Restricted Generosity in the New Testament

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with when, how and why the first Christians restricted their material generosity, according to the evidence of the New Testament texts. Its central argument is that restricted generosity in the early church was inseparable from the church's self-conception as a fictive family. It is divided into two parts: the first discusses generosity, and its restrictions, in other first-century CE social structures (the *oikos*, voluntary associations and Jewish groups); the second turns to the New Testament itself.

The first part argues that reciprocal material solidarity and generosity was expected within the *oikos*; this duty was restricted in cases where one party had failed to perform their obligations to the household. Against the current majority view, it is argued that there is not sufficient evidence to claim that voluntary associations cared for their poorer members. It is further argued, again, against the majority view, that there is not sufficient evidence to claim that organised poor-care was widespread in first-century CE Jewish groups. Although all three social structures are considered to have relevance to the investigation of the early church in general, on this specific issue the most illuminating comparisons can be drawn between the *oikos* and the early church.

The second part examines the New Testament. One chapter analyses the extensive use of fictive-kinship language in the New Testament, arguing that the texts not only present the church as a family, but that this conception is repeatedly associated with the normal 'family duty' of reciprocal material generosity and support. This infers a restriction: there is a difference between how the early church was generous to insiders and outsiders. The following two chapters address the Thessalonian correspondence and 1 Timothy 5.3-16 respectively, the two places in the New Testament where the author(s) command the restriction of generosity. In both chapters, it is argued that the ethical logic relates to the self-conception of the

church as a family and it is this paradigm that renders the encouraged restrictions most explicable.

Restricted generosity in the early church, according to the New Testament documents, was inseparable from the church's self-conception as a fictive family. The reciprocity expected within an ideal *oikos* was also expected within the church; in both cases familial benefits were restricted for those who failed to fulfil their own duties to the family.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations in this thesis follow the guidance of *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL, 2014). Abbreviations not found there are listed below.

AGRW	Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg. *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012.
AncSoc	*Ancient Society*
BICSSup	Bulletin for the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement
BNP	*Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, eds. H. Cancik, H. Schneider, C.F. Salazar, F.G. Gentry and D. Smart. 22 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2002–2011.
DSE	*The Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, ed. J. Green. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
DSS	The Dead Sea Scrolls
EDEJ	*The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. J.J. Collins and D.C. Harlow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
EDRL	Adolf Berger. "Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law," *TAPS* 43 (1953): 333–809.
FCCGRW	First Century Christians in the Greco-Roman World

GRA	*Greco-Roman Associations* (see bibliography).
HNTR	William Baird, *The History of New Testament Research*, 3 vols. Minneapolis: Fortress,1992–2013.
IJO	*Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* (see bibliography).
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau. Berlin, 1892–1912.
IVPNTCS	Inter-Varsity Press New Testament Commentary Series
JJMJS	*The Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting*
KNNE	Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
SCI	*Scripta Classica Israelica*
TRENT	David Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004–.
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

Chapter 1

1. Introduction: Restricted Generosity in the New Testament in its Academic Context

This thesis is concerned with when, how and why the first Christians restricted their material generosity, according to the evidence of the New Testament texts. The question is both interesting and important because the teaching of Jesus, which these same churches preserved in the gospels, contains radical statements about wealth which seem to espouse a limitless generosity.[1] The study is divided into two parts: the first discusses other first-century CE social structures to provide an informative context against which to understand the ethics and ethos captured in the New Testament;[2] the second turns to the New Testament itself.

[1] E.g., Mark 10.17–31 par. Matt 19.16–26, Luke 18.18–27; Luke 6.30, 10.25–37, 12.33.

[2] Jan van der Watt, "Preface," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, ed. J.G. van der Watt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), v–ix, distinguishes between ethos and ethics as follows: *Ethics* is related to the "rules/principles/basic exhortations/ethical pointers" (7) of a given text. It is concerned with moral reflection and motivation. *Ethos* however "is a behavioural category… it deals with the way in which believers concretized their ethical convictions into actions in the totality of their life experience" (7). Ethos can thus be the expression of ethics, but the real *ethos* of a community may contradict their *ethical* ambition. Hence, van der Watt helpfully differentiates between real and idealized ethos.

The study is, thus, positioned within the discipline of New Testament studies, more specifically within New Testament ethics and most specifically within New Testament wealth ethics. The first task of this introduction is to position this work in relation to the field and results to date. Studies exclusively devoted to New Testament wealth ethics have only appeared in the last fifty years; however, I will reach further back and provide a concise summary of how wealth ethics has been approached by those writing on New Testament ethics more broadly since the beginning of the twentieth century. Methodologically, as 'New Testament ethics' encompasses a variety of academic endeavours, any study connected to this field must be precisely defined; the need for clarity is acute in relation to the most basic of presuppositions.[3] This will be the second task: to clarify my approach and suggest how it relates to current controversies. The main lines of argument and significant conclusions of the thesis are summarised at the end of this chapter.

[3] See the comments of Richard B. Hays, "Mapping the Field: Approaches to New Testament Ethics," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos*, ed. van der Watt, 3–22, where concerning a major conference on NT ethics he remarks "we found it impossible to agree on either the appropriate subject matter or the appropriate method… we found ourselves talking at cross purposes and ending in confusion and frustration" (1).

1.1. The development of New Testament ethics

"Only in the past 150 years or so has 'New Testament ethics' been a subject distinct from theology or separate from the task of giving practical instruction to the church."[4] Although the church has articulated Christian morality in relation to the books of the New Testament throughout its history, the development of New Testament ethics as a distinct discipline, which conceptually separated the *study* (or *descriptive* task) of ethics and morality in the New Testament from its *application* (or *prescriptive* task), was fairly late. Charles Cosgrove has suggested that this development derives from the influence of J.P. Gabler's inaugural address to the University of Altdorf in 1787,[5] in which he separated the task of "conveying what the holy writers felt about divine matters"[6] from the investigation of "which opinions have to do with the unchanging testament of Christian doctrine, and therefore pertain directly to us."[7] For Gabler, the latter could then be used by dogmatic theologians to address contemporary Christian practice. This 'biblical theology' movement shaped academic study

[4] Charles H. Cosgrove, "New Testament Ethics," *DSE*, 548.
[5] Ibid., 549.
[6] Trans. John Sandys-Wunch and Laurence Eldredge, "J.P. Gabler and the Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology: Translation, Commentary, and Discussion of His Originality," *SJT* 33 (1980): 133–58, 137.
[7] Ibid., 142.

thenceforth;[8] the separation of New Testament ethics from applied moral teaching seems predictable in retrospect.

Such separation is immediately evident in the preface of the earliest relevant English-language work known to this author – George Matheson's *Landmarks of New Testament Morality* (1888)[9] – in which he is careful to distinguish his work from dogmatic theology, instead claiming to sum up "the distinctive and salient principles of New Testament Morality" (*preface*). Nonetheless, this did not prevent him from concluding that the primary impression gained from his reconstruction was the continuous relevance and "permanent character" (263) of such morality. Although Matheson compared the morality he found in the New Testament to "pre-Christian" and Jewish morality, he explicitly stated that his work was not historical, in that it made no attempt to place New Testament texts in a historical context or understand them by such means.

By contrast, Hermann Jacoby's *Neutestamentliche Ethik*[10] was much more engaged with the historical-critical methods increasingly prevelant in general New Testament theology. He too clearly conceived of his work within Gabler's paradigms: "So lange Dogmatik und Ethik zu einem Ganzen verschmolzen wurden, kam

[8] So, e.g., Christine Helmer, "Biblical Theology: Bridge Over Many Waters," *CurBR* 3 (2005): 169–96, 169–73; Marcus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocussing New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 104–5.
[9] London: Nisbet.
[10] Könisburg: Thomas & Oppermann, 1899.

die Ethik nicht zu ihrem Recht. Dies ist ihr erst zu teil geworden, seitdem Dogmatik und Ethik als zwei selbständige Wissenschaften bearbeitet werden" (v). Having worked exegetically through the New Testament documents Jacoby concludes: "Betrachten wir die neutestamentliche Ethik als ein einheitliches Ganzes" (470). In answer to the question as to whether New Testament ethics have lost their relevance, he replies: "Keineswegs! Sie bleiben in voller Geltung" (472). These volumes mark the point from which studies exclusively devoted to New Testament ethics began to be published with some regularity,[11] although the overall number of studies was still fairly low.

The early twentieth century saw some significant theses in broader New Testament scholarship that would prove to have an impact on New Testament ethics. Most notable are Albert Schweitzer's "interim ethic,"[12] with reference to Jesus, and Rudolf Bultmann's development of the "Indikativ-Imperativ" paradigm

[11] Jacoby cited only one former study, the essay entitled 'Geschichte der christlichen Sittenlehre in der Zeit des neuen Testaments' by Albrecht Thoma (1879). However David Horrell notes a very early study by I. Berger, entitled *Versuch einer moralischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament für Religionslehrer und denkende Christen* (1797). Horrell owes this reference to V.P. Furnish who in turn learned of it from Baur. See David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 7.

[12] As described in, e.g., Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion*, trans. W. Lowrie (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1914), 97–100. See its later manifestation in Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (London: SCM, 1975).

with reference to Paul.[13] However, in the early twentieth century, volumes on New Testament ethics tended to adopt a methodology and approach similar to that of Jacoby and Matheson. In contrast to the modest output of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the growth of the subject in the last fifty years has been exponential and exhibited a much wider diversity of methodological approaches.[14]

1.2. Wealth ethics in New Testament ethics

Volumes on New Testament ethics in the early-mid twentieth century[15] principally discussed wealth ethics in relation to Jesus's teaching, in particular the 'impossibility' or 'inadvisability' of his

[13] Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Ethics in Paul," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches*, ed. B.S. Rosner, trans. C.W. Stenschke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 195–216. Willi Marxsen, writing in 1989 considered this still to be a common approach to Pauline and New Testament ethics: *New Testament Foundations for Christian Ethics*, trans. O.C. Dean Jr. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993 [German org. 1989]), 180.

[14] Horrell, *Solidarity*, suggests that this growth is part of a societal shift that is increasingly focussed on orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy, together with the "prominence of many specific ethical issues in the public domain" and, perhaps more significantly, "the collapse of a shared moral tradition" (10). Admittedly, "two and a half decades of word-processing technology" and an "all-encompassing output culture" may also have contributed: Bockmuehl, *Word*, 33.

[15] The first of several studies in English with a similar methodology was Ernest F. Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus* (London: Macmillan, 1924). Following: C.A. Anderson Scott, *New Testament Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: CUP, 1930); L.H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1966); Sydney Cave, *The Christian Way: A Study of the New Testament Ethics in Relation to Present Problems* (London: Nisbet, 1955); William Lillie, *Studies in New Testament Ethics* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1961); Robert N. Flew, *Jesus and His Way: A Study of the Ethics of the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1963).

commands, e.g., to "sell all that you have" (Mark 10:21) or to "give to the one who begs from you" (Matthew 5:42). Scholars noted that the problem is compounded by the apparent inconsistency of Jesus; not all were presented with the radical commands, and differing practices are commended. On the whole, research in this era offered three solutions: the first was to distinguish between 'commandments' for all disciples and 'counsels' which were not universal;[16] the second was to adopt some form of Schweitzer's interim ethic; the third was to seek the principle behind the instruction, whilst taking the particular command as a forceful illustration of the principle.[17] The principle was always less demanding than the command. Other than Jesus's teaching, there was little detailed consideration of wealth ethics in the rest of the

[16] Scott, *Ethics*, 18; Marshall, *Ethics*, 101; Cave, *Ethics*, 58–59. Taken up in later scholarship by, amongst others, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*, trans. J. Holland-Smith and W.J. O'Hara, rev. 2nd (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 48–49; J. Leslie Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament* (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975), 91; Wolfgang Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, trans. D.E. Green (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 49.

[17] Scott, *Ethics*, 57–58; Marshall, *Ethics*, 35; Cave, *Ethics*, 57. Later followed by Schnackenburg, *Moral Teaching*, 125; Thomas W. Manson, *Ethics and the Gospel* (London: SCM, 1960), 56. Dissenting was Lillie, *Ethics*, 100. All these 'solutions' were forcefully critiqued by John Knox, *The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church* (London: Epworth, 1961). Although not specifically dealing with wealth ethics, and thus not discussed at length here, he commented that "to conclude that Jesus did not mean his 'absolutes' absolutely would involve ascribing to him a lack of responsibility and seriousness which no student of his teaching and life as a whole would find credible" (40). Although he accepts Jesus' expectation of a fast-approaching eschatological consummation, Knox rejects the interim solution partly because the Kingdom of God is present as well as future, and partly because: "the question, however, is whether his ethical teaching would have been less absolute in its demands" (47) without such an eschatological horizon, a proposition Knox rejects.

New Testament, aside from different attempts to explain the 'community of goods' described in Acts 2:42–47, 4:32–37. Some considered it to be a "voluntary communism,"[18] others an "inter-group generosity," [19] and still others inclined towards a more official structural communism.[20] More or less all assumed that this 'experiment' was historically true, but that it did not continue beyond this initial expression; in some works there is an evident polemic against political communism which no doubt influenced exegetical conclusions. Overall, despite the lack of significant attention to wealth ethics these early volumes raised important questions as to how best to understand Jesus's actions and teaching that relate to money and possessions. The suggestion that there were principles that lay behind specific imperatives remains influential, as is the suggestion that different individuals may be given different instructions, even if the details of the exegetical solutions offered in this era are rejected.[21]

The treatment of wealth ethics in New Testament ethics was heavily influenced by liberation theology, which "emerged within the wider context of Catholic social teaching and, in particular, the

[18] E.g., Lillie, *Ethics*, 103.
[19] E.g., Cave, *Ethics*, 103. Later: Schnackenburg, *Moral Teaching*, 210; Martin Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 32–34.
[20] E.g., Manson, *Ethics and the Gospel*, 78–79, 82–86.
[21] For a summary and assessment of how these solutions have fared through the contemporary era in relation to wealth ethics see Christopher M. Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, WUNT 2.275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 2–19.

significant development of Roman Catholic theology based on the Second Vatican Council."[22] In general terms, the late 1960s saw the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America attempt to bring the Bible to bear on the devastating socio-economic situation of much of the population.[23] The manner in which they pursued this aim was in enormous contrast to the Western theological tradition surveyed thus far: "Liberation theology is above all a new way of *doing* theology rather than being itself a new theology."[24] For Gustavo Gutiérrez , whose *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* is considered the foundational publication for liberation theology:

> The theology of liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society; this theology must be verified by the practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors.[25]

This entailed a new approach to the relationship between the Bible and ethics and, although different authors have articulated different hermeneutical approaches, the central focus is upon the so-called

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[22] Christopher Rowland, "Introduction: The Theology of Liberation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, ed. C. Rowland, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 1–16, 5.
[23] See the brief history in Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 11–24.
[24] Rowland, "Liberation," 3, emphasis his.
[25] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. C. Inda and J. Eagleson (London: SCM, 1974 [Spanish org. 1971]), 307.

'preferential option for the poor,' whereby it is claimed that the God represented in the biblical texts is demonstrably primarily concerned with the materially poor,[26] and a methodological shift whereby "the emphasis is not placed on the text's meaning in itself but rather on the meaning the text has for the people reading it."[27] The combination of these two factors is found in the claim that "the most adequate 'pertinency' for rereading the kerygma of the Bible, is with the poor."[28] The life situations of the poor make them those to whom the texts are primarily addressed and for whom they have the most meaning. The descriptive and prescriptive tasks are thrust aside by the immediate apprehension and embodiment of biblical narratives and statements in the contemporary Christian community. A full description and evaluation of the many nuances of liberation theology is superfluous here;[29] what is important to note is that this movement has had a significant impact on New Testament study in recent decades.[30] This can be seen partly in numerous forms of liberation theology addressing Western issues

[26] Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner, *Liberating Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies* (New York: Orbis, 1983), 42.
[27] Carlos Mesters, "Use of the Bible," in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. N.K. Gottwald (New York: Orbis, 1983), 119–33, 122.
[28] J. Severino Croatto, *Biblical Hermeneutics: Towards a Theory of Reading as the Production of Meaning* (New York: Orbis, 1987), 63.
[29] For this, see, e.g., Christopher Rowland, ed., *Companion to Liberation Theology*; Smith, *Liberation Theology*; Paul E. Sigmund, *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads: Democracy or Revolution* (New York: OUP, 1990).
[30] Cf. Christopher Rowland, "Epilogue: The Future of Liberation Theology," in Rowland, *Companion to Liberation Theology*, 304–7.

of perceived oppression and injustice;[31] more particularly, work on New Testament Ethics from the 1970s onward has tended to consider whether there was more to say about money and possessions than earlier works had articulated.[32]

One notable scholar evidencing this shift was Wolfgang Schrage.[33] In contrast to earlier treatments Schrage emphasised that for *all* disciples, *all* possessions are subject to the command of Jesus. Identifying principles cannot mean the erasure of the more concrete instructions: "the primacy of love did not prevent Jesus from uttering specific binding instructions paradigmatically" (80). Thus, Schrage argues that it is not merely *heart attitude* (as earlier scholars tended to emphasise) but the *concrete reality* of what one does with their possessions that is the concern of Jesus's teaching. This is what is striking in his account: the emphasis on the ethical condemnation of earthly riches in and of themselves, argued on exegetical grounds. Alan Verhey also gave more substantial attention to wealth ethics in his work on New Testament ethics,[34] although he is less combative than Schrage and his work contains more continuity with the earlier volumes surveyed above. Among

[31] See, e.g., A.F. Botta and P.R. Andiňach, eds., *The Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation* (Atlanta: SBL, 2009).
[32] It is surely no coincidence that the plethora of studies on wealth ethics in Luke-Acts originates in the same decade that liberation theology became widely read.
[33] Schrage, *Ethics*.
[34] *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984). Schrage and Verhey discuss wealth ethics at least twice as much as any other volume on New Testament ethics of a similar length in this era.

the most recent volumes in New Testament ethics, Russell Pregeant also deserves mention here, not so much for quantity of comment on wealth ethics, but for how clear the contrast is between his work and early-mid twentieth century treatments of Jesus's sayings about wealth, most clearly seen as he exegetes Jesus's encounter with the rich young man:

> Far from a one-time counsel to a particular person, it says something indispensable about discipleship. Although it may take on a metaphorical value, it is evident throughout the conversation that the reader is asked to take the literal level seriously. Apart from such an assumption, neither the disciples' reaction in [Mark 10] v. 26 nor their claims regarding their own economic sacrifices in v. 28 make sense.[35]

As with Schrage, the willingness to defend an exegesis of the text that does not explain away the literal force of Jesus's commands is a clear development from earlier work. Pregeant also makes mention of "Paul's sense of community solidarity" which "demands sharing within the assemblies" (357). These conclusions owe much to liberation theology (with which Pregeant also shares a more postmodern hermeneutical methodology); it is no surprise to see him explicitly reference the "preferential option for the poor" (357). Of course, not all have moved in the same direction.[36] Overall, though, post-1970 volumes on New Testament ethics have

[35] Russel Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging New Testament Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 159.
[36] E.g., Houlden, *Ethics*; Marxsen, *Ethics*, who repeat the substance of earlier treatments.

tended to pay more attention to wealth and property,[37] and many have sought to assert that there was something more demanding in the texts than earlier scholars seemed to allow. The suggestion that wealth was not just an issue of the heart, but a problem in and of itself, is a notable development, as is the increasing attention paid to the communal dimension of wealth ethics.

1.3. New Testament wealth ethics

The increased attention given to wealth ethics in volumes on New Testament ethics is not as noticeable as the significant growth of studies focussed exclusively on New Testament wealth ethics itself.[38] These may be divided into studies that examine a specific biblical author or corpus and those that attempt to deal with the whole of the New Testament.[39] Due to the character of such studies

[37] Although some remain brief: Daniel J. Harrington and James F. Keenan, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics* (Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 2002), 130–31; Ben Witherington III, *The Indelible Image*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009–10); Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996). Witherington devotes 17 pages to discussions of wealth ethics, but out of a combined 1600 pages across both volumes the topic still seems under-developed. Hays claims that one of the four primary moral concerns of the New Testament is the sharing of possessions, but only spares the theme five pages in his conclusion (464–8). Similarly, although earlier, it is astounding that there is no treatment of any area of wealth ethics in Barth's massive *Church Dogmatics*.

[38] Over the same period there has been a prolific growth of popular level treatments of biblical or Christian wealth ethics. For recent bibliography on this see Craig L. Blomberg, *Christians in an Age of Wealth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013).

[39] For the former, the work devoted to Luke-Acts far exceeds that given to any other text or author, for the entirely understandable reason that it contains the greatest quantity of material. For a summary see Thomas E. Phillips, "Reading

an attempted summary or survey of key insights would be futile as most of the valuable research is in relation to specific texts, and thus is better engaged as and when such texts become our concern. What must be addressed here, though, are the methodological developments that have also emerged over the last 40 years.

The current diversity in New Testament ethics mirrors the breakdown of common ground in all areas of New Testament study.[40] Fortunately, in recent years Richard Hays and Richard Burridge have published helpful and exhaustive surveys that demarcate the variety of current approaches and some of the

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Recent Readings of Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke and Acts," *CurBR* 1 (2003): 231–69. The most significant recent study, including an extensive bibliography, is that of Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*. On the Jesus tradition see, e.g., David L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1980); Roland Deines, "God or Mammon: The Danger of Wealth in the Jesus Tradition and in the Epistle of James," in *Anthropologie und Ethik im Frühjudentum und im Neuen Testament*, ed. M. Konradt and E. Schläpfer, WUNT 322 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 327–86. The most significant monograph on Paul is Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). On James, in addition to Deines, see Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth in James* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987). For Revelation see Mark D. Matthews, *Riches, Poverty and the Faithful: Perspectives on Wealth in the Second Temple Period and the Apocalypse of John*, SNTSMS 154 (Cambridge: CUP, 2013).
For the latter see to varying degrees, e.g., Hengel, *Property and Riches*; Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Nottingham: IVP, 1999); Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sharing Possessions: What Faith Demands*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); Sondra Ely Wheeler, *Wealth as Peril and Obligation: The New Testament on Possessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Gary A. Anderson, *Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition* (New Haven: YUP, 2013); the collection of essays in B.W. Longenecker and K.D. Liebengood, eds., *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[40] This is primarily what Marcus Bockmuehl referred to with his chapter title 'The Troubled Fortunes of New Testament Scholarship' in Bockmuehl, *Word.*

primary issues that are at stake.[41] Hays' survey categorizes work on NT ethics into six groups:

1. Historical Description of the Ethical Teaching of the New Testament Writings
2. Ethnographic Description of the Social World of the Early Christians
3. Extraction of Ideals or Principles
4. Cultural Critique of Ideologies in the New Testament
5. Character Formation and 'the Ethics of Reading'
6. Metaphorical Embodiment of Narrative Paradigms

Broadly speaking, the first two groups are focussed on the *descriptive task* of understanding either the New Testament documents themselves, their context, or the Christian community from which they emerged. The third and fourth groups seek to move from exegesis to contemporary moral discourse (with the associated hermeneutical issues) but from very different perspectives. The fifth and sixth group both emphasise the embodiment of the texts in Christian communities but have contrasting approaches.[42] As Hays rightly notes, the majority of publications in the field have been located in the first group,[43] most of which make no significant attempt to move from description to application. Such a phenomenon is of course the logical derivation of Gabler's distinction between biblical and dogmatic theology, the

[41] Hays, "Mapping the Field"; Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), see esp. Chap. 1: "Being 'Biblical': Contexts and Starting Points," 1–32.
[42] Hays, "Mapping the Field," 18.
[43] Ibid., 4.

context in which New Testament ethics arose. This study stands with a foot in each of the first two categories, thus also contributing to the descriptive task. Although this saves us from having to wade into hermeneutical debates about the relevance and application of New Testament ethics, it does not determine all methodological decisions. The key questions are: 1) can we discuss a wealth ethic of the New Testament or only different wealth *ethics* of the different New Testament books/authors? 2) what is the appropriate object of study? The ethics of the texts or the ethos of the community? Having addressed these questions, I will introduce the recent methodological work of Ruben Zimmermann which is influential on the exegetical sections of this study.

1.3.1. 'Ethic' or 'ethics' of the New Testament

Most volumes on New Testament ethics published in the mid-twentieth century were content to work through the New Testament (or at least Jesus and Paul), mining it for ethically relevant material which was compiled into an essentially unified 'New Testament ethics,' where the plurality of ethics referred to different ethical topics rather than different ethical perspectives.[44] However, a different emphasis became apparent in the 1960s in the work of Thomas Manson[45] and the second edition of Rudolf

[44] See the bibliography above in note 15.
[45] *Ethics and the Gospel.*

Schnackenburg's volume on New Testament ethics.[46] For Schnackenburg: "although wholly loyal to the Lord's words, the early Church, nevertheless, permitted its own viewpoint and interpretation to show through what it handed on" (14). This does not undermine an essential unity of ethical teaching, but allows for different emphases and the development of ethical material in the New Testament documents. For Manson, however, the gospel writers were not "wholly loyal" but appropriated Jesus's teaching and placed it in different contexts to those in which it was originally given; eschatological instructions conditioned by an imminent parousia were transformed into general ethical instructions.[47] Instead of a unified New Testament ethic, then, Manson argued for a *Christian* ethic that is modelled on Jesus's self-sacrificial love.[48] This trajectory reached a defining moment in 1973 when Leslie Houlden published a short volume on New Testament ethics which emphasised the diversity of the texts:

> There is, strictly, no such thing as 'the x of the NT'… it is only at the cost of ignoring the individuality of each [text], in thought and expression, that the unified account can emerge… If this is nevertheless to be done, it can only be for one of two reasons: either because the individuality has not been acknowledged or appreciated, or because of some overwhelmingly

[46] *Moral Teaching*. Similarly, Knox, *Ethic of Jesus*.
[47] Manson, *Ethics and the Gospel*, 94–101.
[48] Ibid., 66. There are parallels between Manson's scheme and many expositions of situation ethics, which was gaining momentum around this time. See C. Fitzhugh Spragins, "Is T.W. Manson Also Among the Situationists," *ExpTim* 81 (1970): 244–47.

> compelling dogma about the authoritativeness of the NT canon as such… In any case, the point to establish is that the individual writer is the starting-point. There can be no initial assumption of harmony.[49]

For Houlden, proper historical-critical methodology[50] reveals that the diversity of the texts is diversity of ethical *principle*, rather than just one of form, emphasis or purpose. Not only is this true of different biblical texts ("the teaching Jesus of these gospels is scarcely recognizable in the moral ideals of the Pastoral Epistles and James" [71]), but he also considers Paul's writings to be ethically inconsistent.[51] The substitution of a 'soft' individuality for a 'hard' diversity became a watershed move. The emphasis on hard diversity paved the way for in-depth studies of different ethical issues, as addressed by different New Testament authors; and even if the particular exegetical conclusions of Houlden are rejected, all future work has had to address the question of whether it is valid to discuss a unified New Testament ethical perspective.[52] In contrast to early and mid-twentieth century work, the majority of recent research has proceeded with the *a priori* assumption of a hard

[49] Houlden, *Ethics*, 2.
[50] By which, perhaps, he primarily has in mind the rise of form and redaction criticism in German scholarship, on which see William Baird, *HNTR* 2.355–57; Stephen Neil and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861–1986* (Oxford: OUP, 1988), 281–88.
[51] Houlden, *Ethics*, 25f.
[52] Even more aggressive is Sanders, *Ethics*. The focus on diversity naturally resulted in work such as Roger Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984).

diversity; most authors avoid any attempt to harmonize or synthesise their findings.

My title, "restricted generosity in the New Testament," may suggest that I *do* consider it valid to discuss New Testament ethics as a unity. To a degree this is the case: although the intention to make sufficient room for the individuality of each New Testament text is surely to be welcomed, Houlden and those following him have taken a position which is too extreme. Whilst accepting that attention must be paid to each writing on its own terms, allowing difference to emerge, the point I wish to contest is that it is necessary to *assume* a hard diversity between these documents rather than, broadly speaking, a significant interrelationship between them that makes their compatibility a more likely prospect than a hard divergence. Leander Keck, in his presidential address to the *SBL* in 1995, made a critical observation:

> The defining feature of New Testament ethics is its orientation to an event, namely, the event of Jesus… and to the community that resulted… Even the *Haustafeln* in Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Peter have been pulled into the orbit of the Christological appeal. This persistent reference to the Christ-event reflects the fact that Christianity offered Christ-wrought salvation, whose acceptance entailed changing certain aspects of the inherited behaviour while reinforcing those deemed not inconsistent with the emerging Christian ethos. In other words, what distinguished the ethics of the New Testament from the philosophical tradition is its appeal to the shape of Jesus' life.[53]

[53] Leander E. Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" *JBL* 115 (1996): 3–16.

All the New Testament documents are concerned with the "event of Jesus" and continually relate ethical discussion to this reality. I accept Wayne Meeks's point that much of Christian morality was also related to, and shared with, the moral world in which they lived; "the 'essence' of Christianity is not some residue that remains after we have boiled away everything they 'borrowed' from the impure world around them."[54] It is not that all the ethics of the New Testament are derived uniquely from Jesus, but rather that all the documents are intimately concerned with and related to him. It seems, then, entirely reasonable to assume that if the ethics of the documents are orientated around Jesus they may well have more to unite them than divide them. What is not being argued for is that the ethics of the New Testament documents are identical; clearly this is not the case. Rather it is suggested that we should not presume the likelihood of a *hard* diversity, or incompatibility. If, after investigation, we conclude that there are incompatible ethics expressed by the texts, this must be accepted; the point is that this should not be the methodological presumption.

Having said this, for those who take a different view, most of the research presented here does not depend on this methodological point. Although some may wish to dispute whether examining fictive-kinship language in the New Testament as a whole is appropriate (chapter 5), the exegetical studies on the Thessalonian

[54] Wayne A. Meeks, "Understanding Early Christian Ethics," *JBL* 105 (1986): 3–11.

correspondence and 1 Timothy 5.3–16 (chapters 6 and 7) may be taken as they stand by those on either side of the debate.

1.3.2. The appropriate object of study: the ethics of the texts and the ethos of the community

Frank Matera's volume, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul*,[55] nicely illustrates the second methodological issue. Faced with the problem of the historical Jesus, Matera abandoned the quest of recovering the ethics of Jesus himself (8); he also accepted the presupposition of hard diversity (4–6).[56] Matera attempts to move beyond these methodological difficulties by working "on the assumption that the *primary* object of New Testament ethics should be the writings of the New Testament," that is, "the ethical teachings of these writings" (7). Thus, the focus is on the "legacies" of Jesus and Paul as reflected in the *texts*, rather than Jesus and Paul themselves. This allows Matera to analyse the ethical teaching of the texts individually, whilst bypassing the

[55] Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

[56] Matera contrasts the diachronic (focus on diversity) and synchronic (focus on unity) approaches. The organizing categories are not particularly helpful or precise, as shown when Matera comments that the diachronic approach results in a "fragmentation of the New Testament witness" (4) and places Schnackenburg within this category. Schnackenburg does trace individual emphases and the development of New Testament ethics, but nonetheless considers them an essential unity; it is certainly misleading to describe his conclusions as "fragmenting" New Testament ethics. Similarly, the two 'synchronic' studies he reviews were written earlier than those he designates diachronic, which he considers "something of a puzzle" (6). The puzzle dissipates when one sees the trajectory of scholarship outlined above and considers that the two 'synchronic' studies pre-date Houlden.

difficulties of historical reconstruction, *and* discuss some kind of unity in the category of "legacy." He even offers some "overtures towards a more synthetic view" (248).

A second approach, in complete contrast to that of Matera, is to study the *ethos of the Christian community* that the New Testament texts bear witness to. The outstanding representative of this approach is Wayne Meeks, who has described how it developed in his own work:

> Disappointed with the prevailing ways of doing theology, I felt increasingly that questions about the ways Christian patterns of moral practice came into being might get us closer to the matters actually dealt with in the earliest Christian documents… I came to see that, despite the many books that continue to be published on the topic, "New Testament ethics" is a misleading category, confusing historical constructions with normative judgments, eliding difficult questions about the nature of a scriptural canon, and above all failing to take with sufficient seriousness the dialectic between the formation of a community and the development of the community's norms of belief and behaviour.[57]

Meeks set out his agenda in his SBL presidential address in 1985,[58] where he stated that "I wish to limit our attention to the ethics of the Christian movement in its formative stage" (3). Thus, the moniker 'New Testament ethics' is anachronistic and useless to the historical task. Rather, what is necessary is a description of "the

[57] Wayne A. Meeks, *In Search of the Early Christians: Selected Essays*, ed. A.R. Hilton and H.G. Snyder (New Haven: YUP, 2002), xxiii–xxiv.
[58] Meeks, "Early Christian Ethics."

world of meaning and of relationships, special to that group in its own time and place, within which behaviour is evaluated" (4). It is the communities themselves that are the primary object of investigation, rather than the "ideas" of the community expressed in Christian texts. Finally, in direct contrast to many former studies, he asserted that:

> What we must do with the scattered fragments of evidence we glean from our sources is not to boil them down to obtain their essence, however we might define that… Rather, we must reconstruct, must imagine the world in which these fragments make sense. (5)

Over the following years Meeks followed the trajectory of his own programme, first investigating *The Moral World of the First Christians*[59] before attempting to describe what constituted the specific morality of the early Christians communities.[60] He considered this the historically valuable task.

One wonders, though, if we must choose between these options. As Keck noted over thirty years ago: "the more sharply the actual life-styles of the Christian communities come into focus, the better we can understand the ethical teaching which was produced and refined in them."[61] The *Sitz-im-Leben* of the documents is accepted by all New Testament scholars as crucial for understanding the text;

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[59] London: SPCK, 1986.
[60] *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: YUP, 1993).
[61] Leander E. Keck, "On the Ethos of Early Christians," *JAAR* 42 (1974): 435–52, 451.

conversely, the primary sources for reconstructing the ethos of the Christian communities in the first century are the New Testament documents. The two are mutually beneficial endeavours and there seems no decisive reason to consider one more desirable than the other. As this study addresses when, how and why the first Christians restricted their material generosity, according to the texts of the New Testament, it necessarily engages both the texts (in particular for the *why* question) and the ethos of the communities to which they are addressed, as best we can understand them (the *when* and *how* questions). To understand what is being said, one must, as much as possible, try to reconstruct what was going on; the tasks are not easily separable.

Even if this is accepted, some may still question why the New Testament documents are prioritised above other early Christian writings, as Meeks argued:

> I propose to abandon the phrase "New Testament ethics," for that is a category not susceptible of *historical* inquiry… Instead, I wish to limit our attention to the ethics of the Christian movement in its formative stage, before, say, Irenaeus. Since those Christians did not yet have a "New Testament," the question of a New Testament ethics does not arise.[62]

The fact that the canon was not closed in the time of the first Christians is here used to assert that any study of 'New Testament' ethics is anachronistic; it may be acceptable as a theological endeavour but is not appropriate for historical study. However, all

[62] Meeks, "Early Christian Ethics," 3.

scholars draw a line somewhere as to which texts are analysed; Meeks proposed to examine the "formative stage" of the Christian movement, but the exact scope of that period is ultimately a matter of each scholar's judgment and choice. If that is accepted, it may be argued that there are good historical reasons one may choose to limit an investigation to the New Testament: although the dating of various New Testament books is always contentious, the vast majority of them are considered the earliest Christian texts we have extant. Strong cases have been made for first-century authorship of all the New Testament texts,[63] and most scholars who choose to date some later than this still accept the vast majority as first-century documents.[64] Similarly, all the New Testament documents are associated with the first generation of leaders of the early Christian church; historically, these documents get us closer to the "event of Jesus" than those of the second generation. Thus, although many scholars may disagree about the exact dating of a minority of the New Testament texts, or wish to include one or two others as first-century documents, overall, the New Testament represents the vast majority of the earliest Christian writings. Thus, given that every scholar makes a choice as to the boundaries of their investigation, it seems historically reasonable to select the New

[63] John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976), famously argued that all the New Testament texts were authored pre-70.
[64] Of course, some non-canonical texts may be considered earlier than some of the New Testament documents, most notably Didache, Barnabas and 1 Clement.

Testament texts as our earliest sources.[65] In addition, one may choose to focus on the ethics of New Testament texts due to their historical significance. As argued above, this is never detached from the historical task, but as Zimmermann comments: "it is not merely the situation, but rather primarily the text itself that had an impact on Christian ethics and has had an ongoing influence on morals and norms until the present day."[66]

1.3.3. Ruben Zimmermann's "implicit ethics"

In the last decade a spate of publications by Ruben Zimmermann have advanced and illustrated his methodological approach for investigating the ethics of New Testament texts.[67] He uses the

[65] So also Witherington III, *Indelible Image*, 1.28–9 and David J. Armitage, *Theories of Poverty in the World of the New Testament*, WUNT 2.423 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 198–204.

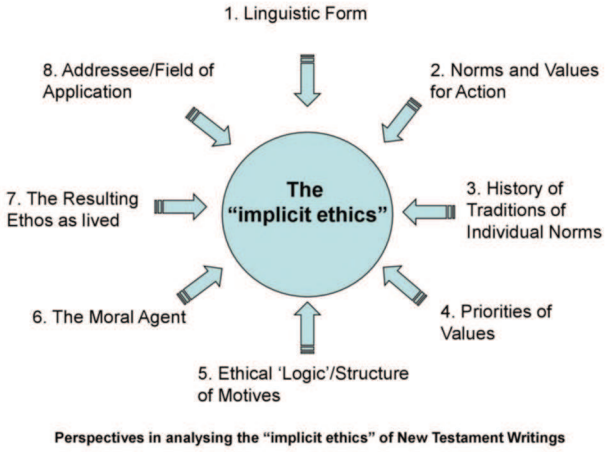
[66] Ruben Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings: A Draft on a New Methodology for Analysing New Testament Ethics," *Neot* 43 (2009): 399–423, 402.

[67] The outline of Zimmermann's method was first published as "Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ: Entwurf einer 'Impliziten Ethik' des Paulus am Beispiel des 1. Korintherbriefes," *TLZ* 132 (2007): 259–84, but substantially presented in 2009 as Zimmermann, "New Methodology." He demonstrated its value in "Mission versus Ethics in 1 Corinthians 9? 'Implicit Ethics' as an Aid in Analysing New Testament Texts," in *Sensitivity towards Outsiders*, ed. J. Kok et al., WUNT 2.364 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 270–89. Zimmermann's methodology has structured the 'Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik' series published by Mohr Siebeck: F.W. Horn and id., eds., *Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ*, WUNT 238 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); id. and J.G. van der Watt, eds., *Moral Language in the New Testament*, WUNT 2.296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); id. and J.G. van der Watt, eds., *Rethinking the Ethics of John*, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); F.W. Horn, U. Volp, and id., eds., *Ethische Normen des Frühen Christentums*, WUNT 313 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). His method could be used to analyse other texts as well, but the New Testament is Zimmermann's focus.

terminology of "implicit ethics" for two reasons: first, "the New Testament authors themselves render no systematic account for norms of action and contexts of reason"; second, the "'ethical substructure' [underlies] the specific communication of a certain writing."[68] In other words the majority of the ethics in a text is not explicitly stated; it must be discerned. Zimmermann proposes eight "perspectives" through which to view New Testament texts (Figure 1); his contention is that the "implicit ethics" may be drawn out if a text is analysed through these lenses. He is clear that some of the perspectives overlap and that not all may be useful for addressing every text, but together they "fulfil a heuristic function" (417); "because ethics is complex, a corresponding methodological guideline cannot be too simple" (418). Zimmermann's methodology has been tested in a number of research publications[69] but has not as yet been widely used by other New Testament scholars. I consider Zimmermann's proposals both convincing and an immensely helpful aid to exegesis and, as such, I will appropriate aspects of his methodology in this study.

[68] Zimmermann, "New Methodology," 403. All quotes in this section are taken from this article.
[69] See the KNNE series, n. 67.

Figure 1[70]



1.4. The argument and contributions of this study

The importance of generosity in the ethics and ethos of the early Christians, as represented by the New Testament, has been given repeated attention in the literature cited above. This study attempts to contribute to that discussion by focussing on the occasions where the first Christians *restricted* their generosity in some way; this question has not been the focus of any research in New Testament wealth ethics to date.[71] I first argue that we can best understand the ethics and ethos of the first Christians by examining them with reference to other comparable first-century social structures: the

[70] Taken from Zimmermann, "New Methodology," 405.

[71] Fiona G.R. Gregson, "Everything in Common? The Theology and Practice of the Sharing of Possessions in Community with Particular Reference to Jesus and his Disciples, the Earliest Christians and Paul" (PhD diss., London School of Theology, 2014), has one chapter on the "limits of sharing" in the Thessalonian correspondence, but this is not the focus of her thesis.

oikos, voluntary associations and Jewish groups.[72] As such, the first half of the thesis is devoted to 'comparative studies,' examining what can be said about generosity, and its restrictions, in these social structures. My main conclusions are as follows: 1) mutual material solidarity and generosity was expected within the *oikos*, a duty which was encapsulated within the Roman virtue of *pietas*; these ideals were not, however, limited to those who thought in terms of *pietas*; similar values and expectations can be found across wider Greco-Roman and Jewish culture. This generosity was reciprocal and, therefore, was restricted in cases where one party had failed to perform their obligations. 2) I argue, against the current majority view, that there is not sufficient evidence to claim that voluntary associations cared for their poorer members. 3) Perhaps more controversially, again, against the majority view, I also argue that there is not sufficient evidence to claim that organised poor-care was widespread in first-century Jewish groups. 4) Although I consider all three social structures to have relevance to the investigation of the early church in general, *on this specific issue* the most illuminating comparisons can be drawn between the *oikos* and the early church.

The results of these comparative studies inform the second part of the thesis: restricted generosity in the New Testament. My research revealed three areas on which to focus: The first area

[72] The justification for these choices and explanation of the terminology can be found at the relevant sections.

concerns the extensive use of fictive kinship language in the New Testament. I argue that the New Testament texts not only portray the church as a family, but that this self-conception is repeatedly associated with the normal 'family duty' of mutual material generosity and support. It is argued that this infers a restriction: there is a difference between how the early church was generous to insiders and outsiders. This distinction between outsiders and insiders is a nuance completely missing in many treatments of New Testament wealth ethics and under-appreciated in others. The other two chapters tackle the specific instances where a New Testament author appeals for generosity to be restricted (the Thessalonian correspondence and 1 Timothy 5.3–16). I apply both the findings of the first half of the thesis and the "implicit ethics" methodology of Zimmermann. In both chapters, I argue that the ethical logic relates to the self-conception of the church as a family and, where restrictions are commanded, it is this paradigm that renders them most explicable. At the same time, both chapters analyse the current academic state-of-play and I advance my own solutions as to the relevant exegetical debates. Although not entirely novel, I argue that these solutions represent a clarification and improvement in the interpretation of the texts. The final contribution of the thesis is the thesis itself: a sustained look at the restrictions on generosity in the New Testament is a current lacuna in New Testament wealth ethics. Some implications of my findings are proposed in the final chapter.

Part 1

Restricted Generosity in Comparable First-Century Social Structures

Introduction

As stated at the opening of this study, one reason that *restricted* generosity in the early church is so interesting is that these same churches preserved Jesus's striking sayings on wealth. The factors that influenced the practice of the early church may plausibly have included this radical teaching, but also the practical circumstances and social norms of their day; the churches existed within the social structures of their society and their financial practices would inevitably have related, in some way, to the world that they inhabited. In order to investigate the ways in which the early church limited its generosity and the reasons why it did so, the clearest possible picture of the early church's practice must be obtained; to do this, it will help us to compare the early church with what can be known of practices related to generosity, and its restrictions, in comparable first-century social structures.

Which social structures should the early church be compared with?

In his influential essay, "The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century,"[1] Edwin Judge presented a compelling case

[1] Edwin A. Judge, in *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E.A. Judge*, ed. D.M. Scholer (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008 [org. 1958]), 1–56.

that the early church must be understood against its Hellenistic urban context:

> It was… among communities living in this alien world that the New Testament writings circulated. That many of the readers practised the Jewish religion does not make their situation irrelevant to their thinking. They still lived under the Hellenistic social institutions and largely shared in the common tradition of civilization. It is the pattern of society in the Hellenistic republics that must be determined if New Testament social precepts are to be understood. (10)

This does not mean that the practice and thought of the early church was determined by its context, rather that it must be understood against it.[2] Such an argument has been accepted by the majority of scholars,[3] who have proposed five social structures as options for comparison with the early churches: [4] the *oikos*, voluntary associations, the synagogue, philosophical schools and mystery

[2] On the whole issue of methodology and comparison, see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), esp. 47. Smith argues at length against the quest for genealogical relationships and emphasises that comparison assumes difference.

[3] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), however, warned against ignoring other important factors: "given the importance ancient communities attached to their founders, the question of how a community understood itself can often only be established by examining its relationship to its founder or leader as well as the philosophical or theological teaching it received from him" (12).

[4] Most have focussed particularly on the Pauline churches, to which the majority of the evidence we have applies; however, any conclusions about broad comparative paradigms are equally likely to apply to the 'non-Pauline' churches.

religions.[5] This study will analyse the first three of these, but not the last two. A full introduction to the three structures we will examine will be given as each is discussed; first the decision to exclude the philosophical schools and the mystery religions must be defended.

Why not the philosophical schools and the mystery religions?

Although many studies have been undertaken comparing early Christian texts or authors (normally Paul) with various philosophers or philosophical systems, our focus here is entirely on the comparison of the community praxis of the early church with that of the philosophical schools. The first philosophical school is generally accepted to be that of Pythagoras in the sixth century BCE,[6] which is often assumed to serve as the basic model for the philosophical schools later founded by Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus.[7] Some scholars have argued that philosophical schools, characterised by "communities of disciples around noted teachers,"[8] serve as an important comparison with the early church.

[5] E.g., Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: YUP, 1983); Richard S. Ascough, *What Are They Saying about the Formation of Pauline Churches?* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1998).
[6] R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* (Missoula: Scholars, 1975), 43.
[7] See Ibid., 61–122.
[8] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 82.

The most important arguments they propose are the following:[9] 1) There are *similarities in the content and style of teaching* in both Paul's epistles and the writings of various philosophers, which we may expect to produce communities with comparable structures, practices and emphases.[10] 2) Linked, but conceptually separable, is the argument that the early church engaged in *similar activities* to the philosophical schools.[11] 3) Some second-century figures considered the early church to be analogous to the philosophical schools.[12]

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[9] For surveys of the relevant scholarship see ibid., 81–84; Ascough, *Pauline Churches*, 29–49; Edward Adams, "First Century Models for Paul's Churches: Selected Scholarly Developments since Meeks," in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later*, ed. T.D. Still and D.G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 60–78.

[10] With reference to all philosophical schools, see esp.: Arthur D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933); Edwin A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," in *The First Christians in the Roman World*, ed. J.R. Harrison, WUNT 229 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 526–52; Loveday Alexander, "Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence of Galen," in *Paul and His Hellenistic Context*, ed. T. Engberg-Pederson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 60–83. On the early church and Epicureans: Norman W. de Witt, *St. Paul and Epicurus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954); Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 1995). On the Stoics: Troels Engberg-Pederson, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

[11] This has been most fully developed by Culpepper, whose argument in support of the Johannine-school hypothesis is that the *activities* of the Johannine group are those that characterised a school. For his summary of what activities characterise a school see Culpepper, *Johannine School*, 258–59.

[12] Particularly Justin and Galen. See esp. Robert L. Wilken, "Collegia, Philosophical School, and Theology," in *The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire and the Setting of Primitive Christianity*, ed. S. Benko and J.J. O'Rourke (Valley Forge: Judson, 1971), 268–91.

These arguments evidently have some merit and have garnered support from a significant number of scholars, but they are not irresistible. Without wishing to minimise the extent to which aspects of first-century Hellenistic philosophy would have been known by, and had meaningful influence on, Jewish and early Christian communities, it is less clear whether the *social structure* of a philosophical school would have been as influential. First, meaningful membership of a philosophical school was a luxury that few outside the elite were able to access.[13] As Steve Mason notes, "Philosophy represented the highest level of education – after elementary tutoring, grammar, and rhetoric – attained by a very few."[14] This is not to deny that many urban-dwellers may have accessed philosophical discourse at some level, whether through public lectures or the dissemination of philosophical ideas through less formal discourse; but regular attendance at a philosophical school was much more restricted. Second, it is debatable how much first-century philosophy was orientated around communities.

[13] Cf. Arthur R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968), 127.

[14] Steve Mason, "Philosophai: Graeco-Roman, Judean and Christian," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. J.S. Kloppenborg and S.G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 31–58), 35. So also John Stambaugh and David Balch, *The Social World of the First Christians* (London: SPCK, 1986), 122–23. Alexander, "Hellenistic Schools," 77, suggests that the definition of 'school' should be widened to include medical sects and other trade guilds, enabling us to conceive of a broader social make-up of 'schools.' No-one, to my knowledge, has yet made a detailed argument to support this suggestion. The task is now further complicated by the recent trend of placing all such groups in the bracket of 'voluntary associations,' on which see the following paragraph.

Ascough notes that by the first century "only two philosophical groups seem to have formed themselves into a closed organization of initiated disciples – the Pythagoreans and the Epicureans."[15] Moreover, in the first century, "evidence of actual Pythagorean communities… is scant to non-existent."[16] Meeks notes that it is these "two schools about which we unfortunately know least, especially in the Roman period."[17] That about which we know the most, the Stoics, "found their greatest unity in their philosophy, not in their organization."[18] As such it is very difficult to draw conclusions about the nature, number and influence of first-century philosophical communities. Regarding the study of generosity and its restrictions, even if one decided that a comparison with the philosophical schools was both valid and desirable, it is functionally impossible: there is not sufficient evidence about this aspect of the practices of the first-century philosophical schools.[19]

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[15] Ascough, *Pauline Churches*, 32.

[16] John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 83.

[17] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 83. The same point is admitted by Alexander, "Hellenistic Schools," 62.

[18] Culpepper, *Johannine School*, 247.

[19] The first Pythagorean community was said to have held their property in common, although the evidence for the social practices of the Pythagorean community (as opposed to its philosophy) comes from the third century CE (ibid., 39.). Epicurus, by contrast, is said to have rejected common ownership as implying a lack of trust between members of the community (Diogenes Laertius 10.11). Elizabeth Asmis, "Epicurean Economics," in *Philodemus and the New Testament World*, ed. J.T. Fitzgerald, D. Obbink, and G.S. Holland (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 133–76, notes that "this was not a welfare society, even though, as friends, Epicureans were expected to help one another" (140). This "help" should not be understood as a sharing of necessities to enable subsistence: Philodemus

One final reason not to discuss philosophical schools as a separate category in this study is that many groups which seem to be in some way connected to philosophical movements can, to a large extent, be considered within the category of voluntary associations. This argument has been made at length by Philip Harland, who collects an impressive array of evidence (relative to its general paucity in this area) to demonstrate that

> educated groups of philosophers, instructors, and physicians in the Roman era, at least, sometimes functioned in a manner similar to other associations and guilds. People of these professions could voluntarily and regularly meet together with fellow-professionals for meals, engage in cultic honours for the gods, and act together as a group in honouring benefactors.[20]

One may object that there is likely to have been a difference between the schools of the most famous philosophers and other groups of local philosophers; for example, the former may have

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makes clear that, in his view, appropriate ways to make money are from land ownership (reaping income from the labour of others) or from giving philosophical discourses (*On Household Management* 23.11–36). In this social strata, the sharing of friends enables the enjoyment of "harmless desires," rather than survival. See further Asmis, "Philodemus' Epicureanism," *ANRW* 36 (1990): 2387–89. Clearly there is very little evidence of what "sharing" was expected in an Epicurean community, although Asmis is right to note the negative point that there is nothing indicating that "more affluent Epicureans were regularly expected to contribute to the livelihood of the more needy" (140 n.37). Given the paucity of evidence we can make no confident positive statements. Cf. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 162.

[20] Philip A. Harland, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary: II. North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 376. See also Richard Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context*, SNTSMS 164 (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), 38–41.

been the centre of a more formal school, with regular students and more intense teaching. Thus, the social structures one may expect these two kinds of philosophical groups to have comprised may have been quite different. However, as already argued, it is unclear just how common school-communities really were and we lack evidence of their practices. What evidence we *do* have of philosophical groups is best dealt with by considering them as one kind of voluntary association, although the possibility that more high-profile schools may have been quite different in their social composition and practices must not be forgotten.

Comparing the social structure of the early church with the mystery religions has been a less frequent endeavour and one that has generally been considered unfruitful.[21] As such, the decision to exclude it requires little defence here; two comments suffice: First, it should be noted that, with regard to our particular concern of restricted generosity within communities, there is so little evidence specific to the mystery religions that any meaningful study would

[21] As seen by its absence of consideration in Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 74–84, and the recent survey of scholarship in Adams, "Models," 63–74. Ascough's chapter on the mystery religions in *Pauline Churches*, 50–70, reveals the relative lack of work in this area compared with the others he surveys; he notes that "overall, it is clear that the mysteries have not proven very helpful on a large scale for understanding early Christianity" (69). The decision to exclude them from consideration as a separate category in this study is mirrored in Andrew Clarke's monograph on leadership in first-century communities, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* FCCGRW (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), in which he surveys the Greco-Roman city, the Roman colony and city, voluntary associations, the family and the Jewish synagogue, but ignores the mystery religions.

be impossible; furthermore, most major studies comparing the mystery religions with early Christianity have focussed primarily on their ideas rather than their social practices, and those social practices that are discussed are usually those of initiation into the community, or cultic acts such as baptism and communion, rather than the kind of practices this study addresses.[22] Second, many groups devoted to the deities of the mystery religions fall within common definitions of voluntary associations; as such, the evidence that is found connected to such groups is taken into account in that chapter.

[22] So, e.g., Richard Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*, trans. J.E. Steely (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978); Alfred Loisy, "The Christian Mystery," *HibJ* 10 (1911): 45–64; Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, trans. J.E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970); Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting*, trans. R.H. Fuller (London: Thames and Hudson, 1956); Hyam Maccoby, *Paul and Hellenism* (London: SCM, 1991); Gary Lease, "Mithraism and Christianity," *ANRW* 23 (1980): 1306–94.

Chapter 2

2. Restricted Generosity in the Roman Household

2.1. The early church and the *oikos*

In the Hellenistic world of the first century CE both the biological family and the wider household were encapsulated by the term *oikos*.[1] The importance of the *oikos* in the ancient world must not be underestimated:

> Scarcely anything determined daily life more than the *oikos* with its network of relationships. It was an all-encompassing social structure with legal, economic, and biological implications. By belonging to an *oikos*, each individual gained a sense of identity within society as a whole… This small "*oikos* fellowship" provided a basic building block for the entire society as well… With this in mind, the significance of the *oikos* for the establishment and organization of early Christian church life can hardly be overemphasized.[2]

Again our point of departure is Judge's "Social Pattern," in which he considered the *oikos* one of the social structures particularly

[1] The nearest equivalents in Latin are *domus* and *familia*. The former can refer either to those cohabiting or all attached to a household; the latter is primarily a legal concept, capturing all that is in the ownership of the *paterfamilias*. See, e.g., Reidar Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Christian Siblingship in Paul*, JSNTSup 265 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 41; Peter Lampe, "'Family' in Church and Society of New Testament Times," *Affirmation* 5 (1992): 1–2, who defines an *oikos* as an economic entity. Cf. the discussion in Clarke, *Serve*, 81.
[2] Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 17.

pertinent to understanding the first churches,[3] noting that: 1) the first churches were located within households and often founded by the conversion of a household.[4] 2) "The terminology of the household community was regularly used by the New Testament writers to express their theological ideas."[5] These two points have been largely accepted and elaborated upon over the decades following Judge's essay, to the extent that Gehring can talk about a "consensus" regarding the importance of the *oikos* for understanding the first churches.[6] Rather than repeat arguments

[3] The other social structure Judge focusses on is voluntary associations, as we shall see in the following chapter. Furthermore, Judge explored the idea of "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," in *The First Christians in the Roman World*, ed. J.R. Harrison. WUNT 229 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008): 526–52. He makes the case for seeing Paul (in his social position) as a sophist and the early Pauline churches as "a school of disciples under the instruction of a rabbi, or a devout sect committed to the study and preservation of the law" (552). However, Judge does not push his argument into an antithesis that discounts the validity of comparison with the *oikos* or associations.

[4] Judge, "Social Pattern," 25. E.g., Rom 16.15, 23; 1 Cor 16.19; Col 4.15; Phlm 2. For a detailed study of the evidence see Gehring, *House Church*, esp. 62–75, 119–54.

[5] Judge, "Social Pattern," 26. So also Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Cultural Setting*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), who describes family language as "the most significant metaphorical usage of all" for Paul's conception of the church (53).

[6] Gehring, *House Church*, 17. For scholars who emphasise the importance of the *oikos*, see e.g.: Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997); David L. Balch, "Paul, Families, and Households," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J.P. Sampley (Harrisburg. PA: Trinity, 2003), 258–292; Hans-Josef Klauk, *Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981); Karl O. Sandnes, *A New Family: Conversion and Ecclesiology in the Early Church with Cross-Cultural Comparisons* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1994); Gehring, *House Church*; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*; H. Moxnes, ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family As Social Reality and Metaphor* (London: Routledge,

that have already been made several times and won widespread acceptance, this study assumes the importance of the *oikos* as a comparative social structure.[7]

Many studies have stressed how the Hellenistic *oikos* or Roman *familia*[8] functioned as the fundamental economic unit of production and consumption in the Roman Empire.[9] One of the primary duties of the family was to maintain the economic viability of the

1997); Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission Volume 2: Paul & the Early Church* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 1301; Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 277.

[7] Similarly, Richard S. Ascough, "What Are They Now Saying about Christ Groups and Associations?," *CurBR* 13, (2015), in his survey of work on the early Church and associations, introduces the article by noting *four* possible models for comparison (associations, synagogues, mysteries, philosophical schools), but stating that in each case he still considers the household to be the "primary building block for the group" (207). Recently some have questioned this majority view, see esp. Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Richard Last, "The Neighborhood (Vicus) of the Corinthian Ekklēsia: Beyond Family-Based Descriptions of the First Urban Christ-Believers," *JSNT* 38 (2016): 399–425. Adams helpfully argues that we must not assume that the early Christians met *exclusively* in houses; however, even after reading his monograph, one cannot but conclude that the evidence indicates that this was the most common scenario. Last's article not only misrepresents proponents of the majority view, but his argument is obscured by a lack of nuance when disscussing the first-century household, presenting it as private rather than public (401) and, similarly, assuming a house-church must be made up of biological relatives (413). Neither of these assumptions is justifiable, but they form the context of his argument.

