

WOMEN AND RITUAL IN PHILIPPI:  
WOMEN'S RECEPTION OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

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WOMEN AND RITUAL IN PHILIPPI:  
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## Chapter 1: Philippi in History and Scholarship

### *Introduction*

As one surveys the scholarship on the canonical letter to the Philippians, one notices the lack of attention to women within the content of many scholars' analyses. It is as if women were shadows, lurking in the background, staying unnoticed of their own accord in spite of the fact that two women are actually named in Philippians 3 and one is named in Acts 13. To a certain extent, this is because ancient texts often leave out information about women. The majority of texts were composed by men who saw the world through their androcentric eyes within the context of the patriarchal system of Greece and Rome. Although this is so, a handful of scholars have attempted to shine the spotlight on women in the Philippian Jesus group in various ways and with various results. Lilian Portefaix, Valarie Abrahamsen, and Joseph Marchal have dedicated entire monographs to the study of women in the early Philippian Jesus community.<sup>1</sup> Ritual studies will be brought to bear on information concerning women in ancient Philippi. This methodology will provide new questions that will shed more specific light on the

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<sup>1</sup> Lilian Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice: Paul's Letter to the Philippians and Luke-Acts as Seen by First-Century Philippian Women*, Coniectanea Biblica. New Testament Series (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988), Valerie A. Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship at Philippi: Diana/Artemis and Other Cults in the Early Christian Era* (Portland: Astarte Shell Press, 1995), Joseph A. Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Power Dynamics in Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

lives of women in this fledgling Jesus group and therefore bring clarity to their reception of the letter. This will help modern readers both to get a sharper image of the community as a whole as well as the struggles that plagued them.

Therefore, this study will proceed in the following way: Chapter 1) a brief history of Philippi will be delineated in order to give the study a historical context. Then scholarship on Paul's letter to the Philippians will be examined in order to give this study a context within the broader discussion of the letter. Chapter 2) A heuristic model will be constructed based on ritual studies which will be informed by evidence from the ancient world. Chapters 3-4) Rituals that affected women in the larger Philippian community will be examined. The rituals discussed will be chosen based on the surviving archaeological evidence found at the site of Philippi coupled with literary witnesses that help to shed light on the ritual activity of women in Greco-Roman cults. Chapter 5) The information gathered and interpreted through the lens of the heuristic model of ritual studies will then be used to illuminate points of contact for women's reception of the Philippian letter in 1:19-30; 2:1-11; and 3:8-21.

Of course, due to the nature of shedding the spotlight only on women, others in the Philippian community will be left in the dark. This strategy is purposeful and has acknowledged blind spots, but, given the scholarly landscape, it seems necessary to give the women of the Philippian Jesus community a chance to move toward the center of the conversation. Therefore, this study is meant to be a



complement to other studies that have gone before it, and, in some cases, take it further. Illuminating women's lives in the broader Philippian context and in the Jesus group specifically will provide the modern reader with a fuller appreciation for the diversity among Philippi's first generation of followers and how women's lives were affected by joining the Jesus group. More importantly, the information from women's ritual lives will help the modern reader better understand Paul's Letter to the Philippians as well as give the modern reader a better appreciation of the early Jesus group's cultural context.

*The History of Philippi*

The original name of the city of Philippi was Crenides. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, colonists from Thasos settled there, tying Thasos with the hinterland of the Thasian territory.<sup>2</sup> The historian Appian (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) tells us the following about the city and its history.

οἱ δὲ Φίλιπποι πόλις ἐστίν, ἣ Δάτος ὠνομάζετο πάλαι καὶ Κρηνίδες ἔτι πρὸ Δάτου· κρῆναι γάρ εἰσι περὶ τῷ λόφῳ ναμάτων πολλάι.

Philippi is a city that was formerly called Datus, and before that Crenides, because there are many springs bubbling around a hill there (*Bell. Civ.* 4.105, LCL).

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<sup>2</sup> Georgios Gounaris and Emmanuela Gounari, *Philippi: Archaeological Guide*, trans. Sophia Tromara (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2004), 14-15.

In 360 BCE, Crenides was founded in Thrace and was the Thasian's last colony in that territory.<sup>3</sup> As Appian states, the ancient name of the city refers to springs in the area, but water was not the only valuable recourse in the area surrounding Crenides. There were also valuable gold and silver mines.

“Ὅτι πλείστα μέτταλά ἐστι χρυσοῦ ἐν ταῖς Κρηνίσιν, ὅπου νῦν οἱ Φίλιπποι πόλις ἴδρυται, πλησιον τοῦ Παγγαίου ὄρους· καὶ αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ Παγγαῖον ὄρος χρυσεῖα καὶ ἀργυρεῖα ἔχει μέτταλλα καὶ ἡ πέραν καὶ ἡ ἐντὸς τοῦ Στρυμόνος ποταμοῦ μέχρι Παιονίας· φασὶ δὲ καὶ τοὺς τὴν Ταιονίαν γῆν ἀροῦντας εὐρίσκειν χρυσοῦ τινα μόρια.

There are very many gold mines in Crenides, where the city of Philippi now is situated, near Mt. Pangaeum. And Mt. Pangaeum as well has gold and silver mines, as also the country across, and the country this side, the Strymon River as far as Paeonia. And it is further said that the people who plough the Paeonian land find nuggets of gold (Strabo, *Georg.* 7.34, LCL).

Because of its wealth, the city of Crenides impressed Philip II of Macedonia. His interest in the city would change it from a Thasian colony to an important outpost within Philip's Macedonian kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

In 356 BCE, the citizens of Crenides called up Philip II to help in controlling the surrounding Thracian tribes.<sup>5</sup> Seeing the mines available to him, Philip II decided to conquer Crenides and name it after himself.

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<sup>3</sup> Chaido Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," in *Philippi at the Time of Paul and after His Death*, ed. Charalambos Bakirtzis and Helmut Koester (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, See also Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 62, Craig Steven De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 234-35.

Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα παρελθὼν ἐπὶ πόλιν Κρηνίδας ταύτην μὲν ἐπαυξήσας οἰκητόρων πλήθει μετωνόμασε Φιλίππους, ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ προσαγορεύσας, τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν χώραν χρύσεια μέταλλα παντελῶς ὄντα λιτὰ καὶ ἄδοξα ταῖς κατασκευαῖς ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἠΰξησεν ὥστε δύνασθαι φέρειν αὐτῷ πρόσδοτον πλεῖον ἢ ταλάντων χιλίων. ἔκ δὲ τούτων ταχὺ σωρεύσας πλοῦτον, αἰεὶ μᾶλλον διὰ τὴν εὐπορίαν τῶν χρημάτων εἰς ὑπεροχὴν μεγάλην ἤγαγε τὴν Μακεδονικὴν βασιλείαν· νόμισμα γὰρ χρυσοῦν κόψας τὸ προσαγορευθὲν ἀπ' ἐκείνου Φιλίππειον μισθοφόρων τε δύναμιν ἀξιόλογον συνεστήσατο καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων πολλοὺς διὰ τούτου προετρέψατο προδότας γενέσθαι τῶν πατρίδων.

After this he went to the city of Crenides, and having increased its size with a large number of inhabitants, changed its name to Philippi, giving it his own name, and then, turning to the gold mines in its territory, which were very scanty and insignificant, he increased their output so much by his improvements that they could bring him a revenue of more than a thousand talents. And because from these mines he had soon amassed a fortune, with the abundance of money he raised the Macedonian kingdom higher and higher to a greatly superior position, for with the gold coins which he struck, which came to be known from the name as Philippeioi, he organized a large force of mercenaries, and by using these coins for bribes induced many Greeks to become betrayers of their native lands (Diodorus 16.8.6-7, LCL).

Peter Oakes notes that Philippi became an ally of Philip's, although unwittingly, and had moderate independence for approximately a decade. This led Philip to

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1937), 39, See also Chaid Chrysanthaki-Koukouli and Charalambos Bakirtzis, *Philippi* (Athens: Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Receipts Fund, 1995), 6-7, Gounaris and Gounari, *Philippi: Archaeological Guide*, 15-16, Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière Hammond, "Philippi," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1162-63. Diodorus 16.3.7

place colonists in the city which created a mix of Greek, Thasian, and Thracian people.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of the city's cultural make up during the time of Paul, 42 BCE was the turning point for Philippi. In the plains southwest of Philippi, Antony and Octavian clashed with Cassius and Brutus over the fate of Rome in the post-Augustan period. This led to Philippi becoming a Roman colony and a resting place for retired soldiers.<sup>7</sup> At first, the colony was named after the battle: *Antoni Iussu Colonia Victrix Philippensium*.<sup>8</sup> After the battle of Actium in 30 BCE, Octavian refounded the colony, settling a large contingent of Roman colonists in it and renaming it *Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis*.<sup>9</sup> The city quickly adapted to its newly found colonial culture, adding Roman culture to the already extant Thracian, Thasian, and Greek cultures. This was the city that Paul reached sometime during 49-50 CE.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Appian, *Hist. rom.* 4.105-116; Suetonius, *Tib.* 14.3;

<sup>8</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 227, See also Oakes, *Philippians*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 227, See also Oakes, *Philippians*, 13, Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 9, Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum*, ed. John M. Court, Society for New Testament Studies (New York:

*The Demography of Philippi*

Given the mix of inhabitants that made up the population of Philippi throughout its history, it is necessary to make mention of the demographics of the city. This information will allow for a better understanding of the rituals used in the cults analyzed in chapters 3 and 4 below as well as give an indication of the blending of gods and goddesses within the pantheon. At the time of Paul's letter to the Philippians, the city was an official Roman colony for a century. This would have given Roman culture time to blend with the already present Greek, Thracian, and Thasian inhabitants. To argue for further specifics on a Greek or a Roman cultural superiority in Philippi would be to overstate the case. Rather, this study will take both Greek and Roman cultures into account, and, as will be seen below, there seems to be more in common between the two cultures than there is different.

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Cambridge University Press, 2005), 64-69, Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 59-61, For more on the colonization of Philippi, see Lukas Bormann, *Philippi: Stadt und Christengemeinde zur Zeit des Paulus*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 11-24, Marion L. Soards, *The Apostle Paul: An Introduction to His Writings and Teaching* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 112-13, Joseph H. Hellerman, "The Humiliation of Christ in the Social World of Roman Philippi, Part I," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160, no. July-September (2003): 324-28, Gerald F. Hawthorne, "Philippians, Letter to The," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 707-08, Lee Martin McDonald, "Philippi," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 787-89, Holland L. Hendrix, "Philippi," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. Gary A. Herion, et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 313-17, Mikael Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 212-14.

As the rituals that affect women are examined in chapters 3 and 4, there will be as much attention paid to the differences and similarities between Greek and Roman rituals as possible.

*Women in Philippi in Current Research*

As Paul traveled through the Roman Empire, he helped to form communities and impact lives in various ways, probably both positively and negatively. In the history of research on the canonical letter to the Philippians, few have dedicated whole works to women within the makeup of the community. In 1988, Lilian Portefaix published a work specifically on women in the church of Philippi.<sup>11</sup> Portefaix notes that the central role of birth and the high mortality rate for both the mother and child brought about a paradoxical need in women for devotion in religion.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that the women chose to be religious and ignores the fact that religion was already a part of the cultural landscape. Furthermore, Portefaix makes the following observation in reference to the cult of Diana.

The fact that the goddess is idealized in literature helps to explain why these women seem to have hoped for an after-life under her protection. Admiration for Diana as an unattainable ideal in this life was probably one reason why women in Philippi identified with the hunting goddess in order to share not only in her beauty and freedom but also in her powerful

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<sup>11</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 11-14.

position relating to female existence and seemingly in her authority in the Underworld.<sup>13</sup>

This paints a rather rosy picture of the mythology behind the Diana/Artemis cult. As will be explain in chapter 3, there is another side to the Artemis<sup>14</sup> cult that balances out this picture and places a more sinister element within the context of women's worship.

Portefaix begins her analysis through the lens of women's religious lives. She notes practices that existed beginning in childhood and continuing through to adulthood.<sup>15</sup> She likewise discusses both private and public religion and the roles women played in both.<sup>16</sup> Portefaix then goes on to discuss the particular cults in Philippi that were important to women. Because much of this material will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4, it is sufficient to note that Portefaix lists a number of cults that may have been important to women in Philippi: Cults to Artemis/Diana, Dionysios, and Isis.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>14</sup> Throughout the rest of this study, I will refer to the goddess as Artemis, but that does not imply that Diana is not also involved in the makeup of the cult. I will discuss both Greek and Roman conception of the goddess in chapter 3 below.

<sup>15</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 33-42.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 43-58.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 75-128.

Portefaix analyzes the religious lives of women's in Philippi primarily through an examination of the cults of Dionysus and Isis. This becomes problematic for two reasons. First, and Portefaix makes this point, the evidence for the existence of the cult of Dionysus is slim amongst the reliefs. She points to two rock carvings, one a phallus and the other a centaur. Furthermore, a shrine was found on the acropolis and one also in the town center.<sup>18</sup> The phallus is problematic due to its location and lack of inscription indicating what god was intended. Paul Collart and Pierre Ducrey site H. Bulle in their discussion of the phallus relief in Philippi and note that the symbol does not generally refer to Dionysus in Thrace.

Bien qu'il dise, ailleurs, que le φαλλός ne joua pas de rôle in Thrace, on peut cependant constater que ces démons étaient traditionnellement représentés ithyphalliques.<sup>19</sup>

Although this is so, Colart goes on to argue for a Dionysian presence in the city of Philippi through the cult of the Thracian Horseman.<sup>20</sup> Also problematic for this interpretation is the appearance of the Thracian Horseman on the acropolis. If the Philippians truly understood the Dionysian god to be amalgamated with the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>19</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 422. See also Paul Collart and Pierre Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres* (Athènes: École française d'Athènes, 1975), 244-45.

<sup>20</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 423.



Thracian Horseman, there is no evidence among the reliefs (seven in all) that would point toward such an interpretation.<sup>21</sup>

The image of the Centaur causes issues in regards to Dionysus. Rouse has noted that this has been among votive offerings to Apollo (Artemis' twin brother) and possibly to Artemis as well.<sup>22</sup> The lead votive of the Centaur Rouse mentions was found amidst other animals cast in lead in Laconia (southern Greece) and similar images were found in a temple to Apollo in Amyclea.<sup>23</sup> Although this location is a good distance from Philippi, the location of the Centaur in Philippi amidst so many Artemis images (Abrahamsen counts ninety in all<sup>24</sup>) leans toward an interpretation that suggests a connection between the Centaur as a wild mythological character and Artemis' connection with hunting and wild animals.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 195-201. It should also be noted that Mount Pangaion was a center for the worship of the Horseman with a sanctuary and numerous votive offerings given to the hero. If Dionysus was amalgamated with the Horseman, any indication of that conglomeration had disappeared by the time Paul arrived in Philippi. Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 24-25. Peter Pilhofer records an inscription about Bacchus in the district of Zikhna which is approximately 16 miles west of Philippi. There was a temple there dedicated to Bacchus, but, given Collart's certainty as to the importance of the god in Philippi, it is telling that Pilhofer only records one inscription to the god and that one inscription is 16 miles away which would have been a day's walk from Philippi. Peter Pilhofer, *Philippi: Katalog der Inschriften von Philippi*, 2 vols., vol. 2, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 519-20.

<sup>22</sup> W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings: An Essay in the History of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1902), 15-16.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Amyclea is located in the Eurotas Plain, southwest of Sparta.

<sup>24</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 26.

Along with the reliefs, there are seven inscriptions that mention Dionysus. One was found in Kalamon, just west of Philippi<sup>25</sup>; five were found in the area of the village of Drama just southeast of the site<sup>26</sup>; one was found on Mount Pangaion to the west of Philippi.<sup>27</sup> This places evidence around the city of Philippi, but it is hardly on the scale of the evidence for the Artemis cult. That said, the Dionysian cult will be delineated in chapter 4 with the assumption that the inscriptions are sufficient evidence to treat the cult as part of Philippian women's ritual lives.

With regard to Isis, Abrahamsen dates the temple on the acropolis in the early third century.<sup>28</sup> This brings to light many problematic conclusions found in Portefaix's work. She claims,

However, it must not be forgotten that Isis was thought to personify all the deities as she presented herself as 'deorum dearumque facies uniformis' ('the single form that fuses all gods and goddesses'), and accordingly could be imagined to represent all the other deities. Therefore, not only the female figures but also the hunting goddess pictured on the Philippian rock

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<sup>25</sup> Pilhofer, *Philippi*, 413-14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 476-80, 82.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 597-98.

<sup>28</sup> Abrahamsen rightly bases this dating on one inscription found inside the Temple of the Egyptian Gods. It is known to have been dedicated in the 3rd century some time between 250-251 C.E. Therefore, the Temple to the Egyptian Gods will not play a part in this particular analysis of the cults in Philippi. This does not mean that Isis was absent in the lives of Philippian women, but there is no evidence to support active involvement on a wider scale before the 3rd century C.E. Paul Collart, "Le Sanctuaire des Dieux Égyptiens à Philippes," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 53 (1929): 76-77. Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 25.

carvings... might well have been interpreted by her followers as portraying Isis.<sup>29</sup>

Here, it appears that Portefaix overstates her case. While it may be true that Isis becomes a popular deity within the confines of Philippi during the third century, it does not seem probable that Artemis would be pushed aside given her prevalence on the acropolis.

Valerie Abrahamsen seems to move forward with Portefaix's understanding of Artemis by noting that she protected women who died in childbirth, but she does not take into account the flip side concerning death.<sup>30</sup> While Artemis may help in protecting a woman, it becomes obvious through the mythology that she could also take the life of the woman in childbirth.<sup>31</sup> Larson describes her in the following way,

She is a paradoxical goddess: a virgin who aids women in childbirth, a fierce huntress who fosters wild beasts, and a bloodthirsty deity who both nurtures the young and demands their sacrifice. Standing at the borders, both conceptual and physical, between savage and civilized life, Artemis oversees the transition of girls to adult status, but is also a patron of warriors.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 116. In terms of the reliefs that may picture Isis, Collart states, "En particulier, aucun trait ni aucun attribut ne permettent de soutenir que ces reliefs représentent Isis; ni une autre divinité égyptienne; pas plus d'ailleurs que Vénus ou une quelconque déesse." Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 233.

<sup>30</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 56-57.

<sup>31</sup> See Callimachus, *Hymn to Artemis*, 121-135.

<sup>32</sup> Jennifer Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 101.

There are two sides to the goddess that are very important in analyzing rituals in her cult as well as how those rituals impacted women's lives. Both Abrahamsen and Portefaix highlight the positive side of the goddess while all but ignoring her more foreboding characteristics.

More recently, Joseph Marchal has addressed women in his work on Philippi. Attempting to provide a feminist perspective on the letter to the Philippians, Marchal begins by discussing the military and friendship imagery, the rhetoric of civic speeches, and the ancient context of Philippi, including women's roles in religious life.<sup>33</sup> The second half of Marchal's analysis focuses on the rhetoric of the letter through the lens of Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza's work.<sup>34</sup> Although Marchal mentions religion and women in the first half of his text, the religious context plays little role in his analysis of the letter since he is approaching the text in an altogether different manner.

Portefaix, Abrahamsen and Marchal have all focused on women in their work. While Marchal focuses on rhetoric and feminist methodology, Portefaix and Abrahamsen focus on the religious context of Philippian women. What is missing in their works is an analysis of ritual and what ritual does, an analysis of Artemis mythology, and a broader analysis of birth and death rituals and how those rituals

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<sup>33</sup> Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 1-112.

<sup>34</sup> For a look at her recent work see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

shaped women's worlds. These gaps in the scholarly record will be filled in chapters 3 and 4 below.

While Portefaix, Abrahamsen and Marchal have dedicated their entire monographs to women in Philippi, some scholars mention women given that Paul addresses Euodia and Syntyche in Phil. 4:2. These scholars either give women a passing mention or they mention women only in connection with certain passages. In order to give the reader examples of these works, a representative sampling will be given in order to give an indication of how scholars have understood women in the Philippian context within broader studies.

Prior to Portefaix's groundbreaking work, commentators usually regulated comments about women to their discussion on Phil. 4:2-3. For example, Berthold Mengel, rather than consider the roles of Euodia and Syntyche in the context of the community, attempts to uncover the reason for Paul's writing the letter and the possible implications surrounding the conflict between the two women for the letter.<sup>35</sup> Fred Craddock is more cautious in his interpretation but still leaves a discussion of gender and women in the Philippian church out of most of his analysis of the letter. He notes that Euodia and Syntyche are to be reconciled, echoing Paul's words to the whole church in Phil 1:27 and he simply calls the

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<sup>35</sup> Berthold Mengel, *Studien zum Philipperbrief: Untersuchungen zum Situativen Kontext unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frage nach der Ganzheitlichkeit oder Einheitlichkeit eines paulinischen Briefes*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 8 (Tübingen: J.B.C. Mohr, 1982), 279-82.

women leaders.<sup>36</sup> F. W. Beare goes even farther and attempts to read into the situation between the two women. He states that the quarrel has to do with one feeling superior and the fact that the church may split between the women into factions of loyalty to one or the other.<sup>37</sup> This, of course, is a possibility, but it is not stated or entirely clear from the text.

In works following Portefaix's, it becomes clear that either her work is ignored (along with Abrahamsen's at certain times) or the questions have not changed for many commentators in regards to women. In 1994, Ben Witherington III noted briefly the role of Euodia and Syntyche within the context of the Philippian community. He states that, because women in the Macedonian region had a history of taking on leadership positions, it would have been expected that women would do the same within the Philippian community. Witherington even goes so far as to include the women amongst the ἐπισκόποι (Phil. 1:1) rather than the διακόνοι.<sup>38</sup> While this is the case, he only briefly mentions women in general and gives little attention to the religious background of women in the Philippian community. Francis Malinowski, on the other hand, relegates Euodia and Syntyche to the level of "brave Christians" rather than having any involvement in the

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<sup>36</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *Philippians* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 37, 69-71.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Wright Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Black, 1959), 143.

<sup>38</sup> Ben Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), 107-08.

leadership of the Philippian community.<sup>39</sup> In 1995, Nils Dahl addresses the unity of the letter once more and uses the women to make his case, connecting the exhortation to Euodia and Syntyche in 4:1-9 with the models and warning examples he stresses throughout the letter.<sup>40</sup>

In her commentary on Philippians, Carolyn Osiek understands, as Abrahamsen and Portefaix do, that women are key to the leadership of the Jesus group in Philippi. This is indicated by the mention of Lydia in Acts 16 and Euodia and Syntyche in Phil. 4:2. While Lydia is not mentioned in Paul's letter to the Philippians, Osiek concludes that the two accounts point toward the importance of women in the Philippian community.<sup>41</sup> She states, "Whether it is Lydia according to Acts or Euodia and Syntyche according to Philippians, women are key players in the development of the church there."<sup>42</sup> Because Osiek is concerned with discussing the leadership positions of Euodia and Syntyche, she notes that women's religious contexts are less important in the analysis given her questions.<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>39</sup> Francis X. Malinowski, "The Brave Women of Philippi," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15, no. 2 (1985): 62-63.

<sup>40</sup> Nils A. Dahl, "Euodia and Syntyche and Paul's Letter to the Philippians," 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 Press, 1995), 11-13.

<sup>41</sup> Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 26-27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

study will build on works such as Osiek's and focus on women's religious context in order to give further depth to the discussion about women in Philippi.

In his delineation of Portefaix's work, Peter Oakes discusses women within the context of mixed marriage: a husband who is not a part of the Jesus group with a wife who is a part of the Jesus group. He notes that Portefaix does not discuss the make-up of the church and therefore ends up mixing Roman and Greek cultural ideas.<sup>44</sup> Davorin Peterlin notes the connection between the dispute of Euodia and Syntyche in Phil 4:2 and the apparent issues of disunity throughout the letter. He notes that "there is no reason to mention Euodia and Syntyche unless they are related to the theme of unity."<sup>45</sup> Peterlin goes on to argue that the women in the church were most likely among the *διδάκονοι* mentioned in Phil. 1:1. He notes that, because of the leadership roles women took in "pagan" religions, naturally women would have been amongst the leadership of the Philippian Jesus group.<sup>46</sup> While

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<sup>44</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 93-95.

<sup>45</sup> Davorin Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, V. 79 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 102, Peterlin references Agouridis as a source for this opinion Savas Chr. Agouridis, "The Role of Women in the Church of Philippi," *Bulletin of Biblical Studies* 1, no. 2 (1980): 84.

<sup>46</sup> Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 109-11, Unlike Peterlin, Melick states outright that the women could have no role in leadership positions, even though he sees them as prominent in the congregation, and he concludes that selfishness was what came between the two women. Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 28, 43, 146-48.



this is not the end of Peterlin's treatment of women in Philippi, a more in depth treatment will be undertaken in chapter 5. Peterlin, like so many others, focuses on the possible split in the church and the clues to that split through Euodia and Syntyche rather than centering the women in the discussion in order to understand women as a whole in the community.<sup>47</sup>

Peter O'Brien takes a different tact when noting the central place of disunity among the Philippian community and the two women's disagreement in Phil. 4:2. He states that those who understand the two women as key to the clues of disunity in the letter as a whole may be mistaken.

That the letter was to be read to the church suggests that the disagreement was serious enough. But it is by no means clear that the dispute was as widespread as Garland<sup>48</sup> and others suggest. Since only two members are singled out by name, this personal discord may have been exceptional in the congregation. Certainly Paul considers the church mature enough to receive his admonition, while his warm and encouraging remarks about the readers elsewhere in the letter do not seem to fit this reconstruction.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Fee also turns to the persons of Euodia and Syntyche as pieces to the puzzle of Paul's purpose for writing the letter. In terms of their place in the community, he simply notes that they are both leaders in the church. Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, vol. 11, The Ivp New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 167-71.

<sup>48</sup> O'Brien specifically cites David E. Garland, "The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors," *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985): 173.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 279.

For O'Brien, the reason Paul even mentions the two women is because they were among his σύζυγοι (4:3) and therefore hold a special place within the relationship between Paul and the people mentioned in Phil 4.<sup>50</sup>

Richard Ascough argues that women in the church at Philippi were involved in leadership positions. Specifically, he cites the comments made by Paul to Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2) and notes that their differences had ramifications for the entire church. While specifics (what little there are) on these two women will be discussed further in Chapter 5 below, Ascough goes on to discuss Abrahamsen's work, indicating that women often were leaders in a religious capacity in Philippi and, after joining the Christ followers, were accustomed to taking on that role.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it would not have seemed so countercultural in Paul's Philippi for women to take on leadership roles.

All of these treatments of women in the Philippian church are paradigmatic of the broader academic discussion of the letter. While the studies mentioned either dismiss, treat tangentially or give more thought to women in the Philippian church, other scholars have honed in on other themes such as military and athletic language at the expense of women in the church. Given that Philippi was a Roman colony with soldiers as its initial colonizers, some predominantly interpret the letter

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 479-80.

<sup>51</sup> Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 134-36.

through this lens. Furthermore, given Paul's proclivity for athletic language, some see this as a mutually important set of metaphors in the letter.

*Military and Athletic Language in the Philippian Letter*

Scholars have taken military terms such as *πραϊτωρίον* (1:13) and *συστρατιώτης* (2:25) as license to see an overall military theme in the letter.<sup>52</sup> Krentz' work has been influential in dealing with the military imagery in biblical scholarship on Paul. In his work on the military and athletic imagery, he gives extensive background concerning generals, how they speak to their troops, the nature of living honorably as a soldier, etc.<sup>53</sup> Amongst other language, Krentz translates the word "*συνήθλησαν*" as a military term denoting fighting or struggling alongside one another (citing Herodotus 7.211.3-212, Thucydides

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<sup>52</sup> Joseph A. Marchal, "Military Images in Philippians 1-2: A Feminist Analysis of the Rhetorics of Scholarship, Philippians, and Current Contexts," in *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Post-Colonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse*, ed. Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd C. Penner, *Global Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 29-35, Edgar Krentz, "Military Language and Metaphors in Philippians," in *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Bradley H. McLean, *Jsntsup* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 109-10, ———, "Paul, Games, and the Military," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), Timothy C. Geoffrion, *The Rhetorical Purpose and the Political and Military Character of Philippians: A Call to Stand Firm* (Lewiston: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993), De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, Adolf von Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

<sup>53</sup> Krentz, "Paul, Games, and the Military.", ———, "Military Language and Metaphors in Philippians."

1.143.2; Plato *Alcebiades*, 119E, as well as other texts).<sup>54</sup> It is arguable that the reception of the letter was by former military personnel or their descendants, but it is improbable that the community was made up solely of ex-military.

The word “συναθλέω” has a cognate that is used more often. It is the word “συναγωνίζομαι”.<sup>55</sup> This term, which is the one Krentz cites most, can connote military action with comrades, but that is not the only use. In Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazusae*, the term is used to mean simply “help” or “aid”.

Ἦχώ, λόγων ἀντωδὸς ἐπικοκκάστρια,  
ἥπερ πέρυσιν ἐν τῷδε ταύτῳ χωρίῳ (1060)  
Εὐριπίδη καύτῃ ξυνηγωνιζόμεν.  
ἄλλ’, ὦ τέκνον, σὲ μὲν τὸ σαυτῆς χρῆ ποιεῖν,  
κλάειν ἔλεινῳς.

Echo, a comedienne who sings back what she hears, who just last year, in this very place, personally assisted Euripides in the contest. But now you must play your part: start wailing piteously (1059-1063, LCL).

Here, Euripides’ character is pretending to be Echo and explaining how she formerly helped the tragedian in his work, but there is no sense of militaristic action. Therefore, the options for meaning are polyvalent, as they are for most words.

Krentz also notes the purpose of the gymnasium and sports as training for military service and the use of the word ἀγών as a term for both battle and an

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<sup>54</sup> Krentz, "Military Language and Metaphors in Philippians," 123 and 23 n. 67-71.

<sup>55</sup> See Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1692.

athletic context (1:30).<sup>56</sup> In terms of this militaristic and athletic imagery, he states the following in regards to Euodia and Syntyche (whom he does not even name) (Phil. 4:2).

Paul reminds the Philippians of this military truism, without invoking any aspect of homosexual love – in part, at least, because some of the leaders in Philippi are women (4:2-3).<sup>57</sup>

He goes on to state,

In Phil 4:2-4, Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche to have the same mind, just what he had urged upon all recipients in 1:27-2:4. These two women have struggled (συνήθλησαν, *synēthlēsan*) alongside Paul, that is, been coworkers along with others in Philippi (τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, *tōn loipōn synergōn mou*). These leaders are Paul's fellow soldiers, like Epaphroditus (2:25) who risked his life (2:27).<sup>58</sup>

These treatments of women are egregious at best. First, mention of women in 4:2-3 is claimed to be an excuse to allay homophobia in the readers because of an overabundance of military imagery in the letter, and second, the women become like military men as co-soldiers with Paul (an illusion not even used in the text). This interpretation of women in Philippians both devalues their presence in the

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<sup>56</sup> Krentz, "Paul, Games, and the Military," 344-45, For a comprehensive analysis of the term 'agon' in the ancient world and in Paul, see Martin Brèandl, "Der Agon bei Paulus: Herkunft und Profil paulinischer Agonmetaphorik" (Thesis (doctoral) - Universität, Tübingen, 2005, Mohr Siebeck, 2006), Uta Poplutz, *Athlet des Evangeliums: Eine motivgeschichtliche Studie zur Wettkampfmetaphorik bei Paulus*, Herders Biblische Studien (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004).

<sup>57</sup> Krentz, "Paul, Games, and the Military," 356.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

community and also perpetuates a homophobic interpretive strategy on the part of some scholars in the guild.

Craig de Vos adopts some of Krentz' work and agrees that there is military imagery in the letter to the Philippians, but de Vos rightly understands the military theme to be one among many in the letter, including suffering.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, de Vos still sees the military imagery at the core of the call to unity.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Portefaix understands the military imagery as a rhetoric of unity for the whole Philippian community.<sup>61</sup> Marchal critiques the use and analysis of military imagery in Philippians in present day scholarship.

Even if one were to assume that military imagery would have some inherent appeal to the veterans of Roman campaigns, it does not explain why scholars presumed that the military language as a rhetorical practice would have had an appeal across the diversity of the Philippian community. Such scholarship has not adequately explained why people other than former veterans such as women and local Macedonians and Thracians would be inclined to react favorably to such terminology.<sup>62</sup>

Marchal rightly notes the out of proportion picture Krentz paints of a community accepting or identifying with military imagery (de Vos is far more tactful in his interpretation). This study will partially fill in the gap in scholarship, taking women into account in the community.

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<sup>59</sup> De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 277-79.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>61</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 140-41.

<sup>62</sup> Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 63.

Martin Brändl has written an entire volume on the term “*agon*” in Pauline literature. His work in chapters 2 and 3 is comprehensive and is an examination of the term in both Greek and Hellenistic Judean contexts. He then examines potential contact Paul may have had with public games in chapters 4 and 5. In chapters 6-9, he looks more closely at ‘agon’ within the context of Paul’s theology. Brändl’s overall conclusion notes that rather than an image of moral striving, Paul is rather focused on an eschatological struggle for those in his community in proclaiming the Gospel.<sup>63</sup> Brändl does not connect ‘agon’ largely to the military imagery that Krentz suggests is central to Paul’s understanding of Philippians nor does he mention the exclusion of women from said athletic contests.

It is admitted that the military imagery in Philippians does exist. The question becomes how much would women have identified with it and to what extent would they be impacted by it? As Portefaix rightly notes, women would have identified with sending off their husbands and sons into military service.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, since Philippi was a colony, Roman soldiers were regular sights within Philippi. What is not clear is how much women would have been familiar with specifics concerning military formations and the linguistic connections soldiers

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<sup>63</sup> Martin Brändl, "Der Agon bei Paulus: Herkunft und Profil paulinischer Agonmetaphorik" (Thesis (doctoral) - Universität, Tübingen, 2005, Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 340-44, 415, 18-22, See also David John Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 264-66.

<sup>64</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 141.

would actually have made with Paul's rhetoric. It is highly doubtful that it would be as such for women, leaving them with an impression about how unity worked within such a theme, but it would not have impacted them in the same way as men who were experienced soldiers. Therefore, it is presupposed that some in the Jesus group in Philippi identified with such rhetoric but it does not account for the diversity in the group as they would have received the letter.<sup>65</sup> This leads to a second major theme scholars have understood to be throughout the letter.

