, 4, 30; 4:15; Gal 3:26–27; 5:6). This transfer to the “in Christ” sphere, then, takes place by cultic actions (baptism in Gal 3:26–27; Rom 6:5–11; cultic meal in 1 Cor 10:16–17).⁸²¹ This, however, does not mean that no other connotations of *κοινωνία* are present—e.g., those who participate in the blood and body of Christ also create a community of like-minded people—but that the chief emphasis in having *κοινωνία* *in/with* the four objects Paul mention is

⁸¹⁹ W. A. Sebothoma (“Koinonia in 1 Corinthians 10:16,” *Neot* 24 [1990]: 63–69, 65) Comments: “Verses 21–22 underscore the mutual exclusiveness of *κοινωνία Χριστοῦ* in verse 16 with *κοινωνία τῶν δαιμονίων* in verse 20.” Cf. Jens Schröter, “Die Funktion der Herrenmahlsüberlieferungen im 1. Korintherbrief: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Rolle der ‚Einsetzungsworte‘ in frühchristlichen Mahltexten,” *ZNW* 100 (2009): 78–100, 86.

⁸²⁰ In some ways, the constraints of the English language hinder us from adequately translate *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* with just one word. The Swedish “gemenskap” works better as translations for *κοινωνία/κοινωνός*, since it carries the meaning of participating in something at the same time as one has community with something/someone.

⁸²¹ Commenting on 1 Cor 10:16–17, Michael P. Barber and John A. Kincaid (“Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism,” *JSPL* 5 [2015]: 237–56, 254) writes: “‘Being in Christ’ is realized *cultically*” (emphasis original). Furthermore, they stress the eschatological dimension of Paul’s use of *κοινωνία*: “Paul’s understanding of the Christ-event is not limited to messianic expectations but is also informed by Jewish cultic restoration eschatology. Moreover, consistent with such hopes, Paul views participation in the cult in terms of access to eschatological, even heavenly realities.”

that the Corinthian Christ followers participate in the reality that is represented in the four objects.⁸²² Consequently, I suggest that the emphasis of *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* is on “participation in/with,” but not that Paul’s use is strictly limited to only that meaning.⁸²³ With this understanding of *κοινωνία* in mind, I turn to 10:16–17, text given above, in order to work out its function in the larger context of 10:14–22.

1 Cor 10:16–17 contains the first of three cultic meal settings Paul refers to in 10:14–22 and he first focuses on the cultic meal the Christ followers celebrate.⁸²⁴ In 1 Corinthians 11, the *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* will be the center of Paul’s attention, but now it merely serves as an example for Paul to help make his point about what it means to participate in the cultic rituals and sacrifices of various cults, and, in the end, how Christ followers cannot participate in the sacrifices to idols.⁸²⁵ Even so, as Hans-Ulrich Weidemann underlines: “Die korinthische Praxis, als das was ‚wir‘ bei

⁸²² This dual aspect of partnership in Christ’s blood and body, on the one hand, and the partnership with those who belong to the same *ekklēsia*, on the other, leads Thiselton (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 762) to translate *κοινωνία* as “communal participation” in order to stress both aspects. Cf. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 231–32.

⁸²³ For example, in 1 Cor 1:9 Paul writes *ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν*. Here, *κοινωνία* is better understood as “fellowship,” “partnership,” or “close relationship.” Several commentators bring up the aspect of community with others that is in the word *κοινωνία*. But that connotation cannot be the primary meaning of *κοινωνία* in 1 Cor 10:14–22 since Paul, after using the word *κοινωνία/κοινωνός*, consequently adds an object in which the subjects participate (*τοῦ αἵματος/σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, verse 16; *τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου*, verse 18; *τῶν δαιμονίων*, verse 20).

⁸²⁴ In 1 Cor 10:14–22, Paul sets up a contrast between three cultic meals and some of the rituals that accompany them: The cultic celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in 10:16–17; the Jewish sacrifices performed in the Jerusalem temple in 10:18; and gentile sacrifices to demons and their idols in 10:20.

⁸²⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 514. In the two examples of the sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem and those in gentile cults, the focus is on the sacrifices. In the current example of the cultic meal of the *ekklēsia*, focus appears to be on the meal, rather than on any kind of sacrifice. Even so, the meal that the *ekklēsia* celebrated was not without sacrificial overtones since members of the Jesus movement celebrated it in memory of the Messiah’s sacrificial death (cf. 1 Cor 11:23–26, see also 1 Cor 5:7: *τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός*). Hence, even if the meal as such does not contain a sacrificial element where food is offered to the god of the Jesus movement, the concept of a sacrifice was not disconnected to the meal. Klawans (*Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 221) suggests that the reason why the eucharist came to be seen as a type of sacrifice in the early Jesus movement was that gentile Christ followers outside the Land could not participate in sacrifices on a regular basis (the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was too far away and any non-Jewish cult was off limits) and the eucharist thus became a sort of sacrifices within the larger Jesus movement. On the Eucharist and its connections to sacrifice, see Andrew McGowan, “Eucharist and Sacrifice: Cultic Tradition and Transformation in Early Christian Ritual Meals,” in *Mahl und religiöse Identität im frühen Christentum/Meals and Religious Identity in Early Christianity*, ed. Matthias Klinghardt and Hal Taussig, TANZ 56 (Tübingen: Narr Francke, 2012), 191–206.

der Feier der Eucharistie tun, bildet den entscheidenden Referenzpunkt seiner [i.e., Paul's] Argumentation.”⁸²⁶ The contrast that Paul is building between the cultic meal of the Christ following *ekklēsia* and those of other cults can be seen in the use of the word “cup” (ποτήριον) in 10:16, where it refers to the Christ followers “cup of blessing,” and later in 10:21, where the “cup” is the “cup of *daimonia*” (ποτήριον δαιμονίων). Even though the focus in 10:16 is on the partaking of the cup and bread, Paul appears to draw attention to a ritual that is more elaborate than a cultic meal. This is suggested by his reference to the fact that the Christ group bless the cup that they take part of (τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν) and that they break the bread that they then share (τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλάμεν). In turn, this means that Paul is not only discussing different cultic meals by the three examples in 10:14–22, but that he has in mind the fuller ritual in which the meal was imbedded.⁸²⁷ Moreover, this suggests that the members in the cults Paul refers to thought that the deity was present when they celebrated their cultic meals, as Paul makes clear with his reference to the *daimonia* in 10:20–21.⁸²⁸

The understanding that the deity is present is also found in the example of the cultic meal of the *ekklēsia* when Paul states that those who partake in the cup and bread participate in the blood

⁸²⁶ Hans-Ulrich Weidemann, “Vom Wasser zum Brot: Die Verbindung von Taufe und Mahl in Texten des Neuen Testaments,” in *The Eucharist, Its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, WUNT 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017], 1.733–69, 753.

⁸²⁷ Cf. Vemund Blomkvist, “The Pagan Cultic Meal in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Eucharist, Its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm and Dieter Sänger, WUNT 376 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017], 3.1667–84, 1676. *Did.* 9:1–4 is one early example of how Christ followers celebrated their communal cultic meal and the prayers that they read during its celebration: “Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks as follows. First, concerning the cup (ποτήριον): We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. And concerning the broken bread (κλάσμα): We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and became one, so may your *ekklēsia* be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever” (trans. slightly altered from Holmes).

⁸²⁸ Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 515) comments: “The distinctively religious nature of these feasts indicates that *worship of the deity* was involved, and therefore that they most likely considered the deity also to be present in some way at the meal” (emphasis original).

and body of Christ. Unlike the *ειδωλόθυτος* discussed in 1 Corinthians 8, it seems as though Paul says that whoever drinks of the cup and eats of the bread actually takes part in Christ, and that he distinguishes between this food and other types of food.⁸²⁹ One could potentially ask if this means that Paul is discussing (only) food offered to idols also in 1 Cor 10:14–22, since Paul’s examples would seem somewhat incoherent if he speaks of the food eaten in the Christ cult’s meal in 10:16–17 and then relates the logic of that example to the worship of their deities in 10:20–21, which are *daimonia* in Paul’s mind.⁸³⁰ There are, however, two reasons why this does not seem to be the case and that the emphasis of Paul’s examples vary slightly (I elaborate on this below). First, in 10:19 Paul again asserts that an idol and that food offered to idols are nothing. Second, when Paul brings up the reason why his Christ followers cannot partake in other cults than the Christ cult in 10:20, he does not mention eating or drinking, but the act of sacrifice and the recipients of those sacrifices (*θύουσιν δαιμονίοις και οὐ θεῶν θύουσιν*).⁸³¹ Hence, Paul’s examples in 1 Cor 10:14–22 are not all describing the same context; they are, however, all linked in that they all describe ways to gain *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* with other entities.

In 10:17 Paul reveals his logic with regards to how those who share the cup and bread can participate in Christ. The bread is a symbol of the unity between Christ followers and the unity

⁸²⁹ Cf. Jerome H. Neyrey, “Body Language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models for Understanding Paul and His Opponents,” *Semeia* 35 (1986): 129–70, 146. This view is also seen in the *Didache*. Cf. Huub van de Sandt, “Why Does the Didache Conceive of the Eucharis as a Holy Meal?” *VC* 65 (2011): 1–20. Jonathan Klawans (*Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 172) mentions that also those who resided at Qumran thought of their food as distinct from any other types of food: “The sect at Qumran considered their food and drink to be holy, and maintained their ritual (and moral) purity in order to preserve the sanctity of their meals.”

⁸³⁰ Cf. *Jubilees* 22:17a: “They [i.e., gentiles] offer their sacrifices to the dead, and they worship demons” (trans. VanderKam).

⁸³¹ Paul does go on to mention the cup and table of the *daimonia*, so drinking and eating is a part of what Paul has in view. But it does not seem to be his key focus when it comes to why Christ followers should abstain from the participation in other cults and their rituals. See discussion below.

they, though many, have with the Messiah.⁸³² In other words, the ritual of sharing one bread between the Christ followers results in a shared reality that lays behind what the bread signifies—much in the same way as the idols, even though they themselves are nothing, represent a reality that certainly is something.⁸³³ Thus, the participation in the cultic meal of the Christ group signify both a participation in Christ and a transformation of the self and one’s own body to being incorporated into the body of Christ.⁸³⁴ The function of the example of the cultic meal of the *ekklēsia*, then, is that by stressing Christ followers’ participation in Christ’s blood and body and the unification of those who partake in the meal, Paul sets up a contrast between this participation and the participation in non-Christ cults.⁸³⁵ As Ullucci puts it: “Paul’s point is that joint

⁸³² Here, we see the “community” aspect of *κοινωνία* and the fact that Paul does not only use the word with one meaning. This is also seen in the first plural of the verb *μετέχω*, which emphasises that the Corinthians take part in the one bread together, as a community.

⁸³³ Paul’s reference to Christ followers becoming “one body” (*ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοί ἐσμεν*) in 1 Cor 10:17 means, at the very least, that those who form one body has formed a community. However, Paul’s other references to *σῶμα* in the letter indicates that his use of the term goes deeper than the symbolic usage that those who form one body form a community. In 6:15, Paul claims that Christ followers’ bodies are part of the body of Christ (*οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν*) and that by having sexual relations with prostitutes the Christ followers join Christ’s body to that of the prostitute. Later on, in 1 Cor 12:12–13, Paul again claims that the Corinthians are part of one body through their baptism (12:13, *πάντες εἰς ἐν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν*, cf. Gal 3:27–28). Furthermore, Paul states, in 1 Cor 12:27, that the Christ followers in Corinth are the body of Christ: *ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ*. So, Christ followers seem to inhabit the body of Christ, on the one hand, but, as Paul makes clear in Gal 2:20 (*ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός*), the Messiah also inhabits the lives, and presumably bodies, of his followers. These passages suggest that when Paul talks about the Corinthians being “one body” in 10:17, the reference should be understood in the larger context of the letter and how Paul views the Corinthians own physical bodies as parts of the body of Christ.

We should not, however, limit the meaning of being “one body” in 10:17 to only the union with Christ, even though I hold that that is the primary meaning. Rather, we should understand the phrase in the sense that those who are the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) make up a community in which they share a way of life and a common identity. Thus I agree with Yung Suk Kim (“Reclaiming Christ’s Body (*soma christou*): Embodiment of God’s Gospel in Paul’s Letters,” *Int* 67 [2013]: 20–29; *idem*, *Christ’s Body in Corinth: The Politics of a Metaphor* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008]) to a certain extent in his emphasis on the meaning of the lived out character of “Christ’s body” in the *ekklēsia*, even though I think that one should not stress this facet of Paul’s “Christ’s body” language at the expense of the union between the Christ followers and their Messiah.

⁸³⁴ Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce (“Self, Identity, and Body in Paul and John,” in *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience*, ed. A. I. Baumgarten, J. Assmann, and Guy G. Stroumsa, SHR 78 [Leiden: Brill 1998], 184–97, 193) comments: “The cult of God and the transformation of the self substantially coincide.”

⁸³⁵ John Chrysostom comments on this passage and imagines Paul saying to the Corinthian Christ followers: “‘How, then,’ Paul asks the Corinthians, ‘is it not a contradiction when you thank God for delivering you from idols but then run back to their tables?’” Judith L. Kovacs, ed., *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, The Church’s Bible (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 168.

participation in this ritual defines the Corinthian body by indexing group membership.”⁸³⁶ Furthermore, by participating in the meal mentioned in 1 Cor 10:16 and the surrounding cultic rituals, the Corinthian Christ followers display their allegiance and obedience to the cult of Christ and its deity, which means that they cannot participate in other cults and their rituals in such a way that it would jeopardise their allegiance and obedience.⁸³⁷

Leaving the example of the cultic meal of Christ followers, Paul turns to another example of participation, this time using the word *κοινωνός* instead of *κοινωνία*, by referring to the altar (*θυσιαστήριον*) on which the Israelites sacrifice animals to their god in 10:18: “Look at Israel according to the flesh: does not the ones eating the sacrifices have partnership with the altar?”⁸³⁸ Just as in the previous example the focus here is on the creation of participation that eating generates (*οὐχ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσίν;*).⁸³⁹ We might ask, however, what the relationship those who partook in the eating of the sacrifice had with the cultic rites that inevitably preceded the eating. Indeed, based on our inquiry into Greek and Roman animal sacrifices in antiquity we know that it was not unusual that only those who participated or

⁸³⁶ Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*, 73.

⁸³⁷ See Jeremy Punt (“Paul, Body Theology, and Morality: Parameters for a Discussion,” *Neot* 39 [2005]: 359–88, 377) who emphasises the exclusiveness that the cultic meal the members of the *ekklesia* celebrated carried with it: “The Eucharistic overtones is clearly present in 1 Cor 10–11 which demonstrated the solidarity of believers in union with Christ, and thus denouncing loyalty to all other powers.”

⁸³⁸ There is some debate whether Paul is referring to Israel in the past, mainly based on the reference to Exodus 32 in 1 Cor 10:7, or if he refers to the Israel of his own time. While this issue might not affect our interpretation of the verse greatly, I think that the fact that the two verbs Paul uses are both in the present (*οἱ ἐσθίοντες, εἰσίν*) indicate that he is speaking about what is happening in the Temple during his time, not what happened in the past. As Zeller (*Der erste brief an die Korinther*, 340) puts it: “Wegen des Präsens und des Plurals ‚die Opfer‘ ist es unwahrscheinlich, dass Paulus in V. 18b das Opfer vor dem Goldenen Kalb im Sinn hat.” See also Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 73–74.

⁸³⁹ *κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου* is here best understood as “participation in the altar.” Hugo Greßmann (“*Ἡ κοινωνία τῶν δαιμονίων*,” *ZNW* 20 [1921]: 224–30) made an influential suggestion one hundred years ago by proposing that *θυσιαστήριον* was a reference to God. Even though this reading would create an apt coherence between the three examples in 10:14–22 with all the *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* references pointing to the *κοινωνία/κοινωνός* in/with a deity or divine being (Christ, god of Israel, and *daimonia*), later scholarship has refuted this suggestion. Cf. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 185–88; John Y. Campbell, “*Κοινωνία* and Its Cognates in the New Testament,” *JBL* 51 (1932): 352–80, 377.

sponsored the performance of the animal sacrifice took part of the animal after they had sacrificed it. Additionally, those who participated in the sacrificial rites and ate of the meat before everyone else, in cases where they later distributed the meat, were thought to enjoy an especially close relationship with the deity based on the fact that they ate their part by the altar at the same time as they offered the divinity's portion on the altar. Consequently, we can ask whether this was also the view in Judaism before the fall of the second temple in 70 CE and if Paul's reference to "those eating the sacrifices" in 1 Cor 10:18 is a reference to all Jews, including those who did not partake in the sacrificial rituals but who later ate of the meat from the sacrificial animal, or only to those who were present and/or provided the animal for the sacrifice. The question is then: who is it that has *κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου*?⁸⁴⁰

It is clear that at least those who served at the sacrifices took part in the meat that the animal would yield.⁸⁴¹ Interestingly, Paul himself gives us a clue as to what group of people he is referring to in 1 Cor 10:18. In 1 Cor 9:13, he writes: "Do you not know that those who work (*ἐργαζόμενοι*) in the temple get what they eat from the temple, and how those who attend (*παρεδρεύοντες*) to the

⁸⁴⁰ Paul does not explicitly mention where the sacrifices he refers to in 10:18 take place. My working assumption here is that he is referring to the sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple since that was the cult that most Jews thought legitimate and because that cult presumably was the one most of Paul's audience would have been familiar with or heard of. There were, however, other places where Jews made sacrifices. We know of at least three Israelite/Jewish temples outside of Jerusalem which all existed sometime in the time span fifth century BCE to first century CE. There were two temples in Egypt, one in Elephantine and one in Leontopolis, and there was the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim. On these three temples, see Jörg Frey, "Temple and Rival Temple – The Cases of Elephantine, Mt. Gerizim, and Leontopolis," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel/Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum*, ed. Beate Ego, Armin Lange, and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 118 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 171–203. In addition to the temple in Jerusalem, temples outside Jerusalem may not have been the only place where Jews offered sacrifices. Jordan D. Rosenblum ("Home Is where the Hearth Is? A Consideration of Jewish Household Sacrifice in Antiquity," in *The One Who Sows Bountifully: Essays in Honor of Stanley K. Stowers*, ed. Caroline Johnson Hodge et al., BJS 356 [Providence: Brown University Press, 2013], 153–63) postulates that Jews, like many other ancient cults in the Mediterranean, offered sacrifices in their homes.