[8] See note 1 on terminology.

[9] See Richard Saller, "Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household," in *Early Christian Families in Context*, ed. D.L. Balch and C. Osiek (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 185–206; Richard Saller, "The Roman Family as Productive Unit," in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. B. Rawson (Chichester: Blackwell, 2011), 116–28. See also Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 33; Stegemann and Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 277; Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 46.

household and ensure its safe passage to the next generation, which in turn secured the stability of the wider society.[10] As one fourth-century Greek author summed up in a discourse on household management, the role of the householder was to "acquire" (κτᾶσθαι) and "preserve" (φυλάττειν) property, and also to be "skilled in improving (κοσμητικόν) and using (χρηστικόν) it."[11] The same mentality was embedded in Roman culture in the first century, as Seneca attests. In discussing the task of the philosopher, he compares it to the task of the householder: the philosopher should treasure, and benefit from, the insight and writings of previous generations. Seneca illustrates this by analogy: "we should play the part of a careful householder; we should increase what we have inherited. This inheritance shall pass from me to my descendants larger than before."[12] Such action is a presumed good. Consequently, many of the primary sources that discuss economic matters of the household concentrate on the means of production, that is, property and slaves, and their transfer, usually by

[10] Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 277; Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 95.

[11] The work is *Oeconomica* (1.6.1). It exists under Aristotle's name but is attributed to Aristotle's successor at his school, Theophrastus, by Philodemus in the first century BCE. See Voula Tsouna, *Philodemus: On Household Management* (Atlantis: SBL, 2012), 79. See also G.C. Armstrong's introduction to his Loeb translation (LCL 287) and the discussion by Renate Zoepffel, *Aristoteles Oikonomika: Schriften zu Hauswirtschaft und Finanzwesen* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 199–204. The text will be cited as pseudo-Aristotle as the attribution to Theophrastus is not universally accepted.

[12] Seneca, *Ep.* 64.7.

inheritance. Far less attention is given to gifts of money or goods that do not constitute productive capital. This is unfortunate, for it is just this kind of giving that appears most often in the New Testament; there is little evidence of the transfer of property as a means of generosity in the Christian community beyond the Jerusalem church, as portrayed in Acts. This being the case, although this chapter covers generosity (and its restrictions) in the matters of inheritance and property transfer, the weight of discussion will fall on inter-family solidarity, especially as it relates to the Roman virtue of *pietas,* as it is in this area that evidence concerning consumable goods, and money for the purchase of consumable goods, can be found.

2.2. The *oikos* and generosity in early Hellenistic literature

Most of the evidence for household generosity in the first century is in relation to the Roman family; however, as the Empire was thoroughly Hellenised, both ideal and real Roman family life would have been influenced by Hellenistic values. Columella, the first-century Roman author, explicitly notes the dependence of contemporary *oikonomic* literature, including his own, on Hellenistic works.[13] A brief examination of some influential Greek writings concerning the *oikos* is therefore in order, before proceeding to the Roman sources. Unfortunately, the relevant

[13] Columella, *De Re Rustica*, 1.1.7.

writings do not provide any detailed information about *practices* of generosity within the *oikos*, as they are largely focussed on the primary tasks of the householder. The following analysis therefore elucidates the underlying *values* of the Greek authors as they pertain to generosity and finances within the family. The sources used are the two best known early Greek works on household management, those by Xenophon and pseudo-Aristotle,[14] together with Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, works that have already been shown to have influenced writings on household management in the New Testament period.[15] The main points to observe are straightforward and uncontroversial.

First, at a very basic level, the authors share the view that the *oikos* was the primary economic unit and should aim to provide for the needs of all those within it, including the slaves (usually rationalised as the sensible maintenance of property). [16] This fundamental solidarity of the *oikos* is seen in Aristotle's *Politics*. In discussing the relationship between the attainment of wealth and household management, Aristotle briefly discusses the development of trade. He takes as his starting point the *oikos*:

> In the primary association therefore (I mean the household) there is no function for trade… For the members of the primitive household used to share commodities that were all their own, whereas on the contrary a group divided

[14] See n. 11 above.
[15] David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter*, SBLMS 26 (Chico: Scholars, 1981).
[16] Xenophon, *Oec*. 13.10; Ps-Aristotle, *Oec*. 1.5.1.

> into several households participated also in a number of commodities belonging to their neighbours, according to their needs for which they were forced to make their interchanges by way of barter. (*Pol.* 1.3.12 [Rackham, LCL])

Trade arises as different households interact according to their needs; the assumption is that within the same household everyone is provided for from common resources. This should not be taken to imply that property was actually commonly owned, or that there was no differentiation in financial means between different members of the *oikos*, but rather Aristotle is making a broader point which assumes that, in some manner, an *oikos* was a cohesive unit which provided for its members.[17]

The second shared assumption is about the role of the householder. As previously stated, their task is to maintain and increase the wealth of the *oikos*, before ensuring its safe transfer to the next generation. This underlying value is exemplified in a statement by Cephalus in the opening pages of Plato's *Republic*. An old man, Cephalus acts as host to Socrates and takes part in an exchange that introduces Plato's key theme of justice. Within the dialogue Cephalus is asked about the source of his wealth – whether it was inherited or earned. He replies:

> As a businessman, I come somewhere between my grandfather and my father. For my grandfather and namesake inherited about as much as I now have and multiplied it many times, whereas my father Lysanias reduced it to less than

[17] See also Xenophon, *Oec*. 12.6–7; Ps-Aristotle, *Oec*. 1.5.1

> it is now. For myself, I'm well pleased if I pass on to these sons of mine not less, but a little more than I inherited. (*Rep.* 1.330b [Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, LCL])

Cephalus, portrayed throughout the encounter as wise and respectable, formulates the aspiration of the common (propertied) man. Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* reveals the same values. In it, Socrates dialogues with a man named Critobulus about household management. Rather than Socrates giving Critobulus advice, Xenophon has him appeal to a third party – Ischomachus – who functions to dispense authoritative wisdom. Using this literary device, Xenophon communicates his opinions through his exemplar Ischomachus. We find Ischomachus talking about the duty of a married couple with regard to the household as follows:

> [they should be] acting in such a manner that their possessions will be in the best condition possible, and that as much as possible shall be added to them by fair and honorable means. (*Oec.* 7.15 [Marchant and Todd, LCL])

Again, we see that the duties and aspirations of householders are described as the acquisition, development and protection of the *oikos*.[18]

The quotation above appropriately introduces the third underlying value: the management of a household required partnership, primarily between the husband and the wife, and good management by the householder.[19] Pseudo-Aristotle, in a passage

[18] See also Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.2.2–4, 1.3.20; Ps-Aristotle, *Oec.* 1.6.1
[19] Xenophon, *Oec.* 3.15–16, 7.13, 35–37; Ps-Aristotle, *Oec.* 3.1.1.

describing the characteristics of a good wife, comments that "she must exercise control of the money spent on such festivities as her husband has approved" (*Oec.* 3.1.1). So too Xenophon, who has Ischomachus state that while the householder is to manage the land, property exchange, and most public matters, his wife

> [is] to stay indoors and dispatch those slaves whose work is outside, and superintend those who are to work indoors, and to receive what comes in and dispense as much of it as must be spent, and watch over as much as is to be kept in reserve, and take care that the amount stored up for a year is not spent in a month. And when wool is brought in to you, you must see that clothing is made for those who need it. You must also see to it that the dry grain is in good condition for making food. One of the duties that fall to you, however, will perhaps seem rather thankless: you will have to see that any slave who falls ill is cared for. (*Oec.* 7.35–37 [Marchant and Todd, LCL])

The roles of both the householder and his wife were crucial to achieving material prosperity.[20]

Finally, reciprocal support between parents and children is expected, relative to the stage of life each are at: parents provide for their children through their childhood and in return are supported by them in old age. That this was an unquestioned assumption is especially evident in the way that the sources refer to the idea – often using it to illustrate a different point – demonstrating that *this* assumption was beyond question. Xenophon, for example, has Ischomachus claim, in passing, that the second reason for child-

[20] See also Xenophon, *Oec.* 3.15–16, 7.13.

bearing, beyond the preservation of humanity, is "to support them [parents] in old age" (*Oec.* 7.19). Similarly, Aristotle recommends, as the best way of ordering family life, that children are born not too far in age from their fathers for "elderly fathers get no good from their children's return of their favours" (*Pol.* 7.14.2). If the father is elderly, by the time the children can produce material gain, it is too late – the father dies before he receives recompense. Thus, reciprocity is presumed.[21]

In summary, these four basic aspirations are shared by, and underlie, pre-Roman Hellenistic literature that addresses household management: 1) the *oikos* was the primary economic unit and should aim to provide for the needs of all those within it; 2) the role of the householder was to maintain and increase the wealth of the *oikos*, before safely handing it over to the next generation; 3) the partnership between the householder and his wife was considered essential to the prosperity of the *oikos*; 4) reciprocal support between parents and children was expected. Beyond this, the lack of detail as to how such values were practically manifested prevents any more precise statements. Nonetheless, such attitudes were doubtless influential, through Hellenistic culture, on the Greco-Roman world of the first century, for which we have more evidence and to which we will now turn.

[21] See also Plato, *Rep.* 5.463d, 7.538a-b.

2.3. Restricted generosity in the Roman *oikos*

Here our task is to examine the norms of inter-family generosity in the Roman household, before looking at when this generosity was restricted. As previously noted, generosity in the sources is most often concerned with gifts of property or capital, primarily through one's will, where the norm (at least ideologically) was to pass on the wealth of the household to one's heirs; the relevant restrictions to this generosity found in Roman law will be dealt with in due course. First, though, as it is central to our interests, we will examine the norms of inter-family generosity which concerned *consumable goods* or *money for maintenance*; it will be argued that this kind of generosity was part of what the virtue *pietas* encompassed. The aim is to delineate what this generosity was understood to entail before we can identify its limits.

2.3.1. Pietas in the Roman oikos

Judith Grubbs writes that *pietas* was the "quintessential Roman 'family value.'"[22] The word itself was used beyond this context,[23] but when applied to the family it refers broadly to the duty that was considered appropriate within those relationships, both of affection

[22] Judith E. Grubbs, "Promoting Pietas through Roman Law," in Rawson, *Companion to Families*, 377–392, 377.
[23] *Pietas* could refer to far more than familial duty. See, e.g., Hendrik Wagenvoort, *Pietas: Selected Studies in Roman Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 1–20.

and of practical obligations.[24] To define the exact dimensions of *pietas* is not our task; in what follows our objectives are more modest: 1) to argue that material and financial solidarity within the household is a central part of what *pietas* encompassed; 2) to examine what the cultural expectations were in regard to *this* aspect of *pietas*. In order to answer these questions we will examine Roman law, epigraphy and literature, before taking particular note of a number of studies focussed on the non-elite.

2.3.1.1. Pietas in Roman law

The Roman legal texts show a deep concern for the economic dimensions of the *familia.* This is because the *familia* constituted the fundamental economic and social unit of the state. The desire to maintain the stability of the *familia* was manifested both in laws that obligated a certain level of material support within the household, and in laws that limited any generosity that may lead to the ruin of an estate by the transfer of too much capital outside of the *familia*. These latter laws will be examined below (2.3.2.1); here we will discuss legal material that promoted household generosity. A comprehensive introduction to the study of Roman law for social history is beyond the remit of this study and of the

[24] So also Saller, *Patriarchy*, 105.

author's knowledge;[25] nevertheless, it is necessary to introduce briefly our key sources before turning to the actual analysis.

Most of the Roman legal material examined in this thesis is that found in the *Digest* of Justinian. Emperor Justinian I (c. 482–565) ordered the compilation and abridgement of the work of previous Roman jurists, which was organised into fifty books and published as the *Digesta seu Pandectae* in 533.[26] These jurists are described by Olivia Robinson as "the most influential of all the sources of law in the later Republic and the Principate."[27] The *Digest*, therefore, is the key source for Roman law in our period, and the *only* source for a large proportion of the jurists' material it contains.[28] The *Digest* was arranged topically but, helpfully for the historian, retained, for each entry, the name of the author and book from which it was taken. Despite this, because of the historical distance between the original writings and Justinian, and the need to articulate historical laws in a way that was relevant to the time of the *Digest*, there are difficulties in establishing the authenticity of particular extracts.[29] This should caution us against placing too great a weight on single

[25] For such an introduction, see Olivia F. Robinson, *The Sources of Roman Law: Problems and Methods for Ancient Historians* (London: Routledge, 1997).
[26] This whole paragraph relies on the preface of Alan Watson, ed., *Digest of Justinian*, vol. 1–4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), volume 1.
[27] Robinson, *Roman Law*, 42.
[28] The other sources available to the modern historian are: 1) pre-Justinian legal writings; 2) literary sources that give information about the law; 3) inscriptions and papyri which reference legal matters.
[29] On which see: Robinson, *Roman Law*, 102–27.; cf. Colin F. Kolbert, *The Digest of Roman Law* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), 41–42.

pieces of evidence from the *Digest*; happily, when the *Digest* addresses *pietas* and issues of generosity, the material is plentiful and a consistent picture emerges from a significant number of extracts, which greatly increases the confidence that can be had in our conclusions. Sources other than the *Digest* will be introduced as they are used.

Bruce Frier and Thomas McGinn cite *D.* 24.3.22.8 as evidence that before the second century CE "a husband had no legal duty to maintain his wife":[30]

> But suppose the woman has the most savage form of insanity and the husband does not want to end the marriage because he is too cunning for this, but treats his wife's misfortune with scorn and shows her no sympathy but clearly does not give her proper care, but misuses her dowry. Here the insane woman's curator or her relatives can go to court to force the husband to give all this sort of support to the woman, to provide for her, to give her medicines, and to omit nothing a husband should do for his wife as far as the amount of the dowry allows. But if it is clear that he is about to squander the dowry and not enjoy it as a man should, then the dowry should be sequestered, and the wife should have enough for maintaining herself and her household.[31]

That legal action may be necessary to force a husband to support his wife from dowry money illustrates that support of one's wife was not legally required in itself; the legal case is about the misuse of the dowry (whose primary function seems to have been to

[30] Bruce W. Frier and Thomas A.J. McGinn, *A Casebook on Roman Family Law* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 227.
[31] Translation of all *Digest* extracts in this thesis are taken from Watson, *Digest*.

provide for the wife's maintenance) rather than neglecting to support the wife.[32] Similarly, Frier and McGinn comment that before the second century CE "fathers also probably had no duty to maintain their children by providing food, shelter, and so on; nor, as it seems, were children obligated to support their parents."[33] This changed in the mid-second century when the emperors began to enforce inter-family solidarity, regularly referred to as *pietas*, through the law.[34] This does not mean that such values in and of themselves only sprang up at this point;[35] the obligations which the law aimed to enforce (in the name of *pietas*) most likely indicate values that would have been present in the first century as well as the second, thus making these laws relevant to our enquiry.[36] Saller has surveyed all of the references to *pietas* in the digest and concludes the following: 1) *Pietas* concerns duty rather than

[32] See also *D.* 24.15.1. There were also families where the wife may have had equal or greater financial resources than her husband. See Richard P. Saller, "Pietas, Obligation and Authority in the Roman Family," in *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Kneissel and V. Losemann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 393–410, 409.

[33] Frier and McGinn, *Family Law*, 227.

[34] So Ibid., 228; Grubbs, "Pietas," 382. Of course, the introduction of these laws is the best evidence for the lack of legal obligation prior to them, but is *not* evidence that such obligations were not widely performed. The reason why such laws were introduced at this point is not entirely clear; part of the answer may simply be that it was in this period that the role of the jurists became increasingly prominent (an insight owed to Dr G. Kantor in private correspondence).

[35] Rather, one could speculate that the reason for the introduction of such laws was the breakdown of a family solidarity that had been widely assumed previously.

[36] Saller, "Pietas," 402, argues a similar position based on references to *pietas* in earlier Latin literature.

affection or compassion;[37] 2) The great majority of references in the *Digest* refer to the nuclear family;[38] 3) *Pietas* is considered natural – it is not just a construct of the law;[39] 4) *Pietas* is reciprocal: "there was symmetry in the most general sense of devotion of all family members to the interests of others."[40]

Such conclusions can be readily illustrated from *D.* 25.3.4–9. The following quotation confirms all Saller's points. In it, the question being considered is whether a *paterfamilias* should be obligated only to support those in his legal power (which is logical – as he legally owned all the possessions of those in his power), or whether he should also have to support children who are outside his legal control (and therefore either own their own property or now belong to a different *familia*):

> Should a father be forced to support only children in his power or should he also support children who have been emancipated or have become independent in some other way? I think it is better to say that even where children are not in power, they must be supported by their parents and they, on the other hand, must support their parents. (*D.* 25.3.5.1)

The verdict confirms a broad view of the duty of *pietas*. It is natural, and thus should extend to the nuclear family regardless of whether

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[37] Saller, *Patriarchy*, 105; so too Frier and McGinn, *Family Law*, 4.
[38] Saller, *Patriarchy*, 111. Nuclear family here refers to one's parents and siblings, or if married, one's parents, siblings, spouse and children. That these relationships make up the majority of references does not mean *pietas* never extended beyond these, as the following paragraph demonstrates.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 114.

or not they are legally in the *familia*; of course, it is again clarified that the duty is reciprocal. The law also extended the obligation for reciprocal maintenance both horizontally and vertically: to maternal family (*D.* 25.3.5.2); illegitimate children (*D.* 25.3.5.4); grandparents and grandchildren (*D.* 25.3.4.5); an enlisted soldier and his parents (*D.* 25.3.5.15); freedmen and the children of freedmen (*D.* 25.3.5.19–20).[41]

Although the law demonstrably expected, in the name of *pietas*, mutual financial aid in the case of need to be practised between members of the household, as Frier and McGinn note, "we have no real way of assessing how well the duty of maintenance worked in practice, and also no reason to be optimistic on this score."[42] The legal material cannot demonstrate that the obligations of *pietas* were consistently practised; in fact, that these laws existed proves that *pietas* did *not* always occur in reality. It does, though, indicate a shared moral ideal in Roman culture about financial obligations within the family.[43]

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[41] See also: *D.* 10.2.50, where a gift motivated by *pietas* was considered exempt from some of the usual legal concerns; *D.* 5.2.15 for how *pietas* impacted obligations to parents in one's will. On patrons and freedmen see also: *D.* 38.1.18–21.

[42] Frier and McGinn, *Family Law*, 228.

[43] Grubbs, "Pietas," 385–87, has also made the point that the ability to take legal action on the grounds of 'undutiful will,' where the testator is alleged not to have left sufficient provision for the claimant, demonstrates that it was the expectation that, unless there were exceptional circumstances, one should provide appropriately for the family.

2.3.1.2. Pietas in epigraphic evidence

Inscriptions provide an array of evidence for the historian.[44] For our interests, of particular importance are epitaphs:

> Epitaphs usefully illuminate aspects of ancient life rarely seen in other sources… by opening windows onto individual lives… The most informative examples are funerary poems (*carmina funeraria*), which tend to combine greater freedom of expression with a propensity to articulate not only personal vicissitudes but individual attitudes and values, aspirations and regrets.[45]

It is in such inscriptions we may hope to find reference to *pietas*, and evidence of what it encompassed. Furthermore, it can sometimes be the case that epigraphic evidence gives voice to the non-elite who are so infrequently represented in literary evidence. A search for *pietas* in the Epigraphik-Datenbank (Clauss-Slaby) and the Epigraphic Database Heidelberg returned 170 results, the overwhelming majority from epitaphs.[46] Of these, most often the term is attached to the deceased as an honorific virtue, lauding their character; also common is a statement to the effect that the gravestone or monument was erected as an act of *pietas*.[47]

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[44] On the scope, variety, analysis and problems of epigraphic evidence, see John P. Bodel, "Epigraphy and the Ancient Historian," in *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions*, ed. J.P. Bodel (London: Routledge, 2001), 1–56.

[45] Ibid., 39.

[46] Epigraphik-Datenbank (EDCS): http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi.php?s_sprache=en. Epigraphic Database Heidelberg: http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/inschrift/suche. Results correct in June 2017.

[47] Such monuments could be lavish, as can be seen by an internet image search for CLE 1552 (= *CIL* 08, 00211–00216 = *ILTun* 0331). Also noting these two

Regrettably, only one of these inscriptions gives any information about what constituted *pietas* (apart from providing burial and a tombstone); this one example, though, is a lengthy eulogy, found in Rome, dated in the first century BCE, that *does* indicate that the obligations of *pietas* extended to significant financial support.

This large funeral eulogy is known as the *Laudatio Turiae*,[48] although in fact the identity of the woman in question is unknown.[49] It describes the character of the marriage and the grief of the widowed husband, but above all praises the multiple actions taken by the deceased in her lifetime that demonstrate her exemplary virtue and character. To briefly sketch some of the main events:[50] we learn that she was orphaned by the murder of her parents, probably in the civil war of 49–45 BCE (left hand column, lines 3–6), but took the lead in the prosecution of the murderers (7–12), before having to defend the inheritance against a legal challenge to her father's will (13–26). Following this, the eulogy relates some of her domestic virtues (30–36) and her virtuous use of her property (37–51); her care for her husband and their common property while

commonalities is Richard P. Saller, "The Family and Society," in *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions*, ed. J.P. Bodel (London: Routledge, 2001), 95–117, 103.

[48] *ILS* 8393 = *CIL* 06, 01527. For English text and introduction: Erik Wistrand, *The So-Called Laudatio Turiae: Introduction, Text, Translation, Commentary* (Lund: Berlingska Boktryckeriet, 1976); Josiah Osgood, *Turia: A Roman Woman's Civil War* (Oxford: OUP, 2014). On the inscription see also Arthur E. Gordon, *Illustrated Introduction to Latin Epigraphy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), n. 28, 103–4; Saller, "Family and Society," 103.

[49] See Wistrand, *Laudatio*, 9–10.

[50] For a maximalist reconstruction, see Osgood, *Turia*.

he was away; and the securing of his return (right hand column, lines 2a–9a, 4–21).[51] Their inability to bear children is lamented; the willingness of the wife to allow her husband a divorce, in order that he might have children by another woman is praised (25–50, the offer was refused). Finally, the grief of the husband at his loss is eloquently expressed in the concluding lines (51–69).

In the *Laudatio* we find several references to *pietas*, many of which are connected with financial issues. The first mention, though, is about the prosecution of her parents' murderers: "strenuously did you perform your filial duty [*munere es pietatis*] by your insistent demands and your pursuit of justice" (7–8).[52] Here we see illustrated one aspect of the breadth of duties required by *pietas* that is not primarily about finances; this reference thus serves to remind us that although that may be the focus of the analysis here, it does not exhaust the obligations of *pietas*.

The second example is much closer to our concerns. The eulogy narrates that the reception of the inheritance by the deceased and her sister was under legal challenge, with the risk both that the wife would be left out of control of the family estate and that her sister would be entirely disinherited.[53] The wife, though, managed to win the legal case and secure sole inheritance; she also determined to then share the inheritance with her sister. Her action is described as

[51] The husband was most probably banished in the fall-out from the civil war. See Wistrand, *Laudatio*, 41.
[52] The translation used throughout is that of Wistrand.
[53] For a reconstruction of the legal case, see Wistrand, *Laudatio*, 33.

"duty [*officium*] to your father… devotion [*pietatis*] to your sister… faithfulness [*fides*] towards me." (25–26). Although the entire episode could be characterised as *pietas*, it is noteworthy that the sharing of the inheritance in particular attracts the use of the term. Shortly following this, in the list of her domestic virtues the eulogy describes her "*familiae pietate*" (32). The husband does not just laud her care of her own parents, but exclaims "you have shown the same attention to my mother as you did to your own parents, and have taken care to secure an equally peaceful life for her as you did for your own people" (32). Providing for one's parents, unquestionably a financial burden, is confirmed here to be an act of *pietas*.

The next occurrence exemplifies the range of financial duties *pietas* could entail:

> Your generosity [*liberalitatem*] you have manifested to many friends and particularly to your beloved relatives [*pietati praestitisti familiae*]… For you brought up your female relations who deserved such kindness in your own houses with us. You also prepared marriage-portions for them so that they could obtain marriages worthy of your family. (42, 44–46)

The provision for family, including the substantial financial burden of a dowry, is seen as an exemplary demonstration of *pietas*, perhaps the most outstanding example of this woman's generosity. Also noteworthy, although not explicitly attributed to *pietas*, is the wife's willingness to hold her household's capital in common with her husband (left hand column, lines 37–41). The final use of *pietas*

in connection with financial solidarity occurs at the end of a long section relating the wife's provision for her husband during his exile, where she is said to have:

> provided abundantly for my needs during my flight and gave me the means for a dignified manner of living, when you took all the gold and jewellery from your own body and sent it to me and over and over again enriched me in my absence with servants, money and provisions… (2a–5a)

It is then related how she secured his return:

> You begged for my life while I was abroad (6a)… Meanwhile when a troop of men collected by Milo… [tried] to break into our house to plunder, you beat them back successfully and were able to defend our home (9a–11a)… for if you had not, by taking care for my safety, provided what he [Caesar Augustus] could save, he would have promised his support in vain. Thus I owe my life no less to your devotion [*pietati*] than to Caesar. (right hand column, 1–3)

The summary use of *pietas* here covers all the wife's actions during the husband's exile. Thus, material provision, political and legal representation (even to the point of receiving a physical beating for pleading his case, [right hand column, 11–14]) and protection of property, all exemplify *pietas*. The only other occurrence of *pietas* in this eulogy relates to their childlessness. The wife offered her husband a divorce that he might obtain children, promising to fulfil the duties of *pietas* to any offspring, and to the new wife, as a sister and mother-in-law (right hand column, 31–38). Although such duties would have had large financial implications, they are not explicated here. Overall, then, this eulogy confirms and illustrates

the financial obligations of *pietas*; moreover, here at least, they are dominant. The woman in this inscription was obviously from the Roman elite, and her generosity was appropriate for that stratum of society; clearly, most would not have been able to provide in the ways she did. Nonetheless it provides an important confirmation of what has been argued thus far: *pietas* included material interdependence and generosity towards members of one's household.

2.3.1.3. Pietas in literary sources

Praise of *pietas* in general can be found scattered across Roman literature. [54] The following section aims to highlight a few references that make clear its *financial* dimensions.[55] For Cicero, *pietas* is the "foundation of all the virtues."[56] That he understands this to include material support is seen most clearly in his description of one's obligations in his *de Officiis*, an exposition on moral duties written towards the end of his life in the form of an epistle to his son:

> Now, if a contrast and comparison were to be made to find out where most of our moral obligation is due, country would come first, and parents; for their

[54] See, e.g., Saller, *Patriarchy*, 105–10.
[55] Other elements of *pietas* are discussed in literary works, e.g., Seneca, *de Beneficiis*, 3.34–36, where the duty of *pietas* extends to the saving of one's father's life. Plutarch, writing in Greek, did not use the term *pietas,* but a similar vision of familial duty is evident in his treatise *On Brotherly Love*. On the material aspect, see esp. 479f.
[56] Cicero, *Pro Plancio*, 29.3 (Watts, LCL). The Latin reads: "nam meo iudicio pietas fundamentum est omnium virtutum."

> services have laid us under the heaviest obligation; next come children and the whole family, who look to us alone for support and can have no other protection; finally, our kinsmen, with whom we live on good terms and with whom, for the most part, our lot is one. All needful material assistance [*rem necessaria praesidia vitae*] is, therefore, due first of all to those whom I have named… (*Off.* 1.17.58 [Miller, LCL])

The importance of material provision for one's family is such that benevolence to those beyond the family is necessarily limited. The one who gives beyond one's means "[does] wrong to their next of kin; for they transfer to strangers property which would more justly be placed at their service or bequeathed to them" (1.14.44 [Miller, LCL]). Thus, for Cicero, one's generosity is always tempered by one's primary financial responsibility – the family.

Further evidence is found in a quite different source, the *Lesser Declamations* ascribed to Quintilian.[57] Quintilian was one of the most prominent first-century Roman rhetoricians and the author of *Institutio Oratoria*, a twelve-volume text book on rhetoric.[58] The *Lesser Declamations* are teaching material for rhetorical schools, whereby court cases (either totally fictive or grounded in historical events) are proposed, together with model speeches for the defence and/or prosecution. As such, they reveal both the nature of

[57] Whether or not they were composed by Quintilian is unimportant to the current analysis. On this see D.R.S. Bailey's introduction to his Loeb translation (LCL 500).
[58] On Quintilian, see, e.g., J.J. Murphy, ed., *Quintilian: On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), ix–xliix.

rhetorical education and many of the shared societal values to which such rhetoricians could appeal. In a number of cases, the orator appeals to *pietas*, often in reference to its broad implications for familial care and solidarity: it is the reason a man would be unable to poison his brother (321.7.3); the beating of one's adopted father is branded outrageous *impietas* (372.7.5). Particularly relevant here is an interesting case where a father has been captured by pirates and a ransom is demanded; the ransom can only be paid by digging up jewellery that has been buried with his late wife. The son delays doing so, and thus the father's current wife digs up the treasure, for which she is accused by the son of tomb violation. In the declamation of the son, his hesitancy to pay the ransom is attributed to an illegitimate selfishness: "It is no use for you [the son] to make lack of money your excuse: it was lack of filial feeling [*impietas*]" (373.2.3 [Bailey, LCL]). The son had delayed payment because he was unwilling to part with wealth; *pietas* should have ensured that such concerns were of no consequence when seeking the ransom of his father.[59]

[59] Similar ideas about family solidarity can also be found in the Greek literature of the same period; e.g. Hierocles wrote of the duty to maintain one's parents as part in reciprocity for their care of their children: "for we shall take thought for nourishment for them that is liberal and adapted to the weakness of old age and, further, for their bed and sleep, unguents, baths, clothing, and, in a word, the needs of the body, so that they may never experience a lack of any of these things, imitating their own concern for our rearing, when we were newborns" (Stobaeus, Anthology 4.79.53). Taken from Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, *Hierocles the Stoic: Elements of Ethics, Fragments and Extracts*, trans. D. Konstan (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 85.

2.3.1.4. Pietas and consortium

It is worth briefly mentioning the work of Cynthia Bannon,[60] who has examined legal and literary sources to demonstrate that fraternal *pietas* was closely linked with the "legal institution of *consortium*, an archaic form of partnership in which brothers jointly own the family property" (7). That is, rather than dividing the estate, the brothers would each own all of it.[61] By the late republic/early imperial period such an arrangement was economically disadvantageous and became legally redundant (19), but the ideas endured and came to represent the shared interest and resources between brothers as they managed the family affairs:

> Thus, through at least the first century of the common era, *consortium* represented for the Romans ideas of joint ownership and community of interest originally vested in the familial relationship among brothers. (24)

Pietas here functions as the underlying virtue and motivation that compels fraternal economic cooperation for the wellbeing of the family; *consortium* was the conceptual reference point for such actions, even though it had ceased (by the first century) to be a reality in its ancient legal form.[62]

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[60] *The Brothers of Romulus: Fraternal Pietas in Roman Law, Literature, and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
[61] For the law, see Gaius *Inst*. 3.1541, b.
[62] Possessions in common also served as an ideal for Plutarch in his treatise *On Brotherly Love* (483b), although he too is clear that this is not present in reality (e.g., 478c). More generally on material or financial sharing between siblings in the ancient Mediterranean, see Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 47–50.

2.3.1.5. Pietas and the non-elite

The bulk of our evidence comes from the world of the elite, but there is evidence pertaining to the non-elite that confirms the financial implications of *pietas*. Although the law's primary reference was to the elite of Roman culture (see the excursus below, 2.3.3), some of the rescripts in the *Digest* concerning inter-family support reflect the problems of artisan families. The following quotation comes from the middle of the section dealing with *pietas* and maintenance. It related a decision of Emperor Antonius Pius on the issue of whether a father should support his son:

> The appropriate judges before whom you will appear must order you to be supported by your father according to his means, provided that where you claim you are a tradesman, it is your ill health which makes you incapable of supporting yourself by your own labor. (*D.*25.3.5.7)

The inability to work due to physical illness is a concern of the 'normal man'; as Grubbs points out, "clearly, both father and son were not from the wealthier strata of society."[63] The quotation demonstrates that the law could be used in such cases; that being said, *pietas* would inevitably have had a different dynamic when applied to sub-elite families. The concern of the rescript is clearly that manual labourers were only entitled to familial support if they were too ill to earn; such were not the concerns of the elite.

[63] Grubbs, "Pietas," 383.

Keith Bradley has presented a cogent argument demonstrating that the 'norm' in non-elite Roman families was that children "should begin work, at about the age of twelve or so, in trades and even in places not necessarily of their own choosing" (111).[64] His case is built on the evidence of apprenticeship records from Roman Egypt, supplemented by epigraphic evidence and literary sources, from which he concludes: "altogether, then, it seems inescapable that lower-class children in Roman society were set to work from the earliest moments they were considered capable of acquiring skills and becoming productive" (116). The evidence he presents demonstrates that many families would have been reliant on the income of the children, as well as of the parents. Moreover, as the parents grew older they would have become exclusively reliant on the support of their children. As Bradley states: "for the rich, dependence on children for support in later years is never likely to have been crucial" (117). For the non-elite, however, "propertyless parents were highly vulnerable and dependent on their children's goodwill and their success in inculcating the virtue of *pietas*."[65] In a family where there was no 'estate' to inherit (and thus financial motivation to care for parents), the legal power of the *paterfamilias* over the property and income of the *familia* must be taken together

[64] *Discovering the Roman Family: Studies in Roman Social History* (Oxford: OUP, 1991).
[65] Saller, *Patriarchy*, 127.

with the ultimate vulnerability of being reliant on one's own labour for subsistence.[66]

Sabine Huebner has produced a detailed study of non-elite family life in Roman Egypt[67] and concludes that

> In general, parents in Roman Egypt seem to have been expected to feed and clothe their children, watch over their moral development, celebrate their coming of age, provide their sons with an education and their daughters with a dowry, and find suitable spouses for them. (66)

In return (and in explicit repayment of one's parents' investment), children were expected to care for aged parents and provide for their burial (86). However, Huebner's study indicates that it is not just in these obligations that the family would have had to practise mutual solidarity, but that many families would have had to work co-operatively to provide the labour to make their household sustainable; this is a primary factor for many households containing multiple marriages (57). Whilst many sons would work as agricultural labourers from the age of 14, and thus contribute to the family's resources, Huebner calculates that it was not until a son was 20 that the financial investment in him was repaid. Thus, financial reciprocity was a survival necessity amongst the non-elite, not just at periods where resources flow one-way (during early childhood and old age), but throughout family life.

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[66] So also Grubbs, "Pietas," 383.
[67] *The Family in Roman Egypt: A Comparative Approach to Intergenerational Solidarity and Conflict* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013).

2.3.2. Restrictions on generosity in the Roman family

It is clear that the ideal of *pietas*, which included the material support of one's family, permeates the sources and reflects a shared conceptual reality across Roman society. However, the presence of an ideal does not indicate the consistency of its application; the reality may not have always matched up to the ideal of *pietas*.[68] Nonetheless it is the conceptual framework that is of greatest interest in this study (although this is never unconnected from the reality of practice). All that remains is to summarily sketch the limits of *pietas* which can be ascertained from the sources.

2.3.2.1. Restrictions on generosity in Roman private law

As has been repeatedly stated, when the sources discuss generosity they are primarily concerned with gifts of capital, often through one's will. Restrictions on this kind of generosity exist in the legal material, aimed at preventing the dissolution of the *familia* by the break-up of its self-sustaining capital. Such laws must have been necessitated by actualities – in this case too great a distribution of the *familia's* resources. But why was this happening? Both Saller and Jane Gardner suggest that social pressures relating to reciprocity and honour were the primary motivating factors.[69] A testator might feel the obligation to repay favours, secure honour

[68] So, e.g., Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 145, 151.
[69] Saller, *Patriarchy*, 165; Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 215.

and memory through benefactions,[70] and suchlike, but this is somewhat speculative. There is insufficient evidence to be confident that this is correct.

2.3.2.1.1. Inheritance

Three laws, beginning with the *Lex Furia,* aimed to limit the distribution of property in a will. The concern of all these laws was to protect an inheritance for the heir that would render the estate viable for the next generation, and provide the resources for the heir to continue to participate in civic life,[71] thus preventing the disintegration of *familia* estates whose dissolution would undermine the important role of the household in society.[72] Under the *Lex Furia* (early 2nd century BCE), controls were placed upon how much one could leave to any individual who was not a proper heir in one's will: "no one was permitted to take more than a

[70] Epigraphic evidence bears witness to this practice, e.g., *GRA* 81 = *AGRW* 58 = *IG* X/2.1 260, where a certain Eupronsyne bequests vineyards to an association of holm oak bearers (*prinphoroi*), stipulating that the income is to be used to burn sacrifices "for my eternal memory"; the bequest was to secure honour and memory after death. Translation from Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), 52. See further section 3.1.1.
[71] Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 214.
[72] The practice of *fidescommission* as a means to evade the law is too far beyond our immediate concerns. Simply put, this is where the testator places an heir under moral obligation to dispense with some, or all, of the inheritance in line with his stated wishes. Thus, one could obligate an heir to do something the testator could not, overcoming legal barriers. On this see Edward Champlin, *Final Judgements: Duty and Emotion in Roman Wills 200 B.C.-A.D. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 103–30; Saller, *Patriarchy*, 166–80.

thousand asses by way of legacy or in consequence of someone's death."[73] The only exceptions to this rule, other than the heir, were relatives up to the seventh degree.[74] Gaius, the second-century CE Roman jurist, wrote a legal textbook called the *Institutes*, in which he explains that the *Lex Furia* failed to be effective because there was no limit on the number of legatees; the number of legacies could still overly weaken the inheritance.[75] Another failed attempt to achieve the same aims was the *Lex Voconia* (169 BCE), which stipulated that "no one was to take more by way of legacy or in consequence of someone's death than the heirs took."[76] Again, though, as the number of legatees was unlimited, this law suffered from the same problem as the *Lex Furia*. Gaius claims that because of the problems faced by these two laws the *Lex Falicia* was instituted in 40 BCE, which prohibited testators leaving less than one-quarter of their estates to their legitimate heirs.[77] Heirs who failed to receive at least this much of the estate could claim "*inofficiosi testamenti*" (undutiful will) and apply to receive their rightful share of the estate.[78]

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[73] Gaius, *Institutes*, 2. 225.
[74] Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 215.
[75] On the failure of the *Lex Furia* and *Lex Voconia* see Saller, *Patriarchy*, 166.
[76] Gaius, *Institutes* 2. 226; It also legislated that those in the highest census class were not to institute women as heirs. See Ibid., 167f.
[77] Gaius, *Institutes* 2. 227; See also *D.* 35.2.1.
[78] E.g., *Cod. Iust*. 3.29.1. On inheritance laws, see also Jane F. Gardner, "Roman 'Horror' of Intestacy," in Rawson, *Companion to Families*, 361–76.

2.3.2.1.2. Gifts

Roman legislation about gifts (the legal category *donatio*) was primarily concerned with non-perishable capital.[79] As such, regulation of gifts was orientated around issues raised by the dispersal of the property of a *familia*, and the weakening of the estate, or gifts designed to accomplish a (suspect) purpose. As Reinhard Zimmermann states: "the *bonus vir* did not squander his assets but tried his best to preserve them for himself and his familia. Where he did not do so, the inference could be drawn that something might in fact be wrong."[80] These two reasons Roman law was concerned with *donatio* are illustrated by competing interpretations of the *Lex Cincia* (204 BC), which banned gifts above a certain (unknown) value to those beyond relatives of the fifth degree.[81] Gardner believes that the *Lex Cincia* was legislated to address the same concerns regarding the disintegration of estates that caused the inheritance laws above;[82] Zimmermann emphasises

[79] Reinhard Zimmermann, *The Law of Obligation: Roman Foundations of the Civilian Tradition* (Cape Town: Juta, 1990), 479. Although it could constitute other actions that brought about 'enrichment.' See further Adolf Berger, "Donatio," *EDRL* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), 442; Alan Watson, *Roman Private Law around 200 BC* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 73. Gifts at the point of death (*donatio mortis causa*) were treated as legacies by the first century (*D.* 39.6.17, 35, 37). We are concerned here with *donatio inter vivos*.

[80] Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 482.

[81] It also prohibited gifts in exchange for certain professional services. See Berger, "Lex Cincia," *EDRL*, 549; "Lex Cincia" in M.H. Crawford, ed., *Roman Statutes Volume II*, BICSSup 34 (London: University of London Press, 1996), 741–44.

[82] Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 215.

the other possible cause – "the possible abuse of an influential position raised doubts about the motives behind large-scale gifts."[83] In either case it could be asked how effective it would have been because there was no stipulated legal penalty; it seems that it may only have been used by a donor when they recanted on a promised donation, and were threatened with action from the prospective recipient.[84] Roman law prohibited gifts between husband and wife (*de Donationibus inter virum et uxorem*),[85] and therefore also gifts to and between those in the legal power of the *paterfamilias*.[86] The reason for this law, given in the *Digest*, is a concern to prevent the impoverishment of estates, or marriage becoming a "matter of purchase" (*ut venalicia essent matrimonia*). As such, the prohibited gifts are usually property or productive capital.[87] This is demonstrated in *D.* 24.1.5.8:

> This arises from the fact that something is only usually termed a prohibited gift where it makes the donor poorer and enriches the recipient. So here [at this point of law] a person is not held to be enriched by property dedicated to religious ends.

Thus, gifts that do not significantly 'enrich' the recipient, are permissible: "the law applying to prohibited gifts should not be interpreted as if they [husband and wife] do not love each other and

[83] Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 483.
[84] So Watson, *Roman Private Law*, 74.
[85] *D.* 24.1.1
[86] *D.* 24.1.3.4
[87] So Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 235, n. 60: "consumable items such as perfumes and luxury foods were allowable."

are hostile, but as between people united by the greatest affection and merely afraid of poverty."[88] Permissible gifts are usually described as perishable (*mortua*) goods – because they are consumed they do not enrich the recipient.[89]

2.3.2.1.3. The peculium

As the *paterfamilias* legally owned all the property in the *familia*, those within his *potestas* did not own property from which to give gifts. Only such resources which were granted by the *paterfamilias* to slaves and sons for their use were they able to dispose of, and usually they were required to use the funds to engage in business; this sum of capital was referred to as a *peculium*.[90] For this reason:

> If the head of a family approves a gift made by a person under his authority, then the gift is valid; but if such a gift is made without his knowledge, it is invalid unless he gives his approval later. (Cicero, *Leg.* 2.20.50, [Keyes, LCL])

Thus, the *peculium* could not be used for gifts without the consent of the *paterfamilias*. In all of the laws surveyed in this section, we must remember that the law is primarily concerned with gifts of *property,* that is, capital that can 'enrich' the recipient; but for most people giving would surely also encompass the sharing of perishable goods (e.g. food) and smaller amounts of money. Such

[88] *D.* 24.1.28.2.
[89] E.g., *D.* 24.1.7.1
[90] Berger, "Peculium," *EDRL,* 624.

practice remained unaddressed by the law. More important in this regard is the restrictions on the obligation of *pietas.*

2.3.2.2. The limits of pietas

In addition to restrictions on generosity as it pertained to significant capital, Roman law also dictated four restrictions to the legal duty to support one's family (*alimenta*), which I have argued was a central part of the virtue *pietas*: 1) If the judge considered the person claiming maintenance to be able to support themselves, their claim to aid from their family was denied (*D.* 25.3.6.7). 2) On two occasions it is stated that support could only be required of a person if they had the means to comply (*D.* 25.3.6.15, 26). 3) Those claiming support had to be genuinely related[91] – a judge could not order maintenance to be paid unless it had been proved that the

[91] This appears to be biological family to the third degree. This coheres with the evidence collected by Edward Champlin that most testators only considered the immediate family (extending to grandchildren) as those they were obliged to provide for in their wills; see his *Final Judgements*, 129–30. However, as shown above (2.3.1.1), the laws of the second century legislated such obligation between patrons and freedmen as well. The reality of such is illustrated by the inscription *ILS* 1949 = *CIL* XIV 2298 which notes the generosity of a freedman's patron: "several times he was willing to grant me an equestrian fortune, he ordered me to let my children live so that he could provide for their upkeep. He was always ready to grant me his own wealth. He also gave my daughters the dowries a father provides…" Trans. J.F. Gardner and T. Wiesemann, *The Roman Household: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 41. There are indications that some even extended support beyond the *oikos*: Quintilian's *Minor Declamations* include one case which imagines a man who provides material assistance to non-family members standing accused of "harming the commonwealth" (*laesae rei publicae*) and "wasting your patrimony" (*patrimonium consumes*) (260.6–7). This demonstrates both the existence of anomalous behaviour, and its counter-cultural nature.

claimant was a genuine relative (*D.* 25.3.5.8). Similarly, in the literary references to *pietas* it is clearly only genuine family members who have a claim to material aid, exemplified by Cicero's discussion cited above (2.3.1.3). 4) The duty of *pietas* could be avoided if one had a 'good reason' not to support his relative, as determined by a judge; the example given by Ulpian is that a father may refuse aid to a son who had informed against him (an action that was itself contra-*pietas*), (*D.* 25.3.5.11). As *pietas* was a reciprocal obligation, a 'good reason' was essentially when the other party had already broken their obligations of *pietas*.[92] Such a situation is envisaged by Seneca when he writes:

> are not some fathers so harsh and so wicked that it is right and proper to turn away from them and disown them? Have they, then, withdrawn the benefits that they had given? By no means, but their unfeeling conduct [*impietas*] in later years has removed the favour that they had won from all their earlier service. (*Ben.* 6.4.2 [Basore, LCL])

The child is free from the obligation of *pietas* due to the father's failure to maintain his own obligations. Thus, fulfilling the material obligations of *pietas* was dependent upon the reciprocity that is its ideal. The law indicates that the reciprocal nature of *pietas* is the key to its restrictions; when one party fails in their obligations to the family, they are no longer eligible to receive its benefits. Legitimate family membership and the fulfilment of one's family duty qualify one for the material benefits of *pietas*.

[92] E.g. *CIust* 3.28.28

2.3.3. Excursus – the relevance of the law to the first Christians

The combined effect of the laws cited above may suggest substantial restrictions on 'generosity' for the Roman family, but to what extent would these laws have actually impacted Christians in the first century? The answer depends on the degree to which Roman law extended both geographically across the empire and socio-economically amongst the non-elite.[93]

Robinson's claim that "Roman law was, until the third century, essentially the law of Rome and Italy"[94] needs greater nuance. Although Roman civil law only applied to Roman citizens,[95] the Roman governors who were responsible for dispensing legal judgment in the provinces often blended local law and Roman customs. David Johnston notes that evidence of the use of Roman legal norms has been found in Arabia, Transylvania and Spain[96] and John Richardson can conclude that "blendings of Roman and local law are frequent in evidence from Egypt in the imperial period."[97] However, this was not systematic, "and there is no evidence of any interest at all in standardization of whatever kind, let alone any attempt by the Romans to impose their own concepts

[93] See Robinson, *Roman Law*, 80–84, 117–24.
[94] Ibid., 123.
[95] So, e.g., John Richardson, "Roman Law in the Provinces," in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Law*, ed. D. Johnston (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), 45–60, 48.
[96] David Johnston, *Roman Law in Context* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 10.
[97] Richardson, "Roman Law," 48.

of law by force."[98] Rather, the individuality of the province and its governor would have much to do with the extent to which Roman civil law penetrated into a culture.[99] Thus, generalised statements are impossible, although we may agree with Saller that in all likelihood "some areas of the western empire and some strata of the population undoubtedly remained unaffected by Roman law."[100] Methodologically, we may be more certain of the influence of Roman law in areas with a relatively high density of Roman citizens, to whom the law primarily applied.

Besides the geographical question, research on Roman law has repeatedly indicated that, although egalitarian in principle, the law was organised around the concerns of the elite. Furthermore, the nature of the Roman legal system meant that those on the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum would have struggled to access Roman law successfully. The process of the legal system had three elements which contributed to making the law relatively inaccessible for those without significant surplus resources:[101] 1) In order to obtain a judgment, the plaintiff had to summon and, if necessary, force the defendant to appear in court.[102] 2) The parties

[98] Andrea Jördens, "Government, Taxation and Law," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. C. Riggs (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 56–67, 62.
[99] Richardson, "Roman Law," 57.
[100] Saller, *Patriarchy*, 159.
[101] For all the following points see Robinson, *Roman Law*, 80–84.
[102] So also Ernest Metzger, "Litigation," in Johnston, *Companion to Roman Law*, 272–300, 282. In the second century the development of *cognition* gave greater provision for the state to compel attendance, although the impact of these laws is uncertain (287–288). John Crook, *Law and Life of Rome 90 B.C. - A.D. 212*

at law had to place a sum of money on the outcome of the case – thus, legal action risked significant loss.[103] 3) Even if a positive judgment were given, the actual decision had to be effected by the plaintiff.[104] In addition to these, Johnston notes that "there were difficulties of access to knowledge about the law; difficulty in activating its procedures; doubts about the quality and impartiality of both magistrates and judges."[105] For such reasons, beneficial use of the law was primarily accessible to the upper echelons of Roman society; many households would struggle to afford access to, secure fair judgment from, or force compliance with, the law.[106]

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), notes that "if your opponent simply could not be got into court and would not appoint a representative, no action and hence no judgement against him was possible; but he counted as *indefensus*, and the praetor would grant you entry into his property, which it would then be up to him to contest" (76). However, this again depends on one's ability to force entry and possession. For this reason, John Kelly, *Roman Litigation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966) concludes that "Roman litigation in the republican and classical periods was devoid of the sanction of state power… the only physical sanction of Roman litigation in these periods consisted in such force as the plaintiff was able to muster" (14). So also Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 277–80, but cf. Johnston, *Roman Law*, 123–24, who is slightly more optimistic on these points.

[103] The various costs of legal action are listed in Crook, *Law and Life*, 92–97.

[104] Ibid., 82–83; Kelly, *Litigation*, 13–14; Garnsey, *Social Status*, 277.

[105] Johnston, *Roman Law*, 131.

[106] The question of access to *any* legal process is much more complicated as in most contexts there were a few 'legal' authorities; most civil cases would come before municipal courts where the jurors and magistrates were drawn from the local citizenry. The relationship between Roman and local law in the empire is complicated and varied, as already discussed. Necessarily, then, we should expect generalisation to be just that, admitting the existence of exceptions, like the rescripts discussed above (2.3.1.5). Nonetheless, there seems enough evidence produced in recent research by historians to maintain the overall claim that the lower strata of society were relatively isolated from *Roman* law. Ben Kelly's study on the law in Roman Egypt, *Petitions, Litigation and Social*

Evidence that the law was designed primarily for the wealthy ranks of Roman citizens is seen in the stipulations of the law itself. Whereas a wealthy *paterfamilias* might serve as a patron to many, having a large estate to distribute at death, or might be able to afford the large gifts that the legislation was designed to address, the

Control in Roman Egypt (Oxford: OUP, 2011), for example, supports the above points as follows: 1) With reference to the choice of legal system: "it certainly was not the case that all disputes came to be adjudicated under Roman law… by and large, most people in Roman Egypt were still dealt with under the rules of the legal traditions that had prevailed in the Ptolemaic period. Even after Roman citizenship was granted to all (or almost all) of the free inhabitants of the province in AD 212, Roman law made slow inroads, with the older traditions proving to be remarkably tenacious" (29–30). 2) Regarding access to law of the poor: "the very poor seem to be underrepresented as petitioners and litigants. The costs of having petitions drafted and of attending court hearings would perhaps have deterred some. But the social profile of petitioners was also the result of the existence of clear ideas about what sort of disputes were appropriate to be brought before a state official: overwhelmingly, the petitions complain of wrongs that in some way or other involved property or economic transactions. Obviously, those in the propertied classes were more likely to be the plaintiffs in such disputes" (34–5). For further recent research into the complexities of Roman law in the Eastern Empire see, e.g., Georgy Kantor, "Law in Roman Phrygia: Rules and Jurisdictions," in *Roman Phrygia: Culture and Society*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: CUP, 2013); "Knowledge of Law in Roman Asia Minor," in *Selbstdarstellung und Kommunikation Die Veröffentlichung staatlicher Urkunden auf Stein und Bronze in der Römischen Welt*, ed. Rudolf Haensch (München: C.H. Beck, 2006), 249–65. New Testament scholars have tended to maintain this consensus in their work; on 1 Corinthians 6.1–11, for example, it is common to assume that those involved in the litigation were of a higher socio-economic status. See, e.g., Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, FCCGRW (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 120; Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. John H. Schütz (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 97; John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, JSNTSup 75 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 127–28. Among the commentators, e.g., Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 418–20; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 229.

majority of families would not have had these kinds of resources. As Frier and McGinn argue:

> Although Roman private law itself was nominally egalitarian and seldom based upon overt differentiations of social class and wealth, and although the law is likely to have had some impact on the lives of persons well below the ranks of the elite, nonetheless there are solid reasons to believe that the outlook, values, and interests of the upper classes (from whose ranks the Roman jurists were overwhelmingly drawn) were crucially important in shaping both the overall texture and the specific rules of classical Roman family law. Above all, this elite enjoyed easy access to law, and the wealth and privilege in which the elite traded were far more readily susceptible to the application of legal norms.[107]

If the point is admitted, we must conclude that Roman law is more relevant to the lives of first-century Christians in relation to their socio-economic status. The debate about the social status of the first Christians is vigorous.[108] I cannot argue for a position here, but

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[107] Frier and McGinn, *Family Law*, 5–6.

[108] The classic debate is between the so called 'new consensus,' built around the work of Meeks, Malherbe, Judge and Theissen, which has already been cited, and those who argue that most Christians were drawn from the ranks of the poor. This latter thesis can be traced back at least as early as Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910). It has found its most vigorous recent exposition in the work of Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); see also Steven J. Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 323–61. In recent years the question has rightly been asked whether the two 'camps' are as far apart as they at first appear, and some effort has been made to try and avoid unhelpful dichotomies. See the mature assessment of Bruce W. Longenecker, "Socio-Economic Profiling of the First Urban Christians," in Still and Horrell, *After the First Urban Christians*, 39–59.

recognise that the relevance of Roman law for the social history of the early Christians is contingent upon that debate.

As a postscript to this excursus we note a final reason to be cautious in our use of the legal material: even amongst wealthy Romans there is evidence to suggest that the law did not, in practice, correspond tightly to the precise legal thought of the jurists. Robinson presents evidence from Cicero's and Pliny's letters to illustrate the contrast between legal norms in theory and reality.[109]

2.3.4. Summary

The restrictions on generosity in Roman family law seem orientated around the necessity of strong and durable households, which enable the *paterfamilias* to play their part in civic life. The ideology of the culture was that a householder should increase the estate and guard it for the next generation. Therefore, *donatio* was restricted through the various laws surveyed above. However, the breadth of application of the law is questionable. Moreover, the law is primarily concerned with gifts of capital. As noted at the outset, the generosity that the New Testament is concerned with is primarily that of food and money to meet material needs. Much more important, then, are our conclusions as to the limits of *pietas*: inter-family generosity to support material needs was a central obligation

[109] Robinson, *Roman Law*, 124. See also Suzanne Dixon, "Family Finances: Terentia and Tullia," in *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, ed. B. Rawson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 93–119.

of *pietas*, but if one did not uphold one's own obligations of *pietas* towards the family, then one's entitlement to receive its benefits was lost.

2.3.5. Qualifying considerations: the Roman family in the wider empire

It may legitimately be asked to what extent the preceding analysis of generosity and its restriction in the Roman family should be assumed to be common to the communities for whom the New Testament documents were first written. One may safely assume their relevance for Rome, Philippi and Corinth (the first for obvious reasons and the latter two as Roman colonies), but what about Palestine and the cities of Asia Minor? Did Roman law and the cultural virtue of *pietas* extend beyond Italy and places which were predominantly populated by Roman citizens?

Some scholars have attempted to investigate the spread of the 'Roman family' in different parts of the Roman Empire, despite a paucity of evidence. Jonathan Edmondson's study of Roman Lusitania, concludes "at the very least that a completely Roman model of family organization did not spread evenly across the entire province. Or even if it did, it did not necessarily obliterate all elements of pre-existing kinship and family systems." [110] He

[110] Jonathan Edmondson, "Family Relations in Roman Lusitania: Social Change in a Roman Province?," in *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy and Beyond*, ed. M. George (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 183–231, 228.

suggests this is characteristic of Roman rule, that "although the spread of Roman power did bring a good deal of uniformity across its provinces, it did not obliterate, still less seek to obliterate, all local traditions and particularities."[111] Greg Woolf's study of the Roman North-West produces a similar result:

> We should expect institutions that were equally central at Rome, like the Roman family and Roman slavery, to play similar roles in the expansion of Roman society. Perhaps the key difference is that the Roman family was never compulsory in the Roman provinces. Even when mass enfranchisements like those associated with colonization suddenly created hundreds of 'Roman families' it would have been easy to evade Roman norms in favour of diverse local practices.[112]

An example of this is provided by Huebner in her study of Roman Egypt discussed above. She notes that "*Patria potestas* was not interpreted in its strict Roman sense in Egypt: sons were independent and could own property once they had reached the age of legal majority." [113] Clearly, then, Roman law and culture regarding the family was differentiated in its penetration to different parts of the Empire; the paucity of evidence should make us cautious in advancing generalities. It is best to consider our conclusions more or less relevant in proportion to the penetration of Roman citizenship, law and culture in any given community.

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[111] Ibid., 229.
[112] Greg Woolf, "Family History in the Roman North-West," in George, *Roman Family in the Empire*, 231–54, 253.
[113] Huebner, *Family in Roman Egypt*, 66.