*Friendship Language in the Philippian Letter*

Although many scholars see friendship as a major theme in Philippians, the terms for "friend" or "friendship" (φίλος; φιλοξενία; φίλια) never actually occur in the letter.<sup>66</sup> While it is not possible to recount all the aspects of friendship in the ancient world here, some comment must be made given the concept's impact on Philippian scholarship. Marchal delineates the current scholarship on friendship in classical studies and then notes how it has been used in biblical scholarship.<sup>67</sup> He rightly notes that "friendship" terminology falls primarily within the domain of

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<sup>65</sup> As Pheme Perkins notes, "The letter, however, is ambiguous in the way it portrays their [women's] involvement. For example, the dominant images of athletic contest and military service do not reflect their experience" Pheme Perkins, "Philippians," in *Women's Bible Commentary with Apocrypha: Expanded Edition*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 433.

<sup>66</sup> Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 35, Bormann, *Philippi*, 164-81.

<sup>67</sup> Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 35-50.



patron/client relations and is not meant to be equated with the term “friendly” and the like in modern parlance.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, friendship in the ancient sense presupposes a hierarchical relationship between the actors and that the relationship takes place within the domain of aristocracy under the rubrics of politics, economy, and social hierarchy.<sup>69</sup> Cicero states this view of friendship clearly.

Tantumque abest ut amicitiae propter indigentiam colantur, ut ei, qui opibus et copiis maximeque virtute, in qua plurimum est praesidi, minime alterius indigeant, liberalis simi sint et beneficentissimi.

It is far from being true that friendship is cultivated because of need; rather it is cultivated by those who are most abundantly blessed with wealth and power and especially with virtue, which is man’s best defence; by those least in need of another’s help (*Amic.* 51, LCL).

It was this system, and those who participated in it, that described those on top as the powerful and those on the bottom as dependent on them.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 37-39.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 37-38, See also Alicia J. Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction in James*, Emory Studies in Early Christianity (Blanford Forum, U.K.: Deo Publishing, 2010), 13-89, John Henry Paul Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 679-80.

<sup>70</sup> Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property, and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 119-43, ———, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (New York: Routledge, 1990), 52, Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 189, Edward N. O’Neil, "Plutarch on Friendship," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 107, See also John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series 75 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 41-82, Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y.

The semantic range of words associated with friendship is many. Besides φίλος and φιλοξενία, some of the words such as φρονέω (to be of like mind)<sup>71</sup>; πολυφιλία (many friends)<sup>72</sup>; ὁμόνοια, *homonoia*, *Concordia*, *Consensio* (concord)<sup>73</sup>; and the like were common in letters to friends and speeches.

Commentators have found such themes within the Philippian letter given Paul's rhetoric.<sup>74</sup> Like military and athletic imagery, the friendship imagery is not

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MacDonald, and Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 195-98, 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), 124-25, Joerg Rieger, *Christ & Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 29-30, Efrain Agosto, "Patronage and Commendation, Imperial and Anti-Imperial," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (New York: Trinity Press International, 2004), 104-407, Gerald W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66-67.

<sup>71</sup> Homer *Il.* 4.360-361; 22.262-265; *Ody.* 6.180-185; 15.195-198.

<sup>72</sup> Plutarch notes that having "many friends" renders the aims of said relationships impossible. One should have few friends in order to maintain the standards of good "friendship": that is virtue, intimacy, and usefulness (*Moralia*94B). See O'Neil, "Plutarch on Friendship," 108.

<sup>73</sup> Cicero, *Amic.* 4.15; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.42; Plutarch, *Mor.* 96e-f; Philo, *Spec.* 1.70.

<sup>74</sup> Stanley Stowers, "Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians," *PT*, no. 1 (1991), Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, L. Michael White, "Morality between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), Klaus Berger, "Hellenistischen Gattungen Im Neuen Testament," *ANRW* 2.25.2 (1984), Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity* (Sheffield:

monolithic.<sup>75</sup> In fact, many commentators ignore the patron/client cultural context and miss the point of the language altogether. That said, friendship language should also be discussed in light of women in the Philippian community.

Friendship language not only connotes a hierarchical relationship, but it also reinforces gendered stereotypes.<sup>76</sup> For the most part, women were excluded from friendship designations because it was, in many cases, centered on politics.<sup>77</sup> While that is the case, Osiek, MacDonald, and Tulloch have rightfully noted the roll women did play in patron/client relations during the Roman Empire.<sup>78</sup>

Aristocratic women were patrons to other women<sup>79</sup> and also to men,<sup>80</sup> but these are

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Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), John T. Fitzgerald, *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).

<sup>75</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon, 22-24*.

<sup>76</sup> Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 43-46. As Marchal states, Cicero sees friendship in the sense of loyalty to the state and in the construction and stability of the government. It is not a personal, individualistic construct like in modern western cultures. Cicero, *Ad. Fam.* 2.5-6; *Philippics* 2.5-6. See also Benjamin Fiore, "The Theory and Practice of Friendship in Cicero," in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 59-76.

<sup>77</sup> Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 43-46.

<sup>78</sup> Osiek, MacDonald, and Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*, 194-219.

<sup>79</sup> Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Lucius Verus, Antoninus Pius, and Various Friends*, trans. C. R. Haines, 2 vols., vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 145-51, G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating*

elite women and it is highly unlikely that such women were members of the Philippian Jesus group. If they were, they remain either unnamed or are Euodia and Syntyche, in which case, we have little information in order to come to such a conclusion. Osiek, MacDonald and Tulloch go on to note the presence of non-elite patron women of the artisan class.<sup>81</sup> This seems to be how the author of Acts portrays Lydia in Acts 16:11-15 (see chapter 5 below for a further discussion). Therefore, some women in the Philippian Jesus group would probably identify readily with the friendship language but not all of them would react positively given their subordinate status. In order to fill out the profile of the community beyond the discussion of military, athletic, and friendship rhetoric as well as androcentric analysis, it will be necessary to analyze women's lives in their ritual contexts (see chapters 2-4 below).

### *Conclusion*

When one looks at the majority of scholarship on Philippi, women seem to disappear into the background. While scholars such as Portefaix, Abrahamsen,

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*Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1977*, vol. 2, New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1982), 55-56.

<sup>80</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 17.10; 18.143, 164; 20.135-136; 20.189-196; *Life* 13-16. Osiek, MacDonald, and Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*, 298 n.31.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-03.

Marschal, and Osiek have placed greater attention on women, the broader arena of scholarship has left women voiceless even though we know some women in the Philippian community by name. In order to remedy this lack of attention on women and their context in Philippi, this study will 1) construct a model for understanding rituals in the ancient world (chapter 2); 2) place women within their religious and ritual contexts in order to better understand their lives within the Philippian community in general (chapters 3-4); and 3) use information garnered from chapters 3 and 4 to note points of contact for women's reception of the letter to the Philippians in 1:19-30; 2:1-11; and 3:8-21. Furthermore, chapter 5 will begin with comments on the persons of Lydia, Syntyche and Euodia before engaging the rest of the letter.

## Chapter 2: Ritual as a Window to the World of Women

The voices of women in the ancient world are hardly audible. They have all but disappeared amidst the cracks and crevices of archaeological relics. Even more problematic is the androcentric literature that provides one of the main sources for women in the ancient world. Although daunting, these obstacles are not entirely insurmountable but rather pose a serious question about how to approach the data and with what means. This chapter will offer one cross-cultural model for the rest of the analysis in order to fill in the missing gaps in the information. As Thomas Carney has argued, cross-cultural models allow the researcher the ability to “patch out” data in order to gain clearer access to information not readily available.<sup>82</sup>

More specifically, this study will attempt to recover the voices of Philippian women through the lens of ritual studies. This is not only because rituals are public action for women, but also because rituals are linked to status claims. Tambiah states it in the following way,

It is therefore necessary to bear in mind that festivals, cosmic rituals, and rites of passage, however prescribed they may be, are always linked to status claims and interests of the participants, and therefore are always open to contextual meanings.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Thomas F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975), 17.

<sup>83</sup> Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 125. This quote appears in Richard E. DeMaris, *The New Testament in Its Ritual World* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 32.

Before turning to the specifics surrounding women in Philippi, a definition of ritual must be proposed in order to provide a heuristic framework for interpreting the evidence, and then a typology of ritual will be outlined.

### *A Definition of Ritual*

How one defines the term “ritual” has as much to do with how one understands what ritual does. The dynamics involved in ritual action and its contextualization are a key to determining a proper definition for ritual and how it functions. In the following two sections, a definition of ritual will be proposed and then a history of ritual studies will be delineated in order to provide background for the definition. The reason it is necessary to make an attempt to define ritual is because of the wide range of meanings associated with ritual in the English language. Ritual has meanings ranging from a traditional formulaic act to an act that is void of meaning as in the saying “it’s just a ritual.”<sup>84</sup> For the purposes of this study, ritual is defined in the following way,

Ritual is a performance, planned or improvised, static or dynamic, that can transform everyday life or reinforce traditional ideals within an alternative context. Traditional rituals open up ordinary life to ultimate reality or some transcendent being or force in order to tap its transformative power or reinforce prior conceptions of power.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Collins, "Reflections on Ritual and on Theorizing About Ritual," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 1.

<sup>85</sup> This definition is a conglomeration of definitions and concepts from Bobby C. Alexander, "Ritual and Current Studies of Ritual: Overview," in *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 139, Bruce Kapferer, "Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice: Beyond Representation and Meaning," in *Ritual in Its Own Right: Exploring the Dynamics of*

This definition, informed by the works of Bobby Alexander and Bruce Kapferer, was not generated in a vacuum but rather was constructed with the history of ritual theory in mind.

In order to understand current theories of ritual, one must become acquainted with the beginning of the conversation in Anthropology and how that development has led researchers to a more dynamic understanding of ritual in the present. In the 1910's, Emile Durkheim posited that ritual was a means of preserving social solidarity.<sup>86</sup> This understanding would later be understood to be part of the structural-functionalist school in the social sciences. Following in Durkheim's footsteps, both Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown argued that ritual reflects a group's sense of moral obligations and reaffirms the social order thereby reinforcing the status quo.<sup>87</sup> This structural-functionalist

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*Transformation*, ed. Don Handelman and Galina Lindquist (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 40-41.

<sup>86</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1965), 257.

<sup>87</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion, and Other Essays* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1954), 54-67, For more on the idea of symbols in ritual and whether they represent a static view of ritual or a dynamic one, see Raymond William Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private*, Symbol, Myth, and Ritual Series (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 167-71, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 125, 57, 64.



approach to ritual would later come into question in the works of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner.

Geertz understood ritual to be that place where the general conceptions of the cosmos and social relations meet. For Geertz, this fusion of the cosmological and the social create what he called a “cultural performance.”<sup>88</sup> This means that ritual events are transformative since the “imagined reality” and the “social reality” merge thereby creating a new cultural perception.<sup>89</sup> Along with Turner’s theory, this idea of creative transformation in ritual changed the way later anthropologists understood ritual as a whole. Rather than seeing ritual as reinforcing the status quo, Geertz showed that ritual can become a key within a community’s need for change and adaption. This shifted the focus of anthropologists from the structure of rituals to performance and context.<sup>90</sup> As will be explained in chapter 5, the introduction of the Jesus community into the city of Philippi would have changed the ritual dynamics for some women and, therefore, injected another cultural factor into their social sphere.

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<sup>88</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112-13.

<sup>89</sup> Ursula Rao, "Ritual in Society," in *Theorizing Rituals: Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts*, ed. Jens Kreinath, Jan Snoek, and Michael Stausberg, *Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006), 146.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 147. See also Collins, "Reflections on Ritual," 2, and Alexander, "Ritual and Current Studies of Ritual: Overview," 140-41.

As with Geertz, Turner proposed a more dynamic understanding of ritual.<sup>91</sup>

Turner defines ritual as a

prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers. The symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context.<sup>92</sup>

Although taking into account dynamism in ritual, his definition is reductionist and, as later scholars would note, needs updating. One of the primary problems with this definition has to do with the necessity for otherworldly beings or powers. In his later work, Turner acknowledged that “secular” contexts can and do contain what amounts to ritual.<sup>93</sup> Grimes has rightly pointed out Turner’s strength in that he did not adhere to his definition of ritual but rather ignored it on many occasions and allowed the data to influence interpretation rather than the model force information into an interpretive constraint.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Kapferer, "Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice," 41.

<sup>92</sup> Victor Witter Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 19.

<sup>93</sup> ———, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Symbol, Myth, and Ritual (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 238.

<sup>94</sup> Ronald L. Grimes, "Victor Turner's Definition, Theory, and Sense of Ritual," in *Victor Turner and the Construction of Cultural Criticism*, ed. Kathleen M. Ashley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 142.

Grimes' criticism of Turner's definition does not stop at the issue of divine powers or supreme beings. He further criticizes Turner's exclusion of technical aspects of ritual. Grimes states that this part of the definition

helps us recognize the noninstrumental quality of festivals, celebration, and other rites permeated by play. But it obscures the link between ritual and technology that develops when "technicians of the sacred" (Eliade's term for shamans) engage in magical rites aimed at specific empirical results such as making crops grow or healing patients. Surely there is a technology of ritual, and surely modern technology has its ritualistic qualities. And these ought to be understood, not obscured.<sup>95</sup>

What Grimes points out is the fact that Turner discounted non-western forms of technology since they were either "magic" or "spiritual" in nature. The fact is this divide between secular and sacred is appropriate for some modern cultural analysis, but it becomes problematic for studying the ancient Mediterranean and therefore deserves a bit of discussion.

While the conversation in anthropological circles does center on the divide between the secular and the sacred, the conversation about secular and sacred is anachronistic when applied to the ancient Mediterranean world. Within the context of the Roman Empire, scholars have rightly noted that this divide is artificial since religion was embedded in everyday life and not something separated from kinship or politics.<sup>96</sup> As Simon Price notes,

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4-7.

There is no religious sphere separate from that of politics and warfare or private life; instead, religion is embedded in all aspects of life, public and private. There are no sacred books, religious dogma or orthodoxy, but rather common practices, competing interpretations of events and actions, and the perception of sacrifice as a strategic device open to manipulation.<sup>97</sup>

Because Price is directly addressing ancient Greek culture from the classical period (5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE), this does not directly address the early period of the Philippian church. On the other hand, Price (in an earlier work), Peter Garnsey, Richard Saller and John Kautsky argue that the religious and secular domains during Imperial Rome were not separate as they are in modern thinking. Rather, in respect to the Imperial Cult in particular, the domains of politics and religion blended.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, it will be presupposed that ancient Philippian women experienced religious life as an integrated part of Greco-Roman political domains.

While Geertz and Turner have turned the conversation toward performance and the dynamic nature of ritual, they were reacting to a particular lack in methodology and, therefore, overcompensated. While correcting the understanding

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<sup>97</sup> S. R. F. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*, Key Themes in Ancient History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3. Contrary to Price, the Romans had a sacred set of writings in the Sybillines. This does not separate the part the Sybillines played in politics.

<sup>98</sup> ———, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 15-22. See also Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 163-64. For a broader discussion of the integration of religion in all spheres of ancient life, see John H. Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 276-77.

that ritual was the keeper of the status quo, they rightly turned the discussion to dynamics and the ability of ritual to change culture. Kapferer has rightly recognized this overcompensation and made adjustments to his understanding of ritual.

Bruce Kapferer has noted that rituals can be both static and dynamic.<sup>99</sup> This is important for the development of a broad definition of ritual. He explains the concepts of static and dynamic in his comments on Turner's idea of process.

The term 'process,' as Turner particularly engages it, of course, is explicitly opposed to statics. I use the concept of dynamics to encompass both process or change and statics or stasis. As I will develop it later, ritual as a relatively unchanging form, for example, is nonetheless dynamic. That is, it constitutes a dynamic field of force having affect and effect upon those who are involved in its domain. Further, the inner dynamics of a rite – even though it may be repeated in much the same way over long periods of time – are not opposed to statics or change. As I will develop later, the dynamics of what might be conceived as a generally repeatable or unchanging form are the key to the continuing vitality of some rites – their capacity to regenerate participants and their realities, often in original ways.<sup>100</sup>

There are a few important points that Kapferer makes that inform the definition in this study. First, ritual has a tendency to remain true to form. This is the 'stasis' component to ritual that notes the sequence of events in a ritual that stay the same over time. Second, ritual has a tendency to be dynamic in that it both transforms participants in various ways and is transformed through changing historical contexts. These corrections to Turner's understanding of ritual are important not

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<sup>99</sup> Kapferer, "Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice," 40.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

only in understanding the reinforcement of cultural norms for Philippian woman in the first century, but also the changing dynamics introduced by the emperor cult and the Jesus movement.

Kapferer goes on to elaborate on the contextual dimension for understanding rituals. He notes that the whole of any current cultural situation is changed through the process of ritual. This is most apparent in life crisis rites (rites of passage) such as rites of birth, initiation, death, and marriage, which will be discussed further below. Furthermore, rites that deal with politics, cosmological order or socioeconomic issues not only reproduce certain traditional themes, but they also give rise to radical adjustments and transformations of significance.<sup>101</sup>

To place the above in a broader context, a graph is provided (figure 2.1) with the following brief explanations for the ritual process in the model.

- 1) Those participating in the ritual gather and prepare to begin.
- 2) The ritual action can come in a number of forms, which are discussed in the section on typology below.
- 3) The ritual affects participants by either reinforcing cultural norms or changing said norms in the process. In many rituals, individual participants are changed from one status to another while reinforcing cultural norms. This is the static and dynamic of ritual at work.
- 4) The cultural context in which the rituals take place matters. If the context of rituals is altered (i.e. outside forces cause insiders to re-evaluate the meaning of regularly practiced rituals), it changes the meaning of the ritual but if the context stays the same, it is more than likely that the rituals will reinforce prior cultural norms. Option 4a has the possibility of being

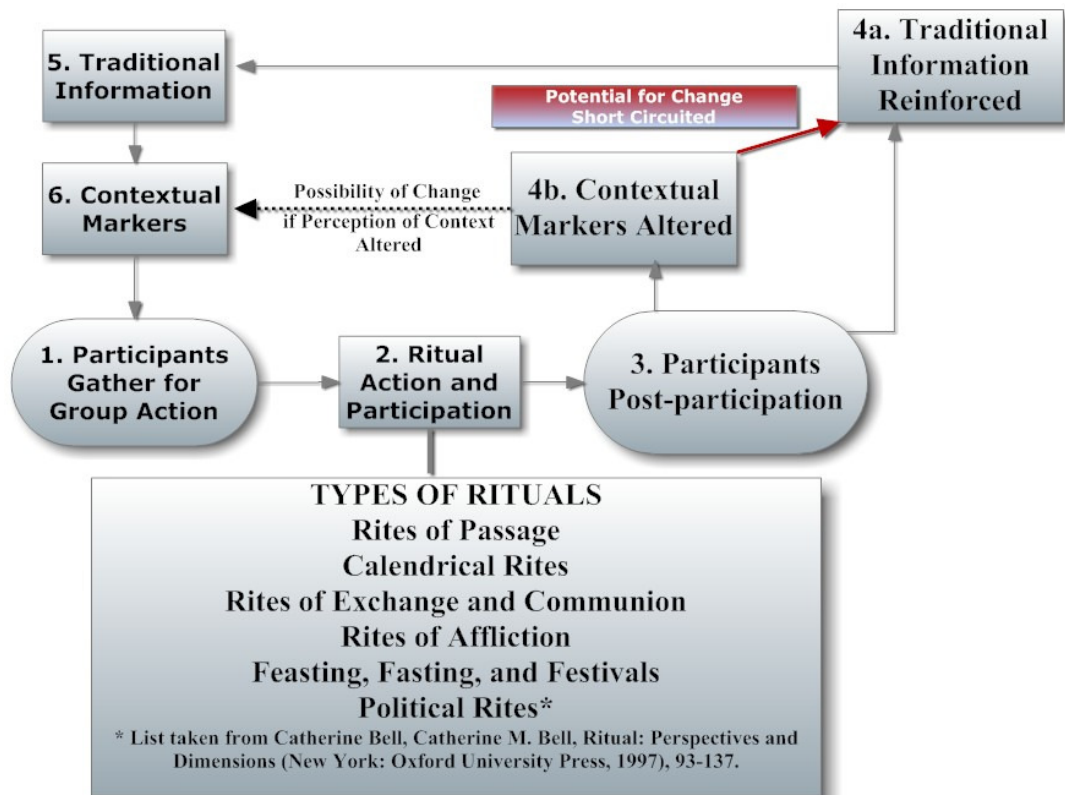
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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 43.

short-circuited, thereby placing a larger emphasis on cultural norms. This will be illustrated in Chapter 4 in the analysis of the cult of Dionysus.

5) Traditional information is thereby reinforced given this path in the ritual process.

6) Traditional contextual markers may stay the same or be altered depending on the outcome of either 4a or 4b.



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Figure 2.1: Ritual Model

Now that a definition of ritual has been constructed, it is necessary to build a framework for describing rituals. Therefore, a typology of ritual will now be delineated in order to provide a framework and vocabulary for describing rituals in

ancient Philippi and Greco-Roman culture. Although the list below is helpful, it must come with some qualifications. First, the list is far from exhaustive.

Catherine Bell has compiled a list composed of ritual types, but the list by no means encompasses every possible ritual one may encounter.<sup>102</sup> Second, following the list of ritual types, while helpful in describing certain types of rituals, will be supplemented by sections on the roles that purity and power play in ritual. Third, there are examples from the ancient world given for each typological category in order to build a framework for discussion. The examples are not meant to be applied specifically to Philippian women in every instance.

#### *A Typology of Ritual*

In her work on ritual, Catherine Bell delineates six primary categories of ritual found in anthropological analysis: Rites of Passage; Calendrical Rites; Rites of Exchange and Communion; Rites of Affliction; Feasting, Fasting, and Festivals; and Political Rites.<sup>103</sup> All of these types play important parts in the lives of ancient women and in particular women in Philippi. For many of the rituals that will be dealt with in this study, Rites of Passage will play a central role because they are key to understanding women's lives in the ancient world. Rites of Passage are rituals that mark a person's transition from one stage of social life to another, such

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<sup>102</sup> Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 93-137.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*



as birth, movement into adulthood, marriage, and death.<sup>104</sup> In *Ciron*, Isaeus (4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE Athenian Orator) tells of a family offering proof of legal marriage in order to obtain proper estate rights. Within the course of the oration, some details about wedding rituals are discussed.

ὅτε γὰρ ὁ πατήρ αὐτὴν ἐλάμβανε, γάμους εἰστίασε καὶ ἐκάλεσε τρεῖς αὐτοῦ φίλους μετὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ προσηκόντων, τοῖς τε φράτορσι γαμηλίαν εἰσήνεγκε κατὰ τοὺς ἐκείνων νόμους.

When our father took her in marriage, he held a wedding feast and summoned three of his friends in addition to his relatives; he also gave a marriage banquet to the phratry according to their established customs (Isaeus *Ciron* 8.18).

Although short, a few pieces of evidence about marriage ritual in classical Athens can be gleaned. First, the marriage ceremony is public and therefore shows proof to the community that the wedding is legitimate. Second, the ritual of marriage solidifies the inheritance of estates. It is the proof that the marriage took place and that the relatives of Ciron are able to prove their status. Furthermore, it must also be noted that there is no documentation of weddings but rather the community acknowledged the wedding by being witnesses to the ritual. This sort of status transformation was a rite that not only transformed the status of the bride, groom and their respective houses, but also changed their relation to their surrounding community. Before the wedding, relationships and statuses were very different, but

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<sup>104</sup> Victor Witter Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," in *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, ed. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little (La Salle: Open Court, 1987), 4-5.

afterwards, a rite of passage had taken place and therefore statuses and relationships changed, integrating the woman into the house of her husband rather than her father.<sup>105</sup>

The importance of rites of passage and women's lives in Philippi necessitates a discussion of women and their relation to ritual in the ancient world. Angeliki Tzanetou notes the importance of women in rituals and the central purpose of rites of passage for women. She states, "The rituals that women performed to mark transitions in their own life cycles are a viable resource for women's attitudes toward their roles as wives and mothers."<sup>106</sup> Speaking of women priests, Joan Breton Connelly correctly injects status into the discussion, noting that women of higher status had access to recourses and power that lower status women did not.

Knowledge of ritual practice, local myths, and ancestral traditions invested priestly women with a cultural capital that made them invaluable to their communities. Finally, the accumulated prestige of priestesses, in leading public processions, overseeing polis festivals, sitting in reserved seats at the theater, and having their images erected in sanctuaries, guaranteed them a symbolic capital that must not be underestimated in a world in which status carried long-standing power.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> John Howard Oakley and Rebecca H. Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, Wisconsin Studies in Classics (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>106</sup> Angeliki Tzanetou, "Ritual and Gender: Critical Perspectives," in *Finding Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Maryline Parca and Angeliki Tzanetou (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

<sup>107</sup> Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 23-24.

While Connelly does make a point of shifting the conversation away from women being viewed as all lower class, powerless individuals, it seems that she overstates her case. Women priests were often from the upper classes, but they still reinforced ideals concerning women's place in society.<sup>108</sup>

In 1909, Arnold van Gennep published his work on rites of passage.<sup>109</sup> He posited a tripartite model that explained many transitions in which people participate when moving from one group to another.<sup>110</sup> Van Gennep hypothesized that there were three stages to this transformation: separation, transition, and incorporation.<sup>111</sup> This tripartite model would influence many anthropologists, especially Victor Turner. Turner, improving van Gennep's model, expands on the ideas surrounding rites of passage and how they occur.

Turner's expanded categories describe the movement through the rite in three similar stages to Van Gennep: separation, liminality and aggregation. These involve a removal from one's core group and everyday activities which leads to an ambiguous state or liminal period and finally ends in a reintegration of the person

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<sup>108</sup> Tzanetou, "Ritual and Gender," 5-6.

<sup>109</sup> Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-13.

into a new status.<sup>112</sup> Turner goes on to clarify that rites of passage do not only involve transitions between ascribed statuses like birth, death, marriage, and puberty rites, which were important ritual domains of ancient Philippian women, but also they involve achieved status as well.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, it is important to note that these rituals are viewed as the very thing that makes the change in status happen rather than merely a set of circumstances that celebrate the change.<sup>114</sup> This moves beyond Van Gennep's model that saw many forms of achieved statuses as economic in character only.

The first phase of rites of passage, or separation, brings a person onto the edge of symbolic death. As will be seen in regards to many rituals in the ancient world, and more specifically Philippi, death was a constant symbol, reminding women of the stark realities of life expectancy during their time. The individual is removed from society and moves toward a transitional or liminal phase. This phase is the initiation of "violence," either physical or symbolic.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, neophytes are separated from the normal rhythms of life. They are secluded from their former group, either kin or fictive kin, and become prepared to accept their new status. It

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<sup>112</sup> Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 94.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>114</sup> Jack David Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion: Culture to the Ultimate* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 126.

<sup>115</sup> Maurice Bloch, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*, Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 181.

is also important to separate the neophyte from the central places of life, i.e. home, temple, etc. Furthermore, time begins to be disrupted (i.e. long times of no eating or sleeping or forced activity) and violence enters the neophyte's existence.<sup>116</sup>

The second phase of initiation, or liminal stage, was central to Turner's understanding of rites of passage. This very place of liminality played a large role in the rites of women in ancient Philippi. The stripping of prior statuses and being of no status at all usually identify this period in the initiation rite. At this stage in the ritual, the neophyte is now under the complete authority of any instructors there might be in the ritual.<sup>117</sup> The neophyte is viewed as possessing nothing, with no status, property, insignia, and position. The initiate is normally passive and must obey the instructors without hesitation. The liminal state is there to strip the person of all former, personal markers so that she can be integrated into a group anew. This period of the rite binds the initiate to others who have been and are being initiated into a status or the community. Turner describes this liminal period as building *communitas*, which he describes in the following way. "Liminality implies that the high [in status] could not be high unless the low existed, and he

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<sup>116</sup> Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 223-26. See also Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 149, Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 126.

<sup>117</sup> Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," 9. See also Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 127.

[she] who is high must experience what it is like to be low.”<sup>118</sup> The humility that accompanies being stripped of one’s station in life and identity allows that person to experience what everyone has experienced in the confines of her new *communitas*. For the women in Philippi, such transitions moved them from the status of παρθένος to the status of γυνή through the rite of marriage; from a marginal member of the household of her husband to fully initiated member through the birth of a son; and through the steps necessary to help dead relatives through their own rites of passage at burial.

Mary Douglas discusses the liminal phase of rituals and why those liminal states require such care and attention. She notes that those within the process of rites of passage become dangerous in their liminal states.

The person who must pass from one to another is himself [herself] in danger and emanates danger to others. The danger is controlled by ritual which precisely separates him [her] from his [her] old status, segregates him [her] for a time and then publicly declares his [her] entry to his [her] new status. Not only is transition itself dangerous, but also the rituals of segregation are the most dangerous phase of the rites.<sup>119</sup>

Power is in the forms and boundaries of society but the areas of society that become blurred, that are on the margin, or that are formless can be potentially

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<sup>118</sup> Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 97.

<sup>119</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 119-20.

dangerous to the forms and boundaries that hold society together.<sup>120</sup> These marginal places contain and control pollution and purity issues.

This liminal state is also understood to represent a sort of death and the stage of aggregation at rebirth. Bell notes the symbols of death and rebirth in

ritual as the expression of paradigmatic values of death and rebirth; ritual as a mechanism for bringing the individual into the community and establishing a social entity; or ritual as a process for social transformation, for catharsis, for embodying symbolic values, for defining the nature of the real, or for struggling over control of the sign – the formulations are all tools that help us to analyze what may be going on in any particular set of activities.<sup>121</sup>

The process of becoming a part of a group and attaining a new status or identity can be painful or traumatic at many levels. Death, a natural part of every human's life, is a universal symbol that becomes imported into transitional rites.

In his analysis of symbols of death in rituals, Turner states that death symbolism is almost always paralleled or overlapped with symbolisms of birth.

The broad number of different symbols is striking and worth noting.

It is interesting to note how, by the principle of economy (or parsimony) of symbolic reference, logically antithetical processes of death and growth may be represented by the same tokens, for example, by huts and tunnels that are at once tombs and wombs, by lunar symbolism (for the same moon waxes and wanes), by snake symbolism (for the snake appears to die, but only to shed its old skin and appear in a new one), by bear symbolism (for the bear “dies” in autumn and is “reborn” in spring), by nakedness (which is

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>121</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 89.

at once the mark of a newborn infant and a corpse prepared for burial), and by innumerable other symbolic formations and actions.<sup>122</sup>

Since these symbols are so universal in rites of passage, it is not at all odd that the early Jesus followers adapted similar images. Also, Paul speaks about entrance to the community using death as symbol. “Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). In the Letter of James, the author uses birth imagery to denote entrance into the community. “In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). So, one might add to Turner’s symbols the rite of baptism. As will be demonstrated in chapter 5 below, these images of death became a potent part of women’s reception of the letter to the Philippians, given their ritual contexts.

While Rites of Passage concentrate on biological transitions, Calendrical Rites “give socially meaningful definitions to the passage of time, creating an ever-renewing cycle of days, months and years.”<sup>123</sup> Calendrical Rites can do many things including impose cultural schemes on a population in order to affect attitudes toward seasonal rhythms of the environment and cosmos.<sup>124</sup> For ancient

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<sup>122</sup> Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 99.

<sup>123</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 23-35.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.



Romans, rites connected to the harvest and yearly festivals played an important role in shaping their cosmology. Robert Turcan notes the power of Calendrical Rites in the lives of Romans: “Above all, it [the Roman calendar] ritualized a way of life which was fairly typical of ploughman-soldier that every true Roman remained at heart.”<sup>125</sup> These Calendrical Rites marked festivals and days that allowed the Roman Government, both local and empire wide, to demonstrate power and the divine sanctions that were given for Roman rule.

The Romans had both fixed (*stativae*) and moveable (*conceptivae*) holidays that periodically marked the calendar.<sup>126</sup> In the *Fasti*, Ovid catalogued the daily festivals of the first six months of the year. While his work is incomplete, it is a primary source for understanding some of the rites performed at these festivals. One such festival was held on March 15<sup>th</sup> in honor of the little known goddess Anna Perenna. After painting a picture of pilgrims pitching tents and setting up camp in the open air, he gives a few details about the rituals at the festival.

sole tamen vinoque calent annosque precantur  
 quot sumant cyathos, ad numerumque bibunt.  
 invenies illic qui Nestoris ebibat annos,  
 quae sit per calices facta Sibylla suos.  
 illic et cantant quicquid didicere theatris,  
 et iactant faciles ad sua verba manus,  
 et ducunt posito duras cratera choreas,  
 cultaque diffusis saltat amica comis.

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<sup>125</sup> Robert Turcan, *The Gods of Ancient Rome: Religion in Everyday Life from Archaic to Imperial Times* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 61.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

They heat up with sun and wine, and pray for years  
 To match their cups and count all their drinks.  
 There you will find a man drinking Nestor's years,  
 A woman changed to Sibyl by her cups.  
 There they sing whatever they learnt in the theatres  
 And wave lithe hands in time to the lyrics.  
 They drop the wine-bowl and join a primitive jig,  
 And chic girl skips and tosses her hair. (3.531-538).<sup>127</sup>

Not only did participants take part in pilgrimage to attend these festivals, they danced, drank and sang as part of the ritual celebration.<sup>128</sup> The general public of a city was all invited and public life was restricted: courts were closed and some agriculture was restricted.<sup>129</sup> There was a general cessation of normal social time and a transition into a period of festival rites such as sacrifices to the gods, drinking, dancing, and feasting. There will be more on festivals below.

Rites of Exchange and Communion center on offerings to the god(s) with the expectation of something in return. This could be fertility of the land, long life, safe passage or abstractions such as benefaction.<sup>130</sup> Like the aforementioned rites,

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<sup>127</sup> Translation from Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. A. J. Boyle and Roger D. Woodard, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 70.

<sup>128</sup> On the anthropology of pilgrimage, see Victor Witter Turner and Edith L. B. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*, Lectures on the History of Religions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

<sup>129</sup> Herbet William Parke and S. R. F. Price, "Festivals," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 593.

<sup>130</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 108.

these were also common in the city of Philippi and played important roles in women's lives. For the Greeks and Romans, Rites of Exchange and Communion that addressed the gods were a reflection of the patronage system between humans.<sup>131</sup> In his comments on prayer and sacrifice, Pliny the Elder notes that sacrifice must be performed along with prayer or it will have no efficacy.<sup>132</sup>

Quippe victimas caedi sine precatione non videtur referre aut deos rite consuli. Praeterea alia sunt verba inpetritis, alia depulsoriis, alia commendationis, videmusque certis precationibus obsecrasse summos magistratus et, ne quod verborum praetereatur aut praeposterum dicatur, de scripto praeire aliquem rursusque alium custodem dari qui adtendat, alium vero praeponi qui favere linguis iubeat, tibicinem canere, ne quid aliud exaudiatur, utraque memoria isnigni, quotiens ipsae dirae obstrepentes nocuerint quotiensve precatio erraverit.