⁸⁴¹ Lev 10:12–15 mentions some rules for the privilege the priests enjoy with regards to some of the sacrifices lay Israelites made.

altar partake from the altar?”⁸⁴² Philo displays a similar opinion to Paul’s when it comes to the intimate connection between those who sacrifice and the temple in *On the Special Laws*. Philo maintains that the sacrificial meat should be shared among those who provided for the sacrifice for two reasons: first, if not, it would decay; second, since the animal has been offered to God it is now God’s property, and according to Philo God’s wish is to share the sacrificed animal with the sacrificial party.⁸⁴³ On this passage, Petropoulou comments: “This sentence makes us see the difference from Greek sacrificial practice, namely, that distribution of meat in Jewish sacrifices only concerned the specific company of those who offered it.”⁸⁴⁴ Regarding those who provide for the sacrifice and who later eat of the meat, Philo uses language similar to that of Paul in 1 Cor 10:18: “[God] has made the convivial company of those who carry out the sacrifices partners of the altar whose board they share (ὧν κοινωνὸν ἀπέφηνε τοῦ βωμοῦ καὶ ὁμοτράπεζον τὸ συμπόσιον τῶν τὴν θυσίαν ἐπιτελούντων).”⁸⁴⁵

Newton also argues that the group Paul refers to in 1 Cor 10:18 are those who served in the temple. First, he points out that “the use of present participle [οἱ ἐσθίωντες] suggests an ongoing action on the part of those who eat,” and he connects 10:18 to Paul’s singling out of cultic personnel in 9:13, mentioned above. Second, Newton emphasises that, “[Paul’s] point is that the

⁸⁴² With regards to whom could offer sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple, James B. Rives (“Animal Sacrifice and Political Identity in Rome and Judaea,” in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, CRINT 13 [Leiden: Brill, 2014], 105–25, 114) writes: “Only one strictly defined group of people, the hereditary clan of Aaronide priests, could offer them [i.e., animal sacrifices]. This statement requires some nuancing, since it seems that any adult male Israelite, with certain exceptions, was ritually able to slaughter a victim. Only priests, however, could perform the essential acts of splashing the blood on the altar, flaying and cutting up the carcass, and burning the appropriate parts on the altar. It was thus only priests who could actually act as sacrificants.”

⁸⁴³ *On the Special Laws* 1.220–223.

⁸⁴⁴ Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 180.

⁸⁴⁵ *On the Special Laws* 1.221; LCL. Earlier in the same work (1.131), Philo writes that the Israelite priests were not given any land as an inheritance, but that God is their inheritance. As such, the priests share in a special way in the offerings Israelites gave to God. On Philo’s understanding of sacrifice, see William K. Gilders, “Jewish Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function (According to Philo),” in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Varhelyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 94–103.

sacrifices made at the altar carry benefits and that those who make and eat those sacrifices benefit together through participation in the altar. Paul's emphasis is thus very much on those *involved in the actual act of making and eating sacrifices*.⁸⁴⁶ Hence, those who participate at the altar also eat the food from it. This reading fits well with the examples of the *ekklēsia*'s cultic meal (10:16–17) and the sacrifices gentiles made to *daimonia* (10:20–21) since the emphasis there is on those who participate in both the rituals that precede the meal, i.e., the blessing of the cup and breaking of the bread in the Christ group's meal and the sacrifices gentiles offered to *daimonia* in their cults, and the meal itself. Another point that supports the argument that Paul's reference in 10:18 is to cultic personnel and not to all Jews who might have eaten meat from a sacrifice is that, in contrast to Greek and Roman practices where the citizens of the city could get a share of the sacrificed animal, Jewish animal sacrifices were not commonly offered in order to feed a larger group of people. Rives notes that in the Jewish tradition of the Second Temple period:

the vast majority of the sacrifices offered on behalf of the Judaeans as a whole were burnt-offerings, equivalent to Greek holocausts, in which the entire animal was burnt on the altar; these were accompanied by smaller-scale “sin-offering,” the meat of which was consumed by the priests within the Temple. Individuals of course also offered a range of sacrifices on their own behalf, many of which were also burnt-offerings and sin-offerings. Thus only a few sacrifices actually produced meat that ordinary Judaeans could eat, of which the main types were the “peace-offering” or thank-offering and the Passover sacrifice.⁸⁴⁷

Even though both Paul and Philo emphasise the role of those who serve at the sacrifices, both by their eating of them and the special company they enjoyed with God, E. P. Sanders is correct in pointing out that all those who ate of the sacrificial animal would most likely have felt some sort of companionship with the god of Israel and participation in the Jewish cult: “It is doubtful that all Jews who feasted on a shared sacrifice had the same theology of participation in God that Paul had, but it seems likely that they at least knew that they were participating in a very

⁸⁴⁶ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 338 (my emphasis).

⁸⁴⁷ Rives, “Animal Sacrifice and Political Identity in Rome and Judaea,” 114–15.

personal way in the divine service.... The idea of participation was built into the sacrifice, and most people probably grasped it in one way or another.”⁸⁴⁸ Put differently, all who ate of the sacrificial meat, notwithstanding if they were present at the actual sacrifice or not, probably felt a connection to the Jewish temple and its god; however, in Paul’s (and Philo’s) mind those who served at the sacrifices had a particularly intimate relationship with the temple and the god of Israel.

With the two examples of the cultic meal of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* and those who eat from the sacrifices the temple personnel offered in the Jerusalem temple and the partnership those who participate in these two cultic meals have with/in the blood and body of Christ and the altar, Paul has now set up the logic of how participation in gentile cults is impossible due to the inevitable partnership with *daimonia*. I now turn to that third example, and I will argue that Paul, in 1 Cor 10:19–22, does not express a prohibition against the eating of food offered to idols, but that he proscribes active involvement in gentile cults in the form of participation in these cults’ sacrifices. Newton sums up the section of 1 Cor 10:16–18 in a way that emphasises the role of sacrifices: “In 10.16–17 Paul has established the principle of communal participation or sharing.... He then shows in 10.18 how those who eat sacrifices in Israel’s sacrificial system are communal sharers or participants in the altar, receiving benefits from the sacrifice they have offered. The emphasis is thus on those who actually offer sacrifices at the altar.”⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁸ Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief*, 256.

⁸⁴⁹ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 340.

Paul's Ban on Idol Worship in 1 Cor 10:19–22

Starting with 10:19, Paul yet again returns to the topic of food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) and idols (εἰδωλα). However, he only briefly touches on these two subjects in order to affirm the position he took in chapter 8 by posing a rhetorical question: “What, then, am I saying? That food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) is anything? Or that an idol (εἰδωλον) is anything?” The answer to Paul's question is “no.” This can be seen in his treatment of food offered to idols and idols in chapter 8 and the adversative conjunction ἀλλά in 10:20.⁸⁵⁰ Consequently, 10:19 has two functions within Paul's argument in 10:14–22: first, it serves to remind the Corinthians of Paul's position in 1 Corinthians 8 (especially verses 4 and 8); second, by shifting his focus to food offered to idols and idols, Paul indicates that he now will present a topic that is separate from the previous examples of the Christ cult's meal and those taking place in the Jerusalem temple. Given the partnership food and eating seem to create in 10:16 and 18, the Corinthians could easily have been mistaken in thinking that eating food offered to idols *per se* created a partnership with those idols. But Paul, as noted, asserts that food offered to idols is nothing and the circumstance he will address in 10:20–22 is not the issue of εἰδωλόθυτος—as it was in 1 Corinthians 8:1, περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων—but rather that of idolatry, the prohibition against which is the overarching theme of 10:14–22. More specifically, as Eckhard J. Schnabel stresses, Paul now turns his attention to the issue of the *daimonia* gentiles sacrifice to their cults.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁵⁰ Eckhard J. Schnabel (*Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, HTA [Witten: SCM R. Brockhaus; Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 2006], 555) writes: “Die Antwort kann im Licht von 8,4 nur eine negative sein.” Cf. Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 343.

⁸⁵¹ Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 555. He writes: “Götzen sind nichts (implizit verneintes τί ἐστίν). Wenn dies stimmt, dann kann man einwenden, dass die beiden Beispiele von 10,16–18 für die Frage nach dem Essen von Götzenopferfleisch belanglos sind. Paulus nimmt von seiner Aussage in 8,4 nichts zurück, er zeigt aber in V. 20, dass die Wahrheit über Götzenopferfleisch (εἰδωλόθυτος) und Götzen (εἰδωλον) durchaus mit einer transzendenten Realität zu tun hat, nämlich mit der Wirklichkeit der Existenz dämonischer Mächte.” I think Schnabel is correct in emphasising that Paul's problem in his treatment of food offered to idols, idols, and *daimonia* is the

Verse 20 is the key in Paul’s argumentation against participation in gentile cults in 1 Corinthians 10. It is in this verse, I argue, that we find the main reason as to why we should understand 1 Cor 10:14–22 as dealing with another subject than the eating of food offered to idols in chapter 8. 1 Cor 10:20 reads:

ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἃ θύουσιν, δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ [θύουσιν]. οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν
δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι.

But that which they sacrifice, [they sacrifice] to *daimonia* and not to God. And I do not want you to become partners with *daimonia*.⁸⁵²

The Greek text of this verse is somewhat uncertain in the placement of various words and some MSS (most notably p^{46vid}, κ, A, and C) add the explicit reference to τὰ ἔθνη by the first θύουσιν. Additionally, textual critics are uncertain whether the second θύουσιν is authentic or not, but the editors of NA28 think the inclusion of the second θύουσιν is the preferable reading.⁸⁵³ Notwithstanding these textual differences in the MSS when it comes to the wording and/or word order of the verse, their disagreements do not amount to any significant differences in the meaning of the text.

daimonia, not their representations, i.e., the idols, or the food offered to them. However, it seems to me as though Schnabel suggests that food offered to idols (“Götzenopferfleisch”) and idols (“Götzen”) are problematic to Paul because of the reality with which they are associated (*daimonia*). This, I argue, is not Paul’s position and I hold that both food offered to idols (“Götzenopferfleisch”) and idols (“Götzen”) are unproblematic in and of themselves in Paul’s mind, even though they are connected with *daimonia* in one way or another. Schnabel’s position does not seem to give due weight to Paul’s statement that food offered to idols and idols are nothing in 1 Cor 8:4 and 10:19 and that Paul, in 10:20, focuses on the act of performing sacrifices to *daimonia*, not on the consumption of food already offered to idols.

⁸⁵² Another possible translation of the last clause of 10:20 reads: “And I cannot have you becoming partners with *daimonia*.” The reason for this is that when θέλω, which is commonly translated “I wish/want,” is connected to a negative (as in 10:20, οὐ θέλω) has the same meaning as δύναμαι (LSJ, 479).

⁸⁵³ On the role of the second θύουσιν, see Timothy A. Brookins and Bruce W. Longenecker, *1 Corinthians 10–16: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHGNT (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 18–19.

Just like previously in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul here makes use of the example of the Golden Calf. The first part of 10:20 (θύουσιν, δαίμονις καὶ οὐ θεῶ) is strikingly similar to LXX Deut 32:17a (ἔθυσαν δαίμονις καὶ οὐ θεῶ) and it is credible that this text influenced Paul.⁸⁵⁴ The only part Paul alters from this verse is translating the verb θύω into the present tense. I think Richard B. Hays is right in arguing that Paul’s almost verbatim quote of Deut 32:17a in 1 Cor 10:20a functions to bring the story of the Golden Calf back into the minds of the Corinthians in order to say that if the Christ followers sacrifice to *daimonia* they will behave in the same way as the Israelites did who sacrificed to the Golden Calf.⁸⁵⁵ However, Paul’s reference is to gentile cults and he insists that just like the Israelites sacrificed to *daimonia* in Deut 32:17a, so too are gentiles sacrificing to *daimonia* in their cults.⁸⁵⁶ Having established the text of 1 Cor 10:20, I now turn to the content of the verse in order to elucidate what Paul is prohibiting.

As indicated by 10:19, Paul’s discussion in 10:20 is related to his previous discussion regarding food offered to idols in chapter 8. However, in 10:20 (quoted in full above) Paul introduces three new terms and concepts, which he did not use in 1 Corinthians 8, that changes the focus away from food offered to idols—since, as Paul has repeatedly stressed, it is “nothing”—to sacrifices, *daimonia*, and the participation with *daimonia*. These three concepts signal that Paul now deals with a different, yet connected topic to that of 1 Corinthians 8. I will examine these

⁸⁵⁴ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 93. Deut 32:17 recalls the story of the Golden Calf, a motif Paul has already used by quoting Ex 32:6 in 1 Cor 10:7 in conjunction with his warning that the Corinthians are not to become idolaters like the Israelites who worshiped the calf. On the influence of the Deuteronomic tradition in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1, see B. J. Oropeza, “Laying to Rest the Midrash: Paul’s Message on Meat Sacrificed to Idols in Light of the Deuteronomic Tradition,” *Bib* 79 (1998): 57–68.

⁸⁵⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 93.

⁸⁵⁶ Depending on how one understands 1 Cor 10:18 either Israel or gentiles could be the subject of θύουσιν in 10:20. If one holds that Paul refers back to the Golden Calf incident in 10:18, then Israel is the subject of θύουσιν; but if one understands 10:18 as a reference to the temple sacrifices being carried out in Paul’s day, then the subject of θύουσιν are gentile cults. Regardless of what reading one opts for, it is clear that Paul means to say that if the Corinthians Christ followers participate in the sacrifices being made in gentile cults, they are effectively making sacrifices to *daimonia*. Cf. Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–11*, WUNT II/63 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 252–53.

three concepts in order to uncover what Paul is instructing the Corinthians about in this verse and how it differs from the context of eating food offered to idols.

The first indication in 1 Cor 10:20 that Paul is dealing with another topic than that in 1 Corinthians 8 is the use of the verb θύω (“to sacrifice”). The fact that the apostle uses this word indicates that he is speaking of the sacrifice that precedes the eating of food offered to idols. Paul’s emphasis on the topic of the sacrifices taking place in gentile cults should come as no surprise. For, as Ullucci notes, “The context of this section [1 Cor 10:14–22] is worship.... Paul’s argument is simple. By participating in various forms of worship the Corinthians make themselves partners in various groups.”⁸⁵⁷ My study into the Greek customs of sacrificing animals in chapter 2 showed that the verb θύω was a standard word that Greek authors used when describing sacrifices, both of animals and inanimate objects. What I also found when studying Greek animal sacrifices was that those who participated in the sacrificial rituals were more intimately linked with the sacrificial animal than those who afterwards partook of any distributed meat. Further, participation *at* the altar also displayed a loyalty to the divinity of that particular cult. Hence, participation in the actual sacrifice at the altar of a cult meant that one was far more engaged with the cult and the worship of its deities than those who merely ate the food after the sacrificial rituals had taken place. This must be taken into account in order to reach a historically attuned understanding of the difference in Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22.

Fredriksen points out that, for Paul, partaking in the sacrifices in gentile cults was not an acceptable thing to do for the Christ followers since for them the cultic meal of the *ekklēsia* was now their new way of worship. She writes: “Paul demanded that his gentiles stop making sacrifices before the images of their native gods. The Eucharist, for them, would stand in for their former

⁸⁵⁷ Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*, 73.

latreia.”⁸⁵⁸ Hence, participation in the Eucharist, where plausibly the Corinthians worshiped their god and their lord, meant that they could no longer participate in the worship of other gods.⁸⁵⁹ It is here we see Paul’s *κοινωνία* language come into full effect: *κοινωνία* can only exist with Christ or with *daimonia*, something Paul will elaborate further in 10:21. Some scholars perceive that there is a level of nuance in Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22 and that there seems to be situations where Christ followers can indeed be present in idol temples without becoming idolaters—in my reading this would be the eating of food offered to idols—but that, according to Paul, there is a limit to how involved a Christ follower is allowed to become in gentile cults.⁸⁶⁰ The question is: how intimately associated with gentile cults can the Corinthians be before they cross the line of idolatry?

Fisk articulates how one could view where Paul drew the line between acceptable and unacceptable engagement in gentile cults: “We shall have to imagine a continuum along which various pagan temple activities could be placed. At the one end was harmless fun and social convention; at the other end was raw idolatry.”⁸⁶¹ If we envision such a continuum, we can ask

⁸⁵⁸ Paula Fredriksen, “How Later Contexts Affect Pauline Content, or: Retrospect Is the Mother of Anachronism,” in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Joshua Schwartz, CRINT 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 17–51, 26. As Klawans (*Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 221) points out: “Gentile Christians in Corinth . . . do not have the option of performing sacrificial rites and eucharistic rites. Jewish sacrificial devotion outside of Jerusalem is out of the question other local forms of sacrificial devotion are equally out of the question, because they are idolatrous. And what is Paul’s message? That early Christians must choose one or the other: it’s either idolatry or the worship of God, either sacrifice or eucharist.”

⁸⁵⁹ Fredriksen (“Judaizing the Nations,” 251) notes that this idea was not specific to Paul but that all leaders of the Jesus movement (as far as we can tell) required this of the gentile Christ followers who joined the movement.

⁸⁶⁰ Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 94) seems to suggest that if a line between allowed participation in gentile cult and forbidden participation in them existed, one must draw the line somewhere along which kinds of meals the Christ followers participated in. If so, social meals would be permitted, but meals with cultic connotations would be off limits. However, Cheung does not think such a line existed in the imagination of Paul and that he forbade all types of meals that took place in cultic buildings. But Cheung (*Idol Food in Corinth*, 95) argues that Paul allowed “only marketplace food and private meals, in which cases the link to idolatry is neither necessary nor obvious.” I think Cheung is wrong to assume that private meals had no link to idolatry for two reasons: first, many households would have had their own gods and other gods worshiped in the city present in some way, shape or form; second, it was common that offerings were made to these deities between the first and second course of the dinner. Hence, a private meal could also have cultic elements. As Horrell (“Theological Principle,” 101) puts it: “Meals in the home often had a religious dimension too; the sacred and the secular cannot be so neatly divided.”