2.3.6. Qualifying considerations: the Roman family and Jewish families

It is particularly worth investigating what is known of the impact of Roman rule on Jewish families, due to the importance of the Jewish context of all the New Testament documents. Margaret Williams investigates to what extent Judea was 'Romanized' in the first century. She objects to the use of rabbinic material (and therefore all studies based primarily on this material) as ahistorical regarding the first century.[114] Her study of the Jewish family and Romanization examines practices concerning naming, marriage, divorce and death; her sources are Josephus, papyri from the Judean desert, the New Testament, archaeological and epigraphical evidence. She argues that although one can observe real change in the Jewish family, it is fairly superficial – change occurs only where the Torah is not prescriptive, and "the evidence… shows that it was largely restricted to the elite."[115]

This should caution against understanding Jewish families in Roman terms, but need not suggest that they had significantly different ideals. Larry Yarbrough compiles evidence from the Pentateuch through to the rabbinic literature to argue for a set of obligations that existed between parents and children in the Jewish

[114] Margaret Williams, "The Jewish Family in Judea from Pompey to Hadrian - the Limits of Romanization," in George, *Roman Family in the Empire*, 159–82, 160. Williams clearly holds a minimalist view as to the historical value of rabbinic evidence. We will discuss this issue more fully in 4.2.1.1
[115] Ibid., 182.

family in this period.[116] Only one paragraph is given to consideration of inter-family support: he claims that it is "obvious" that parents were expected to feed and clothe their children, citing *Arist.* 248 and the rabbinic texts *B. Ketubot* 49ab; *m. B. Qam* 10.1.[117] Interestingly, the duties of parents to maintain their children cannot be grounded in a biblical text, so the rabbis "spoke of it as a moral duty and not a legal obligation."[118] He also shows that the rabbis considered it a father's duty to teach their sons a trade (*B, Qidd.* 30b). In return, children should provide for their parents in their old age (*Sir.* 3.8, 12; Philo, *Decalogue*, 117; *B. Qidd* 31b).[119] Samuel Adams shows that such reciprocity began in reality with the contribution of children to the labour and economic life of the family from a very early age.[120] With regard to our concerns, the key is that Yarbrough can note that "for the most part, we must conclude that Jewish families were not distinctive, at least with regard to the ideal" when compared with wider Greco-Roman

[116] O. Larry Yarbrough, "Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity," in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity*, ed. S.J.D. Cohen (Atlanta: Brown University, 1993), 39–59.
[117] Further evidence for this assertion could be found in, e.g., Josephus, *Ap.* 2.206; 4QInstruction[b] 2 iii.15-iv.1; see also Trevor J. Burke, *Family Matters: A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians*, JSNTSup 247 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 46–59. It should also be noted that marriage contracts have been discovered in which this obligation was made explicit, and the father's possessions were stipulated as liability should he fail to do so. See Hannah M. Cotton, DJD XXVII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 265–74.
[118] Yarbrough, "Parents and Children," 46.
[119] Considered the outworking of the fifth commandment.
[120] Samuel L. Adams, *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Judea* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 61, 72–73.

culture.[121] Alexei Sivertsev confirms this judgment, showing that the rabbinic sources conceptualise household economics based on a *paterfamilias* model which "may very well reflect a provincial adaptation of Roman law."[122]

Ross Kraemer uses the evidence concerning the Herodian princess Bernice and the "somewhat more ordinary" (138) Babatha in order to examine Jewish family dynamics.[123] For the former, Kraemer's source is Josephus, for the latter the 'Babatha archive' found in the late 1950s which contained personal and legal documents. She recognizes that working out "what legal systems and standards may have applied in either case" is a "thorny problem" (145), but notes that among Babatha's papers are contracts with Roman citizens and an appeal to the governor (137–39). The evidence may, in fact, indicate that some Jews exercised choice as to which legal system to appeal to in any given instance.[124] Although Kraemer tentatively suggests that Jewish

[121] Adele Reinhartz examines Philo and reaches similar conclusions: 'Parents and Children: A Philonic Perspective,' in Cohen, *Jewish Family*, 61–88. See also Adams, *Economic Life*, who presents some evidence from Elephantine marriage documents, demonstrating that husbands were expected to support their wives, but that this was facilitated by the provision of a dowry (31).

[122] Alexei Sivertsev, "The Household Economy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, ed. C. Hezser (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 229–45, 238.

[123] Ross S. Kraemer, "Typical and Atypical Jewish Family Dynamics," in Balch and Osiek, *Early Christian Families*, 130–56. Although Babatha is of relatively low social status compared with Bernice, she had more resources than many, owning "land, houses and orchards in their village" (138).

[124] This argument is made by Hannah Cotton, "The Guardianship of Jesus Son of Babatha: Roman and Local Law in the Province of Arabia," *JRS* 83 (1993): 94–108, 107. See also Jill Harries, "Courts and the Judicial System," in Hezser,

families may be differentiated by their practice of polygyny and (perhaps) the inability of the wife to initiate divorce, she has to conclude that "much about these families is not distinctively Jewish… the dynamics of Jewish families do not appear appreciably different from those of non-Jews (of similar class and status) in the early imperial Roman period" (155).

In summary, although the paucity of evidence for the Jewish family under Roman rule is acute, there appears to be a consensus among scholars who have attempted to research this area that Jewish families do *not* appear particularly different, either in their general composition or in their approach to inter-family generosity and solidarity, although there is no evidence that most of them adopted a particularly Roman set of cultural values or moral motivation for such practices. Perhaps, then, although it is unlikely that the particulars of Roman law or an explicit appeal to *pietas* would have had a dominant impact in Palestine, the general pattern of inter-family solidarity that is exemplified in the Roman sources may be assumed to be present, without too much differentiation, in Jewish families of the same period.[125]

Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine, 85–101, 98. Hanan Eshel, "A Survey of the Refuge Caves and Their Legal Documents," in *Halakhah in Light of Epigraphy*, ed. A.L. Baumgarten et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 103–54, writes that the Babatha archive "provides an excellent illustration of how quickly Roman law was adopted and implemented in Provincia Arabia and by the Jewish community in Mahoza" (123). See further ibid., p. 127, 129.

[125] Catherine Hezser, "The Graeco-Roman Context of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine," in Hezser, *Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, 28–47,

suggests much the same, whilst noting that more research on these questions would be welcome (38–39).

Chapter 3

3. Restricted Generosity in Greco-Roman Associations

3.1. Introduction

Judge's essay "Social Pattern" argued that one of the best comparative social structures for the early church was the voluntary association:

> [the first Christians were not] unwilling to be thought of as forming an association of the usual kind. On the contrary it would hardly have occurred to them to raise the question in the first place. It was taken for granted… the term *ecclesia* (namely, meeting) itself, and the names for the various officials may have developed special connotations within the Christian community, but to non-Christians, and to Christians themselves in the early stages, they need have suggested nothing out of the ordinary. (32)

Although there are other scholars in the last two centuries who have compared associations with the early church,[1] in the last couple of decades an unprecedented quantity of work on associations has been undertaken by New Testament scholars.[2] The shift is

[1] On which, see Baird, *HNTR* 2.210–12; David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles*, WUNT 2.248 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 80–81; Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations*, WUNT 2.161 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 4–8.

[2] For an up-to-date bibliography and summary of recent research see Ascough, "Christ Groups and Associations." Ascough has also worked with Philip Harland

represented within the work of Wayne Meeks. In his ground-breaking *The First Urban Christians* (1983),[3] he minimized the importance of voluntary associations for understanding the early church, arguing that there were significant differences between them. Twenty-five years later, however, he was much more positive about the comparison and noted that his own mind had been changed.[4] In the following paragraphs I will outline my working assumptions as to the definition of voluntary associations, the validity of using associations as a comparative model and the evidence to be studied.

3.1.1. Definition

Social groups in the first century can be described as official or unofficial,[5] public or private,[6] involuntary or voluntary.[7] The groups that we are interested in are the latter of each of these pairs, although with nuance. Official groups were "established by an act

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and John Kloppenborg to make available a large amount of the source material for the study of associations: Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *AGRW*; John S. Kloppenborg and Richard S. Ascough, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary I: Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Thrace* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011); Harland, *GRA II*.

[3] Subtitled: *The Social World of the Apostle Paul.*

[4] Wayne A. Meeks, "Taking Stock and Moving on," in Still and Horrell, *After the First Urban Christians*, 134–46, 141.

[5] On these see John S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership," in Kloppenborg and Wilson, *Voluntary Associations*, 16–30, 16–18.

[6] See Richard S. Ascough, "Greco-Roman Philosophic, Religious and Voluntary Associations," in *Community Formation in the Early Church and in the Church Today*, ed. R.N. Longenecker (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 3–19, 9–12.

[7] Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *AGRW*, 3.

of the senate or imperial edict and frequently had important competences and responsibilities within the apparatus of government"[8] (e.g., the official priestly colleges of the Roman Empire), but this is not to say that "unofficial" groups were not recognised by the authorities. Public associations were those that were "connected to a public sanctuary and fell under the administration of the city;"[9] most often these were the legally permitted mystery cults, including "those of Dionysus, Demeter, Isis, and Mithras."[10] By contrast, private groups generally met in a domestic or privately rented space. They were separate from state-controlled activities although some self-identified as devotees of the same deities.[11] This is not to say that they had no visible public presence – quite the reverse, given the vast number of public decrees of such associations attested in the epigraphic evidence. Finally, whereas membership in one's *oikos* or *polis* was not normally chosen, that in voluntary associations was; although it is likely that, for some individuals, social pressures and obligations of one kind or another may have restricted their freedom in practice, if not in law.[12] Having clarified what is meant by 'voluntary,' 'public' and 'unofficial,' we can now cite Harland's definition of

[8] Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi," 16.
[9] Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *AGRW*, 9.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 18.
[12] That is, for necessary political, social or economic reasons a given individual may feel compelled to pursue membership in an association.

an association, which will also function as our definition henceforth. Associations are:

> social groupings in antiquity that shared certain characteristics in common and were often recognized as analogous groups by people and by governmental institutions. Associations were small, unofficial ("private") groups, usually consisting of about ten to fifty members (but sometimes with larger memberships into the hundreds), that met together on a regular basis to socialize with one another and to honour both earthly and divine benefactors, which entailed a variety of internal and external activities.[13]

Harland goes on to present a taxonomy which categorises associations according to the different social networks from which membership was drawn. These include the *oikos*, neighbourhood, occupation, cultic practice or ethnicity.[14] The important implication here is that the fact that the early church was comparable with associations does not invalidate its comparison with other social structures.

3.1.2. The validity of using associations as a comparative model

The arguments advanced for and against comparing the early Christian communities with associations have recently been comprehensively surveyed by Richard Ascough.[15] Rather than

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[13] Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009). Common terms for such associations include: *koinon*, *synodos, thiasos, synedrion, eranos, synergasia, symbiotai, hetairoi, mustai, sunagoge, speira*; in Latin, *collegium* (27).
[14] Ibid., 32–35.
[15] Ascough, "Christ Groups and Associations."

repeat his literature review I will cite his summation and articulate my working assumptions:

> Early Christian writings in the New Testament and beyond resonate with the language and practices of associations. There is extensive use of fictive kinship language… alongside an emphasis on friendship and shared property. Although the writings bear the rhetoric of egalitarianism and shared responsibilities, it is also clear that in many Christ groups there is a hierarchical leadership structure, especially from the second century onwards. Christ groups note a reliance on patronage, and seem to hold meetings in private residences, although occasionally can be found in public spaces… Christ groups look and sound like associations in structure and organization, including similar cult practices (particularly ritual meals) and regulations. They are technically illicit but generally tolerated as insignificant (with a few localized exceptions) and by the second century and beyond even self-describe as associations… enough work has now been undertaken to demonstrate that early Christ groups and, for that matter, synagogues… cannot be categorized as somehow separate and distinct from the myriad other groups in antiquity.[16]

It has been clearly demonstrated that many features of the early church can be helpfully compared to what is known of associations. The evidence that contemporary outsiders viewed the church as another association[17] and the fact that second-century Christian writers do describe churches as associations are particularly convincing in this regard.[18] This does not mean that there was

[16] Ibid., 235.
[17] E.g., Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96.6–7.
[18] E.g., Tertullian, *Apol.* 38–39.

nothing different about the churches [19] or that similarities necessarily mean that the two were genealogically related (i.e., that the practices and structures of the church were copied from other associations). [20] Rather, the comparison is close enough, particularly in the first and second centuries,[21] that examining the restrictions on generosity in associations may plausibly inform our understanding of restrictions on generosity in the churches addressed by the authors of the New Testament.[22]

3.1.3. What groups are included in 'associations'?

Recently, it has been argued that it is not historically responsible to differentiate synagogues, churches and philosophical schools from other voluntary associations, and treat them as different entities. Rather, some scholars have emphasised "the necessity of seeing all of them – and I would include here as well Jewish and Christian associations – as somewhat differing manifestations of the same phenomenon."[23] Harland does not consider this methodology to minimize distinctions between Jewish, Christian, and other associations:

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[19] See Harland, *Identity*, 46.
[20] See Smith, *Drudgery Divine*.
[21] Clearly, as time progressed, the church developed in ways unlike any of the associations. See Hubert Cancik, "Haus, Schule, Gemeinde: Zur Organisation von <fremder Religion> in Rom (1.-3. Jh. N. Chr.)," in *Gruppenreligionen in Römischen Reich*, ed. J. Rüpke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 31–48, 45–46.
[22] We should not, though, overstate the pervasiveness of associations. See the concerns of, e.g., Meggitt, *Poverty*, 171.
[23] Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *AGRW*, 18.

> attention to similarities among associations, synagogues, and congregations, then, is not meant to underplay variations among each of these three types of groups, as well as the variance of individual self-understandings of specific groups. Nor is this meant to ignore the culturally distinctive elements in the worldviews, values, and practices of both synagogues and congregations… that could distinguish them as minority cultural groups.[24]

Others lay greater emphasis on the non-distinctiveness of these groups:

> It is no longer possible to differentiate between synagogues, philosophical groups, and associations on the basis of differing primary features/functions. That old typology erroneously assigns a uniform character to associations and attributes different uniform features to other supposedly homogeneous social groups.[25]

Our analysis of voluntary associations accepts the broad point, in so far as this chapter analyses some groups that were associated with philosophy or the deities of the mystery religions. However, as the focus of this study is (restricted) generosity in the early church, comparing it with other social structures in this regard, it

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[24] Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 212.

[25] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 41. The major problem with Last's study, as I understand him, is that he quickly goes on to say that "the value of grouping associations into a single category is that most of the groups in this classification needed to find ways to buy food and wine for their meals corporately, and crowns and inscriptions for their service providers, and needed to secure recruits in order to generate income and fill couches on their *trinclinia*" (42). He thus *does* attribute a uniform set of functions to all associations, including Christian and Jewish communities, and analyses the Corinthian church by presupposing that they have to have had identical functional needs as the homogenous whole he has created.

necessarily treats the Christian groups separately from other associations. What remains is a brief discussion of synagogues, or, for reasons that will be discussed, 'Jewish groups.'

3.1.4. Jewish groups

> Judean synagogues are sometimes bracketed out from discussions of Greco-Roman associations on the assumption that they are somehow very different types of groups. This is an argument that can no longer be sustained, as there is mounting evidence of some connection between the formation and organization of Judean synagogues, at least in the Diaspora, and associations.[26]

This statement by Kloppenborg and Ascough sums up the emphasis of recent research on Greco-Roman associations by New Testament scholars, as we have seen in the previous section, and alludes to the complex debates surrounding the origin and nature of the ancient synagogue, debates that cannot be addressed here.[27] However,

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[26] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 344. For a brief survey of the different experiences of 'community' available to Jews in the first century see Alan F. Segal, "The Jewish Experience: Temple, Synagogues, Home, and Fraternal Group," in Longenecker, *Community Formation*, 20–35.

[27] Debates focus, among other things, on: 1) the historical origin of the synagogue: see, e.g., Birger Olsson, "The Origins of the Synagogue: An Introduction," in *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 C.E.*, ed. B. Olsson and M. Zetterholm (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 2003); J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Egypt and the Rise of the Synagogue," in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, ed. D. Urman and P.V.M. Flesher (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 3–16; 2) the nature of the synagogue in different places at different times: e.g., Howard C. Kee, "Defining the First Century C.E. Synagogue," in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress*, ed. H.C. Kee and L.H. Cohick (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999), 7–26, argues that there were no synagogue buildings in Palestine pre-70 CE, in contrast to the findings of Paul V.M. Flesher, "Palestinian Synagogues before 70 C.E.: A Review of the

given the current disagreements about the terminology, dating and character of the 'first-century synagogue,' this study will discuss 'Jewish groups' in the first century rather than 'synagogues.' Not only does such a decision intentionally preserve the conclusions of this study from reliance upon any of the wider debates just referenced, but is surely appropriate in allowing for the widest possible context in which to find practices of generosity (and its restrictions) that may allow us to better understand the practices of the first Christians.

Richard Last, for his own reasons, also abandons the terminology of 'synagogues,' choosing instead to discuss "Yahweh groups." Having made this distinction, he essentially argues the same case as Kloppenborg and Ascough, that "Yahweh groups" were considered as associations by their contemporaries, and that there is plenty of evidence that they were characterised by the same financial and honorific behaviours as other associations. [28]

Evidence," in Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*, 27–39; 3) terminology: it is debated how often first-century use of the term "synagogue" refers to a building and noted that there are many other words used to refer to synagogue gatherings. Such clearly has an impact on any definition of a "synagogue" and the other debates cited here; see Carsten Claussen, "Meeting, Community, Synagogue - Different Frameworks of Ancient Jewish Congregations in the Diaspora," in Olsson and Zetterholm, *Ancient Synagogue*, 144–67. On terminology, see too the discussions of Last, *The Pauline Church*, 25–31; Harland, *Identity*, 36–46. More notice should be taken of the point made by Anders Runesson, Donald D. Binder, and Birger Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Sourcebook* (Leiden: Brill, 2008): "It is one thing to claim that the Romans understood and categorised Diaspora synagogues as *collegia*, quite another to assert that this was also how the Jews themselves understood the nature of their institution" (12).

[28] Last, *Church*, 30–33.

Moreover, he suggests that the membership of "Yahweh groups" was not always based on Judean ethnicity:

> The evidence seems to suggest that the membership profiles of individual Yahweh groups differed from group to group – some Yahweh groups were formed primarily from immigrant populations in a locality, some were coherent primarily in terms of occupational status, others pulled members of different ethnicities who were interested in providing cult to Yahweh.[29]

Put simply, Last's argument is that different groups associated with reference to Jews or the Jewish deity,[30] but with a demonstrable range of commonalities *beyond* ethnicity. If ethnicity is not always a decisive factor for the group, and evidence of similar practices to other associations can be found for many such "Yahweh groups," should they not be considered together rather than artificially separated?

Without wanting to deny that, when associations are defined in the broad terms articulated above,[31] Jewish groups would plausibly

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[29] Last, *Church*, 38. Despite the confidence of Last's statement, much of the evidence he offers *does not* demonstrate that some "Yahweh groups" were composed primarily of non-Judeans, but only that some groups did not make ethnicity their defining point. Such groups may still have been composed of ethnic Jews, either exclusively or primarily. The slim and inconclusive evidence he presents does not match the confidence of his assertions.

[30] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 31–33. See further Richard S. Ascough, "Paul, Synagogues, and Associations: Reframing the Question of Models for Pauline Groups," *JJMJS* 2 (2015): 27–52; Peter Richardson, "Early Synagogues as Collegia in the Diaspora and Palestine," in Kloppenborg and Wilson, *Voluntary Associations*, 90–109.

[31] One weakness of the recent research on associations is whether it really allows for many informative conclusions: the breadth of definition of an association means that a huge number and variety of groups can be placed in the same category; however, because the definition is so broad, conclusions about any

fit within this category, in the context of the current study it is nevertheless best to consider them separately for the following reasons: First, Jewish communities, no doubt with significant variation, self-consciously lived their lives with reference to their scriptures. These scriptures contain many references to handling money, including an ethic of poor-care and generosity.[32] This ethic is reflected in several second-temple Jewish texts.[33] Thus, it is initially plausible that if there were to be differences between the practice of Jewish groups and Greco-Roman associations, this is one area where that might be evident. Second, there is solid evidence that Jewish groups exhibited notably different financial behaviour in one regard: the collection and transfer of money to the Jerusalem temple. This money appears in some cases to have been kept in the buildings of the Jewish communities.[34] There is, therefore, already observable difference in at least one area of financial practice. Finally, in such a study as this it is perhaps defensible *in any case* to try to analyse Jewish groups separately from wider Greco-Roman associations, not on the *presupposition* of difference, but rather on the *possibility* of difference. As many of the first Christians were Jews, it is particularly valuable to know if Jewish practice can be distinguished from wider Greco-Roman

specific group in relation to "associations" as a whole are of limited value. For one of the consequential dangers, see the criticism of Last, n. 25 above.

[32] See, e.g., Armitage, *Poverty*, 143–53.

[33] E.g., Daniel 4.27; Tobit 1.16–18; 4.7–11; 12.8–9; Sirach 4.1–10; 29.8–13. Many of the key texts have been helpfully discussed by Anderson, *Charity*.

[34] E.g. Josephus, *Antiq*. 16.163–165.

practice if one is looking for insights into early Christian practice. As such, the rest of this chapter will look at restricted generosity in Greco-Roman associations *excluding* Jewish groups; these will be examined in the following chapter.

3.1.5. Evidence

There are four types of evidence that inform the historian about associations. First, there is archaeological evidence – excavations of places used by associations.[35] The size and location of these buildings, together with extant decorative features, inscriptions and furniture can provide information about the likely size, membership and social status of associations, and suggest what activities may or may not have taken place. However, as it provides little direct help in ascertaining what practices occurred with regard to generosity, archaeological evidence is of no specific help to this study. The second type of evidence is references to associations in Greco-Roman literature, which informs us not only of associations themselves, but also about how they were observed by the authors of these documents. The final two are inscriptions and papyri. These represent the largest body of evidence, and were produced by the associations (or members of associations) themselves, rendering them the most important evidence for establishing

[35] On which, see Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *AGRW*, 5.

association practice. Inscriptions and papyri constitute the majority of the evidence analysed below.

3.2. Association finances – an overview

Many scholars who have written at length about voluntary associations make reference to their finances because they feature so regularly in the evidence. Two recent monographs, already cited, that are particularly helpful in offering an extensive treatment of the financial practices of associations are Downs's *The Offering of the Gentiles* and Last's *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia*.[36] In order to facilitate a clear discussion about the restrictions to generosity within associations, I will draw heavily on Downs and Last (with some insights from other scholars) to sketch briefly what can be said about how associations obtained and used money, delineating some foundations that contextualise our own specific focus. Detailed examination of individual pieces of evidence is deferred until the discussion of restrictions on the use of money in associations (3.3). Finally, this kind of summary

[36] In addition to Downs and Last, see discussion in Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 63–65; Jinyu Liu, "The Economy of Endowments: The Case of the Roman Collegia," in *Pistoi Dia Tèn Technèn. Bankers, Loans and Archives in the Ancient World*, ed. K. Verboven, K. Vandorpe, and V. Chankowski (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 231–56, 238. See also the helpful discussion in John M.G. Barclay, "Money and Meetings: Group Formation among Diaspora Jews and Early Christians," in *Vereine, Synagogen und Gemeinden im Kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, ed. A. Gutsfeld and D.A. Koch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 113–127.

should not be taken to mean that all associations operated in exactly the same way; each one was different, in some degree, from the next. As such, not all of what follows is true of each association, although several features were very common.

3.2.1. Sources of income

3.2.1.1. Patronage/Benefaction

The literature on associations uses both the terms patronage and benefaction to describe the best attested phenomena with regard to association finances: individuals gave to associations and were reciprocated by honorific practices and inscriptions.[37] Benefactions were most commonly financial gifts, but also included property, land and non-material assistance such as legal representation.[38] Honorific practices included crowning the benefactor; proclaiming their honours; releasing them from obligations to pay membership costs; and honorific inscriptions.[39] Such practices were self-perpetuating, as bestowing honour encouraged further donations; many inscriptions are self-consciously designed to stimulate further

[37] Last prefers to use patronage (e.g., p. 35); Downs uses both interchangeably, seeing both as overlapping forms of "general reciprocity" (88–89). Also using the terms interchangeably with regard to associations is Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 61–63. Harland, *Identity*, differentiates them geographically "benefaction (more appropriate for the Greek East) or patronage (more appropriate for the Latin West)," and tends to prefer benefaction (148–149). In this thesis it is accepted that, in the context of voluntary associations, they are essentially overlapping terms.
[38] Downs, *Offering*, 89–90.
[39] Ibid.

benefactions, both from the patrons they honour and others who may desire similar public praise.[40] The whole system was effective primarily due to the honour-driven culture of the Greco-Roman world.[41] Although benefactors could be members or non-members of the society, the benefaction of existing members was encouraged by the 'selling' of offices; the status gained through holding a formal post within the society was the reward for the financial burden it carried.[42] The same dynamics could work for corporate money-raising projects, exemplified by a list of donors to a toll office in Ephesus, which carefully documented each individual's contribution, ranging from four columns to five denarii (*IEph* 20 = *AGRW* 162); the public recognition of each individual with the value of their donation functioned as motivation and reward. Finally, benefactions were not only received by associations from living patrons, but could also be given as part of an individual's will. In this case, the primary reason for leaving a bequest to an association seems to have been to ensure one's post-mortem remembrance. Benefactors sometimes tried to ensure that the association fulfilled its duties by making the bequest conditional,

[40] See, e.g., *GRA* 35 = *AGRA* 20 = *IG* II^2 1327.
[41] On which see, e.g., Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum*, SNTSMS 132 (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 34–40; as he demonstrates: "the Roman elite, and most others in the ancient world, were motivated to behave in a virtuous manner… by the desire to avoid shame and receive honor from persons and groups external to themselves" (49). See also Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[42] See Last, *The Pauline Church*, 150–59.

commanding the transfer of the bequest to another association if the first failed to comply.[43]

3.2.1.2. Membership costs

The second way associations generated income was by charging members for participation, "either upon initiation or upon attendance at each meeting."[44] Some of the extant rules of associations demand that fees be charged even when members were absent from meetings.[45] Last emphasises the necessity of this form of income, arguing for "the foundational importance of collecting subscription dues from all members as a bare minimum requirement for existence as a club."[46] He notes evidence that, when necessary, associations sought to 'recruit' guests, whose contributions would help them to break even.[47] Besides these regular charges there are several examples of association rules that stipulate fines for a variety of misdeeds.[48] It appears that for most associations such fees and fines contributed to the κοινόν (common fund), from which association costs could be paid. These were usually administered by an elected treasurer (ταμίας).[49]

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[43] E.g., *GRA* 69 = *Philippi* II 133/G441. See 3.3.1 below.
[44] Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 63. So also Last, *The Pauline Church*, 108.
[45] E.g., *GRA* 46 = *IG* II^2 1339. See 3.3.2 below.
[46] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 135.
[47] Ibid., 131–32.
[48] See 3.3.2 below.
[49] Downs, *Offering*, 95.

3.2.1.3. Interest on capital

For associations which possessed significant capital, income could also be generated by produce, interest or loans. A good example comes from first-century CE Thessalonica (*GRA* 76 = *IG* X/2.1 259) where a religious association was bequeathed a vineyard, of which a third was to be used for cultic activities; the remaining two-thirds could provide income for the association. Sometimes regular income was generated from the interest on a substantial gift of money.[50] Harland states that the use of association capital to provide loans "was not uncommon."[51] In several examples the loans were designed to secure the association's financial viability; penalties were sometimes stipulated for anyone suspected of mishandling association business.[52]

3.2.2. Uses of money

3.2.2.1. Communal gatherings

Association gatherings cost money, both for the food and wine to be consumed, and the cultic activities that took place.[53] Accordingly, Last notes that "in club bylaws one of the most consistently prohibited activities was showing up at banquets

[50] E.g., *GRA* 69 = *Philippi* II 133/G441.
[51] Harland, *GRA II*, 406.
[52] E.g., *GRA* 149 = SEG 58: 1640.
[53] Downs, *Offering*, 95–96.

without fees."[54] The amount and quality of food and wine would vary depending on the resources of any given association.[55] Such banquets required a venue, and the use of community finances for property rental, purchase or construction is also well attested.[56] Also belonging here are honorific costs, as many attested practices (such as crowning) occurred at group meetings. Honorific inscriptions were also most likely agreed upon at meetings, even if their administration was undertaken at other times. Again, the value of honorific actions depended on the means of an association and the nature (and size) of the patronage it honoured.

3.2.2.2. Loans, burial, administration

It has already been noted that associations offered loans; it was both a 'use' of money and (at least, an association would hope) a source of income.[57] Besides this the running of an association required administration (keeping accounts, communications, record keeping, etc.); providing the necessary materials was another common cost.[58] Finally, one well attested use of money was for the funerary costs of members, either paying them in their entirety or contributing towards them.[59] Scholars now appear to have reached

[54] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 135.
[55] Ibid., 134–35.
[56] E.g., *GRA* 3 = *IG* II^2 337; *GRA* 105 = *IKyme* 37.
[57] For an example of an association that was struggling to recover funds owed to it, see *GRA* 14 = *Agora* 16:161.
[58] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 128–29.
[59] Downs, *Offering*, 96–97.

a consensus that associations established only for this purpose (*collegia funeraticia*) did not exist before Hadrian.[60] This common practice must therefore be seen as a part of normal association life rather than the reason for an association's existence.

3.2.2.3. Care of members?

All are agreed that associations did not offer material help for non-members.[61] The picture is less clear for members. Downs argues that there is evidence (albeit not much) to suggest that some associations did care for their poorer members.[62] The elements of his discussion that pertain to Jewish synagogue practices we will leave aside and include in the discussion of Jewish groups. That aside, Downs' position rests on two pieces of evidence: 1) Pliny's exchange of letters with Trajan concerning whether the citizens of Amisus were permitted to form associations, a scenario likely arising from a general ban on associations that Pliny decreed under Trajan.[63] In Trajan's reply he allowed associations that "are not used for riotous and unlawful assemblies, but to relieve cases of

[60] And were possibly a legal fiction even after Hadrian, see 3.4.1.3 below. The Jewish *chevra kadisha* (burial society) cannot be traced back to this time: the earliest suggested origin is 320 CE, based on the *T.B. Moed Katon,* 27b, although this is speculative. See further Rachel Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 514.
[61] E.g., Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 25; Last, *The Pauline Church*, 169.
[62] Downs, *Offering*, 105–12. Note, though, that Downs cannot suggest how members were cared for beyond the generalised "relieving hardship" (*passim*).
[63] See Pliny, *Ep.* 10.33–34, 96, 7.

hardship among the poor."[64] 2) The regulations of a Demotic religious association in Egypt (second century CE) demanding mutual financial assistance between members in cases of need (P. Cairo 31179). Throughout this section Downs frames the discussion as though this evidence is merely exemplary of wider phenomena (esp. 107–109) but, ultimately, he has no more evidence to present. Downs suggests that:

> To the extent that Greco-Roman associations – pagan, Jewish, and Christian – provided alternative forms of social organization to the structures of both kinship and civic identity, even as they drew from and overlapped with these institutions, one might suppose that these associations also provided protection for the poor against both hardship and exploitation by potential patrons. Unfortunately the evidence is elusive.[65]

The question as to whether associations cared for their poorer members necessitates a detailed examination and will be evaluated below (3.4).

3.3. Restrictions on use of money

As previously stated, only members of associations participated in their functions and received their benefits. Thus, to be excluded from membership, for whatever reason, denied one any access to association resources and benefits. The restrictions on association expenditure presently described all assume this basic fact:

[64] Pliny, *Ep.* 10.93 (Radice, LCL 59).
[65] Downs, *Offering*, 112.

resources were not used for people or functions beyond those of the association.

3.3.1. The wishes of a benefactor

Some inscriptions record that benefactors imposed restrictions on the way an association used the money they bequeathed it, even if the gift was a legacy and the benefactor was no longer alive. Two inscriptions from Thessalonica nicely illustrate this phenomenon. The first, dated in the first century CE, records the bequest of a Gaius Iulius to the *mystai* of Zeus Dionysus Gongylos (*GRA* 76 = *AGRW* 50 = *IG* X/2.1 259):

> … bequeathed to the current and future *mystai*, as long as they are banded together, one-third of five *plethra* of vineyards located in the *asty* of Perdylia, on the following condition: as long as they maintain the legal right every year shall take place a banquet of bread for the *threpsantes* [ἐπὶ τῶν θρεψάντων], according to the tradition and the donation, on Dystros 19, Daisios 13, on Gorpiaios 23, and the current and future *mystai* swear by the god and by the *orgia*, and by midnight bread to maintain the ritual mentioned above according to the bequest... The whole (land) must remain unsold.[66]

Here we see that the income the association drew from the donation of the vineyards put them under obligation to celebrate the specified festivals "ἐπὶ τῶν θρεψάντων"; but what does this mean? Pantelis Nigdelis has cogently argued that although it may be impossible to know exactly who this term refers to, it must refer to deceased who

[66] All translations provided by editors of *GRA* and *AGRW* unless otherwise stated.

are closely associated with the group: the past participle 'θρεψάντων' and the use of θρησκήα in the inscription both indicate reference to the dead. The first two dates stipulated have been identified as well-known Roman festivals for the dead; such association rites are spoken of as having been long established.[67] We have here then a good example of a common association activity – the remembrance of a dead benefactor, which generally included "sacrifice, crowning, and occasionally a feast";[68] the bequest aimed to provide enough income to the association to cover, at the least, the expenses of the memorial. In this case, there is no evidence that those remembered were related to Gaius Iulius, although this would not be unlikely; donations for the purpose of honouring oneself or one's family after their death were not uncommon, as we shall see.

The second Thessalonian inscription (*GRA* 81 = *IG* X/2.1 260), this time from the third century CE, explicates that failure to fulfil the benefactor's instructions would result in the loss of what was bequeathed and its transfer to a different association in the first instance, or to the city:

> The *mystai*, small and large, each is to bear a crown of roses. The one who does not shall not share in my gift. But if they [the Prinophoroi] do not do this,

[67] See Pantelis M. Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations in Roman Thessalonikē: In Search of Identity and Support in a Cosmopolitan Society," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. L. Nasrallah, C. Bakirtzis, and S.J. Friesen (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 13–48, 31–32.
[68] Ibid., 30.

> then it [gift] belongs to the *thiasos* of the Dryophoroi, subject to the same conditions. But if the other *thiasos* does not comply [with the conditions of the bequest], then it [the bequest] is to be for the city. Being Euian priestess of Prinophoros, I bequeath for my eternal memory two *plethra* of vineyard, with the ditches, in order that from the income sacrifices may be burned for me of not less than five *denarii*.

In this case the benefactor was a priestess of Dionysus. The instruction and its motivation are very similar to that of the previous example. The stipulation that each member should wear a crown of roses and offer sacrifices means we should understand this as a manifestation of the *rosalia* festival that was popular across the Roman Empire. This festival was centred both on remembering and honouring the deceased, and also celebrating the return of summer.[69] Again, then, the motivation for the benefactor was honour and remembrance after death.[70] The income from the vineyards should ensure the costs of the festival were met, with any remaining income able to fund the activities of the association. In this example, we see that her wishes were ensured by the public display of penal measures if they were not carried out; the benefits for an association of receiving such income meant that the 'back up' beneficiary would have an interest in observing whether the original recipients were fulfilling their duties.[71]

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[69] See Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 328–29.
[70] See also Liu, "Endowments," 240.
[71] See also *IEph* 3216; *GRA* 69 = *Philippi* II 133/G441 for similar inscriptions.

An inscription from Thera (*AGRW* 243 = *IG* XII, 3 330 [210–195 BCE]), a Greek island south-west of the mainland, documents the will of a certain Epikteta who attempted to ensure the establishment of a family-based association by providing an initial donation and obligating her heir to provide a set yearly income. The will commands annual sacrifices to various deities, but as the location of such sacrifices had to be the "Mouseion," which in this case housed memorials for Epikteta's family members, remembrance of deceased kin was clearly enmeshed in the rituals. She, too, ensured her wishes, in this case by ordering the removal of land from her heir if they did not fulfil her obligations.

In Rome, an inscription from 153 CE (*AGRW* 322 = *CIL* VI 10234) documents a bequest from a member of the Roman elite to a wealthy association: Salvia Marcellina gave land on the Via Appia near the temple of Mars and fifty thousand sesterces to the association of Aesculapius and Hygiae. As well as stipulating what they should build and certain aspects of its cultic practice, there is an interesting 'cover-all' restriction: the association must "use the above-mentioned funds for no other purpose [*et ne eam pecuniam velint in alios usus convertere*] than holding meetings on the days listed below." In this instance, responsibility for obedience was given to the president or supervisors of the association, who were

to be fined twenty thousand sesterces if they were unfaithful in discharging such duties.[72]

3.3.2. Breaking association rules

As previously described, membership in an association entitled one to material benefits, such as food at community meals or burial upon death. A number of inscriptions describe two reasons why a member of an association might fail to receive these benefits: the first is financial, the second is concerned with moral standards and/or ritual purity. In some cases, the regulations demanded that the association temporarily withhold certain benefits until some action was taken, or behaviour amended; others required the expulsion of individuals from the association, comprehensively ending their participation in the group, and therefore access to its benefits.

Our first piece of evidence is from Athens, dated 57/56 BCE, from an association dedicated to members of a famous Athenian family (*GRA* 46 = *IG* II^2 1339). The decree is concerned with the financial viability of the association and to this end states the following:

> those of the *Heroistai* who are away from home for whatever reason shall pay three drachmae for the sacrifices, and those living at home but not in attendance shall be required to pay six drachmae as the contribution, and they

[72] Another inscription that explicitly forbids the use of donated funds for "any other purpose" (εἰς ἄλλον καταχρήσηται) is *GRA* 149 = SEG 58:1640.

> shall not receive the portion (of the sacrifice). And if they do not make a contribution, it was resolved that they should not participate in the *eranos*, except if one should be absent because of mourning or because of sickness.

A likely reconstruction would be that member absence was damaging the financial ability of the association to continue its activities. To mitigate this, the association required differentiated amounts to be collected from those not present; furthermore, those who could attend but did not were denied their share of the meat. Here, then, we see that attendance at association meetings was necessary to obtain the material benefits of membership.[73] The fact that at least some members avoided attending makes one suspect that, at times, the membership costs outweighed the benefits of attendance. Also from Athens comes the well-known "Rule of the *Iobakchoi*" (*GRA* 51 = *IG* II^2 1368 [164/165 CE]). Among the regulations we find the requirement that "each (member) shall speak and act and be zealous (for the association), contributing to the fixed monthly dues for wine. If he does not fulfil (these obligations), he shall be shut out of the gathering" (lines 45–50). The inscription goes on to specify that access to banquets would be denied for non-payment both of normal fees (102–105) and of any fines that a member has accrued (73–83). Further evidence records that associations sometimes took forceful action to ensure payment of fees. In the regulations of a Demotic cult association from Egypt

[73] See also *GRA* 61 = *AGRW* 30 = *IG* IX, I^2 670 where non-attending members are fined.

(*AGRW* 299 = *PCairDem* 30606 [158/157 BC]) we find the following:

> If one of our members does not pay his dues each month and does not hand them over to the representative of the House as stipulated above, the representative of the House shall go to his house and shall seize a surety for the aforementioned money. If he attacks him or one of his agents, the fine shall be 25 debens (= 500 copper drachmas)… and he will continue until he pays the debt.

Andrew Monson has calculated that this fine was equivalent to about 1/8th of the annual cost of food for a normal person in this region at this time.[74] In this association, then, both the decreed enforceability of membership fees and steep financial costs of failing to pay in any given month are notable. Returning to the inscription concerning Epikteta's family association, similar powers are decreed that enable the association to guard against financial malpractice by officers tasked with administrating banquets:

> If there is no longer a person that must provide the service [of officiating the association meeting] without charge, all members will each take his turn, by rank of age, just as it is prescribed for those that undertake it freely. Ten days before the meeting is to take place, they shall receive from the administrator fifty drachmas. But if he does not serve [officiate the meeting] after having received the money, let him pay one hundred and fifty drachmas, which the administrator will arrange, and let his property be seized as security, according

[74] See Andrew Monson, "The Ethics and Economics of Ptolemaic Religious Associations," *AncSoc* 36 (2006): 221–38, 226 chart 2.

> to the law. Until it has been paid he shall not participate in the association. In this case, let the administrator provide the service and recover the cost first from the revenue. Let the banquet take place as the association decides and for the amount that it decides. If the administrator does not provide funds to the officiants according to the regulations, let the officiant complete everything and offer the sacrifice for which he is responsible. But the administrator shall pay one hundred and fifty drachmas to the monthly officer he did not pay, and the right of execution on the debt shall lie with the one who did not receive the money and will be against the administrator, in accordance with a surety, in accordance with the law. And he shall not participate in the association until he pays.

Officiating here includes providing wine, crowns, music and perfume at a minimum, hence why there may be times where no-one will do this "for free" and require money from the association's central fund. In such a case there is clear opportunity for defrauding the association, either by the organiser of the meeting or by the administrator. Again, the threat of violent action stood to ensure that these officers fulfilled their financial duties. It seems, then, that for some associations failure to pay membership costs led only to temporary exclusion from banquets, or, at worst, a long-unpaid debt might lead to permanent expulsion. For others, however, non-payment of fees or failure to fulfil the obligations of an office even put one at risk of the forceful removal of property.

The restriction of members attending banquets in the case of non-payment of fees is logical in a system in which fees were given in exchange for a range of benefits. It is no surprise, then, that similar

restrictions can be found with regard to burials. An inscription recording the regulations of an association for the worship of Diana and Antinoüs (*AGRW* 310 = *CIL* XIV 2112 = *ILS* 7212 [Campania, 136 CE]) states that only members who were relatively up-to-date with their membership fees would be able to claim funerary costs: "if anyone has not paid his dues for six consecutive months and the common lot of humankind befalls him, his claim to burial shall not be considered." Burial was clearly a benefit of membership rather than an act of benevolence on the part of the association – they would not want to be out of pocket. It may be that such issues lie behind two papyri (*AGRW* 292 = *PEnteuxeis* 21 [218 BCE]; *AGRW* 293 = *PEnteuxeis* 20 [215 BCE]) in which complaints are lodged with king Ptolemaios regarding the refusal of societies to reimburse funeral fees. The outcome of the cases has not been preserved, but the fragments show that such issues could escalate to full legal procedures. Returning to the regulations of *AGRW* 310, besides the non-payment of fees there is a further reason given that burial fees may be withheld: "It was further voted that if any member takes his own life for any reason whatever, his claim to burial shall not be considered." This restriction was clearly not based on financial exchange expectations, but was rather a moral restriction; the benefits of association membership were negated in the event of illegitimate behaviour, in this case suicide.

This introduces the second reason why an association might restrict access to its gatherings (and therefore its benefits): concerns

regarding morality and ritual purity. A second-century inscription from southern Greece (*GRA* 49 = *IG* II^2 1369) demonstrates that the association had moral standards for its membership: "It is not lawful for anyone to enter this most holy assembly of *eranistai* without being first examined as to whether he is pure [ἁγνός] and pious [εὐσεβής] and good [ἀγαθός]." Unfortunately, no more details about the desired character of members are given, besides the rule that anyone involved in fighting would be expelled. An inscription from the Cult of Mēn Tyrannos (*GRA* 53 = *IG* II^2 1365+1366 [Laurion, late 2nd–early 3rd CE]) combines both moral instructions with concerns about purity:

> No one shall enter while impure, but let them be purified after (eating) garlic or pork and (intercourse with) women. When members have washed from head to foot on the same day, they may enter. And (a woman), having washed from head to foot for seven days after menstruation, may enter on the same [i.e., seventh] day. And (likewise) for ten days after (contact) with a corpse, and forty days after a miscarriage (abortion)… May the god be merciful to those who serve (the god) with a simple soul.

Kloppenborg and Ascough have collected numerous other references to purity and moral concerns, commenting that in this period purity could be conceived as having "moral aspects as well as physical aspects."[75] Regulations from an Egyptian association of

[75] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 271–277. Quote from 277. On morality and purity in cultic regulations see Angelos Chaniotis, "Reinheit des Körper - Reinheit der Seele in den Griechischen Kultgesetzen," in *Schuld, Gewissen, und Person: Studien zur Geschichte des inneren Menschen*, ed. J. Assmann and T. Sundermeier (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 142–79. For a broader

Zeus Hypsistos (*AGRW* 295 = *PLond* VII 2193 [Philadelphia, 69–58 BCE]) include the prohibition that a member may not "steal the wife of another member"; such action was both of moral concern and damaging to the solidarity of the association.

Our final example is the list of regulations for an association of Dionysios (*GRA* 117 = *TAM* V 1539 [Lydia, c. 100 BCE]):

> When entering (?)… this house let men… and women (?), free people and household slaves, … swear by all (?)… the gods that they do not know about any deceptive action against a man or ... a woman (?) ... or about any drug harmful to people, and that they neither know nor… use (?)… harmful spells, a love charm, an abortive drug, or a contraceptive, Nor should they use any other thing fatal to children, or give advice or connive with another person about such things. Now no one should withdraw their goodwill towards this house, and if anyone should do any of these things or plan them, the others are neither to look the other way nor remain silent, but shall expose and avenge the violations.

Following the quoted paragraph are sections on sexual purity requirements for both men and women. In this inscription, other members of the association are tasked with maintaining the moral standards of the whole – they must "expose and avenge the violations." Harland cautions against the interpretation that such standards were to be applied in the general lives of association

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survey see Noel Robertson, "The Concept of Purity in Greek Sacred Laws," in *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism*, ed. C. Frevel and C. Nihan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 195–243, esp. 229–32. For the relationship between moral and ritual purity in ancient Judaism see Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

members. Although there are some elements "which may point in the direction of moral expectations,"[76] he considers, based on analogy with other temple purity inscriptions, that "purity and the contagion of impurity are the principal framework for understanding these rules."[77] The primary focus was on maintaining ritual purity in cultic space/activity, rather than morally exemplary lives in general.

Thus we have the two restrictions to member participation in association gatherings. The first was based on the tight connection between membership fees and benefits. Members were expected to pay regular costs and fines; in return they received access to association activities and 'services.' The failure of members to do their duty naturally led to their prohibition from such benefits. The second restriction was centred on moral and purity concerns. For some associations, membership was restricted to those who were considered of appropriate character for membership; in other associations the concern was to avoid contaminating cultic activity with human impurity. In the latter case it seems that exclusion was likely to be temporary until the member had become restored to a ritually clean state. Although none of the examples surveyed in this study combine both restrictions in one inscription, we may assume that numerous associations would have had both kinds of restrictions operative. It is best to assume that financial restrictions

[76] Harland, *GRA II*, 189.
[77] Ibid., 190.

were more widespread than those concerning purity given that they are found more frequently in our inscriptions. Furthermore, associations that were primarily orientated around a particular deity may be expected to be more concerned for ritual purity than, for example, professional associations; all associations, though, needed money to fund their activities.

3.3.3. The solvency of an association

In the sources there is an evident concern for securing income, through attracting patronage, membership fees, the proper handling of association money, etc. This indicates that the continuing existence of an association was by no means assured; if there were not enough money an association might well fail. Practically, then, an association was ultimately restricted in the way it used money by its need to remain solvent. An inscription from Lycia, dated to the second century BCE, records the founding rules of an association of Coppersmiths (*GRA* 149 = SEG 58: 1640); it is "the lengthiest inscription we possess concerning any one occupational association in Asia Minor."[78] Although the inscription is not complete, it states that the association was able to lend from its common fund but that this must be done "very securely, writing down in the contracts that these funds come from the legacy of Symmasis." The loans were to be administrated by "managers"

[78] Ibid., 404.

[χιρισταί] and fines were specified for anyone who abused the association regulations; action was motivated by promising half the fine to one who prosecuted the case. Throughout the inscription the concern to protect association capital is obvious.

An inscription from Dacia (*AGRW* 69 = *ILS* 7216 [167 CE]) exemplifies what could happen if associations failed to secure sufficient income:

> Artemidorus son of Apollonius, president of the association (*collegium*) of Jupiter Cernenus, and Valerius son of Nico and Offas son of Menofilus, treasurers of the same association, by posting this notice do publicly attest: that of the fifty-four members that used to constitute the above-named association, there now remain in Alburnus no more than seventeen… that now there were not sufficient funds for any more funerals, nor did he have a single coffin; that no one had been willing to attend meetings on the days required by the regulations of the society, or to contribute to funeral services or fees; and that they (i.e., the remaining officers) accordingly publicly attest by this notice that no member should suppose that, should he die, he belongs to an association or that he shall be able to make any request of them for a funeral.

The problem here seems to have been a fall in membership fees;[79] yet associations could also lose patrons, as a papyrus from Karanis (*AGRW* 289 – *PMich* IX 575 [Egypt, 184 CE]) illustrates:

> To Thrax, the supervisor (*epimelētēs*) and to the members of the synod (*synoditai*), from Epiodoros. Since I am impoverished and unable to make

[79] There is a certain irony that an association spends money to advertise its bankruptcy; presumably such actions were legally necessary.

contributions to the association (or: common fund; *koinon* [?]), I ask that you accept my resignation.

In such circumstances many associations would have to dissolve. Last has argued that most associations were reliant on several different income sources and that to lose any one of them could be terminal.[80] Associations, then, were restricted by their resources; they had to balance the books.

3.4. Care of members in associations?

A few scholars have claimed that some associations used their resources to help their poor members. In addition to Downs (whose argument is summarised above), we have the contentions of Ascough, that "some groups even contributed funds to members who fell on hard times,"[81] and of Kloppenborg, that "associations also provided support for their members… financially and otherwise."[82] Downs, Ascough and Kloppenborg all leave the

[80] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 147, 161–62.

[81] Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 25. In support of his statement Ascough cites Ernest Renan, *The Apostles* (New York: Carleton, 1866), 281, 285–86, but Renan only discusses burial and loans for members in exchange for fees. There is no mention of care for the poor, although he does stress his view that many members of associations were poor.

[82] John S. Kloppenborg, "Associations in the Ancient World," in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. A. Levine, D.C. Allison, and J.D. Crossan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 323–38, 324. See also Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 58. Kloppenborg has repeated the claim recently in "Associations, Christ Groups, and Their Place in the Polis," *ZNW* 108 (2017): 1–56, 14 and 52. In this article, Kloppenborg relies on Nicholas F. Jones, *The Associations of Classical Athens: The Response to Democracy* (New York: OUP,

reader with the impression that such mutual financial aid was a relatively common, normal, feature of association life. But what evidence underlies this claim? Drawing together all the evidence to which they (or secondary sources they cite) refer gives us the following list: three inscriptions (*GRA* 8 = *AGRW* 13 = *IG* II^2 1275; *GRA* 35 = *AGRW* 20 = *IG* II^2 1327; *IG* II^2 1258), three papyri (*AGRW* 299 = *PCairDem* 30606; *P. Cairo* 31179; *AGRW* 300 = *PMich* V 243) and an exchange of letters between Trajan and Pliny the Younger (Pliny, *Epistulae*, 10.33–34, 10.92–93, 10.96–97). In what follows we will revisit this evidence and evaluate to what extent it supports such a view.

3.4.1. Evidence that associations cared for their "poor" members

3.4.1.1. Inscriptions

The three inscriptions all come from Attica and date between the late fourth and early second centuries BCE. The first (*IG* II^2 1258 [Mesogeia, 324/3 BCE]) is an honorific inscription praising the actions of a certain Polyxenos for his legal defence of the association. It is mentioned by Ascough and Kloppenborg in a paragraph discussing members of associations assisting fellow members, where they make the following comment: "In [this

1999). Jones's evidence for poor-care in associations is one inscription (IG II^2 1329), which is discussed below.

inscription] three members of a *koinon* [= association] were chosen to assist in the prosecution of a lawsuit against members who had given false testimony on some matter."[83] Although this is true, it is misleading to cite it as an example of members of an association practising mutual aid, because the lawsuit in question concerned land that belonged to the *koinon*; apparently the action of the false witnesses had in some way damaged the ability of the *koinon* to draw income from their land and this, in turn, was hindering their ability to carry out their usual cultic practices.[84] Thus, the members were elected to represent the interest of the group and secure the association's property and income. Although this would benefit members, it is quite different from appointing men to support another member's private legal action; this was not about aiding needy members, but protecting association assets.

The second inscription (*GRA* 35 = IG II^2 1329 [Piraeus, 178/7 BCE]) is an honorific inscription praising a certain Hermaios who had served for several years as the treasurer of the *orgeōnes* of the Mother of the Gods, in which he is commended for having

> proved himself generous both to the *orgeōnes* collectively and privately to the individuals, putting himself at the disposal of each; and (being) both zealous that the customary sacrifices to the gods be made and generously paying for these, often from his own resources; and also for some who had died, when the treasury had no money, he paid for the tomb so that they might be treated

[83] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 58.
[84] Cf. Cynthia J. Schwenk, *Athens in the Age of Alexander: The Date Laws & Decrees of "The Lykourgan Era" 338–322 B.C.* (Chicago: Ares, 1985), 379.

> decently even in death; and (he) made expenditures for repairs and he was the one who organized the original collection of the common fund; and he continually talks about and advises what is best; and in all things shows himself to be well-intentioned.

This Hermaios was "clearly a person of considerable wealth and influence,"[85] able to meet a number of financial needs of the association. It may be that Hermaios was one of the elite, functioning as a 'typical' benefactor but also serving as one of the officers of the association; alternatively, what we have here may be an example of what Last (following Kloppenborg)[86] calls "peer benefactors."[87] He defines the phenomenon as

> benefaction from individuals who were not elite patrons… the peer benefactor agreed to hold administrative functions, and offer small amounts of their own resources to help fund club activities or to finance purchases beyond materials brought in from membership fees.[88]

He notes that many associations encouraged such peer benefaction in the usual way – by rewarding the peer benefactors with honorific gestures and inscriptions. In either case, Hermaios clearly made substantial contributions to the association finances. The ends to which these finances were put are noted: repairing buildings, organizing the common fund, paying for cultic activities and

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[85] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 179.
[86] See John S. Kloppenborg, "Greco-Roman Thiasoi, the Ekklēsia at Corinth, and Conflict Management," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. R. Cameron and M.P. Miller (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 187–218, 212.
[87] Last, *The Pauline Church*, 151.
[88] Ibid.

funerary costs; in other words, normal association outlays. What is not mentioned here is any aid or financial support for individuals beyond what they would expect to receive by virtue of membership in the club.[89] In essence, then, rather than finding here an example of "funds to members who fell on hard times" or "support for members," we see the usual spending of an association, the income for which was particularly drawn from one patron. It is hard to perceive any evidence for the kind of mutual material aid that it is cited to confirm – none of the specific deeds mentioned are of this nature; rather, members received the normal benefits of association membership, due to the generous patronage of Hermaios.

The third inscription (*GRA* 8 [Piraeus, c. 325–275 BCE]) contains some regulations of an association about which little is known. The beginning of the inscription is missing; in what has been preserved there are essentially two requirements of members. The first is to be present at the funerals of members (and close relatives of members); the second is to "come to the aid" (βοηθεῖν) of any members who had "suffered wrong" (ἀδικῆται). Unfortunately no details are given as to what injustices the association had in mind, or the aid that had to be offered; our ignorance is compounded by the lack of additional information about the association itself and the social strata from which it drew

[89] Neither Jones, *Associations*, 266–67, nor Kloppenborg, "Polis," 52, can demonstrate that the actions amount to poor-care. It is most naturally taken as a benefactor filling up the association coffers when they had run out, rather than funding abnormal activities.

its membership. It is notable that the duties of the association to deceased members do not appear to extend to paying for (or even contributing towards) funerary costs; this does not appear coherent with the hypothesis that this association was concerned with mutual aid, especially as burial of members was a common practice amongst other associations.

This means that from the three inscriptions cited to support association poor-care, only one hint can be gleaned that evidences this claim. Even regarding this hint, the complete lack of information about the character of such care should prevent us placing any weight upon it; it cannot support the claim that associations cared for their poorer members.

3.4.1.2. Papyri

The papyri that are considered to evidence care of members in associations come from the city of Fayûm or the nearby Tebtynis (c. 15–20 miles away) and date to the Ptolemaic period. The texts themselves provide evidence of the usual association activities: libations for the gods (and the king), feasts, fines, officials, provision for members' burials, etc.[90] One noticeable difference is

[90] Carolin Arlt and Andrew Monson, "Rules of an Egyptian Religious Association from the Early Second Century BCE," in *Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heina-Josef Thissen*, ed. H. Knuf, C. Leitz, and D. von Recklinghausen (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 113–22: "[these associations were] remarkably similar to the religious associations that proliferated across the Mediterranean world during the Hellenistic and Roman periods" (113). For a summary of current scholarship on these texts see Andrew Monson, "Religious

that Demotic association rules only lasted a year (the term of office for the elected president)[91] and had to be annually rewritten and affirmed by the association.[92] For this reason, there are five papyri (of which four have been published) from the same association with almost identical regulations;[93] it is these that are most often taken to indicate mutual financial aid for poorer members. For this reason, this association will be addressed first, before examining the regulations of other papyri where mutual aid may be in view.

The association of *P. Cairo 30606*

This association was related to the temple of Soknebtunis – the crocodile god. Their meetings took place "before the mummified crocodiles in the resting place of the crocodile."[94] The regulations that stipulate mutual aid between members of this association are the following:

> If one of our members finds another member on the riverband (?) road or similar and he says, "can you give me some money…" and he does not give

Associations and Temples in Ptolemaic Tebtunis," in *Proceedings of the 24th International Congress of Papyrology*, ed. J. Frösen (Helsinki: Societas Humanarum Fennica, 2007), 769–79.

[91] Arthus E.R. Boak, "The Organization of Gilds in Greco-Roman Egypt," *TAPA* 68 (1937): 212–20, 213.

[92] Monson, "Ptolemaic Religious Associations," 222.

[93] These are P. Hamburg I, P. Cairo 30606, 31179 and 30605, dated between 145 and 157 BCE. See Françoise de Cenival, *Les Associations Religieuses en Égypte: D'après Les Documents Démotiques I* (Cairo: Publications de l'institut Français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1972), 143.

[94] Monson, "Associations and Temples," 769–79, 771. Monson argues, though, that the association was distinguished from the temple and not entirely composed of priests.