In fact the sacrifice of victims without a prayer is supposed to be of no effect; without it too the gods are not thought to be properly consulted. Moreover, there is one form of words for getting favourable omens, another for averting evil, and yet another for a commendation. We see also that our chief magistrates have adopted fixed formulas for their prayers; that to prevent a word's being omitted or out of place a reader dictates beforehand the prayer from a script; that another attendant is appointed as a guard to keep watch, and yet another is put in charge to maintain a strict silence; that a piper plays so that nothing but the prayer is heard. Remarkable instances of both kinds of interference are on record: cases when the noise of actual ill omens has ruined the prayer, or when a mistake has been made in the prayer itself (Pliny *Natural History* 28.11 LCL).

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<sup>131</sup> Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004), 76.

<sup>132</sup> Valerie M. Warrior, *Roman Religion*, Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 18-20.

There are two things of note in this quote in regards to ritual. First, the efficacy of the sacrifice is contingent upon the larger ritual going according to strict rules. Second, this ritual is placed within the confines of political discourse and power. The magistrates perform these rituals in order to give the impression that the gods legitimate their power and, when done properly, will do so without fault. This would have been no different in the context of first century Philippi.

While Rites of Exchange and Communion have reciprocity and benefaction at their center, Rites of Affliction focus on people's ills. Rites of Affliction attempt to mitigate harmful spirits in an attempt to heal, exorcise, protect or purify an individual or group.<sup>133</sup> Livy mentions prayers to various gods for health and healing. Within this context, certain clothes were understood to be part of the ritual.

Postremo prodigii loco ea clades haberi coepta est. C. Seruilius pontifex maximus piacula irae deum conquerere iussus, decemviri libros inspicere, consul Apollini Aesculapio Saluti dona uouere et dare signa inaurata: quae uouit deditque. decemviri supplicationem in biduum ualetudinis causa in urbe et per omnia fora conciliabulaque edixerunt: maiores duodecim annis omnes coronati et lauream in manu tenentes supplicauerunt.

Finally the disaster came to be regarded as a portent. Gaius Servilius, chief pontiff [in 180 B. C. E.], was directed to inquire into the manner of atoning the wrath of the gods and decemvirs to look into the Books; the consul was ordered to vow gifts and to give gilded statues to Apollo, Asclepius and Salus; these he vowed and gave. The decemvirs proclaimed a two-day period of prayer for health, not only in the City but in all the rural settlements and communities; all people above the age of twelve, wearing

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<sup>133</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 115.

crowns and carrying laurel branches in their hands, made supplication (Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 40.37.2-3, LCL).

While the minute details are left out, the actions of the people are clear. At the very least, Livy thought the people he spoke of believed in the effectiveness of their actions.

The last two categories of ritual have to do with displays of loyalty and power. The categories of Feasting, Fasting and Festivals and Political Rites have at their core the display of power by elites. In her work on the Soviet Union, Christel Lane notes the power that ritual has when used for a broader public purpose by a singular elite.

A process of cultural management is more pronounced in societies with a one-party system, sustaining a single ruling elite unified by the urgent pursuit of a number of clearly defined general goals for society.<sup>134</sup>

Catherine Bell goes further in explaining power in relation to rituals. She provides a three part scheme in discussing political rituals and their ability to exert power on cultures,

First, effective political ritual evokes a complex cluster of traditional symbols and postures of appropriate moral leadership, but it orchestrates them to differentiate itself, this particular political authority, from what has gone before. Thus, ritual is built out of widely accepted blocks of tradition, generating a sense of cultural continuity even when the juxtaposition of these blocks defines a unique ritual ethos. Second, rather than affirming clear and dogmatic values to impress them directly into the minds of participants, ritual actually constructs an argument, a set of tensions... Third, ritual does not disguise the exercise of power, nor does it refer,

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<sup>134</sup> Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - the Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

express, or symbolize anything outside itself. In other words, rituals do not refer to politics... they *are* politics. Ritual is the thing itself. It *is* power; it acts and it actuates.<sup>135</sup>

The elites in the Empire used festivals for their own political gain as extensions of the Roman political establishment in Italy. They jostled for position in order to gain honor through displays of wealth and in order to gain personal power over their cities and regions.

While elites did attempt to gain honor amongst the festival activities, women were also subject to cultural categorization during these festivals. Celia Schultz notes that women were placed in collective worship groups based on status. She notes that the Matronalia and the rite of the Bona Dea were restricted to those called *matronae*, who were understood as representing the Roman ideal woman.<sup>136</sup>

The Roman historian Livy offers a picture of the social division of women at festivals.

Decemvirorum monitu decretum est Iovi primum donum fulmen aureum pondo quinquaginta fieret et Iunoni Minervaeque ex argento dona darentur et Iunoni Reginae in Aventino Iunonique Sospitae Lanuvii maioribus hostiis sacrificaretur matronaeque pecunia conlata, quantum conferre cuique commodum esset, donum Iunoni reginae in Aventinum ferrent lectisterniumque fieret, et ut libertinae et ipsae, unde Feroniae donum daretur, pecuniam pro facultatiibus suis conferrent.

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<sup>135</sup> Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 195.

<sup>136</sup> Celia E. Schultz, *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic*, *Studies in the History of Greece and Rome* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 147.

Being so admonished by the decemvirs, they decreed that the first gift should be made to Jupiter, a golden thunderbolt weighing fifty pounds; and that Juno and Minerva should be given offerings of silver; that Juno Regina on the Aventine and Juno Sospita at Lanuvium should receive a sacrifice of greater victims, and that the matrons, each contributing as much as she could afford, should make up a sum of money and carry it as a gift to Juno Regina on the Aventine and there celebrate a *lectisternium*; and that even the very freed-women should contribute money, in proportion to their abilities, for an offering to Feronia (Livy 22.1.18, LCL).

The rank and status of Roman women gives them access to Regina on the Aventine while freed-women give to another goddess. This very public display reinforced Roman social status and reinscribed hierarchy within gender lines.

In terms of our typology, Feasting, Fasting, and Festivals are rituals that display public loyalty and adherence to religious values.<sup>137</sup> The very public nature of festivals attests to their importance to any community as a whole. Most important to the festivals were the processions and the games. The games were set up in order that the larger public could show honor to the gods, whose approval is signified by their statues being paraded in a procession.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, the aristocracy paid for the festivals in order to keep the social status quo. As stated above, religion and politics were intertwined for ancient Mediterranean peoples. Therefore, the power structures were not only displayed through political and military force, but also were set up to seem divinely ordained.

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<sup>137</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 120.

<sup>138</sup> David S. Potter, "Roman Religion: Ideas and Actions," in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*, ed. David S. Potter and D. J. Mattingly (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 161.

In terms of women, the games at festivals played an important role in reinforcing proper social roles for women. In particular, for the young women of Sparta, being able to compete in the Heraia at Olympus was a sign of fertility. Unlike men whose sport trained them for war, Spartan παρθένοι trained hard in order to make themselves healthy for child-bearing. While such contests were first put on either before or after the Olympic games, they became a far wider tradition for several παρθένοι around the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.<sup>139</sup> It is understood that the women ceased competition once they were married. These contests further reinforced women's roles in society as wife and mother in a very public arena.

Other public rituals are those of Political Rites. They are a loose genre containing rituals that display, construct, and promote political power or interests. These political interests could be those of sub-groups or larger communities.<sup>140</sup> Of course, this type of ritual analysis looks at rituals such as festivals from a more political point-of-view, but it cannot and does not exclude those embedded religious components which are inherent to ancient Mediterranean rituals in general. Prime examples of Political Rites are those centered in the Imperial Cult.

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<sup>139</sup> Matthew Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 131-32.

<sup>140</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 128-29, see also David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 2-8.



Warren Carter has noted the central place that festivals played in the display of power from a Roman elite perspective.<sup>141</sup> As the Imperial Cult began to make its way to the east, elites began to jockey for position as they provided festivals for their own cities. They attempted to hold priestly positions in the cities and provinces in order to gain honor. Clifford Ando succinctly notes the results,

Greek cities in the Antonine period now focused their rivalries on claiming positions of priority in the esteem of their overlords and in display of loyalty: Ephesus, for example, referred to itself as “the first and greatest metropolis of Asia, twice temple warden of the Augusti, and lover of Augustus”... Rome thus promoted a reorganization of political, administrative, and conceptual boundaries throughout the East, in a fashion that redirected hearts and minds away from the centrality of individual cities and toward herself as the city of the empire.<sup>142</sup>

The aristocracy in the Greek East used whatever means possible to best one another and give grander and grander events in honor of the Emperor and the imperial family. This created a sense among the population of the power of Rome. As will be seen in the section on the Imperial Cult in chapter 4, Philippi was not immune to the influence of the Emperor Cult, and, in fact, sent strong messages about place

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<sup>141</sup> Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*, Abingdon Essential Guides (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>142</sup> Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 62.

and status of women in that city. Festival Rites and Political Rites played a central role in how the Roman emperors spread their power throughout the empire.<sup>143</sup>

*Ritual and Purity and Pollution*

While understanding types of rituals is important to the model, other aspects of ritual must be added in order to clarify and differentiate how women are impacted by ritual. In her ground breaking work, Mary Douglas identifies ways that purity is used or comprehended in society. In any given society, purity and pollution rules act as boundaries which become a taken for granted part of the cosmology. These cosmologies constitute the social reality that is constructed.<sup>144</sup>

Pollution [impurity] ideas work in the life of society at two levels, one largely instrumental, one expressive. At the first level, the more obvious one, we find people trying to influence one another's behaviour. Beliefs reinforce social pressures: all the powers of the universe are called in to guarantee an old man's dying wish, a mother's dignity, the rights of the weak and innocent. Political power is usually held precariously and primitive rulers are no exception. So we find their legitimate pretensions backed by beliefs in extraordinary powers emanating from their persons, from the insignia of their office or from words they can utter. Similarly, the ideal order of society is guarded by dangers which threaten transgressors. These danger-beliefs are as much threats which one man [woman] uses to coerce another as dangers which he [she] himself [herself] fears to incur by his [her] own lapses from righteousness.... At this level the laws of nature are dragged in to sanction the moral code: this kind of disease is caused by

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<sup>143</sup> For a treatment of the proliferation of images of the Imperial Cult, see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Jerome Lectures 16th Ser. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

<sup>144</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 145.

adultery, that by incest; this meteorological disaster is the effect of political disloyalty, that the effect of impiety.<sup>145</sup>

These very claims are made in terms of women in the ancient world. This is not to say that men could not cause impurity, but women are prominently the ones who are accused of bringing on disaster due to impurity. This construction of social reality can be challenged once other evidence, or a more preferred cosmology, presents itself.<sup>146</sup> Another way that Douglas defines pollution is with the analogy to dirt. When things are out of place, such as hair or food or a wrapping, they cling to an identity and place that is not their own, while these very things are completely normal and acceptable in a trash dump or reclamation station. Society attempts to keep order by “purifying” pollutants and putting those pollutants in their proper place.<sup>147</sup>

In her work on ritual space, Cole discusses the gendered space represented at the Olympic Games and the *temenos* of Herakles and impurity caused by women.

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<sup>145</sup> ———, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 3.

<sup>146</sup> James C. Scott states this in the following way: “If the elite-dominated public transcript tends to naturalize domination, it would seem that some countervailing influence manages often to denaturalize domination.” James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 79.

<sup>147</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 197-98.

The pollution code reflected distinctions of gender basic to the society and differences crucial to the whole system of honor and prestige. The complete absence of sexually active, fertile women at the time of the games sends a clear message that the athletes and their audience needed the attention of the gods to maintain the institutions the games required. Flies and women were a concern because the consequence of their presence was estrangement from divine support.<sup>148</sup>

These gendered spaces were guarded against the impurity of women for fear of drought or other disasters because the women would offend the god and pollute the sacred space. Plutarch notes this in his *Moralia*.

Τοῦ δ' Εὐνόστου τὸ ἱεῶν καὶ τὸ ἄλσος οὕτως ἀνέμβατον ἐτηρεῖτο καὶ ἀπροσπέλαστον γυναιξίν, ὥστε πολλάκις σεισμῶν ἢ αὐχμῶν ἢ διοσημιῶν ἄλλων γενομένων ἀναζητεῖν καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖν ἐπιμελῶς τοὺς Ταναγραίους, μὴ λείληθε γυνὴ τῷ τόπῳ πλησιάζασα.

But the shrine and the grove of Eunostus were so strictly guarded against entry and approach by women that, often, when earthquakes or droughts or other signs from heaven occurred, the people of Tanagra were wont to search diligently and to be greatly concerned lest any woman might have approached the place undetected (Plut. *Greek Questions* 300F, LCL).

Two things must be noted here. First, readers must realize that this is a male perspective on women's ability to pollute the games and anger the gods. Therefore, it is difficult to tell how women would have accepted said notions. What does appear to be true is that women were kept from the games and they were told reasons similar to those of male authorities in the community and abroad. How much women internalized those notions is impossible to measure. Second, the

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<sup>148</sup> Susan Guettel Cole, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience*, The Joan Palevsky Imprint in Classical Literature. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 103.

evidence also points toward a patriarchal control system in which men felt it necessary to exert power using cosmological means. Like the discussion about power above, traditional symbols (i.e. the gods and their wrath) are used as a deterrent to keep men inside the circle of power and women outside.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter was designed to provide the reader with a heuristic model for the analysis of women's ritual lives in the ancient world. More specifically, it will be used as a framework for an analysis of women's ritual lives in Philippi during the time of Paul and will inform an analysis of the letter of Paul to the Philippians from a possible Philippian woman's perspective. First, there was a definition of ritual proposed in this chapter followed by an analysis of anthropological understandings of ritual in order to explain how the definition was constructed. It is pertinent to note the definition one more time. Ritual is

a performance, planned or improvised, static or dynamic, that can transform everyday life or reinforce traditional ideals within an alternative context. Traditional rituals open up ordinary life to ultimate reality or some transcendent being or force in order to tap its transformative power or reinforce prior conceptions of power.<sup>149</sup>

This definition takes into account the static nature of rituals and their possible dynamic effects on the lives of the people who enact them.

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<sup>149</sup>As stated previously, this definition is a conglomeration of definitions and concepts from Alexander, "Ritual and Current Studies of Ritual: Overview," 139, Kapferer, "Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice," 40-41.

After a definition of ritual was formulated, a typology of ritual was presented in order to give a framework for discussing the types of rituals one might find in an ancient context (because this model is heuristic, it can be suggested that it will also work in other cultural analyses). Primarily drawing from Catherine Bell's work on ritual, the rituals discussed and described were rites of passage; calendrical rituals; rites of exchange and communion; rites of affliction; feasting, fasting and festivals; and political rites. Examples from the ancient world of each type of ritual were offered in order to give concrete examples of what said rituals might have looked like for ancient Greco-Romans. These examples were not specifically applied to Philippian women, but rather were used simply to demonstrate the presence of said rituals in the ancient Greco-Roman context.

With a heuristic model explained, Chapters 3 and 4 will use the model to analyze rituals specifically relevant to a study of women in 1<sup>st</sup> century Philippi. Chapter 3 will look at the dominant cult in the city of Philippi: that of Artemis/Diana. Chapter 4 will focus on the lesser known cults in Philippi in order to give a fuller account of women's ritual lives in Philippi. This information will then inform an analysis of women's reception of Paul's letter to the Philippians in Chapter 5.

### Chapter 3: Women and the Artemis/Diana Cult

The archaeology of Philippi hints at an interesting story about the religious lives of women in the first century C.E. As Paul Collart and Pierre Ducrey present it, there are a plethora of goddesses represented in the surviving archaeological record and a dearth of gods. There is also a disparity in the goddesses presented.<sup>150</sup> The following chart is a modified version of Valerie Abrahamsen's analysis of the archaeological findings.

**Table 3.1: Goddesses and Gods of Philippi**

Female Figures <sup>151</sup>		Male Figures	
Artemis	90	Horseman	7
Women	42	Zeus	5
Athena	2	Man and Male Heads	4
Kybele	3	Centaur	1
Lunar Deity	3	Phallus	1
		Man and Altar	1
Total:	140	Total:	19

What will follow in chapters 3 and 4 is an analysis of rituals associated with women in cults recognized as part of the religious landscape of Philippi. In chapter 3, the reliefs of women and Artemis will be discussed along with the rituals involved with Artemis. In chapter 4, the remaining cults will be discussed and the rituals that affected women will be analyzed. This cultural experience of women

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<sup>150</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 29-30.

<sup>151</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 26. Abrahamsen culls her data from Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*.

will be shown as important to understanding women's reception of Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 5.

In terms of the dating of the reliefs on the acropolis of Philippi, Abrahamsen suggests that most of the reliefs ought to be dated 200 CE and later.<sup>152</sup> Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki and Charalambos Bakirtzis simply claim that the reliefs are from the "Roman period."<sup>153</sup> This later dating and vague reference are due to the nature of the monuments in the city. As Koukouli-Chrysanthaki points out in another work, most of the monuments hail from the Julio-Claudio period (late 1<sup>st</sup> to mid-2nd century CE) and therefore come after the time Paul was in the city.<sup>154</sup> More recently, Georgios Gounaris and Emmanuela Gounari have posited a different scenario for dating the reliefs.

On the slope of the acropolis overlooking the city and the plain of Philippi we can find various divinities' sanctuaries, which were founded in the ditches of former quarries [sic]. These sanctuaries are dated to the Roman period, that is the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, while the more recent ones belong to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD as they were found inside pits from which marble had been excavated for the building of the city-Forum during the Antonine era (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 19, See also Koukouli-Chrysanthaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 17.

<sup>153</sup> Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki and Charalambos Bakirtzes, *Philippi*, 2nd ed. (Athens: Ministry of Culture Archaeological Receipts Fund, 1997), 25.

<sup>154</sup> Koukouli-Chrysanthaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 14-18.

<sup>155</sup> Gounaris and Gounari, *Philippi: Archaeological Guide*, 31.



This scenario seems more plausible for a few reasons. First, dating the reliefs solely on the architecture is convenient but rather simplistic since there is no evidence to do this amongst the reliefs themselves. Second, as stated above, the marble of the forum is known to have come from those places which were carved out of the mountain side. Therefore, it can be assumed that the reliefs within those locations are second century or later. The remaining reliefs, which are in the majority, were probably produced over a long period of time and some would have been present during the time of Paul's visit around 50 CE. Therefore, it will be presupposed that the Artemis cult in Philippi was nonetheless a primary focus of women's religious lives during the early to mid first century.

#### *Reliefs of Women on the Acropolis*

Before turning to the cults in the city of Philippi that affected women directly, it seems pertinent to comment on the reliefs of women on the acropolis of Philippi. Figure 3.1 is a well preserved, typical image of a woman from the acropolis. This particular image is found right behind the forum at the base of the acropolis. Figure 3.2 also shows a typical image of a woman from the acropolis that is not holding a child. The purpose of these images is difficult to determine because they lack inscriptions, but their placement on the acropolis amidst the images of Artemis, as well as the use of some comparative material, may provide some clues.

Valerie Abrahamsen concludes that the women on the acropolis represent priestesses of Artemis. She pays particular attention to the frames around the women and their representation of a temple.

The temple frames in this case take on a symbolic quality, then, and the temple symbolism seems to have extended to include the mortal women: the devotees housed in “temples” were Diana’s priestesses, their images placed on the hill as a symbol of their proximity to the goddess in everyday life and especially in worship. Those women in niches and in plain frames may also have been priestesses but were almost certainly devotees. The phenomenon of depicting mortal human beings in temple frames is fairly common in antiquity.<sup>156</sup>



Figure 3.1: Relief of Woman Holding Baby on the Philippian Acropolis. (Photo by Author)

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<sup>156</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 32.



**Figure 3.2: Relief of a Woman not Holding a Baby on the Acropolis of Philippi. (Photo by Author)**

As seen in figures 3.1 and 3.2, the women are framed by what seems to be a temple. While the temple frames do depict devotees, Abrahamsen's conjecture that they are priestesses is wrong. As will be seen below, the reliefs of women on the acropolis in Philippi are not priestesses but rather worshipers of Artemis.

In terms of extant text that may reflect what is seen in the acropolis images, the *Greek Anthology* contains a number of dedications that echo in words what one sees in Figure 3.1.

ΛΕΩΝΙΔΟΥ

Ἐκ τόκου, Εἰλήθια, πικρὰν ὠδῖνα φυγοῦσα  
Ἄμβροσίη κλεινῶν θήκατό σοι πρὸ ποδῶν  
δεσμὰ κόμας καὶ πέπλον, ἐν ᾧ δεκάτω ἐπὶ μηνὶ  
δισσὸν ἀπὸ ζώνης κύμ' ἐλόχευσε τέκνων.

LEONIDAS

Ilithyia, at thy glorious feet Ambrosia, saved from the bitter pangs of labour, laid her head-bands and her robe, because that in the tenth month she brought forth the double fruit of her womb (Greek Anthology 6.200, LCL).<sup>157</sup>

Here, Artemis is addressed as Ilithyia, which means the goddess who comes to the aid of women in child-birth. In another dedication, a woman gives clothes to the goddess in thanks for a successful childbirth.

ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΡΓΕΝΤΑΡΙΟΥ

Σάνδαλα καὶ μίτρην περικαλλέα τόν τε μυρόπνου  
βόστρυχον ὠραίων οὐλον ἀπὸ πλοκάμων  
καὶ ζώνην καὶ λεπτὸν ὑπένδυμα τοῦτο Χιτῶνος  
καὶ τὰ περὶ στέρνοις ἀγλαὰ μαστόδετα,  
ἔμβρυον εὐώδινος ἐπεὶ φύγε νηδύος ὄγκον,  
Εὐφράντη νηῶ θῆκεν ὑπ' Ἀρτέμιδος.

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<sup>157</sup> This reference is found in the Palatine Anthology, which is compiled from three sources. The so called Stephanus, or Wreath of Meleager was collected around the first century BCE. The Stephanus of Philippus was probably gathered in the reign of Augustus. The third is from the Cycle of Agathias collected in the age of Justinian. This dedication is contained in the Wreath of Meleager and is a pre-first century dedication said to be given by one Leonidas. W. R. Paton, *The Greek Anthology*, trans. W. R. Paton, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann, 1920), v-vii.

Euphrante, when she was happily delivered of the burden of her womb, dedicated in the temple of Artemis her sandals and beautiful head-band, and this scented curl cut from her lovely locks, her zone [girdle], too, and this fine under-vest, and the bright band that encompassed her bosom (Greek Anthology 6.201, LCL).<sup>158</sup>

As part of the dedication for a successful childbirth, Ambrosia and Euphrante gave their clothes to the goddess in thanks.<sup>159</sup> In figure 3.1, women's items are pictured in the reliefs and in figure 3.3 below, there are clothes that were dedicated to the goddess hanging in the background. It will further be argued below that, indeed, the women on the acropolis are dedications to Artemis in the context of childbirth for Philippian women.

Matthew Dillon, in his work on women in Greek religion, notes that women or people on their behalf made votive images for those who participated in ritual contexts.

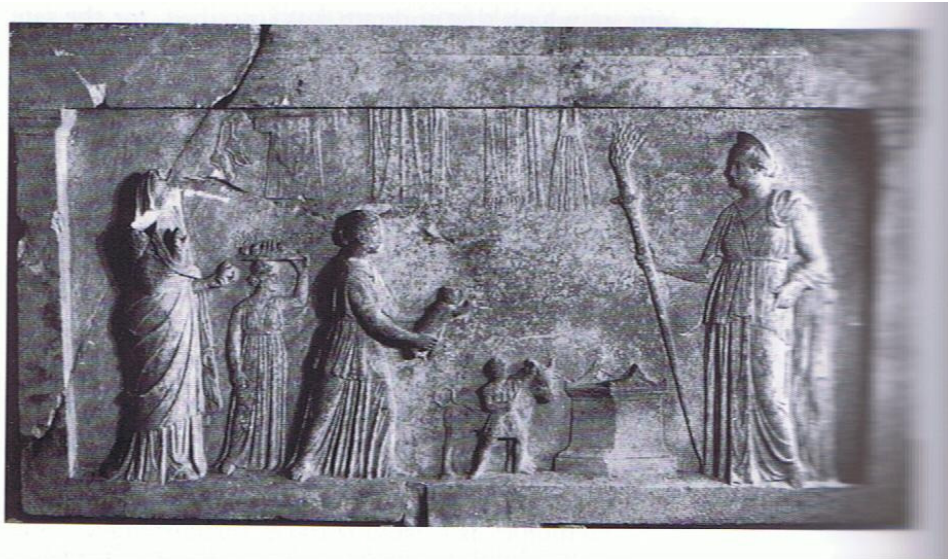
Young girls also appear as tray-bearers, to be interpreted in a sacrificial context. A bronze statuette of about 450 BC now in the Boston Museum shows a girl in a full-length Doric chiton, which leaves her arms exposed; her neckline has a patterned border.... She is carrying a tray, on which there are cakes and fruits which she will present to a deity; she appears to be probably the same age as the kenephoroi, post-pubic but not yet married. This is presumably a dedication made either by a girl who was a tray-bearer, or by someone on her behalf.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> See also Greek Anthology 6.202, 207, 286 (LCL).

<sup>159</sup> This was not isolated to the Macedonian region nor was it a new custom in Paul's day. Artemis Brauronia had clothing dedicated to her between the years 355-336 BCE on the acropolis in Athens. Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 19.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.



**Figure 3.3: The Echinus Relief Showing the Presentation of a Child to Artemis. (courtesy, © Archaeological Museum of Lamia: inv. AE 1041, and © Ministry of Archaeological Receipt Funds, Greece)<sup>161</sup>**

A relief dedicated to Artemis was also found in Echinus, a town north of Philippi on the modern border between Greece and Bulgaria. The scene of the relief takes place in a temple and was dedicated in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

Artemis stands on the far right while four figures stand to her left: from right to left – a (temple) servant, a female servant, a child, a girl (carrying similar items found in the bronze statue Dillon mentions in the quote above) and a woman more elaborately dressed (Figure 3.3).<sup>162</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Fanouria Dakoronia and Lukretia Gounaropoulou, "Artemiskult Auf Einem Neuen Weihrelief Aus Achinos bei Lamia," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 107 (1992): 219-23, See also, Susan Guettel Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," in *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, ed. Sue Blundell and Margaret Williamson (London: Routledge, 1998), 35, Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 232.

<sup>162</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 231-33.

In her comments on the Echinus relief, Susan Guettel Cole interprets the woman holding the child as the mother who is offering her child, in her hands, to Artemis. Artemis holds a torch and has a barely visible quiver behind her left shoulder. A shorter female servant carries a tray of offerings consisting of fruits, cakes, and a myrtle branch. Cole then determines that the woman on the far right is probably the donor of the relief, a grandmother or mother-in-law. She notes that her right hand is held up in a sign of prayer, palm forward, but Cole ignores the other hand (Figure 3.3).<sup>163</sup>

Dillon posits a different interpretation of the figures in the Echinus relief. He argues that the most prominent woman, the one on the farthest right, is the mother, given the extravagance of the relief. Her nurse carries the baby while a servant girl carries the fruits and laurel branch for the offering. The woman on the far right is also more elaborately dressed than the one holding the baby, further arguing for the right hand figure as the mother. Dillon notes that the woman's left hand holds a small bowl, probably of incense to throw on the sacrifice once lit.<sup>164</sup> It is this very depiction of the mother that is identical to the one on the acropolis in Philippi. In figure 3.2, a woman is depicted in the same elaborate dress with her right hand, palm flat, supposedly in an act of prayer toward the goddess. Her left hand holds a similar object to that in the Echinus relief: a bowl of incense for the

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<sup>163</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis."

<sup>164</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 231-33.

sacrifice to Artemis. Of the discernable images, it appears that 13 reliefs depict women in this very way.<sup>165</sup>

In terms of figure 3.1, the woman is depicted holding her child. In the frame are objects associated with women: distaff, wool basket, pair of sandals, a basket with a semi-circular handle, a mirror,<sup>166</sup> and a comb.<sup>167</sup> Other images on the acropolis include women with jewelry boxes and perfume bottles.<sup>168</sup> Many of the figures that are similar to figure 3.1 were difficult to examine even in Collart and Ducrey's original excavations due to the erosion of the reliefs. Many could be holding children while some are clearly only holding the palm of their right hand up, like the image of the woman in 3.2.<sup>169</sup> Portefaix suggests that the items found in the images were the bride's wedding presents which symbolized a woman's household responsibilities as well as her married status.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 140-59.

<sup>166</sup> This is a common object dedicated to Artemis throughout Greek history. A long list of mirror dedications to Artemis was found on the Athenian acropolis from the fourth century BCE. Furthermore, mirrors were dedicated at Delphi and Sparta. It seems that the tradition was one that continued up until the time of Paul in the first century. Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 13.

<sup>167</sup> Although image 3.1 is not published, Collart, Ducrey and Portefaix described the objects from other images on the acropolis. Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 133, Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 86.

<sup>168</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 136-38.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 121-36.

<sup>170</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 86.



Given the fact that women holding their children or simply holding their right palm up in a gesture of prayer were amongst those holding the incense and Artemis images, it can be concluded that the images of the women on the acropolis were votive offerings to Artemis for successful births. The women represented in the images, whether the images were dedicated by the women themselves or by family members, presented their children to Artemis in a ritual ceremony, giving thanks for a successful birth.

#### *Reliefs of Artemis on the Acropolis*

The depictions of Artemis/Diana on the acropolis of Philippi are 90 in number. There are four types of images present depicting different aspects of the goddess. She takes the form of the huntress in all of them rather than the Ephesian goddess of the east. Abrahamsen summarizes the types.

1. Fifty-one times she holds a bow in her left hand and takes an arrow out with her right hand; she is dressed in hunting boots and a short dress which is held by two belts, one under her breast and the other around her waist. A tree stands on the right side of the image, and a deer runs away, followed by a dog.
2. Seven times she holds a deer with her left hand and has a short spear in her right hand. Three times in this posture she drives the spear through the deer's throat.
3. Fourteen times there is a short spear in her right hand and a branch of ivy or small tree in her left hand. Sometimes the branch is covered with fruit.
4. A final portrayal shows Diana with a torch in each hand, a deer running to the left and a tree standing on the right.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 27, 28, These numbers are based on Collart and Ducrey's 1975 edition of the archaeological record. There is no reason to doubt the numbers since no other Artemis reliefs have been uncovered since. Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 32-121.

This begs the question: why use the huntress for an image rather than the Ephesian goddess? As explained below, the arrows, animals, and the hunting regalia of the goddess did indicate that these reliefs were used in connection with birth and the survival or death of women in Philippi. The myths and stories, along with medical literature, give the modern reader an idea of how some may have interpreted the images on Philippi's acropolis.

In ancient Greek medicine, the womb was often described as a wandering animal.<sup>172</sup> Jon Solomon has traced the idea of the wandering womb back to the myths surrounding Artemis and Apollo's birthplace.<sup>173</sup> In the myth, Delos is the only island in the Mediterranean said to be wandering. It was not until Leto had her twins on the island that it finally became anchored to the earth below.

Callimachus mentions only the birth of Apollo in his version but vividly notes the wandering of Delos.

καὶ τὰς μὲν κατὰ βυσσόν, ἴν' ἠπίροιο λάθωνται, πρυμνόθεν  
 ἔρριζωσε· σὲ δ' οὐκ ἔθλιψεν ἀνάγκη, ἀλλ' ἄφετος πελάγεσσιν  
 ἐπέπλεες, οὖνομα δ' ἦν σοι Ἀστεριή τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπεὶ βαθὺν ἦλαο  
 τάφρον οὐρανόθεν φεύγουσα Διὸς γάμον ἀστέρι ἴση. τόφρα μὲν  
 οὐπὼ σοι χρυσέη ἐπεμίσητο Λητώ, τόφρα δ' ἔτ' Ἀστεριή σὺ καὶ  
 οὐδέπω ἔκλεο Δῆλος·

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<sup>172</sup> Lesley Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 70, Helen King, *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 222-25.

<sup>173</sup> Jon Solomon, "The Wandering Womb of Delos," in *Woman's Power, Man's Game: Essays on Classical Antiquity in Honor of Joy K. King*, ed. Mary DeFrost (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1993), 95-105.

ἦνίκα δ' Ἀπόλλωνι γενέθλιον οὔδας ὑπέσχεσ, τοῦτό τοι ἀντημοιβὸν  
ἀπίπλοοι οὔνομ' ἔθεντο, οὔνεκεν οὐκέτ' ἄδηλος ἐπέπλεες, ἀλλ' ἐνὶ  
πόντου κύμασιν Αἰγαίοιο ποδῶν ἐνεθήκαο ρίζας.

And them [the islands] in the depths he [Poseidon] rooted from their foundations that they might forget the mainland. But no constraint afflicted thee, but free upon the open sea thou didst float; and thy name of old was Asteria, since like a star thou didst leap from heaven into the deep moat, fleeing wedlock with Zeus. Until then golden Leto consorted not with thee: then thou wert still Asteria and wert not yet called Delos....

But when thou gavest thy soil to be the birthplace of Apollo, seafaring men gave thee this name in exchange, since no more didst thou float obscure upon the water, but amid the waves of the Aegean sea didst plant the roots of thy feet (Callimachus *Hymn to Delos* 34-40, 51-54, LCL).

Apollodorus provides different details to the myth, adding Artemis as Apollo's midwife (she had just been born prior to Apollo since they are twins).

Δητῶ δὲ συνελθοῦσα Διὶ κατὰ τὴν γῆν ἅπασαν ὑφ' Ἥρας ἠλαύνετο, μέχρῃς εἰς Δῆλον ἐλθοῦσα γεννᾶ πρώτην Ἄρτεμιν, ὑφ' ἧς μαιωθεῖσα ὕστερον Ἀπόλλωνα ἐγέννησεν.

But Latona [Leto] for her intrigue with Zeus was hunted by Hera over the whole earth, till she came to Delos and brought forth first Artemis, by the help of whose midwifery she afterwards gave birth to Apollo (*The Library* 1.4.1, LCL).

The birth of the twins was the very thing that anchored Delos and provided a way for it to stop wandering. Medical texts indicate that the wandering womb was likewise anchored once impregnated, which is explained below.

Although mainly in medical texts, the idea that the womb was an animal is contained in a statement from Plato's *Timaeus*.<sup>174</sup>

αἱ δ' ἐν ταῖς γυναιξὶν αὐτῆς μήτραί τε καὶ ὑστέραι λεγόμεναι διὰ τὰ

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<sup>174</sup> Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science*, 70-71.

αὐτὰ ταῦτα, ζῶον ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐνὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας, ὅταν αὐτὰ ταῦτα, ζῶον ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐνὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας, ὅταν ἄκαρπον παρὰ τὴν ὥραν χρόνον πολὺν γίγνηται, χαλεπῶς ἀγανακτοῦν φέρει.