⁸⁶¹ Fisk, “Eating Food Offered to Idols,” 63.

whether Paul drew the line between different kinds of meals or if there had to be a deeper involvement in the cults than just eating for the Christ followers to cross the line and become idolaters. One can find the suggestion that Paul permitted certain meals and prohibited other among scholars who argue that one can make a distinction between social meals, on the one hand, and cultic (or “religious”) meals, on the other. Willis even goes so far as to write, “the indications are that cult meals, including the mystery cult meals, were generally regarded fundamentally as occasions for social association and conviviality.”⁸⁶² Commenting on the social nature of Hellenistic associations, and their influence on cultic life as lived out in temples, Willis goes on to assert the predominantly social role these associations played in Hellenistic society: “They [Hellenistic associations] had a preeminently social importance in Hellenistic life. They set the tone for other meals, including those of cultic religions.”⁸⁶³ Hence, some of the Corinthian Christ followers did not deem meals offered in cults and temples as “religiously significant,” as Willis puts it, but thought of it more as a purely social endeavour.⁸⁶⁴

Despite this being a somewhat attractive suggestion, it does not hold up to close scrutiny. The primary reason for this is that it is not possible to divide meals in antiquity into two separate categories where one type of meal is “social” and the other “cultic.” To put the social life against the cultic life of a person in antiquity misses the extent to which these parts were intertwined, and certainly in Paul’s time. Moreover, even though, as Willis rightly points out, Hellenistic associations played a strong social role in the life of many, the cultic element of these groups

⁸⁶² Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 49.

⁸⁶³ Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 52.

⁸⁶⁴ Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth*, 63. On the same page Willis writes: “It probably was not regarded as pagan worship to participate in the various ‘socials’ held in temple precincts.” Gooch (*Dangerous Food*, 7) does not divide meals along a social and cultic spectrum, but still argues that food offered to idols is permissible sometimes and forbidden at other times: “Paul might recognize, then, a distinction between eating idol-food as food to satisfy hunger and eating idol-food as partnership with *daimonia*.” The issue in both Gooch’s and Willis’s interpretations, as I will show, is that they argue that the problem is strictly related to food offered to idols and the settings in which one can or cannot eat such food.

cannot be overlooked. Harland draws our attention to this fact: “Appropriately honoring gods and goddesses through offerings and rituals (sacrifices, prayers, singing, mysteries) in a group setting was a concern of *virtually all* types of associations.”⁸⁶⁵ As a consequence, Willis’s argument that the predominantly social aspect of association dinners would have meant that meals in dedicated cults and temples had lost their explicit cultic nature and played a primarily social role is mistaken.⁸⁶⁶ I propose that Paul’s reference to sacrifice in 10:20 reveals where Paul drew the line between acceptable and unacceptable association with and in gentile cults, and it has nothing to do with contexts where food offered to idols is allowed or not.

The line that Christ followers must not cross vis-à-vis their involvement in gentile cults is participation in the sacrificial act of the cult they attend. This is indicated by Paul’s use of *θύω* in 10:20, and, as I argue below, the cultic meaning of “cup” (*ποτήριον*) and “table” (*τράπεζα*) in 10:21.⁸⁶⁷ Food offered to idols will not, according to Paul, affect Christ followers—except if they

⁸⁶⁵ Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 44 (my emphasis). Associations with a special focus on cult and worship were, in the words of Kloppenborg (*Christ’s Associations*, 29), “extremely popular throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods, with groups dedicated to a wide range of Greek and Roman deities, well-known heroes like Asklepios and Herakles, and numerous deities imported from Thrace, Anatolia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt.” Kloppenborg also stress that cultic associations were the most open ones when it came to the question of who could join them, in contrast to some associations that only hosted members of a certain geographical area or occupation, and that they attracted members from various ethnicities and socio-economic statuses. Another factor that highlights the importance of cult and worship in Hellenistic association is that, as Benedikt Eckhardt (“Temple Ideology and Hellenistic Private Associations,” *DSD* 24 [2017]: 407–23, 416) notes, “many, perhaps most Hellenistic associations met in their own sanctuaries.” Therefore, the cultic element was never too far away when it came to the meetings of associations. On the roles and functions of associations in antiquity, see Vincent Gabrielsen and Christian A. Thomsen, “Introduction: Private Groups, Public Functions?” in *Private Associations and the Public Sphere: Proceedings of a Symposium Held at the Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, 9–11 September 2010*, ed. Vincent Gabrielsen and Christian A. Thomsen, *Scientia Danica* 9 (Copenhagen: det kongelige danske videnskabernes selskab, 2015), 7–24.

⁸⁶⁶ One can also question Willis’s argument that Hellenistic associations served a primarily social function. I have already noted Harland’s and Kloppenborg’s emphasis on the role cult played in the life of associations and Eckhardt (“Temple Ideology and Hellenistic Private Associations,” 412) notes a trend which has gained ground in association research: “Associations, in this view, create their own form of public space, a ‘fourth space’ emulating, but not identical to the state, a space that combines religion, politics and private life.” Thus, the social aspect of life in Hellenistic associations was one component, but it would be a mistake to limit the function of associations to that component alone.

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 445): “Das *θύειν* markiert die unüberschreitbare Grenze, die der christlichen Freiheit (neben der Agape) gezogen ist.”

have a weak consciousness—since it is nothing; however, the ritual of performing the sacrifices will put them into contact with *daimonia*, since it is to them they dedicate the sacrifices. Horrell argues along the same lines (even though he ultimately, unlike me, thinks the problem lays in the food offered to idols): “The clear implication of 10.20–21 is that certain occasions *are* idolatrous: cultic gatherings when things are sacrificed to what Paul calls demons.”⁸⁶⁸ Borgen, too, presents a similar argument: “[Paul] drew the boundary line just at the pagan altar table when sacrifices were performed.”⁸⁶⁹ This view also explains why Paul writes “flee from the worship of idols” in 1 Cor 10:14 and not earlier; eating food offered to idols is not deemed as idolatry, but participation in the cultic rituals of the sacrifice is. The problem, as Paul goes on to explain, with these sacrifices is that even though the cult participants perform them before or in the presence of idols, which in themselves are nothing, the participants are in fact sacrificing to *daimonia*, which are not nothing.

On the relationship between gods and their earthly representations in biblical literature, Fredriksen comments:

True, the Bible execrated the worship of these gods’ images, but the image of a god is not the same thing as the god himself. Any human can destroy an idol; no human can destroy a god. An idol may be ‘nothing,’ but a god is definitely something. Jews found ways to subordinate these other beings to Israel’s god, whether explaining their existence as errant angels (or angelic hybrids, Gen 6:5) or as low-level powers, *daimonia* (Ps. 95:5 LXX), who ultimately depended on Israel’s god for their own existence.”⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁸ Horrell, “Theological Principle,” 100 (emphasis original). Also Fisk (“Eating Meat Offered to Idols,” 63) comes to a similar conclusion: “The issue in 10:1–22 is neither *what* one eats (idol meat or other) nor *where* one eats it (temple, home, etc.). Rather, Paul is concerned about the *nature* of the meal” (emphasis original). Even though I think Horrell and Fisk are largely right in their conclusions, their focus on what kind of meal that Paul prohibits is not required. Even though eating of the inner organs (*σπλάγχνα*) took place in Greek sacrificial practices in conjunction with the burning of the god’s portion on the altar, and I do agree with Horrell that Paul most likely did not want his Christ followers to eat from this portion, I hold that it is participation in the sacrifice that is the main issue for Paul. Of course, one would not be able to eat of the *σπλάγχνα* if one were not present at the altar at the time of the sacrifice, so distinguishing between participation at the sacrifice and the eating of the inner organs is not possible on a practical level. Nevertheless, in 10:20 Paul seems to focus on the sacrificial ritual; but he will, I argue, turn to the eating of the inner organs in the verse that follows.

⁸⁶⁹ Borgen, “‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘How Far?’,” 56. Borgen, however, differs from me in that he argues that it is not the Christ followers’ participation at the altar Paul points to. The context that is forbidden, according to Borgen, is to eat meat that is offered as sacrifice, since “it implied a demonic context” (*ibid*). Pace Still (“Paul’s Aims,” 341–42) who argues that Paul’s in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 is to diffuse with regards to where the line goes vis-à-vis idolatry.

⁸⁷⁰ Fredriksen, “The Question of Worship,” 181.

Clearly, *daimonia* were both common and real in the imagination of Jews like Paul. According to Paul, the Corinthians could not associate with both *daimonia* and the Messiah, as he will explain in 10:21. In order to gain a fuller understanding of what Paul meant by his reference to *daimonia* in 10:20, it is helpful to examine how Jewish authors thought of them.⁸⁷¹

Many people today think of demons as evil, spiritual beings. Martin aptly articulates a common understanding of demons that is prevalent both within and outside of academia:

According to familiar Christian mythology, demons are or were fallen angels. Satan was an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. Other angels rebelled along with him and became his minions. These fallen angels became demons. The mythology also assumes that ‘demons’ refers to the same being as ‘evil (or unclean or polluted) spirit.’ Contrary to what may be common assumptions, this mythology was not shared by most ancient Jews, including those who wrote and translated the Hebrew Bible, most writers of ancient noncanonical Jewish texts, and Jews in general before the rise of Christianity. Moreover, that myth, in its complete form, is not found in the NT, though separate aspect of it may be discerned there.⁸⁷²

⁸⁷¹ In the Greek language there were two words that could be used for what we in English label “demon,” *δαιμόνιον* and *δαίμων*. In 1 Cor 10:20–21 Paul uses the word *δαιμόνιον*, which seems to have been preferred over *δαίμων* among Jews and Christ followers. I have chosen to focus primarily on Jewish authors since I believe they provide the best background to how we best can understand Paul. However, these authors were of course not “only” Jewish but influenced by other, non-Jewish authors as well (and many of the Jewish authors wrote in Greek and therefore worked with the same vocabulary as Greek, non-Jewish authors). For more on non-Jewish authors and their understanding of *daimonia*, see Lars Albinus, “The Greek *δαίμων* between Mythos and Logos,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 425–46; Hubert Cancik, “Römische Dämonologie (Varro, Apuleius, Tertullian),” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 447–60.

⁸⁷² Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” 657. For similar critique and critique of modern scholarship’s (at times) anachronistic understanding of *daimonia*, see Bernd U. Schipper, “Angels or Demons? Divine Messengers in Ancient Egypt,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 1–19, 1; Jonathan Z. Smith, “Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity,” in *Principat*, ed. Wolfgang Haase, ANRW II.16.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), 425–39, 430–37. On some of the aspects of the motif of fallen angels in Early Judaism and Christianity, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); *eadem*, *Demons, Angels, and Writing in Ancient Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 189–246; Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1–4 in Early Jewish Literature*, 2nd ed., WUNT II/198 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013); James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. James C. VanderKam and William Adler, CRINT 4 (Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 33–101; Jan Doehhorn, “The Motif of the Angels’ Fall in Early Judaism,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias

In ancient Jewish writings, the term *daimōn* could mean several things. Manfred Hutter give the following framework within which many people in antiquity would have understood *daimonia*:

When we talk about ‘demons’ in Ancient Near Eastern cultures we can start with the Greek loanword to European languages. The Greek word *daímōn* can originally refer to any supernatural beings, and was sometimes also used as a parallel word to *theói* (‘gods’). It is further important to remember that the word in its early usage did not refer to negative semantics, as divine beings in ancient cultures often can be considered as ambiguous, *daímones* could be considered as either ‘evil’ or ‘good’ in the early use of the word.⁸⁷³

Hence, the term *daimōn* was flexible and its meaning depended on context.⁸⁷⁴ One illustration of this is the fact that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible uses the term *δαίμόνιον* as the translation for at least five Hebrew terms.⁸⁷⁵ Martin notes that “in the original Near Eastern context, those [Hebrew] words referred to differed kinds of beings: goat-man gods; superhuman beings that either are or cause diseases; abstract qualities of goods that may also be seen as gods,

Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 477–95. Some scholars have suggested that the equation of fallen angels with *daimonia* first appears in the Book of Enoch and the section the Book of the Watchers. Cf. Charles Guignebert, ed., *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke, The History of Civilization (London: Routledge, 1939; repr., London: Routledge, 1996), 101; John J. Collins, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men,” in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 259–74, 270. Martin (“When Did Angels Become Demons?” 666) critiques this position and sees the issue of equating fallen angels with demons in *1 Enoch* as “a problem arising perhaps partly from reading later Christian myths back into the Enochic material and partly from assuming that ‘demons’ and ‘evil spirits’ always refer to the same kind of being.”

⁸⁷³ Manfred Hutter, “Demons and Benevolent Spirits in the Ancient Near East: A Phenomenological Overview,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 21–34, 21.

⁸⁷⁴ This also holds true for other spiritual beings, e.g., *ἄγγελοι*, which could refer to various things depending on context. Some spiritual beings, however, seem to have carried certain connotations from the time they appear in ancient texts. For example, Stefan Schreiber (“The Great Opponent: The Devil in Early Jewish and Formative Christian Literature,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007], 437–57, 454) comments on the view of Satan (Hebrew: שָׂטָן/Greek: *διάβολος/σατᾶν*) in Early Judaism and Christianity: “The devil forms a stock figure in the religious drama of God and the salvation of humankind. He appears as a mythological, supernatural personification of enmity towards the righteous and as the great opponent of God.” Cf. Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, “Der Teufel und der alttestamentliche Monotheismus,” in *Das Böse, der Teufel und Dämonen – Evil, the Devil, and Demons*, ed. Jan Doehorn, Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, and Benjamin Wold, WUNT II/412 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 1–20.

⁸⁷⁵ These terms are: שָׂטָן, גַּד, שְׂעִיר, צִיִּים, דָּבָר. The Hebrew Bible does not have a term that corresponds to the Greek *δαίμόνιον* and Anne Marie Kitz (“Demons in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *JBL* 135 [2016]: 447–64, 464) points out that “the cultures of the ancient Near East did not envision our understanding of either demons or angels.”

such as Fortune or Fate. What they have in common, nonetheless, is that they all were thought of as gods—in fact, as the gods other people falsely worship: the gods of the nations.”⁸⁷⁶ According to the understanding of the translators of the Septuagint, then, *daimonia* represented a host of spiritual beings, but they were all related to divine beings that the translators viewed negatively. Consequently, this introduces a use of the Greek δαιμόνιον as a label for spiritual beings that are inherently bad and collected what was before several different species of spiritual beings under one heading.⁸⁷⁷ Even though the use of δαιμόνιον in the LXX most probably had some influence on Jews as the Greek translation spread and became more widely accessible to Jewish communities, the term δαιμόνιον still carried a flexibility to it. This can be seen in the works of Philo and Josephus.

Philo, who made use of the Greek translation of the Jewish scriptures, does not portray *daimonia* in an exclusively negative light.⁸⁷⁸ Much like the Greek philosophers, Philo’s view of *daimonia* is that they can have both good and bad intentions and he uses the word to refer to various spiritual beings.⁸⁷⁹ Several examples in Philo’s writings illustrate this fact.⁸⁸⁰ Sometimes *daimon*

⁸⁷⁶ Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” 662.

⁸⁷⁷ Cf. Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” 666.

⁸⁷⁸ That Philo has a high view of the Greek translation can be seen in his discussion of the Greek translation in his *On the Life of Moses* 2.25–44. In addition, Philo did probably not know Hebrew well enough to read the Hebrew text of the Jewish scriptures. Cf. Benjamin G. Wright, “Translation as Scripture: The Septuagint in Aristeas and Philo,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, Septuagint Research 53, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2006), 47–61, 59; D. Gooding and V. Nikiprowetzky, “Philo’s Bible in the *De Gigantibus* and the *Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*,” in *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria: A Commentary on De Gigantibus and Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, ed. David Winston and John Dillon, BJS 25 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 89–125, 119–22.

⁸⁷⁹ Peder Borgen (*Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*, NovTSup 86 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997], 1–13) points out that scholarship on Philo has emphasised various aspects of Philo’s writings and elements that influenced his thinking, e.g., Judaism and Greek philosophy. Cf. Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*, BJS 290/SPhilo 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 21–25.

⁸⁸⁰ Frederick E. Brenk (“In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period,” in *Religion (Heidentum: Römische Religion, Allgemeines [Forts.])*, ed. Wolfgang Haase [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986], 2068–145, 2101) argues that “Philo’s daimonology can be divided into three different parts, probably corresponding to the date of his writings and the development of his thought. In the first he would envisage the angels as *daimones-psychai* filling up the air, and essentially incorporeal human souls. The second mode of thought seems to be a transition in which the angels are spoken of as *daimones-psychai*, but also are *logoi*. Finally in the third part or period, the angels are simply *logoi*, i.e.

has the meaning of “god” or “divine/divinity” and carries a neutral or positive meaning. In *Every Good Man Is Free*, Philo seems to equate *daimonia* with gods (δαίμων τις ἢ θεός).⁸⁸¹ Philo also refers to Ares, the Greek god of war, as a *daimōn*.⁸⁸² Furthermore, in *On the Virtues* Philo says of the arrogant man that he thinks of himself as “neither a man nor a demigod, but fully divine”;⁸⁸³ and in *On the Life of Moses*, Philo refers to the deity of another nation as a *daimonion*.⁸⁸⁴ In his work *The Eternity of the World*, he again regards *daimonia* as gods or equal to gods. First, he refers to some peoples’ understanding of the stars as “gods or *daimonia* by nature” (θείας ἢ δαιμονίας φύσεις).⁸⁸⁵ Second, a *daimonion* has artistically diversified (τέχνη δαιμονίῳ πεποικιλμένης) the flowers of the earth.⁸⁸⁶ Third, Philo refers to truth as divinely beautiful (τὸ δ’ ἀληθὲς δαιμονίως ἐστὶ καλόν).⁸⁸⁷ Philo’s references to *daimonia* can also have other meanings. Philo tells us that Flaccus, who had been deported to the island of Andros, lamented his *daimōn* (κατακλαίων δαίμονα). In this case, “fate” or “destiny” is the best translation of *daimōn*.⁸⁸⁸ We find a similar meaning in *On Providence*, where Philo refers to one’s own *daimōn* (ἴδιον δαίμονα) as one’s fate or lot.⁸⁸⁹

Finally, in *The Embassy to Gaius*, Philo uses *daimōn* to describe a man who ignores the ghosts or evil spirits of his dead wife (πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσας τοῖς δαίμοσι τῆς ἀποθανούσης γυναικός).⁸⁹⁰ Philo also uses *daimōn* in a similar sense in his interpretation of the Cain and Abel

good thoughts, or inspirations – a rather bold leap from traditional daimonology in which at best *daimones* would give good thoughts or inspirations.”

⁸⁸¹ *Every Good Man Is Free* 130.

⁸⁸² *The Embassy to Gaius* 112.

⁸⁸³ *On the Virtues* 172. Greek text: οὔτε ἄνδρα οὔτε ἡμίθεον ἀλλ’ ὄλον δαίμονα.

⁸⁸⁴ *On the Life of Moses* 1.276.

⁸⁸⁵ *The Eternity of the World* 47.

⁸⁸⁶ *The Eternity of the World* 64.

⁸⁸⁷ *The Eternity of the World* 76.

⁸⁸⁸ *Against Flaccus* 168. Cf. 179.