> it, his fine is… *x* debens, except if he swears an oath before the god, saying, "I cannot give him anything."
>
> If one of our members goes to supplicate the god or is imprisoned, or takes asylum in the god's temple, the representative of the House[95] shall assist him and give him five shares. If one of our members is involved in an unjust trial, we shall give the dues that those of the House decided to provide for his trial.[96]

In addition to the regulations quoted the papyrus shows that the association fulfilled the common association function of providing for members' burials. A different version of this association's rules, P. Cairo 31179, adds that some support was also provided for members who found themselves imprisoned. Support in legal cases appears to be limited to the amount agreed upon in advance by the association. It is unfortunate that some of the details of the regulations are unclear. We do not know whether the requirement is to *give* or to *lend* to those requiring help.[97] It would be particularly interesting to know what was the significance of the phrase translated as "riverband,"[98] as the same phrase appears in the other versions of this association's regulations. It is this regulation, more than any other, which seems to provide good

[95] "The House" is the association. Again, the complexity of the relationship between association and household is notable.
[96] Translation Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, *AGRW*, 182.
[97] That a loan is in view is the suggestion of Andrew Monson, "Rules of an Association of Soknebtunis," in *Papyrological Texts in Honor of Roger S. Bagnall*, ed. R. Ast et al. (Durham, NC: American Society of Papyrologists, 2012), 209–14, 213.
[98] Ibid., 211, has "ferry landing."

evidence for general economic assistance to other members.[99] Without wanting to completely deny this, two qualifications must be noted.

First, there were other regulations that would be extremely problematic for any members who were in financial difficulties. To revisit a passage already cited:

> If any one of our members does not pay his dues each month and does not hand them over to the representative of the House as stipulated above, the representative of the House shall go to his house and shall seize a surety for the aforementioned money. If he attacks him or one of his agents, the fine shall be twenty-five debens (=500 copper drachmas)… and he will continue until he pays the debt.

As we will discuss shortly, membership in this association was a costly affair. This regulation is remarkable in the latitude given to association officers to enforce the collection of fees. A different version from the same association, P. Hamburg I, states that after raiding the member's home that member may also be dragged through the courts to secure what is owed to the association. It seems likely that the scenario envisaged is where one has obtained association benefits (by attending a banquet, for example) but then has refused to deliver membership fees; it *may* be the case that one could temporarily abstain from activities if money was short, although such an interpretation has to reckon with regulations such as:

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[99] See Arlt and Monson, "Rules," 120.

> If a member whom those of the House decided shall be the representative[100] of the House refuses to be representative, his fine is twenty-five debens. If one of our members refuses to meet with us during the aforesaid period, or after he has drunk beer… with us, his fine is twenty-five debens.
>
> If one of our members will not go out with us to pull the statue of the god and will not escort him to his tomb during the aforesaid period, his fine is … *x* debens and the curses of the god Souchos shall follow him, except in the case that he is ill or in prison or is in court with the royal treasury.

The triad of illness, imprisonment and "court with the royal treasury" are the commonly valid reasons that one might miss an association activity. The reference to the royal treasury is almost certainly referring to the possibility of being in debt to the king, probably from renting royal lands.[101] This is the level of financial difficulty one must be in before being excused from association duties. Other than this, it seems that both participation, and payment for participation, were obligatory (enforced by fines/seizure).

Second, Monson has compared membership costs with what is known about average incomes and the price of food to try to ascertain what the economic profile of association members was likely to be. He concludes that:

> One can compare the contributions of ordinary members. If we imagine for a moment that the member was living at 10 artabas per year, then his contribution would amount to about one quarter of his annual consumption. It

[100] A position that involved greater financial costs. See Monson, "Ptolemaic Religious Associations," 234.
[101] See de Cenival, *Associations*, 27 n. 9.1.

> follows that the members were relatively prosperous by the standards of Fayyum villages. One can probably assume they had larger plots of land or alternative sources of revenue. The economic status fits well with what we already know about some of the particular members in the Tebtunis associations. A few of the highest paying office holders can be identified convincingly with certain priests who served on the council in charge of administering the temple of Soknebtunis. One member probably even served as the chief priest of the temple. That local elite priests sometimes occupied leadership positions in the associations fits well with the conclusions that the contributions presuppose a relatively high standard of living.[102]

Rules that compelled members to fulfil certain duties and levied high fines on those who failed to do so are much more comprehensible if, as Monson has demonstrated, members were drawn from those who were relatively comfortable.[103] The majority, who lived near subsistence level, would not have been able to afford the regular contribution. This must also contextualise the demand for giving money to members in need. Although commentators are right to point out that this is an example of an association offering financial support to other members, these members were drawn from the local elite and relatively wealthy, ruling out an interpretation that would see the regulation as addressing the regular needs of the majority of the population.[104]

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[102] Monson, "Ptolemaic Religious Associations," 228.
[103] Monson, "Rules," 210, notes that the financial burdens of holding office meant the job was not always undertaken voluntarily, as can be seen from the rules quoted here.
[104] There is a further problem in using these papyri to inform our understanding of *first century* association practices; the socio-economic dynamics in this region

Other papyri

First, we have an association from the village of Pisai, whose regulations are preserved in P. Lille 29 (223 BCE).[105] The papyrus states that a member on trial could expect supportive testimony from other association members, and some material provisions if they were imprisoned. There is also a fine imposed for members who testified against each other in court. The remarkable similarities between this papyrus and those from the association dealt with above suggest they were analogous associations,[106] and thus this papyrus must also be read with the qualifications outlined above in mind.

Two papyri from Tebtynis complete our survey. The first, (*AGRW* 300 = *PMich* V 243 [12–37 CE]) instructs members that "if a member ignores someone (i.e., another member) who is in distress and does not assist in helping him out of his trouble, he shall pay eight drachmas." Unfortunately, no detail is given on what such help may include. Arthur E.R. Boak states that "it might possibly refer to cases of actual want, but is much more likely to apply to members who have got into difficulties with the public

significantly changed between the Ptolemaic and Roman period as land ownership was increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer elites. See Andrew Monson, *Agriculture and Taxation in Early Ptolemaic Egypt* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolph Habelt GMBH, 2012), 16.

[105] See de Cenival, *Associations*, 3–40, 143.

[106] So Ibid., 143.

authorities and are under arrest or in danger of prosecution."[107] It is this kind of difficulty that seems to be the main concern in association regulations, rather than difficulties of personal maintenance. The regulations are more specific on a different point: "If a member has been arrested for private debt, they shall stand surety for him up to one hundred silver drachmas for thirty days, during which time he shall release the men from their pledge." The length of time given for repayment is twice as long in the second papyri (*AGRW* 301 = *PMich* V 244 [43 CE]); however, the powers of the association are also strengthened: as well as permission to seize the possessions of a member in debt, the officers also had authority to seize the members themselves or their slaves.[108] Members of this association were again compelled to attend meetings, which could occur both in the village and in the city. We are left with the impression that the real focus of such regulations was ensuring legal solidarity and 'insurance' for those of at least moderate means, rather than the kind of material aid that the poor would have been most in need of.

3.4.1.3. Pliny's letter exchange with Trajan

Having surveyed the evidence for care of members in inscriptions and papyri, we turn to the final piece of evidence – the letter

[107] Arthur E.R. Boak, "243," in *Papyri from Tebtunis Part II*, ed. E.M. Husselman, A.E.R. Boak, and W.F. Edgerton (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1944), 93.
[108] On this, see Boak, "Organization," 212–20, 214.

exchange between Pliny the Younger and Trajan regarding a petition from the citizens of the city of Amisus, in which they asked for permission to form clubs (*eranoi*), an exchange that Downs calls "the most important literary testimony to the practice of care for the poor among pagan associations in the Greek world."[109] The letter exchange is as follows:

Pliny to Trajan

> The free and confederate city of Amisus enjoys, with your permission, the privilege of administering its own laws. I am sending with this letter a petition handed to me there which deals with the subject of benefit societies [*eranous*], so that you, Sir, may decide whether and to what extent these clubs are to be permitted or forbidden. (*Epis.* 10.92 [Radice, LCL])

Trajan to Pliny

> If the citizens of Amisus, whose petition you send with your letter, are allowed by their own laws, granted them by formal treaty, to form a benefit society, there is no reason why we should interfere: especially if the contributions are not used for riotous and unlawful assemblies, but to relieve cases of hardship among the poor [*ad sustinendam tenuiorum inopiam utuntur*]. In all other cities which are subject to our own law these institutions must be forbidden. (*Epis*. 10.93 [Radice, LCL])

The petition arose because Pliny issued an edict, on Trajan's command, banning associations (*Epis.* 10.96.7) in the provinces under his care. As Amisus had privileges of self-governance they

[109] Downs, *Offering*, 105. On the exchange, see also Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 43–44.

seem to have been seeking clarification of their rights in this matter. Downs makes much of this reference. He suggests that Trajan not only believed *erani* to be "engaged in acts of charity on behalf of the poor,"[110] but that as they were "the Greek equivalent of Roman *collegia tenuiorum*," [111] the Roman equivalents also served a charitable function. Thus, for Downs, this one reference demonstrates, despite the paucity of other evidence, that both Roman and Greek associations regularly cared for the poor. He admits that it is not clear who the "poor" are to whom Trajan refers, and acknowledges in a footnote that they could in fact include those above the level of subsistence,[112] but this does not seem to affect his final argument:

> with his use of the unusual phrase "to relieve cases of hardship among the poor," Trajan seems to have in mind something more substantial than merely an occasional banquet and the provision of a proper burial at death. The "hardship" (*inopia*) envisioned by Trajan appears to be a form of economic distress. While these ἐρανισταί in the Greek East do not necessarily provide evidence for charitable giving from the wealthy to the poor, they do imply that pagan associations did occasionally adopt economic practices, including taking up collections, intended to provide financial assistance for those in material need.[113]

[110] Downs, *Offering*, 107.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 108 n. 130.
[113] Ibid.

The evidence he cites for his final sentence is the inscription *CIL* VI 10234,[114] which records the distribution of *sportulae* (presents) to members of an association from the common fund. I doubt whether Downs's maximalist reading can be sustained for the following two reasons.

First, Downs's reading is perhaps over influenced by Radice's Loeb translation that renders *eranos* as "benefit society," implying that the main purpose of the society was the benefit (which appears to be understood as 'charitable') of its members. This necessitates a brief discussion of the word *eranos*. As Lupu notes, it had "two basic meanings: (1) a meal consisting of contributions made by those participating in it; (2) a particular kind of loan, perhaps friendly, but not necessarily interest-free";[115] its third use is to denote an association. On the second "basic meaning" it is worth quoting Edward Cohen at length, who has cogently argued that an *eranos* loan was not characterised by being interest-free (and therefore in some sense 'charitable'), but rather refers to the loan being drawn from an associative context:

> Yet there is no actual evidence that the absence of interest differentiated *eranoi* loans from other types of credit. Not a single allusion to an *eranos* loan carries any positive indication that the financing was interest-free… despite modern suggestions, there is nothing inherently "friendly" or noncommercial about an *eranos* loan. To the contrary, Aristotle actually states explicitly that

[114] Now translated in *AGRW* 322.
[115] Eran Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 181. Cf. "ερανος," *LSJ*, 680.

> "where a loan is involved, there is no friend, for if a man is a friend he does not lend but gives" [*Problems* 29.2]. Yet *eranoi* loans are clearly not intended as gifts: to secure repayment, they were often collateralized by valuable property. Lawsuits were pursued against defaulting borrowers… two other differentiating characteristics are well attested: group funding of *eranoi* by persons having some prior relationship to the borrower, and a provision for repayment in instalments. Although a loan funded entirely by a single person is never denominated as an *eranos*, even those which are clearly interest-free, a number of passages referring to "gathering together" or "collecting" *eranoi* confirm the associational nature of the *eranos* loan.[116]

This also calls into question Harland's claim that in some association loans "the focus was on financially assisting actual members of an association, in which case an interest-free loan was possible."[117] Certainly none of the inscriptions Harland references in his discussion contain evidence that the loans they offered were interest-free.[118] Furthermore, the evidence suggests that by Pliny's time the use of *eranos* to refer to an association is indistinguishable from other Greek terms such as κοινόν, θìάσος, etc.[119] If there is a particular social benefit that is most readily associated with the term

[116] Edward E. Cohen, *Athenian Economy and Society: A Banking Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 208–9. See also Liu, "Endowments," 246.
[117] Harland, *GRA II*, 406.
[118] These are *GRA* 43 = *IG* II^2 1335; *GRA* 50 = SEG 31:122; *GRA* 143 = *IMagnMai* 117 → *IMagnMai* 215.
[119] So Harland, *Identity*, 27; Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi," 17; Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, 182.

it is the burial of members,[120] again, a function that does not distinguish it from most other associations. For several reasons, then, we should resist understanding *eranos* to denote an association that was different in function or aim from any other. Some of the associations surveyed above self-designate as *eranoi* yet cannot be differentiated in function from other associations. Pliny's (and therefore, probably the Amisians') use of the term, then, cannot be taken to indicate anything other than an 'association,' with no suggestion of aims and functions beyond those surveyed above.

Second, Downs's argument exhibits circularity. According to Downs, Trajan's statement "*ad sustinendam tenuiorum inopiam utuntur*" is likely to refer to material relief (in terms of money, or food) of the poor, where poor is understood to be those living around the subsistence level (and therefore in occasional need of this kind of aid), because of the supposed evidence of such practices in ἐρανισταί.[121] However, he also claims that the reason we may suppose *erani* to engage in charity on behalf of the poor is because of Trajan's statement.[122] Rather, as there is no evidence of 'charity' in associations beyond the uses of money articulated above

[120] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *GRA I*, 234; Adrian N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), 689.
[121] Downs, *Offering*, 108.
[122] Ibid., 107.

(3.2.2),[123] it is surely more likely that Trajan is not referring to this, but rather referring to normal association functions: burial of members; joint meals; the availability of loans; etc. The word "*tenuiorum*" used by Trajan reoccurs in later Roman legislation that specified a category of association that was exempt from the general ban evidenced in Pliny's letter exchange.[124] This category – *collegia tenuiorum* – used to be considered an entirely different type of association, but scholars now tend to conclude that it was not a different type of association in terms of function or purpose.[125] Furthermore, Kloppenborg suggests it was "something of a legal fiction, exploited by groups who for other reasons wished to meet."[126] Evidence from associations dated after this legislation shows that they continued to serve the same functions as those before. It is unlikely, then, that Trajan's use of this terminology meant anything other than the usual functions of normal associations. This means we should take his reference to the '*inopia*' as those of the sub-elite, rather than the materially

[123] Downs's reference to *CIL* 10234 does not support his case. What is recorded here is a financial distribution to members from the interest on the capital of a wealthy association in Rome. William J. Slater's article on the phenomenon of *sportulae* includes specific reference to this inscription. He argues that the practice was one manifestation of patron-client benefaction rather than communal solidarity, partly evidenced in that larger donations were given to wealthier members: "Handouts at Dinner," *Phoenix* 54 (2000): 107–22. See also Andreas Bendlin, "Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law," in *Aposteldekret und Antikes Vereinswesen*, ed. M. Öhler, WUNT 280 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 207–96, 265.
[124] See *D*. 47.22.1.
[125] E.g. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi," 20–21.
[126] Ibid., 22.

destitute. In consequence, rather than attempting to make this letter exchange serve as proof that charitable practices were usual in Roman and Greek associations, despite the lack of other supporting evidence, it is far more plausible to see here Trajan referring to the usual association practices of the sub-elite, practices that in themselves were doubtless of social benefit to their members.

3.4.1.4. Summary

It is clear that associations offered benefits to their members, including burial, banquets, loans and occasionally legal aid. Other social benefits included the opportunity to gain honour, by virtue of a particular role in an association, or the group's recognitions of one's major life events. These benefits were obtained in strict exchange – they were only available if one was up-to-date with payments and had fulfilled all one's obligations. As such, the mutuality of associations was highly contractual. If members failed to pay their financial contributions then any access to association benefits was lost. There is no evidence that associations donated money, or material aid, to individual members who ran into personal financial difficulties. Those who have implied otherwise rely on the evidence treated above, which is in the final analysis unable to support the case. The supposed references to mutual care are either: 1) too vague to serve as evidence; 2) referring to normal association practices (and not to care of members beyond these); 3) referring to benefaction; 4) referring to mutual support between

local elite and their (primarily legal) needs, rather than the material needs of the majority. As such, it remains an unsubstantiated hypothesis that associations would materially support members who ran into personal difficulties; it cannot yet be established by the extant evidence.

3.4.2. Arguments against care of members in associations

We have seen that there is a lack of positive evidence that associations offered care of their members beyond the clearly stipulated areas; certainly they cannot support the weight placed upon them by those who see here evidence of poor-care. In addition to this, we briefly note two arguments that further indicate the unlikelihood of such a practice. One is presented by Jean P. Waltzing in his article "The Roman Guilds and Charity." [127] Waltzing quotes Hermann Schiller as asserting that "the treasuries of the guilds were designed to furnish help to the associates who had need of assistance," a phrase almost identical to those of the modern day scholars we noted above. Against this, Waltzing protests that the benefits of society membership (such as burial) were the eventual return on financial payments rather than help in a time of necessity (349–50). Instead, he argues, if mutual aid or charity was one of the functions of associations, why do we lack

[127] *Charities Review*, 1895, 345–62. Originally published in French as "Les corporations de l'ancienne Rome et charité," in *Compte rendu de troisième congrès scientifique international des Catholiques* (1895), 165–190.

literary or epigraphic evidence of this? "The testimonies are numerous and not one speaks of funds thus collected to assist an unfortunate member, sick or the victim of an accident" (357). For Waltzing, this is all the more remarkable because he notes that wealthy benefactors who bequeathed significant donations to associations commissioned inscriptions that recorded both the amount and quality of their generosity, and how their gift must be used:[128]

> Such was the prescribed use, under penalty of fine of forfeiture of all these donations. Are not those who maintain that the Roman guilds busied themselves with charity, surprised that among so many gifts not one should be made to permit the guilds to help the poor, the sick, and the orphans?... this is explained only when it is admitted that the guilds did not think of aiding their indigent associates. (359)

Doubtless some aspects of Waltzing's treatment of associations need to be updated in the light of recent research, and his argument is rhetorically loaded. However, it remains persuasive, particularly in reference to the wishes of benefactors; it is an argument from silence, but a significant one nonetheless. If it was a common function of associations to offer mutual care for its members, the lack of honorific evidence is a substantial anomaly.[129]

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[128] On which, see 3.3.1 above.

[129] It may be argued that such gifts were not celebrated because aiding the poor was not a social virtue in Greco-Roman culture (see, e.g., Armitage, *Poverty*, 49–127). I agree that this is the case, but this is part of the reason those supposing that voluntary associations cared for their poor should be questioned. The problem can be put both ways: if care of the poor is not a social virtue why should

Secondly, we should also examine the contrast Tertullian draws between Christian associations and other voluntary associations in his *Apologeticus* 38–39 (c. 197 CE). At this point in his discourse Tertullian has just argued at length that the early Christians posed no threat to Rome and its emperor, but were productive and peaceable citizens, notably less violent and politically malevolent than other Roman citizens. Having made the negative argument that Christians cannot be found guilty of undesirable conduct, Tertullian turns to make the positive case by discussing the nature of their gatherings and life together. Despite Tertullian's apologetic agenda, it is notable what his rhetoric assumes about pagan voluntary associations:

> Even if there is a chest of a sort, it is not made up of money paid in entrance-fees, as if religion were a matter of contract. Every man once a month brings some modest coin – or whenever he wishes, and only if he does wish, and if he can; for nobody is compelled; it is a voluntary offering. You might call them the trust funds of piety. For they are not spent upon banquets nor drinking-parties nor thankless eating-houses; but to feed the poor and to bury them, for boys and girls who lack property and parents, and then for slaves grown old and shipwrecked mariners; and any who may be in mines, islands or prisons, provided that it is for the sake of God's school, become the pensioners of their confession. (*Apol.* 39.6 [Glover and Rendall, LCL])
>
> Our dinner shows its idea in its name; it is called by the Greek name for love (agape). Whatever the cost, it is gain to spend in piety's name, for with that

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we imagine it occurring in associations? If care of the poor is a social virtue and it *was* occurring in associations, why is this not recorded in honorific inscriptions?

> refreshment we help the needy. No, not, as among you, parasites aspire for the glory of selling their freedom, authorized by their belly to fatten themselves at the cost of any insult; no, because with God there is greater consideration for those of lower degree. (*Apol.* 39.16 [Glover and Rendall, LCL])

It is evident that Tertullian was well aware of the normal features of associations that have been identified: a common fund, regular membership fees, banquets, benefaction and honorific practice. In this regard his portrayal, though doubtless coloured by his rhetorical aims, is accurate. Interestingly, therefore, his main point of contrast in 39.6 is the use to which association money is put; this is where he saw the greatest difference. In his presentation, the primary use of the Christian groups' funds were various forms of care for the poor; this is presented as an extreme divergence from the normal practice of pagan associations – indicating that there was no comparable activity going on. Had pagan associations practised mutual aid, Tertullian may still have been able to find other points of contrast between the generosity of each, but that is not his comparison. His comparison is between poor-care and banquets; the presence of charity and its absence. The strong rhetorical and apologetic tone of the passage may require that we place less weight on it when trying to gain an accurate picture of normal association practice; however, when taken with the other evidence (or lack of evidence) presented above, it serves as an additional indicator that care of members was not one of the functions of associations.

3.5. Summary

Membership of an association was a reciprocal affair. It involved substantial membership costs, both in fees and potential fines, and, at least for some members, significant amounts of time. In return, members were entitled to participation in banquets, often had their funerary costs provided for and could sometimes access loans or a degree of legal aid. In the final analysis, there is not enough evidence to claim that benefits extended beyond these reciprocal rights, although one may suspect that, as in any communal environment, personal connections and relationships may have provided informal benefits. The restrictions on association finances are essentially defined by its participation-for-payment nature. Individuals lost access to an association, together with its benefits, if they failed to keep up with payments or transgressed association rules. Benefactors exercised some restrictive power on the money they provided to an association and at times associations either had to reduce their 'services' or close altogether for lack of funds. Where there is reference to aid for members, this is in relation to the public legal affairs of the relatively wealthy and a concern to maintain their functionality. There is no evidence that associations provided assistance to members who were struggling to afford their basic maintenance.

Chapter 4

4. Care of the Poor in First-Century Jewish Groups?

4.1. Introduction

In the introduction to the previous chapter it was argued that, although many Jewish groups had similar functions to other voluntary associations, it is reasonable to examine them separately with regard to their use of money. It is important to note that we should not expect Jewish groups to demonstrate sharp differences in all the ways they used money. There is plenty of evidence that some mirrored the practices of other associations in funding common meals, honorific practices, and the other 'general characteristics' elucidated in the previous chapter (3.2). Rather, it is whether there is any difference specifically in practices of generosity that is of interest here. The previous chapter concluded that there is no good evidence that associations cared for their poorer members; the question here is whether or not the same can be said for Jewish groups. If such generosity can be demonstrated, we must then examine in what ways this generosity was restricted.

From a survey of secondary literature, one could easily conclude that such a question is not worth asking. A good example can be

found in Bruce Longenecker's recent monograph. He confidently asserts that

> Jewish synagogues throughout the Mediterranean basin performed many functions, but one function of the first-century synagogue was the collection of donations and resources to be used for charitable purposes, primarily through the donating of food and clothing to the poor and to orphans.[1]

One of the authorities cited by Longenecker in support of his claim is Lee Levine, who does indeed write that the first-century synagogue "might have been used as a courtroom, school, or hostel, or for political meetings, social gatherings, keeping charity funds, slave manumissions, meals (sacred or otherwise), and, of course, religious-liturgical functions."[2] The evidence provided by Levine, though, is all drawn from the rabbinic literature which, as we shall see, is problematic when making claims about the behaviour of Jewish groups in the first century. In fact, although several other scholars claim that some kind of charitable care for the poor was a normal feature of first-century Jewish groups, there is very little evidence presented that is not drawn from rabbinic texts.[3] Our

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[1] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 114.
[2] Lee Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: YUP, 2000), 27.
[3] Others include: James T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 223; Downs, *Offering*, 109; Flesher, "Synagogues," 27–39, 30; Griffiths, "Egypt and the Rise of the Synagogue," 2–16, 7; Richard A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1995), 229–30; Isaac Levy, *The Synagogue: Its History and Function* (London: Vallentine, 1963), 19; Ben-Zion Rosenfeld and Joseph Menirav, "The Ancient Synagogue as an Economic Center," *JNES* 58 (1999): 259–76, 267–68; Emil Schürer, *The History of the*

initial task, then, is to revisit all the evidence cited by these scholars, before analysing additional evidence that may also be important to the question. Once this is done, we will have cleared the ground of any illegitimate evidence and be able to assess what remains.

4.2. Evidence commonly adduced for poor-care in first century Jewish groups.

4.2.1. Literary sources

4.2.1.1. Rabbinic material

The majority of scholars who consider there to have been structural poor-care in first-century Jewish groups base their conclusions squarely on rabbinic evidence.[4] The main texts that are appealed to are: *m. Peah* 8.7; *m. Dem* 3.1; *t. Peah* 4.8–13.[5] The structures for caring for the poor delineated by these texts are the *quppah* and the

Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135), ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 2.437.

[4] Of course, in many cases scholars reference only other scholars, who are reliant on the rabbinic evidence.

[5] At least one, if not all, of these texts is important for Schürer, *History*, 2.437–8; Gildas Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine: First Three Centuries C.E.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 218; Horsley, *Galilee*, 229; Levine, *Synagogue*, 132; Downs, *Offering*, 109. Hamel, *Poverty*. originally followed David Seccombe, "Was There Organized Charity in Jerusalem before the Christians?," *JTS* 29 (1978): 140–43, stating that such evidence is late and cannot be used to reconstruct first-century practices. However, more recently (Gildas Hamel, "Poverty and Charity," in Hezser, *Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, 308–24) he has written that "First-century synagogues seem to have already engaged in charitable activities" (320). To support his statement he references Levine and the rabbinic texts he previously rejected as evidence for first-century practice.

tamḥui.[6] Once described, these institutions are then claimed to have existed in the first century and, furthermore, to be widespread enough to constitute what is typical.[7] They are thus portrayed as characterising the first-century synagogue.[8] Whether the evidence is strong enough to bear such conclusions may be doubted for two reasons.

The first reason concerns the dating of the relevant rabbinic texts. Dating rabbinic texts is a well-known methodological problem.[9] Put simply, the earliest rabbinic texts we have are collected in the Mishnah and Tosefta, which date from the third century. These collections claim to contain traditions that date from considerably

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[6] Most scholars have understood these institutions to care for the local and itinerant poor respectively (e.g., Hamel, *Poverty*, 218; Roger Brooks, *Support for the Poor in the Mishnaic Law of Agriculture: Tractate Peah* [Chico: Scholars, 1983], 147–50.); however, the recent monograph of Gregg Gardner, *The Origins of Organized Charity in Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), argues that the distinction is more than this: the *tamḥui* aimed to alleviate poverty defined as a lack of biological necessities such as food and shelter (84–110), available to both local and itinerant poor; the *quppah* aimed to alleviate poverty defined as falling from one's appropriate socio-economic position, available to locals only (111–138). Thus, the *quppah* could entail significant expenditure.

[7] E.g., Downs, *Offering*, 109. Gregson, "Everything in Common?," 83, is more cautious but still allows for the existence of these institutions in "embryonic forms." She does not, however, have any evidence to support this suggestion.

[8] Aharon Oppenheimer, "Benevolent Societies in Jerusalem at the End of the Second Temple Period," in *Intertestamental Essays in Honour of Józef Milek*, ed. Z.J. Kapera (Kraków: Enigma, 1992), 149–65, has argued for the existence of *ḥaverim* in Jerusalem that functioned as "benevolent societies" in the late second-temple period. He makes his case exclusively with reference to rabbinic evidence and his argument is therefore subject to the same problems as those discussing the *quppah* and *tamḥui*.

[9] Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 47, 56–57; Reimund Bieringer et al., "Introduction," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), xiii.

earlier, but as none of the texts containing supposedly earlier traditions transmit dates,[10] their origin must be worked out, usually by the context of a saying and the rabbi to whom it is attributed.[11] This, though, is problematized by issues of pseudepigraphy, and the possibility of additions or alterations by those who transmitted, redacted and compiled the material.[12] In 1971, Jacob Neusner exposed many of the methodological errors that characterised the use of rabbinic material in his time, one of them being the presumption of many scholars that later traditions can be read back into the first century.[13] David Instone-Brewer remarks that, mainly due to the influence of Neusner, in recent decades scholars have shown the opposite tendency – "New Testament scholarship has tended to steer clear of Jewish sources."[14] Much of his own work has concentrated on developing a methodology for discerning which rabbinic material can be dated prior to 70 CE, including a

[10] Stemberger, *Introduction*, 57.
[11] David Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament Volume 1: Prayer and Agriculture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 28–32. For more on dating rabbinic texts see Günter Stemberger, "Dating Rabbinic Traditions," in Bieringer et al., *New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, 79–96.
[12] On the problems of the accuracy of named attributions and the role of redactors, see Isaiah Gafni, "The Modern Study of Rabbinics and Historical Questions," in Bieringer et al., *New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, 43–62, 49–53.
[13] Jacob Neusner, "Bibliographical Reflections," in *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 3.320–368; id., "The Use of the Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of First-Century Pharisaism," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, ed. W.S. Green (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 215–28, 218–19.
[14] Instone-Brewer, *TRENT I*, 29.

nuanced rating system for each text, showing the reasons for his decision and the relative confidence with which his conclusions are held.[15]

It is in this context that we must consider the specific traditions that concern us. We start by noting the statements of Instone-Brewer, who is generally considered a 'maximalist' in his view of the historical reliability of the rabbinic traditions.[16] He is clear that "none of this [Mishnaic] tradition can be positively dated before 70 CE"[17] and considers the related section of the Tosefta (*t. Peah* 4.8–13) to be undateable.[18] He goes on to argue that the institutions described would cohere well with details in the New Testament, but the evidence he produces is very speculative and in no way requires the rabbinic institutions in order to be understood.[19] If Instone-Brewer cannot date these traditions to the first century then we should expect very few other scholars to attempt to do so; Greg

[15] Ibid., 28–40. For a critique, see Stemberger, "Dating," 92–96.
[16] Stemberger's view is that he "tends to accept the reliability of traditions much too easily," "Dating," 93.
[17] Instone-Brewer, *TRENT I*, 159.
[18] Ibid., 158. Thus Instone-Brewer does not even assign a number for "level of confidence" for dating, as no date is suggested. One may ask, then, why he includes this text in his book at all. It seems that despite admitting the lack of evidence for an early date, Instone-Brewer is convinced of its relevance *because the early Christians undertook organised charity*: "the fact that the Jews collected weekly for the poor is probably the reason why Christians did so also" (161). But is this a fact? On what grounds? The paradigm with which our chapter began becomes a controlling presupposition for dating the rabbinic text.
[19] Instone-Brewer seems conscious of the speculative nature of his argument at this point, as the pages are dominated with words like "may," "possibly," "presumably," "probably" (160–161).

Gardner's recent monograph on the issue confirms that this indeed is the case.[20]

With regard to *m. Dem* 3.1, which records a dispute over who can be supported from the second tithe, Stemberger notes that "for the time before 70 we do not have any evidence regarding the laws of *demai*."[21] For these reasons Gardner strongly cautions us against "the misuse of rabbinic texts as sources for periods much earlier than when they were authored and redacted"[22] when considering organised poor-care. Further, he notes that these rabbinic institutions are particularly idealistic, "laced with distinctly rabbinic features and [address] characteristically rabbinic

[20] Gardner, *Charity*. Gardner summarises previous attempts to secure an early dating for these traditions (11–13) before outlining the current majority view: these traditions cannot be securely dated into the first century (22–26). Still widely referenced is Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM, 1967), who argued that the *quppah* and the *tamḥui* should be dated to the time of Jesus. The weaknesses of his position were exposed by Seccombe, "Organized Charity," in a convincing manner; however, Seccombe's paper also appealed to rabbinic sources as evidence for first-century practices (just different texts and different practices!). The fundamental problem is the dating of those sources themselves. In addition to his main argument Seccombe stated: "nor is there any evidence that the synagogues in early times were centres of organized poor-relief" (142–143). Whether or not he is right in this regard is the focus of this chapter. Finally, even Frank M. Loewenberg, *From Charity to Social Justice: The Emergence of Communal Institutions for the Support of the Poor in Ancient Judaism* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2001), who considers that "the Mishnah began to be taught, around the first century BCE" (168) and clearly thinks that institutional Jewish poor-care should be assumed to be happening in the same period, admits that "it is not possible to arrive at any definitive conclusions concerning an early dating for synagogue involvement in poor relief" (170) due to the lack of evidence.

[21] Stemberger, "Dating," 95.

[22] Gardner, *Charity*, 21.

concerns."[23] As such, we may hesitate as to how well they corresponded to practice even in the third century.

The second factor problematizing the use of rabbinic texts for describing first-century poor-care in Jewish groups pertains to the normativity of rabbinic Judaism in the first century. Some scholars' reconstructions of first-century Jewish poor-care assume that the institutions found in the rabbinic texts are not only early, but can be taken as descriptive of Judaism as a whole.[24] Thus we have statements that the 'normal' function of a first-century synagogue included such charity, based primarily on the rabbinic evidence. The presumption of such a 'normative' Judaism, though, is hard to sustain. Stemberger notes that:

> The sources for a description of the rabbinic period are so biased that the historical picture gained from them remains largely insecure – the very notion of a 'normative' Judaism, for example, derives from these sources.[25]

In fact, when one surveys the literature and non-literary evidence from the second-temple period it is the sheer variety that is so striking.[26] Eric Meyers and James Strange's study of the

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[23] Ibid., 26.
[24] See, e.g., Levine, *Synagogue*, 132–21; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 114.
[25] Stemberger, *Introduction*, 5.
[26] So, e.g., Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism," *EDEJ*, 279–90, 279; Jörg Frey, "The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on New Testament Interpretation: Proposals, Problems, and Further Perspectives," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls Volume 3: The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 407–62, 440. Martin Goodman, *Judaism in the Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 33–46, makes the case that the paucity of evidence from this period means we should "expect greater variety than is usually acknowledged" (33). For a caution against

archaeology of Palestine in this period "left [them] with an impression of cultural diversity in this formative period."[27] Perhaps the most implausible suggestions are that the charitable institutions of rabbinic Judaism were somehow normative across the diaspora in addition to Palestine.[28] To cite just one study to the contrary, Paul Trebilco's thorough study on Judaism in Asia Minor up to the fourth century CE found that there was no evidence whatsoever of rabbinic influence.[29] With regard to Palestine, the question of how influential what later became rabbinic Judaism was in the first century cannot be separated from the question of whether the Pharisees should be seen as the forerunners of rabbinic Judaism and, consequently, what influence the Pharisees had in first-century Palestine. Again, rather than attempt to contribute to this debate,

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overemphasising diversity to the point where no unity of 'Judaism' is acknowledged, see Roland Deines, "The Pharisees Between 'Judaisms' and 'Common Judaism,'" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism Volume I: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien, and M.A. Seifrid, WUNT 2.140 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 443–504, 452–55.

[27] Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange, *Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity* (London: SCM, 1981), 171.

[28] Downs, *Offering*, 109; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 114. This is often implied without, perhaps, a full consciousness of what is being claimed. For example, Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 55–70* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), writes that the duty of charity "was perhaps one of the main social causes of the cohesion of Jewish diaspora communities… The rabbinic injunctions compiled in the second century A.D. probably reflect in general the normal Jewish attitude." (65–66). It is the rabbinic sources that provide the evidence for the claim of widespread Jewish charity even in the diaspora.

[29] Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 189; see also John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 83.

which is clearly not possible within the limitations of this study, we note the current majority position:

> According to the traditional (and in the main correct) view, the Pharisees were, in the decades after the First Jewish War, absorbed into the emerging rabbinic movement, which they shaped decisively. The Pharisaic heritage is therefore incorporated into rabbinic literature, although the latter cannot be taken as a whole and without careful analysis as a source for Pharisaism.[30]

On the majority view, then, there is likely significant continuity between the Pharisees and the rabbinic movement, but also significant discontinuity; similarly, we may admit the likelihood that the Pharisees were substantially influential in pre-70 Palestine without considering that influence to be extensive enough to be considered normative.[31]

In summary, dating the rabbinic texts is a methodologically complex endeavour. Although a full discussion of all the issues would have deviated too far from our concerns, we have briefly explored the current majority view that none of the traditions that are appealed to in support of first-century Jewish poor-care can be

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[30] Roland Deines, "Pharisees," *EDEJ*, 1061–63, 1062. See further id., "The Social Profile of the Pharisees," in *Acts of God in History: Studies Towards Recovering a Theological Historiography*, ed. C. Ochs and P. Watts, WUNT 317 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 29–52, 35 n.19; Isaiah M. Gafni, "The Historical Background," in *The Literature of the Sages First Part: Oral Tora, Halakha, Mishna, Tosefta, Talmud, External Tractates*, ed. S. Safrai (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1987), 1–34, 8: "There appears to be a progression from the Pharisaic movement of the second commonwealth to the rabbinic circles of the Mishna and Talmud period."

[31] For literature on the influence of the Pharisees see Gafni, "Historical Background," 7.

securely dated to this time and we can have no confidence that the practices described were present in the first century. Moreover, even if they were, the influence of such traditions would have been negligible outside Palestine and far from normative within it, but rather *one* expression of Judaism in Palestine in a diverse and dynamic period (albeit one that had strong enough roots to survive the crises of 70 and the Bar Kokhba revolt and grow into the dominant form of Judaism in later centuries). In the first century, the influence of the rabbis was certainly not enough to impose consistency and widespread normativity in the way that many scholars suppose with regard to poor-care. Such suppositions, perhaps unconsciously, rely on a methodology that is labelled by Stemberger, in a strongly worded statement, as:

> a too facile belief in the continuity of Judaism before and after 70, an antiquated, monolithic conception of Jewish history of the period, and anachronistic assumptions regarding the growth and transmission of rabbinic texts.[32]

Thus, the use of rabbinic evidence to assert that such systems were the 'normal practice' of Jewish groups in the first century is extremely problematic.

[32] Stemberger, "Dating," 95.

4.2.1.2. Josephus

The writings of Josephus are largely devoid of evidence regarding care of the poor.[33] The only passages of note are his description of the Essenes (*Bel.* 2.119–161; *Ant.* 18.18–22) and two general comments in *Contra Apionem*. His description of the Essenes will be discussed below in a separate section that also deals with the Qumran community (4.3.3). Here we address the relevant passages from *Contra Apionem.*

The first occurs in Josephus's defence of the Jewish law, at this point particularly the *precepts* of the law. Having covered obligations to parents and various aspects of good social conduct, Josephus cites the treatment of foreigners required by the law, claiming that it requires Jews to be well disposed towards them.[34] In this context we find the following:

> Τἆλλα δὲ προείρηκεν, ὧν ἡ μετάδοσις ἐστιν ἀναγκαία· πᾶσι παρέχειν τοῖς δεομένοις πῦρ ὕδωρ τροφήν, ὁδοὺς φράζειν, ἄταφον μὴ περιορᾶν
>
> He prescribed other measures, of which a sample is necessary; to give fire, water, and food to all who request them; to point the way; not to ignore an unburied corpse (2.211).[35]

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[33] Including some notable silences: when relating the laws concerning tithing and gleaning rights (*Ant*. 4.231–243), Josephus clearly expresses the *ethos* of caring for the poor, but makes no reference to contemporary practices.

[34] No doubt to refute the accusation that Jews are hostile to non-Jews – see Tacitus below.

[35] Trans., John M.G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary Volume 10: Against Apion*, ed. S. Mason (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 292. Barclay's translation has been reproduced because the Loeb translation of Thackeray

The second relevant quotation comes right at the end of his work, as Josephus claims that the Jewish way of life is envied and imitated both by the Greek philosophers but also by the masses. As such:

> μιμεῖσθαι δὲ πειρῶνται καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἡμῶν ὁμόνοιαν καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἀνάδοσιν καὶ τὸ φιλεργὸν ἐν ταῖς τέχναις καὶ τὸ καρτερικὸν ἐν ταῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν νόμων ἀνάγκαις.
>
> Then they try to imitate also our concord among ourselves, our distribution of possessions, our industriousness in crafts, and our endurance under torture on behalf of the laws. (2.283).[36]

Such evidence is suggestive but frustratingly generalised. Clearly, Josephus claims a common ethos and duty amongst Jews, to engage in the distribution of their possessions (τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἀνάδοσιν), including burying the dead and providing charity to the destitute. However, he does not describe any practices of his contemporaries, certainly no charitable system or structure, or relate such practices to organised Jewish gatherings. He clearly portrays the Jewish community as one of real solidarity towards each other and of benevolent disposition towards the outsider and, as such, it is hard to imagine that, had the organised charity legislated by the rabbis been practised in the communities Josephus knew, he would have failed to describe it. Here, then, the most we may claim is that there is evidence of an ethos of Jewish solidarity, which should extend to

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mistranslates μετάδοσις as a reference to sharing with others. Barclay points out that in Josephus it means "what is given, not the act of giving" (292).

[36] Trans., Ibid., 328–29. Again, it is more accurate than Thackeray.

material generosity, but there is no evidence of any organised system or even of specific contemporary practices.[37] This is further confirmed by his comment that "there is no public money among us except that which is God's" (*Ant.* 14.113 [Marcus and Wikgren, LCL]); aside from the collections for the temple-tax, he has no knowledge of community funds.

4.2.1.3. Tacitus

At the beginning of his *Histories* book 5, Tacitus is about to describe the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, but pauses to give an account of the origins of the Jews and Jerusalem (5.2.1). He relates some laws he believes Moses gave, before commenting that Jews still practise such in his own day, at which point begins a list of negatively described practices and traditions. Here we find the following:

> Nam pessimus quisque spretis religionibus patriis tributa et stipes illuc congerebant, unde auctae Iudaeorum res, et quia apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnis alios hostile odium.
>
> For the worst rascals among other peoples, renouncing their ancestral religions, always kept sending tribute and contributions to Jerusalem, thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews; again, the Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity. (*Hist*. 5.5.1 [Moore and Jackson, LCL])

[37] For these reasons Barclay's reference to "a network of social support" is perhaps misleading if it is taken to imply organised or 'institutional' support: Barclay, "Money and Meetings," 118.

Barclay and Downs see here a reference to charitable practice,[38] which is possible but far from certain, especially as it seems to be the practice of contributing to the temple that particularly riles Tacitus. Moreover, Guy Chilver notes that in Tacitus's treatment of the Jews he clearly displays a "general ignorance"[39] alongside the standard Roman anti-Semitism, which is surely a caution not to read much into such an ambivalent reference as this, as he does not display the knowledge of Jewish communities that might lead us to consider his statements to be well-informed. Menahem Stern also sees here a reference to organised charity, but cites only the rabbinic evidence discussed above to justify this.[40]

4.2.1.4. Matthew 6.2

> Ὅταν οὖν ποιῇς ἐλεημοσύνην, μὴ σαλπίσῃς ἔμπροσθέν σου, ὥσπερ οἱ ὑποκριταὶ ποιοῦσιν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς ῥύμαις, ὅπως δοξασθῶσιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων·
>
> "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others." (ESV)

This is the only verse in the New Testament that links the synagogue with care of the poor. It is found in the Sermon on the Mount, at the point where Jesus is describing the kind of giving that

[38] Ibid.; Downs, *Offering*, 110.
[39] Guy E.F. Chilver, *A Historical Commentary on Tacitus' Histories IV and V* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 90.
[40] Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic, 1974), 2.39.

God desires. It forms part of a triad of instruction, focussing on the manner in which almsgiving, prayer and fasting should be done.[41] The emphasis throughout is that such good works should not be done for public approval, but rather in secret, for God alone. At this point, Jesus contrasts the desired practice with that of οἱ ὑποκριταί, whose almsgiving is done in public, both in ταῖς ῥύμαις and in ταῖς συναγωγαῖς. What can be said of the practice Jesus condemns? For some commentators, such as Richard France, the assumption is that Jesus refers here to the "well-organized system of relief for the poor based in the synagogues"[42] which is described in the rabbinic evidence, but as has been argued, a simple appeal to the rabbinic texts is not sufficient.

More important, therefore, are those scholars who argue that this verse itself acts as evidence in favour of the historicity of later rabbinic traditions; the discussion turns on the meaning of σαλπίσῃς. Most commentators have taken this as a reference to the musical instrument 'trumpet,' assuming this to be a hyperbolic phrase emphasising the self-promotion of those in question.[43]

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[41] Verses 7–15 are best seen as a development of teaching on prayer that is 'inserted' into the structurally foundational triad. See Walter T. Wilson, "Seen in Secret: Inconspicuous Piety and Alternative Subjectivity in Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 475–97.

[42] Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 235. He references Schürer, who relies on the rabbinic sources.

[43] E.g., Ibid., 263; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 102; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 208; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 136–37. See others summarised in David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 183. It has been

Others, however, have argued that the reference is, instead, to 'sophar chests,' which were trumpet-shaped money-chests set up in the temple (*m. Sheqalim* 6.1–5). One of these was known as the 'chamber of secrets' (*m. Sheqalim* 5.6) in which donations for the poor were collected; according to the Tosefta (*t. Sheqalim* 2.16), there was a 'chamber of secrets' in every city. Assuming the historical applicability of these sources for our period, scholars have argued that the reference to the blowing of trumpets is either 1) based on a mistranslation from the Hebrew for the sophar chests (שׁוֹפָרוֹת) by a translator who only knew of שׁוֹפָר as an instrument;[44] or 2) a clever reference to the noise made by coins as they are thrown into such receptacles ("do not make the trumpet (sophar chest) *resound*"). [45] In either case, this verse would serve as evidence for widespread poor-care that was at least organised enough to have uniform equipment and methods for almsgiving.

Fundamentally, the argument is advanced on the basis that the rabbinic texts describe historical reality in pre-70 Palestine,

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suggested that Sir. 31.11 may imply a convention of publicly giving alms, but this is not the most natural reading of the passage, which focusses on public recognition for a lifestyle of good works and generosity *in general*, not on the specific occasions of almsgiving. William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 1.579, admit the possibility that it could refer to a now-unknown practice of the literal blowing of trumpets.

[44] Originally G. Klein, "Mt 6,2," *ZNW* 6 (1905): 203–4; adopted by Samuel T. Lachs, "Some Textual Observations on the Sermon on the Mount," *JQR* 69 (1978): 98–111, 103–5.

[45] Neil J. McEleney, "Does the Trumpet Sound or Resound? An Interpretation of Matthew 6.2," *ZNW* 76 (1985): 43–46.

buttressed by the denigration of the trumpets-as-metaphor explanation,[46] but on neither basis does it convince. Positive evidence for the metaphorical explanation does exist,[47] whilst the methodological difficulties with the rabbinic sources have already been discussed. In this specific case, we are asked to accept a chain made of many uncertain links: the claimed function of 'sophar chests' in the temple, the nature of the 'chamber of secrets,' that these existed outside the temple ("in every city"), their function as supporting institutional charity, etc.[48]

Even if we reject the claim that this verse refers to 'sophar chests,' may it not still refer to some organised poor-care? Certainly it is somewhat plausible that if one can give alms with public acclaim (of whatever kind), this may indicate some normal structure, or synagogue routine, for doing so, but the pairing of the street with the synagogue weighs against such a conclusion (for street implies *unorganised* and individual engagement with the poor). The point is that they are public places, rather than poor-care centres.[49] In conclusion, then, it is most likely that this verse

[46] E.g., Lachs, "Observations": "This alleged metaphorical use of 'trumpet' is found neither in Greek, nor in Hebrew, nor in Aramaic" (104).
[47] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 579.
[48] Cf. Gardner, *Charity*: "this is not to say that the "chamber of secrets" was a rabbinic invention; there may have been a structure with that name in the Temple precincts at some point. Rather, what I find is that its *function* as a charity institution akin to the *quppa* is unattested in prerabbinic writings and was likely applied by the Tannaim" (18–19).
[49] So, e.g., Morris, *Matthew*, 137. This is also the most coherent interpretation in view of the emphasis of the whole section on public verses private piety.

references the almsgiving of individuals, in a public context, rather than an organised system of poor-care.

4.2.1.5. Julian

Julian, Roman Emperor from 361–363 CE, is known as 'the apostate' because he attempted to re-establish traditional Roman religions and overturn the Christianization of the empire. He wrote a letter in 362 CE to the high priest of Galatia in which he discusses the need to organise charitable initiatives in order to remove some of the appeal of Christianity. In this context he makes the following, well known, comment:

> For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us. (*Ep.* 22.430D [Wright, LCL])

This has been taken, in relation to our current concerns, to evidence widespread Jewish poor-care in the Roman Empire. Whilst this may be a defensible use of the evidence with regard to the fourth century (where rabbinic evidence can be adduced as well), it is far too late to be used to reconstruct what the norm was in the first century.[50] Far too much occurred in the intervening centuries (not least the rise of Christianity) to assume that the social practices of the Jewish community remained unchanged in this regard.

[50] As does, e.g., Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 114.

4.2.2. Non-literary

Having surveyed all of the Jewish inscriptions and papyri published in the major collections, only three could be found that are of potential relevance for this thesis.[51] Two of these are already well known and have been cited to support the claim that care of the poor was a normal practice of Jewish groups in the first century. The third (*CPJ* 23) will be dealt with in section 4.3.1.

4.2.2.1. The "Theodotus inscription": CIJ 2.1404 = SEG *8.170*[52]

The so-called "Theodotus inscription" was found in 1913 in the City of David in Jerusalem. Dated to sometime pre-70 CE,[53] the

[51] The following collections were surveyed: H.M. Cotton and W. Ameling et al., eds., *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palestinae I-III* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010–2014); W. Horbury and D. Noy, eds., *Jewish Incriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992); D. Noy, ed., *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe I and II* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993–1995); D. Noy, A. Panayotov, and H. Bloedhorn, eds., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis I* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); W. Ameling, ed., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis II: Kleinasien* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); D. Noy and H. Bloedhorn, eds., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis III* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); V.A. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum I-II* (Cambridge: HUP, 1957–1960); V.A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks, and M. Stern, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum III* (Cambridge: HUP, 1964).

[52] The edition and translation used here are those of Runesson, Binder, and Olsson, *Sourcebook*, 52–53.

[53] This dating came under significant challenge from Howard Kee, who argued for a date in the third century CE, see, e.g., Kee, "Defining the First Century C.E. Synagogue." However, the comprehensive analysis of John S. Kloppenborg, "Dating Theodotus," *JJS* 51 (2000): 243–80, rendered Kee's position untenable. The most important evidence Kloppenborg appeals to is the provenance of the inscription. The area in which the inscription was found contains debris only from the pre-70 stratum; the archaeological evidence strongly suggests that the entire site was unoccupied from 135 CE until the fifth century, which is exactly

inscription is considered important as early evidence not only for a synagogue building, but also for the use of the terminology ἀρχισυνάγωγος and for some detail as to the functions of the synagogue. The functions the inscription mentions include "reading of the law and teaching of the commandments," but it also notes "the guest chamber and the upper rooms and the ritual pools of water for accommodating those needing them from abroad (τοῖς [χ]ρήζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ξέ[ς]ης)." This reference has been discussed by Levy in a way that implies the provision should be characterised as charitable.[54] However, those "in need" are explicated as being "from abroad," which most plausibly refers to pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem for the festivals.[55] Thus the need is not material deprivation, but the common needs of every traveller for hospitality. Runesson, Binder and Olsson suggest that the facilities may well have provided an income for the Jewish group associated with the synagogue building.[56] Clearly, then, although it is hypothetically possible that the facilities of the community could have been used to provide assistance for poor members of the community, there is no evidence that they did so. On the contrary,

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when Kee wishes to date the inscription. See further Ibid., 260–61. For another equally convincing response to Kee, see Rainer Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 179–212, 195–200.

[54] Levy, *Synagogue*, 19.

[55] Cf. esp. Runesson, Binder, and Olsson, *Sourcebook*, 54; Flesher, "Synagogues," 33.

[56] Runesson, Binder, and Olsson, *Sourcebook*, 54.

the specification of the inscription that the rooms should be used by those from abroad (τῆς ξέ[ς]ης) renders the possibility an unlikely one.

4.2.2.2. The "Aphrodisias inscription" = SEG *36.970*

This inscription, discovered in 1976, is "the longest synagogue inscription known to date."[57] Most of it comprises a long list of donors, prefaced by eight lines of a "dedicatory sentence."[58] It was first published by Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum (henceforth RT)[59] and its dating is contested, as we shall see. The opening sentence is presented here with a translation by Judge:[60]

Θεὸς βοητός, πατέλλᾳ? δῳ [.1 or 2.]
Οἱ ὑποτεταγμέ-
νοι τῆς δεκαν(ίας)
τῶν φιλομαθῶ[ν]
τῶν κὲ παντευλογ(--ων)
εἰς ἀπενθησίαν
τῷ πλήθι ἔκατισα[ν]
ἐξ ἰδίων μνῆμα

God, helper of those who offer food
Those set out below

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[57] Levine, *Synagogue*, 350.
[58] The phrase is that of Margaret H. Williams, "The Jews and Godfearers Inscription from Aphrodisias - a Case of Patriarchal Interference in Early 3rd Century Caria?," *Historia* 41 (1992): 297–310, 298.
[59] *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987).
[60] Edwin A. Judge, "Jews, Proselytes and God-Fearers Club Together," in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, ed. S.R. Lewelyn, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 73–80.

From the decury
Of the lovers of learning
Known too as constant in blessing
For prevention of sorrow
Founded (it) for the community
At their own expense as a memorial.

It is relevant to our study as some have understood the dedication to refer to formal charitable food distribution. Following RT's original suggestion, Lee Levine comments that "The memorial (μνῆμα) was presumably a building (or part of one) that was used as a *patella* (lit., dish), perhaps a soup kitchen 'for the relief of suffering in the community.'" [61] RT argued that πάτελλα corresponds to "the Mishnaic Hebrew word for 'dish,' תמחוי (*tamḥui*), [which] is used in the Mishnah and Tosephta and in both Talmudim as the name of a charitable institution."[62] Although their interpretation has been adopted by Levine, it is rightly rejected in much following scholarship for two reasons: the translation of πάτελλα as "soup kitchen" and the dating of the inscription.

The translation of πάτελλα as "soup kitchen" has major weaknesses. First, it assumes that rabbinic literature can be used to interpret this inscription, which is problematic. As we have seen, the idea that Jewish communities in Aphrodisias were under the influence of rabbinic Judaism in the early third century (assuming

[61] Levine, *Synagogue*, 273.
[62] RT, *Aphrodisias*, 27.

RT's date) assumes a normativity and spread of rabbinic Judaism that cannot be responsibly maintained. Trebilco concludes, following his detailed study of Jewish groups in Asia Minor, that "we lack evidence which clearly shows that Jewish communities in Asia Minor knew or followed rabbinic teaching."[63] In fact, there are many better-evidenced features of these Jewish communities that would be incompatible with such teaching.[64] In Aphrodisias specifically, there is no evidence, in this inscription or any others identified as Jewish, of any knowledge of Hebrew.[65]

The second major weakness is that to interpret πάτελλα as soup kitchen creates problems in the translation of the rest of the dedicatory sentences.[66] Most striking is RT's claim that μνῆμα should be rendered "memorial" rather than the usual "tomb"; their reasoning is revealing: "[tomb] would give us a simple and straightforward interpretation of our inscription; except that πάτελλα… would then become incomprehensible"[67] Logically, then, they concede that if "another meaning could be found for πάτελλα, μνῆμα would then be free to stand for 'public tomb.'"[68] Fortunately, since RT's publication other suggestions have been

[63] Trebilco, *Asia Minor*, 188.
[64] Ibid., 189; Williams, "Aphrodisias," 300–301.
[65] Williams, "Aphrodisias," 300.
[66] So Martin Goodman, "Review," *JRS* 78 (1988): 261–62; Williams, "Aphrodisias," 305.
[67] RT, *Aphrodisias*, 39.
[68] Ibid., 40.

made that provide a better translation of πάτελλα and avoid the problems of RT's interpretation.[69]

The dating of the inscription is also problematic. RT suggested the late second/early third century CE for the following reasons: 1) "stops and diaeresis marks in common with public inscriptions of the second and third centuries in the city"[70] – so too the letter forms and alignment; 2) One name, Αἰλιανός, derives from the name of Hadrian and likely, therefore, postdates his reign; 3) "the total lack of Roman *nomina* (legal family names),"[71] and any related to Marcus Aurelius is "not easily explicable after 212"[72] when such became the norm; 4) Following point 3, if an early date is rejected the other possibility is in the late fourth or fifth centuries which is unlikely based on letter forms. This dating in the early third century

[69] Perhaps the most convincing is the case of Williams, "Aphrodisias," who argues that the inscription refers to funerary concerns rather than a soup kitchen. Regarding πάτελλα, Williams suggests that the letters following Θεὸς βοητός on the first line should be construed as one word – πατελλαδός, "which continues and completes the invocation to God as helper with which our inscription begins" (308); πατελλαδός is an imperative, asking God to "put [food] upon our plate" (309), for which she provides grammatical parallels (some from Aphrodisias). "I have proposed an invocation (*patellados*)… [and other suggestions] all of which fit neatly in with the pre-existing body of evidence for Diasporan and Graeco-Jewish matters at that time. RT, by contrast, have postulated a strained and unparalleled line of Greek, a building (*tamḥui*) nowhere else attested in the Diaspora, a picture of a third century Diasporan community that is at variance with all the other evidence we possess on the subject" (310). Moreover, a reconstruction primarily relating to the provision of funerary services accords well with what we know of other associations and fits with the most natural translation of many of the key words in the dedicatory sentences. For more problems with RT and other interpretations see Ameling, *IJO*, 2.83–86.

[70] RT, *Aphrodisias*, 20.

[71] Judge, "Club Together," 77.

[72] RT, *Aphrodisias*, 21.

has been accepted by several scholars,[73] but has been strongly challenged by Angelos Chaniotis.[74] Following Marianne P. Bonz,[75] she notes that the opening phrase (*theos boethos*) is "to the best of our knowledge – not attested earlier than the fourth century and becomes common after c. 350."[76] Most significantly, she conducts a thorough analysis of the onomastic evidence, demonstrating that "the majority of the persons in this inscription have names so typical for Late Antiquity that one would immediately be tempted to date the text on face I to the fourth century or later."[77] Particularly convincing is the number of names on this inscription which are attested multiple times more in the late third to seventh centuries than prior to 220 CE, which is particularly striking due to "the fact that the number of inscriptions generally decreases after the third century."[78] Moreover, many names are unattested before, or in line with, 220 CE. As Chaniotis concludes:

> We either have to assume that face I of the 'donor inscriptions' was inscribed around 200 to commemorate men whose names deviated radically from the

[73] E.g. Trebilco, *Asia Minor*, 107; Levine, *Synagogue*, 273.
[74] "The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems," *SCI* 21 (2002): 209–42.
[75] "The Jewish Donor Inscription from Aphrodisias: Are They Both Third-Century, and Who Are the Theosebeis?," *HSCP* 96 (1994): 281–99, 289f.
[76] Chaniotis, "Aphrodisias," 215.
[77] Ibid., 216. The inscription is on a rectangular block of marble with, therefore, four faces; the text is inscribed on two faces, referred to as either 'a' and 'b' or 'I' and 'II' in the literature.
[78] Ibid., 218.