And in women again, owing to the same causes, whenever the matrix or womb, as it is called, - which is an indwelling creature desirous of child-bearing, - remains without fruit long beyond the due season, it is vexed and takes it ill (91c, LCL).

Hence, the womb, without “fruit,” is a womb whose hunger must be satiated. In the Hippocratic corpus, women’s menstrual blood is compared to sacrificial animal’s blood (Hippocrates *Diseases of Women* 1.6).<sup>175</sup> These fifth century B.C.E. attic texts from Plato and Hippocrates influenced later first and second century C.E. medical authors.<sup>176</sup>

One of the most influential medical writers in the second century CE was Aretaeus. He notes that the womb is like an animal that wanders through the woman’s body.

Ἐν τῆσι λαγόσι τῶν γυναικῶν μέσησι ἐγκέεται ἡ μήτηρ, σπλάγχνον γυναικίον, ἀγχιστα ζωῶδες. κινέεται γὰρ ἐξ ἑωυτέης ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ἐπὶ τὰς λαγόνας· ἀτὰρ καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄνω, κατ’ ἴξιν μὲν ὑπὸ τὸν χόνδρον τοῦ θώρηκος, ἐς τὰ πλάγια δὲ ἐπὶ δεξιὰ ἢ ἐς ἀριστερά, ἢ ἐς ἥπαρ ἢ σπλῆνα· γίγνεται δὲ καὶ προπετεστέρα ἐς τὰ κάτω, καί, ξυλλήβδην

<sup>175</sup> Ann Ellis Hanson, "Hippocrates: "Diseases of Women 1", " *Signs* 1, no. 2 (1975): 575.

<sup>176</sup> Helen King comments on the reason for the large time gap between Plato and Aretaeus. “But what happened to womb movement and suffocation between Plato and the second-century AD? This is not an easy question to answer; literary medical sources are sparse, and surviving fragments must be read through the hostile eyes of opponents.” King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 228.

εἴπωμεν, πάντα ἔστι πλανώδης. καὶ εὐώδεσι ὀσμῆσεσι τέρπεται καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὰ ἵεται· ἄχθεται δὲ τοῖσι κακὸδομοῖσι καὶ αὐτὰ φεύγει·

In women, in the hollow of the body below the ribcage, lies the womb. It is very much like an independent animal within the body for it moves around of its own accord and is quite erratic. Furthermore, it likes fragrant smells and moves toward them, but it dislikes foul odors and moves away from them... (Aretaeus *Medical Writings* 2.11.1).<sup>177</sup>

Leslie Ann Dean-Jones suggests two ways this may have impacted women's lives in the ancient world. First, she notes that many assume these notions of the wandering womb point toward sexual repression of women. She does not support this view entirely due to her second reason. She understands men to have many sexual outlets (such as concubines and *hetairai*, male lovers, male and female slaves and prostitutes) and therefore the idea that semen and pregnancy anchor the womb gives women an avenue of argumentation for sexual satisfaction by their husbands.<sup>178</sup> Both options demonstrate the oppression of women, but the latter makes a case for an argument wives could put forward to rein their husbands' exploits back into the marriage bed.

In her assessment of Artemis reliefs, Abrahamsen is correct in her assessment of the images of Artemis and why many of them depict her hunting stags. She notes that the image of the goddess hunting the stag is akin to an image

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<sup>177</sup> Aretaeus, "Medical Writings," <http://www.hsl.virginia.edu/historical/artifacts/antiqua/gynecology.cfm>. See also King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 228-29.

<sup>178</sup> Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science*, 75-76.

of Artemis' blessing of childbirth.<sup>179</sup> In his work on votive offerings, William Gould notes this very use of reliefs in religious practice among ancient Greeks.

The most characteristic records of this occasion [childbirth] are those which represent the act or process blest by the god. This class is represented by groups of statuary or small figures, and by reliefs.<sup>180</sup>

Therefore, Artemis points her arrow toward the metaphorical womb and grants her blessing upon birth. In Philippi, after a successful childbirth, a woman or a family member would have dedicated a relief to the goddess in praise of the safety of the child and woman.<sup>181</sup> This, of course, is only one side of the goddess' participation in childbirth. To incur her wrath was to jeopardize the birth and the woman.

The wrath of Artemis may also be depicted in votives used to appease her after the death of a child or a woman in childbirth. Three images on the acropolis show Artemis grabbing the deer by the head with its neck bare. Artemis' knee is dug into the back of the deer, causing the deer to arch back even more. With her other hand, Artemis wields a spear or knife, plunging it into the neck of the deer.<sup>182</sup> Image 3.4 shows a now faded relief as described above. All three reliefs are side by side. Given the symbolism of the womb as an animal and Artemis' connection

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<sup>179</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 56-57.

<sup>180</sup> Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 254.

<sup>181</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 56-57.

<sup>182</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 104-11.

to childbirth, these images reflect the darker side of the goddess with her wrath being portrayed against the pregnant woman, killing her or her baby in childbirth.



Figure 3.4: Relief of Artemis Killing a Stag on the Acropolis of Philippi. (Photo by author)<sup>183</sup>

With these reliefs as evidence of the Artemis cult in Philippi and the meanings hinted at in the images, it can be assumed that the rituals of the Artemis cult were central in the life of Philippian women. Birth and death were constant forces in the lives of women, reinforced through images as well as rituals that will be discussed below. These rites communicated ideas concerning death and birth to

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<sup>183</sup> For an explanation of the image and the original picture by the excavators, see *Ibid.*, 106-07.

women in the Philippian community and impacted their reception of the Philippian letter from the apostle Paul.

*Rituals Associated with the Artemis Cult*

With the predominance of Artemis reliefs and the number of women represented in the reliefs as well, it is important to understand the rituals involved in the worship of Artemis and what those rituals were understood to do for the community. Artemis was a goddess associated with the biological rites of passage for women. Artemis rituals were often linked to the margins and also played an important role in the life of the community.<sup>184</sup> In his telling of the Artemis myth, Callimachus notes Artemis asking her father for domain over marginal places.

δὸς δέ μοι οὐρεα πάντα· πόλιν δέ μοι ἤντινα νεῖμον ἤντινα λῆς·  
 σπαρνὸν γὰρ ὅτ' Ἄρτεμις ἄστῳ κάτεισιν· οὐρεσιν οἰκήσω, πόλεσιν δ'  
 ἐπιμείξομαι ἀνδρῶν μῶνον ὅτ' ὀξεῖησιν ὑπ' ὠδίνεσσι γυναῖκες  
 τειρόμεναι καλέωσι βοηθόον, ἧσί με Μοῖραι γεινομένην τὸ πρῶτον  
 ἐπεκλήρωσαν ἀρήγειν, ὅττι με καὶ τίκτουσα καὶ οὐκ ἤλγησε φέρουσα  
 μήτηρ, ἀλλ' ἀμογητὶ φίλων ἀπεθήκατο γυίων.

And give me [Artemis] all mountains; and for city, assign me any, even whatsoever thou wilt: for seldom is it that Artemis goes down to the town. On the mountains will I dwell and the cities of men I will visit only when women vexed by the sharp pangs of childbirth call me to their aid – even in the hour when I was born the Fates ordained that I should be their helper, forasmuch as my mother suffered no pain either when she gave me birth or when she carried me in her womb, but without travail put me from her body (Call. *Hymn to Artemis* 18-25, LCL).

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<sup>184</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," 27-28.



Susan Cole comments on the location of Artemis worship as well as her role in childbirth.

When rituals of Artemis excluded males, females had no protection except that which the goddess herself could offer. Nevertheless, official festival calendars of Greek cities regularly required women and young girls to perform important public ceremonies at remote sanctuaries. These women were especially attractive targets for harassment, whether the sanctuaries were located in mountain areas, in the countryside, or where the land met the sea. Artemis was represented as protecting all three types of space, and myths about her sanctuaries frequently stressed the vulnerability of her worshippers. These stories emphasized the negative consequences of interfering with the rites of the goddess, detailing horrific punishments for cities as well as for individuals. Such stories took many forms, with responsibility for incurring the goddess' wrath divided between males who molested celebrants and the females who were unable to control their own bodies.... Ritual transgression meant that the many could suffer from the mistakes of the few.<sup>185</sup>

Women's marginal place in a patriarchal society is emphasized through participation in the cult. Furthermore, Cole paints a different picture than the one Portefaix and Abrahamsen adopt of Artemis. The latter understand Artemis to be a consoling goddess, identifying with the women in their hardships.<sup>186</sup> As Cole, Lefkowitz and Fant have shown, the goddess not only protects women in their rites of passage, especially childbirth, she also kills women in childbirth on account of

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>186</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 94-96. Abrahamsen, while acknowledging Artemis' rather dark side, does not take that dark side into her account of the Artemis cult and women's interaction in said cult, Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 54.

ritual mishaps or accidents that might have offended her.<sup>187</sup> This fact was not have been lost on the women of Philippi.

Since this goddess was heavily connected with women in terms of their safety and death, Artemis resonates with and connects the rites of birth and burial discussed above. The liminality and danger inherent in the Artemis cult was a patriarchal feature that reinforced male cultural norms onto a woman's social roles. Artemis' wrath could be incurred if her attendants did not remain *parthenoi* before their marriage and if the women involved in the ceremony or worship displayed unreliability. This unreliability of women was perceived as a threat to the entire community. Therefore, the goddess would often send plagues, disrupt reproduction in people and animals, or cause various calamities as a consequence.<sup>188</sup>

Callimachus notes this destructive power of the goddess alongside her benefaction.

τὸ τέτρατον οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ δρῦν, ἀλλὰ μιν εἰς ἀδίκων ἔβαλες πόλιν, οἱ τε  
περὶ σφέας οἱ τε περὶ ξείνους ἀλιτήμονα πολλὰ τέλεσκον. σχέτλιοι,  
οἷς τύνη χαλεπὴν ἐμμάξαι ὀργήν· κτήνεά φιν λοιμὸς καταβόσκειται,  
ἔργα δὲ πᾶχνη, κείρονται δὲ γέροντες ἐφ' υἰάσιν, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἢ  
βληταὶ θήσκουσι λεχωίδες ἢ φυγοῦσαι τίκτουσιν τῶν οὐδὲν ἐπὶ  
σφυρὸν ὀρθὸν ἀνέστη. οἷς δὲ κεν εὐμειδῆς τε καὶ ἴλαος ἀυγάσσηαι,  
κείνοις εὐ μὲν ἄρουρα φέρει στάχυν, εὐ δὲ γενέθλη τετραπόδων, εὐ δ'  
οἶκος ἀέξεται· οὐδ' ἐπὶ σῆμα ἔρχονται πλὴν εὐτε πολυχρόνιον τι  
φέρωσιν· οὐδὲ διχοστασίη τρωεὶ γένος, ἢ τε καὶ εὐ περ οἴκους  
ἔστηῶτας εἰσινατο· ταὶ δὲ θυωρόν εἰνάτερες γαλόω τε μίαν πέρι  
δίφρα τίθενται.

<sup>187</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," 28-29. and Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 283.

<sup>188</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," 31.

But the fourth time – not long was it ere thou didst shoot at the city of unjust men, those who to one another and those who towards strangers wrought many deed of sin, forward men, on whom thou wilt impress thy grievous wrath. On their cattle plague feeds, on their tilth feeds frost, and the old men cut their hair in mourning over their sons, and their wives either are smitten and die in childbirth, or, if they escape, bear births whereof none stands on upright angle. But on whomsoever thou lookest smiling and gracious, for them the tilth bears the corn-ear abundantly, and abundantly prospers the fourfooted breed, and abundant waxes their prosperity: neither do they go to the tomb, save when they carry thither the aged. Nor does faction wound their race – faction which ravages even well-established households: but brother’s wife and husband’s sister set their chairs around one board (*Call. Hymn to Artemis* 121-135 LCL).

In this case, the repercussions were brought upon an entire community. Pausanias describes another tale that involves stillborn children.

Καφυῶν δὲ ἀφέστηκεν ὅσον στάδιον Κονδυλέα χωρίον, καὶ Ἄρτεμιδος ἄλσος καὶ ναὸς ἐστὶν ἐνταῦθα καλουμένης Κονδυλεάτιδος τὸ ἀρχαῖον· μετονομασθῆναι δὲ ἐπὶ αἰτία τὴν θεὸν φασὶ τοιαύτη. παιδία περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν παίζοντα—ἀριθμὸν δὲ αὐτῶν οὐ μνημονεύουσιν—ἐπέτυχε καλωδίῳ, δήσαντα δὲ τὸ καλώδιον τοῦ ἀγάλματος περὶ τὸν τράχηλον ἐπέλεγεν ὡς ἀπάγχοιτο ἡ Ἄρτεμις. φωράσαντες δὲ οἱ Καφυεῖς τὰ ποιηθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν παιδίων καταλεύουσιν αὐτά· καὶ σφισὶ ταῦτα ἐργασάμενοις ἐσέπεσεν ἐς τὰς γυναῖκας νόσος, τὰ ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ πρὸ τοκετοῦ τεθνεῶτα ἐκβάλλεσθαι, ἐς ὃ ἡ Πυθία θάψαι τε τὰ παιδία ἀνείπε καὶ ἐναγίζειν αὐτοῖς κατὰ ἔτος· ἀποθανεῖν γὰρ αὐτὰ οὐ σὺν δίκῃ. Καφυεῖς δὲ ποιῶσι τὰ τε ἄλλα ἔτι καὶ νῦν κατ’ ἐκεῖνο τὸ μάντευμα καὶ τὴν ἐν ταῖς Κονδυλέαις θεὸνπροσεῖναι γὰρ καὶ τόδε ἔτι τῷ χρησμῷ φασικαλοῦσιν Ἄπαγχομένην ἐξ ἐκείνου.

About a stade distant from Caphyae is a place called Condylea, where there is a grove and a temple of Artemis called of old Condyleatis. They say that the name of the goddess was changed for the following reason. Some children, the number of whom is not recorded, while playing about the sanctuary found a rope, and tying it round the neck of the image said that Artemis was being strangled. The Caphyans, detecting what the children had done, stoned them to death. When they had done this, a malady befell their women, whose babies were stillborn, until the Pythian priestess bade them bury the children, and sacrifice to them every year as sacrifice is made

to heroes, because they had been wrongly put to death. The Caphyans still obey this oracle, and call the goddess at Condyleae, the Strangled Lady from that day to this (Pausanias, *Descr.* 8.23.6-7, LCL).

These connections with death are stark and could be frightening to women who participated in the rituals with fear of transgressing or angering the goddess unknowingly.<sup>189</sup>

Because reproductive capacity was a measure of the community's success, the goddess required particular lifecycle rituals. Each of these rituals falls in line with Van Gennep and Turner's understanding of rites of passage: before puberty, before marriage, between marriage and first pregnancy, during pregnancy, at the time of childbirth, and for mothers at important stages of their children's developments. The content of these rituals varied across the Mediterranean, but what is central to them is the risk of the wrath of Artemis. This wrath was feared until a woman had survived childbirth.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> But why call the Artemis Ἀπαγχομένην (The Strangled Lady)? The idea of strangling as a means of women's suicide has a long tradition in classical Greek literature. As King points out, Artemis is the goddess that never bleeds. In like manner, *parthenoi*, instead of becoming violated, women in ancient literature were depicted as hanging themselves or jumping down wells (Aesch *Supp.* 465, 788; Cic. *De prof. cons.* 3.6). King goes on to state, "Pausanias' story reflects Artemis as both the goddess who sheds none of her own blood, and the goddess who makes others bleed. The Kaphyan *gynaikes* only accept the second aspect; by denying that Artemis is strangled they claim her as a *gyne* like themselves. The children, appropriately, recognize the first aspect.... In dedicating garments to Artemis they finally acknowledge her role in initiating the transition which takes them further towards becoming full *gynaikes*." King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 80-84.

<sup>190</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," 33.

The specific rituals and their actual content are not described in one place nor are there extant manuals for such rituals. This means that the researcher must cobble together a picture of women's rites by examining evidence across the Mediterranean and throughout the classical to Roman period of the region. While this is the case, it will be assumed that information from the Roman period is more reliable and information from other periods will be critically examined and used to fill gaps in the record.

#### *Birth/Death Rites*

Central to women's ritual lives in the ancient world and, specifically in Philippi, birth and death rites were enacted within the domestic sphere. Birth and death rituals were fundamental in the life of women, for both rituals ushered in the possibilities of death (miscarriage, still born, burial). Anthony Corbeill notes the connections between birth and death in Roman burials.

Women's ritual... replicates the birth process in a dual form that first ushers the deceased out of the community of the living and then guides it into its new phase of existence. In this replication, standardized female roles in mourning both in antiquity and elsewhere – tearing cheeks, bearing and beating breasts, unbinding the hair – become adapted to a new function in the Roman context.<sup>191</sup>

Corbeill points out that care for a newborn and treatment of a corpse are both female gendered processes in the Roman world. These processes are linked to death in an explicit way. It should also be noted that the ritual described in

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<sup>191</sup> Anthony Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, N.J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 70.

Corbeill's text is decidedly Roman in nature. As will be demonstrated below, Greeks performed similar rituals within their own context. Therefore both Greek and Roman rituals will be explained where the information is available.

With ritual reinforcing a connection between birth and death, women had to deal with the high mortality rate that was associated with childbirth both for the mother and for the child.<sup>192</sup>

The paradox inherent in the female role, where the bringing forth of new life often resulted in death, may well have accounted for woman's interest in, and her need for, religion.<sup>193</sup>

Portefaix is correct about the paradox, but she presupposes that people had a choice to be "religious" in the ancient world. Rather, it seems more appropriate to describe women as being raised in a culture saturated with religion and therefore religious activity would have been a given for them throughout their lives (the same for men as well). What is pertinent about the ambiguity is that, for Philippian women, Artemis also contains this dual nature in her functions. She is the goddess that protects women in their female rites of passage: menstruation, marriage, and birth. What would be unsettling to the women of Philippi (and the Greco-Roman world in general) was the fact that Artemis is likewise the killer of women and children. Offending the goddess could lead to the death of a child in childbirth, the

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<sup>192</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 9, Nancy H. Demand, *Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Classical Greece*, Ancient Society and History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 78-89.

<sup>193</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 9.

death of the mother in childbirth, or a number of other calamities on the community.<sup>194</sup>

These rituals of death and birth point to a central concern in the life of women. In these two rituals, issues of purity are central. In both Greek and Roman cultures, at birth, women are considered impure just as they are in rites of death.

Birth and death were treated together in pollution regulations because both are transitional states, both involve risk, and the outcome of both is not easy to predict. In birth and death boundaries of the body are breached, identity is ambiguous, and the individual can be imagined to inhabit two realms. Birth is a visible physical transition, but the transition associated with death is not so obvious.... Because female physical processes obscure body boundaries, women were assigned responsibilities for presiding over transitions from others, whether at the beginning or end of life. The ritual for a corpse and the funeral ceremony, like a family's obligations at the time of birth, sharpened the distinction between life and death, thereby creating the illusion of control. Females, being intimately involved with both birth and death, were also associated with the hazardous and polluting aspects of both. Birth and death were in fact so powerful that the mother in childbed and the corpse before burial were classified along with murderers as not only polluted in themselves but able to pollute others.<sup>195</sup>

Likewise, the immortals shunned pollution and its stain of death. In Euripides'

*Iphigeneia in Taurica*, Iphigeneia complains about the irrational logic behind

Artemis' sanction against pollution in her sanctuary while the goddess nonetheless kills.

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<sup>194</sup> Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 283.

<sup>195</sup> Cole, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space*, 105-06. On Greek women and impurity, see Jan N. Bremmer, "Rites of Passage: Greece," in *Religions of the Ancient World*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 445.

ἥ τις βροτῶν μὲν ἦν τις ἄψηται φόνου,  
ἢ καὶ λοχείας ἢ νεκροῦ θίγη χερσίν,  
βωμῶν ἀπείργει, μυσαρὸν ὡς ἡγουμένη,  
αὐτὴ δὲ θυσίαις ἡδεταὶ βροτοκτόνοις.

Who, if one stain his hands with blood of men,  
Or touch a wife new-travailed, or a corpse,  
Bars him her altars, ordering him defiled,  
Yet joys herself in human sacrifice (381-384, LCL)!

The rituals of death and birth were central to women throughout their entire life.

The pollution women came in contact with provided need for rituals that cleansed them of the impurity and usher them back into normal life. In order to understand the impact rituals had on women in Philippi, it is necessary to discuss the particulars of death, birth, and marriage rituals and their interrelation.

Birth and death rituals begin with placing the baby or person about to die/dead upon the floor. “Delivery onto the bare ground resembles another controversial Roman practice, that of *deposition*, whereby a dying person, while still alive, is placed on the bare earth outside the home.”<sup>196</sup> Although Corbeill discusses Roman culture, the Greeks also saw a connection between birth and death. Artemidorus mentions the similarities in terms of the cloth used to wrap a body and to swaddle a child.

οἱ ἀποθανόντες ἐσχισμένοις ἐνειλοῦνται ῥάκεσιν ὡς καὶ τὰ βρέφη καὶ  
χαμαὶ τίθενται, καὶ οἷόν περ λόγον ἔχει ἡ ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸ τέλος τὸν  
αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ τέλος πρὸς τὴν ἀρχήν.

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<sup>196</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 90-92, E. Samter, "Zu römischen Bestattungsbräuchen," in *Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfelds Sechsigsten Geburtstag* (Berlin: Weidmannsch Buchhandlung, 1903), 250.



Like infants, the dead are wrapped in torn strips of cloth and put on the ground. The end has the same relation to the beginning as the beginning does to the end (Artemidorus, 1.13, LCL).

The connection of birth rituals with death rituals was not lost on ancient Greco-Romans and, for women, the connections would have been all the more potent given their role in birth and burial.

The Roman and Greek funerary rituals were similar in practice and contained the same gendered divisions (the sex of the body being prepped for burial did not seem to have any barring on these divisions in the ritual). In the Roman rite, after the corpse is laid on the ground, the women close the eyes,<sup>197</sup> wash the body,<sup>198</sup> clothe the body,<sup>199</sup> and the corpse is placed in the atrium of the house (probably by the men).<sup>200</sup> As Margaret Alexiou points out, the Greeks had very similar customs which included closing the eyes,<sup>201</sup> washing the body,<sup>202</sup> clothing

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<sup>197</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 9.486-87; Ov. *Am.* 3.9.49, *Epist.* 1.102, *Trist.* 3.3.44, 4.3.44; Val. Max. 2.6.8; Sen. *Contr.* 9.4.5; Lucan 3.740; Pliny *Nat.* 11.150.

<sup>198</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 6.218-19; Apul. *Flor.* 19, *Met.* 8.14.

<sup>199</sup> Liv. 5.41.2, 34.7.2-3; Cic. *Leg.* 2.60; Pliny *Nat.* 21.7.

<sup>200</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 91. See also É Cuq, "Funus, Rome," in *Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, ed. C. Daremberg and E. Saglio (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1896), 1386-90.

<sup>201</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.426, 24.296; Plato *Ph.* 118a.

<sup>202</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18.343-55, 19.212; Sop. *El.* 1138-42, *Ant.* 901; Lucian, *On Funerals*, 11.

it,<sup>203</sup> and then setting the body out on a bier.<sup>204</sup> In both Greek and Roman traditions, the newborn child opened his/her eyes for the first time, the child and mother were bathed,<sup>205</sup> anointed, and dressed and then laid down in a bed.<sup>206</sup> These parallels are striking and, as Stears notes, not accidental.

Upon death the eyes and mouth of the corpse were closed. The body was, wherever possible, returned to its *oikos* where it was further treated by the women of the household. It was washed and then wrapped in a number of layers of fabric, including a shroud and a top-cover. On the bier it was laid out with the feet toward the door and a pillow under the head. It was then decked with herbs and sometimes with garlands and occasionally jewelry; an unmarried adolescent might be adorned as if for a wedding. A jar of oil was placed by the bier and a post of water by the street door of the house, measures effecting the containment and purification of ritual pollution (*miasma*).<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Lucian, *On Funerals*, 11-12.

<sup>204</sup> Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 2 ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002). See also C. Lécrivian, "Funus, Grèce," in *Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, ed. C. Daremberg and E. Saglio (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1986), 1370-74, Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 23-25, Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3940, Barbara E. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 31, Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 72, Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 191-92, Frank P. Graves, "The Burial Customs of the Ancient Greeks" (Columbia College, 1891), 19-35.

<sup>205</sup> Bremmer, "Rites of Passage: Greece," 445.

<sup>206</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 92.

<sup>207</sup> Karen Stears, "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual," in *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, ed. Sue Blundell and Margaret Williamson (London: Routledge, 1998), 114-15. See also Robert Parker, *Miasma* :

Then the corpse is laid in the atrium or courtyard for a certain amount of days during what is called the *prothesis*.

During the *prothesis*, those who surrounded the deceased were made up of the women in the family.<sup>208</sup>

The most important position in relation to the deceased appears to have been near the head, as this is where the chief female mourner (?the mother) [sic] stands, facing or behind the head, holding either it or the shoulders or sometimes plumping the supporting pillow. Occasionally this position is occupied by an older woman with short hair who might be identified as the old wet-nurse of the deceased.<sup>209</sup>

In his analysis of Greek funerary plaques, John Broadman notes that the closest relations were the ones standing near the body and that most of the relatives were women. Images of males in the funeral plaques are rare.<sup>210</sup> For the Greeks, this ritual stems from age old laws attributed to Solon.

γυναῖκα δὲ μὴ ἐξεῖναι εἰσιέναι εἰς τὰ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος μηδ' ἀκολουθεῖν ἀποθάνοντι, ὅταν εἰς τὰ σήματα ἄγηται, ἐντὸς ἐξήκοντ' ἐτῶν γεγонуῖαν, πλὴν ὅσαι ἐντὸς ἀνεψιαδῶν εἰσι· μηδ' εἰς τὰ τοῦ

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*Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 35-36.

<sup>208</sup> Lécrivian, "Fonus, Grèce," 1373.

<sup>209</sup> Stears, "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual," 115. In Cic. *In Ver.*, 118, Cicero recounts a situation where mothers were not able to mourn over their sons, giving them a final embrace and "receiving their final breath." This elicits the picture of the mother at the pillow of the bier, holding the head of her son, and lamenting his departure. See also Cuq, "Fonus, Rome," 1386.

<sup>210</sup> John Broadman, "Painted Funerary Plaques and Some Remarks on Prothesis," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 50 (1955): 55-58.

ἀποθάνοντος εἰσιέναι, ἐπειδὴν ἐξενεχθῆ ὁ νέκυσ, γυναῖκα μηδεμίαν πλὴν ὅσαι ἐντὸς ἀνεψιαδῶν εἰσίν.

And no woman less than sixty years of age shall be permitted to enter the chamber of the deceased, or to follow the deceased when he is carried to the tomb, except those who are within the degree of children of cousins; nor shall any woman be permitted to enter the chamber of the deceased when the body is carried out, except those who are within the degree of children of cousins (Dem. *Macart.* 43.62, LCL).

For the Romans, according to Cicero, the laws of the Greeks concerning burial were influential.<sup>211</sup> In the Greek and Roman ritual, the women lament, tear their hair, scratch their faces, and beat their breast at the bier.<sup>212</sup> For the Greeks, they were restricted from doing this in the procession in order to keep public excess to a minimum.<sup>213</sup>

For women, Corbeill notes that the process of wailing, tearing the hair, and scratching the face could possibly mimic the physical pains that come with childbirth.<sup>214</sup> For Greek women, this would happen only at the house and tomb, while the actual procession ideally was silent.<sup>215</sup> The tearing or pulling of the hair

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<sup>211</sup> Cicero *de Leg.* 2.23-24.

<sup>212</sup> Graves, "The Burial Customs of the Ancient Greeks", 23, Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 93.

<sup>213</sup> Donna C. Kurtz and John Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 143-44, For information on the Roman ritual, see Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 85-88.

<sup>214</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 93. Cicero *Tusc.* 3.26.

<sup>215</sup> Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, 74-75.

was part of the unbinding features of Greco-Roman rites of passage. More will be said below about knots.<sup>216</sup> In terms of gender divisions, Plutarch ponders the idea that the head covering of sons in the funeral procession has a distinct purpose in terms of gender roles.

Διὰ τί τοὺς γονεῖς ἔκκομίζουσιν οἱ μὲν υἱοὶ συγκεκαλυμμένοι, αἱ δὲ θυγατέρες γυμναῖς ταῖς κεφαλαῖς καὶ κόμαις λελυμέναις; Ποτερον ὅτι τιμᾶσθαι μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρρένων δεῖ τοὺς πατέρας ὡς θεούς, πενθεῖσθαι δ' ὑπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων ὡς τεθνηκότας, ἑκατέρῳ τὸ οἰκεῖον ὁ νόμος ἀποδοῦς ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων ἐποίησε τὸ ἀμόττον;

Why do sons cover their heads when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound? Is it because fathers should be honoured as gods by their male offspring, but mourned as dead by their daughters, that custom has assigned to each sex its proper part and has produced a fitting result from both? (Plutarch *Roman Questions*, 267A, LCL)

The sons in the procession are to cover their heads as if honoring the gods and the daughters are supposed to unbind their hair and uncover their head in order to mourn the dead. It is as if, for the males in the family, the dead person becomes like a god and, for the females, the dead person is someone they are ushering into the afterlife.

For the Romans, the deceased is cremated on the eighth day, and buried or entombed on the ninth. Corbeill sees a parallel here with the nine months of pregnancy and the collapse of those nine months into nine days for the burial

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<sup>216</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 92-93.

ritual.<sup>217</sup> This parallel would be untenable, except that the images begin to build upon one another in terms of comparing the rituals. For the Greeks, this was not the case. Instead, three days were prescribed between death and burial.<sup>218</sup> Of course, what is mentioned above is the ideal circumstance and would have changed due to variations in situations, but the norm would still have been in the back of the minds of participants as they deviated from them.

The next step in the process is inverted birth. When the corpse is finally removed from the atrium, it is always carried out feet first. Pliny is our clearest source for this ritual and, not coincidentally, this ritual is recorded in a text on childbirth.<sup>219</sup>

ritus naturae capite hominem gigni, mos est pedibus efferri.

It is part of nature's ceremonial that humans are born head-first; it is human custom that they are carried out of the house by the feet (Pliny *Nat.* 7.6, LCL).

For Pliny, it seems that how people come into this world is connected with how people exit as well. Boardman notes that this same position of the body is found in

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 93. See Aulus Gellius 3.16 for a detailed debate on the gestation period of humans. Graves, "The Burial Customs of the Ancient Greeks", 29.

<sup>218</sup> Kurtz and Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, 144-46, Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 93.

<sup>219</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 94-95, Graves, "The Burial Customs of the Ancient Greeks", 33.

funerary plaques from ancient Greece.<sup>220</sup> As the funeral procession exits the house, the body is turned to a head first position in order to allow for a new birth or entry into the afterlife.<sup>221</sup>

The procession to the tomb or pyre further punctuates the role of women in the process. The Greeks carried the dead to the tomb on a cart<sup>222</sup> and the Romans are depicted as using a *kline* or board to carry out the dead.<sup>223</sup> The women follow the cart, still pulling hair and beating their breasts, and, in the Roman ritual, lamenting out loud.<sup>224</sup> This final moment ushers the deceased into the tomb or onto the pyre and completes the transition from the living world to that of the world of the dead. Lastly, women cut a lock of their hair and placed it upon the tomb.<sup>225</sup> This part of the ritual will be discussed in the section on marriage below. In Table 3.1, a comparison is set out of the two rites of passage just discussed. Women participated in both death and birth rituals, with a strong connection to Artemis that emphasized death as a central component in their lives. Before turning to wedding

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<sup>220</sup> Broadman, "Painted Funerary Plaques and Some Remarks on Prothesis," 55-56.

<sup>221</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 95-97.

<sup>222</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 277, Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, 31-32, Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 7.

<sup>223</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 96-97.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98, Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 7.

<sup>225</sup> Johnston, *Restless Dead*, 42, Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 7.

rituals, one more aspect of death and birth rites needs to be discussed: that of binding and loosing.

**Table 3.2: Comparison Between Greco-Roman Death and Birth Rituals**

Death <sup>226</sup>	Birth
<p>A. Birth out of the world</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corpse on Ground</li> <li>2. Eyes Closed</li> <li>3. Wash</li> <li>4. Clothe, according to status</li> <li>5. Corpse in Atrium/Court Yard</li> <li>6. Lament</li> <li>7. Nine Days before Cremation/Burial</li> <li>8. Corpse leaves atrium feet first</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Birth, on the ground</li> <li>2. Eyes Open</li> <li>3. Wash</li> <li>4. Clothe</li> <li>5. Infant in Cradle</li> <li>6. Feeding</li> <li>7. Nine days before child given name</li> </ol>
<p>B. Procession into Afterlife</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corpse head first</li> <li>2. Mourning increases</li> <li>3. Eyes are opened; toes bound</li> <li>4. Nine days after cremation/burial: changing of mourning garments, funerary feast</li> </ol>	

As part of the rites of passage of women in the ancient world, untying and tying knots, or binding and loosing, was an important component to rituals surrounding death, birth, and marriage. One of the pieces of clothing often connected with binding and loosing was the ζώνη. The ζώνη or girdle was a central symbol in the rituals surrounding different stages of a Greek woman's

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<sup>226</sup> Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*.



life.<sup>227</sup> For example, Schmitt notes that pregnant women untie their girdles in labor.<sup>228</sup> Jan Bremmer has noted the connections between birth and the untying of knots.

As the labor pains began, the mother untied her hair and loosened her dress; this change from everyday appearance signaled a vital moment and also was understood by the participants as a means of undoing all sorts of binding and thus helping to hasten the birth.<sup>229</sup>

Sappho mentions the loosening of knots which hold together the women's legs.

This loosening is tied to Eros in a poem by Sappho.

Ἰσανορεσ. Ἰ  
 Φοίβωι χρυσοκόμῃαι τὸν ἔτικτε Κόω κίόρα  
 Ἰμίγεισ' ὑψινέφει Κροῖονίδαι μεγαλωνύμωι·  
 Ἄρτεμις δὲ θεῶν ἰ μέγαν ὄρκον ἀπώμοσε·  
 νῆ τὰν σὰν κεφάλαν· αἶ πάρθενος ἔσσομαι  
 ἀδμησ' οἰοπόλων ὀρέων κορύφαισ' ἐπι  
 θηρεύοισ'· ἀγὶ καὶ τὰδε νεῦσον ἔμαν χάριν·  
 ὥς εἶπ'· αὐτὰρ ἔνευσε θεῶν μακάρων πάτηρ·  
 πάρθενον δ' ἔλαφάβλολον ἀγροτέραν θεοῖ  
 ἄνθρωποι τε κάλεισιν ἐπωνύμιον μέγα·  
 κῆναι λυσιμέλης Ἰ Ἔρος οὐδάμα πῖλναται,  
 Ἰ . Ἰ . Ἰ . . . . ἀφόβε[. Ἰ . . . ὦ·

Artemis swore a severe oath to gold-haired Phoibos, whom Koios's daughter bore after she lay with Zeus, the famous lord of high clouds. She swore by his beard: "I will remain a virgin hunting upon the peaks of solitary mountains. Grant me this favor."