⁸⁸⁹ *On Providence* 2.8. Philo also appears to equate the *daimōn* to one’s mind (νοῦς): ὃν γοῦν ἴδιον δαίμονα λέγω δὲ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ νοῦν.

⁸⁹⁰ *The Embassy to Gaius* 65.

story in the work *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*. There, Philo explains that God will not create an inviolable person (ἄτρωτος) that becomes subject to any passions, nor will God let someone who is a murderer and a *daimonion* (φονῶντι καὶ δαιμονῶντι) seek virtue (ἀρετή).⁸⁹¹ *Daimonion* here is probably best understood as “mad” (cf. LCL) but does not carry any explicitly spiritual connotations. Perhaps the most telling passage with regards to *daimonia* in Philo’s work comes from *On the Giants*, where he explains that *daimonia* are not different from other spiritual entities and that there are both good and bad *daimonia*, just like there are both good and bad souls and angels. The passage reads:

So if you realize that souls and demons and angels (ψυχὰς οὖν καὶ δαίμονας καὶ ἀγγέλους) are but different names for the same one underlying object, you will cast from you that most grievous burden, the fear of demons or superstition (δεισιδαιμονία). The common usage of men is to give the name of demon to bad and good demons alike, and the name of soul to good and bad souls. And so, too with angels (ὥσπερ γὰρ ἀγαθούς δαίμονας καὶ κακούς λέγουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ ψυχὰς ὁμοίως, οὕτως καὶ ἀγγέλους), you also will not go wrong if you reckon not only those who are worthy of the name, who are as ambassadors backwards and forwards between men and God and are rendered sacred and inviolate by reason of that glorious and blameless ministry, but also those who are unholy and unworthy of the title.⁸⁹²

The various nuances and meanings that *daimonion* and *daimōn* have in Philo’s works show that in both Judaism and Greek philosophy, both of which had a profound impact on Philo’s writings, the word pair could mean vastly different things depending on context.

We also find a wide range of the use of *daimonion* and *daimōn* in the work of Josephus. In *Jewish Antiquities* he portrays *daimonia* in three different ways. In 13.415, *daimōn* describes someone evil (LCL: “evil genius”) who might be angry with the house of Alexander. It is clear from the context that *daimōn* refers to a person and not a spiritual entity, since the *daimōn* would

⁸⁹¹ *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better* 46–47.

⁸⁹² *On the Giants* 16; slightly altered from LCL. Archie T. Wright (“Some Observations of Philo’s ‘De Gigantibus’ and Evil Spirits in Second Temple Judaism,” *JSJ* 36 [2005]: 471–88, 479–82) suggests that Philo might be alluding to the *I Enoch* and the Watcher tradition.

serve in the garrisons that protected the house of Alexander. Immediately after this reference, in 13.416, Josephus writes that some people were calling the *daimōn* of Alexander (τοὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου δαίμονας ἐπικαλουμένων) in order for it to take pity on those who were currently in danger or had died in war.⁸⁹³ Clearly, *daimōn* here refers to something that is related to Alexander and is probably best understood as his soul, ghost, or spirit. In 14.291, Josephus tells the story of how Malichus, whom had Herod's father killed by poisoning, enters the city of Tyre in order to retrieve his kidnapped son. His plan, however, fails because a *daimōn* and Herod lead a military action against Malichus in order to have him killed (τοῖς δὲ βεβουλευμένοις ὃ τε δαίμων ἀντέπραξε καὶ δεινὸς ὢν Ἡρώδης). The *daimōn* in this story is an active agent that works to the benefit of Herod, but to the detriment of his enemy, and is to be understood as a divine power whose actions can be understood as both good and bad, depending on which side one finds oneself.⁸⁹⁴

In *The Jewish War*, Josephus records Vespasian as saying: “‘After all,’ he continued, ‘you have slain myriads of Jews, but yourselves have given but a trifling contribution to the deity’ (τῷ δαίμονι).”⁸⁹⁵ The *daimōn* in question is the Roman god of war and Vespasian's speech carries the meaning that while the Romans have killed many Jews in the war, the Romans have only suffered minor losses and thus only made a small contribution to the god of war. Keeping with the context of war, Josephus recounts a speech by Titus, where he says that brave men (τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν) who have died in battle are placed among the stars (ἄστροις ἐγκαθιδρύει) and that they, as brave

⁸⁹³ Roland Deines (“Josephus, Salomo und die von Gott verliehene τέχνη gegen die Dämonen,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 365–94, 366) comments on Josephus's use of *daimōn* and *daimonion* and points out that in several of the occurrences of these words, like the instances in the *Jewish Antiquities* 13.415–16, refer to “interfamiliäre Blutschuld.”

⁸⁹⁴ Josephus recounts the same story in *The Jewish War* 1.233. There he does not use the word *daimōn* but *χρεών*, which means fate or destiny.

⁸⁹⁵ *The Jewish War* 4.41; slightly altered from LCL.

daimonia and favourable heroes (δαίμονες δ' ἀγαθοὶ καὶ ἥρωες εὐμενεῖς), manifest themselves to their descendants.⁸⁹⁶ Just as in the previous passage in *Jewish Antiquities*, where Josephus spoke of τοὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου δαίμονας, it is clear that the *daimōn* is a benign, spiritual being, and that it is connected to deceased persons.

A caveat with the examples from Josephus is that he here recounts what *others* have said and that the view they put forth does not necessarily cohere with that of Josephus's. However, the examples still show that Josephus was aware of several uses and meanings of the word *daimōn*, even if he himself possibly did not share those views of *daimonia*. Josephus can thus use the words *daimonion* and *daimōn* to mean several things and there does not seem to be anything inherently positive or negative in the word.⁸⁹⁷ As Martin articulates Josephus's use of *daimōn*: "Daimons occur in all sorts of situations and look just like Greek notions of daimons and divine forces, both helpful and harmful."⁸⁹⁸ I now turn to a final set of Jewish texts where the use of *daimonion* and *daimōn* is frequent, the New Testament. In contrast to Philo's and Josephus's references to *daimonion* and *daimōn*, the authors of the New Testament documents virtually always use *daimōn* terminology in a negative way.

In the New Testament, we find the most references to *daimonia* in the four gospels.⁸⁹⁹ The references to *daimonia* in the gospels are purely negative, and at least the synoptic gospels "clearly

⁸⁹⁶ *The Jewish War* 6.47. On the correspondence between the Greek *daimōn* and the Latin *genius*, see Wolfgang Speyer, "The Divine Messenger in Ancient Greece, Etruria and Rome," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 35–47, 44.

⁸⁹⁷ Thus, both Philo and Josephus deviate from the LXX's use of *daimonion* and *daimōn* as a negative term, since for them the term simply denotes something spiritual, non-somatic, or a characteristic that can be good or bad. It is interesting to note, as do Christopher Begg ("Angels in the Work of Flavius Josephus," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 525–36), that Josephus's use of ἄγγελος is largely in line with how the LXX uses the term (i.e., ἄγγελος can refer to both human messengers and super-human messengers sent by God).

⁸⁹⁸ Martin, "When Did Angels Become Demons?" 672.

⁸⁹⁹ Craig A. Evans ("Jesus and the Spirits: What Can We Learn from the New Testament World?" *Transformation* 27 [2010]: 146–61, 148) points out that exorcizing *daimonia* and other evil or unclean spirits "was commonplace in the

identify demons with unclean or evil spirits,” which are most often connected with exorcisms.⁹⁰⁰

We find the most explicit reference to *daimonia* as unclean spirits in Luke 4:33 where a man in a synagogue is reported to have πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου.⁹⁰¹ In addition, Peter G. Bolt suggests that the understanding of *daimonia* as the ghosts/spirits of the dead may also be present in some of the gospel accounts that mention the exorcizing of *daimonia* (especially Mark 5:1–20).⁹⁰² All three synoptic gospels include the reference to Beelzebul as the leader of the demons (Βεελζεβούλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων).⁹⁰³ Furthermore, Matthew explicitly identifies Beelzebul with Satan in

ministry of Jesus” according to the gospel writers. Cf. Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, Symposium Series 12 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 2; James D. G. Dunn and Graham H. Twelftree, “Demon-Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament,” *Churchman* 94 (1980): 210–25, 211. Furthermore, scholarship on the historical Jesus is in general agreement that Jesus was viewed as an exorcist by his contemporaries, cf. Geert van Oyen, “Demons and Exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, ed. Nienke Vos and Willemien Otten, SupVC 108 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99–116, 100; Helen K. Bond, *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Guides for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 102–1; Thomas Söding, “,Wenn ich mit dem Finger Gottes die Dämonen austriebe ...‘ (Lk 11,20): Die Exorzismen im Rahmen der Basileia-Verkündigung Jesu,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 519–49, 519.

⁹⁰⁰ Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” 673. The exorcisms in and of themselves testify to the negative view of *daimonia* in the synoptics, since “the casting out of demons presupposes a dualistic setting and a certain relationship between the two powers” (Gerbern S. Oegema, “Jesus’ Casting Out of Demons in the Gospel of Mark against its Greco-Roman Background,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 505–18, 508). In John’s gospel, Jesus never exorcize any *daimonia*. Ronald A. Piper (“Satan, Demons and the Absence of Exorcisms in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Christology, Controversy and Community: New Testament Essays in Honour of David R. Catchpole*, ed. David G. Horrell and Christopher M. Tuckett, NovTSup 99 [Leiden: Brill, 2000], 253–78) argues that the reason for this is John’s understanding of Jesus’s victory over Satan and evil. Rather than expelling Satan from the earthly realm and *daimonia* from physical bodies, Jesus confines Satan and *daimonia* to Earth and to bodies and shuts them out from the heavenly realm and the life of those who trust in the Messiah and are born again (John 3:5). Cf. Eric Plummer, “The Absence of Exorcisms in the Fourth Gospel,” *Bib* 78 (1997): 350–68.

⁹⁰¹ Even though *daimonia* are not explicitly called unclean spirits in John’s gospel, the author consistently refers to them in a negative manner, cf. John 7:20; 8:48–49, 52; 10:20–21. On the use of “evil spirits” and “demons” in the synoptics, Martin (“When Did Angels Become Demons?” 673) comments: “Though he can refer to these beings as either ‘spirits’ or ‘demons,’ Mark’s preferred term seems to be the latter. If Matthew used Mark, it is notable that he tends to change language he gets from Mark that refers to unclean ‘spirits’ and to substitute language about ‘demons.’ Moreover, Luke prefers ‘demons’ to ‘spirits’ even more than do Matthew and Mark. We may, therefore, see a movement toward preferring talk about ‘demons’ over talk about ‘evil spirits.’”

⁹⁰² Peter G. Bolt, “Jesus, The Daimons and the Dead,” in *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realm*, ed. Anthony N. S. Lane, Tyndale House Studies (Grand Rapids: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 75–102.

⁹⁰³ Mark 3:22; Matt 12:24; Luke 11:15.

12:26–27 where Jesus uses the two words *σατανᾶς* and *Βεελζεβούλ* interchangeably.⁹⁰⁴ Outside of the Gospels, there are a handful of references to *daimonia* in Acts to Revelation. All of them, bar one, are negative.⁹⁰⁵

In 1 Tim 4:1, the author writes that the Spirit has made known that in “the end times some will depart from obedience, devoting themselves to misleading spirits and teachings of *daimonia* (πνεύμασι πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων).” The author of James commends the Christ follower he is writing to for their belief that there is one god, which even the *daimonia* share, shivering with fear.⁹⁰⁶ The final text in the New Testament that mentions *daimonia* in a negative way is Revelation. In 9:20 those who survived the three plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur did not repent (οὐδὲ μετενόησαν), but continued to worship *daimonia* and idols (προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδωλα); in 16:14, three unclean spirits in the form of frogs (πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι) are exiting the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet; these unclean spirits are further specified as spirits of *daimonia* (εἰσὶν γὰρ πνεύματα δαιμονίων); the final reference to *daimonia* in Revelation comes from 18:2, where the fallen Babylon has become a

⁹⁰⁴ The other two synoptics also make this connection (cf. Mark 3:22–29; Luke 11:14–20), but it is the most explicit in Matthew. Cf. Clinton Wahlen, *Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels*, WUNT II/185 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 124–28; Martin Rese, “Jesus und die Dämonen im Matthäusevangelium,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römhald (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 463–75, 470–71.

⁹⁰⁵ We can also find a wholly negative picture of *daimonia* in Jewish texts outside the New Testament. Cf. Jacques van Ruiten, “Angels and Demons in the Book of *Jubilees*,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 585–609; Philip S. Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2.331–53; Ida Fröhlich, “Evil in Second Temple Texts,” in *Evil and the Devil*, ed. Ida Fröhlich and Erkki Koskeniemi, LNTS 481 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 23–50.

⁹⁰⁶ James 2:19: σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός; καλῶς ποιεῖς· καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουν.

dwelling-place for *daimonia*. *Daimonia* are also in this verse connected to unclean spirits, for whom Babylon has become a prison (φυλακή παντός πνεύματος ἀκαθάρτου).⁹⁰⁷

Of all the references to *daimonia* in the New Testament, only Acts 17:18 gives a neutral portrayal of these spiritual beings: “And some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him [Paul], and some said: ‘What is this babbler saying?’ Some said, ‘he seems to be a proclaimer of foreign *daimonia* (ξένων δαιμονίων),’ because he was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection.” However, this reference does not affect the overall picture the New Testament authors give, since the neutral reference to *daimonia* in Acts 17:18 does not reflect the author’s position, but that of someone he is allegedly quoting. In Acts 17:17, Paul is discussing Jesus and the resurrection with Jews in the synagogue and with the pious (σέβομαι) of the city in the place of assembly (ἀγορά).⁹⁰⁸ In the following verse, there is division among the Epicureans and Stoic philosophers on what to make of Paul’s preaching: some think he is simply talking nonsense; others, however, think that he “seems to be a proclaimer of foreign *daimonia* (ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι),” since Paul was speaking of Jesus and the resurrection.⁹⁰⁹ In this instance,

⁹⁰⁷ Revelation, together with the synoptic gospels, gives us the most explicit examples of how New Testament authors viewed *daimonia* as the mediators between evil powers (personified in Satan) and humanity. This, Anders Klostergaard Petersen (“The Notion of Demon: Open Questions to a Diffuse Concept,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 23–41, 27) notes, was contrary to how *daimonia* often were viewed in Greek tradition, where they functioned as the mediators between the divine and human.

⁹⁰⁸ Ἀγορά can also be translated “market” but the translation “place of assembly” better mirrors the synagogue where Paul discussed with the Jews.

⁹⁰⁹ N. Clayton Croy (“Hellenistic Philosophies and the Preaching of the Resurrection (Acts 17:18, 32),” *NovT* 39 [1997]: 21–39, 23) posits the idea that Paul’s audience viewed Jesus and the resurrection as two separate divinities, and that Jesus “could easily have been associated with Ἰησῶ (or Ἰασῶ), daughter of Aesculapius and goddess of healing. Ἀνάστασις, which would not have conveyed its Christian meaning to Greek philosophers, might also be construed as the name of a deity.” So also, Thomas Knöppler, “Paulus als Verkünder fremder δαιμόνια: Religionsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund und theologische Aussage von Act 17,18,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 577–83, 580.

there is no negative connotation to the *daimonia*, and the word here means deity or divinity, since that is how Paul presents Jesus. This view, however, is not that of the author of Acts, but it is ascribed to some of the Epicureans and Stoic philosophers.⁹¹⁰ Therefore, it does not alter the fundamentally negative view the New Testament authors had of *daimonia*. I now turn to Paul's use of the word *daimonion* and how he presents them in 1 Cor 10:20–22.

I have noted earlier that Paul, like virtually everyone else in the beginning of the first century CE, thought that a host of spiritual beings inhabited the world, the god of Israel being only one of these. Many of the spiritual entities or divinities Paul mentions are often in opposition to him, the message of his preaching, or the god of Israel.⁹¹¹ Just like everyone else of his time, Paul was unaware of our modern understanding and division of the (spiritual) world. For example, his view of angels—which are often viewed as “good” or “positive” beings today—is complex and flexible and there are several negative references to them in Paul's letters.⁹¹² For instance, they could seek to separate the Christ followers from their Lord (Rom 8:38); Christ followers are to judge them, which implies that they are not all good in Paul's view (1 Cor 6:3); and an “angel of Satan” (ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ) has given Paul a “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor 12:7).⁹¹³ I have already noted

⁹¹⁰ On Stoic conceptions of *daimonia*, see Keimpe Algra, “Stoics on Souls and Demons: Reconstructing Stoic Demonology,” in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, ed. Nienke Vos and Willemien Otten, SupVC 108 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 71–96.

⁹¹¹ For example, in Gal 1:8 Paul says that otherworldly beings (ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ) could potentially preach a message different than the one he himself preached to the Galatians.

⁹¹² It is not the case that Paul only viewed angels in a negative light, but these references illustrate the complexity and flexibility in various concepts that today are more well-defined but were not in Paul's time. For neutral and positive portrayals and/or references to angels in Paul, see 1 Cor 13:1; 2 Cor 11:14; Gal 3:19; 4:14. For an in-depth study into Paul's use of the word (and concept) ἄγγελος, see Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz and Reimund Bieringer, “Guardians of the Old at the Dawn of the New: The Role of Angels According to the Pauline Letters,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 325–55; with special attention to the Corinthian correspondence, Albert L. A. Hogeterp, “Angels, The Final Age and 1–2 Corinthians in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception*, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 377–92, 386–90.