> contemporary onomastic habits, or that the inscription dates to sometime after c. 250. In light of all the other evidence, the latter conclusion is compelling.[79]

To conclude, it is extremely unlikely both that the inscription refers to charitable practice and that it can be dated early enough to be relevant to our concerns.[80] To take the inscription as referring to a "soup kitchen" or any other particularly charitable activity is very difficult; it is much more likely to refer to funerary practices that were usual in many associations. The most plausible dating for defending the "soup kitchen" interpretation is into the fourth and fifth centuries, but at this point it is so late as to be irrelevant to those seeking to establish what was happening in Jewish groups around the first century CE.

4.3. Evidence rarely adduced for poor-care in first century Jewish groups.

4.3.1. Papyri

4.3.1.1. CPJ 23

The first piece of relevant evidence rarely employed to assess Jewish poor-care in the first century is this papyrus, from Krokodilopolis in the Fayûm (182 BCE). It "is the best known specimen of a typical Hellenistic contract where both the

[79] Ibid.
[80] So also Gardner, *Charity*, 23.

contracting parties are Jewish."[81] The contract concerns a loan given "without interest" (ἄτοκα), which was secured against the recipient's house. The recipient had to repay the loan within the year, or immediately if his property (the security) became endangered in any way. If he failed to repay within the year he became liable for a 24% interest rate on the loan until it was repaid, the usual rate throughout this period.[82] Could this be evidence of benevolent conduct within a Jewish community? Whilst it is possible that such an interest-free loan was designed to aid the recipient, there is nothing to suggest that the recipient was poor or that the loan was designed to meet material needs. Moreover, the stringent security and repayment measures warn against a reconstruction that understands the contract to have had the wellbeing of the recipient as its focus. Finally, the other contracts between Jews in papyri from this period (*CPJ* 24–6) are for loans at interest, intimating that even if there were occasional interest-free loans this was far from a community norm.

4.3.2. Roman literature: Jewish beggars and the προσευχή

"The Jewish beggar is a familiar figure in Roman literature,"[83] including the works of authors from the first and second centuries

[81] V.A. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, *CPJ* , 1.162.
[82] Ibid., 164.
[83] E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 133.

CE.[84] The reason the stereotype emerged is commonly thought to be the actual relative poverty of Jewish communities in Rome,[85] although it became associated with some gentile accounts of Jewish origins, for example that of Lysimachus, quoted by Josephus:

> In the reign of Bocchoris, king of Egypt, the Jewish people, who were afflicted with leprosy, scurvy, and other maladies, took refuge in the temples and lived a mendicant existence. (*Ap.* 1.305 [Thackeray, LCL])

The repetition of the motif of a Jewish beggar may be, to a significant degree, because the association had achieved a proverbial status.[86] It is also worth considering another possibility, though, for the ready association of Jews with beggars, which connects the phenomenon with some kind of charitable practice. The primary evidence for this hypothesis is that, in several of the literary references, Jewish beggary is connected with the προσευχή. The key passages will be presented below and then discussed together.

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[84] Juvenal, *Sat.* 3.292–299; 6.542–548; Martial, *Epigrams* 12.57.11–15; Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* 3.53; Cleomedes, *Caelestia* 2.1.500–503.
[85] See, e.g., Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Jews of Italy: Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 159; Smallwood, *Jews Under Roman Rule*, 133; W.J. Watts, "Race Prejudice in the Satires of Juvenal," *Acta Classica* 19 (1979): 83–104, 102–3.
[86] On which see Louis H. Feldman, *Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 172.

4.3.2.1. Juvenal, Satires 3.292–299

At this point in Juvenal's satire the narrator, a character called Umbricius, is lamenting the squalid nature of life in Rome for one of his own social standing (relatively poor, a client to rich patrons). As he details the hazards of walking the streets of Rome at night he describes being randomly assaulted by a drunken thug, who offers both verbal and physical abuse. As part of the verbal tirade, the assailant asks the following rhetorical question:

> "ede ubi consistas: in qua te quaero proseucha?"
>
> "Say, where's your pitch? Which synagogue shall I look for you in? (Braund, LCL)

'Consistas' here refers to the beggar's pitch.[87] Although the two phrases may be separate insults (as a beggar and [separately] a Jew),[88] given the repeated portrayal of Jews as beggars, not least in Juvenal,[89] it is better to see a deliberate connection here.

4.3.2.2. Artemidorus, Oneirocritica 3.53

The *Oneirocritica* is a manual of dream interpretation,[90] explaining the prophetic implications of different dreams. Part of its value for

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[87] So, e.g., Edward Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London: Athlone, 1980), 192.
[88] A possibility suggested by John E.B. Mayor, *Mayor's Juvenal "Thirteen Satires" Volume 1: Introduction, Complete Text, and Commentary on Satires I-VII*, ed. J. Henderson (Bristol: Phoenix, 2007 [Mayor's original 1886]), 214.
[89] E.g., *Sat.* 3.10–16; 6.542–7.
[90] Daniel E. Harris-McCoy, *Artemidorus Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 1–3.

the historian is its constant reference to everyday realities, providing insight into the situations and matters of ordinary life. In this section, Artemidorus associates a προσευχή with beggars, explaining that both indicate grief and worry:

> Προσευχὴ καὶ μεταῖται καὶ πάντες ἄνθρωποι προΐκται και οἰκτροὶ καὶ πτωχοὶ λύπην καὶ φροντίδα καὶ τηκεδόνα τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ προαγορεύουσι
>
> A place of prayer and beggars and all people who are bums and wretches and scroungers foretell grief and worry and the wasting away of the soul for both a man and a woman.[91]

The reasons given are that, with regard to the προσευχή, one who goes to pray is worried about something, and, with regard to the beggars, because they "get in the way of every course of action" (ἐμποδὼν ἵστανται πάσῃ προαιρέσει). Thus, although there is not a necessary connection between the beggars and the προσευχή in this dream interpretation, it is notable that both appear together.

4.3.2.3. Cleomedes, Caelestia, 2.1.500–503

Cleomedes was a Stoic philosopher about whom little is known.[92] The *Caelestia* is his only extant work. The few sentences of interest here occur when Cleomedes is attacking the work of Epicurus. He

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[91] Trans., Ibid., 287.

[92] See Alan C. Bowen and Robert B. Todd, *Cleomedes' Lectures on Astronomy: A Translation of "The Heavens" with an Introduction and Commentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1–3.

quotes a number of his phrases and suggests that they originate in contexts which are far from respectable:

> ὧν τὰ μὲν ἐκ χαμαιτυπείων ἄν τις εἶναι φήσειε, τὰ δὲ ὅμοια τοῖς λεγομένοις ἐν τοῖς Δημητρείοις ὑπὸ τῶν Θεσμοφοριαζουςῶν γυναικῶν, τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ μέσης τῆς προσευχῆς καὶ τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς προσαιτούντων, Ἰουδαϊκὰ καὶ παρακεχαραγμένα καὶ κατὰ πολὺ τῶν ἑρπετῶν ταπεινότερα.
>
> Some of these expressions might be said to have brothels as their source, others to resemble the language of women celebrating the rites of Demeter at the Thesmophoria, still others to come from the heart of the synagogue and its suppliants – debased Jew talk, far lower than the reptiles![93]

Here, the connection between the προσευχή and beggars may be much tighter, as the beggars (τῶν προσαιτούντων) belong to the προσευχή (ἐπ' αὐτῆς). This could be read as referencing beggars who "belong" to the προσευχη insofar as that is the place they beg, but it is equally possible that the phrase claims the beggars to be *members* of the προσευχή; on this reading it is the social location of the beggars that is referenced, rather than the geographical location of their begging.

4.3.2.4. Summary: Evidence for Jewish poor-care?

It is this connection between the προσευχή and beggars that may be caused by more than just the proverbial literary stereotypes, as it goes beyond merely associating Jewish people with beggary. It may be that beggars are so closely associated with the προσευχή because

[93] Trans., Ibid., 125.

they were regularly seen there, and if this is the case it indicates the expectation of charity at these locations. Given the ethos of almsgiving that developed in Jewish literature in the second-temple period,[94] it does not stretch plausibility to imagine that the most natural time to do this was as one entered or exited the προσευχή, particularly at times of Torah reading or prayer, which would inevitably cause suppliants to gather around such buildings at the relevant times.[95] This is not, though, the only possible reading. The case could also be made that, as the προσευχή was closely associated with the Jews, the references to the προσευχή are all identifying the social location of the beggars, rather than the geographical location of their begging. Moreover, even if the former reading is correct, the passages do not allow us to postulate any particularly organised system of care for the poor, nor even to speculate about its limits. Was it only Jewish beggars who are imagined by our authors? The passage by Juvenal may indicate so, but the other two are less clear. We are left, then, with evidence that is suggestive, *possibly* indicating that almsgiving was associated

[94] See n. 33 in Chapter 3.

[95] Such may be the case in Acts 3.2–3; however, there is a lack of positive evidence for this hypothesis. An alternative suggestion is that the gathering of beggars at a προσευχή is merely part of the wider tendency for beggars to gather at temples, due to the number of people who would gather there (higher footfall = higher chance of alms in percentage terms, all else being equal!) and the desire for protection from the deities. See Gardner, *Charity*, 5–6.

with the προσευχή; but, due to the ambiguity of our authors, such evidence on its own can take us no further.[96]

4.3.3. The Qumran community and the Essenes

The association of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Qumran community and the Qumran community with the Essenes is the majority view,[97] although it is not entirely uncontested.[98] This consensus has also found support from Catherine Murphy's comprehensive monograph entitled *Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community.*[99] In it, Murphy's research demonstrates that a coherent and consistent picture regarding wealth and possessions can be constructed from the scrolls, the archaeological evidence of Qumran and the classical accounts of the Essenes. In doing so, she provides an excellent survey and discussion of all the relevant evidence. In this section, I will not only follow her acceptance of the consensus, but draw extensively

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[96] Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilisations* (London: Penguin, 2007), 236, also suggests there may be a connection between this literary motif and Jewish charity.

[97] For the former, see the comments of Eric M. Meyers, "Khirbet Qumran and Its Environs," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. T.H. Lim and J.J. Collins (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 21–45, 41. For the latter, see Joan E. Taylor, "The Classical Sources on the Essenes," in Lim and Collins, *Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 173–99, 188. See also Charlotte Hempel, "Qumran Community," *EDSS* 746–51, 748; James C. Vanderkam, "Identity and History of the Community," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years*, ed. P.W. Flint and J.C. Vanderkam (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2.487–533.

[98] For a survey of challengers, see Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins, "Introduction: Current Issues in Dead Sea Scrolls Research," in Lim and Collins, *Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1–20, 5–7.

[99] Leiden: Brill, 2002.

on her research. In order to keep focussed on our specific concerns the discussion will be limited to the *practices* of poor-care, and their restrictions, with regard to the Qumran community and the Essenes, rather than broader concerns, such as general admonitions to care for the poor, or their attitudes and beliefs with regard to wealth and poverty.

It is perhaps surprising how little reference is made to the Qumran community or the Essenes in support of structural poor-care in first-century Jewish groups. This may be because, often, scholars tie such structural poor-care to the synagogue, and thus do not consider this body of evidence, even though it is, in fact, the strongest evidence for structured poor-care by a first-century Jewish group. The key evidence is found in the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document*, together with the accounts of the Essenes provided by Philo and Josephus.[100] The content of the sources will be examined first, before their significance for our question is discussed.

[100] Pliny the Elder also gives an account of the Essenes in his *Natural History* (5.73), locating them in the same region as the Qumran settlement, but this account contains nothing that informs us about their poor-care (although he does state they have no money [*sine pecunia*]).

4.3.3.1. The Damascus Document and Community Rule[101]

Charlotte Hempel notes that "the complex relationship of these two key documents is central to scholarly endeavours to depict the communities reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls."[102] They both contain numerous community rules and both make repeated reference to property, wealth and generosity. The exact relationship between the two documents, and the purpose of each, are matters of scholarly debate;[103] my analysis assumes the majority view, that, complexities notwithstanding, the *Damascus Document* "focuses on the congregation of those Israelite households or families who lived in cities and camps throughout the land,"[104] whereas the *Community Rule* is primarily concerned with more specific and restricted communities, perhaps primarily the one that existed at Qumran itself:[105]

> It never refers to women or families but only to the "men of the community." The work mentions an oath to return to the Law of Moses, stresses communal

[101] For issues related to different manuscripts and redactions, see Murphy, *Wealth*, 26–28. We will only discuss such concerns as and when they become relevant.
[102] Charlotte Hempel, "Damascus Document," *EDEJ* 510–12, 512.
[103] With reference particularly to the social structure of the community in these scrolls, see Charlotte Hempel, *The Qumran Rule Texts in Context: Collected Studies* TSAJ 154 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 25–45.
[104] Elbert Tigchelaar, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," *EDEJ* 163–80, 177. See also Hempel, "Qumran Community," 511: "The legal part of the document also contains prescriptions for the organization of a family-based community that dwelled in camps presided over by an overseer." So too Michael A. Knibb, "Community Organization in the Damascus Document," *EDSS* 136–38, 137.
[105] See, e.g., Michael A. Knibb, "Rule of the Community," *EDSS* 793–96, 796. For this basic distinction see also Collins, *Qumran Community*, 54, 78–79.

activities, emphasizes the handing over of one's property to the inspector, and describes a complex admission procedure.[106]

This basic information contextualises the content analysed below.[107]

4.3.3.1.1. Expected generosity

> [They are] to set apart holy portions according to their exact interpretation; for each to love his brother like himself; to strengthen the hand of the poor [עני], the needy [אביון] and the foreigner [גר];[108] *Blank* for each to seek peace of his brother… (CD 6.20–21)[109]

This passage comes immediately after a list of accusations against the current temple authorities. They are accused of failing to uphold the law with regard to both money and to purity concerns (CD 6.15–19). The financial crimes are named as "stealing from the poor of the people, making widows their spoils and murdering orphans"

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[106] Tigchelaar, "Scrolls," 177.

[107] There are now several monographs on each of these documents addressing their historical development and redaction history. See, e.g., Jonathan G. Campbell, *The Use of Scripture in the Damascus Document 1–8, 19–20* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), 4–8; Charlotte Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document: Sources, Traditions and Redaction* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), esp. 25–46, 109–22; Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For bibliography, see Hempel, "Damascus Document"; Sarianna Metso, "Rule of the Community," *EDEJ* 1169–71. The issues are too complex to address here and do not affect the passages we cite in our discussion, other than regarding the overall question of which community/communities our documents (or, the particular section of our documents) are intended to be relevant for.

[108] Here Murphy has "proselyte".

[109] All translations of DSS are those of F.G. Martínez and E.J.C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

(16–17).[110] By contrast, the community is exhorted to rightly fulfil the law by providing for the vulnerable, and it is within a list of exhortations that we find our quotation. Perhaps due to being part of a long list of righteous conduct, *how* the community is meant to fulfil this command is not discussed here. However, such instruction is given at another point in the document:

> And this is the rule for the Many, to provide for all their needs: the salary of two days each month at least. They shall place it in the hand of the Inspector and of the judges. From it they shall give to the <[in]jured>[111] and with it they shall support the needy [אביון] and the poor [עני], and to the elder who [is ben]t, and to the af[flic]ted, and to the prisoner of a foreign people, and to the girl who has [n]o re[dee]mer, [and] to the <youth> [w]ho has no-one looking after him; everything is the task of the association, and [the house of the association shall] not [be deprived of] its means… (CD 14.12–17)

This passage is found in a section describing the organisation of the camps, which first legislates that "the Many" are to be registered by name, and only admitted into the community gatherings on the authority of the Inspector. Thus, this passage concerns those who are within the community.[112] The regulations mandate the pooling

[110] Polemic against the temple's financial abuse of the vulnerable can also be found in 1QpHab 8.10–9.8.

[111] [xxx] is "text restoration, sometimes minimally preserved in the manuscript"; <xxx> is "text inadvertently repeated by the copyist". Martínez and Tigchelaar, *DSS Study Edition*, 1.xx.

[112] So also Murphy, *Wealth*, 84. As such, automatically excluded were those whose physical or mental illnesses prevented them qualifying for the community due to its strict interpretation of the Torah's purity laws (CD XV.15–17), even though such would doubtless be amongst the needy of any Judaean settlement, so also Knibb, "Community Organization," 137.

of at least two days' wages each month and that the proceeds are distributed in a structured, organized manner under the supervision of selected officials. Here, then, is the clearest example of a concrete organized system of poor-care from the first century.[113]

This appears to be a different arrangement from that stipulated in the *Community Rule*, in which members unite all their property.[114] There, the possessions of those who volunteer to join the community are merged with those of the community after a two-year probationary process (1QS 6.16–23), in line with the observation that this document envisages a more intense and unified common life.[115] The regulations about food (e.g., 1QS 6.25) show that this was distributed centrally;[116] thus, for the envisaged community, poor-care of members was unnecessary as the communal life would provide them with all they needed. It is interesting, then, that this document does not record any charitable distribution such as we find in the *Damascus Document*. We will return to this in our discussion about the recipients of Essene charity (in 4.3.3.4.2).

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[113] Manuscript fragments of the Damascus Document found at Qumran have been dated from the first century BCE to the first half of the first century CE (Hempel, "Damascus Document," 510). It is almost impossible to identify exactly which forms of the documents were functioning as authoritative at any particular time. See n. 154 below.

[114] James H. Charlesworth, "Community Organization in the Rule of the Community," *EDSS* 133–36, 133.

[115] On the apparent incongruity between this demand for communal possessions and parts of 1QS that seem to assume private ownership, see Murphy, *Wealth*, 399–400, 454.

[116] Charlesworth, "Community Organization," 135.

There is one further passage of the *Damascus Document* that could be taken as evidence of poor-care:

> He shall have pity on them like a father on his sons, and he will heal all the <afflicted among them> like a shepherd his flock. He will undo all the chains which bind them, so that there will be neither harassed nor oppressed in his congregation. (CD 13.9–10)

These instructions pertain to the Inspector of each camp, found in a section of rules for the community. The context of these lines suggests that the "chains that bind" may well be related to financial or economic concerns: immediately following the quote above we find that the Inspector should examine anyone wishing to join the community, specifically with regard to his wealth (CD 8.11). Furthermore, the first rules to which a member is asked to subscribe are a ban on monetary sale within the community (members are to exchange goods instead) and the prohibition of business dealings with those outside the community without the oversight of the Inspector (14–15). Given this context, Murphy presents convincing arguments that suggest an economic interpretation of "chains that bind," primarily resting on the parallels in Isaiah 58:6–7 and the interpretation of "distress" (מדהוב) in 4QInstruction[b] 2.ii.14.[117] Under such a reading the responsibility of the Instructor, on behalf of the community, was to ensure that those entering the community could do so free from financial obligations to those outside:

[117] Murphy, *Wealth*, 41–43.

> The new benefactor, on behalf of the community, may have assumed or redeemed any number of liabilities incumbent on the initiate, for example debt obligations under high interest, liens on property, surety or collateral obligations, or contracts for service in return for the provision of basic needs (what we might call contract labor or slavery).[118]

If such a reading is accepted, it means that the communities addressed by the *Damascus Document* were required not only to provide regularly for the poor amongst their number, but also to ensure new members were freed from financial obligations upon entry to the community. Such would obviously require the close examination and judgment of the Instructor that preceded the addition of any new member.

4.3.3.1.2. Restrictions on generosity

Having cited the evidence for generosity in the two key documents, we should also note some restrictions on this use of wealth. The first restriction is that decisions regarding possessions were reserved for those in authority. We see this in both documents: In the *Damascus Document* we have already seen that charity was distributed by the Inspector and the judges;[119] furthermore, members of the community were not allowed to engage in financial

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[118] Ibid., 44.

[119] On the role of judges in this process see Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony and the Penal Code* (Chico: Scholars, 1983), 37–38.

transactions with those beyond the community. In the *Community Rule* we find similar restrictions:

> Only the sons of Aaron will have authority in the matter of judgment and of goods, and their word will settle the lot of all provision for the men of the Community and the goods of the men of holiness who walk in perfection. Their goods must not be mixed with the goods of the men of deceit… (1QS 9.7–8)

An initial hypothesis, then, would be that generosity was restricted to those in the community who were authorised to make decisions about wealth and possessions. However, Murphy argues that, although this is generally true, charity was an exception to the rule:

> The caretakers or supervisors of the community are said to have all authority except over expenditures of charitable aid and pity. Interestingly, it is precisely the outlay of money or goods for the needy that the community would not restrict (CD 6.20–21; 14.12–16; 1QS 10.26).[120]

This suggestion is based on the description of Josephus:

> In all other matters they do nothing without orders from their superiors; two things only are left to individual discretion, the rendering of assistance and compassion. Members may of their own motion help the deserving, when in need, and supply food to the destitute; but presents to relatives are prohibited, without leave from the managers. (*Bel.* 2.134–5 [Thackeray, LCL])

We may question, though, whether the three passages Murphy cites from the scrolls support Josephus's description. CD 6.20–21 has been discussed above; it is an admonition of duty to care for the

[120] Murphy, *Wealth*, 433.

poor but with no description of how this is to be done. Such a description is found in 14.12–16, which has also been discussed. Here we saw that the means by which the community was to fulfil the mandate of 6.20–21 was the organised, regulated contribution of earnings, which were then distributed by the Instructor and judges. Thus, the general admonition may apply to all but the means by which it is accomplished keeps the control of the expenditure in the hands of the leaders. Finally, 1QS 10.26 reads: "I will share out the regulation with the cord of the ages and […] justice (and) compassionate love [אהבת חסד] with the oppressed, and to strengthen the hands of the dismay[ed]." This, then, is a pledge by community members to practise charity. It is doubtful, though, that this can be taken as permission to engage in such acts without supervision, primarily because exactly the same phrase (compassionate love) occurs in 1QS 5.2–4 where the authority to do such acts is denied to the individual. In it, all members are to submit

> to the authority of the sons of Zadok, the priests who safeguard the covenant /and/[121] to the authority of the multitude of the men of the Community…By their authority, decision by lot shall be made in every affair involving the law, property and judgement, to achieve together truth and humility, justice and uprightness, compassionate love [אהבת חסד] and seemly behaviour in all their paths.

[121] /xxx/ is "legible text inserted between lines by the copyist." Martínez and Tigchelaar, *DSS Study Edition*, 1.xx.

Here, then, acts of compassionate love are executed through the authority of the community and its leaders, *not* through individual discretion. All three citations, then, fail to provide evidence that individuals were free to make charitable decisions. Of course, this is not to say that Josephus's description is inaccurate regarding all Essene communities – the failure of the Scrolls to support him does not prove him wrong; however, Murphy is incorrect to cite them in support of his description.[122] Conversely, his assertion that members cannot support their families without supervision accords well with the evidence of the Scrolls, where marriage, with its financial implications, is strictly controlled (CD 13.15–18).

A further restriction on generosity is that those who have been expelled from the community are denied help from those who remain:

> And the one being expelled shall go away. And the one who eats from their wealth, or who enquires about his welfare, or who agrees with him, I shall have his action inscribed by the Examiner permanently, and his judgment will be complete. (4QD[a] 11.14–16)[123]

[122] Cf. Todd S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), who suggests that "If Josephus' account is accurate, he may be reflecting the Essene customs at a different time period from the *Damascus Document*, or perhaps he is simply speaking of voluntary acts of charity performed in addition to the organized effort" (66). It is harder to see how the laws in 1QS can be harmonized with his account.
[123] Translation by Murphy, *Wealth*, 90.

{…}[124] However, anyone who has been in the Community council {…} for ten full years. *Blank Blank* {…} *Blank* and whose spirit reverts to betray the Community and go away from the presence *Blank* of the Many in order to walk in the stubbornness of his heart, will never return to the Community council. And the person among the men of the Commu[nity w]ho fraternizes with him with regard to his purity of his goods, wh[o …] the Many, and his sentence will be like his, [he] shall be expe[lled…]. (1QS 7.24–27)

Both passages come from legal material detailing the rules for the respective communities. In both passages members are forbidden from sharing food or money with expelled members, rendering it forbidden to express any generosity or charity towards them. The two passages prescribe different punishments for the crime, which is possibly due to the different kind of communities to which they are primarily addressed. In both cases though, the restriction is clear.

4.3.3.2. The testimony of Philo and Josephus

On the majority reading, which is followed here, the *Damascus Document* and *Community Rule* should be associated with the Essene movement.[125] It is therefore necessary to examine the references to Essene poor-care in Philo and Josephus before attempting to evaluate what can be said of Essene poor-care in the

[124] {…} is "illegible text erased or corrected by the copyist." Martínez and Tigchelaar, *DSS Study Edition*, 1.xx.
[125] See Jörg Frey, "Essenes," *EDEJ* 599–602, who explicitly lists 1QS and CD among a small number of DSS documents that can legitimately be used to reconstruct Essene beliefs and practices (600).

first century. This is not to assume the communities Philo and Josephus describe are to be identified specifically with Qumran and the scrolls, or that these communities shared identical beliefs and practices. However, even if they are not identical, the study of Josephus and Philo is surely worthwhile as most scholars accept they describe groups that are *at least* similar to those whose remains were found in the caves. Finally, we note that Philo's and Josephus's accounts are sometimes very similar, and sometimes differ. Most assume, therefore, that the two authors had both common and different sources for their accounts.[126] Again, to retain our focus, only references to poor-care will be discussed.

4.3.3.2.1. Philo on Essene poor-care

Philo's two relevant works that describe the Essenes are *That Every Good Man is Free* (*Quod omnis probus liber sit*) and *Apology for the Jews* (*Hypothetica*).[127] The nature of both writings leads us to expect an idealized picture of the communities he describes: in the former his discussion revolves around the importance and consequence of virtues in human life, with the Essenes presented as the exemplar; the second is self-evidently an *apologia*.[128]

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[126] See Murphy, *Wealth*, 406.

[127] There is not enough evidence to identify the Therapeutae, whom he describes in *De vita contemplative*, as an Essene community, although there are enough similarities to suggest there may be some connection or influence. Cf. Geza Vermes and Martin D. Goodman, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 17.

[128] So also Todd S. Beall, "Essenes," in *EDSS* 262–69, 263.

In *Every Good Man*, Philo states that the Essenes live a frugal life, rejecting wealth by choice not necessity (76–77, 84) and rejecting slavery (79). He claims that they demonstrate "love of men [φιλάνθρωπος], by kindness [εὔνοια], equality and a communal life [κοινωνία]" (84),[129] which he proceeds to describe:

> No house belongs to any one man; indeed, there is no house that does not belong to them all, for as well as living in communities, their homes are open to members of the sect arriving from elsewhere. Secondly, there is but one purse for them all and a common expenditure. Their clothes and food are also held in common, for they have adopted the practice of eating together… whatever they receive as salary for their day's work is not kept to themselves, but it is deposited before them all, in their midst, to be put to the common employment of those who wish to make use of it. As for the sick, they are not neglected on the pretext that they can produce nothing, for, thanks to the common purse, they have whatever is needed to treat them, so there is no fear of great expense on their behalf. The aged, for their part, are surrounded with respect and care: they are like parents whose children lend them a helping hand in their old age with perfect generosity and surround them with a thousand attentions. (85–87)

The account in *Hypothetica* repeats a lot of this material, but makes even more explicit the provision each receives from the common fund:

> they have to suffer no privation of what is indispensable to essential needs… when each man receives his salary for these different trades, he hands it over to one person, the steward elected by them, and as soon as the steward receives

[129] Trans. Vermes and Goodman, *Essenes*, 21–25.

this money, he immediately buys what is necessary and provides ample food... (9–10)[130]

Philo also adds that their wellbeing and communal life are protected by their refusal to marry (13–17). The emphasis of his description, then, is on the provision for each member of the community within the common life. This provision is described as covering the necessities of life for each member, yet in a frugal, simple manner. Moreover, such communal provision is extended to Essenes from other locations when they travel or stay in the area. There is no mention of any care for the poor beyond the boundaries of the community.

4.3.3.2.2. Josephus on Essene poor-care

Unlike Philo, Josephus claimed personal knowledge of the Essenes (*Vita* 10–11). Like Philo, his account may well have been coloured by the apologetic concerns that characterise his writings.[131] There are two passages that describe the Essene manner of life: a short account in *Ant.* 18.18–22 and a much longer one in *Bel.* 2.119–161. It is this longer account that will be examined here, as the shorter account adds nothing to it that is relevant to our question.

At the very beginning of his account, Josephus claims that the Essenes are "more closely united among themselves by mutual affection [φιλάλληλοι] than are the others [Pharisees and

[130] Trans. Ibid., 27–31.
[131] Beall, "Essenes," 263.

Sadducees]" (119).[132] He notes that they "adopt the children of others" (120),[133] refusing marriage for themselves. Like Philo, he describes their community of goods:

> They despise riches and their communal life is admirable. In vain would one search among them for one man with a greater fortune than another. Indeed, it is a law that those who enter the sect shall surrender their property to the order; so neither the humiliation of poverty nor the pride of wealth is to be seen anywhere among them. Since their possessions are mingled, there exists for them all, as brothers, one single property. (122)

Josephus further informs us that such funds were entrusted to an elected official (123). Such communities were spread across the towns of Judea who offered hospitality to one another (124), which was the particular responsibility of one person in each community (125). He emphasises their frugal life (126) and the ready generosity within the sect: "they neither buy nor sell anything among themselves; each man gives what he has to whoever needs it" (127). Following, we find the comment that we have already had cause to discuss, that although they were forbidden to make decisions apart from their leaders, an exception was made with regard to charity. He describes how one expelled from the sect may perish, having taken oaths not to share in the food of any outside the sect; this also parallels the evidence of the Scrolls which state that expelled members could not receive aid from the community

[132] Trans. Vermes and Goodman, *Essenes*, 37–49.
[133] Presumably orphans.

(143–144). Interestingly, at the end of his account Josephus comments that there is "another order [ἕτερον τάγμα]" of Essenes who choose to marry, although maintain the same lifestyle in other regards (160).

Josephus' account, then, also emphasises the care of the poor within the communal life of the Essenes. Given their practices of common property, it is impossible that a member would struggle for the necessities of life. Like Philo, he notes the frugality of their lifestyle and their provision for Essene travellers.

4.3.3.3. Summary of Essene poor-care and its restrictions

The clearest conclusion that can be drawn from our sources is that within the Essene community, assuming the community itself was solvent, every member's basic needs of food, clothing and support in illness and old age, were provided for. All sources concur that this was organized and managed by the officials of the communities, funded by the pooling of earnings, either partially (as the *Damascus Document*) or totally (as the *Community Rule*). Here, then, is the best attested example of organised poor-care within a Jewish group in the first century.[134]

[134] Our limited knowledge makes it difficult to state with confidence exactly which rules in 1QS or CD were in force at any particular time for any particular community. Hence, our conclusions are inevitably generalised, and may well not be true for specific Essene communities at specific times. This is even true with regard to the Qumran community: Sarianna Metso, "The Redaction of the Community Rule," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery 1947–1997*, ed. L.H. Schiffman, E. Tov, and J.C. Vanderkam (Jerusalem: Old City Press, 2000), 377–84, analysed the multiple fragments of the *Community*

We may summarise the restrictions to Essene charity as follows: Within the community, decisions on charitable actions were restricted to the appropriate officials. They were expected to provide for each member's basic needs, and generosity is not perceived to extend beyond the limits of the frugal lifestyle that was claimed to have characterised the communities. Even the provision of necessities such as food could be restricted should members break community rules (1QS 6.25–7.21). The question as to whether support extended beyond the community is important here, but a full discussion will be deferred until we have considered the work of Brian Capper in the following section. To anticipate my conclusions: the balance of evidence indicates that Essene poor-care was most likely directed at those within the community; therefore, generosity was inward and those outside would not have been granted access to the structured charity of the Essenes.

4.3.3.4. The influence of Essene poor-care and the normativity of the sources

We come now to our final concern: to what extent can our sources be taken to portray normative Essene practices? How numerous were such Essene communities? How representative were they of wider Jewish society? It is only in answering these questions that

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Rule found at Qumran and concluded that "the idea of a single legitimate version of the Community Rule on which the Qumran community based its judicial decisions at a particular period of time is also not plausible in light of the number and variety of the rule texts found at Qumran" (384).

we can appropriately account for Essene practice in an evaluation of wider Jewish first-century poor-care. In order to address this question I will engage with the work of Capper, who has advanced a maximalist case for Essene influence in the first century, specifically with regard to their poor-care.[135]

[135] See primarily Brian J. Capper, "Essene Community Houses and Jesus' Early Community," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 472–503, the content of which is re-presented in "Jesus, Biblical Covenant, and the Essene New Covenant of Ancient Judaea: On the Origins of the Early Christian Familial Economic Covenant," *QC* 19 (2011): 1–32. His thesis also draws on his earlier article "'With the Oldest Monks...' Light from Essene History on the Career of the Beloved Disciple?," *JTS* 49 (1998): 1–55, and is assumed in his later articles: "Community of Goods in the Rule of the Community (1QS) and Comparative Analysis of the Advanced Probationer's Renunciation of Administration of His Property in Other Fully Property-Sharing Groups," *QC* 20 (2012): 89–150; "The Essene Religious Order of Ancient Judaea and the Origins of Johannine Christianity," *QC* 22 (2014): 39–71. Capper follows the work of Bargil Pixner and Rainer Riesner, see esp. Pixner, *Wege des Messias und Stätten der Urkirche* (Basel: Giessen, 1991), 149–218. For full bibliography and comment see Frey, "Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 407–62, esp. 430–38. Capper's views are also clearly influenced by Hartmut Stegemann, see esp. *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) and Stegemann's view that "the Essenes were the principal representatives of Palestinian Judaism" (268). Capper is followed by his student Timothy J.M. Ling, *The Judaean Poor and the Fourth Gospel*, SNTSMS 136 (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 94–96; Ling adds nothing to Capper's argumentation but assumes his conclusions. Capper has also argued for a close association of the Jesus movement with the Essenes, and claims that aspects of the early church's practice (especially the so-called 'community of goods' in Acts) are dependent upon them: This aspect of his work has been extensively engaged and well refuted by Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 196–200, 216–21; see Hays for full bibliography on this aspect of Capper's work. For a critique that engages Pixner and Riesner in addition to Capper see Richard Bauckham, "The Early Jerusalem Church, Qumran and the Essenes," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. J.R. Davila (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 63–89.

4.3.3.4.1. Capper's thesis

Capper's key arguments find their earliest expression as a chapter entitled 'The New Covenant in Southern Palestine at the Arrest of Jesus' in an edited volume following a conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls.[136] His argument was slightly expanded and republished in 2006 in Jesus and Archaeology [137] under the title 'Essene Community Houses and Jesus' Early Community.' At the beginning of the 2006 version Capper's stated aim was:

> to show, through the combination of evidence for the density of settlements in the Judean hills from Avi Ofer's archaeological survey of the region with close [*sic*] reading of ancient literary sources related to Essenism, that there existed a network of poor-care houses in southern Palestine at the time of Jesus' arrest. This well-organized network of poorhouses, run by the Essenes, extended to most if not all the villages and towns of the Judean heartland, and was of sufficient economic strength largely to relieve the problem and consequences of destitution in the region… this social organization, a kind of "friendly society," offered social security to, and was deeply rooted in, the poorest classes of the region. (472)

His argument first aims to establish that communities of male celibate Essenes would have been found dispersed throughout all the settlements of the Judaean heartland. It is important to note that Capper accepts that the number of 4000 Essenes given by Philo and Josephus is accurate, both numerically, and in that the 4000 are to

[136] Davila, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 90–116.
[137] See n. 135. All references to Capper in the following discussion are from this article.

be identified as male celibates (473–34). Capper proceeds to divide this number (minus 1000 for settlements in Qumran, Jerusalem, and other points outside the Judaean heartlands) by the probable number of settlements in the region at this time, according to Ofer's survey (c. 200).[138] Such a calculation concludes that a community of between ten and twenty male celibate Essenes could have existed in each settlement around the first century (478–79). These settlements are likely to have been of no less than ten Essenes for several reasons: the *Rule of the Community* appears to require valid communities to be constituted of no less than ten members; Josephus uses a group of ten when describing Essene group practices; the communities of the DSS appeared to consider themselves as the true Israel and imagined their community to be organised in obedience to the commands given to Israel in the wilderness wanderings where, again, the smallest group was ten Israelites; both the *Rule of the Congregation* and the *War Scroll* consider a group of ten as the smallest organisational unit of the community (476–78). Capper considers that each community would not have been much greater than ten-to-twenty members for three reasons: as the members would have been employed in the rural economy there would not have been enough work at any one place to support many more than this; furthermore, if there was a large presence of labourers without families to support this would

[138] The original survey is Avi Ofer, "The Highland of Judah during the Biblical Period" (PhD, Tel Aviv University, 1993).

depress wages, a consequence the Essenes would have sought to avoid; finally, the Essenes would have sought to "occupy" the land and thus a thin, wide distribution of their members is ideologically more appropriate (479). Capper concludes, on this basis, that a small community of Essene male celibates would have been present in each of the settlements of Judaea.

The second step of Capper's argument is to establish that such communities functioned as poorhouses offering social security for the destitute and, as such, would have had a large impact on society in Judaea. To do so, his argument delineates three kinds of Essene communities. First, he claims that some of Josephus' description "describes more tightly communal arrangements" (480) that most likely apply to the Qumran community (485), whereas Philo's account is of those communities based in rural Judaea. The third kind Capper equates with those Josephus mentions as a second order, who, for him, are represented in the *Damascus Document*, marrying Essenes who existed over and above the 4000 male celibates (being "several times more in number" [485]), whose communities were linked to the local poor-house. Thus, the poor-houses were run by the male celibates, supported by a wider Essene community; the community of Qumran "housed what was in effect the Essene 'University,' a center of learning, where the most able members of the Essene group received a higher training" (480). Philo's description implies that the male celibates in the rural communities were primarily day labourers and artisans (481–84).

The combination of their wages and the contributions of the "marrying Essenes" funded the social care of the poorhouse.

Capper is in no doubt that the poor-care of the Essenes was fundamentally outward looking – they cared for the destitute in the whole of Judean society (485 and *passim*). As well as interpreting the comments of Josephus and Philo to this effect, Capper rests his case on CD 14.12–17 where, he claims, "it is important to note that some of the classes of legitimate recipients of aid are clearly drawn from outside the immediate New Covenant community" (486). As well as orphans, the "girl with no redeemer" and "youth with no teacher" are to be taken as those beyond the community (487). The Essenes took the former in to prevent them falling into prostitution; the latter, to prevent their departure to banditry. It is through such actions that Capper perceives the celibate community was able to continue and grow; such young unmarried men and women could also engage in productive labour which brought extra income into the community (489). Furthermore, the "wandering poor" of CD 14.15 are understood to be any poor person (491). Overall, then, Capper can write:

> the celibate male Essenes were prepared to treat with considerable kindness any destitute person they encountered in the villages and towns of rural Judea, their immediate social context… if the individual celibate male Essene could be allowed such leeway with his wages from the day before, pooling them with community resources in the evening after his day's work was done, how much more would his community officers have been prepared to support and

> assist destitute and genuinely needy individuals who sought support from the community house. (490–91)

The extent of this support, according to Capper, is staggering. Drawing on existing work on the economics of Palestine,[139] Capper calculates that a typical celibate male Essene community of fifteen would be able to support another thirty to forty people at the basic level of food and clothing (494). If between a fifth and a third of families in any given village were part of the second Essene order (which Capper claims "would hardly be surprising," 495), their contributions could have supported another ten to fifteen people. The income of the community is also assumed to be supplemented by the productive labour of those whom they took in, possibly in crafts and textiles. Thus, each of Capper's proposed poor-houses would have been able to support fifty to fifty-five people. Capper cites Gerhard Lenski's calculation that "in normal times from 5 to 10 percent of the population found itself [destitute]."[140] When applied to the average village population, which Capper has at 500

[139] The works Capper cites are: Magen Broshi, "The Population of Roman Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine Period," *BASOR* 236 (1979): 235–37; Wolfgang Reinhardt, "The Population Size of Jesuralem and the Numerical Growth of the Jerusalem Church," in Bauckham, *Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, 237–65; Hamel, *Poverty*, 40; Friedrich M. Heichelheim, "Roman Syria," in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome IV*, ed. F. Tenney (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1938), 121–257; Ayre Ben-David, *Talmüdische Ökonomie* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), 65–69, 292.

[140] Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 283, from Capper (495).

people, he is able to claim that the Essene poorhouses "were able to support the destitute class of Judea" (495).

The final pillar of Capper's argument is the example of Bethany, which he claims is a concrete example of an Essene poorhouse.[141] He begins this stage of his argument by noting that in the *Temple Scroll* the community is commanded: "you shall make three places, to the East of the city, separate from each other, to which shall come the lepers and those afflicted with a discharge and the men who have an emission" (11Q20.13, trans. Capper, 496). In the same passage is the stipulation that nothing unclean should come within 3000 cubits of the city. Thus, Capper suggests, we should expect an Essene poorhouse just beyond this distance east of the city. Three known villages present themselves as options, Bethany, Bethphage and En-shemesh, of which Capper argues Bethany should clearly be considered the correct option: there is evidence in the New Testament (Mark 14.3–10; John 11.1–12.11) that associates Bethany with lepers and the sick (496–97); the etymology of Bethany is best understood as derived from the Hebrew *beth 'ani* – literally the house of the poor (497–98);[142] the Talmud notes the reputation of Bethany as a place of hospitality for pilgrims (498); the objections to Mary's expensive gesture in Mark 4–7/John 12.4–6 imply a context of poor-care that made her actions uncomfortable

[141] This part of his argument is interdependent with his claim that there were very strong links between the early church and the Essenes, which cannot be addressed here. See n. 135.
[142] Capper considers, and rules out, alternative proposals (497).

(501); Jesus' reply that "the poor you will always have with you" is also best understood in this context.[143] The fact that Jesus was able to stay with his company of disciples regularly demonstrates that he was held in favourable regard with the local Essene administrators. Thus, Bethany is the "poorhouse par excellence" (498) that both concretizes and further supports the thesis of widespread Essene poor-houses in first-century Judea.

4.3.3.4.2. Questioning Capper's reconstruction

If Capper is correct, then any account of Jewish poor-care in the first century must take notice of such a large and influential phenomenon. Certainly, Capper has combined imagination and erudition to produce an inspiring interpretation of first-century Essenism that contains many plausible arguments and inferences. Having said this, there are a number of problems with his reconstruction which, together with some larger considerations, raise serious questions about whether Capper's maximalist picture can be accepted as it currently stands.

1. Can we accept that the 4000 in Josephus and Philo is both numerically accurate and correctly understood to refer to male celibate Essenes?

[143] Capper actually suggests that Mary was a rich Jerusalemite patron of the poorhouse whose actions "sought to make Jesus the Messiah of the poor, as the leader of the highly organized New Covenant network of Judea" (500).

Capper never considers this as an issue; however, there are significant grounds for withholding uncritical acceptance of Philo's and Josephus' testimony in this regard. Berdnt Schaller has demonstrated that the numbers of 4000 and 6000 function, in ancient historiography, as *topoi* that do not indicate numerical accuracy but instead refer to "idealle Gruppentypen."[144] Thus, although we may assume that these numbers imply some reality as to the *relative* difference in size of the Pharisees and the Essenes, they cannot be taken as a good guide to the actual numbers of either.[145] There is clearly good reason to believe that is the case in Josephus given that, in his extant works, he uses the round numbers of 6000 and 4000 on 22 and 11 occasions respectively.[146] This is concerning given the central role of this number in Capper's reconstruction. Moreover, can we assume that Josephus and Philo are correct to state that this number refers to male celibate Essenes?

[144] Berndt Schaller, "4000 Essener - 6000 Pharisäer: Zum Hintergrund und Wert antiker Zahlenangaben," in *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum: Festschift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. B. Kollmann, W. Reinbold, and A. Steudel (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 172–82, 181.
[145] Ibid., 182; Frey, "Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 435 n.108, suggests that we should nonetheless take them seriously, at least in Josephus's case, as he would have had personal knowledge of such groups in Palestine. However, we cannot be particularly confident that Josephus's personal knowledge was of the kind that could guarantee such numbers; the relevant passages are marked by rhetorical *topoi* that throw doubt on the veracity of many of his claims; see Collins, *Qumran Community*, 128. Moreover, the fact that Philo's account is chronologically prior to Josephus's, and the likelihood that they both drew on a common source, shows that this number did not originate with Josephus.
[146] Schaller, "4000 Essener," 175.

Stephen Hultgren has cogently argued that this is unlikely.[147] Explicitly considering a thesis that assumes many monastic communities co-existing with marrying Essene groups, spread throughout Judaea, Hultgren notes that Josephus's description in *Bel.* 2.119–61 is primarily paralleled in the *Rule of the Community* – that is to say, that his description of "Essene" community life appears to be drawn from a source that is probably describing a monastic community like that at Qumran. When he presents his description of general "Essene" life, then, "the suspicion arises that… a description of a monastic community (i.e., Qumran) has been taken and applied to *all* 4000 Essenes."[148] This is all the more likely considering that both Josephus and Philo write as *outsiders* to the community – for outsiders such a mistake is entirely comprehensible. Thus, they associate celibacy, which was true of a small group within Essenism, with the number that represented the whole Essene movement. Moreover, both accounts are clearly apologetic, aimed at magnifying the virtue of Jewish communities. To broaden what characterised one community and apply it to the whole movement would not only have been an easy mistake to make, but one that served their purposes. This apologetic concern of Philo and Josephus is never mentioned by Capper, despite the fact that the descriptions of Essene communities, which he relies on

[147] Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 548–52. For further literature, see Hempel, *Qumran Rule Texts*, 43 n.82.
[148] Hultgren, *Damascus Covenant*, 548.

as being utterly accurate, are clearly written in such a way as to portray the Essenes (and Judaism in general) as a philosophically virtuous, ideal community.

2. Can we accept that Essene poor-care was outward looking?

Against Capper, the evidence does not make it clear that Essene poor-care extended beyond the community to other Jews; our review of the primary sources demonstrates that most give no evidence that it did. Particularly important for Capper is the account of organized charity in CD 14.12–19 which was examined above. Those specified to receive support are: "the wounded… the poor [עני] and the destitute [אביון], the old man who is bowed down and the man who is afflicted, the one captured by a foreign people and the virgin who has no redeemer; the youth who has no one to care for him." As Capper argues, the last two on the list may have some parallel in Josephus's claim that the Essenes "adopt the children of others" (*Bel.* 2.120), and, if so, this would represent one way in which Essene charity extended beyond their community – although only temporarily, for by adopting them they are brought within the community. Aside from these, it is unclear whether the other beneficiaries on the list are inside or outside the community.

In favour of outward-looking poor-care there are two arguments: First, if those within the community are provided for *de facto* being members, then the exhortations to charity may appear somewhat redundant. However, it is entirely possible, and perhaps likely, that

the communities saw their communal lifestyle as *fulfilling* these same demands for charity, in much the same way the document regularly exhorts members to remain pure but also provides concrete instruction on how to accomplish this. It is not necessary that the appeals for charity refer to action beyond what is stipulated in the document. Second, Josephus explicitly claims that members have freedom from officials to "help the deserving [τοῖς ἀξίοις], when in need, and supply food to the destitute [ἀπορουμένοις]" (*Bel.* 2.134). As the officials had a duty to provide for those within the community, this must refer to aid for those beyond it. This is the only clear evidence in support of Capper's claims.

Against outward-looking poor-care we also note two arguments: First, the *Community Rule* lacks any reference to charitable distribution. Given that in this document possessions are held in common ownership and food is centrally distributed, we can infer that when members *of the community* are provided for there is no need for instructions on charitable practice and, therefore, that there is no outward-looking charity. Under this reading, the *Damascus Document* contains more instruction on provision for the poor because poor members were not automatically provided for by centralised food distribution, and therefore the community had to put structures in place to guarantee their care.[149] Second, the

[149] That the *Damascus Document* supports the poor of its own community, see e.g., Hempel, *Laws*, 138; Murphy, *Wealth*, 84–86. Even Stegemann, *Library of Qumran*, 188–89, considers Essene charity to be practised only between members of the community.

polemic against those outside the sect in the Dead Sea Scrolls generally, and in CD/1QS in particular, is hard to reconcile with an active social care programme for those outside the community.[150] This is especially so considering the extent to which 1QS and CD are concerned to protect the community from any financial or economic 'mixing' with non-members (1QS 5.10, 13–14; 6.22; 9.8; CD 6.14–15).[151] The connection between financial regulations and purity concerns is a complexity that Capper nowhere addresses.

Overall, then, the evidence is not entirely unanimous. There is scant evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls that charity in those communities was extended to those beyond the community, unless it was part of the process of adding them to it; rather, they may be seen to point in the opposite direction. Philo provides no evidence in favour of outward-looking charity, but there is one reference in

[150] See, e.g., 1QS I.10, V 11–19; CD VI 14–15. On the hostility to outsiders see Roland Deines, "Die Abwehr der Fremden in den Texten aus Qumran. Zum Verständnis der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in der Qumrangemeinde," in *Die Heiden: Juden, Christen und das Problem des Fremden*, ed. R. Feldmeier and U Heckel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 59–91; Marcus K.M. Tso, *Ethics in the Qumran Community: An Interdisciplinary Investigation*, WUNT 2.292 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), who notes that "the group's deterministic and dualistic teaching also reinforced their self-understanding as God's only elect, which promoted hostility towards outsiders and a heightened sense of solidarity and responsibility towards fellow members" (204–5). Whether such solidarity should be characterised as 'fictive kinship' is not easily answered – see Jutta Jokiranta and Cecilia Wassen, "A Brotherhood at Qumran? Metaphorical Familial Language in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Northern Lights on the Dead Sea Scroll*, ed. A.K. Peterson (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 173–204.

[151] Cf. Alfred R.C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (London: SCM, 1966), 173.

Josephus that is hard to understand any other way.[152] What does seem clear is that Capper radically oversimplifies the problems of the sources and creates a reconstruction that depends, ultimately, on one single line from Josephus, and is problematized by all our other extant sources. One wonders if, under such conditions, this reconstruction is legitimate.

3. Capper's reconstruction contains too many fallacious arguments and unsubstantiated assertions.

Capper's proposal is striking and his utilisation of the sources is impressive. However, it is perhaps because of the ambition of his argument that it is weakened by a significant number of assertions, inferences and arguments that are individually problematic or speculative. Some examples, besides those under the two points above, may illustrate this (rather sweeping) criticism:

Capper's claim that celibate male Essene communities would not have been large in order to avoid depressing wages in any given region is problematized by his own claim that "there was a numerically significant, virtually floating population of underemployed" (472) in the first century. When there is significant excess labour, the addition of further excess is surely unlikely to have any significant impact on labour prices. The argument that there would not have been enough labour to support many Essenes

[152] Although some do. Zeev Safrai and Hanan Eshel, "Economic Life," in *EDSS*, 228–33, conclude that "[Josephus] makes no allusion, however, to any help extended to individuals not belonging to the community" (230).

in any one place is only successful on the assumption that most the population of that place are non-Essenes. However, hypothetically, particular villages or land-holdings could be majority-Essene (unless, of course, you assume Capper's thesis in advance); the argument only makes sense when one already assumes what he seeks to prove. Regarding Bethany, its identification as an Essene poor-house is certainly possible, but not necessary. We may accept its designation as a 'poor-house' to refer to a place where significant numbers of lepers and the sick lived, without assuming that it was an Essene establishment. Ritual purity concerns were not unique to the Essenes; a community near to Jerusalem with such a character is not implausible outside of an Essene context. To suggest that Mary functioned as a rich patron to the Essene poor-house, which in turn offered hospitality to Jesus and his party, may be simplified by the thesis that Mary was a rich patron who offered hospitality to Jesus, without postulating an Essene poor-house. In all the sources on which Capper draws, none of them associates the Essenes with Bethany.

Unsubstantiated assertions include differentiating widespread male celibate communities from the Qumran community, which is considered "sui generis" (480), thereby proposing that numerous supposed communities for which we have no evidence were significantly different from the one community for which we do have evidence. Similarly unsubstantiated are the claims that the marrying Essenes "were several times more in number" than

Capper's 4000 male celibates, and that they were linked to local celibate groups; so too the suggestion that a third to a fifth of families in any village may plausibly have been Essene. Capper's claim that teenagers were adopted primarily to prevent prostitution and banditry is pure speculation, as is his suggestion that they would have been put to productive work by the community (if they were economically productive why were they abandoned by their kinship groups?). Finally there is the suggestion that such poor-houses would have been part-funded by the donations of wealthy patrons; the only evidence Capper cites is Jesus's female benefactors in Luke 8.1–3, where there is no indication that their patronage was aimed to support poor-care.[153]

Overall, it must be admitted that Capper's reconstruction is based on a huge number of hypotheses, few of which are supported by concrete evidence and many of which are problematic.[154] It may be

[153] One may also suspect that the concern for separation from the possessions of the wicked in the Scrolls, and the hostility towards outsiders (see n. 150), may have made such patronage relationships extremely problematic.

[154] Methodologically, the accumulation of such a large number of hypotheses is even more problematic considering that many of them are drawn from different sources; some are based on the writings of Philo and Josephus, others from the *Damascus Document* or *Community Rule*. It may not be unjustified to combine these sources in historical reconstructions, but as noted by Sarianna Metso, "Constitutional Rules at Qumran," in Flint and Vanderkam, *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 186–210, "the plurality of the various rule texts found at Qumran, on the one hand, and the fact that older versions of the documents continued to be copied even when new versions were available, on the other hand, warn us against placing an equal-sign between the picture painted by a document and the historical reality behind it… linking a rule or practice with an actual historical period of time is far more difficult. *It is particularly problematic*

doubted that, as things stand, enough of Capper's hypotheses are secure to render his reconstruction tenable.

4. The outstanding problem which Capper does not address

Most significantly Capper's thesis fails to answer the fundamental problem facing all maximalist reconstructions of Essenism in the first century: if their influence was as great as Capper claims, why are they unmentioned in the New Testament and rabbinic literature,[155] and why is there no evidence of their existence in post-70 Judaism?[156] Is it conceivable that a Jewish movement significant enough to support the entire destitute class of Judea and have established communities in every Judaean settlement would garner no mention in our sources?[157]

4.3.3.4.3. Conclusion

Capper's reconstruction is, at best, possible. However, in its current form, when evaluated by the available evidence, it is improbable. Thus, we should not conceive of such a maximalist picture when attempting to discern the influence of the Essenes. The number and

when pieces of information provided by different manuscripts are combined in an attempt at historical reconstruction" (209, emphasis mine).

[155] Schiffman, "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism," 279–90, 281.

[156] Beall, "Essenes," 268; Goodman, *Judaism in the Roman World*, 153–62. Goodman makes the point that lack of evidence is not lack of existence, with which I would agree. However, it is hard to see it as anything other than evidence of a lack of *influence.*

[157] For discussion of these questions with regard to the New Testament see Frey, "Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 135–38.

influence of their communities is largely unknowable, although their absence from the New Testament, rabbinic literature and post-70 evidence suggests that it was not particularly significant. Although the Essenes represent the best evidence for structured poor-care in the first century, it is not evidence that can be used to make any strong claims about *Jewish* poor-care more generally.

4.4. Dead ends and loud silences

The attempt to identify all the relevant evidence for Jewish poor-care in the first century in the previous pages helpfully clarifies where there is *no* evidence. Such 'dead-ends' are worth mentioning particularly when one may expect, or at least hope, to find relevant material.

4.4.1. Philo

Philo's importance to our understanding of diaspora Judaism is hard to overestimate; his writings are one of the most important sources for any scholar working in the field. However, in relation to our question, what is notable is not any positive evidence in Philo's writings concerning care for the poor in Jewish groups, but its *lack.* There are simply no examples in the whole corpus where Philo references any contemporary practice of organised poor-care. This is particularly notable in contexts where, if Jewish groups did

care for their poor, one may expect Philo to refer to this. We will examine two examples:[158]

4.4.1.1. Decal. 40–43

This section is particularly noteworthy because in it Philo addresses the dignity of the poor and discusses Jewish gatherings in the διδασκαλεῖα.[159] He begins by posing the question of why God addresses the Decalogue as if to a single person, even though the whole multitude of Israel was gathered to listen. One of his answers is that

> He wills that no king or despot swollen with arrogance and contempt should despise an insignificant private person but should study in the school of the divine laws and abate his supercilious airs… (40 [Colson, LCL])

As God "could not brook to despise even the humblest, but deigned to banquet him on holy oracles and statutes" (41), Philo claims that none should be "proud-necked, puffed-up and loud-voiced" (41)

[158] In addition to the examples below, we have searched for the key Deuteronomic laws regarding care for the poor in Philo's works using the index provided by J. Allenbach et al., *Biblia Patristica Supplément: Philon D'Alexandrie* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982). Although in several places Philo lauds the moral excellence of such laws, he nowhere states or even implies that they have any application to the poor in his own context (see, e.g., *Virt.* 88–100; *Spec. Leg.* 4.192; *Decal.* 171). The closest we come is in *Spec.* 2.71–78 where, taking Deut. 15.1–11 as his starting point, he condemns those who lend at interest, implying that he considers this principle to be applicable to his contemporaries.

[159] This is the neuter plural of διδασκαλεῖον for which *LSJ* has "teaching place, school"; so also Franco Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

towards those who are less well-off. This leads him to make the following statement:

> I will make myself affable (εὐέντευκτον) and easy of access (εὐπρόσιτον) to the poorest, to the meanest, to the lonely who have none close at hand to help them, to orphans who have lost both parents, to wives on whom widowhood has fallen, to old men either childless from the first or bereaved by the early death of those whom they begot... I will inure my mind to have the feelings of a human being, not only because the lot both of the prosperous and the unfortunate may change to the reverse we know not when, but also because it is right that even if good fortune remains securely established, a man should not forget what he is. (42–43 [Colson, LCL])

Although Philo mentions the classic categories of need in the biblical tradition (the orphan, the widow, the destitute), his focus is on having the right personal disposition towards them. Having mentioned their common membership in the διδασκαλεῖα, which is surely related to organised Jewish community practices, it is revealing that expected treatment of poorer members of the group is discussed only in terms of personal action. Had organised charity existed, it is hard to understand why Philo would not mention it at this point.