<sup>227</sup> King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 85.

<sup>228</sup> Pauline Schmitt-Pantel, "Athéna Apatouria et la Ceinture: les Aspects Féminins des Apatouries à Athènes," *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 32e, no. 6 (1977).

<sup>229</sup> Bremmer, "Rites of Passage: Greece," 445.

So she spoke and the father of the blessed gods consented.  
 Now gods and mortals call her Virgin Hunter and Slayer of Deer,  
 and Eros, loosener of cords holding in reluctant thighs, never comes near  
 her (fr 44a, LCL).<sup>230</sup>

Therefore the untying of knots was connected to the entrance into the liminal phase  
 of a woman's rite of passage.

The ζώνη, or girdle, was often dedicated to Eileithyia (a common epithet of  
 Artemis) after a successful birth.<sup>231</sup> As stated above, this was unbound at the time  
 of labor, along with the woman's hair and was also connected to marriage.

#### ΑΓΑΘΙΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΑΣΤΙΚΟΥ

Τῇ Παφίῃ στεφάνους, τῇ Παλλάδι τὴν πλοκαμίδα,  
 Ἄρτέμιδι ζώνην ἄνθετο Καλλιρόη·  
 εὔρετο γὰρ μνηστῆρα, τὸν ἠθέλε, καὶ λάχεν ἦβην  
 σώφρονα καὶ τεκέων ἄρσεν ἔτικτε γένος.

#### AGATHIAS SCHOLASTICUS

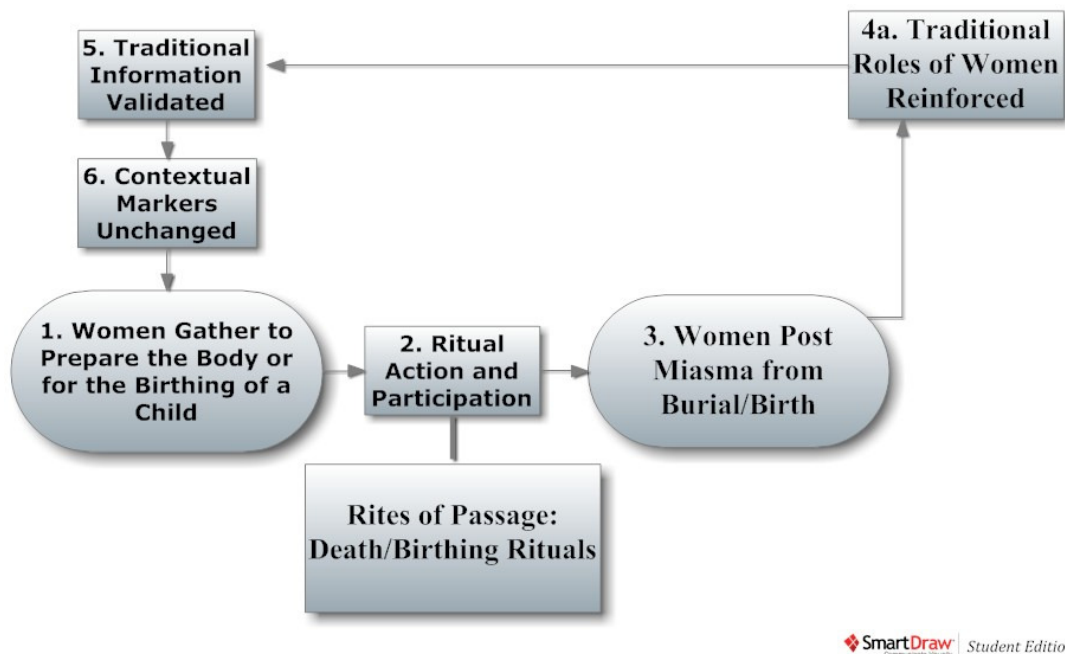
Callirrhoe dedicates to Aphrodite her garland, to Pallas her tress and to  
 Artemis her girdle; for she found the husband she wanted, she grew up in  
 virtue and she gave birth to boys (Greek Anthology 6.59, LCL).

As can be seen in the Greek Anthology, the woman did not dedicate her girdle to  
 the goddess until she had boys, which integrated her fully into her husband's  
 household. It was not the marriage ritual itself that brought about a full transition  
 but, rather, the birth of a son, reinforcing cultural norms.

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<sup>230</sup> Translation from Sappho, *Poems: A New Version*, trans. Willis Barnstone, Sun  
 & Moon Classics (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1998), 91.

<sup>231</sup> Bremmer, "Rites of Passage: Greece," 445.



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Figure 3.5: Rites of Passage - Death/Birthing Rituals

1. Death Ritual: Women gather to prepare the body for burial. Birth Ritual: Women gather to prepare a new life to enter the world. Both have birthing and death imagery attached to them.
2. Death Ritual/Birth Ritual: Various parallel ritual actions in the Rite of Passage as delineated in the chart above.
3. Women are purified after a period of time due to miasma.
4. Women's roles concerning death and birth are reinforced as well as any connection they have to their traditional roles in said rituals.
5. As women re-enter normal life, said traditional rolls are reinforced.
6. Contextual markers unchanged although the potential for change in textual markers is always there.

*Marriage/Death Rite*

Similar to the correlations found between death and birth, marriage was also associated with death for women in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Although scholars have seen similarities, they are not as pronounced as the comparison of death and birth rites, but there are enough symbols in the ritual that link the two, especially for women. This transition, from παρθένος to wife, was essential for a woman's contribution to the continued replenishing of male citizens (for those who were citizens) and for their places within their own husband's household. In comparing the static nature of men to women in marriage, Redfield states that

He [the male/groom] is born and dies one person; in ancient society he is born to the house and (at least ideally) dies in it. The female, by contrast, is both fertile and mobile; she transforms and is transformed. This may seem to associate her with that flux of transformations which is nature.<sup>232</sup>

This transformation is central to the marriage ritual and connects that ritual to those of burial for women in Philippi.

Before the marriage ritual even began, both Roman and Greek young girls dedicated their toys and locks of hair to Artemis as a way to appease her since she was losing her παρθένοι to the marriage bed.

Toys would be dedicated to Artemis by adolescent girls prior to marriage, as a prelude to finding a husband and having children. More significant as a rite of passage before marriage was the cutting and dedicating of a lock of hair. Generically, Artemis received the maiden locks of girls prior to marriage... The cutting of the girl's 'maiden's hair' signified her transition to marriage and ultimately (through childbirth) womanhood. Mourning was

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<sup>232</sup> James Redfield, "Notes on the Greek Wedding," *Arethusa* 15 (1982): 185.

also an occasion for shearing hair, and a lock of hair could be placed on the tomb.<sup>233</sup>

As Dillon notes, the lock of hair has a direct parallel in Greek burial rituals.

Sophocles mentions this practice at burials in the *Electra*.

ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρὸς τύμβον, ὡς ἐφίετο,  
λοιβαῖσι πρῶτον καὶ κατατόμοις χλιδαῖς  
στέφαντες, εἴτ' ἄψορρον ἤξομεν πάλιν,

Meanwhile, we will first crown my father's tomb as the god ordered with libations and the luxuriant tribute of a severed lock (Sophocles *El* 51-53, LCL).

In the Greek Anthology, Damagetus mentions a dedication of a lock of hair for Artemis before marriage.

ΔΑΜΑΓΗΤΟΥ  
Ἄρτεμι, τόξα λαχοῦσα καὶ ἀλκήεντας ὀιστούς,  
σοὶ πλόκον οἰκείας τόνδε λέλοιπε κόμης  
Ἄρσινόη θυόεν παρ' ἀνάκτορον, ἡ Πτολεμαίου  
παρθένος, ἱμερτοῦ κειραμένη πλοκάμου.

DAMAGETUS  
Artemis who wieldest the bow and the arrows of might, by thy fragrant temple hath Arsinoe, the maiden daughter of Ptolemy [I], left this lock of her own hair, cutting it from her lovely tresses (Greek Anthology 6.277, LCL).

Girls could also dedicate a number of other items to Artemis before their marriage.

In an anonymous dedication, a girl is described as dedicating a number of toys and other items to the goddess before marriage.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 215, See also Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, 249-51, Eve D'Ambra, *Roman Women*, Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 73.

ΑΔΗΛΟΝ (p1)

Τιμαρέτα πρὸ γάμοιο τὰ τύμπανα τὰν τ' ἔρατεινὰν  
 σφαῖραν τὸν τε κόμας ῥύτορα κεκρύφαλον  
 τὰς τε κόρας Λιμνάτι, κόρα κόρα, ὡς ἐπεικῆς,  
 ἄνθετο καὶ τὰ κορᾶν ἐνδύματ' Ἀρτέμιδι.  
 Λητώα, τὴν δὲ παιδὸς ὑπὲρ χεῖρα Τιμαρετείας  
 θηκαμένα σῶζοις τὰν ὀσίαν ὀσίως.

Anonymous

Timareta, the daughter of Timaretus, before her wedding, hath dedicated to thee, Artemis of the lake, her tambourine and her pretty ball, and the caul that kept up her hair, and her dolls, too, and their dresses; a virgin's gift, as is fit, to virgin Diana. But, daughter of Leto, hold they hand over the girl, and purely keep her in her purity (Greek Anthology 6.280, LCL).

Leaving behind their status as *parthenoi*, brides would also dedicate an item connected with their new status as sexually active wives.<sup>235</sup>

The ζώνη was also an item that girls donated to Artemis before their wedding. King notes the significance of the ζώνη and its connections between marriage as well as childbirth.

A young girl is 'ungirdled' and the first girdle, put on at puberty, is later dedicated to Artemis as part of the marriage process; a special girdle, tied with a ritual knot, is worn on the wedding night and untied by the spouse; a married woman unties her girdle in labour. Loosening hair [as in funerals] and garments can be a necessary precaution in dangerous situations and when performing magic.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 14, Max Collignon, "Matrimonium - Grèce," in *Dictionnaire Des Antiquités: Grecques et Romaines*, ed. C. Daremberg and Anthony Ross Potter (1904), 1648.

<sup>235</sup> Rush Rehm, *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 12-13.

<sup>236</sup> King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 85. See Catullus 61.51-55.

King goes on to argue that Artemis is involved in “loosing” women at times of bloodshed: defloration, labor, menses, etc.<sup>237</sup> It is clear that Artemis supervises those transitions in women’s lives in which the goddess cannot participate. Being a virgin, Artemis is appeased when losing those just like her, the παρθένοι, as they transition into that liminal period between being just a wife to their husband and producing an offspring, which incorporated them fully into their new household.<sup>238</sup> These very same dedications would have happened in Philippi as young girls began their transition from παρθένοι to married women.

After dedications were made, the bride was washed and clothed. In *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, Euripides uses the parallels between funerary and wedding rituals as a central tension in his play.<sup>239</sup> Iphigenia is summoned by Agamemnon under the pretense of being given in marriage to Achilles while in reality he plans on sacrificing her to Artemis in order to bring wind for the Greek fleet headed to Troy (49-114).<sup>240</sup> When Clytemnestra finds out about her daughter’s true fate, she proclaims,

σοὶ καταστέψασ' ἐγὼ νιν ἦγον ὡς γαμουμένην,  
νῦν δ' ἐπὶ σφαγᾶς κομίζω· σοὶ δ' ὄνειδος ἴξεται,

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 12.

<sup>239</sup> Helene P. Foley, "Marriage and Sacrifice in Euripides' "Iphigeneia in Aulis", " *Arethusa* 15, no. 1/2 (1982): 160.

<sup>240</sup> For the washing of the bride, see also Euripides *IT* 818-19; Thucydides 2.15.5.

ὅστις οὐκ ἤμυνας· εἰ γὰρ μὴ γάμοισιν ἐζύγης,  
ἀλλ' ἐκλήθης γοῦν ταλαίνης παρθένου φίλος πόσις.

For you it was I wreathed her head and led her forth as if to marriage, but now it is to slaughter I am bringing her. On you will come reproach because you did not help her; for though not wedded to her, yet were you the loving husband of my hapless girl in name at any rate. (905-8, LCL).

Here, Iphigenia is crowned like a bride or the corpse in the funeral preparations.<sup>241</sup>

The fact that Clytemnestra insists on Achilles seeing himself as married in name only, and therefore obligated to Iphigenia, emphasizes this double meaning even more. Furthermore, a messenger tells Agamemnon of Iphigenia's arrival and that she is bathing in a stream (420-1).

On the eve of the wedding in Greece, a woman called the *νυμφεύτρια* was enlisted to help the bride get dressed for the wedding.<sup>242</sup> For the Romans, the bride put on a white tunic and her mother tied a belt around her waist with a knot called the *nodus Herculis*. This knot was to be untied by the groom on their wedding night.<sup>243</sup> As noted above, this ritual was similar to that of the Greeks. In the funeral, similar actions are made since the body was dressed and perfumed with herbs while lying out on the bier. Likewise, the bride was dressed for the occasion

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<sup>241</sup> For crowning the corpse, see Euripides *Medea* 979; Aristophanes *Ec.* 1031; *Lys.* 602; Kurtz and Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, 207.

<sup>242</sup> Aristophanes *Arch* 1056; Plu *Lyc.* 15; Pausanias 9.3.7.

<sup>243</sup> Fritz Graf, "Rites of Passage: Rome," in *Religions of the Ancient World*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 449, Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 163.



and perfumed for the procession to come.<sup>244</sup> For the Romans, there was also a rather elaborately decorated bed in the atrium of the bridegroom's house waiting their arrival.<sup>245</sup> What is odd about this bed is that it was not the consummation bed. Rather, it was symbolic, appearing to take the place of the bier, and the couple consummated their marriage in their own room, not in the public space of the house.<sup>246</sup> This would have made a lasting impression on women, meshing the rituals of death and wedding together.

As the bride leaves her mother and exits the house, she is given over to her new husband with a symbolic holding of hands.<sup>247</sup> As the people prepared for the procession, the bride's mother lit her torch and prepared to follow the bride to her new home.<sup>248</sup> For the Romans, the groom went on ahead to his new home so that he was there before the bride arrived. On the other hand, for the Greeks, the bride

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<sup>244</sup> Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 16, Stears, "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual," 119, Kurtz and Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, 144, Corbeill, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome*, 92. Xenophon *Symposium* 2.3; Plutarch *Mor.* 138D-E.

<sup>245</sup> Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 168. Catullus 64.47ff; Lucan 2.356-7; Juvenal 10.334-5.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, Graf, "Rites of Passage: Rome," 449.

<sup>247</sup> Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 164, Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 25.

<sup>248</sup> Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 166.

and groom participated in the procession together.<sup>249</sup> The bride and groom were often transported in a cart, not unlike the one used to transport bodies in Greek funerals.<sup>250</sup>

When the procession begins, singers follow behind the bridal party singing wedding songs.<sup>251</sup> These songs, while celebratory, are parallel to the dirges sung in the funeral processions of the Romans and those sung at the grave by the Greeks.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, as stated above, the mothers hold the torches and are central to the conveyance of the bride to the groom's home. The bride's mother follows the procession while the groom's mother waits with her son at his home to accept the bride into the new family.<sup>253</sup> Along the way, people threw nuts and fruits at the bride, told obscene jokes, and flutes played along with the hymns.<sup>254</sup> Again, as in

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<sup>249</sup> Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 27.

<sup>250</sup> Redfield, "Notes on the Greek Wedding," 188-89, Rehm, *Marriage to Death*, 26, Collignon, "Matrimonium - Grèce," 1651, H. L. Lorimer, "The Country Cart of Ancient Greece," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 23 (1903): 136-37.

<sup>251</sup> Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 166, Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 26-28.

<sup>252</sup> Redfield, "Notes on the Greek Wedding," 189, Gloria Ferrari, "What Kind of Rite of Passage Was the Ancient Greek Wedding," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003), 35.

<sup>253</sup> Rehm, *Marriage to Death*, 14, Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 166.

<sup>254</sup> Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 166, Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 27. Plutarch *De. Mul. Virt.* 244e; Chariton *Call.* 8.1.12; Catullus 61.120-1; Virgil *Ecl.* 8.30; Varro *Men.* 10; Pliny *NH* 1.16, 30.18.

the funerary ritual, the most prominent women in the house were the central figures in the rite of passage. When the bride reached the groom's home, she left behind the torch of her mother and began her incorporation into her new home by her mother-in-law.<sup>255</sup>

**Table 3.3: Comparison between Greco-Roman Death and Marriage Rituals**

Marriage	Burial
<p>A. Pre-Wedding Preparations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dedications</li> <li>2. Wash the Bride</li> <li>3. Clothe the Bride</li> <li>4. Perfumed</li> </ol>	<p>A. Birth out of the world</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corpse on Ground</li> <li>2. Eyes Closed</li> <li>3. Wash</li> <li>4. Clothe, according to status</li> <li>5. Perfumed</li> <li>6. Corpse in Atrium/Court Yard</li> <li>7. Lament</li> <li>8. Nine Days before Cremation/Burial</li> <li>9. Corpse leaves atrium feet first</li> </ol>
<p>B. Precession</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bride and Groom Depart</li> <li>2. On Wagon</li> <li>3. Wedding Songs (including torch carrying)</li> <li>4. Bed in Atrium</li> <li>5. Wife Unbound</li> <li>6. Wedding Feast</li> </ol>	<p>B. Procession into Afterlife</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corpse head first</li> <li>2. On board or in Wagon</li> <li>3. Mourning increases/Dirges (including torch carrying)</li> <li>4. Eyes are opened; toes bound</li> <li>5. Nine days after cremation/burial: changing of mourning garments, funerary feast</li> </ol>

<sup>255</sup> Oakley and Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, 34, Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 166.

The last connection between marriage and death that needs mentioning is the case of the woman who died before she was married. If a woman died before she was married, she was understood to have married Hades.<sup>256</sup>

Wedding songs and dirges, wedding torches, funeral torches, the wedding banquet and the meal that follows the funeral are not analogous to one another, but represented as polar opposites to convey the idea of an inverted ritual. When a maid ready to marry dies, and particularly when she is murdered, the normal order of things is reversed and the *ekdosis* is replaced by the *enguê*, with horrible results.<sup>257</sup>

Therefore, wedding and funerary rituals are combined in a gruesome way for a woman who did not fulfill her duty to her community. In Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Iphigeneia is doomed to be a bride of Hades since she will be sacrificed without marrying (461, 540, 1278). It would not be lost on the ancient Greeks that she was also being sacrificed on the altar of Artemis who would have seen her through her passage from παρθένοι to γυνή (1395-7).<sup>258</sup> Roman women dying before marriage was no less tragic in the eyes of Roman society. A girl was unable to reach her society potential, i.e., having a male child, if she died before a proper marriage had occurred.<sup>259</sup>

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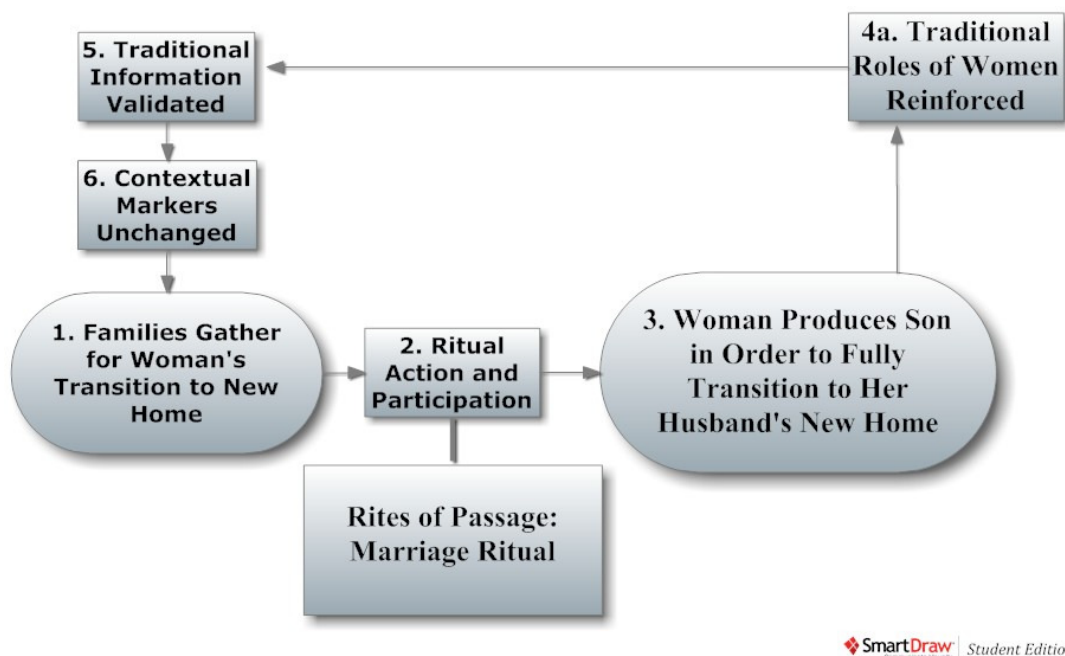
<sup>256</sup> Richard Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987): 106-07, Redfield, "Notes on the Greek Wedding," 189-90.

<sup>257</sup> Ferrari, "What Kind of Rite of Passage Was the Ancient Greek Wedding," 36.

<sup>258</sup> Foley, "Marriage and Sacrifice in Euripides' "Iphigeneia in Aulis"," 164.

<sup>259</sup> D'Ambra, *Roman Women*, 66.

The ritual of marriage was a rite of passage that reinforced a central role of women in Philippi. In terms of the model, marriage rites attempted to reinforce women's roles as future mothers, as seen in figure 3.6 below. The families would prepare and gather for the wedding (1). In preparation, *parthenoi* dedicated items to Artemis as symbols of their childhood, prompting the entrance into a liminal period. As the bride is transferred from her home, she completes her rite of passage as she becomes part of her new husband's home. While the rite of passage is occurring, images that were connected to funerary rituals were reinforcing connections to death and, by extension, birth (2). Because a woman is not fully integrated into her new home until she has a son, the wedding reinforces traditions connected with motherhood and the Artemis cult (3-4a). If all went appropriately and no new factors were introduced into the culture, these traditional roles of women were passed down again as more weddings began for sisters and daughters in Philippi (5-6).



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**Figure 3.6: Model of Marriage Ritual**

1. Families gather for the woman's transition, particularly the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom. The woman is prepared for her transition.
2. Procession from her father's home to her husband's home takes place. This places the woman physically in the house but does not complete the transition.
3. The woman is fully integrated when a son is born in order for the husband's family line to continue and to provide an heir for the family's estate.
- 4a. Women's traditional roles are reinforced, especially in regard to domestic roles and their connection with providing a son to the household.
5. As time goes on, this traditional information is validated.
6. Contextual markers, if not changed, have little or no impact on the ritual being a change agent but rather reinforce the status quo.

### *Conclusion*

The present chapter has focused on the cult of Artemis in Philippi and the rituals closely associated with the goddess. Their impact on women's lives was all pervasive, communicating norms about death, birth, and the place women held within those realms. First, the present chapter established that the Artemis cult was all pervasive in the city of Philippi. The reliefs of both women and Artemis give evidence connecting the Artemis cult with birth and death in the city of Philippi. Second, this chapter explored the specific rituals involved in death and birth noting their close relation and impact on women's lives in ancient Philippi. Throughout a woman's life, images of death punctuated and emphasized the most serious transitions including birth. Third, the ritual of marriage was also taken into account given its connection with Artemis as well as its parallels with death rituals.

Having established the pervasiveness of the Artemis cult in Philippi and its possible impact upon women, it is important to examine the other cults that related to women in the city of Philippi. These cults are not as well attested and some have scant evidence for actual ritual practices. Therefore, the presence of the cult in the city of Philippi will be established. Then, if there is any, the evidence for rituals of each cult will be delineated and the impact of said rituals will be analyzed within the context of the model in chapter 2. This is done in order to give a fuller picture

of the ritual lives of women in Philippi and how that picture might impact a woman's reading of Paul's letter to the Philippians.



## Chapter 4: Other Cults

While the cult of Artemis was central for women in the Philippian community, there were other cults that also provided a glimpse into the lives of ancient Philippian women. Like Artemis' cult, they reinforced social norms that were expected of women while also providing women with an outlet for expression and communal gatherings. What follows is an examination of the cults of Dionysus, The Lunar Deity/Hecate, Bendis, Kybele, and the Emperor Cult and their possible impact on Philippian women's worldviews and social standing. Finally, this added information will be taken into account when examining women's reception of Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 5. The following information is not meant to be exhaustive. Given the available space, it is improbable that one could include every aspect of every cult or every conjecture about deities assimilating other deities' attributes. Therefore, as with the Artemis cult in chapter 3, the purpose is to establish the presence of the cult in the Philippian community and examine the rituals, if there is any information extant on said rituals, as they applied to women's lives in the first century CE.

### *Dionysus (Liber Pater)*

On the road to the theater outside the north-eastern part of the Agora in Thasos, there is a large sanctuary of Dionysus.<sup>260</sup> The proskeine in the theatre was

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<sup>260</sup> Ecole française d'Athènes, *Guide de Thasos* (Paris: École française d'Athènes, 1968), 42.

dedicated to Dionysus by one Thasius Lysistratos.<sup>261</sup> The Thasians probably brought Dionysus to the mainland when they moved near to mount Pangaion at the site of Philippi (360 BCE).<sup>262</sup> The inscriptional evidence indicates a vibrant Dionysian cult in Philippi and around the Macedonian region. Pilhofer notes nineteen such inscriptions which occur both in Latin (11)<sup>263</sup> and in Greek (8).<sup>264</sup> Of these inscriptions, four mention women and one mentions a family unit.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, two reliefs have been found on the acropolis indicating a possible connection with the Dionysian cult. One of the reliefs is of a phallus and the other of a centaur.<sup>266</sup> Collart also suggests that the masks found on one of the pillars at

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>262</sup> Diodorus Siculus XVI.3.7. Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 137, See also Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 59-60.

<sup>263</sup> Pilhofer, *Philippi*, 341, 44-49, 403, 511-15, 19-20.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 413-14, 76-82, 597-98, 669-70.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 345-49, 597-98.

<sup>266</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 177-80, 244-45. There are remains of a second relief in Collart and Ducrey's photograph of the phallus. Collart and Ducrey state that the second relief, although almost completely missing, is another phallus. This is far from conclusive and, while the context may cause one to lean in this direction, there is not enough of the relief left to make such a claim. Therefore, I keep the number of phallus reliefs at one. ———, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 244.

the front of the theatre could also remind ancient Philippians of Dionysus.<sup>267</sup>

During the excavations of Philippi, a building was found near the public baths which has been designated a sanctuary of Dionysus.<sup>268</sup> Furthermore, Mt. Pangaion, across the plain from Philippi, was closely connected with the myths and worship of Dionysus.<sup>269</sup> Therefore, the presence of the cult in Philippi is undeniable. What is more problematic is the evidence for actual ritual content within the cult itself and what that content might mean for women's ritual lives in Philippi. This is due to two primary reasons: 1) the textual evidence for actual ritual activity is from the classical period with few parallels near the first century and 2) the mythological stories are difficult to separate from actual rituals that took place in real life.

In terms of the mythology, Dionysus had his domain over a number of aspects of ancient Greco-Roman life. His provinces included ritual ecstasy, the world of the theatre, the realm of the dead, and wine.<sup>270</sup> Albert Henrichs argues

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<sup>267</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 374. Many representations of Dionysus are minimal in that the god is simply represented by a mask, a

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 413-15, Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 63, 99, Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 18.

<sup>269</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 413, Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 24.

<sup>270</sup> Albert Henrichs, "Dionysus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 479. See also Strabo 10.3.10.

that Dionysus also has his domain over the world of the dead and, therefore, the adherents of the cult relied on the god to usher them into some form of said world of the dead.<sup>271</sup> Conversely, Susan Guettel Cole has argued that the conclusions concerning Dionysus and the afterlife have been erroneous. She summarizes her case in the following manner.

Bacchic organizations, like other corporate and religious associations of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, took responsibility for the burial of members. Bacchic organizations tended the graves of their leaders and officials, but members without rank were also provided with tombstones and rites at the grave. Because all sorts of organizations erected gravestones for their leaders and members, it is probably a mistake to read into these practices any expectations on the part of the membership concerning the afterlife. More likely, the organizations simply intended to provide a decent burial for their members.<sup>272</sup>

Cole goes on to note that members of such associations left bequests throughout the Macedonian region, including in Philippi and Thessalonika.<sup>273</sup>

However, the eschatological message in the Dionysian record was not always absent. Cole does note that in pre-third century BCE, there were a number of indicators that Dionysus was associated with some sort of mystic afterlife.

The eschatological message so explicit in the early gold tablets [found in graves in Thessaly, Crete and Italy] does not appear later in the public inscriptions on stone. The detailed description of the underworld and the

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Susan Guettel Cole, "Voices from Beyond the Grave: Dionysus and the Dead," in *Mask of Dionysus*, ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Faraone (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 285.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 286.

definite promise of a special status for the Bacchic initiate in the afterlife are missing in the later Dionysiac material dated after the third century B.C.<sup>274</sup>

Therefore, while Henrichs tends to take the ancient concepts surrounding Dionysus and apply them to the cult throughout Greco-Roman history, Cole corrects those assumptions and notes the variation in the cult mythology over time.

Consequently, this may have been the case with the cultic practices as well.

The most famous depiction of the mythology surrounding Dionysus comes from Euripide's classical play *The Bacchae*. Within the play, Dionysus causes a group of women (aristocratic in status) to go off into the wilderness in an ecstatic state and causes them to commit an act of cannibalism. It is also obvious to the reader/watcher of the play that these rites in this particular play are secret and are to exclude men. But, again, this play, while performed during the first century CE, was produced in the classical period and, if it does at all, probably reflects ritual practices contemporary with the classical period.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>275</sup> Another famous account of the Bacchanalia is found in Livy 39.8. Livy recounts the restrictions placed on these nocturnal rites in Rome and his account describes rites that were not exclusive to women but also involved men. Given the context and the specific circumstances with no actual parallel in the Macedonian region, Livy's account is not incorporated into the data on Philippian women. For another account of the myth based on the *Bacchae*, see Ovid *Met.* 3.693-733.

The difficulty in pinpointing exact ritual actions in Dionysian worship for Philippian women cannot be overstated.<sup>276</sup> Pilhofer notes that the role of women in the cult of Dionysus is difficult to ascertain given the lack of specifics in the epigraphical record.<sup>277</sup> Our major literary evidence comes from earlier accounts surrounding the rituals and how they were enacted. For example, Demosthenes (4<sup>th</sup> century BCE) gives an account of a son helping his mother prepare the ritual for initiates.

δι' ἦν παῖς μὲν ὦν μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἐνδείας ἐτρέφης ... ἀνὴρ δὲ  
γενόμενος τῇ μητρὶ τελούσῃ τὰς βίβλους ἀνεγίνωσκες  
καὶ τὰλλα συνεσκευωροῦ, τὴν μὲν νύκτα νεβρίζων καὶ κρατη-  
ρίζων καὶ καθαίρων τοὺς τελουμένους καὶ ἀπομάττων τῶ  
πηλῶ καὶ τοῖς πιτύροις, καὶ ἀνιστὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ καθαρμοῦ  
κελεύων λέγειν ἔφυγον κακόν, εὖρον ἄμεινον, ἐπὶ τῶ  
μηδένα πώποτε τηλικούτ' ὀλολύξαι σεμνυνόμενος, ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις  
τοὺς καλοὺς θιάσους ἄγων διὰ τῶν ὀδῶν, τοὺς ἐστεφανωμένους  
τῶ μαράθῳ καὶ τῇ λεύκῃ, τοὺς ὄφεις τοὺς παρείας θλίβων  
καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς κεφαλῆς αἰωρῶν, καὶ βοῶν εὐοῖ σαβοῖ, καὶ  
ἐπορχούμενος ἕως ἄττης ἄττης ἕως, ἕξαρχος καὶ προηγεμῶν  
καὶ κιττοφόρος καὶ λικνοφόρος καὶ τοιαῦθ' ὑπὸ τῶν γραδίων  
προσαγορευόμενος, μισθὸν λαμβάνων τούτων ἐνθρυπτα καὶ  
στρεπτοὺς καὶ νεήλατα.

As a child you were raised in utter poverty ... when you became a man, you read the service while your mother performed the initiations and prepared the ritual equipment. At night you put the fawn-skins on the initiates and mixed the libations and cleansed the initiates by wiping them down with mud and bran, and you stood up after the lustration and proclaimed, 'I have

<sup>276</sup> Ross Shepard Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus," *Harvard Theological Review* 72, no. 1/2 (1979): 56-57.

<sup>277</sup> Peter Pilhofer, *Philippi Band I: Die erste christliche Gemeinde Europas*, vol. 87, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 42.

escaped evil, and found a better way ...' During the day you led the sacred bands through the streets, with their heads wreathed in crowns of fennel and white poplar. As you went you squeezed the Asclepian snakes and raised them over your head shouting 'euhow Saboi' and dancing 'hyes attes attes hyes.' You were greeted by old women as Conductor and Leader and Ivy-bearer and Carrier of the Wincrowing Fan, and you were paid with sops, twisted rolls and new cakes (*On the Crown* 258-60).<sup>278</sup>

Demosthenes is contrasting himself over against his opponent Aeschines by claiming Aeschines had helped his mother in the Bacchic rites. Perhaps this was an attack on Aeschines' masculinity since he kept helping his mother in what should have been female rites.

In terms of the gender make up of the Dionysian cult, scholars have noted that, on the one hand, there were versions of the cult that were entirely made up of women and, on the other hand, had both sexes among their numbers.<sup>279</sup> In an Egyptian papyrus from 245 BCE, one Demophon requests certain ritual instruments for a women's festival to honor Dionysus.

Demophon to Ptolemaeus, greetings. Send us at your earliest opportunity the flautist Petoun with the Phrygian flutes, plus the other flutes. If it's necessary to pay him, do so, and we will reimburse you. Also send us the eunuch Zenobius with a drum, cymbals and castanets. The women need them for their festival. Be sure he is wearing his most elegant clothing. Get the special goat from Ariston and send it to us ... Send us also as many cheeses as you can, a new jug, and vegetables of all kinds, and fish if you

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<sup>278</sup> Translation from Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 273. Greek text from <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.ezproxy.tcu.edu/inst/browser>. Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession," 61-62.