⁹¹³ One could interpret ἄγγελος here as a reference to a “messenger” of Satan. However, it was quite common in ancient Judaism to associate angels with the realm of hell or the netherworld and being in league with Satan. Cf. Kelley Coblentz Bautch, “Heavenly Beings Brought Low: A Study of Angels and the Netherworld,” in *Angels: The*

Paul’s view of various other spiritual beings in the previous chapter and will therefore turn to Paul’s use of *daimonion* in 1 Cor 10:19–22. However, before I do so, it is worth reminding ourselves of the vast array of spiritual beings that inhabited the world, according to Paul: τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, 1 Cor 2:8; ἀρχή, ἐξουσία, and δύναμις, 1 Cor 15:24; δαιμόνιον, 1 Cor 10:21; στοιχείον, Gal 4:9; ἄγγελος, Gal 1:8, 4:14; 2 Cor 11:14; Σατανᾶς, 2 Cor 11:14.⁹¹⁴

Paul’s use of *daimonion* is sparse; in fact, he only uses the word in 1 Cor 10:20–22.⁹¹⁵ Hence, comparing Paul’s different usages of *daimonion* outside of this passage is not possible.⁹¹⁶ Even so, based on the comparative material of the other references to *daimonia* in New Testament texts, which are, when written from an emic perspective, wholly negative, and Paul’s rhetoric in 1 Cor 10:14–22, I think we have ample evidence to conclude that Paul uses *daimonion* in a negative way in 1 Cor 10:20–22. One clear indicator that Paul views *daimonia* negatively is that they are in opposition to Christ. The rhetorical force of Paul’s three examples in 1 Cor 10:16, 18, and 20 lays in the idea that the Corinthian Christ followers cannot have partnership in the blood and body of Christ and at the same time have partnership with *daimonia*. This becomes clear in 1 Cor 10:21, which I examine below: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of *daimonia*; you cannot take part in the table of the Lord and the table of *daimonia*.” Lampe points out that the problem Paul perceives in 10:20—that the Corinthians would “have partnership with *daimonia*”—

Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception, ed. Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, DCLY (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 459–75. On angels in early rabbinic sources and in Jewish sources up to late antiquity, see Mika Ahuvia, *On My Right Michael, On My Left Gabriel: Angels in Ancient Jewish Culture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

⁹¹⁴ On some of these entities, see Michael Becker, “Paul and the Evil One,” in *Evil and the Devil*, ed. Ida Fröhlich and Erkki Koskeniemi, LNTS 481 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 127–41; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 102–10.

⁹¹⁵ Paul does not use the word *daimōn* at all.

⁹¹⁶ Even though Paul only uses the word *daimonion* in 1 Cor 10:19–22, he does so in a way similar to other Jewish authors by connecting idolatry, sacrifices, and demons. Martin (“When Did Angels Become Demons?” 674) notes that this is the case also in the LXX, *1 Enoch*, and *Jubilees*; and as we have seen earlier, also Revelation made this connection (Rev 9:20).

occurs when they participate in the sacrificial rituals and so form a connection with *daimonia*.⁹¹⁷ *Daimonia*, then, according to Paul is the antithesis to Christ and the apostle connects their realm of existence to gentile cults.⁹¹⁸ Martin suggests that “we may also imagine that Paul would have considered demons especially associated with pollution and tied, as other Jews *and Greeks* would assume, to the earth and lower parts of the atmosphere.”⁹¹⁹ All of this leads to the conclusion that Paul portrays *daimonia* in an entirely negative light in 1 Cor 10:20–22.⁹²⁰ Having looked at Paul’s use of the word θύω (“to sacrifice”) and his view of *daimonia*, I now turn to the question of what Paul meant by “to have partnership with *daimonia* (κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι).”

The possibility that the Christ followers in Corinth could “have partnership with *daimonia*” seems to be the main issue Paul is combating in 1 Cor 10:14–22, since Christ followers, according to Paul’s reasoning, only can have partnership with either Christ *or daimonia*. Above, I argued that

⁹¹⁷ Peter Lampe, “Die dämonologischen Implikation von I Korinther 8 und 10 vor dem hintergrund paganer Zeugnisse,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/Demons: The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literatures in Context of Their Environment*, ed. Arming Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 584–99, 595.

⁹¹⁸ Cf. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 93; Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” 674.

⁹¹⁹ Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons?” 674 (emphasis original).

⁹²⁰ Gooch (*Dangerous food*, 76) puts forward the interesting suggestion that even though Paul understood *daimonia* in a negative light, the Corinthians audience might not. For them, Gooch suggests, *daimonia* might have meant nothing else than “deities” and they might not have thought of these spiritual beings in the negative way Paul did. The fact that Paul felt it necessary to explain to the Corinthians that the sacrifices in gentile cults were offered “to *daimonia* and not to God (οὐ θεῶν)” implies that the Corinthians did not share Paul’s view of the spiritual entities the idols represented. The translation of θεός is not entirely clear in this verse. It could refer to “a god” but it would make little sense if the Corinthians, at least in Paul’s view, thought it was acceptable to participate in the sacrifices if they performed them to gods and not *daimonia*. Surely, sacrifices to any other spiritual entity than the god of Israel would be equally unacceptable. However, if we translate θεός as “God” (i.e., the god of Israel), we are left with the question of how the Corinthians could have thought that the sacrifices were in honor of God since there most likely were no indications that this would have been the case. One possible argument in favour of the latter view is that the Corinthians themselves only acknowledged one God and one Lord (1 Cor 8:6), and since neither an idol nor food offered to idols are anything, they could have been of the opinion that what gentiles sacrificed to in their cults also was nothing. This could have led them to believe that the only possible recipient of the sacrifices was the god of the Jesus movement. The majority of commentators understand Paul’s reference to θεός in 1 Cor 10:20 as a reference to the god of Israel, see Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 236; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 750; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 520; Zeller, *Der erste brief an die Korinther*, 340; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 444. Regardless of how the Corinthians understood *daimonia* or whether Paul’s use of θεός is a reference to “a god” or “God,” Paul’s language concerning *daimonia* must have made it clear to the Corinthians that the recipients of the sacrifices were no benign beings.

because of Paul's introduction of the verb *θύω* in 1 Cor 10:20 he is not discussing food offered to idols in 10:14–22 but a situation where Christ followers would be present at the altar when the sacrifices took place. Simply put, taking part in the sacrificial rituals is what constitutes idolatry, Paul argues. Furthermore, being an active participant in the sacrificial rituals also leads to partnership with *daimonia*. This view could potentially be challenged by the reference to drinking (“you cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and the cup of *daimonia*”) and eating (“you cannot participate in the table of the Lord and the table of *daimonia*”) in 10:21. One could read these reference as another way for Paul to say that “when you eat food offered to idols, you drink the cup of *daimonia* and participate in the table of *daimonia*.” This is the prevailing view of much of the scholarship on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

Witherington states that the problem Paul addresses in 1 Cor 10:14–22 is one where Christ followers are “partaking of idol food in the temple.”⁹²¹ Fee is of a similar view and argues that Paul is focusing on the eating of food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 10. On verse 20 Fee comments: “The food eaten at the pagan meals has been sacrificed to demons; that means that those at the table are sharers in what has been sacrificed to demons.”⁹²² Ciampa and Rosner put forth a slightly more nuanced articulation of this view, even if the conclusion is that the eating is the problem, *à la* Witherington and Fee:

[Paul] does indicate that by knowingly partaking in meals where sacrificial food was consumed they [the Corinthians] were still to be considered participants in the sacrifices themselves.... Paul's argument suggests that the problem is not with the food (or drink) itself, but with the social and spiritual significance of eating (or drinking) it in contexts that may naturally be understood as condoning and/or participating in the pagan offering itself. On the issue of eating food offered to idols the Corinthians reason purely on the basis of the nature of the food. Paul argues on the basis of the potential significance of the act of eating it.... If pagan offerings are actually offerings made

⁹²¹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 226.

⁹²² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 521. Cf. David E. Garland, “The Dispute over Food Sacrificed to Idols (1 Cor 8:1–11:1),” *PRSt* 30 (2003): 173–97, 193.

to demons ... to knowingly and intentionally eat food from that offering in a context where it is acknowledged as such is to establish oneself as one in communion with those demons.⁹²³

The crucial problem Paul argues against, these scholars maintain, is the eating of food that has been sacrificed to idols. In contrast to these scholars' emphasis on the food eaten and the idea that it is the food (together with the context of eating it in a temple dedicated to idols) that poses the problem, I argue that it is the participation at the sacrificial altar that constitutes idolatry.⁹²⁴

The notion that one has partnership with the blood and body of Christ if one participate in the cultic meal of the Jesus movement, on the one hand, and that one has partnership with *daimonia* if one participates in the sacrificial rituals in gentile cults, on the other, leads Paul to explain to the Corinthians that they can only have partnership with either Christ or *daimonia* in 1 Cor 10:21: "You cannot drink from the cup of the lord and from the cup of *daimonia*; you cannot participate in the table of the Lord and the table of *daimonia*." Without a comprehensive understanding of Greek and Roman sacrificial practices, 10:21 may appear to be just another reference to food offered to idols and that Paul here simply goes one step further in restricting the Christ followers eating practices than he did in 1 Corinthians 8. However, based on the inquiry into Greek and Roman sacrificial practices in chapter 2, we can further decode Paul's language and gain a fuller understanding of what his reference to the cup and table signifies. If participation in the sacrificial rituals is one aspect of what constitutes "partnership with *daimonia*," what Paul says in 10:21 represent another aspect of how the Corinthian Christ followers have partnership with *daimonia*. I propose that Paul, by his reference to the participation in the cup and table of the Lord or *daimonia*, is speaking against the Christ followers' participation in the meal that is shared, not

⁹²³ Ciampa and Rosner, *The first letter to the Corinthians*, 481–82.

⁹²⁴ In contrast to Witherington, Fee, and Ciampa and Rosner, Zeller (*Der erste brief an die Korinther*, 342) argues: "Paulus stelle sich Teilhaberschaft mit den Dämonen nur während des Schlachtopferaktes am Altar vor, nicht aber während des Verzehrs von Opferfleisch."

after, but at the same time as the sacrifice is taking place and the god's portion is being burnt on the altar.⁹²⁵ In order to take part of *this* meal, the Christ followers would also have to participate in the rituals of sacrificing the animal at the altar.

We find two clues to this reading in Paul's language. First, he is still writing with reference to the sacrifices to *daimonia* mentioned in 10:20; second, instead of using the catch-all phrase *ειδωλόθυτος*, as in chapter 8, Paul refers specifically to the cup (*ποτήριο*) and the table (*τράπεζα*), indicating that he is now concerned, not with the general eating of food offered to idols, but with something more specific. A third initial reason as to why there is good reason to think that Paul is envisioning a different scenario in 1 Cor 10:21 from that in 1 Corinthians 8 is that in chapter 8 there does not seem to be any inherent problem with eating food offered to idols in an idol's temple. In 10:21, however, Paul straight away makes it clear that Christ followers cannot (*οὐ δύνασθε*) drink from the cup and participate in the table of the Lord and *daimonia*. In addition to Paul's own language, there is also the fact that other texts connect the two words *ποτήριο* and *τράπεζα* with altars and sacrificial practices.

Based on the Greek texts I explore below, I argue that Paul uses *ποτήριο* and *τράπεζα* in a specific, cultic sense. I will deal with both these words in turn, starting with *ποτήριο*. I propose that the cup Paul speaks of is not just any cup, but a cup that is used in connection with libations (*σπονδαί*) at the sacrifices. Unlike my examination of cultic usages of *τράπεζα* below, where I focus solely on that specific word, my analysis of *ποτήριο* will take into account more words for drinking

⁹²⁵ Cf. Ullucci (*The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*, 73) who writes: "Paul expresses this participation in terms of eating." Thus, the view that Paul is prohibiting eating of food offered to idols in 1 Cor 10:14–22 is not entirely inaccurate, but this prohibition is specified so that it does not apply to all food offered to idols eaten in all circumstances. Rather, Paul prohibits the eating of the parts of the sacrificial animal that was eaten as the god's portion burnt on the altar and the drinking of the libation that accompanied this. To be present at *this* meal, the Christ followers would also have to have been present at the sacrifice, since the meal was consumed at the altar during the sacrifice, and as a consequence Paul forbids both activities.

vessels than just ποτήριον (e.g., δέπας, φιάλη, πῶμα), since ancient Greek has a number of words for “cup.”

In *Peace*, a play by the Greek writer Aristophanes (c. 446–386 BCE), the roasting of a sacrificial animal is underway (1045–95). When some of the parts have been roasted, Trygaeus tells the slave to start carving the meat, to which the slave asks, “where is a table?” (ποῦ τράπεζα). Trygaeus, seemingly ignoring the slave’s question, tells the slave to also “bring the libation” (τὴν σπονδὴν φέρε). Towards the end of the sacrifice, Aristophanes details what happened at the altar by the time of the sacrifice: the god’s portion, the thigh-bones, is burnt, the inner organs (σπλάγχνα) are eaten, and libations are poured from cups (ἔσπενδον δεπάεσσιν). Two additional examples come from the satirist Lucian (c. 120–190 CE) and his *Toxaris, or Friendship*. In the first example, a dinner party is underway and after the meal is finished the company “poured libations to the gods” (ἔσπεισαν τοῖς θεοῖς) and one of the men raises the libation bowl (φιάλη), which is full of wine, in order to make a vow to marry the daughter of one of the guests.⁹²⁶ The second example comes from Lucian’s description of how some men rob a temple. The first things they steal are two libation bowls made of gold (χρυσᾶς τε φιάλας δύο).⁹²⁷ The presence of these bowls, which are reported to belong to the god, indicates that people made libations to the god, and if they also performed sacrifices in the temple, something that Lucian leaves unspecified, they most likely used the libation bowls in connection with the sacrifices.

We also find a clear reference to the connection between libation, the use of cups, and sacrificial rituals in Homer’s *Odyssey* (18.151–52). After holding a speech, Odysseus proceeds to

⁹²⁶ *Toxaris, or Friendship* 25. It is somewhat strange that the man is raising the φιάλη, since this technically is not a drinking cup but the bowl from which the libation was poured from. Cf. Dietrich von Bothmer, “A Gold Libation Bowl,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 21 (1962): 154–66.

⁹²⁷ *Toxaris, or Friendship* 28.

pour a libation (σπένδω) and then drinking the sweet wine from a cup (δέπας). Another example comes from the fifth century BCE poem *Ion* by Euripides. One of the characters, Creusa, is seeking to kill her stepson and asks an old man to poison him. She instructs the man to go to her husband, who is sacrificing an ox (βουθυτέω), and when the party have finished their dinner (δείπνον) and are about to pour libations (σπονδὰς θεοῖς μέλλωσι λείβειν), the old man is to pour the poison into the cup (πῶμα) of the stepson.⁹²⁸

The final text that mentions where a libation and cup together comes from the gospel of Luke 22:20b, where Jesus celebrates his last supper with his disciples. This text has nothing to do with Greek sacrifices, but it illustrates well the connection between “cup” and the pouring of liquid. The text reads: Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον. Several modern Bible translations translate the Greek with the understanding that it is Jesus’s blood that is poured out (ἐκχυννόμενον). Thus, the NIV translates 22:20b: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”⁹²⁹ Matthias Klinghardt, however, has demonstrated that this translation is wrong:

In diesem Fall müsste die Apposition wie das Bezugswort im Dativ stehen und folglich τῷ ... ἐκχυννομένῳ lauten. Der Nominativ der Apposition τὸ ... ἐκχυννόμενον kann sich daher syntaktisch nur auf τὸ ποτήριον beziehen, so dass die korrekte Übersetzung lauten muss: ‘Dieser Becher, der für euch vergossen ist, ist der Neue Bund in meinem Blut’ oder genauer: ‘Dieser für euch vergossene Becher ist der Neue Bund in meinem Blut.’⁹³⁰

Hence, it is the cup that is poured out, not the blood. As such, this text perfectly illustrates the use of a ποτήριον in conjunction with the act of pouring libations.

⁹²⁸ *Ion* 1030–34. It is not entirely clear if the δείπνον takes place during the sacrifice or after it. Whatever the case might be, it is clear that the δείπνον is closely connected to the sacrifice and that the libation is the final part of the whole ritual.

⁹²⁹ See also NKJV and JB. However, a number of English translations, including ESV, NRSV, and NASB, have the translation Klinghardt argues in favour of.

⁹³⁰ Matthias Klinghardt, “Der vergossene Becher. Ritual und Gemeinschaft im lukanischen Mahlbericht,” *EC* 3 (2012): 33–58, 34 (emphasis original).

These texts demonstrate that Greek writers on several occasions connected the act of making libations (with the use of cups) to sacrificial rituals. Furthermore, the texts illustrate that a cup or general drinking vessel was used both to pour libations and to drink the same liquid from. Thus, when Paul uses the word *ποτήριον* in a passage where he is describing cultic settings and rituals, it is possible that he too is thinking about the act of pouring libations and drinking from them. I now turn to the use of *τράπεζα* in Greek writings to study its function as a cultic object and how that might affect our reading of 1 Cor 10:21.

In the LXX, *τράπεζα* can refer to an altar (*θυσιαστήριον*). In Isaiah 65, God accuses his people of having abandoned him in order to worship and sacrifice to other spiritual entities.⁹³¹ The text explicitly refers to cultic activities of making sacrifices and burning incense in verse 3: “This people provokes me before my face through all their sacrifices in the gardens (*θυσιάζουσιν ἐν τοῖς κήποις*) and the burning of incense (*θυμιάω*) on the bricks to *daimonia*, which are nothing (*τοῖς δαιμονίοις ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν*).”⁹³² Later on in the chapter, God accuses the Israelites of “setting the table for a *daimōn* (*ἐτοιμάζοντες τῷ δαίμονι τράπεζαν*) and filling the drinking vessel for fate.”⁹³³ We find an explicit equation of *τράπεζα* with an altar in Ezekiel 41:22. God describes an “altar of wood (*θυσιαστηρίου ξυλίνου*)” to Ezekiel in the beginning of the verse; at the end, God refers to it as “the

⁹³¹ Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19B [New York: Doubleday, 2003], 278) notes that the charge against the people most probably refers to them being active in both the Jerusalem cult and “engaging in cults to other deities.” On the potential cultic settings referred to in Isa 65:3–4, see P. A. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah: The Structure, Growth and Authorship of Isaiah 56–66*, VTSup 62 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 137–39.

⁹³² Unlike Paul’s understanding of *daimonia* as evil spiritual beings, the Greek text of Isaiah “describes these demons as figures of the worshippers’ deluded imagination” (David A. Baer, *When We All Go Home: Translation and Theology in LXX Isaiah 56–66*, JSOTSup 318 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 177).

⁹³³ Isa 65:11 LXX is especially apt for our purposes since it portrays how some of the Israelites both set a table for a *daimonion* and fill a drinking vessel. The word for “drinking vessel” used here is *κέρασμα*, not *ποτήριον*, but both words refer to vessels one drinks from (cf. Ps 74:9 LXX).

table (τράπεζα) before the face of the Lord.”⁹³⁴ Later on, in 44:15–16, God says that the Levites shall bring him “sacrifices of fat and blood (προσφέρειν μοι θυσίαν στέαρ και αίμα),” and the place where they will do so in the holy place (εἰς τὰ ἅγια) where the table (τράπεζα) of God is.⁹³⁵ Toward the end of Ezekiel 44, the text specifies the types of offerings the priests are allowed to eat from while serving at the altar. Daniel I. Block notes that this is a further elaboration on 44:16, where the priests are allowed to approach God’s table, and that “now they are invited to eat Yahweh’s food... With the notable exception of the ‘*ôlâ*, ‘burnt offering,’ all that the Israelites bring to him [God] they may enjoy.”⁹³⁶ Therefore, eating of the food that was served in connection with sacrifices was regarded as eating of God’s food and from God’s table. The same pattern of using θυσιαστήριον and τράπεζα interchangeably can be seen in Malachi 1:7 and 12 as well. There, the priests of Israel have offered polluted food on God’s altar (θυσιαστήριον). The text then refers to the altar as the τράπεζα of God in verses 7 and 12.⁹³⁷

The practice of using the word τράπεζα in order to refer to an altar can also be found in a number of Greek texts outside of the LXX. In the Jewish work *Joseph and Aseneth*, the word τράπεζα is used in a number of instances to designate a table with a cultic function. In 8:5, Joseph

⁹³⁴ On features of this altar/table, Walter Zimmerli (*Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, ed. Paul D. Hanson and Leonard Jay Greenspoon, trans. James D. Martin, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 389) comments: “Since wooden sides and a wooden pedestal ... are mentioned, it must be a ‘table’ the structure of which resembles an altar.”