4.4.1.2. Spec. 2.61–63

This passage is found in a context where Philo is discussing the establishment of the Sabbath. Aware of the charge of laziness that

the Jewish practice of the Sabbath attracted,[160] Philo insists that the cessation from labour allows both physical recovery and also "the exercise of the higher activities," that is, study of the law, which improves one's moral and spiritual disposition (61):

> So each seventh day there stand wide open in every city thousands of schools of good sense, temperance, courage, justice and the other virtues in which the scholars sit in order quietly with ears alert and with full attention, so much do they thirst for the draught which the teacher's words supply, while one of special experience rises and sets forth what is the best and sure to be profitable and will make the whole of life grow to something better. But among the vast number of particular truths and principles there studied, there stand out practically high above the others two main heads: one of duty to God as shewn by piety and holiness, one of duty to men as shewn by humanity and justice, each of them splitting up into multiform branches, all highly laudable (62–63 [Colson, LCL]).

Here, then, in the context of Jewish gatherings, Philo notes the emphasis of the law on practical duty to man, as well as piety towards God. However, he does not describe what such duty consists of, or describe any practice to accompany the ethos. This continues to be the case when Philo discusses other laws that have reference to the poor at other points in *de Specialibus Legibus*.[161] Any description of practical action is that of the ancient Israelite community; there is no description of any current practice of his own Jewish community.

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[160] E.g., Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.4; Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.105
[161] E.g., 2. 105–107, 4.172–180.

To both examples, one may object that Philo is focussing on the delivery of the law. In the first example he emphasises its applicability to all, whether rich or poor; his focus is on the law as a 'level playing field' which has implications for the self-perception of the relatively wealthy. In the second, his focus is on study of the law as meaningful work. Furthermore, when Philo does discuss Jewish gatherings the activity he repeatedly mentions is Torah reading and exposition[162] and, thus, the argument from silence presumes an interest Philo does not share. This, though, is perhaps the critical point: Philo is not a writer without interest in the sufferings of the poor of the Jewish community, even though he is himself wealthy;[163] he is proud of the laws that command just and compassionate treatment of the poor; he is eager to portray commendable Jewish practice and willing to discuss the activities that characterise Jewish gatherings. Yet he fails to mention a single example of organised poor-care in contemporary Jewish groups. This is surely a significant silence.

4.4.2. Other sources

2 Macc. 3.10

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[162] E.g., *Hypoth.* 7.11–14; *Mos.* 2.214–216; *Prob.* 80–83. It is noteworthy in itself that this is the focus of Philo's description of Jewish gatherings, with no mention of any social functions of such groups.

[163] As demonstrated by his involvement in the embassy to Gaius on behalf of his suffering fellow-Jews. So also David L. Mealand, "Philo of Alexandria's Attitude to Riches," *ZNW* 69 (1978): 258–64, 264. See further, Armitage, *Poverty*, 176–78.

τοῦ δὲ ἀρχιερέως ὑποδείξαντος παρακαταθήκας εἶναι χηρῶν τε καὶ ὀρφανῶν

This verse is found in the narrative of the confrontation between Heliodorus and the High Priest about the money deposited in the Jerusalem temple. Under orders to seize the money, Heliodorus enters Jerusalem and enquires as to what funds are stored in the temple. In reply, the high priest states that there were the παρακαταθήκας[164] of widows and orphans. On first reading, this may be taken to suggest some reference to organised financial provision for the poor in Jerusalem;[165] however, this is almost certainly a reference to the use of the temple as a bank *by* widows and orphans.[166] The argument of the High Priest is thus that in

[164] Referring to that which is deposited under the care of another for its protection: C. Spicq, *TLNT* 3.24–6.

[165] So, e.g., the NAB, which translates this as "a care fund"; this has been amended in the NABRE to "deposit."

[166] On the use of the temple as a bank see Hans Neumann, "Banks - Ancient Orient," *BNP* 2.484; Neill Q. Hamilton, "Temple Cleansing and Temple Bank," *JBL* 83 (1964): 365–72, 366–67; Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 143–44. Interestingly, Stevens suggests that the temple would have been involved in community welfare, but can produce no evidence to support this (131–134); she can only present a range of texts that demonstrate the ethical imperative of poor-care, rather than any evidence that the temple was involved in providing it. Similarly, Robert Doran, *The Second Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, vol. 4, *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), suggests the possibility that "the author is referring here to the tithes set aside for them" (207), but none of the evidence he adduces connect such tithes with the temple administration. Perhaps the best evidence that the temple was expected to have a charitable function is found in the accusations of the NT gospels and texts from Qumran that accuse the temple authorities of stealing from the needy: Mark 12.40; Luke 20.47; 1QpHab 8.10–9.8; CD VI.16–17. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the grounds of accusation were the withholding of money from the poor that should have been distributed to them, or legal and religious processes that contributed to their impoverishment, such as

taking the temple money Heliodorus would remove the deposits of widows and orphans, leaving them impoverished, not that the money was used for social care.[167]

Another barren source is the edicts concerning the Jews recorded by Josephus in *Ant.* 14.185–264; 16.162–172, which detail the rights that were explicitly granted to the Jews by Roman emperors and officials. Although there is mention of collections of money, these are always the money to be sent to Jerusalem; never do the edicts refer to money that is used for local purposes, charitable or otherwise.

The Jewish manumission inscriptions located in the Bosporan Kingdom on the North coast of the Black Sea dated in the first few centuries CE have no significance for our question.[168] The evidence does not allow us to reconstruct a precise picture of what historical realities lay behind the inscriptions.[169] All that can be confidently said is that:

> All these manumission inscriptions inform us that the slaves are set free in the prayer house (προσευχή), that the Jewish community appears as a guardian of

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the use of κορβᾶν dedications to avoid financially supporting one's family (cf. Mark 7.9–13).

[167] So also, Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 194.

[168] The relevant inscriptions are listed in E. Leigh Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosporus Kingdom* TSAJ 75 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 98.

[169] J. Andrew Overman, "Jesus, Slaves, and the Synagogue on the Black Sea," in Kee and Cohick, *Evolution of the Synagogue*, 141–57, describes them as "a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma" (157).

> the legal act, and that the freedmen are connected by certain obligations to the synagogue.[170]

One may, initially, plausibly hypothesise that some kind of social concern should be associated with the significant number of manumissions located in a προσευχή, but such a suspicion is ultimately disappointed. Leigh Gibson's thorough study of the inscriptions demonstrates that the manumissions do not differ significantly in character from those commonly found in epigraphic evidence across the Mediterranean, on which she comments:

> There is no evidence that loyalty, diligence, or religious interests prompted owners to manumit their slaves. Rather, it appears that the owners' self-interest was the driving force…[171]

What is different is that she suggests the inscriptions are best interpreted as donating the remaining obligations of the manumitted slaves to the synagogue rather than their former owner. There is no evidence that the manumitted slaves were Jewish, nor indeed those who manumitted them.[172] The real significance of the inscriptions, she suggests, is that they demonstrate the respectable status of Jewish groups and their involvement in the legal processes of their communities at this time.[173]

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[170] Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 110.
[171] Gibson, *Manumission*, 153.
[172] Ibid., 154–55.
[173] Ibid., 156–58.

4.5. Summary

The majority of scholars who suppose a widespread, organised system of poor-care in first-century Jewish groups are heavily reliant on rabbinic sources which cannot support the weight they are asked to bear. Once these are set aside, the evidence that remains is thinner than might have been expected. The Theodotus inscription, the statement by Julian and the Aphrodisias inscription are irrelevant, the statement of Tacitus too vague, and the references in Josephus and Matthew's gospel, when taken without presuppositions from rabbinic sources, do not appear to refer to organised or systemic poor-care, but rather occasional, individual, almsgiving. Such almsgiving may be related to the Roman literary motif of the Jewish beggar, although this is not certain; little attention is currently paid to these sources in the debate. The evidence concerning Qumran and the Essenes is, therefore, the only clear example of structured poor-care in the first century. A maximalist reconstruction claims that such practices would have been found throughout Judaea (but not beyond it); however, this reconstruction has a number of critical weaknesses. Finally, we have noted a few dead-ends, and the silence of Philo.

It is important to be clear that it *should not* be concluded from this argument that most Jews did not care for their poor at all; such a conclusion would go beyond the evidence and seems unlikely given the poor-care ethos of ancient Judaism. However, it *can* be argued that there is no reliable evidence for an organised system of

poor-care in the first century with the exception of the scrolls-Qumran-Essenes evidence we have discussed.[174] The evidence commonly cited is scarce, vague and seems only to refer to voluntary, occasional almsgiving. This evidence is all of a Palestinian provenance, with the exception of Josephus, although he was, of course, for a large portion of his life a Palestinian Jew. The lack of evidence from the diaspora should be noted. As such, our reconstructions of first-century Jewish poor-care should be significantly scaled back from the commonalities cited at the beginning of the chapter, especially when describing Jewish practices in the diaspora. We cannot responsibly conclude that Jewish groups supported their poor, whether through the 'first-century synagogue,' some form of the *quppah*/*tamḥui* or any other organised means. In this respect, then, Jewish groups cannot be distinguished from other Greco-Roman associations. Despite the claims to the contrary we have cited, there is not sufficient evidence that either materially supported their poorer members.

[174] Nathan Eubank, who served as a respondent when the main argument of this chapter was presented as a paper at the BNTC 2016, suggested that the ethos of poor-care in second temple Jewish texts further supports my argument – when the texts exhort poor-care they describe occasional, individual almsgiving and contain no reference to any organised system.

Part 2

Restricted Generosity in the New Testament

Chapter 5

5. Fictive Kinship and Social Reality in the New Testament

Many metaphors are used for the church in the New Testament, but none so frequently as those drawn from the conceptual sphere of the *oikos*.[1] Fictive kinship language abounds throughout all the New Testament documents. There is not space in this study to discuss the origin of this phenomenon,[2] or how unusual it is.[3]

[1] See Chapter 2 n. 5. For a theoretical discussion of metaphor theory in relation to fictive-kinship language see Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 23–31.

[2] The most widely held position is that it grows out of the Jewish tradition (e.g., Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 87; Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 59–69; implied in David G. Horrell, "From Adelphoi to Oikos Theou: Social Transformation in Pauline Christianinty," *JBL* 120 (2001): 293–311, 296; explicitly in Horrell, *Solidarity*, 123. Hellerman argues that in both the Hebrew scriptures and the second temple literature the following can be found: "1. The metaphor of a surrogate kin group is utilized as one image among several to describe the relationship between the group in question and their God; 2. Behaviour appropriate to PKG [Patrilineal Kinship Group] norms is expected on the part of those who represent… the true Israel… 3. When one is forced to choose between loyalty to God and loyalty to one's blood family, the former must prevail" (68). He then suggests that the Jesus group took over and developed these concepts, which then came to characterise the early Christians. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, considers the origin to be Jesus in antithesis to the broader Jewish background (59–60), but his position is hard to maintain as it relies on the claim that "nowhere in the Old Testament is Israel called *God's* family as such" (59); Hellerman has demonstrated that such an idea is present – see, e.g., Deut. 14.1; 34.6; Mal. 2.10. It might be better to say that Jesus remoulded and emphasised an idea that already existed in the Jewish milieu.

[3] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, argued that the usage was unique, certainly compared to other associations (87). So also Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 21–25 and more recently Ascough, "Christ Groups and Associations," 212. However, Harland, *Identity*, has recently mounted a strong counter-argument. He

Rather, the focus of the following discussion is to argue that the New Testament authors, broadly, expected the economic norms of the contemporary Greco-Roman *oikos* to have some expression within the church, the *oikos* of God.[4] There are two main lines of argument: 1) Plausible implications drawn from a survey of *oikos* language in the whole New Testament. 2) Specific texts in the New Testament that link the church as an *oikos* with economic

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presents enough evidence to demonstrate that the occurrence of fictive kinship in association sources is more common than scholars have assumed, although the amount he can produce is still not overwhelming (67–80). More significant is his observation that the difference in sources may account for the remarkable disparity in frequency between fictive kinship metaphors in the New Testament and in association inscriptions: "we have personal letters pertaining to early Christian groups (reflecting personal interactions), but rarely have any literary or epistolary evidence for the internal life of other associations" (67). He conservatively concludes that due to the discrepancy in sources "we cannot be sure that fictive sibling language was widespread within associations or that it had the same meaning that "brothers" developed within certain groups of Jesus followers" (80); but he claims there is enough evidence to show that it is more present within associations than has often been supposed. See also Harland, *Associations, Synagogues and Congregations*, 32–33; cf. Peter Artz-Grabner, "'Brothers' and 'Sisters' in Documentary Papyri and the New Testament," *RevistB* 50 (2002): 195–204. With regard to the Jewish milieu Hellerman suggests that the Jesus group is delineated in its use of fictive kinship in that it is "more pervasive," "more consistent" and "Jesus emphasized the idea of an exchange of loyalties to a much greater degree" (70). The exception is then the Qumran community, which was also marked by the same 'unique' points as the Jesus group. Hellerman thus posits further differences between the fictive kinship of the Jesus group and that of Qumran specifically: 1. For the Jesus community the role of father "was reserved for God alone" (79), whereas in Qumran the leader also operated as a father; 2. The fictive family at Qumran "remained Judean by blood" (88) whereas for Jesus "surrogate kinship functioned as an *alternative* to (not a *subset* of) *ethnos* as the defining social category for God's eschatological people" (89). These points obviously complement wider theological differences that distinguished the two groups.

[4] So, e.g., Horrell, *Solidarity*, 126. The argument has not yet been made strongly enough to wield noticeable influence on the academy, hence the intention in this chapter to demonstrate the weight of evidence in favour of this position.

practices.[5] Having analysed the evidence, I will finally argue that this phenomenon should be understood as one way in which the early church restricted its generosity. Before we begin, a brief *apologia*: the argument of this chapter is by nature broad and cumulative, seeking to demonstrate a trend, or characteristic, that permeates the New Testament. As such, many texts will be referenced without substantial exegetical argumentation (although the texts most important to our case are more fully discussed); similarly, in many cases a full bibliography of commentators and specialist studies cannot be provided. This chapter is, then, necessarily much wider than it is deep. It is hoped that the exegetical depth and rigour of the following two chapters will provide appropriate balance to the study.

[5] A third line of argument could be 'external evidence,' that is, texts written by those outside the Christian community that provide evidence for family-like behaviour with regard to material possessions amongst the early Christians. The most important text here is Lucian of Samosata's *The Passing of Peregrinus*, where he links fictive-kinship with material generosity in his description of the early Christians: "their first lawgiver persuaded them that they all are brothers of one another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines traditionally without any definite evidence" (Lucian, *Peregr.* 13 [A.M. Harmon, LCL 302]). I do not appeal to this evidence here for the following reasons: 1) Lucian was a second-century author and thus, to be consistent, appeal to Lucian should also be accompanied by the analysis of second century Christian texts, which is beyond the scope of the thesis (see 1.3.2). 2) Lucian has been comprehensively dealt with by Sandnes, *Family*, 172–75; I have little to add to his analysis.

5.1. Implications of *oikos* language in the whole New Testament: The church-as-family as a redefinition of *oikos*.

A survey of *oikos* language in the New Testament is presented in the appendix in a set of tables. The survey demonstrates that there are several texts that do not just present the church as an additional family, but actually redefine family around the church.[6] Such an idea is prevalent in the gospels. All the synoptic gospels record Jesus explicitly redefining family as "those who do the will of God" (Mark 3.31–35/Matthew 12.46–50/Luke 8.19–21). Mark's Gospel clearly contrasts the rejection of Jesus by his natural family with the response of the community of his disciples by placing such episodes next to each other. Having narrated the selection of the twelve disciples (3.13–9), Mark immediately refers to the attempt of Jesus's family to restrain (κρατήσαι) him (3.21); following Jesus's rejection in his πατρίδα (6.1–6), Mark immediately relates the commissioning of the twelve and their success (6.7–13). In this manner, the narrative form communicates the reality Jesus makes explicit in 3.35.[7] To this evidence we can add the remarkable conclusion to Jesus's encounter with the rich young man. Following Peter's claim to have left everything in order to follow Jesus, Jesus states that

[6] So, e.g., Carolyn Osiek, "The Family in Early Christianity: 'Family Values' Revisited," *CBQ* 58 (1996): 1–24, 23.
[7] See Osiek and Balch, *Families*, 127.

> Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house (οἰκία) or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses (οἰκίας) and brothers and sisters and mothers and children… (Mark 10.29–30)

As most commentators conclude, Jesus must here be referring to the new family of the church as the replacement family members for those who join his movement.[8] Hellerman also argues that the synoptic authors' presentation of Jesus celebrating the Passover meal with his disciples and not with his natural family points in the same direction.[9] Citing Exod. 12:3–27, Josephus *Ant.* 11.109 and *m. Pes.* 10.4, he claims that this shared meal is "a kinship event."[10] Thus the Passover meal of Jesus "clearly reflects their perception of their community as a surrogate family."[11] However, this is only significant if the natural family of Jesus were not present, which is harder to prove.[12] If allowed, though, this is additional evidence for the *redefinition* of the family around Jesus.[13]

A redefinition of family is also present in the epistles of the New Testament. First is the striking designation of the church as the

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[8] Jesus may be indicating *more* than this, but certainly not less. See 5.2.1 below.
[9] It is unnecessary in this regard to decide whether or not this *was* a Passover meal (cf. John 18.28, which implies the meal was the day before the Passover). The important point is that the synoptics present it as a Passover meal.
[10] Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 67.
[11] Ibid. Hellerman further argues that Jesus's burial by his disciples rather than by his family demonstrates the same reality, as burying one's dead was a key familial responsibility.
[12] So, e.g., Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3.458.
[13] In order to maintain tight focus in this chapter we leave aside discussion on the substantial body of texts that *relativize* the natural family for the Jesus movement. See the tables for references to the texts.

household of God (Ephesians 2.19, 1 Timothy 3.15, 1 Peter 4.17) or of faith (Galatians 6.10). Galatians 6.10 will be discussed in detail below. In Ephesians 2.11f. the author is dealing with the coming together of Jews and Gentiles in the church. He notes their previous separation from God (2.12) and reconciliation through Jesus, both to God (2.13, 16) and of Gentile to Jew (2.14, 16b–19). At the summation of this passage three metaphors are used to describe this new church of both Jew and Gentile: "citizens," "temple" and "household." The emphasis throughout is on the *unity* now established through Jesus – all belong, both Jew and Gentile. Thus, the church becomes the primary place of belonging, the primary *oikos* – the one defined as God's. In 1 Timothy 3 the author has just described the qualifications for an ἐπισκοπή and διακόνος, emphasising a good track record in the management and care of their own natural *oikoς*, most explicitly in 3.5: "if someone does not know how to manage his own household how will he care for God's church?" Although the redefinition is less clear here, the passage does manifest a certain hierarchy of importance – the church leaders are qualified by their management of lesser households (the natural ones) for leadership in the most significant household of all (3.15). In 1 Peter 4.17 the reference is used merely to designate Christians and does not by itself indicate anything further about the

relationship between the natural household and the household of God.[14]

In addition to these explicit references, something must be said of the sheer quantity of kinship language used to describe the status of believers (in relation to God) and the relationships between believers in the epistles, across all the different New Testament authors. Abraham Malherbe writes with respect to 1 Thessalonians: "a coherent view of the church, as the family of God, underlies his [Paul's] practical thinking in this pastoral letter."[15] Similarly, the sheer quantity, variety and saturation of kinship language across all the New Testament epistles demonstrate that the view of church as the *oikos* of God was fundamental to the early Christian self-perception. The most likely explanation for its dominance was its importance – it was not merely an additional family but had become the primary family.[16]

All this is not to say that the natural *oikos* is of no concern for the New Testament authors. Even in the Jesus tradition, the Corban dispute in Mark 7. 9–13/Matthew 15.3–6 records a sharp attack on the Pharisees by Jesus for allowing religious practices that

[14] In 1 Cor 7:29 we also find extreme relativizing of natural family: "let those who have wives live as though they had none," although in this case the motivating reason is eschatological rather than because natural family has been supplanted by the divine family.
[15] Abraham J. Malherbe, "God's New Family in Thessalonica," in *The Social World of the First Christians*, ed. L.M. White and O.L. Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Auhsburg Fortress, 1995), 116–25, 117.
[16] This is also the conclusion of Artz-Grabner, "'Brothers' and 'Sisters,'" 203.

undermined the expectation that one should financially provide for one's parents. In Philemon, Paul recognises the existence of the natural *oikos* and the reality of obligations within it, as do the household codes in Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter. In 1 Timothy, the failure to provide for one's natural family is condemned in the strongest terms (5.8). Accordingly, good management of the natural *oikos* is a pre-condition of leadership in the divine *oikos* (1 Timothy 3.5). A simplistic either-or conclusion - that the church either totally replaced the natural family or was a mere addition to it – must therefore be resisted.[17]

Given the evidence above, that the family is *redefined* (and not just supplemented), it is plausible that normal *oikos* functions may be more present in the church-as-*oikos* than in a scenario whereby a fictive family only supplements one's existing *oikos*. This is particularly likely with regard to the *oikos* duties of solidarity and mutual care, as these represented the most basic advantages of any *oikos*. However, this should not be taken to suggest that the members of the divine *oikos* were allowed to abandon their natural *oikos*; it may be that this confusion is one factor that contributes to the problems discussed in 1 Timothy 5, as shall be discussed in detail in chapter 7.

[17] It is surely plausible to postulate that the emphasis between the two would vary depending on the consequences one experienced because of conversion. For example, 1 Corinthians 7.12–16 clearly shows the possibility of being divorced as a result of conversion, which would have increased the need for the church to serve as one's primary family; the experience of those who were part of a household conversion (e.g., 1 Cor 1.16) would have been quite different.

5.2. Specific texts possibly linking the church-as-*oikos* with economic issues

The implications of the survey of *oikos*/fictive kinship language, discussed above, enable us to hypothesise that the metaphorical description of the church as a family would have had concrete material implications.[18] The best evidence to confirm such a hypothesis would be texts that explicitly link the two – material solidarity and the church-as-family. Possible instances where this is the case in the New Testament will now be examined.

5.2.1. Mark 10.28–31

This passage has been discussed above in relation to the redefinition of family. It must now further be noted that the new family that Jesus establishes is characterised by the sharing of resources that was expected in a normal *oikos*. The passage is clearly focussed on material possessions: Jesus challenges the young man to sell his possessions and give to the poor (10.21); his failure to do so is followed by the famous saying that it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle (τρυμαλιᾶς ῥαφίδος) than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (10.25); Peter's statement of the disciples' actions (10.28), accurate or not,[19] is

[18] So also Brian S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origins and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 123.

[19] If Peter's statement is taken to mean they renounced all ownership this is hard to square with Mark 1.29–30, where Peter continues to own a house and clearly has a wife, and therefore probably children; John 21.3f. assumes that Peter's ownership of his fishing equipment continued.

focussed on the same issues. Thus, when Jesus responds to Peter promising family, *houses* (οἰκίας) and *fields* (ἀγροῦς) he must be contrasting the abandonment of personal family and possessions with sharing in the communal possessions of the new family one joins.[20] Here, then, is a clear example where the construal of the disciples as a family is connected with the material norms of familial solidarity.

5.2.2. Matthew 25.31–46

Karl Sandnes sees in early Christian literature the claim that the Christians "lived together as members of an extended family, sharing its resources, eating at the same table and caring for the needy." [21] He identifies a number of examples of such "*philadelphia*"; the parable of the sheep and the goats is his first.[22] The material generosity described in the parable would clearly illustrate the mutual solidarity that would characterise an ideal family; however, the question is whether the reference in v. 40 to "the least of these my brothers" (τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν

[20] So also: Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 67, who interprets houses and fields as representing shelter and food, "life's necessary physical resources"; Pregeant, *New Testament Ethics*, 127; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8.27–16.20*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 102–3; Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 408; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 297; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 474; Ezra P. Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896), 196.
[21] Sandnes, *Family*, 170.
[22] Ibid., 132–36.

ἐλαχίστων) can be taken to imply that the charitable actions were done *because* the recipients were members of the family of God. Such an interpretation would require 1) that the reference was to care of Christians, not humanity in general; 2) that the action was in some way connected to or motivated by their familial relationship; 3) crucially, that those being judged are Christians and thus *should* have acted in accordance with their familial reality. Of these, the first point is heavily disputed[23] and cannot be answered here, but even if it were adjudicated in Sandnes' favour his interpretation of this passage falters on the second and third points. On the second, the text does not indicate that the good deeds were motivated by a recognition of the recipients as Jesus's brothers. Rather, their surprise at the association of such people with Jesus suggests the opposite. The most significant flaw in Sandnes' suggestion, though, is with regard to the third point. If this parable was to represent the familial care expected of Jesus's fictive family, then those being judged would have to be *within* the family; however, 25.2 explicates that the parable refers to the judgment of all the nations – it is a universal judgment. When the weight of this point is appreciated, whether or not the recipients are Christians or

[23] See the summary of positions in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3.428–9. For the view that this refers only to Christians they list "Origen, Basil the Great, Augustine, Bede, Thomas Aquinas, Zwingli, Luther, Calvin, B. Weiss, J. Friedrich, Ingelaere, S.W. Gray, G.N. Stanton, Court, France, Garland." For the view that this refers to all in need they have: "Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Alford, McNeile, Schlatter, T. Preiss, Cranfield, G. Gross, Jeremias, Hill, E. Schweizer, Agbanou, Meier, Schnackenburg, Gnilka, Patte, D. Wenham."

the universal poor, the parable cannot represent the "*philadelphia*" of the Jesus family, but rather the action (or non-action) of all people. Thus, although this analysis offers little of constructive use as to how best to interpret the parable, it demonstrates that this cannot serve as an example of material solidarity motivated by fictive kinship.

5.2.3. Romans 12.9–13

In this chapter, Paul outlines desirable Christian living. The previous section ends with a doxology in 11.33–36; 12.1 should clearly be taken as the beginning of a new section in the letter.[24] Commentators are agreed that verses 1–2 introduce this section, followed by verses 3–8 which discuss the use of spiritual gifts (*charismata*) within the community. The following verses are subject to more debate, as to their structure, unity and source history,[25] which cannot be dealt with in the current study. My analysis takes verses 9–13 as a distinct unit in which Paul describes the desired internal characteristics of the Christian community, which is followed by admonitions concerning suffering and conflict, both within and outside the community, in verses 14–21.[26]

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[24] Although note the reference to the mercy of God in both 11.32 and 12.1.

[25] For discussion of the options see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 651–53; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 771–74.

[26] Those who consider 9–13 a distinct section include: Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 167; David A. Black, "The Pauline Love Command: Structure, Style, and Ethics in Romans 12.9–21," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 2 (1989): 3–22; James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988); Moo, *Romans*;

This coheres well with the Greek text: the counsels of verses 10–13 are constructed by participles and dative nouns, whereas there is a shift to imperatives at v. 14. Ultimately, it is hoped that a more robust defence of treating verses 9–13 as a distinct unit will be demonstrated by the analysis below.

Η ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος.
    ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρόν,
    κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ,
τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι,
τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι,
τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί,
    τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες,
    τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες,
τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες,
τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες,

N.T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, vol. 10, *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002). Other consider 9–13 and 14–21 as just one section, although even then 9–13 are often discussed seperately from 14–21. Such include: F.F. Bruce, *Romans*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); Charles E.B. Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979); Charles H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932); Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Fitzmyer, *Romans*; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Freiburg: Neukirchener, 2010); Handley C.G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1928); John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968). Preferring a different structure are: Charles K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed., BNTC (London: A&C Black, 1991); Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. E. Hoskyns, 6th ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1968); Frédéric Godet, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1881); Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες,
ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες,
τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.

The initial words of this section are best taken as a command: to "let love be genuine" (ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος).[27] This instruction is immediately followed by two further commands in a participle structure, which Moo suggests indicates "the close relationship of the exhortations with the original demand."[28] Paul does not leave his exhortation for love vague and undefined, but immediately makes clear that unhypocritical love should be characterised by hating of evil and clinging to good. In a similar way, the imperatives of verses 10–13 may be seen as explicating different, more specific, aspects of the love that Paul envisages as characterising the Christian community in Rome, following the more general 'headline' command of verse 9.[29]

v. 10a. τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι,

The first term Paul uses to specify and describe the ideal love of the community is φιλαδελφία. That this heads the list is significant – it is this conception of love that gives coherence to the instructions

[27] So all major English translations.
[28] Moo, *Romans*, 776.
[29] Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, also analyses this section with a concentration on expositing the implications of φιλαδελφία. My analysis differs in that although Aasgaard recognises that the word refers to "mutual obligations among Christians" (177) he almost totally overlooks the material dimensions of this mutuality, even with regard to v. 13, where he comments that "such action is here not related clearly to siblingship in particular" (176). I argue that it is this aspect of φιλαδελφία that is primary (though not exclusive) here.

that follow. Outside Christian literature, the word φιλαδελφία always refers to the relationship between actual family members,[30] but to which aspects of that relationship is Paul appealing? Many commentators seem to consider "family affection" as the primary meaning of φιλαδελφία here – that is, the Roman church should have the feelings and emotional disposition to one another that is appropriate for family members.[31] However, if this is the case, it begs the question why Paul qualifies it with an appeal for φιλόστοργοι, which unambiguously *does* refer to the affectional aspect of love, again often to those closely related.[32] If φιλαδελφία here is to refer primarily to affection, the qualification of φιλόστοργοι is redundant. A better interpretation draws on the norms and values of the Greco-Roman family discussed in chapter 2. There it was argued that appropriate love and devotion to family (*pietas*) was primarily a matter of duty, and that this included the material support of other members of the household. Here, then, the primary reference of φιλαδελφία is to the *practice of deeds appropriate to family relationships*.[33] Such an interpretation makes

[30] So, e.g., BDAG (1055); E. Plümacher, 'φιλαδελφια', *EDNT* 3.424; Morris, *Romans*, 444; Barrett, *Romans*, 221; and esp. John S. Kloppenborg, "ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ, ΘΕΟΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΣ and the Dioscuri: Rhetorical Engagement in 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12," *NTS* 39 (1993): 265–89, 272.

[31] So, e.g., Schreiner, *Romans*, 664; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 753; Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 631.

[32] BDAG has "heartfelt love, strong affection" (1095). See also L&N 25.41.

[33] So also, Wright, *Romans*, 711. The same point, understated, is made by Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (London: SPCK, 2009), 138: [it] "must have had some practical edge."

much more sense of Paul's qualification: the deeds of φιλαδελφία are to be practised with the appropriate affection (φιλόστοργοι). As Luke Timothy Johnson has it:

> As Plutarch's discourse on the subject makes clear, brotherly love is not merely a matter of sentiment, but involves a complex set of dispositions and practices. Above all, it involves mutual sharing of possessions and activities. That is why some of the New Testament passages calling for brotherly love modify it with language about feelings.[34]

Although φιλαδελφία primarily refers to concrete practices within the community, it would be reductionistic to argue that Paul *only* has concrete practice of material support in mind here. It is central, but not necessarily exclusive.

v. 10b. τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι,

Commentators are divided over whether this verse should be translated to mean something like 'to surpass one another in showing honour/to take the lead in showing honour to one another,' [35] or whether a more unusual translation should be provided for the verb, giving something like 'prefer one another in honour.' [36] The debate is not decisive for our purposes;[37] more interesting is the reason why Paul may exhort appropriate conduct

[34] Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 339.
[35] E.g., Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 753; Jewett, *Romans*, 761.
[36] E.g., Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 633.
[37] Moo, *Romans*, 777 and Schreiner, *Romans*, 664, argue there is little difference between them.

in relation to honour at this point.[38] Jewett rightly insists that interpretation should account for "the social context of honor that marked the Mediterranean world."[39] One of the most common ways in which honour was obtained was through the donation of one's resources either in benefaction/patronage, where the recipients (clients) were individuals and voluntary associations, or in euergetism, where the benefaction was a gift for the whole *polis*. In either of these cases, the donation resulted in public honour, as can be seen, for example, in the myriad honorific inscriptions detailing gifts by benefactors.[40] For the Roman Christians, then, the donation of their own resources within the community would inevitably have raised questions and complications regarding the cultural norms of rewarding such deeds with honour. This is the most plausible reason why Paul, in this context, insists that generosity should not result in the striving for personal honour that characterised Greco-Roman society. Practical φιλαδελφία should be done both with appropriate affection and without inappropriate honour-seeking.[41]

v. 11. τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες.

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[38] Most commentators generally interpret this exhortation in terms of showing respect to, deferring to or celebrating one another.
[39] Jewett, *Romans*, 762.
[40] On the relationship between benefaction/euergetism and honour, see Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 54–61; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 71–73.
[41] For the relevance of this instruction in family environments, see Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 119.

For the Roman Christians, being asked to demonstrate costly, familial generosity, yet to be denied the common cultural recompense for doing so, may well have been difficult. Entirely appropriate, then, is Paul's next series of exhortations. The demanding nature of Christian communal life should not dampen the eagerness and the zeal of the Romans, but rather they should remember that they are serving the Lord and rely on the Holy Spirit for the continued ability to do so; "the Christians in Rome are not to allow themselves to grow slack in zeal (in the service of God and of their neighbours)."[42]

v. 13a. ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες,

Sharing in the needs of the saints is unambiguously here a reference to material sharing. The plural form here has reference to material needs whenever it appears in the New Testament.[43] Therefore, to 'share' in such needs must involve attempting to alleviate them; such a conclusion is made more likely by the frequent association of the κοιν- word group with material sharing in the New Testament (Acts 2.44; 4.32; Romans 15.26; 2 Corinthians 8.4; 9.13; Galatians 6.6; 1 Timothy 6.18; Hebrews 13.16).

v. 13b. τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.

[42] Cranfield, *Romans 9–16*, 633. For similar interpretations, see also Jewett, *Romans*, 764; Moo, *Romans*, 778.
[43] So also Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 144.

Hospitality was an important virtue in Mediterranean culture; its practice involved significant cost. Andrew Arterbury's thorough study demonstrates that hospitality was expected to include not only food, lodging and protection for the duration of the guests' stay, but also provisions for the next stage of their journey, and sometimes even accompaniment.[44] Paul's instruction here is not just that the church should be willing to offer hospitality if required, but should actively *pursue* it – a demanding ideal. Although he does not specify whom the recipients of such generosity should be, Arterbury is right to comment that the evidence of early Christian documents shows that "Christian hosts typically offered hospitality only to Christian travellers."[45] Again, then, for Paul, φιλαδελφία is manifested in material generosity towards members of the community.

The command to love is, then, primarily conceived of as φιλαδελφία. In this clear fictive-kinship context, Paul's exhortation to φιλαδελφία with the appropriate affection indicates that such φιλαδελφία was practical, primarily expressed by material sharing to meet basic needs. This is evidenced by the following commands, of which some make such solidarity explicit (v. 13) while others address challenges which were likely to arise within such a community. Dodd is right, then, to conclude:

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[44] Andrew E. Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in Its Mediterranean Setting* (Sheffield: Phoenix, 2005), 129–32.
[45] Ibid., 132. He notes that in this regard early Christian practice mirrors Jewish practice in that Jewish travellers generally sought hospitality from other Jews.

> Within a family of brothers there will be a full sharing of needs and resources, by way of hospitality and otherwise. With all this will go a particular emotional tone – one of joy, fervour, hopefulness, and zeal.[46]

This section of Romans, therefore, is a clear example of fictive-kinship language carrying the expectation of family-like behaviour in material interdependence and generosity.

5.2.4. Hebrews 13.1–6

Hebrews 13.1 is the start of a new section on appropriate Christian behaviour. From v. 7 the attention is on proper conduct in relation to church leaders and correct doctrine, but verses 1–6 address practical moral matters within the community.[47] Many elements of this text mirror those of Romans 12.9–13; some of the discussion above can serve, therefore, to illuminate the current passage. Again, the admonitions are headed by an exhortation to φιλαδελφία (v. 1) which, as we have seen, is primarily a practical admonition.[48] As

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[46] Dodd, *Romans*, 199.

[47] Those treating vv. 1–6 as a distinct unit include: Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972); Johnson, *Hebrews*, although for him the section extends to v. 7; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991); Ceslas Spicq, *L'Epitre aux Hébreux*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Gabalda, 1953); Brooke F. Wescott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Macmillan, 1928). For a different structure, see Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

[48] For the same point with specific relation to this verse, see Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 510. For a similar argument to our analysis, see William L. Lane, "Unexpected Light on Hebrews 13: 1–6 from a Second Century Source," *Perspectives in Religious Study* 9 (1982): 267–74.

such it is illustrated by commands to hospitality and the care of those in prison or otherwise mistreated (v. 2).[49] The choice of many English versions to translate φιλοξενία as "hospitality to strangers" [50] is an over-translation – the word is simply "hospitality," [51] a key concern for the early Christian communities.[52] The costs of hospitality have been described above. As to visiting prisoners, one of the key purposes of such visits in antiquity was to deliver food. Craig Wansink's study has collected substantial evidence to suggest that, although there are some exceptions, for most people prison food was both meagre and often inedible.[53]

The primary moral threat to any community practising such mutual generosity was greed; hence it is natural for the author to address the topic in verses 4–5.[54] An appeal for sexual chastity in v. 4 supports our analysis, as Johnson demonstrates:

> Ancient moralists, indeed, grasped the moral connection between sexual incontinence and greed. Both pointed to disordered or excessive desires. Both

[49] It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the reference to entertaining angels.
[50] So ESV, NIV, NAS, NJB, NRSV.
[51] So NAB, NET. So also BAGD; Arterbury, *Hospitality*, 107; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 386; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 694; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 399.
[52] E.g., Rom. 12.13; 16.23; 1 Tim. 5.10; 1 Pet. 4.9; 3 John 5–8; 1 Clem 10.7–12.1.
[53] Craig S. Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments*, JSNTSup 130 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 63–65.
[54] Contra, e.g., Donald Guthrie, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 266, who considers the whole of 13.1–25 "a series of apparently disconnected exhortations." The analysis above shows that at least vv. 1–6 form a cohesive unit.

> led to reckless behaviour destructive of proper human relationships [and consequently the rupture of *philadelphia*]. We are not surprised, therefore, to see statements on sexual and economic behaviour standing side by side as they do in Heb 13:4–5, because the same combination occurs in other New Testament texts (Luke 16:9–18; 1 Cor 5:1–6:11; Eph 5:3–5; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:3–7).[55]

Thus, the concern with sexual conduct does not intimate that this is a random collection of admonitions, but rather that the kind of behaviour threatened by greed (material sharing) has been in view since v. 1. On verses 5–6 it is interesting to note that the reason the church may avoid greed is theological: God's companionship and provision underwrites the ability of his people to be generous with their possessions. In Hebrews 13.1–6, then, we have another concrete example of where brotherly love is conceived of, primarily, as consisting of practical acts of material sharing. It may be more than this, but it cannot be less.[56]

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[55] Johnson, *Hebrews*, 34.

[56] A final, more tentative, exegetical comment on this passage is to note 13.15–17. These three verses seem to provide something of a summation prior to a personal request and benediction. This summary includes worship of God (15) material sharing (16) and appropriate behaviour towards leaders (17). Prior to 13.1–6 we have an exhortation to worship of God, and following it commands regarding leaders. If, then, 13.15–17 function as a summation of what has immediately preceded, then within it vv. 1–6 are abbreviated to mutual sharing and doing good, which gives further evidence that this is in fact what those verses are mainly concerned with.

5.2.5. Galatians 6.10

Galatians 6.10 falls in a section of exhortation about the desired character of the church's communal life. Money matters have already arisen in 6.6, where Paul commands that the teachers should receive material support from the community. In this final, summative verse, Paul commands the Galatians:

> Αρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.

Here Paul clearly connects responsibility to 'do the good' with the conception of the church as the household of God. The key point to establish, then, is what is meant by 'doing the good.' Longenecker has recently mounted an impressive argument about care for the poor in Galatians which includes treatment of this verse. His most important point (for understanding this verse) is that 'to do the good' is "(virtually) technical terminology in the ancient world for bestowing material benefits on others." [57] As such, that this exhortation included an appeal for material generosity would have been obvious. Furthermore, such a reading makes sense in the context of the whole letter. As Longenecker argues,

> The exhortations to 'do good' in 6:9–10 are not an indication that Paul's moral vision here has reached 'the utmost point of generality,' as commentators occasionally suggest. Instead, those exhortations have moved more in the direction of specificity. That is, the apostolic stipulation that gentile Christians

[57] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 142. For some of the epigraphic evidence, see Winter, *Welfare*, 33–36.

> should remember the poor is reinforced by Paul in the final verses of 5:13–6:10… That apostolic exhortation arcs outwards to its final grounding point in the very culmination of Paul's theologizing prior to his epistolary postscript.[58]

To a large extent the acceptance of Longenecker's argument may rest in what one makes of his overall case for care of the poor in Paul's communities; this study finds it compelling, particularly at this point, for although 'doing the good' may encompass more than financial generosity,[59] it cuts against the historical and social context to ignore this aspect.[60]

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[58] Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 215.

[59] So, e.g., Ronald Y.K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), who argues that the term encompasses "'sowing to the Spirit'… and all that is implied by that term" (296), which for him includes financial generosity.

[60] I do not engage here with Hurtado's argument that Paul is referring to the Jerusalem collection in these verses (and 2.10). For our purposes the debate makes no difference – if Paul is not, the above case still stands, and if he is referring to the collection then we have an equally good example of where financial generosity is linked with fictive-kinship metaphors. See Larry W. Hurtado, "The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians," *JSNT* 5 (1979): 46–62. Commentators that allow Paul's appeal here to include material support include: Ernest D.W. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921), 346–47; James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1993), who also links the ideas of mutual material responsibility and church-as family. Hans D. Betz, *A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), makes no mention of a reference to material sharing here, arguing that it refers to the previously stated fruit of the spirit. Obviously, this does not have to be antithetical to material generosity.

5.2.6. 1 John 3.17

The section of 1 John in which this verse falls is dominated by the conception of church-as-family. John finishes a discussion on sin (3.4–9) by claiming that no-one 'born of God' (γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) can keep sinning. Verse 10 transitions the epistle to a new focus on brotherly love by claiming that one cannot be a child of God without both practising righteousness and loving one's brother. It is on this theme that the following verses (3.11–18) are centred. The discussion is not about abstract or general love, but specifically brotherly love. Cain is presented as the antitype – one who hated his brother (3.12); John's audience, in contrast, is to pursue true brotherly love, the content of which is explicated in verses 16–18.[61] John's first claim is that brothers should lay down their lives for each other (16) in imitation of Jesus. Of particular interest to this study is his second claim that "if anyone has the world's goods (τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου) and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (17). The phrase τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου clearly refers to material possessions[62] and the rest of the verse to the expectation that they should be shared with brothers in need. The practical emphasis is confirmed by v. 18 which requires love "in deed (ἐν

[61] So also A.E. Brooke, *The Johannine Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 95.
[62] So, e.g., Ibid.; Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, AB (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1982), 474–75; Robert W. Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 203.

ἔργῳ) and truth." Here, then, in a section of the epistle clearly focused on the brotherly love required of the community, the most specific command concerns the sharing of material goods, surely indicating its central importance for John in his understanding of the familial love that should characterize the community.

5.2.7. 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 and 1 Timothy 5.3–16

These passages are treated at length in the following chapters and it would be superfluous to present any analysis here. Nonetheless they must be mentioned here as key texts supporting my synthetic argument. To briefly anticipate my conclusions, both texts *do* link issues of material generosity with the conception of the church-as-family. In 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 the whole discussion is about the proper application of φιλαδελφία; in 1 Timothy 5.3–16 the author constantly references the material responsibilities of both the natural *oikos* and the *oikos* of God.

5.2.8. Indicative references

The texts above represent the *clearest* evidence for claiming that the metaphorical conception of the church as a family had concrete implications in the realm of material sharing and solidarity; they do not, though, represent the *only* places where such a conception may be present. What remains is to briefly indicate other passages where church-as-family may be linked to material solidarity and generosity. Whether a link in any of these texts is accepted will

likely depend on how one evaluates my main thesis – thus they are offered as correlative texts, rather than central evidence.

Hellerman points out that in 1 Corinthians 6.1–8 Paul considers that church members taking legal action against one another is shameful: "A so called brother who wrongs or defrauds a member of his own family through recourse to the Greco-Roman legal system is no true brother at all."[63] Certainly, the prominence of ἀδελφός language and its emphatic nature (particularly v. 8) seem to confirm his observation; Paul's rhetorical question in v. 7 ("why not rather be defrauded" [ἀποστερεῖσθε]) indicates that financial matters were what was at issue. Greco-Roman culture considered it shameful to take family members to court (although this clearly happened).[64] Here, therefore, is another example of where the Christian kin were to act in accordance with the norms for a Greco-Roman family, in relation to their finances.[65]

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[63] Hellerman, *Church as Family*, 104.

[64] See: Grubbs, "Pietas," 377–92; Burke, *Family Matters*, 107.

[65] Although this argument is sound, Hellerman is not convincing when he claims that the section of 2 Corinthians on the collection (chap. 8–9) represents another example where church-as-family is related to material support. Hellerman points to "the density of kinship terminology in 2 Corinthians 8–9" and argues that "Paul at this point in his argument is particularly aware of the need to provoke his readers to behavior consonant with the Mediterranean family values that he shares with the Corinthians" (111). He sees this playing out in both an expectation of reciprocity (the Corinthians should donate to the collection), trust of those administrating the collection (for you should trust your brothers) and comparative motivation (the Macedonians have given, and they are your brothers – you should do the same). However, after the vocative in 8.1 Paul only uses ἀδελφός language to refer to specific believers who are going to come to the Corinthians (8.23); here ἀδελφοί is used to designate whom Paul is talking about – at no point in the passage does it have a motivating function, unlike in 1

In 2 Corinthians 11.9 Paul mentions that the Macedonian *brothers* have provided for his needs; similarly, in Acts 11.29 the church in Antioch determined to send material relief to the brothers in Judea. The references are in passing and do not allow for causal connections, but they are worth noting. In 2 Corinthians 12.14–15 Paul remarks that he will refuse to require money from the Corinthians, and appeals to the common practice of parents and children; again, the connection between financial concerns and familial matters occurs, if not in a way that further advances my argument.

5.3. Summary

It is true, as Harland has written, that "it is extremely difficult to measure the relative importance or depth of meaning attached to such familial language in specific instances."[66] This section has

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Corinthians 6.1–8. One can agree with Hellerman that Paul is asking the Corinthians to take action that is in keeping with familial behaviour, but the fictive family is not appealed to in order to justify, motivate or exhort such behaviour here. In fact, contra Hellerman, this is the most pressing objection to my argument – if Paul's communities *did* conceive of themselves as having family obligations to one another, why does he not appeal explicitly to that here, in his longest and most desperate attempt to motivate financial generosity in any of his epistles? Perhaps the best solution was suggested by John Barclay in private conversation – that as the Corinthians had never met the Jerusalem believers, attempting to motivate generosity by appealing to their fictive kinship may have been a bit weightless and required the Corinthians to behave in accordance with a very abstract conception. Paul's approach may have been different if he was motivating generosity amongst the Corinthian community itself.

[66] Harland, *Identity*, 80. He was talking about fictive kinship in associations more broadly, but the point is true.

attempted to present the evidence as to whether the characterisation of the Church in familial or *oikos* metaphors included any concrete expectations for the church to act practically in the manner of the Greco-Roman family with regard to material solidarity and generosity.[67] From the summary data of fictive kinship language, it was noted that the *redefinition* of the family, whilst not totally removing natural family obligations, may indicate a more significant social reality than language of a mere *additional* family. Such is also suggested by the sheer amount, variety and saturation of kinship language across all New Testament authors. Secondly, several key New Testament texts that link church-as-family with the kind of material mutuality that characterised an ideal *oikos* have been surveyed. Moreover, these examples come from across the New Testament: Mark's Gospel, Pauline epistles, Hebrews, 1 John and the pastoral epistles. This is the strongest evidence that the conception of the church as a family *did* have financial implications, and that such an understanding was widespread in the early church.[68] Added to this are numerous other texts where such ideas are implied or suggested, without being made explicit.

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[67] This is not to claim that every Greco-Roman family did fulfil the ideal. See Meggitt, *Poverty*, who argues that "the first recourse in time of need, the kinship group, was a structure that, for many urban dwellers, was neither extensive nor intensive enough for it to be particularly beneficial" (169). We may accept this without problematizing our thesis, which relates to the cultural value rather than the extent of its fulfilment.

[68] The motivating connection between fictive kinship and material mutuality, which is present in the first century, continues into the second century, on which see Timothy J. Murray, "Wealth Ethics and Christian Identity in Second-Century

5.4. Implications: fictive-kinship and material solidarity as restricted generosity.

If, as has been argued, the fictive-kinship of the early church reflects a self-perception that expected members of the church to provide for one another's material needs as a family duty, we see here a clear difference between the generosity owed to one's brother or sister, and that owed to the outsider. This is explicit in verses that make a distinction between doing good to the community and to outsiders (Galatians 6.10; 1 Thessalonians 5.15). In both cases, although good to both is commanded, there is a clear priority first to aid fellow believers. It is striking that outside of the gospels, of the thirty (by my count) places where material generosity is either encouraged, commanded or described, twenty clearly refer to giving to other believers.[69] Of the remaining ten, one relates to the generosity of Cornelius (not yet a Christian),[70] and in another seven the reference is ambiguous – it could refer to generosity to other Christians or to any needy.[71] The final two

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Christian Communities" (MRes diss., University of Nottingham, 2014). So too David J. Downs, *Alms: Charity, Reward, and Atonement in Early Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 275: "numerous appeals for the sharing of resources reflect the aim of creating, strengthening, or demonstrating communal solidarity through practices of mutual assistance."

[69] Acts 2.44–45, 4.32–32, 6.1–7, 11.27; Rom 12.8–13, 15.25–27; 1 Cor 16.1–4; 2 Cor 8–9; Gal 6.6; Eph 1.15; Phil 4.15–19; 1 Thess 4.9–12, 5.13; 2 Thess 3.6–15, 1 Tim 5.3–16, 5.17; Heb 13.1–3; Jas 2.15–16; 1 Pet 4.9; 1 John 3.17.

[70] Acts 10.2, 4, 31.

[71] Acts 20.35; 1 Cor 13.3; Gal 2.10; Eph 4.28; 1 Tim 6.18; Heb 13.16; Jas 1.27. Even in these texts, a strong case can be made in each that they have insiders primarily in mind.

occasions are those cited above which clearly refer to both the community and those beyond. We can see, then, that the evidence indicates the early church restricted its generosity in the following ways: 1) There was a difference of *priority* between insiders and outsiders: one's first priority was to meet the needs of the family of believers. 2) There was a difference in *the nature* of generosity expected; one was obligated to support fellow church members with family-like solidarity, whereas when outsiders are in view generosity is conceived of as charity.[72] This, then, is the first restriction on early-Christian generosity: the level of material generosity was restricted in relation to whether the recipient was a member of the fictive-family or an outsider:[73] the former was owed demanding *oikos* solidarity; the latter, where addressed (and this is

[72] How this phenomenon relates to the Jesus tradition is a very interesting question that is unfortunately too far beyond the scope of this study. Briefly, we may suggest some correlation between my conclusions here and the following aspects of the Jesus tradition: 1) The redefinition of the family around Jesus (5.1); 2) Some evidence that Jesus and his inner-disciples shared their resources (John 12.6, 13.29; Luke 8. 1–3); 3) the contrast of promises made to disciples, primarily Mark 10.28–31 and parallels, with general exhortations to almsgiving for those outside. The question is complicated by the Jewish context of Jesus' ministry in contrast to the Greco-Roman context of many of the New Testament epistles.

[73] A large volume of essays has recently been released on outsider-insider dynamics in the early church: J. Kok et al., eds., *Sensitivity towards Outsiders*, WUNT 2.364 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). Although the editors note the significance of the "alternative kinship family" in the early church's self-perception, none of the contributions addresses the significance of this self-perception for material generosity. Stephan Joubert's contribution to the volume ("Homo Reciprocus No More: The 'Missional' Nature of Faith in James" [382–400]) seems to presume that James envisages no difference between the generosity offered to outsiders and insiders; I consider the text to indicate otherwise.

much less often than might be thought), is owed charity, but only after the needs of the family have been met.[74]

[74] The amount of resources any given local church may have had depends on one's reconstruction of the socio-economic status of the early Christians (see Chapter 2 n. 108). Unless one assumes a considerable number of fairly wealthy church members, or a very small number of poor ones, one wonders how much surplus would plausibly be left after caring for internal needs.

Chapter 6

6. Restricted Generosity in the Thessalonian Correspondence

Both letters to the Thessalonians wrestle with a problem in the church that was related to the nature and limits of material generosity (most clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12, 5.14–15, 2 Thessalonians 3.6–16). The quantity of relevant material presents a rare opportunity to analyse both what *was* going on at Thessalonica and what the authors[1] of the epistles envisaged *should have been* going on; we are able to glimpse both ethics and ethos-as-lived. Furthermore, the extended treatment allows us to establish not only the ethical imperative, but something of the authors' ethical reasoning, both explicated and implied.

This chapter will begin by dealing with methodoligcal prolegomena and summarising the main current reconstructions of the problem. It will then analyse the ethics of the relevant texts before using this exegesis to evaluate the different interpretive options. The two important arguments made in this chapter are: 1)

[1] I refer to 'the authors' rather than 'Paul' when discussing the letters not because I consider them non-Pauline but to draw attention to their co-authorship as a contribution to advancing recognition of the research of Richards and others discussed in the following section on authenticity. However, when summarising the work of other scholars, their preferred term is retained, whether that be to Paul or an anonymous author.

that of the main interpretations, the evidence best supports those who see the problem as related to 'missional privilege'; however, I suggest that even this may be an overspecification and propose a minimalist solution: the problem as the simple abuse of φιλαδελφία. 2) Most significantly, the authors' solution to the problem – restricting generosity in the Thessalonian church – is related to the self-conception of the church as a family;[2] those who refuse to play their part in the fictive-family of the church should be denied the family benefit of material support. This supports the central argument of my thesis.

6.1. The authenticity of, and relationship between, 1 and 2 Thessalonians

The major methodological decision that must be made prior to investigating the texts is whether or not to take the two Thessalonian letters as addressing the same problem in the same community (allowing for developments between the epistles). If one does so, it is not only possible but necessary to use the information in both epistles to reconstruct the situation. The decision must account for two scholarly disputes: the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians and the order of the epistles.[3] In a thesis of this

[2] On the overwhelming amount of fictive-kinship language in 1 Thessalonians see, e.g., Burke, *Family Matters* and Malherbe, "God's New Family," *passim*.
[3] The authenticity of 1 Thessalonians was first denied by K. Schrader and F.C. Baur in the nineteenth century, but their arguments have been overwhelmingly rejected and the authenticity of the first epistle accepted. See, e.g., Gene L.

nature it is not possible to rehearse and engage with all the arguments that are dealt with in the commentaries and introductions; my more modest aim is to indicate and justify my position: that 2 Thessalonians is authentic and was written after 1 Thessalonians.

Arguments against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians can be classified as literary and theological objections.[4] The most influential literary argument has been that made by William Wrede in 1903,[5] where he argued that the close similarity of the two epistles in structure, content and style can only be explained by a pseudonymous author imitating the first letter.[6] Wolfgang Trilling gave the case against authenticity greater breadth and detail in his 1972 monograph,[7] and the enduring influence of the arguments of these two scholars is such that they are still appealed to in contemporary scholarship, in expanded or modified form, to argue for inauthenticity.[8] Theological objections to the authenticity of 2

Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 55–56.

[4] These are the weight-bearing categories in the well-known article of John A. Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?," *NTS* 25 (1979): 131–45. So also, e.g., Gary S. Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 28–29.

[5] *Die Echtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbrief untersucht* (Leipzig: Henrichs).

[6] So, e.g., Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 19; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1972), 50–51.

[7] *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief* (Leipzig: St Benno).

[8] See, e.g., Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2007), 20–25.

Thessalonians go back much further, to J.E.C. Schmidt in 1798.[9] Most often, the main problem is considered to be the eschatology of the respective letters, which is seen as incompatible.[10] I consider the case for inauthenticity unconvincing for the following four reasons:

First, as scholars on both sides admit, the case against authenticity is essentially cumulative, as no single argument is considered strong enough when viewed in isolation from others.[11] This has necessitated detailed responses, of a point-by-point nature, from those who seek to defend the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians. Over the years, the most compelling of these have come from Béda Rigaux, Howard Marshall, Charles Wanamaker and Abraham Malherbe.[12] As their work demonstrates, many of the literary arguments are built on marginal statistical evidence and the theological 'differences' rest on contestable or unpersuasive exegesis. At many points, supposed problems "could all be explained by an adequate analysis of the congregational situation as it evolved between the two letters."[13] The cumulative case

[9] Best, *Thessalonians*, 50.
[10] See esp. discussion in Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, AB (New Haven: YUP, 2000), 368–69.
[11] E.g., for a summary case against authenticity, see Maarten J.J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians* (London: Routledge, 1994), 27–43.
[12] Béda Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les Épitres aux Thessaloniciens* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1956); I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*.
[13] Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 16.

against authenticity can be *prima face* intimidating but, when subject to detailed examination, its weaknesses are exposed; unless at least some of the individual points are persuasive in themselves, we should not be persuaded by the multiplication of unconvincing arguments.[14]

Second, many of the literary arguments concerning parallels with 1 Thessalonians or Pauline/non-Pauline stylistic features, vocabulary and expressions have been shown to be increasingly insignificant by more sophisticated stylistic analysis in the modern era.[15] Not only this, but all literary arguments lose much of their force when one considers the process of letter-writing in the first century. Recent work in this area by Randolph Richards presents a substantially different picture from that assumed by many who have engaged in the debate.[16] Richards shows that the evidence of first-century letter writing indicates that Paul's co-authors would have contributed to the content of the letters (32–46, 109–121); Paul would have used a secretary, who would have influenced the style, syntax and vocabulary of the letter (59–93, 141–155); a letter would

[14] So also Marshall, *Thessalonians*; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 238.
[15] Paul Foster, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians? A Fresh Look at an Old Problem," *JSNT* 35 (2012): 150–75, argues that 2 Thessalonians is at least as likely to be authentic, on stylistic grounds, as 1 Thessalonians and Philippians.
[16] E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004); id., *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, WUNT 2.42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). For earlier work on the practice of letter writing in the ancient world, see esp. Otto Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933).

probably have gone through a number of drafts (55–58 and *passim*); letters often included material drawn from another context or written at another time (109–121); Paul would likely have kept copies of his letters, enabling him to draw on what he had already written (210–223). Richards is aware of the implications of his work: "debate over Pauline authorship or arguments for interpolations (or dislocations), discussions of rhetoric, all need to be informed by a realistic appraisal of first-century letter writing."[17] These conclusions require a significant shift in debates about authenticity; they undermine all arguments that merely attempt to show some kind of differentiation of style, vocabulary, syntax or structure in 2 Thessalonians. Menken dismisses the importance of such research, but in doing so shows that he has not fully understood it:

> Is this literary dependence [between 1 and 2 Thessalonians] conceivable when Paul is the author of 2 Thessalonians?... One has to presuppose at least that Paul kept a copy of 1 Thessalonians (which is not impossible), but it is rather uncommon for an author to write a second letter to the same addressee which is so remarkably alike the first one, even when he did so using a secretary. Besides, there is the striking point that precisely the more 'personal' parts of 1 Thessalonians (in 2.1–3.10) have not been used in the composition of 2 Thessalonians. In fact, the parts of 1 Thessalonians that are most clearly paralleled in 2 Thessalonians are the more general or formulaic sections of the letter."[18]

[17] Richards, *Letter Writing*, 32.
[18] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 39–40.