<sup>279</sup> Sarolta A. Takács, *Vestal Virgins, Sibyls, and Matrons: Women in Roman Religion*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 94.

have it. Your health! Throw in some policemen at the same time to accompany the boat (*Hibeh papyrus* 54. G).<sup>280</sup>

While a man is doing the ordering, it is clear that the women will be performing the rites on their own. Even though this account shows some male involvement, it is clear that women were being enabled to perform what seem to be needed ritual actions. Men were also implicated in the scandal that happened in Rome concerning the Dionysian cult, but that incident was isolated and does not seem to apply to the Philippian context (Livy 39.8).

In his work on classical Greece, Dillon delineates some of the rituals associated with female only Dionysiac worship. He comments on the differences between the myths and the actual reality of the cult.

In classical religion, maenads were women devotees of Dionysus, possessed by him and dancing ecstatically in his honour. There were many myths about them, and the maenads of myth and those of reality do not necessarily share the same features.<sup>281</sup>

Dillon goes on to note many regional rites that occurred in the classical period, but this is problematic for an analysis of first century women in Philippi because the classical evidence is too early. Plutarch dedicates his work on *Isis and Osiris* to the head of the Thyiads (worshippers of Dionysus), Klea (*Moralia* 351C). During the Pauline period, it seems a select group of women made pilgrimage to Delphi and

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<sup>280</sup> Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 274.

<sup>281</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 140.



held Bacchic rites with the Delphic Thyiads, but this was a very specific group and does not apply to a broad range of women throughout Greece.<sup>282</sup> Although evidence from Plutarch is unhelpful in an analysis of Philipian women during the time of Paul, Diodorus Siculus (1<sup>st</sup> century BCE) notes that there were broader rites performed by women throughout Greece during his life.

διὸ καὶ παρὰ πολλαῖς τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων διὰ τριῶν ἔτων Βακχεῖά τε γυναικῶν ἀθροίζεσθαι, καὶ ταῖς παρθένοις νόμιμον εἶναι θυρσοφορεῖν καὶ συνενθουσιάζειν εὐαζούσαις καὶ τιμώσαις τὸν θεόν· τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας κατὰ συστήματα θυσιάζειν τῷ θεῷ καὶ βακχεύειν καὶ καθόλουτ ἦν παρουσίαν ὑμνεῖν τοῦ Διονύσου, μιμουμένας τὰς ἱστορουμένας τὸ παλαιὸν παρεδρεύειν τῷ θεῷ μαινάδας.

Consequently in many Greek cities every other year Bacchic bands of women gather, and it is lawful for the maidens to carry the thyrsus and to join in the frenzied revelry, crying out "Euai!" and honouring the god; while the matrons, forming in groups, offer sacrifices to the god and celebrate his mysteries and, in general, extol with hymns the presence of Dionysus, in this manner acting the part of the Maenads who, as history records, were of old the companions of the god (4.3, LCL).

This text validates the fact that rites similar to those spoken of in Euripides'

*Bacchae* were conducted in a more subdued manner and were permitted to happen by the men in the city.

Heinrichs notes the ubiquity of festivals dedicated to Dionysus in the ancient world.

Dionysiac festivals were ubiquitous throughout the Greek world; in Athens alone there were seven such festivals in any given year, five of which were dedicated chiefly to Dionysus- Oschophoria, Rural Dionysia, Lenaea,

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<sup>282</sup> Martin P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*, Ancient Religion and Mythology (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 5.

Anthesteria, and City Dionysia. The name Oschophoria commemorates the ritual carrying of vine branches hung with bunches of grapes. The Lenaea and both Dionysia featured performances of tragedy and comedy. Apart from the new wine, the Anthesteria celebrated the spring time arrival of Dionysus from across the sea. Festivals of Dionysus were often characterized by ritual license and revelry, including reversal of social roles, cross-dressing by boys and men, drunken comasts in the streets, as well as widespread boisterousness and obscenity.<sup>283</sup>

What is central to all of these festivals is that women were known to go into ecstatic altered states of consciousness. They danced, let down their hair, cry out ritual sounds, and drank wine.<sup>284</sup> Scholars have speculated on the reason for these rituals and why women left their domestic space to take part in role reversals and frenzied activity.

Barbara Goff paints these moments of female revelry, sometimes taking part away from men's prying eyes and out in the wilderness, as a rebellion against patriarchy in classical Athens.

This "city of women" is constituted in resistance to that of the men, because the women refuse their assigned feminine roles, attack men who come near them, and celebrate their own superiority in the masculine acts of hunting and warfare. The "city" is organized along aristocratic lines, in that it is arranged in three bands, or *thiasoi*, led by the Theban princess, Agave, Ion, and Autonoe. But in some ways it is a far more "democratic" city than even that of the Athenians, who supply the audience for the drama, for it deliberately convenes both old and young, married and unmarried, and women of varying social status (694).<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Henrichs, "Dionysus," 481.

<sup>284</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 139-52.

<sup>285</sup> Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 214.

Deborah Lyons notes that men were often fascinated with female-only rites of which the flip side was the undervaluing of said rites by the same men.<sup>286</sup> This fascination also reveals that men saw the rites as necessary given the fact that they allowed them to happen in the first place thereby reinforcing male power.

Ross Kraemer has noted the prevalence of role reversals for women in the Dionysian cult.

This motif of the reversal of normal states and judgments occurs in the sphere of socio-biological roles as well. Women possessed by Dionysus are compelled to abandon, at least temporarily, their domestic obligations of housework and child-rearing in favor of the worship of the god. While in service of Dionysus, their activities express a marked ambivalence towards the neglected roles... Likewise, the temporary abstinence from marital sexual obligations is also reflected in the activities attributed to the worshippers of Dionysus. On the one hand, the maenads are repeatedly accused of sexual immorality while in the possession of Dionysus,<sup>287</sup> but often elsewhere in the same myths, and in the *Bacchae* itself, they are defended from such accusations.<sup>288</sup>

In doing the rituals that only involved them, women would partake in potential roles that were subversive to the general societal order. Some scholars leave the ritual analysis at the level of subversion, as Goff does above, but there is an altogether different outcome when these revelries only for women are done and

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<sup>286</sup> Deborah Lyons, "The Scandal of Women's Ritual," in *Finding Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Maryline Parca and Angeliki Tzanetou (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 39.

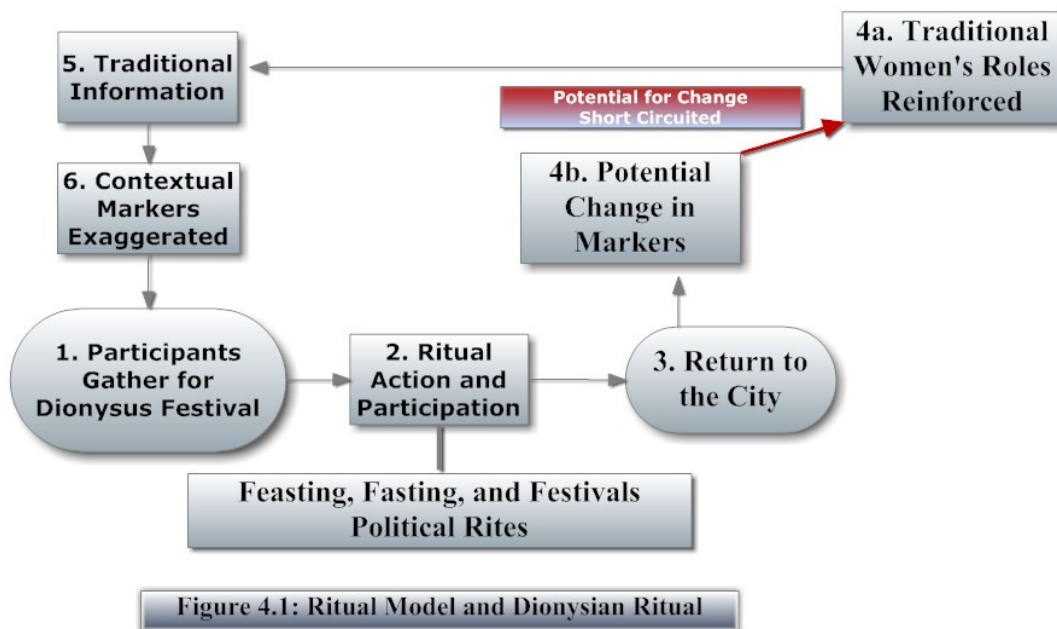
<sup>287</sup> Euripides *Bacchae* 195-96.

<sup>288</sup> Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession," 67-68, See also John Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory, and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

they return to domestic life. While a possible outlet due to social control, the Bacchic rituals created a possibility for social upheaval and then short circuited the potential for change and consequently reinforced patriarchal roles. In terms of the model, the process would have gone something like this,

- 1) The maenads gather and prepare for their rituals that were to take place outside the city.
- 2) The women took part in ritual actions (probably categorized as feasting, fasting, and festivals) that emphasized role reversals and abandonment of their normal social stations.
- 3) Participants end their festival for Dionysus and prepare to return to their normal social lives.
- 4) The chance for ritual change in the context of these rites was high but, since the chance for change is short circuited, traditional contextual markers were reinforced.
- 5) Traditional information is reinforced
- 6) Traditional contextual markers are thereby reinforced and exaggerated to a certain extent given the failure of the rituals to change social roles (see image 4.1 below).

Like in the rituals associated with Artemis, domestic roles are reinforced. While the potential for change is there, the very nature of this ritual process reinforces social norms through a process of short circuiting the change.



SmartDraw Student Edition

**Figure 4.1: Model of Dionysian Women Only Ritual**

### *Kybele*

Alongside the cult of Dionysus, Kybele is attested in the archaeological remains of Philippi, but the evidence is minimal. Collart and Ducrey note that one of the three reliefs of Kybele is most certainly she, but the other two are questionable.<sup>289</sup> Abrahamsen comments on the evidence and the probable impact of Kybele within the religious sphere of Philippi.

A Kybele sanctuary near the Sylvanus inscription [on the west facing slope of the acropolis just north of Basilica A] is attested by one or possibly two reliefs found in that general vicinity; interestingly, the more easily identifiable relief of the two shows a thin crescent in the field, which suggests syncretism with a more popular lunar deity such as Diana. Other

<sup>289</sup> Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 242.

attestations to Kybele at Philippi and her popularity in the region show her presence in the area, but at Philippi, she is less popular than other deities.<sup>290</sup>

While there is a relief on the acropolis, it seems extreme to call it evidence of a “sanctuary.” Rather, this could be a singular votive from someone wanting to thank the Great Mother for some perceived intervention in her or his life. Another votive can be found on the island of Thasos off the coast near Neapolis (present day Kavala). This votive depicts two women bringing doves as sacrifices to the goddess.<sup>291</sup> In other votives throughout Greece, Kybele is also found in reliefs associated with funerary rights and meals.<sup>292</sup>

Étienne Lapalus further notes a statue found in the forum that could have been a statue of Kybele. The statue is missing most of the markers that would identify the seated female figure. Lapalus makes his argument based on the fact that the woman is sitting rather than standing.<sup>293</sup> Collart argues that this could also be Tyche.<sup>294</sup> Therefore, the identity of the subject of the statue is inconclusive.

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<sup>290</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 18.

<sup>291</sup> Lynn E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 158.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> 'Etienne Lapalus, "Sculptures de Philippes," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 57 (1933): 457-58.

<sup>294</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 360, n.5, In a later article, Lapalus adjusts his interpretation of the statue, 'Etienne Lapalus, "Sculptures of Philippes," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 59 (1935): 191-92.

There are also a few inscriptions in and near Philippi that reference Kybele. Pilhofer records two inscriptions that mention the “Mother of the Gods” in either Latin (one occurrence in Philippi) or Greek (one occurrence in Drama).<sup>295</sup> In the companion work to the inscriptions, Pilhofer notes the following about the importation of eastern cults such as Kybele’s.

Alle diese Gottheiten kommen schon aus chronologischen Gründen nicht in Betracht. Bei anderen ist die chronologische Ansetzung einigermaßen unsicher: Ob das Iseion am Hang der Akropolis beispielsweise zur Zeit des Paulus schon bestanden hat, ist aufgrund der fehlenden definitive Publikation nicht sicher entscheidbar.<sup>296</sup>

The time frame and potential influence of the Kybele cult on the religious milieu of Philippi is difficult to determine. With this in mind, this study will briefly look at the particular rituals associated with Kybele and how those may have had an impact on Philippian women’s religious lives.<sup>297</sup>

In terms of her mythology, she is an eastern goddess who is described as having her domain over nature in general.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Pilhofer, *Philippi*, 61-62; 468.

<sup>296</sup> ———, *Philippi Band I*, 93.

<sup>297</sup> The Taurobolium, a ritual popularly associate with Magna Mater/Kybele, is not attested in the archaeological record (CIL X 1596) until 134 CE or in textual evidence until much later. Therefore, this ritual will not be a part of the analysis for women’s ritual lives in Philippi. Sarolta A. Takács, "Cybele," in *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 1039.

<sup>298</sup> Grant Showerman, *The Great Mother of the Gods*, The Argonaut Library of Antiquities (Chicago: Argonaut, 1969), 14-15.

ἐκ γὰρ τῆς ἄνεμοί τε θάλασσά τε νειόθι τε χθών  
 πᾶσα πεπείρηται νιφόεν θ' ἔδος Οὐλύμποιο·  
 καί οἱ, ὅτ' ἐξ ὀρέων μέγαν οὐρανὸν εἰσαναβαίνῃ,  
 Ζεὺς αὐτὸς Κρονίδης ὑποχάζεται.

For by her power the winds and the sea and all the earth below and the snowy seat of Olympus are complete; and to her, when from the mountains she ascends the mighty heaven, Zeus himself, the son of Cronos, gives place (Apollon. *Arg.* 1.1098-1101, LCL).

More specifically, she is a goddess of fertility and the wild. Like Artemis, her domain included mountain regions (Eur. *Hipp.*, 143-144).<sup>299</sup> In Greek mythology, Kybele takes on the attributes of Demeter and, it seems, is absorbed into the primary cult of Philippi: that of Artemis. There are mountain sanctuaries dedicated to Kybele in Phrygia (Asia Minor) not unlike those of Artemis in Philippi.<sup>300</sup> Like many earth related goddesses, she is a goddess of fertility and, therefore, shares a very close affinity to Artemis in this regard.<sup>301</sup> Lastly, akin to other imported eastern gods and goddesses, Kybele's cult was considered one of the *mystai*, or mystery cults.<sup>302</sup>

One of the primary rituals associated with Kybele is the festival of the Hilaria at Rome. Herodian mentions this festival in his telling of a plot to kill the

<sup>299</sup> Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 178.

<sup>300</sup> Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, 79-105.

<sup>301</sup> C. H. Emilie Haspels, *The Highlands of Phrygia: Sites and Monuments*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 110-11, Francis Redding Walton and John Scheid, "Cybele," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 416.

<sup>302</sup> Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, 149.



Emperor Commodus. He notes that, during the festival, people paraded their wealth through the streets, including those of the imperial house, there was a masquerade, and people were free of their inhibitions (1.10.5).<sup>303</sup> Ovid tells of a second festival called the Megalensia. This is the Great Mother's festival that reenacted her coming to Italy from the east. According to Ovid, the statue of the goddess is washed in a river, attendants went into ecstatic trances, and the goddess is then transported on a cart to her temple (*Fasti*, 4.337-48). This all takes place where the river Almo meets the Tiber River in Italy. Ovid goes on to specifically mention that the temple was formerly founded by Metellus but now it had been rebuilt by Augustus (*Fasti*, 4.348). Furthermore, at this festival, there are the first games of the year, her cult is given copper coins, milk is drunk and great banquets and feasts are given at individuals' homes (*Fasti*, 349-72).<sup>304</sup>

Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions a Greek ritual that was conducted in the city of Rome. During this ritual, a group of priests called γάλλοι march in procession through the streets with an image of the goddess, begging for alms, striking timbrels and playing flutes (2.19.4). According to the stories, the priests of Kybele were self-castrated and likened to be women. No Roman was allowed in the procession or to take part in the ritual because the ritual was strictly Phrygian in

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<sup>303</sup> See Catullus, 63 for references to the goddess inciting manic states in her worshippers.

<sup>304</sup> For other stories concerning the Great Mother (Kybele) coming to Rome, see Livy 29.11.1-8; 11.14.5-14.

origin and the Romans saw the display as ostentatious and below Roman etiquette.<sup>305</sup> In his work on women in ancient Greek religion, Dillon notes that Kybele was often associated with ecstatic women thought to be possessed by the Corybants (δαίμονια associated with Kybele).<sup>306</sup> In Euripides' *Bacchae*, Kybele is mentioned in the context of Bacchic rituals.

ὦ μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαί-  
μων τελετὰς θεῶν εἰ-  
δὼς βιοτὰν ἀγιστεύει  
καὶ θιασεύεται ψυ-  
χὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύ-  
ων ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν,  
τά τε ματρὸς μεγάλας ὄρ-  
για Κυβέλας θεμιτεύων  
ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων  
κισσῶι τε στεφανωθεὶς  
Διόνυσον θεραπεύει.

O blessed the man who,  
Happy in knowing the gods' rites,  
Makes his life pure  
And joins his soul to the worshipful band, performing bacchic rites upon the  
mountains,  
With cleansings the gods approve:  
He performs the sacred mysteries  
Of Mother Cybele of the mountains,  
And shaking the bacchic wand up and down,  
His head crowned with ivy,  
He serves Dionysus (72-82, LCL).

While the mysteries of Kybele are connected with the god Dionysus, it is impossible to ascertain what actually happened in them, since we have no record

<sup>305</sup> See also Ovid *Fasti*, 4:179-372; Apuleius *Met.*, 8.26-30.

<sup>306</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 179.

except that they danced, sang, and played musical instruments that sent the people into an altered state of consciousness.<sup>307</sup>

In terms of the model in chapter 2, all the things festivals are said to communicate to the general public are accounted for in both Herodian's and Ovid's depictions. It is clear that local elites paraded their wealth as a show of status and power among the general, poor population of the region. This status and power were coupled with a religious context in order to give divine sanction to the aristocrats' place within that society. Ovid even goes so far as to mention Augustus and his role in re-establishing the primary sanctuary of Kybele, giving Augustus a place of great power in respect to the goddess. Even the Mother of the Gods is not above the power of the Emperor and his patriarchal control. In terms of Philippi, the festivals mentioned in Ovid and Herodian specifically took place in or near Rome and are not attested as universal. In fact, the festivals are problematic because, during the time of nascent Christianity, the festivals were merely taking shape and are not fully attested until 354 CE.<sup>308</sup> While rituals associated with the Artemis cult have attestations across a wide variety of times and geographical locations, the rituals associated with Kybele remain obscure. This presents a problem for the historian of Philippi. Do the festivals from Rome get imported

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<sup>307</sup> Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, 156. See also Lucretius *De Rerum Natura*, 2.618-32.

<sup>308</sup> Walton and Scheid, "Cybele," 416.

through the establishment of Roman colonists? Do the Greeks in the area have an affinity for the eastern goddess that led to rituals of which we are not aware? What can be conjectured is the following: the cult of Kybele reinforced the idea that women were prone to ecstatic, uncontrolled behavior and that its primary purpose in the community was the propagation of progeny. Given the evidence, it is presupposed that the cult of Kybele was primarily absorbed by the Artemis cult, which had similar traits in terms of women's ritual lives.

### *Domestic Religion*

Domestic Religion also played a key role in the lives of Greco-Roman women. The difficulty with domestic religion in all ages of the Greco-Roman world is the lack of evidence as well as the apparent difficulty in defining "domestic religion." Faraone notes this very difficulty in modern scholarship on ancient Greece,

Christine Sourvinou-Inwood... has argued that there really is no private religion at all in ancient Greece because, even when animals are sacrificed in the courtyard of a private house, the act "was perceived as part of the *polis* cult and ... interdependent with the whole system of *polis* religion." Such developments in modern scholarship, in fact, get to the heart of our traditional confusion about the religion of family or household, which is both "private" in the sense that it is usually screened from the general public, and "communal" in the sense that it almost always involves more than one person and usually assumes a traditional form that is practiced by citizens in other families or households.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Christopher A. Faraone, "Household Religion in Ancient Greece," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, ed. Saul M. Olyan and John Bodel (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 211. Internal quote from Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Further Aspects of Polis Religion," in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion*, ed. R. Fowler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54.

Because rituals are seen to impact individuals embedded in communities at large, it becomes difficult to define and differentiate household or domestic religion from public or civic religion.

Although domestic religion is difficult to define, what happens ritually within the household will be discussed. For example, funerary rituals are considered by Faraone to be civic due to their ability to show off the household's wealth during the procession to the grave, but there is a much longer and complex set of rituals that takes place within the home prior to the procession and interment as shown in chapter 3.<sup>310</sup> As Boedeker intimates, the rites surrounding death, sex, and birth are all excluded from public temples and the like due to their miasmic qualities.<sup>311</sup>

One major locus for women's rituals in the home was the hearth, or Hestia.<sup>312</sup> The rituals of the hearth were central to the marriage ritual as well as bringing the woman into the man's home, the birthing rites, and during the purification rituals once the child (usually a boy) has survived forty days.<sup>313</sup> From

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<sup>310</sup> Faraone, "Household Religion in Ancient Greece," 213.

<sup>311</sup> Deborah Boedeker, "Family Matters: Domestic Religion in Classical Greece," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, ed. John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 240.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

these rites, it becomes apparent that the in-house rituals become central not only to women's lives within the household but also to life and death of the larger community. Lastly, ritual sacrifices were performed by some families in honor of the emperor and his family. This ritual will be discussed below in the section on the imperial cult.

*Lunar Deity/Hecate/Bendis*

Before moving on to the Emperor Cult, it is necessary to make a brief mention of the Lunar Deity, Hecate, and Bendis. This is because of their close associations with the Artemis cult. Little is known about many of these cults in terms of actual ritual enactments connected with them. They have apparently been absorbed into the Artemis cult in Philippi because of the goddesses' similarities with Artemis' functions. Therefore, the presence of the goddess (or lack thereof) in Philippi will be delineated, then the associations one may have had with Artemis will be delineated, and finally, some conclusions will be made for each cult.

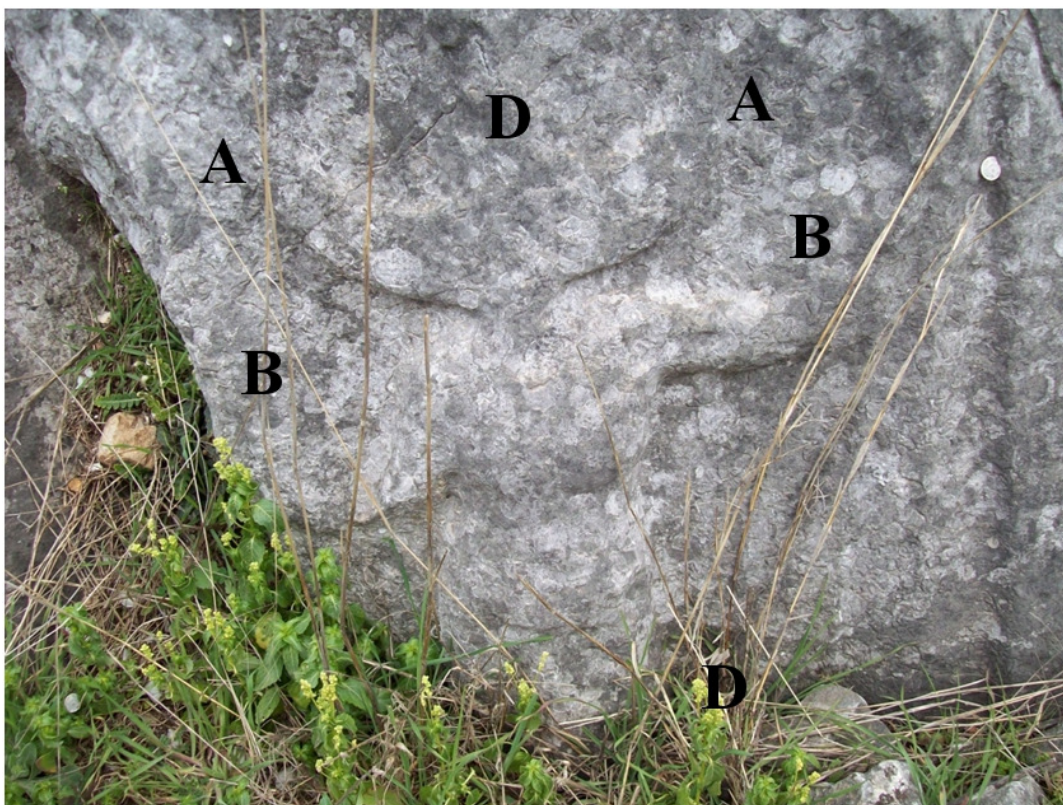
The lunar deity has its origins in the cult of Artemis in Greece.<sup>314</sup> Selene was the lunar deity in the Greek pantheon while Luna was her name in the Roman pantheon. The lunar deity is also associated with Hecate and Artemis.<sup>315</sup> As far as

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<sup>314</sup> Angeli Bertinelli and Maria Gabriella, "Luna," in *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 881.

<sup>315</sup> Robert Christopher Towneley Parker, "Selene," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1379.

the archaeological record concerning the lunar deity, there is evidence that Artemis was associated and indeed co-opted the lunar deity's functions in Philippi. In image 4.2<sup>316</sup> below, a faded relief was carved into the mountainside like other Artemis reliefs but this relief has a crescent moon behind the goddess' head.



**Figure 4.2 - Image of Artemis with Crescent Moon behind the Head on the Acropolis of Philippi. The actual relief begins at the waste of the goddess. She has both arms held out to her sides raised up (B). Her head seems to be looking forward (D) and there is a crescent moon lying on its side behind her head (A). (Photo by author)**

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<sup>316</sup> For more on this image, see Collart and Ducrey, *Philippes I: les Reliefs Rupestres*, 167-69.

There are also two crescent moons that appear by themselves in the vicinity of the Artemis with the crescent moon. One of the moons stands on its own<sup>317</sup> and the other moon is carved into the rock next to an inscription and a set of eyes.<sup>318</sup> The inscription has partial Greek above the eyes and then a Latin inscription below the eyes.

.. I . . YOI  
 Π . . . A  
 . . . ΙΣΙC  
 .ΧΑΙΠΩΝΕΟΙΝΙΟΥ

- image of eyes -

GALGAST  
 IA · PRIMIL  
 LA · PRO  
 FILIA · DEANE  
 V · S · L · M<sup>319</sup>

Gladly, willingly and deservedly, Galgestia Primilla has fulfilled this vow to Diana on behalf of her daughter.

The proximity of the crescent moons to the image of Artemis (here named Diana) with the crescent moon behind her head gives the impression that the Lunar deity and her functions have been adopted by Artemis.

The connection claimed with the cult of Hecate is more tenuous, but not altogether absent. Hecate was another goddess who was worshipped in marginal

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 169-70.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, See also Pilhofer, *Philippi*, 187-89.



zones, outside cities, in marshes and the countryside.<sup>320</sup> In these aspects, Hecate shared commonalities with Artemis. Collart states the following about the connections between Artemis, Bendis, Hecate, and the Lunar goddess.

Si, pour les Grecs, Bendis s'assimilait complètement à Artémis, elle n'avait pu être comparée à Hécate que par le côté commun à ces déesses, à savoir comme divinité lunaire.<sup>321</sup>

Because of their similarities, the goddesses were often absorbed into like cults.

The connection is clearer in Aeschylus' *The Suppliant Maidens* since Artemis is equated with Hecate in line 676.

Ἄρτεμιν δ' Ἐκάταν γυναι-  
κῶν λόχους ἐφορεύειν.

For always, and Artemis-Hecate  
Birth by women protect.<sup>322</sup>

Here, Hecate is associated with child birth and the welfare of the woman and baby. Furthermore, since Hecate was both perceived to be a beneficial goddess as well as terrible, she becomes even more conflated with Artemis in later Greco-Roman myth and helps to emphasize Artemis' chthonic side which brings wrath upon those who abuse her suppliants or fail in their ritual duties (see chapter 3). Lewis Farnell

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<sup>320</sup> Albert Henrichs, "Hecate," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 671.

<sup>321</sup> Collart, *Philippe, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 437 n. 4.

<sup>322</sup> Translation from Seth G. Benardete, trans., *Aeschylus 2, The Complete Greek Tragedies* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1956), 29.

notes the connection between Artemis and Hecate as central to understanding her importance in Greek religion.

In fact, the importance and reality that she came to have in Greek religion may for the most part have come to her through association with Demeter and Artemis.<sup>323</sup>

All of these signs point toward an integration of Hecate into the cult of Artemis given Artemis' popularity in Philippi. The traits mentioned in chapter 3 concerning Artemis and her connection with birth and death reflected this integration. Given the integration of both the Lunar goddess and Hecate into the cult of Artemis in Philippi, it is not surprising that one more similar goddess was also co-opted into the Artemis cult.

As was stated in chapter 1, the Thracians inhabited Philippi and the surrounding area before the Greeks. When the Greeks moved into the city, the Thracian goddess Bendis was incorporated into the cult of Artemis.<sup>324</sup> Plato begins

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<sup>323</sup> Lewis Richard Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (New Rochelle: Caratzas Brothers, 1977), 502.

<sup>324</sup> Plus qu'à toute autre, cependant, c'était à une divinité féminine que s'adressaient à Philippes des hommages dévots, dans lesquels on peut reconnaître sans peine les manifestations d'un culte indigène, celui de Bendis, déesse thrace, bien souvent, mentionnée dans les textes. Dès le v<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère, elle avait été accueillie en Attique; son temple s'élevait au Pirée, ou plus exactement à Munychie, et par un privilège spécial, obtenu grâce à l'intervention de l'oracle de Dondone, les Thrace y célébraient des cérémonies selon les rites particuliers de leur pays et dans le cadre de la religion officielle. Les Grecs l'identifiaient à Artémis. On n'a donc pas d'hésitation à discerner, dans les représentations de Diane-Artémis qui foisonnent sur les rochers de Philippes, la véritable nature de cette déesse. Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 430-31.

*The Republic* with a mention of Socrates visiting a festival in honor of the Thracian Artemis, Bendis.

Κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος,  
προσευξόμενός τε τῇ θεῷ καὶ ἅμα τὴν ἑορτὴν βουλόμενος  
θεάσασθαι τίνα τρόπον ποιήσουσιν ἅτε νῦν πρῶτον ἄγοντες.  
καλὴ μὲν οὖν μοι καὶ ἡ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων πομπὴ ἔδοξεν εἶναι,  
οὐ μέντοι ἦττον ἐφαίνετο πρέπειν ἢν οἱ Θρᾶκες ἔπεμπον.

I went down yesterday to the Peiraeus with Glaucon, the son of Ariston, to pay my devotions to the Goddess, and also because I wished to see how they would conduct the festival since this was its inauguration. I thought the procession of the citizens very fine, but it was no better than the show made by the marching Thracian contingent (*Plato Resp.* 327a, LCL).<sup>325</sup>

A communal festival was enacted in veneration of Bendis/Artemis that draws pilgrims from around Attica. This demonstrates that, early on, Bendis/Artemis was an important goddess in the life of those living in the area of Thrace.<sup>326</sup>

In terms of rituals and how they impacted women, little is known about the Bendis cult. In Philippi, since she was absorbed into the Artemis cult given their similarities, it is probable that separate rites were not enacted for Bendis and the Artemis cult adopted nuances from the Bendis Cult. Given the fact that we have no evidence of this in or near Philippi in either texts or archaeological records, it is impossible to make claims about how the Bendis cult would have impacted women in Philippi during the time of Paul.

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<sup>325</sup> See also *Ibid.*, 437 n.4.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

### *Imperial Cult*

While the cults of Artemis, Dionysus, Magna Mater and others were longstanding in the Greco-Roman world, the imperial cult brought new meaning to women's rituals in Philippi. No longer were they simply perpetuating the community by pleasing Artemis and gaining her favor for safe childbirth, but rather they were expected to live up to the expectations found in the edict set out by Augustus concerning families. It was not just the goddess that was in play here, but it was also the emperor and his family, specifically the cult of Livia, who stood for the ideal family while Artemis remained subordinate to the power and peace of Rome. While this is the case, this section is not meant to present a comprehensive study of the Imperial Cult. Therefore, the particular arguments about whether the emperor was seen as a god or not, etc will not be rehashed here. Rather, the purpose is to place women's ritual lives in an imperial context in order to better understand women's cultural backgrounds as a source for determining their reception of Paul's letter to the Philippians. It is the power struggle between these very ritual backgrounds that Paul makes moot in his elevation of Jesus in Philippians 2 (See Chapter 5).

Although it is presupposed that the imperial cult was active in Philippi during the founding of Paul's community and the reception of the letter, one must

be aware of the scarcity of monuments in the city during this time.<sup>327</sup> It was not until the end of the second century that two imperial temples were established in the forum.<sup>328</sup> As Collart states,

Enfin, comme on pouvait naturellement l'attendre d'une colonie romaine fondée par Auguste, Philippes avait fait une place au culte imperial dans la religion officielle.<sup>329</sup>

The fact that Philippi was a Roman colony indicates that the imperial cult was more than likely established before the founding of the temples in the forum.

Inscriptions attest to the existence of the emperor cult in honor of Augustus (27 BCE-14CE), Claudius (41-54 CE), and Vespasian (69-79 CE).<sup>330</sup>

On an inscription which mentions Augustus, he is referred to as *Aequitas Augusti*. The phrase is unique and, at least at the time of Lemerle's work, was not found in the epigraphic record except in Philippi.<sup>331</sup> This inscription gives little

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<sup>327</sup> Collart mentions statues found in the forum that point toward an imperial cult in the first century (see below for more discussion) Ibid., 248, 353. For an overview of the imperial cult in Philippi during the first century and beyond, see Bormann, *Philippi*, 32-54, Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State*, 212-17.

<sup>328</sup> Abrahamsen, *Woman and Worship at Philippi*, 80.

<sup>329</sup> Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 412.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Paul Lemerle, "Inscriptions Latines et Grecques de Philippes. I. Inscriptions Latines," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 58, no. 1 (1934): 458. See also Collart, *Philippes, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 412.

evidence that Augustus has been considered deified in this context.<sup>332</sup> Perhaps Equity, the goddess, has been understood as co-opted by Augustus since he is now the law in terms of weights and balances, etc. Galba (68-69 CE), in his short time as Emperor, struck coins with the saying *Aequitas Augusti* on them proclaiming the emperor's supposed stance on equity and therefore possible equality to the goddess.<sup>333</sup>

S. Reinarch records an inscription found near one of the basilicas in Philippi that calls Augustus "divine."<sup>334</sup> Chaido Koukouli-Chrysantaki notes the importance of the imperial cult to Philippi.