⁹³⁵ Stephen L. Cook (*Ezekiel 38–48: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22B [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018], 212) comments that the reference to God’s table in 44:16 could be a reference to either the table of the bread or the main altar. Based on Nathan MacDonald’s observation (*Priestly Rule: Polemic and Biblical Interpretation in Ezekiel 44*, BZAW 476 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015], 61) with regards to the influence of Num 18:4–7 in this part of Ezekiel, Cook concludes that it is the main altar that is in view. There is also a strong thematic connection between Ezekiel 40:46 and 44:15–16. In 40:46 it is clear that it is the main altar (θυσιαστήριον) that the text refers to.

⁹³⁶ Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 2.645.

⁹³⁷ Just as in Ezekiel 44:15–16, the altar/table mentioned here is it the altar where the burning sacrifices would take place. Cf. Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 28 (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012) 299; *idem*, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 25D (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 177.

explains that it is not proper for him, a man who worships God, to kiss Aseneth since she “blesses dead and mute idols with her mouth and eats bread of strangling from their table (ἐσθίει ἐκ τῆς τραπέζης αὐτῶν ἄρτον ἀγχόνης) and drinks from their cup of libation (πίνει ἐκ τῆς σπονδῆς αὐτῶν ποτήριον).”⁹³⁸ In 11:9, we find a connection between defilement and the participation in the *τράπεζα* of idols, when Aseneth declares: “I ate from their sacrifices and my mouth has been defiled from their table (καὶ ἔφαγον ἐκ τῶν θυσιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ στόμα μου μεμίαται ἐκ τῆς τραπέζης αὐτῶν).” A similar statement by Aseneth is recorded in 12:5: “My mouth has been defiled from the sacrifices of idols and from the table of the gods of Egypt (τῆς τραπέζης τῶν θεῶν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων).”⁹³⁹ Finally, in 21:14 Aseneth regrets her drinking of a “cup of treachery ... from the table of death (τῆς τραπέζης τοῦ θανάτου).”⁹⁴⁰

From the contexts in which *Joseph and Aseneth* uses the word *τράπεζα*, it is clear that the references to *τράπεζα* are to a cultic table or altar where sacrifices took place and from which Aseneth ate sacrificial food. Furthermore, the reference in *Joseph and Aseneth* 8:5 to eating bread from the table of idols and drinking from their cup of libation is strikingly similar to the situation

⁹³⁸ Greek text from Reinmuth, ed., *Joseph and Aseneth*. Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen (*Aseneth's Transformation*, DCLS 24 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018], 161) notes that because Aseneth is accused doing these things, Joseph does not kiss Aseneth due to fear of contamination. Matthew Thiessen (“Aseneth’s Eight-Day Transformation as Scriptural Justification for Conversion,” *JSJ* 45 [2014]: 229–49, 232) points out that it is specifically Aseneth’s idolatry that is problematic in Joseph’s eyes. In a way similar to Paul’s reasoning in 1 Cor 10:14–22, *Joseph and Aseneth* employs food rituals and worship in order to separate groups of people and one cannot partake in both the Jewish worship and meals and gentile worship and meals. Joseph claims that since he blesses God, eats the blessed bread of life, drinks from the blessed cup of immortality, and is anointed with blessed oil of incorruption, he cannot kiss someone who participates in the opposite rituals, as does Aseneth.

⁹³⁹ More generally on food and its meaning in *Joseph and Aseneth*, see Meredith J. C. Warren, *Food and Transformation in Ancient Mediterranean Literature*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series 14 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 75–100.

⁹⁴⁰ This verse is not present in the shorter textual witnesses known as the *d* family and is therefore not included in the critical text produced by Marc Philonenko (*Joseph et Aséneth: Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, SPB 13 [Leiden: Brill, 1968]). However, other critical editions, favouring a longer text, include this verse. Cf. Christoph Burchard, *Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth: Überlieferung – Ortsbestimmung*, WUNT 8 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965).

Paul envisions in 1 Cor 10:21. It seems clear that the eating and drinking Aseneth is reported to have taken part in in 8:5 suggests more than just eating food offered to idols, since the text at several instances envisages that Aseneth was intimately involved in the Egyptian cult. It is just this kind of intimate, active participation Paul fears that his Christ followers are guilty of and that he forbids in 1 Cor 10:21.

Philo also mentions the cultic use a *τράπεζα* could have. In *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?* he expounds on the candlestick (*λυχνίας*), table (*τράπεζα*), and altar (*θυσιαστήριον*) in the Israelite sanctuary. On the *τράπεζα*, Philo comments: “In the table we have thanksgiving for the mortal creatures framed from these elements [earth, water, air, and fire], since loaves and libations (*ἄρτοι γὰρ καὶ σπονδεῖα*), which creatures needing food must use, are placed on it.”⁹⁴¹ Philo’s remarks show that even though there is an altar present in the sanctuary, the table also serves a cultic function.

In addition to these Jewish Greek texts, there are also Greek texts written by non-Jews where the word *τράπεζα* is used to signify a table which is used for cultic purposes. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (c. 80–20 BCE) uses the word *τράπεζα* in a cultic sense twice in his *Library of History*. In book two, Diodorus recounts the interior of a temple dedicated to Zeus. Within the temple there are three large statues made of gold, one of Zeus, one of Hera, and one of Rhea, and before these statues was a great, golden *τράπεζα*.⁹⁴² On top of the table were two drinking-cups (*δύο καρχήσια*), containers for incense (*θυμιατήρια*), and three golden bowls (*κρατῆρες χρυσοῖ τρεῖς*).⁹⁴³ We find the second instance of *τράπεζα* being used with a cultic meaning

⁹⁴¹ *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?* 46; LCL.

⁹⁴² Diodorus writes that it was “forty feet long, fifteen wide, and weighing five hundred talents” (*The Library of History* 2.9.7; LCL).

⁹⁴³ The weight of these items indicates that they were quite large and perhaps used to put offerings to the deities in, not something those who worshiped them used themselves.

in book five of the *Library of History*. Diodorus again details the interior of a temple—this time one that was purportedly built by Zeus—which contains a golden couch of the god (κλίνη τοῦ θεοῦ) and a table of the god (τράπεζα τοῦ θεοῦ) next to it, both presumably belonging to Zeus. The two tables Diodorus mention clearly carry cultic connotations, but it is unclear whether they functioned as altars that people ate from, and the first τράπεζα was by all accounts used for rituals in honor of the gods Zeus, Hera, and Rhea.⁹⁴⁴

In his ten books in which he describes Greece, Pausanias (c. 120–180 CE) tells the story of a certain sceptre Hephaestus made for Zeus, which the Chaeroneans call Spear (Δόρυ). Even though this sceptre has no dedicated temple, it has its own priests who keep it in a house. There they sacrifice to it daily and beside the divine sceptre is a τράπεζα that is full of meat and cakes (κρεῶν καὶ πεμμάτων πλήρης). The meat and cakes on this τράπεζα are most plausibly the leftovers from the sacrifices performed by the priests, and there is also the possibility, although one cannot be certain about this, that the τράπεζα is itself the place where the offerings are being made since the sceptre is housed not in a temple but in a house where there might not be sufficient space for both an altar and a table for the offerings.⁹⁴⁵

The last example of τράπεζα being used with cultic connotations comes from the Roman author Aelian (c. 170–230 CE) and his work *On the Characteristics of Animals*. He tells the story of a divine serpent which resides in a tower in the Egyptian town of Metelis. In front of the serpent there is a table and a bowl (τράπεζα καὶ κρατήρ). The bowl is filled with barley soaked in honey and milk every day, and when the servants return the next day, the bowl is empty. In this story the τράπεζα plays a cultic function since the offering of barley, honey, and milk are there for the divine

⁹⁴⁴ *Library of History* 5.46.6–7.

⁹⁴⁵ *Description of Greece* 9.40.11–12.

serpent's benefit and honor.⁹⁴⁶ These examples, taken from a wide variety of authors from different time periods, support the notion that ancient authors who wrote in Greek used the word *τράπεζα* with cultic connotations and that the word *τράπεζα* itself can be used interchangeably with the word for altar (*θυσιαστήριον*).

The various strands of evidence brought forth when it comes to the use of the two words *ποτήριον* and *τράπεζα* display that (1) libations were common and an integral part when it came to animal sacrifices and when a word for a drinking vessel is used in connection to such a sacrifice, it usually meant that the sacrificial party had poured a libation; (2) a *τράπεζα* could serve a cultic function and that when the word is used in a cultic context, it often had such a function; (3) several of the texts explored above refers to both the use of a cultic *τράπεζα* and the pouring of libations. Given the fact that Paul, in 1 Cor 10:21, speaks into a cultic context, as the wider context of 10:14–22 indicates, I think it plausible that when he forbids the Corinthian Christ followers from taking part in *ποτήριον δαιμονίων* and *τραπέζης δαιμονίων*, he is not merely thinking of the eating of food offered to idols. Rather, what Paul forbids is the participation at the altar (as indicated by *θύω* in 10:20), the eating of the *σπλάγχνα*, and the pouring of libations as well as the subsequent drinking of the cup used for the libation (or a cup that contained wine from the libation bowl).⁹⁴⁷ Rather than restricting Christ followers from participating in the wider, social consequences of animal sacrifice, such as eating sacrificial meat, Paul is here restricting participation in a very specific cultic activity related to the sacrificial killing and eating of animals in honor of idols.

⁹⁴⁶ *On the Characteristics of Animals* 11.17.

⁹⁴⁷ Cf. Dieter Sänger (“Ekklesiale Gemeinschaft und eucharistisches Handeln: Neutestamentliche Impulse im Anschluss an 1 Kor 10f. und Apg 2,42–47,” *KD* 66 [2020]: 97–117, 110): “Paulus geht es also nicht um die Gemeinschaft mit anderen Götzenverehrnern, sondern um Koinonia über die Tischgemeinschaft mit den als präsenste Gastgeber gedachten Dämonen.”

1 Cor 10:22 sums up Paul’s argument surrounding the incompatibility of the cup of the Lord and *daimonia* and the table of the Lord and *daimonia*. Paul first asks the question, “do we want to provoke the Lord to jealousy (*παραζηλοῦμεν*)?” and then poses another question, “we are not stronger than him, are we?”⁹⁴⁸ This verse lends further evidence that Paul does not have only the eating of food offered to idols in view, since in 1 Cor 8, where his discussion clearly revolves around the eating of this kind of food, he argues that food “will not bring us before God’s judgement” (8:8). Paul’s attitude in 10:22 is clearly different from that in 8:8: taking part in the cup and table of *daimonia* would have a serious effect on the Christ followers’ relationship with their Lord.⁹⁴⁹

I mentioned above that 1 Cor 10:20a (*θύουσιν δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ*) is almost identical to Deut 32:17a (*ἔθυσαν δαιμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῷ*) and it appears as though Paul is drawing on Deut 32:21 in 1 Cor 10:22. The linguistic and thematical similarities are striking. Deut 32:21 reads: “They provoked me to jealousy (*αὐτοὶ παρεζήλωσάν με*) with what is not God, they provoked my anger with their idols (*τοῖς εἰδώλοις αὐτῶν*), but I will provoke them to jealousy (*παραζηλώσω αὐτούς*) over that which is not a nation, over an unwise nation I will provoke them to anger.” God is provoked to jealousy and anger in Deut 32:21 by the worship of beings and things which are not God, the text especially singles out idols.⁹⁵⁰ A similar connection between *παραζηλώω* and cultic participation can be found in Ps 77:58 LXX.⁹⁵¹ First, the psalmist accuses Israel of having

⁹⁴⁸ Both of these rhetorical questions require a “no” as their answer due to the context and the use of *μή* in the second question.

⁹⁴⁹ Newton (*Deity and Diet*, 368) writes: “10.22 is Paul’s final seal that in 10.20–21 he is talking about more than mere eating and drinking.”

⁹⁵⁰ Due to these similarities between 1 Cor 10:22 and Deut 32:21, Schrage (*Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 447) comments: “Diese Warnung, von deren Schärfe durch die kommunikative 1. Pers. Plur. nur wenig zurückgekommen wird, hat also mehr den Eifer Gottes als die Macht der Dämonen im Blick.”

⁹⁵¹ On other connections between jealousy and idols in the Hebrew Bible, see Brian S. Rosner, “‘Stronger than He?’ The Strength of 1 Corinthians 10:22b,” *TynBul* 43 (1992): 171–79, 178–79.

provoked God’s anger with their high places (βουνοί), i.e., places of worship; second, Israel provoked God to jealousy (παραζήλω) with their carved images (ἐν τοῖς γλυπτοῖς αὐτῶν).⁹⁵² Again, here it is Israel’s use of representations of other gods, this time in the form of carved images, that provokes God’s jealousy.

Having dealt with the specific problem and limits of idolatry in 10:14–22, Paul now turns his attention to two additional settings which presumably faced the Corinthian Christ follower relatively often: buying food in the market that potentially came from a sacrifice and dining with those who were not members of the *ekklēsia*.

Buying Food at the Market and Dining with Outsiders

Many have taken Paul’s reference to the *μάκελλος* in 1 Cor 10:25 as a reference to a market where people only sold meat, probably due to the reference to meat in 1 Cor 8:13.⁹⁵³ However, Henry J. Cadbury points out that the *μάκελλος* “was not exclusively a meat market, but other foods were sold there including fish, fruit, bread. In some cases also non-edible goods were for sale, too,” but he goes on to admit that “animal food was, I think, the most constant factor in a *macellum*.”⁹⁵⁴ Inscriptional evidence, most notably one inscription excavators found in 1898 that contains the word *macellu[m]*, indicate that there was a market in Corinth.⁹⁵⁵ As of yet scholars have reached

⁹⁵² It is impossible to know whether Paul intended for the Corinthians to apply the whole context of Deuteronomy 32 to their situation. However, if that was the case, they would have read God’s accusations against those Israelites who participated in the eating of the fat from animal sacrifices and the drinking of the wine from libations in 32:38 (τὸ στέαρ τῶν θυσιῶν αὐτῶν ἤσθιετε καὶ ἐπίνετε τὸν οἶνον τῶν σπονδῶν αὐτῶν).

⁹⁵³ On the *macellum* in the ancient Roman world Hans-Josef Klauck (*Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult*, 273–74) comments: “In den Städten Italiens was das Macellum ein freier Platz, von offenen Läden und einer Säulenhalle umgeben, mit einem Rundbau in der Mitte. Es befreite das Forum vom Handel und diente als zentrale Markthalle. Man konnte dort auch Köche mieten, Mahlzeiten bestellen und abhalten.”

⁹⁵⁴ Henry J. Cadbury, “The Macellum of Corinth,” *JBL* 53 (1934): 134–41, 141.

⁹⁵⁵ On the inscriptions, see David W. J. Gill, “The Meat-Market at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:25),” *TynBul* 43 (1992): 389–93.

no consensus as to where in Corinth this market may have been located. The meat one could buy at the market came either from sacrificial animals or animals which a butcher had prepared at the market.⁹⁵⁶ Distinguishing between these two origins vis-à-vis the meat sold in the market would have been hard without asking those who sold it.⁹⁵⁷ The presence of meat from sacrificial animals was not the only thing that connected the market with the cultic milieu of its city. Dietrich-Alex Koch notes that, “Die religiösen Elemente eines *macellum* bestanden vor allem in Götterstatuen, die sehr häufig nachgewiesen sind und deren Existenz man auch dort vermuten kann, wo ein Nachweis (bisher jedenfalls) fehlt.”⁹⁵⁸ In addition to statues of idols excavators have also found altars in the *macellum* at Pompei and two additional ones in the regions of Numidia, from Cuicul and Thibilis.⁹⁵⁹ Hence, it was clear to anyone who entered the market in Corinth that they were not entering a “secular” place, but one that—like the temples and so many other buildings and locations in antiquity— the deities and cults of the city permeated.

⁹⁵⁶ Cadbury (“Macellum,” 141) writes: “the presence also in one shop of entire skeletons of sheep suggests that the meat may have been sold on the hoof or slaughtered in the *macellum* as well as sold already butchered or sacrificed in a temple.”

⁹⁵⁷ Christopher M. McDonough (“The Christian in the Ancient Meat Market: Neglected Evidence for the Pricing of Idol Meat,” *STRev* 47 (2004): 278–89) argues that the Corinthians would have been able to spot the sacrificial meat since it would have had a higher price. This is also suggested by M. Isenberg, “The Sale of Sacrificial Meat,” *CP* 70 (1975): 271–73. Murphy-O’Connor (*St. Paul’s Corinth*, 33) believe that the vast majority of the meat sold in the market at Corinth came from sacrifices performed in the temples in the city. His suggestion, though possible, is hard to substantiate. Murphy-O’Connor himself presents no clear evidence, and we simply do not know how much of the meat sold in the Corinthian market came from sacrifices and how much of it came from non-sacrificial animals. Clearly, in Paul’s understanding, both sacrificial food and non-sacrificial food were sold in the Corinthian market to the extent that one could end up buying either. As Dietrich-Alex Koch (“,Alles, was ἐν μακέλλῳ verkauft wird, eßt ...’ Die *macella* von Pompeji, Gerasa und Korinth und ihre Bedeutung für die Auslegung von 1Kor 10,25,” *ZNW* 90 (1999): 194–219, 194) puts it: “Paulus setzt damit voraus, daß man im *macellum* beides bekommen kann, Götzenopferfleisch, also aus paganen kultischen Schlachtungen stammendes Fleisch, und sozusagen ‘normales’ Fleisch, d. h. Fleisch von Tieren, die nicht für kultische Zwecke geschlachtet worden sind.”

⁹⁵⁸ Koch, “ἐν μακέλλῳ,” 211.