Allowing, for a moment, that the similarities between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are as close as Menken believes them to be, the final two sentences of this quote miss the point. If Paul had used a secretary, it is precisely the more general or formulaic sections that he is likely to delegate, rather than the sections which are more 'personal.' It is relatively likely that Paul might have asked a member of his team, or the secretary, to compose an introductory greeting; it is relatively unlikely that he would have made the same request for direct personal appeals. Such comments demonstrate that existing research on first-century letter writing has yet to have the influence it should in debates about authenticity.

Third, although Gordon Fee's discussion of the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is brief, he has pointed out that "the writing of a commentary on this letter in and of itself tends to push one towards authenticity";[19] those favouring inauthenticity are generally not commentators.[20] His contention is that if one closely analyses the details of the letters, there are phenomena that "seem to push forgery beyond the bounds of ordinary historical probability."[21] Fee himself offers a sampling of ten exegetical insights; even more

[19] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 237.
[20] He notes that in English scholarship only the commentary of Earl Richard has interpreted 2 Thessalonians as inauthentic in the last century and a half (237). The majority of scholarship in favour of inauthenticity, though, is continental. Even this is a relatively recent development among continental commentators; in 1979 Bailey, "II Thessalonians," could write that "to date no single commentary has appeared in any major European language which interprets II Thessalonians as pseudonymous" (9).
[21] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 238.

impressive is the comprehensive commentary of Malherbe, which repeatedly argues along the same lines.

Finally, those who argue for forgery are yet to overcome the problem of how 2 Thessalonians would have entered circulation as a genuine Pauline letter. It is hard to see how such a forgery could have gained acceptance within Paul's lifetime, when he and his co-workers were still active.[22] Members of the Thessalonian church would remember Paul well and be able to compare Paul's signature on the first letter to the 'second.' For such reasons, those asserting inauthenticity usually place the letter towards the end of the first century.[23] However this is problematic – surely a letter whose delivery was delayed by forty years or so would raise suspicions, particularly when it draws attention itself to the problem of forgery? How would such a letter enter circulation? It must have been able to convince the Thessalonian church, who would presumably still have had 1 Thessalonians available; as Malherbe comments, "it would have been difficult for 2 Thessalonians to escape the notice of the church to which it was addressed."[24] Regarding the letter itself, the most challenging problem is stated nicely by Fee: "what is perhaps the most significant feature of all regarding this letter is the fact that its author has a thoroughgoing acquaintance with, and

[22] Conceded by, e.g., Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 65.
[23] E.g., Wrede, *Thessalonicherbrief*, 67–69; Wolfgang Trilling, *Der Zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Zürich: Benziger, 1980), 28–29; Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 66. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 28–29, fails to propose a date, which serves him well in ignoring this problem.
[24] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 374.

use of, language and terms from the first letter, but knew next to nothing, if anything at all, of the Paul of the later letters."[25]

Given the strength of the arguments above it seems entirely reasonable to proceed assuming the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians; this is not a minority position[26] and seems entirely more defensible than to assume inauthenticity. Surveying the debate, it seems, as N.T. Wright has commented, that "the prejudice [against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians] has lingered on long after the scholarly mood has shifted."[27] It is expected that the decision taken here will be further bolstered by the coherence of the exegetical work that follows.

Regarding the order of the epistles, the overwhelming majority of scholars consider the canonical order also to be the chronological order. However there have been exceptions;[28] the strongest case is generally considered to be that of Thomas Manson,[29] which has been further advanced more recently by Wanamaker. I find the

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[25] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 240.
[26] Foster, "2 Thessalonians," demonstrates how many important Pauline scholars now hold the epistle as authentic. This can even be seen among some German scholarship. See, e.g., Roland Deines, "Revelatory Experiences as the Beginning of Scripture: Paul's Letters and the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible," in *From Author to Copyist: Essays on the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Zipi Talshir*, ed. C. Werman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 333; Fritz W. Röcker, *Belial und Katechon: Eine Untersuchung zu 2Thess 2, 2–12 Und 1Thess 4, 13–5, 11*, WUNT 2.262 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 223–33; Traugott Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKKNT, XIII (Zurich: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1986), 277f.
[27] N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013), 1.61.
[28] For bibliography, see Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 38.
[29] Thomas W. Manson, "St Paul in Greece: The Letters to the Thessalonians," *BJRL* 35 (March 1952): 428–47.

argument unconvincing and follow, e.g., Marshall, Jewett and Malherbe in preferring the traditional order:[30] not only is the reference to a previous letter in 2 Thessalonians 2.15 strong evidence in favour of this conclusion, despite Wanamaker's objections, but furthermore the heavy emphasis on Paul's time in Thessalonica through the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians makes best sense if it is his first correspondence with that church. In summary then, this thesis takes both letters as Pauline, with 2 Thessalonians written shortly after 1 Thessalonians; the material in the two epistles is therefore mutually informative in reconstructing what was happening in Thessalonica and analysing the authors' response.[31]

6.2. The Problem in Thessalonica

There is a consensus about the problem when stated in its most basic form: some members of the community were not working and were instead being maintained by others. There is also common acknowledgement that the issue is linked with the ἄτακτοι ('the disorderly' [1 Thessalonains 5.14; 2 Thessalonians 3.6, 11]) and that Paul appeals to his own example in his response. Beyond this, matters are disputed, particularly *why* such a situation arose in the

[30] Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 25–26; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 21–30; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 361–64.
[31] Those sharing these conclusions include: Beale, Best, Bicknell, Bruce, Fee, Green, Malherbe, Marshall, Morris, Neil, Rigaux, Shogren and Witherington.

Thessalonian church. Previous research on the cause of the problem may be categorised into three main interpretations: eschatological beliefs, social dynamics and missional privilege.

6.2.1. Eschatological beliefs

Historically, the most popular of the three options is the claim that inordinate eschatological expectation or an over-realised eschatology is the reason some members of the Thessalonian congregation were refusing to work, although this view has lost traction in recent years.[32] Although the exact reconstruction varies between scholars, the contours of their discussions are near-identical. An incorrect eschatological belief, either that Christ's return is imminent, or that it has already come, leads to the rejection of the activities of normal life. To take Menken as an example:

> In early Jewish and Christian apocalypticism as it was current at the beginning of our era, absence of hunger, thirst and labour belongs to the blessings of the new era. Or, to put it positively: those who will participate in the coming age will have plenty of food and drink, and will enjoy freedom from labour…

[32] Commentators who favour this position include: Beale, Best, Bicknel, Bruce, Morris, Marshall (although with reservations), Marxsen, Menken, Neil, Rigaux and Whitley. So also Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "How You Must Walk to Please God: Holiness and Discipleship in 1 Thessalonians," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. R.N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 98–119, 114–15. For more bibliography, see Fee, *Thessalonians*, 157. An overview of the history of this line of interpretation can be found in Ronald Russell, "The Idle in 2 Thess 3.6–12: An Eschatological or a Social Problem?," *NTS* 34 (1988): 105–19, 105–6. John M.G. Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 512–30, could also join this list, although we deal with his argument in our third category. Similar to Barclay is Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 105.

> When Christ has returned, the restoration of Paradise and the annulment of the curse of Genesis 3.17–19 are being realized or will be very soon: therefore, there is no need to work any more, in toil and trouble, for a living.[33]

Other scholars opt for a heightened expectation of the parousia rather than the belief it had arrived,[34] but the argument is much the same.[35]

This position faces many serious objections. First and foremost, in neither 1 nor 2 Thessalonians do the authors address the problem of the disorderly by referring to eschatological beliefs.[36] They neither connect the two issues nor appeal to their eschatology to resolve the behavioural problems, which is very strange if the two are linked. Moreover, in 1 Thessalonians the discussion of brotherly love and work is separated from the discussion of the arrival of the day of the Lord both by 4.13–18 and the transitional περὶ δέ in 5.1. In 2 Thessalonians, the division between the two discussions is even more marked, separated by a thanksgiving (2.13–14), instruction (2.15), and prayers (2.16–3.5). There is therefore no internal evidence in favour of a link between these topics; the burden of proof falls on those who see them as intertwined to

[33] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 139–40. His argument can also be found in Maarten J.J. Menken, "Paradise Regained or Still Lost? Eschatology and Disorderly Behaviour in 2 Thessalonians," *NTS* 38 (1992): 271–89. Jewett's thesis arguing that the Thessalonian church should be understood as a radical Millenarian church could also be cited here.
[34] E.g., Gregory K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, IVPNTCS (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 128; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 117.
[35] For fine distinctions, see Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 253–54.
[36] So also Green, *Thessalonians*, 209; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 253.

explain why the authors would talk extensively about both issues yet fail to connect them in either epistle. Second, this view cannot be justified on the basis of 1 Thessalonians alone, for in it the authors emphasise the imminence and unexpectedness of the parousia (5.1–11), an odd approach if an exaggerated eschatology in this direction was the cause of the church's problems. It may even be that their emphasis here caused some of the trouble later addressed in 2 Thessalonians.[37] If one wishes, then, to argue that the problem in 2 Thessalonians 3.6–15 is due to such false beliefs, one must either totally separate the issue from 1 Thessalonians or explain why similar behaviour was also present prior to the adoption of problematic eschatology. Finally, the problem of the disorderly seems to relate to a group within the Thessalonian church rather than the totality. If their behaviour was caused by eschatological beliefs held widely within the church, as is the case in most of the reconstructions cited above, one is hard pressed to explain why only a minority of the church adopted the troublesome behaviours.[38]

6.2.2. Social dynamics

In recent decades, some reconstructions have explained the problem by appealing to the social context of the Thessalonian church. Perhaps the view which has gained the greatest traction is

[37] As argued by Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 253 and *passim.*
[38] So Russell, "Idle in 2 Thess 3.6–12," 110.

that which was first argued by Bruce Winter in 1989;[39] it has since been defended in commentaries by Gene Green and Ben Witherington. The pillars of Winter's argument are as follows: (1) it is historically likely that members of the Thessalonian church acted as clients and/or patrons in their daily lives (*Welfare*, 45–7); (2) Paul's insistence on supporting himself was primarily in order to avoid entering the complicated web of obligations that client-patron relationships established (47); (3) 1 Thessalonians 4.11, particularly ἡσυχάζειν and πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, should be understood as an instruction to clients to stop being involved in the public affairs of their patrons (48–51); (4) by working instead of functioning as clients, the Thessalonians would have been rendered independent of patrons (1 Thess. 4.12); (5) the intensification of the problem in 2 Thessalonians should be explained by the famine of 51 CE which would have thrust many in the church into patronage relationships to obtain affordable grain. These relationships appear to have continued once the crisis had passed (53–57). Winter therefore argues that the driving motivation in Paul's instruction was to abolish patron-client relationships as behaviour inappropriate for Christians. Green follows Winter's argument,

[39] Bruce W. Winter, "'If a Man Does Not Wish to Work...' A Cultural and Historical Setting for 2 Thessalonians 3:6–16," *TynBul* 40 (1989): 303–15, later expanded and reproduced in Winter, *Welfare*, 41–60. In 1988 Russell, "Idle in 2 Thess 3.6–12," postulated patron-client relationships as the social context of Paul's instructions, but he suggested that the new Christians transferred their reliance away from existing patrons and on to the church (113). It is Winter's formulation that has proved influential; see also Clarke, *Serve*, 199–201.

concluding: "What the apostle warns against is becoming dependent as well as disruptive members of society whose reputation in no way enhances the gospel."[40]

Problems also confront this interpretive paradigm. First, again, there is no explicit link in the texts to patronage – why do the authors not mention patronage at any point in either epistle if this is their primary concern?[41] Second, Winter's argument that the problem was exacerbated by a famine does not explain why some were not willing to work,[42] but it is precisely the 'will' to work that the authors are concerned with – if it is just an inability to earn sufficiently, the authors' instructions are hardly conducive to solving the problem.[43] Third, Winter's argument is, at points, convoluted and not entirely coherent. One example is that Winter confidently asserts that the Thessalonians were drawn from a "moderately high social register" (45). However, the evidence for this is that they were able to serve as clients (the truly poor had little to offer patrons) – surely a case of assuming what one seeks to prove. Assuming Winter is right, together with his claim that it is "essential to assume the presence of a few patrons whose houses were large enough to serve as centres for the church" (47), one wonders whether such a congregation would have suffered from a

[40] Green, *Thessalonians*, 213.
[41] Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 172.
[42] So also Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 138.
[43] As Winter himself argues with respect to Russell's suggestions. Winter, *Welfare*, 43–44.

grain shortage to such a "crippling" (56) extent as he later suggests. At times, Winter seems to consider the patronage relationships as likely to have been primarily between those within and outside the church (45–51); at other points, he seems to consider them primarily between members of the church, especially occurring as a result of the famine (56). Furthermore, the injunction of 2 Thessalonians 3.10 assumes that the church was able to withdraw support of the 'clients.' If this was the case then the patrons must have been within the church as well. If patronage was a mutually beneficial exchange, as Winter himself argues, why are the authors not more direct in their instructions to the patrons? The entire passage would have to be taken as aimed at the more dependent clients. Finally, as Callia Rulmu has pointed out,[44] Winter argues that a client who withdrew from reliance on a patron would earn his respect,[45] which seems incongruous with Winter's recognition that patrons depended on large clienteles for honour and power (45).

Other scholars have suggested different social dynamics as causative of the problem. As previously mentioned (see n. 39 of this chapter), Ronald Russell presented a thesis similar to Winter's, but less developed, arguing that a lack of work forced members into patronage relationships.[46] Again, this does not explain the problem the authors address – the unwillingness to work. In his earlier work,

[44] "Between Ambition and Quietism: The Socio-Political Background of 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12," *Biblica* 91 (2010): 393–417, 394 n.11.
[45] Winter, "Historical Setting," 309.
[46] Russell, "Idle in 2 Thess 3.6–12," 112–13.

Malherbe suggested that the problems addressed in 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 were caused by Epicurean tendencies in the Thessalonian community.[47] Malherbe argues that Epicureans attempted to withdraw from public life and had a negative perception of most occupations; converts had a tendency to "abandon their jobs" (104). That such influences were at play here is confirmed (for Malherbe) by the authors' language, which takes up Epicurean motifs and attempts to distinguish the Thessalonian church from Epicurean practices and dogma. However, if I have understood him correctly, he moves away from this position in his commentary, published in 2000. Without completely dispensing with his argument that Paul makes use of Epicurean terms to admonish the Thessalonians, he places much more weight on the practice of φιλαδελφία as the soil in which difficulties grew, a point we will return to. Certainly, he has not won any other adherents to his older theory.[48]

6.2.3. Missional privilege

The third category is the least widely held, although arguably it presents the fewest problems. In one form, it is best seen as a variation of the eschatological explanation detailed above. Barclay, for example, suggests that:

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[47] The idea was first proposed in "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," *ANRW* 26.1 (1992): 267–333. It is most clearly set out in *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophical Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1987), 101–6.

[48] For the difficulties in considering the early churches analogous to philosophical schools, see the introduction to Part 1.

> The most plausible explanation, one which takes into account the apocalyptic atmosphere in the church, lies in interpreting Paul's comments as directed at those who stop work in order to engage in something altogether more urgent: the preaching of the gospel.[49]

In his view, the imminence of the parousia caused believers to abandon work in order to engage in mission; as their hunger did not abate, they ended up claiming maintenance from other members of the church. Barclay considers that such Christian activity, brewing with apocalyptic fervour, would have been very provocative and contain "enormous potential for offense" (524), something the authors seek to mitigate.[50]

Perhaps the most comprehensive argument for this position is that defended by Gary Shogren in his recent commentary; by contrast with Barclay, he explicitly rejects eschatological fervour as contributing in any way to the problem. After summarising and rejecting previous explanations Shogren builds a constructive case to argue that "[the Thessalonians] emulated Paul and Silas by doing evangelistic work, but unlike them they asserted that they deserved support from the churches" (332):

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[49] Barclay, "Thessalonica," 522. Similarly, Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, 105. Barclay is followed by Burke, *Family Matters*, 214–24; Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 162–65.

[50] For commentators who have noted this possibility, without fully endorsing it, see bibliography in Barclay, "Thessalonica," 522. The idea that Paul is primarily concerned to prevent the Thessalonians provoking the authorities has been given a robust foundation by Rulmu, "Background."

> a. When Paul speaks of a work ethic, it is always in connection with his ministry and the model he gave them. In other words, he is not simply a pattern for *Christian behavior*, but more specifically for the *behaviour of Christians who evangelize*.
>
> b. Paul held to a specific ideal of self-support, which he applied to himself, Silas and Barnabas…
>
> c. The Thessalonians were noteworthy for being evangelistic, as demonstrated in 1 Thess 1–2… Paul's description of the apostles' work in 2:1–12 was not self-defense [*sic*], but rather to provide a model for the Thessalonians…
>
> d. In later Christian texts, one encounters a strong indication that the church had regular trouble with parasitical teachers who looked to the church for goods or money [citing Titus 1.7, 11; 1 Tim 3.3, 8; 6.5; 2 Tim 3.2; 2 Pet 2.3; Did 11.4–6; 12.4–5]. (333)

Finally, Shogren also argues that the term usually translated 'busybody' in 2 Thessalonians 3.11 (περιεργαζομένους) should be understood to refer to "prying inappropriately into divine matters" (328), a lexical sense he argues has been overlooked by other commentators. As well as avoiding the problems of the previous two interpretive paradigms, Shogren's argument has a number of strengths: He takes into account the repeated references to manual labour and the apostolic example throughout both epistles, presenting a coherent connection between this emphasis and the problem the authors are addressing; it explains the uncertainty of the Thessalonian church as to what to do and why the appeal for continued support had traction in the community; one can easily imagine how such a problem would grow over time and why the authors' response to it seems relatively restrained.

6.2.4. None of the above

Finally, we should mention those commentators whose views cannot easily fit into the three categories above.[51] Trilling considers the problem to be simple laziness, which the author responds to by making diligence and hard work the Christian work ethic.[52] In Wanamaker's treatment, he seems at first glance to opt for patron-client relationships as the problem (282, 286),[53] but his later comments introduce a complexity:

> The ultimate goal of people working quietly is that they should provide for themselves… and stop being a drain on the resources of either the community as a whole or more likely its wealthier members. Ironically, Paul's emphasis upon familial love and commitment among the members of the community may have given rise to the situation. (287)

Although Wanamaker clearly considers some variety of personal patronage his preferred interpretation, he has introduced here a slightly different possibility: that the φιλαδελφία espoused by Paul included practices that themselves could lead to the kind of problems faced in Thessalonica. This is a possibility also explored by Malherbe:

> In early Christian paraenesis, *philadelphia* and *agape* are expected to be expressed in a practical manner through the extension of hospitality… Given

[51] Fee, *Thessalonians*, declines to make a decision: "caution would seem to be the better part of wisdom on this matter" (157).
[52] Trilling, *Thessalonicher*, 151–52.
[53] His commentary was most likely completed, if not quite published, before Winter's article; otherwise one suspects Wanamaker may have been stronger on this point.

> the importance of hospitality in the life of the house churches Paul and others established the practice could easily become burdensome… especially to a church as remarkable for its communal love as the Thessalonian church was. It would be natural, even for this church, after extending hospitality for some months after its founding, to inquire of Paul whether brotherly love obligated them to give material aid without regard to a person's ability to secure his own livelihood.[54]

This interpretive approach has not been particularly well developed by any of our commentators and, for those who do begin to explore such ideas, many end up placing their emphasis on one of the other three options described above. This is not unreasonable, for it can coherently combine with elements of these other three options, but it can also stand independently of them and does not need to rely on any of them. I consider that this is the best understanding of the problem of the disorderly (without denying the 'missional privilege' interpretation as a possible corollary). However, rather than beginning my exegesis by proposing a reconstruction, I will start by analysing the implicit ethics of the relevant texts. Having done so, I will return to the main interpretive options and dicuss how my exegesis supports or undermines each one. This then clears the ground to allow us to summarise my preferred interpretation and the ethics of restricted generosity in the Thessalonian correspondence.

[54] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 255–56.

6.3. Implicit ethics in the Thessalonian correspondence

6.3.1. 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12

Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδελφίας
οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν,
αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοί ἐστε
εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους,
καὶ γὰρ ποιεῖτε αὐτὸ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς [τοὺς] ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ.
Παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,
περισσεύειν μᾶλλον
καὶ φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν
καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια
καὶ ἐργάζεσθαι ταῖς [ἰδίαις] χερσὶν ὑμῶν,
καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν,
ἵνα περιπατῆτε εὐσχημόνως πρὸς
τοὺς ἔξω
καὶ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε.[55]

Zimmermann's methodological model for analysing the implicit ethics of New Testament texts was introduced in the opening chapter. Although I consciously depend on this model in the following analysis, I will not work through all eight perspectives Zimmermann proposes, as not all contribute to the exegesis of the current texts. Neither is it necessary to keep each perspective entirely distinct. Rather, I will work with the perspectives that are

[55] The text here and those following have been presented in the above manner to emphasise the structure of their ethical argumentation.

most fruitful for our enquiry (generally indicated in the subtitles), using the different elements of Zimmermann's model with relative freedom.

6.3.1.1. Linguistic form

The opening περὶ δέ regularly functions to change the topic of discussion, sometimes indicating that what follows is in response to an inquiry by the recipients of the letter, although that is not necessarily the case here.[56] It makes clear that the focus of the following discussion is φιλαδελφία, which should function as a control on any interpretation.[57] Most commentators take the relevant section to be verses 9–12, but occasionally the decision is taken to separate off verses 11–12. One wonders whether this is due to a fallacious interpretation of what φιλαδελφία refers to. Leon Morris, for example, justifies this move by claiming that verses 11–12 "deals with the practical outworking of Christian love rather than with that love itself."[58] If, I have argued, φιλαδελφία itself refers to practical acts then such a distinction is unwarranted. Instead, the whole section is so closely inter-related that to treat it otherwise obscures matters rather than clarifies them.

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[56] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 242; David G. Bradley, "The Topos as a Form in the Pauline Paraenesis," *JBL* 72 (1956): 238–46, 245.
[57] So also Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 156.
[58] Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, rev., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 130.

After this introductory phrase, we have three present tense clauses in the indicative mood. As the authors present the content of the clauses to be true, they function as a vehicle for the communication of ethics. The first phrase rhetorically claims the banality of the advice about to be given (*paralipsis*). This is common in letters from this era: "one pretends to pass over something one in fact mentions."[59] The purpose of *paralipsis* is to give advice or instruction, but to do so in a form that best preserves the mutuality and warmth of the relationship, as it avoids calling into question the current behaviour of the recipient(s).[60] Thus, although the statements are not explicitly instructive they function to emphasise desirable behaviour. In these verses, that behaviour is the practice of φιλαδελφία, extended both between members of the Thessalonian church and among the wider church in Macedonia. Furthermore, the current behaviour is given even more significance as the church is alleged to be "θεοδίδακτοί" in this regard;[61] the moral authority and imperative for this behaviour is not merely the founders of the church or its current members, but God himself.

[59] Malherbe, *Pastoral Care*, 76–77.
[60] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 220.
[61] This term has attracted considerable debate in recent decades, well summarised by Stephen E. Witmer, "Θεοδιδακτοι in 1 Thessalonians 4.9: A Pauline Neologism," *NTS* 52 (2006): 239–50. Witmer's destructive case (against the interpretations of Kloppenborg and Malherbe, amongst others) is more convincing than his constructive proposal: Paul coins the term consciously drawing from Isaiah 54.13. Regardless, Witmer concedes, as most commentators, that this is a reference to some form of communication from God to the Thessalonians that did not occur through Paul. See also Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 158–59.

The authors, then, use the common epistolary technique of *paralipsis* to underline the importance of φιλαδελφία in the opening sentence.[62]

From v. 10b to the end of v. 11 there occur four exhortations from the authors to the brothers in Thessalonica. The first refers back to the φιλαδελφία already being demonstrated by the church, encouraging the further increase of such practices; the remaining exhortations encourage what was not necessarily already present. Another contrast is that the first exhortation has in view one's desirable integration with others – as φιλαδελφία necessarily implies; the other three are primarily concerned with one's desirable separation, in a certain sense, from others. The close grammatical connection of the latter exhortations with the first, by the repeated καί, underscores the point that these instructions are thematically held together under φιλαδελφία. One interpretative option is to take at least the first and third καί as explanatory; the requests of verse eleven thus detail *how* the Thessalonians are to make their love further abound.[63] On this reading, the ethical force is that φιλαδελφία is to be increased, not in addition to appropriating the other instructions, but *by* doing so. Such an

[62] So also Burke, *Family Matters*, 205.

[63] So Best, *Thessalonians*, 174 ("they are now told how to excel in love"); Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 249. When listing instructions that clearly deal with a variety of issues later in 1 Thess. 5.14f., note that the requests following Παρακαλοῦμεν are not linked by καί.

interpretation is also supported by the fact that the four instructions attain the same purpose (v. 12).

The opening of verse 12, καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν, functions both to evoke the recipients' memory of the authors' company in the earliest stages of the life of the church and to reference the conduct of the apostles that has already been much discussed in the epistle. The ethical importance of this is further discussed below. Finally, the two subjunctive clauses at the end of the verse indicate the purpose for which the previous exhortations are given; what is contained here are, therefore, the values or norms, which are the legitimising reasons for the advised conduct.

6.3.1.2. Norms and values

Zimmermann clarifies that norms and values refer to "a basic principle that puts a normative obligation on the behaviour of the individual or the group";[64] often, it is presented as the legitimising reason for ethical instruction. In our current passage we may identify five such principles. The first is φιλαδελφία, not because it is appealed to in order to defend a particular ethical injunction but rather because φιλαδελφία itself is assumed as the primary ethical goal; all of the other ethical instruction in these verses pertains to the pursuit of φιλαδελφία. Importantly, though, the fact that the authors do provide further instruction regarding φιλαδελφία shows

[64] Zimmermann, "New Methodology," 399–423, 406.

that it is not utterly transparent how to fulfil the obligations of φιλαδελφία in the Thessalonian context. The importance of φιλαδελφία is underlined by the introduction of a further norm, the idea of divine instruction that lies behind the use of the adjective θεοδιδακτοί. The rhetorical effect of the term is to underline the current action of the Thessalonians as already displaying noteworthy φιλαδελφία before the instruction of the epistle. The importance of the term for understanding the implicit ethics of the text lies in the additional authority it gives to the goal of φιλαδελφία – this is an ethical aim that God himself has taught to the Thessalonians.

The third norm of our text is disclosed in only three words of verse eleven, but their import in the context of the whole epistle should not be underestimated. With καθὼς ὑμῖν παρηγγείλαμεν, the authors place themselves or, more accurately, their instructions at the level of ethical norm; the Thessalonians should not only accept the current instruction but remember that this coheres with previously given, authoritative, ethical teaching. The further effect of such a comment is to evoke the memory of the time when they were present in Thessalonica, which is particularly important because recounting this foundational period of the church's life is a repeated emphasis of the letter. For the authors to mention it again here may lead us to expect that there are particular aspects of their conduct or instruction that they want the Thessalonians to recall. When this is recognised, it is hard not to see the account contained

in 2.5–12 as particularly pertinent to 4.9–12. In it, the authors mark the following aspects of their conduct: 1) They came without flattery (κολακεία), which in the ancient world "was commonly viewed as a way to get money out of others";[65] 2) They came without a pretext for financial greed (προφάσει πλεονεξίας).[66] In 2.5 then, in two complementary ways the authors underline that they were not seeking financial gain through their ministry to the Thessalonians. 3) Although they considered that they had the right to be a burden to the Thessalonians (δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι), as apostles, they chose not to exert that right. The burden in question has been understood as both a financial burden[67] and a 'burden' of authority,[68] which the apostles had the right to impose upon the Thessalonians. Given that the contrast presented to being 'burdensome' is being gentle (2.7b) it seems best to understand the potential harshness of apostolic authority as the primary reference here,[69] although as Best suggests: "Paul may well have been aware of the word's ambiguity and intended a secondary allusion to his upkeep." [70] 4) In further demonstrating how beloved the

[65] Green, *Thessalonians*, 122.
[66] BDAG has "the state of desiring more than one's due" and glosses our verse "pretext for avarice."
[67] E.g., Morris, *Thessalonians*, 67.
[68] E.g., Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 68.
[69] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 144, convincingly demonstrates the parallels between the self-presentation of the authors here and that of contemporary philosophers; he notes that 'harshness' was a common concern of philosophers in such contexts.
[70] Best, *Thessalonians*, 100; Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 98.

Thessalonians had become to the apostles, the authors ask them to remember their κόπος and μόχθος, night and day, which they did so that they would not burden (ἐπιβαρέω) the church (2.9). κόπος and μόχθος both refer to hard work,[71] and when taken together in this context imply particularly difficult physical labour.[72] Whereas the meaning of "burden" in 2.7 is disputed, there is no such ambiguity here. The authors claim to have avoided being a financial burden on the church by working hard, and all this as a demonstration of their love for the Thessalonians (2.8). 5) Finally, the authors compare their conduct to that of a father with his children (2.11), a simile which connotes that the direction of provision, care and instruction was from the apostles to the church rather than the other way around.

The account of the apostles' conduct, then, is relevant to the discussion of 4.9–12. We see that in many ways the authors emphasise that they were not financial beneficiaries of their ministry – they were not 'takers' of the church. Rather, the importance of their own manual labour to provide for their needs is placed front and centre; interestingly, it is also explicitly linked to their love for the Thessalonians. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that in 4.11, when the authors refer to their foundational time with the Thessalonian church, they imply that their ethical

[71] For κόπος BDAG has "activity that is burdensome"; L&N notes that this term "implies difficulties and trouble" in its semantic field; similarly μόχθος. L&N glosses our current verse "in hard work and toil."
[72] So Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 171 and references there.

example, recounted for the Thessalonians' benefit in 2.5–12, should serve to inform and instruct the church with regard to the problem being tackled in 4.9–12.

Our final two values are found in 4.12 and function to legitimise the instructions in verses 10–11, that they may walk properly (εὐσχήμων) [73] before outsiders and "μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε." Malherbe notes that "*euschēmonōs* and its cognates appear with various forms of *taxis*"[74] in contemporary literature, which is of considerable importance in confirming that the problem in Thessalonica is clearly related to the ἀτάκτοι of 1 Thessalonians 5.14 and 2 Thessalonians 3.6. Here, though, our focus is on the function of "proper behaviour" as an ethical norm. Such a norm immediately invites qualifications: the evidence of the New Testament by no means portrays Paul as one attracted to the path of least resistance. However, there is plenty of evidence that he was regularly concerned about how certain conduct would appear to outsiders (e.g., Romans 12.18; 13.1–7; 2 Corinthians 8.21) and even explicitly discusses this concern in tension with the subversive nature of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9.12–23). As such, we may expect this not to function as the ultimate ethical norm for Paul and his co-authors, but nonetheless as an important one: φιλαδελφία should be undertaken in such a way as would appear appropriate to

[73] BDAG has "being appropriate for display, proper, presentable."
[74] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 251.

those outside the community, and this was to be secured by the instructions of 4.11.

The same instructions are also envisaged to serve the final norm, which can be rendered as "dependent upon nothing" or "no-one." There is in reality little difference between the two (as things come from people), but again a qualification is in order: given the authors' positive endorsement of the interdependence of φιλαδελφία we may not push this statement to its extreme; it is clearly a certain kind of inappropriate dependence that the authors have in mind, rather than any kind of dependence at all. Exactly what this inappropriate dependence is depends on one's reconstruction of the problem; further comment will therefore be reserved for the summative discussions at the end of the chapter.[75]

6.3.2. 1 Thessalonians 5.12–15

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,
εἰδέναι
τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν
καὶ προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ
καὶ νουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς
καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ
διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν.
εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.
Παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,
νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους,

[75] So too the interpretation of the four ethical instructions in vv. 10b-11.

παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους,
ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν,
μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας.
ὁρᾶτε μή τις κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ τινι ἀποδῷ,
ἀλλὰ πάντοτε τὸ ἀγαθὸν διώκετε [καὶ]
εἰς ἀλλήλους
καὶ εἰς πάντας.

Most commentators connect the mention of the ἀτάκτους here with 2 Thessalonians 3.6–15, and use both references to reconstruct the Thessalonian problem. It was argued in the introduction to this chapter that this is methodologically justified, and I too consider the terms in both letters to refer to the same group of Thessalonians. However, the importance of this text to a correct understanding of 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 and 2 Thessalonians 3.6–15 goes beyond merely the mention of the ἀτάκτους. As some reconstructions (particularly 'missional privilege') relate the problem to ministry within and beyond the church, the instructions here concerning leadership need to be factored in to our understanding of the implicit ethics of the authors. The form and content of these verses are more straightforward than those of 4.9–12 and thus do not lend themselves to the same structure of analysis; our discussion will be clearer if we simply take the relevant sections in turn.

6.3.2.1. The request (12–13b)

This request addresses the relationship between some form of work on behalf of, or amongst, the church, and the church itself; it is of

particular importance then for evaluating the 'missional privilege' explanation - that the problem concerned some claiming support whilst engaging in evangelism. The authors' use of ἐρωτάω indicates the gentle nature of the request, accentuated by the familial language accompanying it.

The request is essentially for two things: to respect (εἰδέναι) those ministering and to ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ. The justification given is an appeal to their work – their function within or amongst the community renders it ethically proper to follow the authors' instructions. But who are these people? Most commentators have taken the three descriptive clauses of verse twelve as referring to the leaders of the Thessalonian community (with disagreement about whether this constituted an 'office'), but Malherbe argues instead that they refer to all members of the congregation when they fulfil such functions; the reference is to mutual pastoral care rather than the constant practice of certain individuals:

> Paul is concerned with activities and functions in vv 12–14, and there is no indication in this context or anywhere else in the letter that he has in view any officials in Thessalonica. The participle describes those who care for others in the congregation… They may have become leaders through their service to others (cf. Matt 20:25–28; Luke 22:27), but as 4:18; 5:11, 14–15 show, they are not a limited group. (313)

Although we may agree with Malherbe that it is difficult to find evidence for an 'office' here, and that any leadership in the

congregation would plausibly change every so often (as it did in many associations), the very fact that the authors request specific action with reference to certain people indicates at the very least that there were some performing these functions in a way that differentiated them from the rest; if all were involved roughly to the same degree in these activities why would the authors bother to make the requests as they did? Malherbe wishes to lean on 5.11 to interpret these verses ("Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" [ESV]), but it is surely better to see verses twelve and thirteen as moving beyond the mutual edification encouraged in verse eleven to a more specific request with reference to particular people (although defined by activity, not title). These leaders to which the authors refer are those who labour amongst the church (ἐν ὑμῖν) and care for or admonish the other Thessalonians. Although the latter two clearly refer to intra-community activities, it is possible to take τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν as a reference to evangelistic activity – that is, outward-looking – rather than another reference to inwardly-focussed work.[76]

In addition to respecting such people, the Thessalonians are asked to "esteem[77] them very highly in love."[78] The translation "very highly" is not adequate for ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ, which

[76] So Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 311–12, placing the weight of his argument on the use of ἐν rather than εἰς.
[77] BDAG 434, all commentators.
[78] So, ad loc., Marshall, *Thessalonians*; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*; Best, *Thessalonians*. Cf., e.g., ESV, KJV, NASB.

emphasises extremity: L&N suggests "an extraordinary degree, involving a considerable excess over what would be expected" (78.34). Hence BDAG glosses the word "quite beyond all measure" noting that it is the "highest form of comparison imaginable" (1033). Here, then, is a striking phrase used to communicate the way in which the Thessalonians should treat their leaders. The further modification, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, is a broad term, as evidenced by the lack of any detailed reflection on what might be envisaged here in the commentaries. Whilst resisting any attempt to overly narrow the terminology, it must again be insisted here that this was unlikely to denote *only* an emotional disposition or manner of interaction, but also to extended practical care and provision, just as with φιλαδελφία. The community was to demonstrate love, both practical and otherwise, to the leaders of the church (defined by their outward and inward-looking work) to an extreme degree. The ethical justification for this instruction is "because of their work"; the logic of the implicit ethics here therefore places an extremely high value on such work and the people who undertake it.

6.3.2.2. The ἀτάκτους (14a)

The authors use παρακαλέω to issue six instructions, the first of which concerns us here. Although παρακαλέω itself is again relatively gentle, what is encouraged is much firmer: the Thessalonians are to admonish (νουθετεῖτε) the disorderly, the

"harshest form of exhortation Paul mentions in the letter."[79] The significance of dealing with the disorderly is evident not only by the use of νουθετέω, but also by its prominence as the first of the imperatives in this list. Although little information can be gained from such a short instruction, two points must be made: 1) In 4.9–12 the authors address the whole church, in which they directly appeal to those causing the problem themselves. Here, the instructions are primarily addressed to those who are not disorderly. Not only does this mean, quite simply, that both groups are understood to constitute the Thessalonian church and assumed to be present, but also the inclusion of this instruction here legitimises the discipline of the disorderly in such a context: the authors deliberately instruct the admonishment of the ἀτάκτους in their hearing. 2) The juxtaposition of the authors' request to regard legitimate work highly amongst the church with the charge to admonish the disorderly is striking; those who perceive the problem to be caused by those seeking illegitimate support for their 'ministry' need to account for these texts in their reconstruction. It seems unlikely that the authors would give such a strong request for the holistic support of those ministering in the community, without qualification, if this was in some way the root of the problem. Furthermore, the separation of the ἀτάκτους from their discussion

[79] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 316.

of leadership indicates these are separate, rather than connected, problems.

6.3.3. 2 Thessalonians 3.6–16

Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί,
ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος
καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν.
Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς,
ὅτι οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν
οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι
πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν·
οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δῶμεν ὑμῖν
εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς.
καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἦμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τοῦτο παρηγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν,
ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.

Ἀκούομεν γάρ τινας περιπατοῦντας ἐν ὑμῖν ἀτάκτως
μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους
ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους·
τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις παραγγέλλομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ
Χριστῷ,
ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν.
ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, μὴ ἐγκακήσητε καλοποιοῦντες.
Εἰ δέ τις οὐχ ὑπακούει τῷ λόγῳ ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς,
τοῦτον σημειοῦσθε μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι αὐτῷ,
ἵνα ἐντραπῇ·

καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἡγεῖσθε,
ἀλλὰ νουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν.
Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δῴη ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ.
ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

2 Thessalonians 3.6–16 is the most extended passage that addresses the problem in the Thessalonian correspondence. It is the only place where the authors describe the behaviour that they wish to be amended, but even here the description is short and not unambiguous. Again, then, an investigation of the implicit ethics of the text may provide the best route to obtaining some clarity about both the problem and the solution the authors wish the Thessalonians to move towards.

6.3.3.1. Linguistic form

In this passage the authors give six instructions and remind the hearers of a seventh previously given. The first three (v. 6, 12 and 13) demand immediate action; the second three (vv. 14–15) are conditional. Whereas in 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 the authors address the whole congregation, in our current passage the instructions are variously directed either to the disorderly (v. 12) or to the rest of the church. Five of the instructions have the intention of resolving the problem; one command does not, but deals with a potential consequence of the problem (13).

Whereas in 1 Thessalonians 4.12 the authors give two clear reasons for their instructions, here we have only one, ἵνα ἐντραπῇ·

(14). Thus, this passage is focused upon resolving the issue, rather than explaining why it needs to be resolved. This is further confirmed by the rhetorical effect of verses 7–10, which repeatedly assert that there should be no confusion about what is right behaviour, primarily appealing to the clear teaching and example of the apostles; no energy is expended in justifying *why* such behaviour is right, but rather in reasserting what *is* right and that the Thessalonians should *already know* that it is right. The right behaviour is established as incontrovertible before demanding that action is taken to resolve the problem.

The authors' concern over this issue may be measured both by the length of treatment it receives, its emphatic position at the end of the letter and the language the authors use: "one of the strongest adjurations to be found in [Paul's] letters."[80] A command is issued, rather than a request, and its authority is asserted by reference to Jesus's lordship. Overall then, the linguistic forms of this text communicate the focus of the passage (asserting what is 'the right,' asserting its transparency, demanding resolution) and indicate a serious degree of concern on behalf of the authors.[81]

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[80] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 326.

[81] This is a further argument for the traditional order of the epistles. 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 takes pains to provide relatively gentle encouragement towards change and focusses on the reasons why change is necessary. As the same problem appears to be the context for both passages, it is difficult to see how the authors could move from 2 Thessalonians 3.6–16 to 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12; it is easy to see how the reverse could be true.

A final note on the linguistic form is that although verse sixteen is grammatically independent of what precedes it, it should perhaps be taken as an indication of what the authors hope will result from obedience to their commands. There is no grammatical indication of purpose or result, but given the substantial focus on the inter-communal 'disorder' one may plausibly suggest that peace from the Lord is the hoped-for state that the commands are intended to contribute towards.

6.3.3.2. Norms and values

For the authors, the 'right' behavior should be obvious, but on what grounds? The last clause of verse six introduces the answer: some Thessalonians are disorderly and not living according παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν. The tradition, then, is presented as the norm for correct behaviour. This tradition seems to constitute the foundational ethical and theological teaching which the apostles delivered to the Thessalonian community; it may perhaps be "what was common to the early Christian community."[82] In any case the particular bit of the tradition to which the authors refer is rehearsed in the following verses;[83] reference is made to both word and action (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2.15).

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[82] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 328.

[83] Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, 129–33, has made the case that as ἄτακτος derives from τάσσειν, we should look for an 'order' that would have been handed down, transgressed by those refusing to work. He suggests that Genesis 3.17–19 is the best candidate due to its function in other Jewish texts as the mandate for work, and terminological and conceptual overlap with 2 Thessalonians. This is surely

This norm of the tradition is equated with the norm of the apostles' conduct and teaching. Its importance is accentuated by the claim that it is *necessary* to imitate the apostles (3.7). Closely related, the authority of the apostolic norm is demonstrated by the command of 3.14, in which it is disobedience to their word (in the letter) that is the grounds for punishment. The example of the apostles is, implicitly, presented as ethically determinative. They did not eat anyone's bread without payment, but rather worked hard night and day to provide for their own needs.[84] The indicative statement itself makes clear which action is considered right. The reason this action is taken is in order not to "burden" any of the Thessalonians, which must here refer to a financial burden. To this point the ethical force of the text is fairly obvious, but 3.9 introduces an important nuance. In it, the authors claim that they

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not unlikely given the Jewish roots of much early Christian ethical teaching, although one may question whether the text of 2 Thessalonians itself attempts to allude to this specific passage. Menken believes that "evidently [the author] assumes his readers to be able to detect such hints" (133); this is only evident if one considers the Thessalonians to be a community with a significant familiarity with the Jewish law, which seems more questionable than he allows, even though to concede this point does no damage to his overall argument.

[84] Bailey, "II Thessalonians," sees a problem here: "according to Phil. iv. 15 f., the Philippian church sent Paul material assistance more than once while he was in Thessalonica - which the Thessalonian Christians must have known about" (139). The emphasis, though, is on how the authors related to the Thessalonian community, to whom they refused to be a financial burden. Moreover, occasional gifts from Philippi may not have relieved the need for the apostolic party to work hard; the pattern of life demonstrated by the apostolic party of work-for-sustenance would not be undermined by occasional external gifts. Finally, the authors make similar claims in 1 Thessalonians, but this is not considered a reason to question its authenticity.

did in fact have the right to receive financial support from the Thessalonians – thus, they do not consider it an ethical maxim that the Christian worker should not receive financial support, an observation in continuity with the wider Pauline corpus.[85] Their decision not to do so in Thessalonica is explained in two ways. First, they wanted to set an example for the church, and second, they did not want to burden them. At this point we are frustrated by a lack of further information. Was there a particular reason why the apostles suspected the Thessalonians needed such an example? Was the problem that arose after their departure connected to this (therefore legitimising their earlier concerns)? We may suspect something along these lines given that they felt the need to give the maxim of 3.10 in the early stages of the community's development. Did they wish to avoid burdening the Thessalonians because of their relative poverty? There are indications that Paul considered the Macedonian churches to be relatively poor (2 Corinthians 8.2): Richard Ascough has made a strong case that the internal evidence of 1 Thessalonians suggests that the church is best situated at a relatively low social level, perhaps primarily composed of manual labourers;[86] could he also be right that θλῖψις in 1 Thessalonians

[85] As Fee, *Thessalonians*, notes: "without [Paul's right] as the common assumption between him and them, the rest of his argument carries no weight" (331).

[86] Ascough, *Macedonian Associations*, 165–76. Ascough is not persuasive, though, in his claim that the church is best understood as a converted association (184–6). The similarities Ascough presents are not as close as he makes out and the differences significant. The problem, then, is that to bracket the Thessalonian

1.6 should be taken as an indication primarily of the suffering of poverty?[87] The evidence for firm conclusions eludes us, although there is significant merit in both suggestions. In any case the implicit ethics revealed are not that Christian workers should not be supported, but rather that the apostles chose not to receive it for circumstantial reasons particular to the Thessalonians.[88]

That there was concerning behaviour from the outset at Thessalonica is perhaps indicated by 3.10; whilst still present the apostles had been required to teach the maxim that one only eats if one works. As the commentators have noted, although the sentiment was common this proverb has not been found in this form elsewhere and one may assume that it originated with the apostolic party.[89] Taken with 3.11 it explicates what the problem was at its most fundamental level – some were, in some way, perceived as not working, and yet were able to eat food provided by someone else, in a way that was within the control of the rest of the Thessalonian congregation. The only command to address such

church as an association one has to extensively broaden the category 'association' to the point where identifying it as such is of little value.

[87] Ibid., 168. The semantic range of θλῖψις seems broad enough to include the possibility (BDAG – "trouble that inflicts distress"); Ascough points out that in 2 Corinthians 8.2 the θλῖψις of the Macedonians is connected with their extreme poverty.

[88] Of course, many have pointed out that Paul's normal practice appears to have been to refuse support from the churches he is currently founding (e.g., Gerald W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi*, SNTSMS 92 [Cambridge: CUP, 1997], 116–17); this may be true, but we are unable to ascertain from the texts whether that was another reason for refusing support in Thessalonica.

[89] E.g., Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 452; Green, *Thessalonians*, 349.

people directly is that of verse twelve – they were to eat *their own* bread; clearly until now they had been eating that of somebody else. In all this, the norm of work is made clear: it is presented as the acceptable way in which one may obtain sustenance; to eat another's bread without work is ethically unacceptable. The meaning of the phrases μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους· and μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι is dependent upon which reconstruction of the problem one favours. Again, then, comment will be reserved until the summative discussions below.

6.3.3.3. Ethos as lived

We have already established that the lived ethos the authors desired of the community was that each member was to work for their bread; here we briefly examine what conduct was expected of the church as a whole if those causing the problem did not adjust their behaviour. In 3.6 the Thessalonians are commanded to keep away (στέλλεσθαι) from them, a command given greater clarity in verses fourteen and fifteen. The verb συναναμίγνυμι (14) refers to association, as L&N has it: "to associate with one another, normally involving special proximity and/or joint activity, and usually implying some kind of reciprocal relation or involvement." This kind of association is exactly what one would expect in the Thessalonian community – reciprocal relationships (φιλαδελφία), proximity and joint activity. It seems best then to take this as prohibiting the disorderly access to the usual church gatherings, as

it is very difficult to envisage how they could disassociate without barring them from gatherings.[90] Such a significant measure of discipline explains the need for the clarification of 3.16: if the offenders were still admitted to church gatherings they clearly could not be counted as enemies; as they are prohibited, the authors clarify how the church should relate to them. The offenders are still brothers within the family of God, but they are prohibited, temporarily, from obtaining its communal benefits.[91] The stated aim is that the offender may be shamed; the implicit aim is that this will lead to changed behaviour,[92] a realistic prospect given the penal power of shame in the honour-shame culture of the first century.[93]

Finally, we must note the instruction of 3.13. Coming between commands to the disorderly (to work) and the community (to

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[90] Fee, *Thessalonians*, argues that "[Paul] is ready for them to experience this degree of shame "within" so that they will not have to experience the ultimate shame "outside"" (337). This seems misleading: they are "within" in the sense of still being considered fellow believers (see rest of paragraph), but surely "outside" of church gatherings. The same confusion is present in Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 330. Better and clearer is Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 289; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 459–60.

[91] Marshall, *Thessalonians,* sees a problem here: "the offenders were evidently still within reach of brotherly admonition (v. 15), so they can hardly have been excluded from the church meetings" (228). The problem is only real if church meetings are the only times when the Thessalonians would have seen each other; this seems highly doubtful, as normal life would have provided numerous points of contact between church members outside organised meetings, especially if the church members were drawn from various trades and households that regularly interacted with each other; contra. Best, *Thessalonians*, 343.

[92] That the implicit aim is restorative rather than destructive is clear from the instruction to treat the offender as a brother.

[93] Green, *Thessalonians*, 355; Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 329.

discipline), the subjunctive functions as an instruction, one which differs from the others in that it does not deal directly with the problem, but encourages the community not to cease doing good despite it. Evidently, the authors considered that this was one possible response to the circumstances. Considering the context, whereby a problem had arisen in connection to φιλαδελφία and the material sharing of the community, it is best to see 'doing good' here as referring primarily to material generosity; [94] the congregation is not to allow those who have unethically benefitted from the generosity of others to impede that generosity.

6.3.4. Summary

If one accepts, with most commentators, that 2 Thessalonians 3.6–16 deals with the same problem (allowing for development) as 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12, then the entire issue is seen to be bound up with φιλαδελφία and its limits. Φιλαδελφία is repeatedly legitimised as an appropriate ethical goal. The linguistic form of 1 Thessalonians 4.9 makes its desirability clear, as does the reference to divine instruction. The Thessalonians are exhorted not only to continue practising their generosity (2 Thessalonians 3.13) but to increase it (1 Thessalonians 4.10). Given that there was a serious problem emerging amongst the congregation, the strong emphasis not to step back from φιλαδελφία is notable.

[94] Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 226; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 458.

Φιλαδελφία, though, is a value that is not free from the need of further clarification. It is to be done in such a way that it appears proper to outsiders and should not lead to a wrong kind of dependence (1 Thessalonians 4.12); it appears that this kind of dependence is one that undermines the ethical norm of work (2 Thessalonians 3.10). Repeated appeal is made to the norm of apostolic behaviour and instruction, functioning not only to assert and reinforce what is right behaviour, but indicating that the problem in Thessalonica was one perceived from the foundational months of the church by the apostolic party.

In addition to instructing the continuation of φιλαδελφία the authors give two other broad instructions. The first, addressed to the whole church in 1 Thessalonians 4.11 and to the offending people in 2 Thessalonians 3.12, is to work to provide for oneself, with the quality of ἡσυχία; the activity indicated by the verb περιεργάζομαι is prohibited. The second set of instructions concerns discipline of the offenders – they are to be prohibited from Thessalonian gatherings in the hope that their exclusion will generate shame and changed behaviour, yet they are still to be considered family rather than foe: family temporarily excluded from familial benefits.

6.4. The Thessalonian problem – what can be said?

Having analysed the ethics of the texts we are now able to evaluate the different proposals as to the Thessalonian 'problem.'

6.4.1. Eschatological beliefs

This position finds no support from our analysis and, in fact, the case against it is strengthened. None of the authors' ethical logic is connected, at any point, with eschatology. Moreover, perhaps the most dominant norm of the text, the apostolic example, is recounted with an entirely relational focus; the apostolic party did not work because that was the eschatologically appropriate thing to do, they worked in order not to burden the Thessalonian church. Finally, 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12 is entirely concerned with φιλαδελφία, an ethical ideal that is repeatedly reinforced. Clearly, then, the authors are correcting an illegitimate form of a valid principle; the principle itself is defended and encouraged. For advocates of the eschatological explanation, the wrong practice of the church stems from an incorrect belief. If the authors wished to combat and correct such a mistake, they would either have to rule against the practice itself as illegitimate or change the grounds on which it should be done. The fact that neither of these options appear in our texts renders this position untenable: the authors strongly advocate the practice of φιλαδελφία and make no attempt to challenge the grounds on which the church acts; rather, they seek to further clarify true φιλαδελφία.

6.4.2. Social dynamics

Advocates of this position understand the references to ἡσυχία in 1 Thessalonians 4.11 and 2 Thessalonians. 3.12 to refer to the withdrawal of the Thessalonian clients from the political affairs of their patrons. The prohibition of περιεργάζομαι is taken to ban meddlesome activity on behalf of one's patron. The emphasis on what is 'one's own' in both these verses is seen as antithetical towards the affairs or provision of one's patron; the authors, on this reading, emphasise independence from the influence of the patron and self-provision for one's material needs. The political dimension of this terminology is usually highlighted[95] and, for this reason, it should be emphasised that the linguistic evidence itself is not conclusive, or even particularly in support of those who favour this interpretation. Although ἡσυχία can indeed refer to withdrawal from public life it is also regularly used to refer merely to an absence of conflict.[96] One may especially note the well-known "Rule of the *Iobakchoi*" (*GRA* 51 = *IG* II^2 1368), where the word is used to appeal for orderly and peaceable meetings. In Sirach 28.16, in an extended passage on dangerous and sinful speech it is asserted that those who engage in slander will find no ἡσυχίας.[97]

[95] E.g., Winter, *Welfare*, 50; Green, *Thessalonians*, 210.
[96] See references in BDAG and, e.g., *IG* II^2 43; *IG* XII^2 35; SEG 21.451.
[97] Another helpful example is found in the Lindos Chronicle (*Lindos* 2.2), where it functions as a personal disposition, translated as 'serene' by Carolyn Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past* (Oxford: OUP, 2003).

Furthermore, although περιεργάζομαι can refer to an inappropriate involvement in public affairs, neither for this word nor ἡσυχία can Winter or Green produce a parallel that is concerned with clients acting on behalf of patrons. By contrast, Malherbe has noted that popular philosophers were regularly charged with being 'busybodies': "the slur that they were busybodies meddling in other people's affairs was constantly hurled at them."[98] One particular cause for concern was when people withdrew from their perceived duties to engage in philosophic pursuit:

> It was difficult for the elite to escape criticism when they withdrew from productive public lives, and it was impossible for the working classes to do so. Lucian excoriates manual laborers who abandoned their trades upon supposedly converting to philosophy (*Fug.* 14; *Bis acc.* 6; *Vit. Auct.* 11). Idle Christians would have stood out in the crowded quarters where they lived and plied their trade. The elite looked down on manual labor, but thought it appropriate for the lower ranks of society, where the critics of Christians placed them, and where the Thessalonians belonged.[99]

Such parallels are much stronger, and cohere to a much greater extent with the linguistic evidence, than concerns about patronage. If patronage is the correct interpretation of the problem the case must primarily rest on other grounds.

Our analysis of the implicit ethics of the texts raises a number of other serious problems for the patronage interpretation. As

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[98] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 453.
[99] Abraham J. Malherbe, "Ethics in Context: The Thessalonians and Their Neighbors," *Restoration Quaterly* 54 (2012): 201–18, 205.

previously commented, advocates of this position seem unclear about whether they perceive the patron-client relationships to be internal or external; both possibilities are problematic.

If the Thessalonians were the clients of external patrons we are faced with the following issues: 1) The injunction of 2 Thessalonians 3.10 implies that the Thessalonian church had the power to prevent the disorderly from eating;[100] this seems odd if the Thessalonian clients obtained their food from external patrons. 2) The justifying reason for the instructions of 1 Thessalonians 4.11 is a manner of life that is respectable to those outside. As patronage was so widely accepted, it is difficult to see how the eradication of patronage was important in this respect; why would the severing of patron-client relationships gain the wider culture's respect? If anything, would not the abandoned patrons resent the loss of clients, one measure of their social standing? 3) The instructions of 1 Thessalonians 4.11 are presented as the means by which the church could increase its φιλαδελφία, but one is hard pressed to see how disengaging from external patronage would have achieved this. It could possibly be argued that the extra income from working former-clients constituted the increased φιλαδελφία but this is not the ethical thrust of the text itself – the emphasis is not on increased income, but on eradicating inappropriate dependence.

[100] Recognised by Robert Jewett, "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church: The Implications of a Form-Critical Analysis of 2 Thessalonians 3:10," *BR* 38 (1993): 23–43, 37.