Another important cult in Colonia Augusta Iulia Philippensis was that of the emperors. Apart from the cult of Augustus and Livia, Philippi also yields evidence of the cult of Claudius, which was probably already established by the time Paul arrived, although Claudius had refused to accept divine honors the Thasians tried to bestow upon him.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> "The contemporary witness for Caesar's intentions is, of course, Cicero. As far as Caesar the god is concerned, *Philippics* ii, 110 is surely conclusive... The tenses ensure that Cicero is talking of Caesar's life-time. Even the skeptics concede that this is a difficult passage to get round; I should have thought it impossible." Elizabeth Rawson, "Caesar's Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and Their Roman Equals," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 1975, no. 65 (1975): 149.

<sup>333</sup> Lemerle, "Inscriptions Latines et Grecques de Philippes. I. Inscriptions Latines," 458.

<sup>334</sup> S. Reinarch, "Inscriptions Latines de Macédonia," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 8 (1884): 49, See also Pilhofer, *Philippi*, 35. In another inscription found in the forum, Pilhofer offers a reconstruction that includes the word *divi* in brackets, noting its absence in the actual inscription. Because of the reconstruction, it is hard to tell if the word actually occurred or if something else was intended. ———, *Philippi*, 259-60.

<sup>335</sup> Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 25-26.

Given the name of the colony, it is not surprising that Livia was a part of the imperial cult at Philippi and an influence upon women in the city.

Not far from Philippi, in the seaport of modern Kavala (ancient Neapolis), there is an inscription attributing divinity to Livia.

Cornelia P(ubli) fil(ia) Asprilla, sac(erdos) divae  
Aug(ustae), ann(or)um XXXV h(ic) s(ita) e(st).

Cornelia Asprilla, daughter of Publius, Priest of the deified Augusta, 35 years old, lies here buried.<sup>336</sup>

The title Augusta here refers to the deified Livia.<sup>337</sup> A long inscription was found in the forum that proclaimed the deity of Augusta and mentions her priestess.<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, images of Augusta were probably kept in Roman households.

The *Juno* of Livia, to some extent, also found its way into the household cult of Italian families. Statues of her have been found in the *lararia* of a villa at Gragnano near Naples, and of a Gallo-Roman house near Lyons.<sup>339</sup>

The beginning of the cult to the empress began in the early years of Augustus' reign and set a precedent for the deification of later wives through the Julian line.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Pilhofer, *Philippi*, 2.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>339</sup> Gertrude Grether, "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," *The American Journal of Philology* 67, no. 3 (1946): 225.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*: 223.

These examples point toward a vibrant imperial cult that communicated the power of Rome, and of the royal family, to the populace of Philippi.

The imperial cult helped proclaim the position of Rome on a cosmic level. Rome was chosen by the gods to rule the world, and therefore civic rituals were integral to communicating the power of Rome to its people.<sup>341</sup> Vergil's *Aeneid* makes the claim that the Trojans, having lost to the Greeks, were ordained by the fates to rule the world nonetheless. This turns the Homeric mythological epic on its head. In book 1 of the *Aeneid*, it is made clear that the Roman Empire was established by divine means.

Hic iam ter centum totos regnabitur annos  
 gente sub Hectorea, donec regina sacerdos,  
 Marte gravis, geminam partu dabit Ilia prolem.  
 Inde lupae fulvo nutricis tegmine laetus  
 Romulus excipiet gentem, et Mavortia condet  
 moenia, Romanosque suo de nomine dicet.  
 His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;  
 imperium sine fine dedi. Quin aspera Iuno,  
 quae mare nunc terrasque metu caelumque fatigat,  
 consilia in melius referet, mecumque fovebit  
 Romanos rerum dominos gentemque togatam :  
 Sic placitum. Veniet lustris labentibus aetas,  
 cum domus Assaraci Phthiam clarasque Mycenae  
 servitio premet, ac victis dominabitur Argis.  
 Nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar,  
 imperium oceano, famam qui terminet astris,  
 Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo.

Here three full centuries shall Hector's race  
 have kingly power; till a priestess queen,  
 by Mars conceiving, her twin offspring bear;  
 then Romulus, wolf-nursed and proudly clad

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<sup>341</sup> Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 7.



in tawny wolf-skin mantle, shall receive  
 the sceptre of his race. He shall uprear  
 and on his Romans his own name bestow.  
 To these I give no bounded times or power,  
 but empire without end. Yea, even my Queen,  
 Juno, who now chastiseth land and sea  
 with her dread frown, will find a wiser way,  
 and at my sovereign side protect and bless  
 the Romans, masters of the whole round world,  
 who, clad in peaceful toga, judge mankind.  
 Such my decree! In lapse of seasons due,  
 the heirs of Ilium's kings shall bind in chains  
 Mycenae's glory and Achilles' towers,  
 and over prostrate Argos sit supreme.  
 Of Trojan stock illustriously sprung,  
 lo, Caesar comes! whose power the ocean bounds,  
 whose fame, the skies. He shall receive the name  
 Iulus nobly bore, great Julius, he (*Aeneid* 1.272-288, LCL).

This divine power was communicated to the general populace through rituals as well as statues, temples, busts, and coins throughout the empire.<sup>342</sup> The people, particularly in cities such as Philippi, were inundated with images of the imperial family and Rome's divine sanctions. As will be shown below, the inclusion of the imperial cult in the city of Philippi changed the contextual markers for ritual and therefore gave either different or more nuanced meanings to already established rites.

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 7-8, 15, 83-84, For Coins, see Zander H. Klawans and Kenneth E. Bressett, *Handbook of Ancient Greek and Roman Coins* (Racine: Western Pub. Co., 1995), 216-56, Larry Kreitzer, "Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 53, no. 4 (1990), For images and media in general, see Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, For temples, see Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, 80-84.

The message of the Imperial Cult did not stop at the divine level but made claims about the empire as Caesar's house. The emperor was often called the *pater patriae*, giving him a title that depicts him as head of the household and the empire as his extended household with those living within its boundaries his obedient and submissive family (Ovid *Tristia* 2.157, 181; *Res. Gest. Divi Aug.* 6.35).<sup>343</sup>

Jupiter/Zeus was commonly called Father (Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.254, "the father of men and gods"), and the emperor was known as "Father of the Fatherland." He was seen as a father having authority over and blessing the members of his large (submissive) household that comprised his empire.<sup>344</sup>

Of course, not all authors were convinced that the provincial elites understood the empire to be a home, but, rather, they saw the imperial house as a means to an end as they bartered for favor.<sup>345</sup> Elites went as far as having images of the emperor and his family in their atriums where the family performed sacrifices to/in honor of the imperial family on feast days and when company came (Ovid *Epistulae ex Ponto* 2.8.1ff.; 4.9.105ff.).<sup>346</sup> No doubt, clients that came to elite homes in Philippi saw a series of busts or statues of the imperial family in the atrium of their patron's home.

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<sup>343</sup> Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 32, Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 401, Werner Eck, Deborah Lucas Schneider, and Sarolta A. Takács, *The Age of Augustus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 65-66.

<sup>344</sup> Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 87.

<sup>345</sup> Price, *Rituals and Power*, 103.

<sup>346</sup> Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 265-66.

The message embedded in the imperial cult not only communicated the power of Rome and the emperor, but it also communicated certain cultural expectations to women. As stated above, Livia became a prominent figure in the divine Augustan family.<sup>347</sup> The Julian marriage laws (passed in 18 BCE) both reinforced patriarchal norms and set up marriage and procreation as a primary legislative concern for the divinely ordained empire.<sup>348</sup>

Leges retractavit et quasdam ex integro sanxit, ut sumptuariam et de adulteriis et de pudicitia, de ambitu, de maritandis ordinibus.

He [Augustus] revised existing laws and enacted some new ones, for example, on extravagance, on adultery and chastity, on bribery, and on the encouragement and marriage among the various classes of citizens (Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 34, LCL).

The laws went further granting rewards in tax breaks for having children, made divorce unattractive, and made adultery illegal.<sup>349</sup> Cassius Dio writes on marriage and children.

τοῖς τε ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς ἀνάδροις βαρύτερα τὰ ἐπιτίμια ἐπέταξε, καὶ ἔμπαινον τοῦ τε γάμου καὶ τῆς παιδοποιίας ἄθλα ἔθηκεν. ἐπειδὴ

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<sup>347</sup> Grether, "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," 235.

<sup>348</sup> It is recognized that the Julian Marriage laws were originally intended for Italian aristocracy only. Although this is so, after a time, the laws spread and influenced people all over the empire. This is apparent because later Christians would petition the emperor to revoke the laws which were either repealed or left in disuse during the reign of Constantine. The laws would have likely reached the colonies of the empire by the time of Paul and the reception of the letter to the Philippians in Philippi. Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 102-03.

<sup>349</sup> Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire*, 22-23.

τε πολὺ πλεῖον τὸ ἄρρεν τοῦ θήλεος τοῦ εὐγενοῦς ἦν, ἐπέτρεψε καὶ ἐξελευθήρας τοῖς ἐθέλουσι, πλὴν τῶν βουλευόντων, ἄγεσθαι, ἔννομον τὴν τεκνοποιίαν αὐτῶν εἶναι κελεύσας.

[Augustus] assessed heavier taxes on unmarried men and women without husbands, and by contrast offered awards for marriage and childbearing. And since there were more males than females among the nobility, he permitted anyone who wished (except for senators) to marry freedwomen, and decreed that children of such marriages be legitimate (Cassius Dio *History of Rome* 54.16.1-2, LCL).<sup>350</sup>

The images of the imperial family were both ubiquitous and set up as representing the ideal family. Livia becomes the ideal foreordained woman who is both wife and mother. This was the case for many of the wives of Caesar after Augustus. First-century statues of Augustus and his family were found in the forum, together with monuments to the Julio-Claudian emperors.<sup>351</sup> Before turning to festivals and the imperial cult, it must be recognized that not all women in Philippi would have agreed with the message of the cult nor would all of them followed the respective laws. What is important is the message and what it communicates to women from a position of power, not the enactment of laws in real life circumstances (although, that could have an important impact as well).

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<sup>350</sup> The *Sententiae Receptae Paulo Tributae* contains the law concerning adultery. “Adulterii convictas mulieres dimidia parte dotis et tertia parte bonorum ac relegatione in insulam placuit coerceri: adulteris vero viris pari in insulam relegatione dimidiam bonorum partem auferri, dummodo in diversas insulas relegentur” (2.26.14).

Latin text from, "Sententiae Receptae Paulo Tributae," <http://ancientrome.ru/ius/library/paul/paul2.htm#26>.

<sup>351</sup> Collart, *Philippe, Ville de Macédoine, Depuis ses Origines Jusqu'à la Fin de L'époque Romaine*, 248, 353.

The primary rituals of the imperial cult that took place in the Greek provinces were festivals in honor of the emperor and his family. These rituals writ large reminded the people of Philippi to whom they owed their allegiance.

It was at festivals and in their ritual that the vague and elusive ideas concerning the emperor, the 'collective representations', were focused in action and made powerful.<sup>352</sup>

S. R. Price mentions a full description of an imperial festival that happened at Gytheum near Sparta.<sup>353</sup> In the description, there is a procession from the temple of Asclepius and Hygeia to the Caesareum and then a sacrifice was conducted on behalf of the present and past emperors. Then, a sacrifice was offered in the agora (a central place of power and politics in the city). Finally, the procession went to the theater where sacrifices of incense were burned in front of the images of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius.<sup>354</sup> Perhaps the festival would have looked like the following in terms of the ritual model from chapter 2.

- 1) Ritual preparations for the festival take place and the community gathers for the festivities.
- 2) The festival takes place with processions, games, sacrifices, etc.
- 3) The ritual effects take place. The power of Rome is reinforced. The power of the family of the Emperor is also reinforced which communicates

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<sup>352</sup> Price, *Rituals and Power*, 102.

<sup>353</sup> S. R. F. Price, "Between Man and God: Sacrifice in the Roman Imperial Cult," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980): 31.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid*, Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 78.

norms to women through the person of the wife as well as the power structures inherent in having a male head of the empire (i.e. Livia).

4) For the east, the imperial cult was a relatively new cult within the bounds of their cities. This created a new context for competition between cities and elites while placing the non-elites in a subordinate position. While this is the case, many cities in the east were accustomed to venerating kings.

5-6) While traditional information was reinforced by promoting local deities during imperial festivals, the inclusion of the emperor and his family alongside said deities brought new interpretive contextual information to bear on local rituals and their place within society.

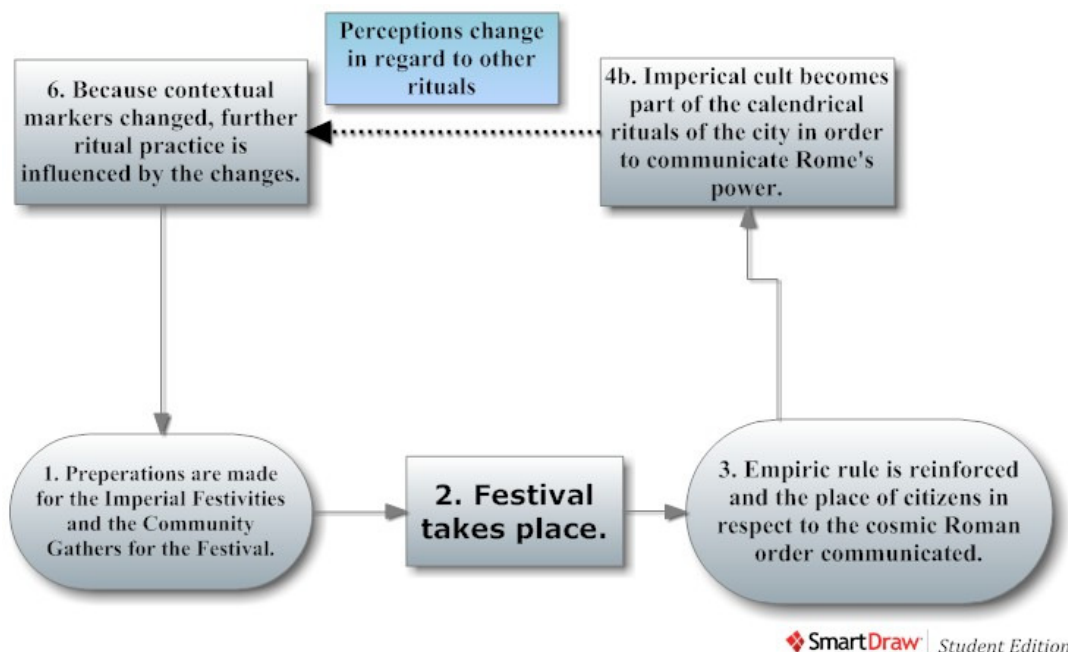


Figure 4.3: Imperial cult and the recontextualization of traditional rituals.

Both elites and non-elites participated in the festivals in various ways. In particular, women would prepare cakes and bread for sacrifices, play instruments, sing, perform priestess duties, and participate in processions honoring both the emperor and perhaps a deity closely associated with the city or a festival which was

traditionally celebrated without the imperial cult before its inclusion.<sup>355</sup> The images of the imperial family were therefore juxtaposed to the images of the primary divine patrons of a city.<sup>356</sup> In the case of Philippi, that would have been Artemis along with the rest of her divine counterparts within the Philippian city.

### *Conclusion*

The introduction of the imperial cult into the eastern part of the empire brought about what post-colonial feminists call “double colonization.”<sup>357</sup> This term refers to the plight of women who are subjected to both colonial powers and to the male domination found in a patriarchal society.<sup>358</sup> For the women of Philippi, the introduction of the Roman imperial cult not only placed them in a double colonization situation, it also reinforced patriarchal norms to a greater extent. On the one hand, the imperial cult brought with it a constant barrage of images including those of women who were not only powerful but powerful only because of their attachment to a male emperor. On the other hand, women participated in ritual activity with the permission of males within the community. These rituals,

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<sup>355</sup> Price, "Between Man and God," 30, Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 78.

<sup>356</sup> Price, "Between Man and God," 32.

<sup>357</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 66-67, Pui-lan Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 172.

<sup>358</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post Colonial Studies*, 66.

like those associated with Artemis, made women either the guarantors of the city through childbirth or made them the scapegoats of the city. They were blamed for angering the goddess on account of rituals gone wrong. This is the very cultural and religious matrix women experienced in Philippi when Paul sent his letter to the local Jesus followers. As will be seen in Chapter 5, the language Paul uses may help modern readers understand how Philippian women may have received Paul's letter given their ritual backgrounds prior to entering the group.



## Chapter 5: Women's Reception of Paul's Letter to Philippi

Now that a background of women's ritual lives has been examined, it is time to turn toward that information's implications concerning women's reception of the Philippian letter. Rather than exegete the entire letter, four primary passages will be selected that highlight possible points of interest for women given the information in chapters 3-4. In addition, the message of Paul will be analyzed with an understanding that women had to leave their former cosmology behind and adopt a new one, that is, if they fully complied with Paul. This small window into the world of women will shed light on the consequences of women joining the Jesus Group in Philippi. McFarland and Pals address the need for dissatisfaction in order for people to leave a group and join another.

Through in- and out-category comparisons, actors learn which categories are more or less desirable. The actors' desire for positive affiliation and self-efficacy motivates them to exit unfulfilling memberships for more desired ones. Once a person is attached to a category, however, he or she tends to view that category as better than the alternatives. Thus, category comparisons and in-group biases give rise to personal motives for identity change.<sup>359</sup>

Because women were embedded in their community's cycles of birth and death, the language Paul uses in the Philippian letter gives us clues as to how women within the group identified with Paul's message and how that message may have shaped their cosmology. Before turning to the other three passages in Philippians, we will

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<sup>359</sup> Daniel Mcfarland and Heili Pals, "Motives and Context of Identity Change: A Case for Network Effects," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (2005): 290.

take note of Acts 16:11-15 and then Phil. 4:1-7 for their significance. Then, Phil. 1:19-30; 2:1-11; and 3:7-21 will be examined in light of the evidence in chapters 3-4.

*Acts 16:11-15 and Philippians 4:1-7*

Acts 16:11-15 and Philippians 4:1-7 are significant passages for this study because they both mention women in the Philippian church by name. Lydia, Euodia, and Syntyche are all represented as not only group members but as significant members of the Philippian community. Because this study is about women and the Philippian community, a few remarks are necessary at the outset concerning these three women and why they point toward the significance of women in this particular Pauline community.

Acts 16:12-15 presents a brief glimpse into the life of the church of Philippi as seen through the eyes of Luke. Within this passage, a woman named Lydia makes an appearance. There are a few key pieces of information in this passage concerning Lydia herself and the nature of the Philippian mission. First, Luke tells us that Lydia meets with other women who worship the God of the Judeans outside of the city walls in order to pray (Acts 16:13-14). Second, Lydia is a dealer in purple goods from Thyatira. This fact suggests that she might have been a person of some means, though some argue to the contrary (see discussion below). Furthermore, she owns a house and hosts Paul and his company in that house (Acts 16:14). Third, Lydia is the first convert in Philippi. This is significant since she is a

woman. As Paul and his companions will find out later, the men whom they approach reject the message they bring while Lydia and her household are receptive (16:16-40).

#### *Lydia's Occupation*

In his work on *Acts of the Apostles*, John Pilch claims that purple dyeing would have been looked upon as a low status job by those in the elite classes.

The presence of Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth confirms this suggestion. Like tanning, so, too, purple dyeing involved the use of animal urine and was hence a very smelly process. Likely Lydia and her coworkers lived outside the city gates, too, where the business would also be located.<sup>360</sup>

On the other hand, Josephus seems to paint a more ambiguous picture of dyers in Tyre.

ἠτύχησε δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἀλεξάνδρου πολιορκία· ἀλλὰ τῶν τοιούτων συμφορῶν κατέστη κρείττων καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτὴν τῆ τε ναυτιλία, καθ' ἣν ἀπάντων τῶν αἰεὶ κρείττους εἰσὶ κοιμῆ Φοίνικες, καὶ τοῖς πορφυρέοις· πολὺ γὰρ ἐξήτασται πασῶν ἡ Τυρία καλλίστη πορφύρα· καὶ ἡ θήρα πλησίον καὶ τὰλλα εὐπορα τὰ πρὸς βαφὴν ἐπιτήδεια· καὶ δυσδιάγωγον μὲν ποιεῖ τὴν πόβ αφὴν ἐπιτήδεια· καὶ δυσδιάγωγον μὲν ποιεῖ τὴν πόλιν ἡ πολυπληθία τῶν βαφείων, πλουσίαν δὲ διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην ἀνδρείαν.

The city was also unfortunate when it was taken by siege by Alexander; but it overcame such misfortunes and restored itself both by means of their dye-houses for purple; for the Tyrian purple has proved itself by far the most beautiful of all; and the shell-fish are caught near the coast; and the other things requisite for dyeing are easily got; and although the great number of dye-works makes the city unpleasant to live in, yet it makes the city rich through the superior skill of its inhabitants (Strabo, *Geo*, 16.2.23 LCL).

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<sup>360</sup> John J. Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004), 118.

Josephus concedes that the dye works are a smelly business; yet, the wealth and prestige brought to the city are worth it. Furthermore, while Lydia does pray outside the walls of the city in Acts 16, it seems that Josephus points toward dye works being within the walls of Tyre. Another source that Lydia may have tapped for purple dye was hyacinth plants, madder plants, and insects (*Kermes coccifera*).<sup>361</sup> Although these sources may have been accessible to Lydia, they present no evidence of where her home may have been. This fact proves Pilch's conclusion suspect and, perhaps, that Lydia did own a home within the walls of the city. With Josephus in mind, one cannot support an interpretation of Lydia's home location based on her occupation as a purple manufacturer. With the information Luke gives the reader, it is entirely speculative either way.

On the other hand, Cicero gives another description of tradespeople when he notes the size of the business and the honor accorded certain large-scale businesses.

*Mercatura autem, si tenuis est, sordid putanda est; sin magna et copiosa, multa undique apportans multisque sine vanitate impertiens, non est admodum vituperanda, atque etiam, si satiate quaestu vel contenta potius, ut saepe ex alto in portum, ex ipso portu se in agros possessionesque contulit, videtur iure optimo posse laudari.*

Trade, if it is on a small scale, is to be considered vulgar; but if wholesale and on a large scale, importing large quantities from all parts of the world and distributing to many without misrepresentation, it is not to be greatly disparaged. Nay, it even seems to deserve the highest respect, if those who

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<sup>361</sup> Terri Bednarz, "Lydia Speaks: Examining the Life of Lydia through Her Social and Theological Context" (The Catholic Theological Union, 2002), 80-81.

are engaged in it, satiated, or rather, I should say, satisfied with the fortunes they have made, make their way from the port to the country estate, as they have often made it from the sea to the port (Cicero, *De. Off.*, 1.42, LCL).<sup>362</sup>

Elites looked upon small-scale merchants as vulgar because of their need to raise the price for their own support. Cicero, of course, sees this enterprise as usury (*De. Off.*, 1.42). Only merchants of vast quantities of goods were able to sell their wares for a reasonable price.<sup>363</sup> Bednarz notes the ambiguity of status that might be inherent to Lydia's work.

Since it is far more likely that Lydia operated a business from her household, she must have incurred an attitude of disdain from the elite. Wealthy people do not need to do manual work nor would they want to do the dishonorable work of an artisan or merchant. Her home must have been very modest and probably located outside the city walls because dye works were prohibited inside city walls due to the smell [there is no primary evidence cited for this claim]. If Lydia had a modest household, she could be subsisting rather than profiting on surplus. In this case, her honor would be respected as someone who was not getting rich through dishonest means. It seems Lydia was caught between two hard places. The elite viewed her work as dishonorable and the masses saw her work as honorable women's work dedicated to helping the household survive.<sup>364</sup>

As Carolyn Osiek and David Balch note, Lydia was probably of some means but was by no means elite.<sup>365</sup> What is clear is that Lydia belonged to a certain rung of

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<sup>362</sup> Translation and text from Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (London: Heinemann, 1913), 155.

<sup>363</sup> Bednarz, "Lydia Speaks", 50.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>365</sup> Carolyn Osiek and David Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*, 1st ed., The Family, Religion, and Culture (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 97-98. See also David Lertis

the merchant-artisan class, but this is all the information that Luke gives the reader about the first convert in Philippi in terms of her status among merchant traders. This small window of information gives the modern reader a brief introduction to Lydia's status, but scholars have also discussed whether or not Lydia existed in real life.

*Was Lydia Real or Not?*

In terms of Lydia's place of birth, Joseph Fitzmyer notes the connection with her name: "Her name corresponds to the land from which she came, for Thyatira was in a district called Lydia in Asia Minor."<sup>366</sup> Dennis MacDonald and Shelly Matthews both take this connection and interpret it in different ways. MacDonald argues that there is a close connection between the *Bacchae* of Euripides and the character of Lydia in Acts.

Insofar as women are largely absent from early Christian sources, one understandably may lament the migration of women in this story from history to fiction. But they are larger in fiction than they ever could be in history, because they represent what the author and probably some of his readers understood to be their symbolic significance as Maenads in a Christian mode. Lydia is not a wild woman in the hills raving ecstasy. The mantic slave girl, exploited by her male owners, returns to her senses. Many Greeks and Romans considered Dionysian worship objectionable because of its irrationality, and Luke precludes such criticisms of Christian

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Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 12. and Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles*, 118.

<sup>366</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 585.

women by portraying Lydia and her sisters as altogether noble, sane, and faithful.<sup>367</sup>

Because Lydia is the cult center of Dionysus<sup>368</sup> and the Lydia in Acts has a contingent of women followers, Macdonald concludes that the woman Lydia is a fiction. Luke is merely using the character in order to deflect accusations of Maenad type behavior among Christian women.<sup>369</sup> While this might be the case, Macdonald hints at what might be the most significant information found in Acts 16:12-15. He notes, "like Euripides' Maenads who worshiped the god in the hills outside Thebes, Lydia and her sisters worshiped their god at a river outside Philippi."<sup>370</sup>

Matthews, on the other hand, does not see Lydia's connection with narrative women such as the Maenads as an indication that Lydia was not a real person.

This is not to say that Luke invented Lydia because he did not know of women who were prominent in the early Philippian church. It may be that

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<sup>367</sup> Dennis R. MacDonald, "Lydia and Her Friends as Lukan Fictions," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004), 110.

<sup>368</sup> Dionysus - ἐντεῦθέν εἰμι, Λυδία δέ μοι πατρίς. Thence am I: Lydia is my fatherland (*Bacchae* . Euripides, *Euripides*, trans. Arthur Sanders Way, 4 vols., vol. 3, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 38-39.

<sup>369</sup> MacDonald, "Lydia and Her Friends as Lukan Fictions," 109.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*

Luke knows all too well that women were leaders in the congregation there, especially the two named in Phil. 4.2-3.<sup>371</sup>

Taking similar information, both MacDonald and Matthews come to different conclusions. While MacDonald is more convinced by the idea that Lydia is a pure fiction, Matthews is more cautious and notes that Luke knew of women who were leaders in the Philippian church.<sup>372</sup>

Given these two interpretations, it is obvious that the information given in the text is insufficient for determining the historicity of Lydia. In terms of this analysis, it is enough to state that Luke uses the character of Lydia in his narrative for a particular purpose. That purpose seems to reflect Luke's understanding that women played a significant role in the founding of the Philippian Jesus community. This emphasis on women is further emphasized when one takes into account Paul's address to Euodia and Syntyche in the Letter to the Philippians.

#### *Euodia and Syntyche*

In Philippians 4:1-7, Euodia and Syntyche are directly addressed as being "of the same mind in the Lord" (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ; 4:2). Paul goes on to

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<sup>371</sup> Shelly Matthews, "Elite Women, Public Religion, and Christian Propaganda in Acts 16," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004), 131. Francis X. Malinowski concludes that Lydia is a real person based on her ability to give hospitality and the Philippians apparent generosity in their gift to Paul (Phil. 4:15-16). This connection, though, is erroneous and seems a *nonsequiter*. Malinowski, "The Brave Women of Philippi," 60-61.

<sup>372</sup> Matthews, "Elite Women, Public Religion, and Christian Propaganda in Acts 16," 131.



address them as “colleagues” (συνεργοί; 4:3) and states that they “supported him in the gospel” (ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησάν μοι; 4:3). Davorin Peterlin considers these two women to be of the διάκονοι from verses 1:1.<sup>373</sup> On the other hand, Carolyn Osiek provides a more cogent argument for including Euodia and Syntyche amongst the ἐπίσκοποι.<sup>374</sup> These two women, obviously important enough for Paul to address by name and first in the ending of the letter, provide another window into the Philippian community, albeit a rather opaque one given that there are no other facts given about them. We will return to Euodia and Syntyche in the concluding remarks in this chapter.

*Philippians 1:19-30*

Because the rituals that were central to women’s lives in Philippi centered on both birth and death, imperial power, and lack of domestic freedom, Paul’s language of suffering and death resonated differently for women within the community than it had for men. This is not to say that death had no impact on men. Of course it did. But women played specific roles in the life of a family and the community that placed them close to the death of children and loved ones. The key to what might have impacted women most in this passage is found in verse 21: Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος (For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain). Paul paints death in a positive light rather than as a punishment

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<sup>373</sup> Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 118, 23-24.

<sup>374</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 111-12.

for faulty rites. It is likely that this very point caught the attention of Philippian women as they struggled with the concept of death, the rites surrounding it, and the goddess whom their community had appeased for so long. Paul's language leading into verse 21 builds up the theme of suffering and its positive outcomes.

The change of topic from 1:18 to 1:19 is connected through the concept of thanksgiving ( Ἄλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι).<sup>375</sup> Verse 19 has within it a quote from the text of Job 13:16 (LXX): τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν. It is not clear that the first members of the Jesus community would have caught the reference, but Paul obviously intended to convey that he was in a similar plight to Job.<sup>376</sup> This language of thanksgiving juxtaposed to the idea of suffering reflects what will be a transformation in the contextual markers of women's rituals (more below).<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid., 40-41, Norbert Baumert, *Studien zu den Paulusbriefen* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001), 92.

<sup>376</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, 232-33, Nikolaus Walter, Eckart Reinmuth, and Peter Lampe, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon*, 18. Aufl. (Erstauf. dieser neuen Bearbeitung) ed., *Das Neue Testament Deutsch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 41.

<sup>377</sup> Some scholars have argued that the theme of suffering ties the letter together. While this may or may not be the case, depending on one's perspective, it is not my intent to rehash the arguments here. Rather, the intent of this study is to analyze how women in the early Philippian church may have received the letter given their ritual background. Therefore, while the theme of suffering is emphasized in the analysis, the structure and continuity of the letter will not be a part of the discussion. For arguments concerning suffering and the structure of the letter, see Oakes, *Philippians*, 77-84, Nikolaus Walter, "Sie Philipper und das Leiden. Aus den Anfänger einer heidenchristlichen Gemeinde," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs: Für Heinz Schümann*, ed. Rudolf Schnackenburg, et al. (Freiburg: Herder, 1978), 417-34, Walter, Reinmuth, and Lampe, *Die Briefe an die Philipper*, 37-44, L. Gregory

In verse 20, the first mention of death occurs in the letter. Paul proclaims, ἐν οὐδενὶ ἀίσχυνθήσομαι ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνηθήσεται Χριστός ἐν τῷ σώματί μου. εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου.<sup>378</sup> Paul sets himself up as an example and, later in the pericope, will note that the suffering (πάσχω; 1:29) is a worthy thing in the context of the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:27).<sup>379</sup> Another facet of the language in verse 20 focuses on honor and shame. Paul proclaims that he will not be shamed (ἀίσχύνω) whether he lives or he dies. Having been imprisoned, he has been shamed in the

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Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon*, Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, Begründet von H. A. W. Meyer 9. Abt., 8. Aufl. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), For an examination of the unity of the letter in general see Demetrius K. Williams, *Enemies of the Cross of Christ: The Terminology of the Cross and Conflict in Philippians*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series (New York: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 41-54.

<sup>378</sup> Many commentators are concerned here with Paul's confidence or lack thereof in surviving his current imprisonment. Many modern scholars come to varied conclusions regarding what Paul is intending in Phil. 1:20: i.e., acceptance of suicide, martyrdom, or confidence in living. While part of some scholars interpretive conclusions regarding Paul and his situation, I will not venture a conclusion concerning Paul's personal motivations here given the fact that this particular study is concerned with Paul's audience rather than Paul himself. For an example of martyrdom as a conclusion, see Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon*, For an example of Paul's contemplation of suicide, see Arthur J. Droge, "Paul and Ancient Theories of Suicide," *Novum Testamentum* 30, no. 3 (1988): 278-85, For an argument in favor of confidence, see Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*, 152-57, Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 81.

<sup>379</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 145, Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*, 160, Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 43.

eye of the public and his honor is at stake. His rhetoric shows that he wishes to take a shameful situation and turn it into the honor of Christ.<sup>380</sup> In terms of the overall letter, this sets up the hearers of the letter for what is about to come in chapter 2 in the *Carmen Christi* (see below).

In verses 21-24, Paul puts meat on the bones of what he is talking about in verse 20. For Paul, living or dying will work in his favor. Either he will live and be a benefit to the Philippian community or he will die and be with Christ (vv. 22-23). The expression  $\sigma\upsilon\nu \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$  in verse 23 is an unusual expression for Paul since he normally uses the phrase  $\epsilon\nu \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$  when speaking about incorporation into the Jesus group. For Paul, to be  $\sigma\upsilon\nu \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$  is specifically a reference to departing this life.<sup>381</sup> For women who were central to the process of burial, this

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<sup>380</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 42-43, Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, 47-48, Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 302-03, For scholarship on honor and shame in the ancient world, see Joseph Plevnik, "Honor/Shame," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 106-15, Zeba A. Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (2009): 591-611, J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30-106, Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 29-87, Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Honor: Core Value in the Biblical World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, ed. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (New York: Routledge, 2010), 109-25, Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 27-57.

<sup>381</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 43-44.

language would have changed their view of burial ritual. Here, Paul changes the contextual markers in death rituals for in-group Christ followers (see more below).

Because most commentators leave women's lives out of their analysis of Philippians, they tend to focus on patriarchal language in the text.<sup>382</sup> Richard Melick notes the language of citizenship (πολιτεύεσθε) in verse 27 and athletic language (τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες) in verse 30 which are central metaphors for Paul in this letter.<sup>383</sup> As was seen in chapter 1, athletic language was attached to military language. This language was primarily part of the male domain, but the metaphors would not be misunderstood by women in the group. Furthermore, for women, citizenship was very limited. In Roman law, they could not hold political office, could not be on a jury, could not represent others in court, and could not adopt children, among other limitations. Of course, when a woman was independent (no longer *in potestate*),<sup>384</sup> she gained control over her own finances,

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<sup>382</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 250, Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 78-92.

<sup>383</sup> Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 89-90, 92.