⁹⁵⁹ Koch, “ἐν μακέλλῳ,” 212. To my knowledge, there has not been any such findings from the ancient market in Corinth.

Paul's guidance on what Christ followers can buy from the market and eat are rather straightforward.⁹⁶⁰ He makes the origins of the food a non-issue: "Eat everything (πᾶς) that is sold in the market, not inquiring into it because of consciousness." Paul's attitude in 10:25 to the food sold in the market strongly suggests that he is not concerned with what Christ followers eat—and that it is not eating Paul combats in 10:14–22, but idolatry—and that what they eat will not affect their loyalty to the Christ group or to their deity.⁹⁶¹ From where the meat comes from, Paul asserts, is nothing that should matter to the consciousness (συνείδησις) of the Christ follower; they are free to eat.⁹⁶² By quoting Ps 23:1 LXX in 1 Cor 10:26, Paul explains why one need not be concerned with the origins of the meat in the market: "For the earth and everything that is in it belongs to the Lord." Thus, obedient Christ followers can eat meat offered to idols, since this type of food, in the end, belongs to the Lord, not the deities of other cults. On the topic on buying food from the market, Zetterholm comments:

The reason why Paul finds food bought at the market least problematic is presumably also the lack of an immediate cultic context, and it is not inconceivable that here Paul draws from a local Jewish halakhah concerning food bought at the market in Corinth when creating a set of rules for Gentile Jesus-believers. Rabbinic literature shows that the rabbis discussed the extent to which the act of selling disconnects objects from a ceremonial context. In the Tosefta, R. Jehuda ha-Nasi is said to have advocated the view that selling in general signified a nonsacral status for an object (see *m. Avodah Zarah* 4:4–5; cf. *t. Avodah Zarah* 5:5)... The other rabbis disagreed, but the discussion shows that some Jews argued that food bought at

⁹⁶⁰ Compared to the rest of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, there is little in the way of discussions surrounding the first part of 10:25 (πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε). Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 530) even calls Paul's rule for how the Christ followers in Corinth should behave in the market "a simple one."

⁹⁶¹ On the reason why Paul tells the Corinthians not to ask of the origins of the meat, Ciampa and Rosner (*The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 487–88) suggests the following: "To ask questions and refuse to eat food which is explicitly identified as idol food would seriously reduce the food options available. To ask questions and then go ahead and eat food that had been explicitly identified as idol food could be interpreted (by the one selling the food or by someone observing the transaction) as a willingness to be considered a supporter of or participant in the sacrifice that was made. To avoid asking questions was to avoid giving anyone the ability to associate the purchase with any religious intention on the part of the buyer." I think their first suggestion has some merit, depending on how the ratio of sacrificial and secular meat looked like at the market in Corinth; but their second one seems speculative.

⁹⁶² Exactly whose consciousness Paul refers to is not clear. It could be the Christ follower who buys the meat or the one that saw the transaction taking place. However, since Paul, when referring to someone's consciousness, always refers to the consciousness of others in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 (8:7, 10; 10:29) it seems reasonable that Paul is discussing the consciousness of someone other than the buyer.

the market no longer had a ceremonial significance attached to it owing to the act of selling, in fact, Paul's views on this matter might indicate that this was the case.⁹⁶³

In 1 Cor 10:27, Paul turns from the situation of buying meat at the market to how Christ followers should view the food those who did not belong to the Jesus movement offered them when they were invited to dine with them.

Initially, Paul's instructions in 10:27 are identical to those given previously in 10:25. If an ἄπιστος invites a Christ follower to dinner, and the latter is disposed to go, Paul's instructions are: "eat everything (πάντα) that is placed before you, not inquiring into it because of consciousness."⁹⁶⁴ However, in the following verses, Paul further qualifies his instructions: "But if someone says to you: 'This is meat from an animal sacrifice (ἱερόθυτος),' do not eat it on account of the one who informed you and the consciousness. But I do not mean your own consciousness but that of the other. For why should my freedom be decided by someone else's consciousness?" There are a couple of things that need to be dealt with concerning Paul's instructions when it comes to dining with those who are not part of the Jesus movement. First, what role did cultic rituals play, if any, in dinner parties and meals? Second, if any cultic rituals were performed during dinners, why did Paul not see these as an obstacle to the Christ follower's participation? Third, what is the identity of the person whose consciousness needs to be taken into account if it is disclosed that the meat comes from an animal sacrifice? I will now deal with these questions in turn.

⁹⁶³ Zetterholm, "Purity and Anger," 15.

⁹⁶⁴ The last clause, "not inquiring into it because of consciousness," is taken over verbatim from verse 25 (μηδὲν ἀνακρίνοντες διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν). It is unclear exactly what kind of dining Paul has in mind. Most take the invitation to refer to an invitation to dine at someone's home. Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 532; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 786. But this is nowhere stated in the text, and taking into account all the settings and occasions where people shared meals, it should not be taken for granted that the home is the only location Paul has in mind in 10:27. Cf. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 183; Horrell, "Theological Principle," 103.

Whereas Paul appears to see no major problems in the Christ followers' eating with those outside the *ekklēsia* this was a significant issue for later Christian writers. Cf. Jennifer A. Glancy, "Temptations of the Table: Christians Respond to Reclining Culture," in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentations, and Conflict at the Table*, ed. Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 229–38.

The cults, beliefs, and gods that permeated the ancient city and its life were by no means shut out from the realm of private dinners; on the contrary, displaying piety and reverence to the gods in these settings was pivotal.⁹⁶⁵ One of the most ubiquitous ways to display piety was to pour libations. As we have already seen, this was a common practice when Greeks and Romans performed animal sacrifices. But pouring libations seems to have been routine also during private dinners and banquets. On this custom, Klinghardt makes the following remark: “The libation followed the dinner proper and marked the opening of the symposium. This religious ceremony, which could take different forms, was typical and well established, it is well attested not only for meals with a religious background but also for meals that appear to be completely ‘secular’ in a modern sense.”⁹⁶⁶ Charles H. Cosgrove comments more generally on the general understanding of cultic elements present at communal meals in and around Paul’s time: “Basic to the ancient banquet was a division into meal (*deipnon*) and drinking party (*potos* or *symposion*), with a libation ceremony after the meal and further libations in the drinking party.... The people of the Roman empire were expected to honor the emperor and the imperial gods by pouring a libation and singing

⁹⁶⁵ Since it is clear from 1 Cor 10:27 that Paul discusses dinners where at least one person is invited to dine with the members of a household, association, or other type of group I focus on those types of meals in my study of the performance of cultic rituals in connection to meals. I am less interested in other aspects of how the actual dining took place. Although we have a limited amount of evidence of what kind of meal it is the Corinthian Christ followers are being invited to, we know a couple of things. First, those who invite the Christ followers are not members of the Christ group. Second, meat was most likely served during these meals. Therefore, it seems plausible that those who invite the Christ followers are inviting them to some kind of banquet. On the distinguishable features of the ancient banquet, Charles H. Cosgrove (“Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine in the Greco-Roman World and Early Christianity,” *CBQ* 79 [2019]: 299–316, 300–01) comments: “First, the banquet was a supper, that is, a late-afternoon or evening meal. Second, it took place under the auspices of a host, such as an individual householder, a voluntary association to which the diners belonged, or a civic entity. Thirds, the banquet was thought of as a gathering of friends.... Fourth, the banquet was usually marked by extended relaxation over wine, often with entertainments other than conversation.”

⁹⁶⁶ Matthias Klinghardt, “A Typology of the Communal Meal,” in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentations, and Conflict at the Table*, ed. Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 9–22, 11. To dine together was not only an occasion to perform cultic rituals, it was also a deeply social practice. Dennis E. Smith (“The Greco-Roman Banquet as a Social Institution,” in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentations, and Conflict at the Table*, ed. Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig [New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012], 23–33, 28) notes that “to dine together formed the dining group into a community whose identity was defined internally by means of social bonding and externally by means of social boundaries. By dining together the dining group separated itself from the outside world thus creating social boundaries.”

a group paeon.”⁹⁶⁷ Possibly, the Christ followers in Corinth also poured libations during their cultic meal. The question about what τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας refers to in 1 Cor 10:16 is an open debate. Both Hal Taussig and Klinghardt argue that the nascent Jesus movement, at least in its Pauline form, adopted the practice of pouring libations for deities during dinner and that Christ followers poured libations to Christ during their meals.⁹⁶⁸ Others, however, view Paul’s reference to “the cup of blessing” in the Jewish context of blessings made to the god of Israel during meals.⁹⁶⁹

Focusing on the various cultic elements that took place during a dinner in the ancient Greco-Roman world, Lampe writes:

Die Cena beginnt mit einer Götter-Akklamation. In der Pause zwischen *primae* und *secundae mensae* werden die Laren und die Genien des Hausherrn und des Kaisers angerufen und ein Opfer gebracht. Haben die Speisen und das Trinken der *comissatio* sich eine Weile abgewechselt, beendet ein Trunk ungemischten Weines, der dem ἀγαθὸς δαίμων dargebracht wird, die Desserts der *secundae mensae*. Die Eßtische werden abgeräumt. Das eigentliche Trinkgelage beginnt damit, daß im Krater Wein mit Wasser gemischt und ein Trankopfer (σπονδή) dargebracht wird; die Versammelten singen — zuweilen mit Flötenbegleitung — einen Paian dazu. Bei jedem neuen Krater wird die σπονδή wiederholt.⁹⁷⁰

Even though the pouring of libations and singing of paeans were common in the Greco-Roman world, there seems to be a divide in scholarship regarding questions surrounding if people performed libations and paeans during *all* dinner parties, or only among those hosted by the elite, and precisely how common libations were in and around the first century CE. Stressing the ubiquitous practice of libations in antiquity, Warren writes: “*Virtually all meals* in Greco-Roman

⁹⁶⁷ Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies,” 299–300. On the role of communal dining in the early Jesus movement, Dennis E. Smith (“Dining with the ‘Other’ in Earliest Christianity,” in *Food, Identity and Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Ancient World*, ed. Wim Broekaert, Robin Nadeau, and John Wilkins, Collections Latomus 354 (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2016), 99–106, 106) remarks: “In its earliest manifestations that we can trace, the Jesus movement as a distinct social phenomenon took shape at the dinner table. Its social and identity formation from the outset drew on meal ritual and ideology, more specifically that of the Greek symposium tradition.”

⁹⁶⁸ Hal Taussig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 109–12; Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl*, 309.

⁹⁶⁹ Cf. Luise Schottroff, “‘Wir sind Ein Brot’ (1 Kor 10,17): Manna, Abendmahl und Opferfleisch in 1 Kor 10,” in *Essen und Trinken in der Bibel: Ein literarisches Festmahl für Rainer Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michaela Geiger, Christl M. Maier, and Uta Schmidt (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 60–71, 65.

⁹⁷⁰ Lampe, “Das korinthische Herrenmahl,” 186–87.

antiquity would have likely included libations at some point of the dinner, honouring various gods.”⁹⁷¹ Arguing against this view, Cosgrove points out that it was not the case that libation rituals were part and parcel of every communal meal in antiquity. In fact, libations (and paeans) appear to have been more frequent in the Classical age in Greece and something that primarily the elite did during their meals when we come closer to the time of Paul.⁹⁷² Hence, Cosgrove suggests “that libations were treated more informally and even omitted as group ceremonies in noncultic banquets, especially outside aristocratic circles.”⁹⁷³

Although it is impossible to say for certain whether the dinner party poured libations during the dinners Paul had in mind, or if any other type of offering was made to the gods, the possibility of libations does not seem to bother Paul.⁹⁷⁴ Why? If libations were being poured, it is possible that Paul had given the Christ followers prior instructions, either in person or in another letter, on how they should behave with regards to these offerings. Perhaps the Christ followers were provided with something else to drink due to their cultic dietary restrictions. It could also be the case that only the host poured the libation from his/her cup and that drinking the liquid the host served was as unproblematic as eating food offered to idols for Christ followers. However, if, as Cosgrove argues, group libations were uncommon during smaller banquets hosted by non-elites,

⁹⁷¹ Warren, “God’s Wrath,” 9 (my emphasis). To support her claim, Warren refers to Smith, *Symposium to Eucharist*, 180 and E. P. Sanders, “Jewish Association with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11–14,” in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 170–88, 178.

⁹⁷² Cf. Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies,” passim. Commenting on the Greek symposium, where the participants poured out libations, Herbert Hoffman (*Sotades: Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1997], 5) writes: “It was essentially an elitist affair, restricted to those who could afford it, and took place on special occasions such as weddings, victories in athletic or literary contests, departures for abroad, or important arrivals.”

⁹⁷³ Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies,” 316.

⁹⁷⁴ One could possibly argue that Paul found no problem with the idea that Christ followers poured libations, but such a suggestion would seem strange in the overall context of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, especially if Paul’s reference to the cup of *daimonia* in 10:21 is a reference to libations. In addition, other Jewish texts show contempt for the libations of non-Jews, cf. Add Esth 14:17; *Joseph and Aseneth* 10:13; *m. Avodah Zarah* 4.8; 5.5–9. On the topic of how rabbis navigated Greco-Roman dining practices (including libations), see Susan Marks, “In the Place of Libation: *Birkat Hamazon* Navigates New Ground,” in *Meals in Early Judaism: Social Formation at the Table*, ed. Susan Marks and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 71–97.

then there would be no problem with drinking whatever liquid the host served. Or maybe there was a middle way where those guests who wanted to pour a libation did so, whereas those who wished not to abstained.⁹⁷⁵ Which one of these suggestions, if any, is closest to the reality in first century Corinth, I do not know; but based on the evidence in 1 Corinthians, the question of libations during dinners did not concern Paul and he did not feel the need, for whatever reason, to instruct his Christ followers on how they should act if a libation was poured out during the dinner.⁹⁷⁶ The only potential problem in Paul's mind is if the host served food offered to idols (*ἱερόθυτος*). This brings us to our third question, what is the identity of the person whose consciousness the Christ follower has to take into account?

There are two options with regards to the identity of the who informs the Christ follower that the food comes from a sacrifice: (1) it could be someone (either the host or a guest) who is not a Christ follower, or (2) a guest who is a Christ follower and who finds the eating of food offered to idols problematic with regards to their consciousness. Several scholars argue that the one who informs the Christ follower of the origin of the meat is not a Christ follower. This argument is primarily built upon the use of *ἱερόθυτος* in the text. For example, Schnabel writes: "Der im Vergleich zu der (kritisch-wertenden) Vokabel *εἰδωλόθυτον* ‚neutrale‘ Ausdruck *ἱερόθυτον* weist darauf hin, dass die Warnung von einem Heiden ausgesprochen wird."⁹⁷⁷ However, this is a rather weak argument and the use of *ἱερόθυτος* does not disclose the identity of the informant. If the informant was not a Christ follower, then they would use the word *ἱερόθυτος*, but the same could be said about a Christ follower since (1) the word *εἰδωλόθυτος* was uncommon at the time, and (2)

⁹⁷⁵ As suggested by Cosgrove, "Banquet Ceremonies," 315.

⁹⁷⁶ It is fully possible that Paul gave guidance on this topic to his *ekklēsiai* when he was with them, or that he did so in a letter that has not survived to our time.

⁹⁷⁷ Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 571.

since εἰδωλόθυτος is a derogatory word a Christ follower would most probably not use it if invited to dine with non-Christ followers.

A second issue with identifying the informant as a non-Christ follower is that it makes it difficult to make sense of Paul's statement that this person's consciousness would be hurt if the Christ follower ate the food, knowing that it had been part of a sacrifice. Put simply, how could a non-Christ follower, who themselves probably ate of the food, be offended if a Christ follower ate of the same food?⁹⁷⁸ Due to the difficulties that arise if we identify the informant as someone who is not a Christ follower, I think the more plausible option is to view this person as a Christ follower for whom eating ἱερόθυτος would have been harmful.⁹⁷⁹ This also fits well with what Paul has said in 1 Corinthians 8 (verses 7 and 13) on the topic of how Christ followers should abstain from food if it can cause a fellow Christ follower any harm. As Scott D. Mackie concludes: "Given the focus on the informant's συνείδησις and the community orientation in 10:23–11:1, it is most likely that this person is a fellow believer who has not 'consciously' worked through the issue [of eating ἱερόθυτος]."⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁸ Those who take the informant to be a non-Christ follower make various suggestions as to why this person's consciousness is in danger. Borgen ("'Yes,' 'No,' 'How Far?'," 52) suggests that the non-Christ follower thinks that eating of the food is tantamount to worshiping the god(s) who were the recipient of the sacrificial animal. Thus, the Christ follower would become an idolater, at least in the mind of the informant, if he/she went ahead with eating the meat. Such a reading of the situation seems flawed for two reasons. First, eating of the meat from a sacrifice was not the same as worshiping the god(s); second, even if the informant was a non-Christ follower and thought that eating the meat constituted worship of the gods, it is not necessarily the case that this one person's consciousness could determine where to draw the line for idolatry in case of the Christ follower. Another suggestion comes from Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 535) who argues that the one who informs the Christ follower "has done so out of a sense of moral obligation" and in order to not offend that person, or their moral expectations of the Christ follower, the latter should abstain from the meat.

⁹⁷⁹ Duane F. Watson ("1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 in the Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric: The Role of Rhetorical Questions," *JBL* 108 [1989]: 301–18, 306), who does not come down on either side of the debate, suggests that the "abstinence [of ἱερόθυτος] may be required because it will lead the weak Christian to sin by eating against his or her own conscience (cf. 8:10–13)."

⁹⁸⁰ Scott D. Mackie, "The Two Tables of the Law and Paul's Ethical Methodology in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 and 10:23–11:1," *CBQ* 75 (2013): 315–34, 329.

In 10:29b–30, Paul shifts the focus from the discussion of dining at the invitation of non-Christ followers to a first-person defence of his own freedom (ἐλευθερία). Scholars have debated these verses and Thiselton notes that interpreters have given as many as six potential interpretations.⁹⁸¹ Moreover, Duane F. Watson notes that “the two rhetorical questions of 10:29b–30 are the major stumbling block to determining the flow of the argument in this section [1 Cor 10:23–11:1]. Problematic are Paul’s shift from exhortation in the second person to questions in the first person, and determining how the questions are related to their context.”⁹⁸² Comparing Paul’s language in 1 Cor 10:29b–30 with the discussions of rhetorical questions in ancient Latin rhetorical handbooks, Watson comes to the conclusion that Paul, in 10:29b–30, asks two questions which he foresees that some in the *ekklēsia* will ask in light of the instructions in 10:28–29a; then, in 10:31–11:1, Paul gives a “proposal of policy in the form of exhortation.”⁹⁸³

10:31–11:1 functions as a conclusion to the arguments Paul has made since chapter 8, when he introduced the topic of food offered to idols in the letter. The conclusion moves beyond, but still includes, questions of eating and drinking to broaden the perspective to the whole life of a Christ follower: “So then, whether you eat, whether you drink, *whatever* you do, do *everything* to the glory of God” (10:31). Thus, Paul instructs Christ followers that they can eat, drink, and do whatever they want, but only as long as this also brings glory and honor (δόξα) to their god, which their actions presumably would not do if they acted in a way that made another Christ follower stumble (cf. 1 Cor 8:7, 13; 10:28–29a).⁹⁸⁴ Similarly, Christ followers would also not honor their god if they drank from the cup of *daimonia* and participated in the table of *daimonia*. Paul then moves on to instruct the Corinthian Christ followers not to cause offense to Jews, Greeks or the

⁹⁸¹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 788. For an overview of the six proposals, see *ibid*, 788–91.