<sup>384</sup> "In early Roman law, and to considerable though diminishing extent throughout, the family was the legal unit and the head of the family (*paterfamilias*) was the only full legal person (*sui iuris*). The family was agnatic, i.e. it included any person, of whatever age, who was directly descended from the *paterfamilias* through the male line by birth *ex iustis nuptiis*. It included also those artificially brought in by *adoption* (q.v.) and likewise the wife if married with *manus* (q.v.), and excluded conversely those made independent by *emancipation* (q.v.) and those given in adoption, or daughters married with *manus*." Barry Nicholas, "Patria Potestas," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière

could litigate, and could marry and divorce.<sup>385</sup> Although this was the case, there may have only been a few, or even no legal female citizens within the context of the Philippian Jesus group.<sup>386</sup> Therefore, Paul's call to citizenship in heaven would have been attractive to most of the Philippian Jesus group, including the women. For the most part, athletic games excluded women from participating and even watching in most cases.<sup>387</sup> Given Paul's language in this section of the letter, the athletic imagery elicited connections with the imperial cult and the games enacted in the emperor's honor, and therefore with power structures associated with festivals, which leads up to the hymn in chapter 2 (1:30).

In verse 27, Paul tells the Philippians "to conduct themselves as citizens" (πολιτεύομαι).<sup>388</sup> Later in Phil. 3:20, Paul will once again reinforce this concept

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Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 789, For a fuller discussion of this concept in the Roman world, see Saller, *Patriarchy, Property, and Death in the Roman Family*, 114-32.

<sup>385</sup> See Gaius, *Institutes* 1.48, 109; *Digest of Justinian*, 1.6.4; Tacitus, *Annales* 4.16; Jane F. Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 85-87, Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 20-24.

<sup>386</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 70-76.

<sup>387</sup> Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, 131-32, Cole, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space*, 103, Reumann connects the term *agon* with the Imperial games held in Philippi, Reumann, *Philippians*, 273.

<sup>388</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 47-48, Raymond R. Brewer, "The Meaning of *Politeuesthe* in Philippians 1:27," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 73, no. 2 (1954): 76-83, Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State*, 239, 43, Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, 51, Reumann, *Philippians*, 238-39, Contra

by stating ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανῶς ὑπάρχει. Reumann equates this language with Paul's own hope to use his Roman citizenship as a means to get out of his own circumstance, but he ignores the fact that the statement in 1:27 is a command to the Philippian community, not a statement about Paul himself.<sup>389</sup> Given the fact that many women could not obtain citizenship or, if they could, it was partial, Paul offers them a way to full citizenship under another authority.<sup>390</sup> In terms of their ritual lives, this provides a way for women to leave behind the need to participate in imperial rituals as well as rituals dedicated to Artemis and Dionysus, but not without a cost, which will be discussed below. Paul follows this command with a contextualization of said citizenship within the context of suffering in 1:29-30.

Phil. 1:29 gives a further instance of how Paul communicates a concept that was close to women and their experiences. Portefaix notes the theme of suffering in the letter in the following way.

Identification with the suffering of Christ, however, was also related to the resurrection and the after-life (Phil. 3:11). Through carrying the cross of

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Brewer, Miller understands the political references as addressing the church as a replacement for Israel. This interpretation has not been widely accepted and it ignores the literary and social context of the Philippian Jesus group. Ernest C. Miller, "Πολιτεύεσθε in Philippians 1.27: Some Philological and Thematic Observations," *JSNT* 15 (1982): 86-96.

<sup>389</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, 238-39.

<sup>390</sup> De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 281-82, Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 114-15.

Christ his followers would in a future life be provided with his 'glorious body' (Phil. 3:21). Consequently, even in the greatest afflictions they were able to feel a permanent joy by contemplating this prospective goal – a joy independent of external conditions (Phil. 4:4, 6, 11-13). For Paul himself the joy was deeply rooted. Even martyrdom was seen by him as a pouring out of the self to God, an action he likened to the pouring out of wine in cult ceremonies which made libations to the gods (Phil. 2:17).<sup>391</sup>

While Portefaix makes a point concerning all people's experience with suffering, her point is rather lacking in specifics that would address women's concerns.

Women were consistently reminded of their suffering through death rituals, helping with and going through child birth and the sorrow of a high mortality rate in births.

Also, there were external pressures involving ritual commitments that caused women to suffer within the context of the Jesus Group. Peter Oakes notes that,

The natural way to take this is that Paul knows of suffering among the Philippians that he reminds them that this is for Christ, and that he is likely to be using this reminder to argue that there is some particular value in the Philippians' sufferings, a value of which they were insufficiently aware.<sup>392</sup>

Furthermore, the constant rituals connected to Artemis, Dionysus, the imperial cult, etc. also played a significant role in women's identity and how they viewed and dealt with suffering in their lives. Paul's message to the people in Philippi provided them another option which created dissatisfaction with their former cosmological view.

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<sup>391</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 145.

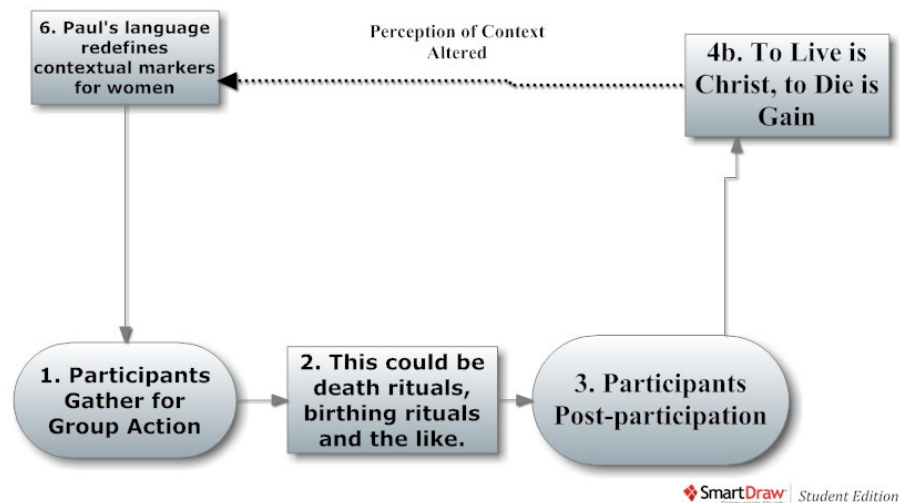
<sup>392</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 79, See also Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State*, 233-34.



While some rituals no longer were enacted by women in the Jesus group in Philippi, others continued to be enacted with little or no change in the form of the ritual. What changed were the contextual markers surrounding the ritual. In terms of the model, this would coincide with “4b. Contextual Markers Altered” (see Figure 5.1 Below). It is worth repeating what the 4<sup>th</sup> section of the model represents (see Chapter 2).

4) The cultural context in which the rituals take place matters. If the context of rituals is altered (i.e. outside forces cause insiders to re-evaluate the meaning of regularly practiced rituals), it changes the rituals’ meaning but if the context stays the same, it is more than likely that the rituals will reinforce prior cultural norms.

For the women of the Philippian Jesus group, including Euodia and Syntyche, the seemingly contradictory language Paul used about death in Phil. 1:19-30 redefined contextual markers to the point of altering how burial ritual was viewed in this first generation of Jesus followers in Philippi.



**Figure 5.1: Paul’s Language Recontextualize Women’s Concept of Death in Ritual.**

1. Women gather around the corpse or around the woman about to give birth in order to begin ritual action.
2. Rituals were enacted in the same form and with the same actions as when women prepared corpses for burial or enacted rituals during birth before entering the Jesus group.
3. When the ritual is done, women return to normal rhythms of life.
- 4b. Paul's rhetoric changed women's views of death as they were ascribed in rituals from the Artemis Cult. No longer was death spoken about as if it was a punishment for wrong doing but rather could be viewed as a benefit as an insider of the Jesus group. This meant that, as women looked toward the burial of loved ones, including still born children and women who died in childbirth, they could now understand death as re-defined in the context of traditional rituals.
6. Paul's rhetoric recontextualized already active rituals for women. Therefore, rather than military and friendship imagery being the primary contact point between women and Paul's rhetoric, it is apparent, given their ritual lives, that women would have gravitated toward and identified with the language of death in Paul's letter and its positive re-definition in light of Jesus.

Furthermore, when the women who joined the Jesus group in Philippi stopped participating in rituals that involved Artemis, they were easy targets as scapegoats when women died or had stillborn babies (See Call. *Hymn to Artemis* 121-135 LCL). As stated in chapter 3, women were the unlikely protectors of communities through their appeasement of the gods they served. Given Philippi's archaeological remains, the possibility of suffering on the part of women in the Philippian Jesus group due to mishaps during childbirth was great. Also, the exclusivity of the Jesus group took women out of many forms of social interaction

they once had. Refusing to take part in Dionysus rituals caused women to lose connections with other women in the community. Furthermore, this situation led to persecution from fellow women and their families within the broader Philippian community.

*Philippians 2:1-11*<sup>393</sup>

The Philippian Hymn is arguably the most commented on passage in the letter. Its cosmic claims about the Christ demonstrate a rather advanced Christology and a claim against imperial authority.<sup>394</sup> The power differentials that were brought about by the colonization of Philippi and the insertion of the Imperial Cult within the forum brought about a double colonization of women (chapter 4). This double colonization manifested itself in messages concerning marriage and family in the Julian Marriage Laws as well as in the more general patriarchal reinforcement of male rule.

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<sup>393</sup> The literature on this section of Philippians is immense and could contribute to entire monographs on the pericope. Therefore, I will favor literature that falls within the purview of the current discussion concerning women. For an evaluation of the literature and a monograph concerned only with the Christ Hymn, see Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation & in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, 1st ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

<sup>394</sup> Peter Oakes, "Re-Mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27, no. 3 (2005): 311.

Phil. 2:1-4 is often a set of verses skipped as commentators gravitate toward the hymn in 2:5-11.<sup>395</sup> In 2:1-4, Paul prefaces the hymn with a call for unity. These four verses hinge on the “multivalent verb” φρονεῖν.<sup>396</sup> This verb indicates not just being of the same mind but also being oriented, as a group, toward the same thing.<sup>397</sup> In his work on Philippians, Peterlin extracts specifics about the Jesus group at Philippi from these four verses.

Paul suggests that some members cherished [sic] misguided ideas about themselves (κενοδοξία) which caused them to look down on others. Verses 2:3, 4 also imply that they misused the benefits which their rights/privileges gave them. They used their rights/privileges to give them some kind of leverage over the less endowed members. Therefore it is reasonable to qualify this phenomenon as abuse of status although precisely what aspects constitutive of status played a prominent part is not immediately apparent.<sup>398</sup>

Based on Philippians 3, Peterlin may be on to something when speaking specifically about internal issues in the community at Philippi, but Philippians 3 must also be understood in light of external pressures placed upon the Jesus

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<sup>395</sup> David Alan Black, "Paul and Christian Unity: A Formal Analysis of Philippians 2:1-4," *JETS* 28, no. 3 (1985): 299, Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 51.

<sup>396</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 53.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid, William Barclay, "Great Themes of the New Testament: I. Phil. 2:1-11," *Expository Times* 70, no. 1 (1958): 5, Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, 62.

<sup>398</sup> Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 63.

group.<sup>399</sup> Given what we know about women and their ritual lives in Philippi, the persecution was likely to come from members of the broader civic community who resented their leaving communal cultic activity. This call to unity leads into the Christ Hymn in Phil 2:5-11.

Paul once again calls on the Philippians to be of one mind (φρονεῖν) in verse 5 as he did twice in verse 2.<sup>400</sup> This unity is then set in the context of Christ's humility in 2:6-8. In verse 6, ἀρπαγμός indicates that Jesus was unwilling to misuse his status to seek his own power and he did not consider himself τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῶ.<sup>401</sup> Verse 7 equates Jesus with a δούλος, claiming that he was completely stripped of his status in his obedience to God.<sup>402</sup> As Sheila Briggs states,

The humiliation of Christ in the "form of a slave" comprises two elements. Firstly, there is an obvious comparison between the lowly status of Christ's earthly existence and his original equality with God. However, the poignancy of the portrayal of Christ as slave derives not only from a loss of status but also from the degradation of being a slave. This sense of degradation is heightened by the assertion that it is a divine being who has become a slave, that the two opposites in the realm of being and worth have met in one person and one fate. Furthermore, the insistence on Christ's

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<sup>399</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 81, ———, "Re-Mapping the Universe," 128, Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 92-95.

<sup>400</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 59.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-61, Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, 66-67.

<sup>402</sup> Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 100, Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 67, Morna Hooker, "Philippians," in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 112.

original equality with God points out that Christ's existence did not begin as that of a slave.<sup>403</sup>

Paul then notes that Christ even took the form of a ἄνθρωπος (person). The parallel in the text between slavery and humanity equates one to the other. Christ humbled himself, taking on the status of someone who has no honor and became a human, willingly placing himself in a vulnerable position in regard to the dominant forces of power.<sup>404</sup>

Phil. 2:8 depicts the ultimate humiliation for Christ. Jesus chose obedience to God to the point of the most humiliating death in the empire (ἔταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ).<sup>405</sup> As Osiek notes,

But the obedience and the death should not be separated: death is the content of the obedience. Verse 8c makes this obedience even more explicit: it is death on a cross. Because this line breaks the threefold pattern of the rest of the composition, it is sometimes thought to be Paul's own interpolation. Structural patterns aside, however, it completes and deepens the thought of what went before. For an immortal, pre-existent being, death

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<sup>403</sup> Sheila Briggs, "'Can an Enslaved God Liberate?' Hermeneutical Reflection on Philippians 2:6-11," *Semeia* 47 (1989), See also C. F. D. Moule, "Further Reflections on Philippians 2:5-11," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 264-76.

<sup>404</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 61, Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, 67, Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 143-45, Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 67, Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State*, 271, Reumann, *Philippians*, 369-71, Williams, *Enemies of the Cross of Christ*, 131-32.

<sup>405</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 62.

is bad enough. But for anyone, one of the worst kinds of death that could have been imagined in Greco-Roman antiquity was crucifixion.<sup>406</sup>

Crucifixion was a punishment usually restricted to the lower classes, slaves and provincials.<sup>407</sup> This fact makes the second part of the hymn all the more potent.

In Phil. 2:9-11, God raises Jesus from his lowly status to one who has authority over “heaven and earth” as well as “under the earth” (ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων) (2:10). This authority includes power over Rome.<sup>408</sup>

Even the emperor will bend his knee and confess that κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

The hymn is then punctuated with the words εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός (2:11).

Carter notes the connections between calling God “father” with the emperor as *pater patriae*.

Paul’s attack not only dismisses polytheism, but also confronts Roman imperial theology, challenging the divine sanction for the empire. If there are no other gods, and only one divine Father, Rome’s claims to rule and shape the world according to the sovereign will of Jupiter and the rest of the gods is exposed as empty.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 63, See also De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 285.

<sup>407</sup> De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 285. De Vos rightly sites as examples, Appian *BCiv.* 4.20; Cicero *Phil.* 13.21, *Rab. Post* 9-17, *Verr.* 2.12, 5.169; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.69.1, 15.51.3; Josephus *BJ* 2.75, 5.449-51; Livy 30.43.13; Petronius *Sat.* 53.3; Strabo *Geog.* 4.18; Tacitus *Hist.* 2.72, 4.11.

<sup>408</sup> Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 61, Wiard Popkes, "Philipper 4.4-7: Aussage und Situativer Hintergrund," *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 246-48.

<sup>409</sup> Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 87.

The father of the fatherland is no longer head of the household for the Jesus followers. Rather, a new father has usurped all prior claims made about the emperor and his actual power in the world.

In the Hymn's vision of Christ, he who was brought low and died a shameful death is divinely given authority and raised to the highest honor, even over the emperor. By extension, those in the Jesus group have been embedded in Christ's honor if they heeded Paul's admonitions to unity and imitation of Christ (2:1-4).<sup>410</sup> While that is the case, entrance into the Jesus group came at a cost because of their separation from former ritual contexts. As De Vos notes,

Therefore, to affirm that the one whom they now regarded as their new Lord had been convicted and executed as a traitor, a rebel and a slave is more than a relativization of, or detachment from, their allegiances to Rome. It constitutes a paradigm shift. To affirm this did not just involve a change in attitude or thinking but a completely new way of relating and living within the wider civic community.<sup>411</sup>

Beyond the imperial cult, Christ has power over the entire world, which includes the gods of the Philippian pantheon as well as those who persecuted women for separating themselves from former loyalties and rituals.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State*, 274-75.

<sup>411</sup> De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 285.

<sup>412</sup> It seems that Oakes understates the situation when he notes, "I think it is very unlikely that the Philippians' problems stemmed primarily from the imperial cult. It would be one cult among many that they might be seen to abandon. Since... most Christians were probably not Roman citizens, the imperial cult is unlikely to have been the most pressing of the issues that they faced." Oakes rightly points out that there were a number of cults abandoned when joining the Jesus group in



As was seen in the previous section, abandoning rituals of Artemis was looked upon as abandonment of the community at large. Having joined the Jesus group and separating themselves from their civic duties as worshippers of Artemis, among other gods, the women in the Jesus group no doubt were persecuted and reviled. Even in the case of restructured burial rituals, it would have been difficult for women in the Jesus group to remain separated due to prayers to gods during the preparation of the body in burial, thanksgiving for children born healthy and also during marriage ceremonies. Membership in the Jesus group demanded severed ties, not only with cults specifically, but with those in the community that enacted the rituals in said cults.

As a consequence, women in the Jesus group were shunned, were at a loss for financial recourses due to the severed connections, and were exiled from their previous social safety net within Philippi. By understanding the ritual lives of women in Philippi, one begins to get a sharper image of their struggles in the new group. Their situation was unstable as they struggled for cohesion in a new network of people who had adopted a form of citizenship apart from the wider empire and their local civic community. As Paul continues in chapter 2, he notes the internal struggles that the group has had (2:12-18). Throughout the letter,

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Philippi, but it is unclear as to why citizenship was a prerequisite to participation in the imperial cult. Festivals were a city-wide ritual that would have included both citizens and non-citizens who lived in and around Philippi. Oakes, *Philippians*, 137.

women heard Paul exhorting them to remain steadfast in the absence from their formal ritual groups as their new in-group begins to struggle with cohesion and identity (i.e. 1:8-11, 27; 2:1-4).

Furthermore, the language of Christ's death would have struck a chord with women. In 2:8, Paul states that Christ died willingly, humbling himself to the point of death on a cross. For women, this language continued to reinforce the changed contextual markers for burial preparations, and, perhaps, the connotations of death in other rituals like marriage and birth. In 3:11, Paul speaks of the hope of resurrection that comes with death and loyalty to Christ. Women within the Jesus group in Philippi who conformed to the new conception of the cosmos under Paul's Christ would have seen burial not as a preparation for something final, but as a preparation for what they understood to be a temporary condition. This very fact may have attracted women to the Jesus group as they were presented with an alternative cosmos that usurped the imperial cult and, in particular, gave a more preferred answer to the difficulty of death in their lives.

*Philippians 3:7-21*

In verses 7-9, Paul begins to tell his readers the value of being within the Jesus community. Whatever gains (κέρδος) Paul had before he pledged loyalty to Christ, those gains were worthless in comparison to his loyalty to his new cosmic lord.<sup>413</sup> As women struggled with external pressures from family and former

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<sup>413</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 91.

community groups, their loyalty to their new group was challenged.<sup>414</sup> Paul wants them to consider their former associations σκύβαλα (rubbish, dung).<sup>415</sup>

Contextually, in verse 8, the language of loss and gain was heard differently by the women in the community than by the men. This is because of Paul's rhetoric concerning circumcision in verses 3:1-5. Peterlin understands this section of the text as speaking to legalism in general.

How does this “transitional paragraph” (3:8-11) fit into Paul's argument? Reacting against latent legalism..., in v. 8 Paul expounds on the change which occurred through his realization of the “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” which impressed on him the demand to make every effort in “gaining Christ.” The details of the next three verses expand and elaborate what this implies and entails. Hence the disclaimer of vv. 12-14 refers to notions of alleged perfectionism based on the assumption of achievement of this goal: the complete knowledge of Christ and the resulting fullness of existence.<sup>416</sup>

While this may address Paul's own issues, which Peterlin goes on to discuss, it rather ignores the ritual context of women and their disconnect with images of circumcision. To be blunt: women cannot be circumcised in the same way a man is able to be.

In verse 10-11, Paul describes what the purpose of remaining in this community is and why women should reject former ties with others: εἰς τὴν

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<sup>414</sup> De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 274-75.

<sup>415</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 91, David A. deSilva, "No Confidence in the Flesh: The Meaning and Function of Philippians 3:2-21," *Trinity Journal* 15, no. 1 (1994): 41.

<sup>416</sup> Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 83.

ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν (for the resurrection of the dead; verse 11). Paul wishes to “attain the resurrection from the dead” through knowing Christ, the power of his resurrection, and by sharing in Christ’s sufferings.<sup>417</sup> Tellbe puts it in the following way,

Paul frequently affirms the self-respect and honor of the Philippians by employing a pattern of contrastive models. Because the Philippians suffer, they are in “good company” and imitate the mind and destiny of Christ (2:5-11; 3:10-11). The life of Christ is taken as an example of how the one being prepared to lose his [her] status and honor will be honored and vindicated by God, i.e., *the highest honor is given to those who identify with the paradigm of Christ.*<sup>418</sup>

Of course, this applied to the entire community, both men and women, but more specifically, this language was a point of contact for women because it addresses the result of death as well as gives hope to women who were more than likely shut out by others in the wider community in Philippi.

Paul then turns toward encouraging the Philippian Jesus group to endure with an eye toward the goal (τετελείωμαι; τέλειος) (3:12-16). While the text is laden with athletic imagery,<sup>419</sup> the metaphor was not lost on the women in the community. Paul notes, Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διώκω δὲ εἰ

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<sup>417</sup> Fowl argues that the thrust of Paul’s purpose in 2:10-11 is “to know Christ.” This hardly seems the case since the concluding clause in verse 11 says otherwise. Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 155.

<sup>418</sup> Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State*, 274.

<sup>419</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 98-99, Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, 95.

καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (3:12). The goal is therefore not yet attained and the suffering of Philippian women in their current situation is temporary provided they remain steadfast and keep enduring to the end.<sup>420</sup> As Oakes notes,

In chapter 2, what the Philippians are called to involves at least the willingness to lose privileges. Christ then models loss of privilege and obedient suffering. Paul does this too in chapter 3. From Paul's model, the Philippians would feel called to be willing to lose privileges for the sake of gaining Christ. In the Philippian context this would mean willingness to risk losing money and status for the sake of others.<sup>421</sup>

One can imagine women in the Philippian community considering abandoning the Jesus group given the immediate stress of persecution from those with whom they were formerly connected. In light of the ritual life of women and the consequences of their abandonment of civic duties (especially the Artemis and imperial cults) for the Jesus group, Paul's rhetoric was a hard sell. He had to convince the women, and the entire group, that such consequences were worth it in the long run. He does this by holding himself up as an example of a fellow sufferer who participates in the suffering of Christ (3:7-11, 17).

Bloomquist suggests that Paul is addressing opponents who claimed perfection in 3:12-16. He connects this with those whom Paul mentions in 3:2-4: ἡ

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<sup>420</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 119.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

κατατομή.<sup>422</sup> Would the Philippian women, a group of Gentiles, have associated what Paul states in 3:6-11 with his previous comments on circumcision? It is highly doubtful. Rather, as Oakes indicates, Paul is setting himself up as an example of a fellow sufferer in general, everyday situations that call for perseverance.<sup>423</sup> Given what we know about women's ritual contexts in Philippi and the consequences of abandoning said contexts, women needed to hear that their current suffering had a final, positive τέλος.

Paul concludes the body of the letter by setting himself up as an example for the rest of the Philippian congregation (2:17). Osiek notes that Paul is not posing himself as the final authority but rather as a broker of Christ.<sup>424</sup> Like Paul, the Philippians are to lose status (3:7-9), be willing to suffer as Christ suffered (3:10-11), and to persevere in the midst of persecution from the broader civic community (3:12-14).<sup>425</sup> Paul ends 3:17 by including others that are like him as examples (σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς).

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<sup>422</sup> Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*, 47-48, See also Mikael Tellbe, "The Sociological Factors Behind Philippians 3.1-11 and the Conflict at Philippi," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 98-100, 05-16.

<sup>423</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 119-20.

<sup>424</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 100-01, See also Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 142.

<sup>425</sup> Oakes, *Philippians*, 105.

Perhaps these others were Timothy (2:19), Epaphroditus (2:15), Euodia (4:2), Syntyche (4:2), and Clement (4:3).<sup>426</sup>

In Phil. 3:18-19, Paul sets up a foil in contrast to those who are good examples for the Philippian community. This section has confounded interpreters for some time because it seems vague. Paul calls these people τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. He describes them as heading for destruction, their god as being a κοιλία, their glory being ἀισχύνη, and their minds set on τὰ ἐπίγεια. Some commentators connect these cross haters with the κατατομήν in 3:2.<sup>427</sup> Helmut Koester identified the opponents in chapter 3 as a misguided group of Gnostic Christians.<sup>428</sup> George Kirlpatrick, G. B. Caird, D. E. Garland and Carolyn Osiek argue that the references to κατατομήν in 3:2 refer to no one in particular but actually act as a 'cautionary example.'<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 101., although Osiek only references Timothy and Epaphroditus as among this group.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 102, Joachim Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief*, 4. Aufl. ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1987), 24, ———, "Die Antipaulinische Mission in Philippi," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 9 (1965): 258-76, A. F. J. Klijn, "Paul's Opponents," *Novum Testamentum* 7 (1965): 280, J. Müller-Bardorff, "Zur Frage der Literarischen Einheit des Philipperbriefes," *Wissenschaftlich Zeitschrift der Universitetät Jena* 7 (1957-1958): 591-604, Beare, *Philippians*, 100-41.

<sup>428</sup> Helmut Koester, "The Purpose of the Polemic of a Pauline Fragment," *New Testament Studies* 8 (1961-1962): 317-32.

<sup>429</sup> George D. Kilpatrick, "Βλεπετε, Philippians 3.2," in *In Memorium Paul Kahle*, ed. M. Black and G. Fohrer (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1968), 146-48, G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (London:

Given the fact that no consensus has been reached, it is clear that the language of 3:18-19 has given no further evidence that contributes to a better understanding of the opponents at Philippi. It is suggested that Kilpatrick, Caird, Garland and Osiek are correct in their assessment of the rhetorical situation of the letter and the context of 3:2. Rather than a real group, Paul is drawing on past experiences as an example of outsiders who might do harm to the group.

It is unlikely that these “Judaizers” are present at Philippi though they have a very real existence in other places, especially Galatia. If Paul wants to pick some group that he can portray as enemies from past experience, this is it. They will serve as a foil to Paul himself with his own faultless credentials.<sup>430</sup>

While this is the case for 3:2 and Paul’s personal example and experiences, this leaves the interpreter with the description in 3:19.

While the descriptions of the cross haters as shameful and headed for destruction are unambiguous, the saying concerning their god being a *κοιλία* has caused interpretive problems. Some commentators have seen the reference to the *κοιλία* as pointing to the male sexual organ because of the *κατατομήν* in 3:2.<sup>431</sup> As Osiek states, this conclusion is hardly defensible since the male organ was

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Oxford University Press, 1976), 131, Garland, "The Composition and Unity of Philippians," 166, Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 80-81.

<sup>430</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 81.

<sup>431</sup> Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice*, 140, Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 143, For further discussion of this option, see Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 102-03.



generally connected to honor and power.<sup>432</sup> Other interpreters connect κοιλία with possible libertinism and those who use excess.<sup>433</sup> While these two interpretations are the primary ones scholars have suggested, women's ritual lives in Philippi can provide a new lens through which to view verse 19.

The aforementioned scholars often understand κοιλία as a referent to the belly and, therefore, come to the conclusions based on food consumption or metaphor for sexual organs. There is a third option for translation here: womb. As women heard the ending of the body of Paul's letter, they had been encouraged to unite as one group in the face of external pressures from former groups who had disowned them. The women of the Jesus group had shirked their civic duties and put the wider Philippian community in danger by abandoning their ritual obligations to Artemis, Dionysus, the Imperial Cult, etc. As was demonstrated in chapter 3, Artemis was the primary god in the Philippian community and her primary domain was childbearing. Amongst the ubiquitous reliefs on the acropolis, reliefs of women were dedicated to Artemis for successful births. If women were being pressured to return to their former groups, which it seems they would have been, the women in the Jesus group would have heard this as a description of those who had left the group to return to their formal ritual lives. It is proposed that this

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<sup>432</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 103.

<sup>433</sup> Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 143, Robert Jewett, "Conflicting Movements in the Early Church as Reflected in Philippians," *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970): 376-82.

is one cause for the disunity and strife among some in the community (i.e. Euodia and Syntyche in 4:2).

In his final verses of the body of the letter (3:20-21), Paul revisits territory already covered in the first chapters of the letter by returning to strong imperial imagery. In verse 20, he once again notes that the Jesus group's citizenship is in heaven (πολίτευμα) (see comments on verse 1:27 above). Here, he calls Jesus Christ σωτήρα, a term used of the emperor (Josephus, *JW* 3.459).<sup>434</sup> While this term can also describe gods, the mention of citizenship would evoke images of the emperor, the power of Rome, and the local imperial cult.<sup>435</sup>

Paul then reminds the Philippians of the benefit of being in the Jesus group: ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (3:21). The benefit of citizenship is transformation of the body at the resurrection (see also 3:10-11).<sup>436</sup> Christ does this through the power granted to him to rule over all things (3:21; 2:11).<sup>437</sup> Women would have been granted citizenship in Christ post resurrection whereas they never had access to full citizenship in the empire. Furthermore, Christ is shown to have conquered

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<sup>434</sup> Carter, *The Roman Empire*, 89.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 86, Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 105, Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 379, Oakes, *Philippians*, 139, ———, "Re-Mapping the Universe," 135-37.

<sup>436</sup> Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon*, 106-07.

<sup>437</sup> Oakes, "Re-Mapping the Universe," 137.

death, a central concept in the lives of women in the ancient Greek and Roman world.

### *Concluding Remarks*

As one surveys the scholarship on Paul's letter to the Philippians, one notes that women receive little attention in spite of two being named in the letter: Euodia and Syntyche. In chapter 1, a brief delineation of modern scholarship demonstrated that few scholars have paid attention to women and the Philippian letter. In order to fill in the gaps in the information about women in ancient Philippi and expand on former scholarship, a model of ritual was constructed in order to be a heuristic framework to bring to the fore women's ritual lives in Philippi. The model of ritual was then used to analyze the cults found in the surviving Philippian archaeological record. More specifically, rituals and cults that affected women in ancient Philippi were examined through the lens of the model of ritual studies. This data was brought to bear on the letter to the Philippians itself in order to shed light on women's reception of the letter in the first generation of Philippian Jesus followers.

Therefore, the current findings in this study add substantially to our understanding of Greco-Roman women's lives, the nascent Philippian Jesus community, and how Paul's letter to the Philippians might be understood in light of women's ritual lives in their ancient context. More specifically, the present study provides several noteworthy contributions to the study of the Letter to the Philippians, which are as follows:

- A model for understanding ancient women's ritual lives was delineated and shown to be useful in shedding light on the Philippian community's cultural context. Ritual was defined with both static and dynamic elements in mind. Furthermore, contextual markers were taken into account in order to demonstrate how ritual plays a part in change even though it may remain static in form. This understanding of ritual led to the creation of a heuristic model which may be applied to other ritual contexts in the ancient world.
- A ritual typology was constructed in order to give a framework for studying the rituals themselves. While the typology in and of itself is nothing new to the field of religious studies, its application to Greco-Roman women's ritual contexts provides a window into the world of women from a different methodological angle.
- An analysis of the archaeology of Philippi and the surrounding area provided new information regarding the reliefs on the acropolis. While conjectures had been made concerning the purpose of the reliefs of women on the acropolis (i.e. they were votives to Artemis made by her priestesses), this study showed, through a comparison to the Echinus relief, that the reliefs were votive offerings dedicated to Artemis by her worshippers as petitions for successful births.

- The archaeological evidence provided a list of specific cults useful for analyzing women's spiritual lives in Philippi. These cults were analyzed through the lens of the ritual model delineated in chapter two. This provided a more complex look into women's lives in ancient Philippi as well as demonstrated how cults such as the Imperial cult could change contextual markers and alter perceptions concerning traditional cults. For example, the power of Rome through the Imperial Cult altered the cosmological landscape and subjugated other cults such as that of Artemis. Also, the Imperial Cult further reinforced patriarchal norms through a double colonization of women. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that cults, although having a large population of women adherents, were not always of the benevolent type. Artemis has both a helpful (i.e., keeping women safe in childbirth in exchange for proper rites) as well as a harmful side (i.e., killing women or causing children to be stillborn because of violation of her rites). These concepts shaped how women viewed their cultural contexts and provided information about women who were in the Philippian community when Paul's letter was received.
- Given the analysis of women's ritual contexts, this study demonstrates women's connection with Paul's language of death

and suffering within the letter to the Philippians. Furthermore, Paul's language of citizenship provided a way for women to justify leaving the Imperial Cult for a less stable Jesus group. Therefore, Paul's language was confirmed as redefining the contextual markers for ritual and altered women's interpretations of traditional rituals. For example, Paul's rhetoric of death as gain (Phil. 1:21) and concerning the resurrection (3:11, 21) had great potential to alter perceptions of death rituals and provide women with a favorable alternative to their prior perceptions of death.

- With women having abandoned their prior civic duties in the broader community of Philippi, this study demonstrates that women would have been persecuted by those outside the group in an effort to bring them back into their prior ritual contexts for the sake of the wider civic community. This was tied most readily to the cult of Artemis and the need to appease her through ritual in order to continue the community through childbirth. This makes available a background that challenges the conventional translation of κοιλία in Philippians 3:19. Most translators render this word as "belly" in English. This proves to be an interpretive conundrum. Who are those who worship this "belly"? Does Paul refer to libertines or is this a euphemism for the male genitals? This study demonstrates

that “womb” would be a better translation given the context of the Philippian Jesus community and women’s preoccupation with safe births. Furthermore, the pressure from outside the group demonstrates the Philippian struggle for cohesion and in-group unity about which Paul was concerned. Those giving in to peer pressure and leaving the Jesus community for their former ritual lives in the Artemis cult (and other cults as well) were seen by Paul as shameful and only concerned with earthly things.

Overall, through the model of ritual studies, this study has provided a more complex understanding of the early Philippian Jesus community. Furthermore, it emphasized women’s lives in order to fill in gaps and enhance modern scholarly discussion of the letter. The lives of women in the early Jesus Group in Philippi provide needed information in order to both fill out the picture of the community as a whole and shed light on their struggles for coherence and unity.

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