⁹⁸² Watson, “1 Corinthians,” 308.

⁹⁸³ Watson, “1 Corinthians,” 311. For the full discussion, see *ibid*, 308–18.

⁹⁸⁴ Cf. Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 380.

ekklēsia of God (cf. 8:9, 13; 10:24, 28–29a). And, in 10:33–11:1, Paul instructs his audience in a way that is reminiscent of his aims in chapter 9 to become like him and put others before themselves for their benefit. By doing so, Paul appears to lay down a general principle that should guide the whole debate surrounding the issues he has brought up in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1, namely that Christ followers should imitate their leader, Paul, and their Messiah. If they do so, they minimise the risk of leading other Christ followers astray and they will not risk their own obedience to the Messiah.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined 1 Cor 10:14–33 and the three situations Paul deals with therein: participation in cults (10:14–22), buying meat from the market (10:25–26), and what Christ followers should do when non-members invite them to dinner (10:27–30). With regards to the first situation in 10:14–22, I argued that Paul sets up a contrast between participation in the cultic meal of the Christ cult on the one hand, and participation in the sacrifices gentile performed in their cults, on the other. For Paul, participation in one cult, and with its deity/deities, necessarily prohibited the participation in the other and its deity/deities. I also argued that Paul’s prohibition of the partaking in the cup and table of *daimonia* is more than a reference to food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος). Rather, Paul prohibits the Christ followers to take part in the sacrifices and libations in honor of gentile deities. I based this argument primarily on Paul’s use of θύω (“to sacrifice”) in 10:20 and the cultic function cup (ποτήριον) and table (τράπεζα) had in other Greek texts.

With regards to the other two contexts Paul instructs the Christ followers on, the apostle again turns his attention to the eating of food that came from sacrificial animals. When buying meat at the Corinthian market, Paul’s instructions are that Christ followers can buy anything,

regardless of its origins. If someone outside the *ekklesia* (an ἄπιστος) invites the Christ followers, Paul says that they can eat anything the host serves, but that if someone informs them that it is from a sacrificed animal (ἱερόθυτος), they should abstain from eating due to the consciousness of the informant. This shows that Paul did not think that eating food offered to idols was problematic in and of itself, which supports my argument that Paul is not prohibiting the eating of food offered to idols in 10:14–22, but the participation in the sacrifices of gentile cults.

Conclusion

The supposed contradictions between 1 Cor 8:1–13, where Paul appears to allow the Corinthian Christ followers to eat food offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος), and 1 Cor 10:14–22, where he forbids them to drink from the cup of *daimonia* and partake in the table of *daimonia*, have long puzzled readers of Paul’s letters. Scholars have made several suggestions in their attempts to solve this interpretative crux. Some have argued that 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 originally belonged to different letters, and that someone other than Paul merged the two into what later became 1 Corinthians. Others suggest that Paul tried to deal with an internal problem in the Corinthians *ekklēsia* where the “weak” and “strong” held different views with regards to whether a Christ follower could eat food offered to idols. Yet others have proposed that Paul forbids the eating of food offered to idols in both 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, albeit on different grounds—on ethical grounds in chapter 8, and on theological grounds in chapter 10. None of these suggestions, however, has convinced the majority of scholars on 1 Corinthians, leaving many undecided on how to best understand 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

1 Corinthians 8 and 10 have also presented the Paul within Judaism school with a serious challenge: if Paul, as the Paul within Judaism school argues, was a faithful Jew, how could he allow Christ followers in Corinth to eat food offered to idols? In this thesis, I have aimed to do two things: first, present a reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 that resolves any supposed tensions between the two chapters; second, I have argued that Paul was involved in a discussion many Jews roughly contemporary with him were, and that his instructions in primarily 1 Corinthians 8, therefore, does not serve as “evidence” that Paul left Judaism.

By comparing Paul’s language in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 with the Greek and Roman rituals surrounding animal sacrifice, I answer what perhaps is the fundamental question when it comes to

resolving the tensions in Paul’s instructions in these two chapters in 1 Corinthians. As Newton puts it: “Was there a basic difference between the context of 1 Corinthians 8 and that of 1 Cor. 10:14–22 which might help to account for the supposed contradiction between Paul’s teaching in those respective two sections—a contradiction which has baffled scholars and commentators for many years?”⁹⁸⁵ I argue that Paul does indeed describe two different situations in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:14–22. Moreover, virtually all tensions previous scholarship has seen between the two chapters disappear when we realise that this is the case.

The majority of scholars working on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 envision that Paul is addressing two contexts. In 1 Cor 8:1–13 and 10:14–22, he speaks about the eating of food offered to idols; and in 10:25–29, he addresses the topic of buying meat from the market and eating with non *ekklēsia* members in their homes. In contrast, I propose that Paul is addressing *three* contexts: first, in 1 Cor 8:1–13, he addresses the situation where a Christ follower eats food offered to idols in an idol’s temple; second, in 10:14–22, Paul addresses those Christ followers who participate in the sacrificial rituals at the altar in gentile cults and who share in the innards of the animals, which they would have roasted as the god’s portion burnt on the altar; third, in 10:25–29, he instructs the Corinthians about buying meat from the market and dining with those who are not members of the *ekklēsia*. One of the arguments of this thesis is that when we imagine these three settings—rather than the traditional two—the contradictions between 1 Cor 8:1–13 and 10:14–22 disappear. To make this argument, I dealt with several topics throughout the thesis with the aim to create a historically nuanced background for Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

This background mainly considered three things: the Roman colony of Corinth around the time of Paul’s sojourn there (*c.* mid-50s CE), the background and structure of the Corinthian

⁹⁸⁵ Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 334.

ekklēsia, and the rituals surrounding Greek and Roman animal sacrifice in antiquity. After the inquiry into the background of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, I proceeded with two chapters in which I focused on 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 respectively. What emerged at the end of the final chapter was a re-reading of these two chapters in 1 Corinthians, in which I argued that Paul first allows Christ followers to eat food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8, since not doing so would jeopardise their social status in the city, and then goes on in 10:14–22 to forbid the Corinthian Christ followers from partaking in the sacrificial rituals in gentile cults.

Chapter one focused on the city of Corinth, and how it would have looked like around the time of Paul's visit, and the Corinthian *ekklēsia*. The Roman general Leucius Mummius and his army destroyed Greek Corinth in 146 BCE. After roughly one-hundred years, in 44 BCE, Julius Caesar made the city a Roman colony. As a consequence, many have viewed the Corinth of the first century CE as a thoroughly Roman city, with only minor traces of its Greek past. In contrast to this view, I argued that Corinth did in fact host *both* Roman and Greek culture and that its inhabitants cannot be said to have abandoned the city's Greek heritage. There are several reasons to view Corinth as city that hosted both Greek and Roman culture. First, freedmen of Greek origins made up a significant part of the elite in the city, and the negotiators or tradesmen who colonised Corinth came from Italy and were of Greek or eastern background. Second, looking at written sources from Corinth, Greek was the language of the common person, and the language many used on a daily basis (e.g., in Paul's letter to the Corinthians). In official writings (e.g., in inscriptions and on monuments), the preferred language was Latin. Third, scholars have also demonstrated, on the basis of archaeological findings, that both Greek and Roman cults were active during Paul's time. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Corinth even rebuilt some Greek cults (including the Temple

of Apollo, the Temple of Aphrodite, the Asklepieion, and the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore), which lay desolate after Corinth's destruction in 146 BCE.

I then turned my attention to the Corinthian *ekklēsia* in order to examine its place in the city and its membership. Even though the *ekklēsia* consisted of several sub-groups, Paul viewed them as one (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1) and used familial terminology, referring to them as ἀδελφοί and ἀδελφαί (cf. 1:10; 5:11; 6:6; 7:12, 15; 8:11, 13). The Christ group in Corinth plausibly contained c. 10 regular members, both men and women. As to the question of what type of group the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was, I noted that cultic elements, such as initiation rites, communal meals (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, 1 Cor 11:20), worship, and regular gatherings played a significant role in the life of the group's communal life. With regards to the background of the members it seems like many of them were of gentile background, but there appears to have been a Jewish portion as well. Additionally, the socio-economic status of the members also varied, but it is unlikely that any member did not have the means to support him-/herself, since the Christ group most likely was dependent on members' economic contribution. Thus, the Corinthian *ekklēsia* hosted a varied membership in several aspects and it is plausible that Corinthians from many different parts of society joined the *ekklēsia*.

Chapter two dealt with what I argued to be the most important context to understanding Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, namely ancient rituals of animal sacrifice. Based on my argument that Corinth hosted both Greek and Roman culture and cults in chapter 1, I focused on Greek and Roman sacrificial rituals separately. Some of the key findings in this chapter (which are true for both Greek and Roman practices) were that it was only a small party that participated in the sacrificial rituals and the killing of the animals. Furthermore, it was common that a dinner followed the animal sacrifice after the roasting of the meat; however, the meat could also be taken

straight to the market and sold. Both these situations, a dinner that followed the sacrifice and the selling of meat at the local market, fit well with the contexts Paul describes in 1 Cor 8 and 10:25–29. In order to better understand 1 Cor 10:14–22, I explored what usually happened at the time of the sacrifice, before the meat was either served during a dinner or taken to the market. Immediately after the sacrifice, when the god’s portion was burning on the altar, the sacrificial party would roast and eat the innards of the animal (Grk: *σπλάγχνα*). During this time the one performing the sacrifice also poured a libation in honor of the god. This context, I argued, is what Paul addresses in 10:14–22 and not only the Corinthian Christ followers eating of food offered to idols, which most scholars argue. I conclude this chapter with a short examination of the various cults active in Corinth during the mid-50s CE: the Greek cults of Apollo, Asklepios, and Demeter and Kore; and the Roman imperial cult. The reason for this was to explore possible cults the Corinthian Christ followers could have been active in—even though it is impossible to say if they were with any certainty—and to take the more general picture of Greek and Roman animal sacrifice and dining and see what bearing it might have on ancient Corinth.

I dedicated the second half of the thesis, chapters three and four, to an exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. In my reading of 1 Corinthians 8, I presented the argument that Paul does allow Christ followers to eat food offered to idols in principle and that the reason for this is that if he would not have allowed it, he would have jeopardised the social status of the Corinthian Christ followers. The only reason they cannot eat is if an *ekklēsia* member for whom food offered to idols still is tainted is present. Paul, then, tries to balance between two poles: on the one hand, he does not want to create a situation where the Christ followers are socially ostracized by not letting them partake in important social activities in Corinth; on the other, he also wants the Corinthian Christ followers to adapt a new lifestyle that takes their membership in the Jesus movement and their

fellow members into account. I based my reading of Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 on two premises. First, in 1 Cor 5:9–13 Paul shows that he is aware that the social bonds between Christ followers and non-Christ followers in Corinth is precarious and he instructs them that they are indeed allowed to mix with non-members, regardless of their morality or cultic practices. Second, By a study of a letter from Pliny to Trajan, the Mishnaic tractate *Avodah Zarah*, and how Romans viewed those they labelled as *superstitio*, I demonstrated that not behaving according to the social norms, certain groups were described negatively and at times with hostility; but from an emic perspective it also led groups, as seen in *m. Avodah Zarah*, to have intra-group discussions on the topic of how they could live as “normally” as possible and at the same time follow their own rules, which at times prohibited them from partaking in certain activities and rituals that were common in the ancient city. As I see it this is exactly what Paul—like many other Jews—is doing in 1 Corinthians 8 by allowing the Christ follower to eat food offered to idols, but at the same time setting up a boundary for when that is no longer acceptable (i.e., if another member falls ill).

In the fourth and final chapter, I tackle the notorious problem of the supposed contradiction between Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 8 and 10:14–22. As many scholars construe the text, Paul allows the eating of food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8, only to later forbid it in 10:14–22. In contrast, I argued, that there is no contradiction between these two chapters in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor 10:14–22, Paul is no longer discussing *εἰδωλόθυτος* but changes the topic to idolatry, as indicated by the use of *εἰδωλολατρεία* in 10:14. There are other linguistic features of 10:14–22 that indicate Paul’s change of topic from *εἰδωλόθυτος* to *εἰδωλολατρεία*. For example, Paul’s use of *θύω, ποτήριον δαιμονίων, and τραπέζης δαιμονίων*, signals that the situation he addresses is not only about eating food offered to idols. Additionally, judging from the three examples Paul brings up in 10:14–22, it appears as though he is discussing cultic settings which are intimately linked with

the core activity of these three cults (the Christ group, Jewish cult, and gentile cults). Based on my study of animal sacrifice in chapter 2, I further demonstrated that to partake in the sacrificial rituals that took place when the animal was slaughtered, which in Greek practice included eating the innards of the animal, meant that one was more closely connected with the cult—and it inevitably entailed that one was an active participant in the worship of the cult’s god(s). By taking all this into account, I argued that the situation Paul describes in 10:14–22 is one where Christ followers *actively participated in the actual performance of animal sacrifice* in gentile cults. This he forbids.

Impacts on Reading Paul *within* Judaism

In the introduction to this thesis, I mentioned a number of scholars who view 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 as clear evidence for just how far from Judaism Paul had moved in his role as the apostle to the gentiles. Paul’s instructions in these two chapters in 1 Corinthians, these scholars argue, demonstrate that Paul no longer considered the Jewish customs and traditions of any value—indeed, Paul, they claim, went as far as being “full of irony toward his Jewish heritage,” and that Paul “is nowhere more un-Jewish” than in his instructions surrounding the issue of eating food offered to idols.⁹⁸⁶ This claim presents a serious challenge for those scholars who argue that Paul did not leave Judaism for the Jesus movement, but that he remained a Jew also in his role as apostle to the gentiles.

In this thesis, I have argued that 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 cannot be used as evidence for the argument that Paul left Judaism. When we pay close attention to the historical context in which Paul and the Corinthian Christ followers found themselves, it is untenable to view 1 Corinthians 8

⁹⁸⁶ Quotes from Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 532 and Barrett, “Things Sacrificed to Idols,” 146.

and 10 as evidence of Paul's abandonment of his native Judaism. The fact that Paul allows Christ followers to eat food offered to idols (with certain restrictions to other factors than the food itself) does not entail that he did not see any value in Jewish dietary laws. Instead, his reasoning displays his awareness of how delicate the Christ group's standing was in Corinth and that he would make life very hard for its members by forbidding them to eat food offered to idols. Thus, just like many other Jews who lived in the diaspora, Paul had to balance the demands and lifestyle of his native Judaism with the requirements and social codes of non-Jewish societies.⁹⁸⁷ Paul was not alone in his attempt to strike the right tone between these two poles, and many other Jews had to make similar decisions. Hence, the apostle to the gentiles was partaking in an ongoing debate which Jews, both before and after Paul's time, had been having for centuries: how do we fit into a culture that does not adhere to our sacred laws? And how do we do that in a way that allows us to follow our laws, while being accepted members of the non-Jewish society? This, I have argued was what Paul was doing when he wrote his instructions in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.

Consequently, 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 provides us with a unique insight into how Paul was building his halakah when it came to matters of eating of the food that members of other cults had sacrificed. In this, he allows the eating of such food, for the food itself is not changed by the sacrifice and those Christ followers who eat it as such show no disloyalty to the god of Israel. But Paul forbids them from partaking in the actual sacrificial rituals since that does entail that one has broken the exclusive relationship with the god of Israel. This reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 shows that Paul allows Christ followers to live according to the social norms of the city as long as it does not break the bond between the Christ follower and God.

⁹⁸⁷ Whereas many Jewish texts are written for other Jews, Paul's situation is different since he most likely is addressing gentile Christ followers in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. This, I think, has an effect on Paul's reasoning, which might have been different had he addressed Jewish Christ followers.

The impact of my thesis outside the immediate context of scholarly readings of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 lays primarily in how we can understand Paul as a Jew who remained *within* Judaism after he joined and became a leader of the Jesus movement. The Paul within Judaism reading of Paul is by no means an entirely new project, but it remains a project that is in its early stages in terms of reassessing Pauline texts that previously have been interpreted in an anti-Jewish way. My thesis contributes to this reassessment of Pauline texts by presenting a reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 in which one can view Paul’s reasoning about food offered to idols as one expression of Judaism. With my contribution, I hope to further the conversation of what it means to read Paul within Judaism, and to continue the critical re-evaluation of how to view Paul and his letters as articulations of first century CE Judaism.

Paul’s relationship to Judaism may be one of the more prolific questions when it comes to New Testament authors and their relationship to Judaism. But the quest to read New Testament authors *within* Judaism stretches well beyond Paul’s relationship to Judaism.⁹⁸⁸ Recent examples include Matthew’s, Mark’s, and John’s relationship to Judaism.⁹⁸⁹ Therefore, my thesis stands in a conversation that seeks to place other parts and authors of the New Testament within the context of first century CE Judaism—a scholarly trajectory that goes beyond Pauline studies. As such, my study adds both to the specific question of how Paul can be read and understood within Judaism by presenting a Paul within Judaism reading of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, and to the larger conversation about the relationship between Judaism and the New Testament.

⁹⁸⁸ See, e.g., Alan J. Avery-Peck, Craig A. Evans, and Jacob Neusner, eds., *Early Christianity within the Boundaries of Judaism: Essays in Honor of Bruce Chilton*, BRLA 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

⁹⁸⁹ John Kampen, *Matthew within Sectarian Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019); Anders Runesson and Daniel M. Gurtner, eds., *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel*, SBLECL 27 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020); John van Maaren, “The Gospel of Mark within Judaism: Reading the Second Gospel in Its Ethnic Landscape” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2019); Wally V. Cirafesi, *John within Judaism: Religion, Ethnicity, and the Shaping of Jesus-Oriented Jewishness in the Fourth Gospel*, AJEC 112 (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

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