If the patron-client relationships were internal we have a different set of problems: 1) If the patrons were inside the church and the appeal to ἡσυχία refers to withdrawing from public affairs, then Paul's instructions (to the whole church) in 1 Thessalonians 4.11 required those patrons to give up their public functions. It is hard to see how this would have been well thought of by outsiders who were concerned that the wealthy fulfilled their civic duties.[101] 2) The ethical corrective delivered by the authors in both epistles focusses on the disorderly; it is they who were required to amend their inappropriate behaviour. However, if it is the patronage system itself that was considered wrong, why do the authors not address the internal patrons who were equally responsible for its continuation? The church was instructed not to feed those unwilling to work, which implicitly presumes the wider church was *not* also part of the problem. If the internal patrons were requiring their clients not to work, such ethical rhetoric would be grossly unjust. 3) Furthermore, without explicitly stating that patronage was to be avoided, it is hard to see why the ending of internal patronage would be perceived as a way of increasing φιλαδελφία in a church where the system was accepted. 4) Finally, the injunction to the church in 2 Thessalonians 3.13 – not to grow weary of doing good – is hard to explain by the patronage theory. Green's attempt is unconvincing: "although the apostle had absolved the patrons of

[101] Furthermore, this cuts against the wider case Winter, *Welfare*, wants to make: that the early Christians were encouraged to involve themselves in public affairs.

their responsibility to those who did not want to work (v. 10), this in no way implied that they should quit doing what was correct on behalf of those in genuine need" (353). But why would the Thessalonians associate those not working (and acting as clients) with helping those in need, if the objection of the authors is to patronage?

The final point made above needs to be expanded here; put simply, the ethics of the text imply the abuse of a good system rather than a bad system. The authors are careful to encourage the expansion of φιλαδελφία (1 Thessalonians 4.9–10) and warn the church against abandoning it (2 Thessalonians 3.13). One takes care to continue to legitimise a good system under threat rather than a bad system that needs to be abolished. Moreover, the implication of the texts is that the problem was present, at least as a threat, whilst the apostolic party was still in Thessalonica; the problem was obviously complex enough to survive the foundational period of the church and at least one apostolic letter. This is much easier to imagine if the problem lay in the complexities of a legitimate system, rather than in an illegitimate system.

Finally, perhaps the dominant norm of our texts is the apostolic example, repeatedly referred to. The ethical emphasis in these accounts is that the apostles worked night and day, not to secure independence, but that they would not financially burden the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2.9; 2 Thessalonians 3.8). In 1 Thessalonians 2.8–9 this is given as an example of their love for the

church. It surely makes less sense to interpret these verses as an assertion that the apostolic party worked to remain independent, as a mark of love; 2 Corinthians 11.7–11 suggests the opposite: refusing financial support could lead to the accusation that one did *not* love the church! The authors' emphasis, then, on their refusal to be a financial drain on the church is problematic for the patronage explanation as it is this that is presented as a central ethical norm for imitation, not a focus on independence.

6.4.3. Missional privilege

Those who understand the problem to be one of missional privilege generally consider the references to ἡσυχία to emphasise the need for the Thessalonian evangelists to curtail the provocative effect of their message and lifestyle. Shogren also argues that περιεργάζομαι can, and in this case should, take the sense of "prying inappropriately into divine matters."[102] Shogren's argument for this perspective admits that "our viewpoint, like all the others, contains an element of guesswork," but he considers it preferable because "it takes all the data into account and rests on the fewest number of assumptions."[103] As a result of our analysis we may agree with Shogren that the 'missional privilege' argument is certainly plausible and, in some ways, coheres well with the evidence.

[102] Citing supporting passages from *Let. Aris.*, Philo, Josephus and Plato in addition to Acts 19.19.
[103] Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 335.

However, some of the data are still problematic, and we cannot agree that it is the option that "rests on the fewest number of assumptions."

Initially, though, it should be recognised that the implicit ethics of the texts cohere well with this theory in two ways. First, Shogren is right to point out that the apostolic example is that of evangelists supporting themselves as they work. We have noted how dominant this example is as an ethical norm, but whether the authors primarily intended their example to be imitated by all the Thessalonians, or more particularly those Thessalonians engaged in evangelism, is an open question. The best evidence in favour of the latter is 1 Thessalonians 2.9, where the present participle ἐργαζόμενοι is dependent upon the verb ἐκηρύξαμεν, closely connecting the two and indicating that they were done simultaneously. The biggest obstacle to this reading is the authors' insistence that they did, in fact, have the right to support (1 Thessalonians 2.7; 2 Thessalonians 3.9) and chose not to exercise it as a demonstration of love (1 Thessalonians 2.8). The problem is as follows: the apostolic party worked while preaching *not* because it was intrinsically right (otherwise they would not have mentioned that they could have done otherwise); the Thessalonian offenders are portrayed as comprehensively *wrong* in their action. There would be a clear logical fallacy for the authors to insist that they had the right to support (even though they refused it) but the Thessalonian offenders, in the same circumstances, had no right to

support. The second point in favour of the 'missional privilege' position is the insistence in 2 Thessalonians 3.14–16 that the offending members should still be considered as family, despite their sanction. If the offenders were not lazy scroungers but rather zealous evangelists (potentially working very hard in this manner) then this would cohere well with the relative warmth with which the offenders are to be treated. If one accepts the canonical order of the epistles it could also explain why the severity with which the problem is addressed was gradually increased; the offenders were not those whom the apostles would expect to be hostile to their admonitions.

Evidence that inclines one away from the 'missional privilege' explanation can be summarised in four points, listed here from the least to the most problematic: 1) Shogren places great weight on the authors' "specific ideal of self-support" (333) in making his case that the apostolic example in the Thessalonian correspondence is aimed primarily at Thessalonian evangelists; however, the wider evidence from the Pauline corpus makes it clear that Paul's own practice was intimately connected with his own history and calling, rather than as a principled position easily applicable to others (1 Corinthians 9.15–18). 2) Barclay eloquently describes how Christian evangelists might have caused all manner of disruption and offence in the Roman milieu,[104] suggesting that one of Paul's

[104] Barclay, "Conflict," 523–4.

primary concerns was to avoid undue antagonism and external pressure for this young church. However, as Barclay also admits, Paul's own approach can hardly be characterised as evangelism by the path of least resistance. Furthermore, in both 1 Thessalonians 4.11–12 and 2 Thessalonians 3.8–10 the ethical emphasis appears to be on the need to *work*, rather than on the content or effects of the evangelistic message. Barclay suggests that "a consciousness of the poor reputation of Cynic preachers,"[105] who had a reputation for fraudulent living, lies in the background here, but is it not more likely that Thessalonians perceived as such would attract ridicule and insult rather than social pressure serious enough to be perceived by the authors as a threat to the church's existence? 3) More substantially, it may be questioned how well the 'missional privilege' explanation can account for 1 Thessalonians 5.12–14.[106] As discussed above, if the ministry of some was at the root of the problem, would the authors give such a strong request for holistic love of leaders (at least connoting financial support, 5.13), emphasising that this is because of their work, without citing any reservations or qualifications? The encouragement to admonish the disorderly follows so closely behind (14a) that if there was a group considered disorderly in connection with their ministry the instructions would surely be received with a fair degree of

[105] Ibid., 523.
[106] The passage is not addressed by Barclay; Shogren does not connect it to his discussion of the problem.

confusion.[107] 4) Perhaps the most problematic datum for this position is that the ethics of the text clearly expect the offenders to cease their current activity and work instead (explicitly 2 Thessalonians 3.11–12; implicitly 1 Thessalonians 4.11). The appeal of the authors is expressed polemically – not this, but that – even if 'this' is not described. The rhetorical impact on the church would be to curtail their evangelism, which would be hard to reconcile not only with the missional imperative of the apostolic example and wider Pauline corpus, but also with the praise of the Thessalonians' ministry in 1 Thessalonians 1.3, 6–10.[108]

The 'missional privilege' position is, of the major interpretive options, the one best supported by the implicit ethics of the texts; my reticence to adopt it is partly due to the weaknesses outlined above, but primarily because there is another possibility, better supported by the implicit ethics of the texts that, using Shogren's words, "rests on the fewest number of assumptions."

6.4.4. The 'problem' as the simple abuse of φιλαδελφία

Our contention is that the implicit ethics of the text point towards a comparatively simple interpretation of the problem: the church's practice of φιλαδελφία involved substantial financial

[107] See also 1 Thess. 1.6–10 where the ministry of the Thessalonian church is praised without reservation.

[108] It may be objected that this is polemical rhetoric and we should not read too much in to a lack of nuance. Rather, in such an extended treatment, the lack of nuance at this point should be taken as indicative of how clearly the authors disapproved of the action of the disorderly.

interdependence and some abused the system. As mentioned earlier, a number of scholars approach this reading,[109] although many eventually end up with one of the more complex interpretations. It is worth quoting Malherbe again:

> In early Christian paraenesis, *philadelphia* and *agape* are expected to be expressed in a practical manner through the extension of hospitality… Given the importance of hospitality in the life of the house churches Paul and others established the practice could easily become burdensome… especially to a church as remarkable for its communal love as the Thessalonian church was. It would be natural, even for this church, after extending hospitality for some months after its founding, to inquire of Paul whether brotherly love obligated them to give material aid without regard to a person's ability to secure his own livelihood.[110]

As argued throughout, the implicit ethics of the texts repeatedly indicate a good system abused rather than a bad system: one of the major ethical emphases of the texts is in fact to reinforce and commend the practice of φιλαδελφία. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, the fictive-kinship of the early church is best understood to include the norm of intra-familial material support and, therefore, it should not be a surprise to see the evidence incline in the same way here: clearly, the φιλαδελφία was at a significant enough level for some to be able to survive without working. Such a system carries the inherent risk of freeloaders, and it is unnecessary to postulate one particular reason why the

[109] See 6.2.4.
[110] Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 255–56.

Thessalonian church had some; it is more likely that those of the disorderly had a range of reasons for not working and claiming support, given that the authors do not explicate a reason. To emphasise only one possibility is unnecessary and ends in a reductionism the texts avoid. Why then the reference to ἡσυχία and minding one's own business? Again, the (lack of) evidence prevents us from claiming only one cause; however, it should be recognised that the use of such terms does not require one of the three main interpretative options. The fact that the apostles are clarifying desirable behaviour in 1 Thessalonians 4.12 indicates that there was currently disagreement or confusion on this point – this in itself was conceivably enough to cause conflict within the Thessalonian congregation.[111] We have already noted that the language of ἡσυχία can be used in association settings to refer merely to orderly meetings and more broadly to a lack of conflict; it need mean no more than that the Thessalonian disorderly were causing a degree of dispute, or perhaps confrontation, when the church gathered. Of course, the terms may refer to more than this – it is impossible to be sure – but they do not *have* to refer to more than this to be explicable.

Perhaps the strongest positive reason for this 'abuse of φιλαδελφία' interpretation is the emphasis of the ethical corrective

[111] Furthermore, note the instructions to be at peace with one another (1 Thess. 5.13), the emphasis on God being the God of peace (1 Thess. 5.23) and providing peace (2 Thess. 3.16).

provided by the authors of the epistles. In 1 Thessalonians 4.11 the instructions given are best understood as the detail of *how* the Thessalonians are to increase their φιλαδελφία, the command at the end of 4.10; the instructions themselves focus on requiring the disorderly to fulfil their right obligation. This is entirely coherent in the context of the Greco-Roman concept of familial obligation and generosity. The material interdependence of the family was grounded in mutual obligations; fulfilling these obligations was part of the duty of *pietas* (and the same concepts are clearly manifest in non-Latin sources). As such, if the Thessalonian church was acting, with regard to material interdependence, to some degree as a family, the authors' admonitions make clear sense: the disorderly needed to *increase* φιλαδελφία *by fulfilling their obligations within the family*, primarily by working so as to ensure the financial wellbeing of the family as a whole.[112] The apostolic example, repeatedly cited as a key norm, coheres with this reading, for the apostles worked so as not to burden the church as an

[112] This point has been picked up by both Burke and Aasgaard. Burke, *Family Matters*, 218: "Paul's point is that if brotherly love is sincere, it will best be demonstrated when a fellow-brother works with his own hands to support himself and his dependants"; Aasgaard, *Christian Siblingship*, 163: "the family was the basic production unit in society. Much emphasis was put on the ideal of the self-maintenance of the family and its members." Gregson, "Everything in Common?," objects to interpretations that draw on the familial language of the epistle because she considers it very difficult to reconstruct anything reliable about first-century family practices and prefers other interpretive lenses. I have attempted to demonstrate that there is sufficient evidence for a confident grasp of first-century family financial practices in Chapter 2. Given this context, the connection between generosity and fictive-kinship in the Thessalonian context seems to me compelling.

expression of love. The repeated family language of 1 Thessalonians 2.7–11, together with the statement that the Thessalonians had become "beloved" to the apostles (8), portrays the relationship between the apostolic party and the church as familial; one key expression of that familial love was their decision to work rather than financially burden the Thessalonians (9).[113] This, then, is the example for the disorderly: let your φιλαδελφία be expressed by working for your family so as not to burden them. In accordance with this reading, the instructions of 2 Thessalonians 3.14–15 clarify that although the disorderly are to be barred from one benefit of being in the family, they are not to be removed from it. The nuance of these instructions is required by the circumstances: does one continue to consider the disorderly as members of the fictive family when they fail to fulfil their obligations? The authors' solution is thus delicately positioned – they are still within the family but temporarily excluded from one area of family life.

6.5. Summary

The problem in Thessalonica is only understood when the full material implications of the practice of φιλαδελφία are given their due. The considerable financial and material interdependence of the

[113] This is likely one of the implications of becoming like a father (1 Thess. 2.11) – the apostolic party provided for the church rather than the other way around.

Thessalonian church was praised and encouraged by the authors, but was also being abused by a number of disorderly who were foregoing their familial responsibility of work but attempting to retain the familial benefit of support. An underappreciation of the significant financial generosity in the Thessalonian church is perhaps one factor that has led commentators to favour other explanations of the problem. Having made the case for a relatively simple interpretation, it should be recognised that it is possible to take aspects of the other explanations in combination with the simpler account we have provided – 'missional privilege' being the best candidate. The simpler account is, though, the one with the least assumptions and handles the data of the texts as well, if not better, than the other three interpretations.

In 2 Thessalonians 3.6–15 the authors instruct the church to restrict their generosity by barring the disorderly from their gatherings and, by consequence, excluding them from the mutual material support administered there. The explicit reason is that they were not currently working and this is described as an issue of the will rather than of circumstance. The implicit ethics of the texts give further context to this principle, neatly summarised in 2 Thessalonians 3.10: it was the failure of the disorderly to fulfil their familial obligations that was the problem. The punishment, of restricting their access to familial benefits, is quite in keeping with familial principles of their culture and context. We saw in section 2.3.2.2 that one of the reasons given in the *Digest* that one may

legally refuse the obligations of *pietas* is the previous failure of the other party to fulfil *their* duties of *pietas*. In other words, when a family member failed to fulfil their duty and obligations, their family was no longer bound to afford them the support they would otherwise have been entitled to. The same reasoning seems to underlie the ethical instructions of the authors of the Thessalonian epistles.

Chapter 7

7. Restricted Generosity in 1 Timothy 5.3–16

1 Timothy 5.3–16 is the second place in the New Testament where we encounter the restriction of generosity in an early Christian community. In this case the context is the care of widows in the community.[1] Once again I will outline the current interpretive options found in the scholarly literature and key methodological issues, before analysing the implicit ethics of the text. Again, I argue that the problem is inextricable from the self-perception of the community as a fictive family: confusion (or abuse) regarding the care of widows arose because of the reconstruction of 'familial' boundaries, with correlative financial practices. The restrictions

[1] Notably for this thesis, the epistle has recently received significant attention by scholars concerned with understanding the early church in relation to comparable social structures Korrina Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God: A Contextual Approach to Roles and Ministries in the Pastoral Epistles* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), considers the epistle to be addressing a "household-based private association" (59), taking seriously the early church's comparability both with associations and the *oikos*. Another recent monograph, Gary G. Hoag, *Wealth in Ancient Ephesus and the First Letter to Timothy: Fresh Insights from "Ephesiaca" by Xenophon of Ephesus*, BBRSup 11 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), also attempts to derive exegetical insights from the social context of the epistle, but focuses primarily on the cultural milieu of the rich, in particular their role in the Artemis cult. Unfortunately for this study, Hoag does not bring his insights to bear on 1 Tim 5.3–16.

proposed by the author, and the implicit ethics of the text, are also best understood within this framework.

7.1. Current interpretive options

The key questions any interpretation of this passage must address are as follows: What was the nature of the generosity that is the focus of this text? What was the perceived problem? What was the author's proposed solution? What does the passage reveal about the ethics (explicit or implied) of either the author or the community? The answers given to the latter three questions tend to be largely constrained by the answer one gives to the first and it is in answering this first question that the field is most clearly divided. One group of scholars proposes that this passage describes a formal church order of widows who worked for, and were supported by, the church;[2] another group of scholars considers the context to be

[2] Commentators include: Jouette M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996); Ernest F. Brown, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Methuen, 1917); Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, trans. P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972); Burton S. Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: SCM, 1948); Anthony T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: CUP, 1966); John N.D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles: I & II Timothy, Titus*, BNTC (London: Black, 1963); Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe, Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994); Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Jürgen Roloff, *Der Erste Brief an Timotheus*, EKKNT (Zürich: Neukircher, 1988); Ceslas Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les Épitres Pastorales* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1947). Monographs and articles arguing in this direction include: Jouette M. Bassler, "The Widow's Tale: A Fresh Look at 1 Tim 5:3–16," *JBL* 103 (1984): 23–41; Stevan Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 70–73; Dennis R.

one of charitable care of widows, with no church order in view.[3] A couple of scholars attempt to harmonize these positions.[4] The key arguments of each may be sketched as follows:[5]

MacDonald, "Virgins, Widows, and Paul in Second-Century Asia Minor," in *1979 SBL Seminar Papers*, ed. P. Achtemeier (Missoula: Scholars, 1979); Stählin, "Chēra," in *TDNT*, ed. Friedrich, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); Bonnie B. Thurston, *The Widows: A Women's Ministry in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Paul R. Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* WUNT 166 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 523–26; David C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles* (Chico: Scholars, 1983), 161–65; Zamfir, *Household*, 352–62. Jay Twomey, *The Pastoral Epistles Through the Centuries* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), claims that "most modern commentators feel that an office of widows is at least strongly implied by our text" (74). The evidence I have surveyed suggests that this is an accurate statement if one ignores the last thirty years of scholarship; within that period it seems that the pendulum has swung the other way.

[3] Commentators include: Charles K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963); Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002); Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, NIBCNT (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984); I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); George T. Montague, *First and Second Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000); Risto Saarinen, *The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude* (London: SCM, 2008); Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). So also Charles Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H, 2011), who uses the term 'order' but means by it only that registered widows received regular and organised aid.

[4] George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); Luke T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

[5] As one may expect, the proponents of each position also argue their case by identifying the difficulties of the alternatives, but at this point we will focus on their constructive points.

7.1.1. An order of widows

Proponents of this perspective point to two major features in the text that are said to indicate a church order. First, καταλέγω (v. 9), usually translated "enrol," is used as a technical term for enrolment in an organised group.[6] To many interpreters, this indicates that 1 Timothy 5 concerns a formal office; thus, the appeal to "honour" (τίμα) real widows refers primarily to payment for services rendered by the official church widows. Second, the πίστιν mentioned in v. 12 denotes the vow taken by widows when they entered the order, namely to remain widows and commit themselves to the service of the church. This explains why remarrying would lead them to nullify this πίστιν and, therefore, why younger widows should be denied entry into the order. This is claimed to be a clearer and more natural interpretation than the alternatives.

Not crucial to the argument, but often used to buttress the case, are two further exegetical points. First, the requirement for a real widow to be a "ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή" is understood to mean that they have only ever had one husband. Such women would fulfil the Roman ideal of the *univira*, who is perceived to embody "female chastity, faithfulness, dedication and even religious piety."[7] Where

[6] See, e.g., Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, who emphasize the regularity of its occurrence in military contexts (75). It can also be found in connection with religious groups: see Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 591; Thurston, *Widows*, 44–45.
[7] Zamfir, *Household*, 357.

such widows appear in the early Christian tradition they are regularly portrayed as performing religious duties (particular emphasis is placed on Anna in Luke).[8] Second, the text indicates some of the likely duties of the order, most commonly prayer (drawing on v. 5) and pastoral visitation (drawing on the condemnation of the author in v. 13).[9]

The final positive argument for this position is the evidence of other texts. It is regularly claimed that statements are made by Ignatius, Polycarp and Tertullian concerning an order of widows,[10] creating a historical context that makes it plausible to see such an order emerging in the *Sitz im Leben* of 1 Timothy. This case is made particularly strongly by those who date 1 Timothy in the second century.[11]

7.1.2. A benefit register

The major alternative is that which considers the enrolment of the widows as a benefit register. Proponents generally point to other aspects of the text, arguing that its main concern is to do with

[8] Quinn and Wacker, *Timothy*, 427–29. This is especially compelling for them, as they consider Luke to have been the most likely author of the Pastoral Epistles.
[9] So, e.g., Thurston, *Widows*, 50–51.
[10] These are Ign. *Smy* 13.1; *Pol.* 4.1; Pol. *Phi.* 4.3; Tert. *Veiling of Virgins* 9.
[11] Although see Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, who considers the letter authentic and still sees here an order of widows. It should also be mentioned that the 'widows' order' position has also been incorporated into feminist scholarship which argues that the power or influence of the order was the major problem, which the author sought to curtail through his directives. Consequently, the restrictions to the order and polemical description of unruly widows aim to undermine and restrict the egalitarian impulse within the church. So esp. Bassler, "Widow's Tale," *passim*.

financial support: "balancing the needs of the poor and the resources of the intentional community."[12] They note repeated discussion of who is responsible for supporting widows (v. 4, 8, 16). The appeal to "τίμα" real widows is thus not reward for services rendered but support for those truly in need. As such, the question the author faces is not 'who should qualify for the order' but rather 'who should qualify for support.' This makes better sense of the flow of the text which discusses both circumstantial and character qualifications.

The historical context often adduced to support such a reading is as follows: It is likely that there were a large number of widows in the Greco-Roman world, due to both high mortality rates and the normal practice of women marrying significantly older men. Jens-Uwe Krause has estimated that thirty percent of women in the ancient world were widows;[13] even those who consider Krause's estimate too high generally concur that the number of widows would have been significant.[14] Furthermore, the duty to care for widows is emphasised in Judaism and seems to have been practised by the Jerusalem church (Acts 6.1–7). Thus, we should expect both

[12] Luke T. Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New Testament in Context (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1996), 179.
[13] Jens-Uwe Krause, *Witwen und Waisen im Römischen Reich: Vols. I-IV* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1994), 1.73.
[14] Thomas A.J. McGinn, "Widows, Orphans and Social History," *JRA* 12 (1999): 617–32, 618–19; Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 124–25.

a need for care of widows in the early Christian communities and a recognition that the church had to address this need.

7.1.3. Harmonisation

George Knight has attempted to harmonize the two positions by paying careful attention to the nuances of the text and by resisting assuming what is not said. His argument is best summarised in his own words:[15]

> enrollment on the list involves a "pledge" (πίστιν) with reference to Christ that would be "set aside" if a widow on the list were to remarry (vv. 11, 12). The pledge is, therefore, to remain a widow and serve Christ in that capacity. The requirement of sexual fidelity while married… and of practical Christian service… might imply that the enrolled widow is to have a part in the church's ministry.[16]

However, for Knight, this pledge and ministry does not constitute an order or organisation, and is only considered an option for destitute widows. He reconstructs the arrangement thus:

> So a church may have a list of elderly and godly widows who have no one else to care for them and who commit themselves to serving Christ. The church commits itself to assist these widows and in turn may ask them to perform certain tasks as need arises. Noting all the dimensions of this arrangement keeps one from drawing the false conclusion that the church does not help other widows who are either younger or who do not fully meet the requirements. But the passage does imply that the church enters into this

[15] A similar position is taken by Johnson, *Timothy*, 264, 274–75, but less clearly; Knight is the better representative.
[16] Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 222.

> permanent arrangement only with certain qualified widows and with mutually accepted commitments and possible responsibilities. Noting all the dimensions of the arrangement also guards against the erroneous conclusion that Paul is mandating a widows' organization in the church. The teaching of the passage is, rather, that the church only provides for widows when families do not. Thus, where every widow is provided for by her family there is no need for such a list. If, however, there needs to be a list, these are the requirements.[17]

These, then, are the main interpretive options for reconstructing the nature of the generosity occurring in this Christian community. It would be too strong to claim that all the other key questions *must* depend on this one, but they often follow accordingly. On the one hand, the problem could be a strain on the resources of the community and possible bad repute due to the church supporting women behaving in morally questionable ways. Alternatively, the reputation of the widows' order is at risk,[18] or the author needs to curtail the influence of the widows' order (the intention behind the explicit prohibitions and defamation).[19] The solution is either aimed at restricting access to an order or restricting access to resources. Once again, it is proposed that the exegetical issues debated are enlightened by paying attention to the implicit ethics of the text. For this reason, the summative discussions follow the

[17] Ibid., 222–23.
[18] E.g., Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 114.
[19] Esp. Bassler, "Widow's Tale," 38. We must note the failure of some 'widows' order' proponents to explain what the problem was, e.g., Dibelius and Conzelmann, who never address the question.

analysis of the text, but to briefly anticipate my conclusion on this specific issue, I argue that the benefit register interpretation is broadly correct and better supported by the evidence.

7.2. Methodological issues

There are two methodological issues that require brief comment. First, some commentators, in line with the prevailing consensus, assume that any care of widows in the early church was modelled on Jewish practice:

> It appears that a *roll* of widows was kept, and thus that there was a fairly developed organization; there is, however, no reason to doubt that the Church, following the Jewish model, did organize its charitable relief at an early date.[20]

However, as has been argued, we cannot legitimately make such assumptions; this thesis will avoid doing so. Second, the debate over the authorship and date of 1 Timothy is vast and cannot be engaged here;[21] fortunately, my argument is not dependent on any one position. As briefly mentioned above (7.1.1), the 'widows' order' interpretation may appear better evidenced if the epistle is given a late date, depending upon one's assessment of the other texts that mention widows in the second century, but other than this no matters of exegesis are affected by the dating. Although I

[20] Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 75. Much the same is found in Johnson, *Timothy*, 272.
[21] For the literature, see the major commentaries.

consider the epistle authentic,[22] I will refer to 'the author' rather than 'Paul' throughout as a means of reinforcing the independence of my argument from any particular position on authorship or date.

7.3. Implicit ethics in 1 Timothy 5.3–16

Χήρας τίμα τὰς ὄντως χήρας.
εἰ δέ τις χήρα τέκνα ἢ ἔκγονα ἔχει,
μανθανέτωσαν
πρῶτον τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον εὐσεβεῖν
καὶ ἀμοιβὰς ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς προγόνοις·
τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.
ἡ δὲ ὄντως χήρα
καὶ μεμονωμένη
ἤλπικεν ἐπὶ θεὸν
καὶ προσμένει ταῖς δεήσεσιν καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας,
ἡ δὲ σπαταλῶσα
ζῶσα τέθνηκεν.
καὶ ταῦτα παράγγελλε,
ἵνα ἀνεπίλημπτοι ὦσιν.
εἰ δέ τις τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ,
τὴν πίστιν ἤρνηται
καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρων.
Χήρα καταλεγέσθω
μὴ ἔλαττον ἐτῶν ἑξήκοντα γεγονυῖα,
ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή,
ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη,

[22] Following the arguments of Johnson, *Timothy*, 55–99.

εἰ ἐτεκνοτρόφησεν,
εἰ ἐξενοδόχησεν,
εἰ ἁγίων πόδας ἔνιψεν,
εἰ θλιβομένοις ἐπήρκεσεν,
εἰ παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ ἐπηκολούθησεν.
νεωτέρας δὲ χήρας παραιτοῦ·
ὅταν γὰρ καταστρηνιάσωσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
γαμεῖν θέλουσιν
ἔχουσαι κρίμα
ὅτι τὴν πρώτην πίστιν ἠθέτησαν·
ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἀργαὶ μανθάνουσιν
περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας,
οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀργαὶ
ἀλλὰ καὶ φλύαροι
καὶ περίεργοι,
λαλοῦσαι τὰ μὴ δέοντα.
Βούλομαι οὖν νεωτέρας
γαμεῖν,
τεκνογονεῖν,
οἰκοδεσποτεῖν,
μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδόναι τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ λοιδορίας χάριν·
ἤδη γάρ τινες ἐξετράπησαν ὀπίσω τοῦ σατανᾶ.
εἴ τις πιστὴ ἔχει χήρας,
ἐπαρκείτω αὐταῖς
καὶ μὴ βαρείσθω ἡ ἐκκλησία,
ἵνα ταῖς ὄντως χήραις ἐπαρκέσῃ.

The structure of this text is debated, particularly as to how many different groups of widows are conceived of by the author and which verses correspond to each group. Any interpretation must

make some decision about these matters. Commonly, this is the first issue the exegete discusses; however, as the best solution is evidenced, in part, by the ethics of the text, a structure will be proposed after our analysis. As in the previous chapter, the following discussion draws heavily on Zimmermann's methodology, employing several of his "perspectives." Once again, I will employ the tools in the manner that is best suited to the text: In this case, the best approach is to make some general observations as to the linguistic form of the text, and the norms and values to which it refers, as a prelude to a verse-by-verse analysis. It is in this close analysis where interaction with the scholarly literature will primarily be found; this detailed work serves as the evidence-base for the summative discourses that follow.

7.3.1. Linguistic form

The text is organised around six imperatives, of which four are unconditional (v. 3, 4, 7, 11) and two conditional (v. 9, 16). In addition, the author expresses a wish (βούλομαι, v. 14), which functions rhetorically as a conditional command. Thus, we have seven instructions in the text. Of these seven, only twice is the command given without some kind of explanation or justification (v. 3, 9). These commands are one of two primary vehicles for ethical communication in our text. The other is *characterisation*; that is, the author describes certain behaviours in such a manner as to communicate ethical judgments on such behaviour. The intended

function of the categorisation is to allow the recipient(s)[23] of the letter to evaluate the behaviour of individuals and place them in the appropriate category. Having done so, recipient(s) are able to obey the imperatives of the text, which command action to be taken regarding the different groups. Such passages are rich with implicit ethics.

7.3.2. Norms and values

The norms or values the text explicitly appeals to include: piety (εὐσέβια, 4), what pleases God (4), life/death (6), being blameless (ἀνεπίλημπτος), the faith (8), an unbeliever (8), the first faith/vow (τὴν πρώτην πίστιν, 12) and things that ought not to be said (13). One is immediately struck by how many of these are contextual; it is difficult to be certain exactly what the content of such norms were. The appeal to εὐσέβια requires a common understanding to be shared between the author and recipient(s) of what is meant by the term for this norm to carry any weight; to work out what the things are that "ought not to be said" that the author has in mind is difficult, if not impossible; the agreed (negative) ethical norm of "an unbeliever" is only understood contextually, and so forth. A second observation to make is that these are only the *explicated* norms/values; more are implied. For example, verse sixteen assumes the ethical norm that widows need to be supported, but this

[23] The letter seems to address Timothy, but often extends to the wider church. See Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 52.

is not stated; the same could be said of the passage as a whole (3–16). To try to explicate what is assumed (by the author and often the interpreter) allows for clarity in our interpretative argumentation.

7.3.3. The text

v. 3 Χήρας τίμα τὰς ὄντως χήρας.

Here we have our first unconditional imperative of this section of the epistle. It functions to control the subject and dictate the content of what follows: the following thirteen verses clarify how exactly this instruction is to be obeyed. As previously discussed, almost all commentators suppose that τίμα includes a financial element.[24] The disagreement is over whether this refers to honouring and remunerating members of the widows' order or maintaining destitute widows.[25] In either case we find here an assumed norm: the 'honouring' of widows is the right thing to do. Without the assumed norm the rest of the text is nonsensical. The fact that there is no justification given for this imperative informs us that this assumed norm was shared between the author and the recipient(s) of the letter. The assumed norm is, thus, either that members of the order should be appropriately honoured (including financially) or that destitute widows must be financially supported. We must

[24] Contra. Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 73.
[25] For 'benefit register' exegetes, the financial aspect of τίμα is necessarily primary. This is not necessarily so for the 'widows' order' interpretation.

analyse the rest of the text to decide which understanding is better. It should be noted that at this point the following discussion must address at least two groups: real widows (however defined) and other widows.

> *v. 4* εἰ δέ τις χήρα τέκνα ἢ ἔκγονα ἔχει, μανθανέτωσαν πρῶτον τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον εὐσεβεῖν καὶ ἀμοιβὰς ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς προγόνοις· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

Here begins the first distinction made by the author to determine who is a "real widow": does the widow have descendants? (having τέκνα ἢ ἔκγονα as opposed to being μεμονωμένη [5]). ἔκγονα can refer to any descendants but it is most likely that grandchildren are primarily in view here.[26] A few scholars take the subject of the unconditional imperative μανθανέτωσαν to be the generalised χήρα,[27] with the explanation that the widows were required to show εὐσέβια towards their household, usually understood to mean that they should fulfil their domestic duties; the majority opinion, though, is that the subject is τέκνα ἢ ἔκγονα.[28] In the end a decision must rest on the likely understanding of εὐσέβια shared between the author and recipients. As εὐσέβια was the Greek equivalent of

[26] So, e.g., ESV, NRSV. It would be very rare for a widow to have no living children or grandchildren, but to have other living descendants.
[27] Roloff, *Timotheus*, 287–88; Bassler, *Timothy*, 94–96.
[28] So all other commentators consulted. Even Zamfir, *Household*, for whom χήρα-as-subject would be a more helpful interpretation for her overall thesis, concedes that this is unlikely (356). For further bibliography see Marshall, 583.

pietas, often standing for the same set of values,[29] we can appeal to our investigation of the financial implications of *pietas* within an *oikos*. One of the primary obligations of *pietas* within the *oikos* was to provide financial support for the basic needs of those without means, and the most important relationship of all in this regard was between parents and children. As such, by far the best assumption to make is that the author was appealing to this widespread, historic, dominant emphasis on the obligation of descendants to provide for their progenitors. That the reciprocity of *pietas* is in view is surely confirmed by the author's claim that to fulfil his command is to ἀμοιβὰς ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς προγόνοις (ἀμοιβάς as "return, recompense" [BDAG]; thus the phrase can be rendered "to make a return to their progenitors"). Interpretations of this statement which take the widows as the subject are strained. It must be noted that although the content of εὐσέβια must be ascertained by identifying the shared cultural assumptions, the author does not justify this instruction by appeal to common custom, but to what pleases God. Of the two interpretations, ours is the more likely candidate to be described as "pleasing to God," as Jews considered such behaviour to fulfil the fifth commandment.

[29] See Angela Standhartinger, "Eusebia in den Pastoralbriefen ein beitrag zum einfluss Romischen Denkens auf das Entstehende Christentum," *NovT* 48 (2006): 51–82; Carolyn Osiek, "Pietas in and out of the Frying Pan," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 166–72, 170; Adam Pažout, "Roman Pietas and Herod the Great," *Studia Hercynia* 19 (2015): 206–17, 207.

v. 5 ἡ δὲ ὄντως χήρα καὶ μεμονωμένη ἤλπικεν ἐπὶ θεὸν καὶ προσμένει ταῖς δεήσεσιν καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας,

Having dealt with widows who have relatives the author turns to those who do not, but with a characterisation that is important for our analysis. He first explicates that a real widow must be truly alone (μεμονωμένη) in the sense of having no relatives who could support her.[30] The rest of the verse, though, describes a particular character and set of behaviours, namely, a reliance upon God that is expressed through regular prayer. The reliance is presumably with regard to her material needs; the hope in God carries an implicit "rather than…": faced with material need the widow has chosen to rely on God rather than turning to other possible sources of provision – most obviously prostitution.[31] Here, then, we find that now *three* groups have been established: 1) real widows – as defined by need (no relatives) and character (hope in God, prayer); 2) other widows who have relatives; 3) the logical implication of this verse: other widows who may have no relatives but whose character may not comply with the description of a 'real widow' given by the author.

v. 6 ἡ δὲ σπαταλῶσα ζῶσα τέθνηκεν

This verse confirms our last observation – the author defines a group of widows not considered 'real widows' on the basis of their

[30] This is not just the most natural rendering of μεμονωμένη but necessary for the contrast he sets up to carry any weight.
[31] See, e.g., Robert Knapp, *Invisible Romans* (London: Profile, 2011), 237.

behaviour rather than their circumstances. The verb σπαταλάω ("live luxuriously, voluptuously," BDAG) is also found in James 5.5 and Ezekiel 16.49 (LXX); interestingly in both contexts the ill-treatment of the poor by those living luxuriously is highlighted.[32] Could it be that similar dynamics are at least partly in view here?[33] Clearly, the author considers this behaviour ethically wrong, for such behaviour does not only mean that one is not considered a "real widow" but also that one is "dead." What must be recognised is that such a widow would not be destitute; the condemned lifestyle depends on wealth. For the first time in the text, then, we have the implied possibility of a widow in some way connected with the church, discussed in relation to the problem of 'real widows,' who is not poor. It might, at this point, be helpful to list the categories thus far created:

1. Widow, no descendants to meet financial needs, reliant on God (real widow)
2. Widow, descendants (not real widow)
3. Widow, unsuitable character
   a) not reliant on God (implied) (not real widow)
   b) σπαταλάω, not poor (not real widow)

v. 7 καὶ ταῦτα παράγγελλε, ἵνα ἀνεπίλημπτοι ὦσιν.

[32] Although this is not the case in Sirach 21.15 where the verb is also found.
[33] This also lends a certain logic to the prohibition if the 'benefit register' interpretation is adopted – why should one whose lifestyle includes mistreating the poor be given access to charity? Johnson, *Timothy*, suggests that the judgment fits with "the view elsewhere in 1 Timothy that regards excessive wealth as a moral danger (6:6–10) and ostentatious display as scandal (2:9)" (262).

Our third unconditional imperative commands the recipient to re-issue the author's directives. The reason he should do so is conveyed by appeal to blamelessness as an ethical norm to which all should aspire. The subjunctive appears to refer primarily to the families of verse four, although it is easy in such a summary statement to envisage a principle with relevance to all groups in the church thus far discussed.

> *v.* 8 εἰ δέ τις τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ, τὴν πίστιν ἤρνηται καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρων.

This verse makes the strongest statement yet about providing for one's household, both confirming that this is the issue that has been in view since verse four and marking the climax of this part of the author's instructions. The word πρόνοια is the Greek synonym for the Latin *providentia*, which referred, amongst other things, to the provision undertaken for one's dependants.[34] This already inclines us to see the author as talking about familial reciprocity; such is strongly confirmed if one accepts the convincing argument of Theodore Skeat that in these contexts μάλιστα is best translated "namely."[35] The author is not just referring to one's reciprocal financial duties, with special attention to the household, but rather

[34] Bruce W. Winter, "Providentia for the Widows of 1 Timothy 5.3–16," *TynBul* 39 (1988): 83–99, 90; Johnson, *Timothy*, 263; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 590.
[35] "Especially the Parchments: A Note of 2 Tim 4.13," *JTS* 30 (1979): 173–77. He argues from usage in the pastoral epistles and non-biblical Greek letters that in direct discourse such as letters μάλιστα may be used *not* to differentiate two items, but to *further define* or *particularise* a generality. That is precisely what we find here.

specifying that one's reciprocal financial duties *were* to one's household. Thus, the author is representing the common conventions of familial reciprocity. To fail this expectation is condemned on two counts. First, it represents a denial of τὴν πίστιν, which functions here as a norm of ethical behaviour; for the author part of legitimate faith was maintaining familial duties. Second, such behaviour is condemned as it falls below the ethical standards of the unbeliever, who functions here as a negative ethical norm; if one is worse than a negative norm the situation is bad indeed!

Winter has argued that the grounds for such an accusation were the legal protection widows received in both Greek and Roman culture: "[the condemnation] refers to the fact that while holding the dowry, the head [of the household] was not fulfilling his legal responsibility to support the widow."[36] According to Winter, the legal stipulations in ancient Greek and Roman law ensured provision for widows, either by their children or their own blood relatives, dependent upon who held the dowry; he claims that the problem is that some "slipped through the net, especially those at the lowest end of the economic scale." [37] Although this is a coherent proposal, the secondary sources Winter cites regarding Greek and Roman law do not allow the confidence with which he draws this conclusion. David Schaps,[38] on whom Winter leans heavily, makes

[36] Winter, "Providentia," 92–93; Winter, *Roman Wives*, 126–27.
[37] Winter, "Providentia," 86.
[38] *Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979).

it clear that although there is evidence for considerable protection of widows in Athenian law, "we have no grounds to infer that the laws, customs, or social functions of the dowry were identical throughout Greece, or even that they were anywhere quite what they were at Athens."[39] Furthermore, Schaps goes on to discuss the considerable difference between what the law said and what actually happened.[40] For Roman law, Winter cites Suzanne Dixon's *The Roman Mother,*[41] but here the discussion is primarily about wealthy widows handling the divestiture of significant amounts of property; it is of considerable methodological risk to suggest that what was true of the wealthy was equally true across the whole of Roman society.[42] For these reasons Winter's point would be better grounded on the common ideology of familial reciprocity rather than the precisions of the law;[43] this still maintains the thrust of his argument as to why such behaviour was worse than an unbeliever's, but places the weight on less contestable evidence.

v. 9 Χήρα καταλεγέσθω μὴ ἔλαττον ἐτῶν ἑξήκοντα γεγονυῖα, ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή,

[39] Ibid., 84.
[40] Ibid., 89–91.
[41] London: Croom Helm, 1988.
[42] The failure to nuance our understanding of widows to allow for the differences between socio-economic classes is one of the main points repeatedly made by McGinn, "Widows, Orphans and Social History."
[43] As previously discussed, there are serious questions about how many people had genuine access to the law, see 2.3.3.

In verses 4–8 I have argued that the author is primarily (though not exclusively) distinguishing real widows by their familial circumstances; at this point the focus turns to two further distinctions: the age of the widow and her character. The verb καταλέγω is often translated "to enrol," and for some commentators the term itself "makes it absolutely clear that there was a definite order of widows."[44] Actually, as most recent commentators point out, all it makes clear is that there was a list of widows, implying nothing about the nature of the group enlisted.[45] It is the natural verb to use for any context that implies a degree of organisation in relation to the membership of a specific group; the 'widows' order' interpretation is coherent with the vocabulary but nothing more.

The first restriction made by the author is that a real widow must be sixty years old. No justification is offered in explicit connection with this command; any suggestions as to why the author makes this restriction must be made on the basis of the general ethical or practical emphases of the text.[46] The following restriction in this verse and the next characterises the real widow, communicating the

[44] Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 115.
[45] Thus BDAG has "to make a selection for membership in a group." See Johnson, *Timothy*, 364; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 591–92; and esp. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 286.
[46] Among the commentators, suggestions include: ensuring the financial burden of support on the church is manageable; sixty was considered true old age in Roman society, at which point one would not be considered able to provide for one's own needs; guaranteeing the inability of a registered widow to bear children and decreasing the chance of remarriage; decreasing the likelihood of sexual sin amongst the enrolled widows.

ethics of the author; widows that fit the mould qualify. Such a passage both serves the functional purpose of providing a means by which to make decisions about real widows, and underlines the ethical desirability of the behaviours listed. It is primarily for this reason that it seems highly unlikely that ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή should be taken to mean "only married once," *pace* the commentators who take the phrase to refer to the Roman ideal of the *univira*.[47] The case can only convincingly be made when one assumes the 'widows' order' interpretation: some ancient sources clearly do attribute "moral and religious value… to the condition of *univira*";[48] a Christian religious order for women is then a plausible context in which the condition of *univira* may be expected. The first problem, though, is that the author recommends remarriage for younger widows (v. 14). If the character list in which ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή appears partly functions to underline ethically good behaviour, it presumes remarkable inconsistency on the author's behalf to have him appeal to an ethical standard he almost immediately advises against. Secondly, the most natural Greek term for a *univira* is a μόνανδρος,[49] which is not what we have here.[50] A third problem is that the option of choosing to remain a *univira* is one open only to wealthy women who did not have to fear for their means into old

[47] Fee, *Timothy*; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*; Spicq, *Épitres Pastorales*.
[48] Zamfir, *Household*, 358.
[49] See, e.g., *IG* XIV 191; *I. Porto* 77; *JIWE* 1.207
[50] Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 116, notes this but fails to consider that the author's refusal to use this term may be an indication of what he *is* asserting.

age; for most women to refuse remarriage endangered their security and future, thus ironically making the financial support of the church primarily available to the wealthy. Fortunately, we are not forced to this conclusion as the phrase itself can just as readily be taken to refer to marital faithfulness (regardless of the number of husbands one has had).[51]

> *v. 10* ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη, εἰ ἐτεκνοτρόφησεν, εἰ ἐξενοδόχησεν, εἰ ἁγίων πόδας ἔνιψεν, εἰ θλιβομένοις ἐπήρκεσεν, εἰ παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ ἐπηκολούθησεν.

The characterisation is extended by a list of good works which a real widow must have a reputation for performing. The nature of the list, bookended by general references to "good works," indicates that it is illustrative. As such, the exact interpretation of each phrase is not as important to the current study as is the marking of their overall focus: care of others within the church. This is explicit in the phrase ἁγίων πόδας ἔνιψεν as the saints are the focus of care. In the context of wider early Christian evidence, hospitality (ξενοδοχέω) should be taken primarily to refer to the hospitality of other Christians;[52] aiding those in distress (θλιβομένοις ἐπήρκεσεν) is also likely focused on other Christians, whether that be material hardship or the distress of persecution. τεκνοτροφέω means to "bring up children" (BDAG), normally one's own, but could also

[51] Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 223; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 594; Towner, *Timothy*, 346.
[52] See the discussion of Rom 12.13b in 5.3.2; Collins, *Timothy*, 140.

refer to care of others' children. Those who see this list as the duties of the widows' order sometimes take this to refer to the care of orphans for which the Christian community was responsible.[53] Marshall, who rejects the 'widows' order' interpretation still maintains that this refers primarily to orphans "since by definition the widow has no children or grandchildren."[54] He overlooks, though, that the widow most probably did have children at some point, which would be a sufficient opportunity to establish a good reputation in this regard. It is best, then, to take the verb in its most natural sense.

Overall then, the author's instructions regarding which widows qualify as real widows have one circumstance-based restriction (age), and a character model to compare to. This model is headed by the specific requirement of sexually acceptable conduct before a more illustrative list of good works. The thrust of the list is that such widows should have a record of playing their part in the mutual care expected within the church. To interpret τεκνοτροφέω as care of orphans is an enticing option in this regard; however, even care of one's one children may be taken as fulfilling one's duty to the church in line with the wider concerns of this passage: caring for one's own dependants rightly relieves the church from having to do so. We have, therefore, an implicit emphasis on reciprocity within the fictive kinship of the church, the household

[53] Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 117.
[54] Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 595.

of God (1 Tim. 3.15). Under the 'benefit register' interpretation, we would have the requirement that, to receive the material support of the church, widows should have formerly demonstrated their own fulfillment of duties within the church: a clear example of appeal to familial reciprocity. By contrast, the 'widows' order' interpretation has to either presume this list is a list of their duties (but could such strenuous duties be required of those over sixty?) or that it is a character test for those entering the order (which then demands an explanation as to why these particular qualities are highlighted).

v. 11a νεωτέρας δὲ χήρας παραιτοῦ·

At verse 11 the author turns his attention to younger widows. Taken together with the implications of verses 9–10 we can complete the list of 'types' that the author discusses in 1 Timothy 5.3–16 as follows:

1. Widow, no descendants to meet financial needs, not younger than sixty, reliant on God, good character as per v. 9–10 (*real widow*)
2. Widow, descendants (*not real widow*)
3. Widow, unsuitable character (*not real widow*)
   a) not reliant on God (implied)
   b) σπαταλάω, not poor
   c) not meeting the requirements of v. 9–10
4. Young widow (under sixty) (*not real widow*)

Verse 11 contains the final unconditional imperative of this text. The comparative adjective depends on the instructions of verse 9: widows that are younger than the stipulated age fall into this

category. The author provides two reasons (vv. 11–13) justifying his command, just as he has also provided a rationale for rejecting widows with descendants (they should be supported by their families) and for rejecting widows of unsuitable character (explicitly - they are dead while they live;[55] implicitly - they have not fulfilled their obligations to the Christian fictive family).

> *v. 11b-12* ὅταν γὰρ καταστρηνιάσωσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ γαμεῖν θέλουσιν ἔχουσαι κρίμα ὅτι τὴν πρώτην πίστιν ἠθέτησαν·

The first reason the author gives for rejecting younger widows is, broadly, concern as to their unmarried condition, and the perceived likelihood that they may choose to marry again. Beyond this, interpretation is less easy. This verse is by far the greatest evidence for the 'widows' order' advocates and the most difficult for those who reject it. The argument runs thus: it is the act of marriage that is said to attract judgment. Marriage in and of itself does not represent sin or a denial of Christian faith, and, as such, πίστιν must here be taken as 'pledge' or 'vow.' This vow must refer to a vow of celibacy for it to be broken by marriage. Such vows are best explained by the existence of a widows' order that one had to take a vow of celibacy (and potentially other duties) to enter.[56]

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[55] Although the reason is explicit, it remains somewhat unclear! This is hardly a convincing piece of moral logic. It seems the implied reasons are the foundational ones as to why such widows should not be supported and the explicit statement is more of an assertion as to the spiritual state of such widows.
[56] So, e.g., Thurston, *Widows*, 45; Verner, *Household of God*, 164.

Much turns on how one understands τὴν πρώτην πίστιν, which functions as an ethical norm here.[57] The three most plausible options are: 1) the vow one takes upon entering the 'order'; 2) a vow taken by widows that amounts to less than entering an order, e.g., the commitment to pray for the Christian community in exchange for support;[58] 3) a reference to the Christian faith, with the corollary argument that the author has in mind here marriage to unbelievers, an action that would require the abandonment of Christian faith, as wives were required to align with their husbands in matters of religion.[59] All three suggestions suffer from the need to presume something the text does not make explicit: for the first two, that the vow included celibacy; for the third, that marriage to non-Christians is in view. In support of either of the first two options, the use of ἀθετέω to refer to the nullification of a formal treaty or pledge is well attested. Towner has objected that a vow of celibacy "would not be a likely condition of enrolment for widows aged sixty."[60] He is surely correct in what he states, but the argument fails: the author is introducing an age limit in this text;

[57] Although the verb καταστωνιάω is a *hapax legomenon* all interpretations render the sense as something like "growing wanton against Christ". Johnson, *Timothy*, notes "the translation must therefore combine the element of sensual itch and the result that this urge somehow turns them against Christ" (266). Whether the κρίμα in this verse refers to that of God, the church or the wider community is not decisive for our overall interpretation. Thus, τὴν πρώτην πίστιν is the key.
[58] Ibid., 275; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 226–27.
[59] Fee, *Timothy*, 121–22; Towner, *Timothy*, 352; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 601; Collins, *Timothy*, 141; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 291–92.
[60] Towner, *Timothy*, 352.

currently, if there was an 'order' of widows it obviously included younger widows before he wrote, otherwise his instruction would be redundant. We must recall that this is part of his justification for excluding younger widows.

If taken in isolation then, verses 11b-12 seem to favour some form of 'widows' order' interpretation.[61] However, the margin is not great, for all options struggle with a lack of information and all must provide some explanatory theory not in the text. If one is convinced there are strong grounds for rejecting the 'widows' order' interpretation based on other evidence it may well be legitimate either to leave this verse as an unsolved puzzle or to accept possibility three above as the least problematic solution, as many commentators do. Finally, the work of Bruce Winter on "new women" in the Pauline communities[62] presents an important thesis as to the *Sitz im Leben* of this text that makes coherent sense of some of its more puzzling elements. His argument will be assessed after examining verses 13–16.

> *v. 13* ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἀργαὶ μανθάνουσιν περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀργαὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, λαλοῦσαι τὰ μὴ δέοντα.

The second justification for rejecting younger widows is the behaviour that the author claims *results* from their enrolment. "At

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[61] As can be seen in the work of commentators who reject the maximalist reconstructions of an order, but nonetheless postulate some kind of vow with accompanying duty (even if only prayer) on the basis of this verse alone: e.g., Johnson, *Timothy*, 275; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 226–27.
[62] Winter, *Roman Wives*.

the same time" as their behaviour becomes sexually suspect (v. 12) they "learn" a list of negative behaviours.[63] Again, characterisation clearly communicates implied ethical judgments against such behaviour. The young widows learn to be idle, which is expressed and demonstrated in "going about" households. In such environments they are not only idle, but also accused of being "babblers" (φλύαρος) and "meddlers" (περίεργος). The first term is "highly pejorative"[64] indicating talk that makes no sense; the second can refer to inappropriate interference both in the lives of other people (which can have sexual connotations)[65] and divine matters.[66] In both cases they are judged to say things that ought not to be said.

It is no surprise that such characterisation has led many commentators to see here a reference to the heresies that were troubling the congregation, especially given the correlation of concerns about women and false teaching in 2.11–15. However, what "ought not to be said" may be ethical,[67] rather than theological, or indeed both. We cannot but note, following our study of the Thessalonian letters, the connection of financial

[63] That the widows "learn" such behaviour is difficult for the 'widows' order' interpretation: why should participating in the order lead the women to learn bad behaviour?
[64] "φλυαρέω", in Spicq, *TLNT*, 3.466.
[65] Winter, *Roman Wives*, 135.
[66] Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 118; and see esp. Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 327–28.
[67] Winter, *Roman Wives*, argues that "the context is the semantic field of sexuality" (135).

matters, idleness and meddlesome behaviour once again. Similarly to the Thessalonian problem, the concern is not just that such behaviour is occurring, but that the organisation of the church's finances is *facilitating* such behaviour. We have then two reasons for the rejection of younger widows from the financial support to which "real widows" were entitled: concern about their sexual behaviour (which was resulting in illegitimate marriage) and concern about their social behaviour (which was resulting in idleness and unhelpful speech).

v. 14a Βούλομαι οὖν νεωτέρας γαμεῖν, τεκνογονεῖν, οἰκοδεσποτεῖν,

Having justified his restrictions on younger widows the author commends an alternative set of choices for such women in the Christian community. The fundamental instruction is to remarry, for the other two duties (childbearing and household management) follow from this. Implicitly, then, the author compels the following possibilities for young widows who are currently 'enrolled' with the church: 1) They must remarry and fulfil their duties in that environment (which reflects both what is required of all the believers [v. 4] and characterises real widows [v. 10]). If having remarried they continue to behave as has been described in verses 12–13, then at least the church cannot be held culpable for providing their means to do so as they would now be supported by their husbands. 2) They do not remarry, but have relatives who can support them (v. 4). 3) They do not remarry but are wealthy enough

not to need support. In either of these latter two cases their behaviour may or may not change, but the church is no longer tasked with their support and no longer shares complicity in their behaviour. What is not resolved is the case of the younger widow with no relatives who cannot remarry and does not behave in a negative manner. One cannot demand comprehensiveness of this kind of text, but it may imply that such widows were not numerous enough to warrant specific instruction at this point in the life of the community. If so, this is itself important, for it implies that the unmarried state of many of the younger widows was a choice that they were making, rather than a circumstance over which they had no control. This is a central insight of Winter's thesis, to which we will shortly come.

> *v. 14b-15* μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδόναι τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ λοιδορίας χάριν·ἤδη γάρ τινες ἐξετράπησαν ὀπίσω τοῦ σατανᾶ.

The author offers a reason in defence of his advice (to prevent reviling [λοιδορία])[68] and further justifies it by claiming that some have already "turned away to follow Satan." The wellbeing of the community and of the individual young widows is in view. The rhetorical function of this statement is to add severity to the implied ethical judgments contained in the previous verses. The negative behaviour which is said to characterise the young widows is here associated with following Satan (and being the cause of abuse

[68] It does not matter for our concerns whether one sees the adversary as human or as another reference to Satan.

towards the community). The polemic indicates how serious the problem is, in the view of the author, that he is attempting to address in our text.[69]

> *v. 16* εἴ τις πιστὴ ἔχει χήρας, ἐπαρκείτω αὐταῖς καὶ μὴ βαρείσθω ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἵνα ταῖς ὄντως χήραις ἐπαρκέσῃ.

The final verse of our text presents one more interpretive puzzle. All are agreed that the author returns here to the need of relatives to support their widows, allowing the church to support those without relatives; but why does this emphasis reappear here and why is it addressed to believing women (πιστή)? Many commentators note that to return to such concerns at this point clearly indicates the overriding concern of the text: the material support of real widows.[70] Perhaps, but why appeal only to the women? Kelly has suggested that wealthy women are in view who have taken widows into their household for charitable support, but have begun to transfer the burden of their care to the church.[71] More commonly it is suggested that, since the woman of the household was primarily responsible for internal finances and practicalities,

[69] This has implications for interpreting vv. 11–12, if one sees this polemic as connecting that far back in the text. Would a desire to remarry and hence break one's vow of celibacy have been seen as following Satan? Would it make better sense of the text if the problem in vv. 11–12 was either a) serious or repeated sexually sinful behaviour or b) marriage that represented the abandonment of faith?
[70] A point well emphasised by Johnson, *Timothy*, 268–69, 271.
[71] Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 121.

she was the most natural addressee of such an instruction.[72] There is another suggestion worth considering though: verses 11–15 are all concerned with younger widows; may it be that this verse too has younger widows primarily in mind?[73] As we have seen, some of the widows the author wants to remove from church support were not poor and may have had significant wealth. Such widows may well have had elder widows who looked to them for support, even if their younger relatives (children etc.) had died. If so, in such circumstances, the author is clarifying that a younger widow of means who is herself depended upon by other widows should continue to support them. There is not sufficient evidence in the text to prove such a contention but it makes clear sense both of the text itself and the reason why the instruction would occur at this point. Whichever way this verse is understood, when taken with the rest of our text, if the addressees followed the author's instructions the lived ethos would be the same.

7.3.4. Excursus - B. Winter's thesis concerning "New Women"

The negative behaviours that are said by the author to characterise some of the widows in Ephesus include an extravagant lifestyle (v. 6), sexual impropriety (v. 11, and cf. 5.2) and a rejection of traditional roles (v. 13–14). They appeared to be exerting a degree

[72] Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 606; Towner, *Timothy*, 359; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 229; *pace* Collins, *Timothy*, 142–43.
[73] So also Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 524.

of influence over other church members in their speech (which is condemned by the author). Winter's thesis grows from the observation that similar behaviours also appear in the discussion of women in the church in 1 Timothy 2.9–15, and elsewhere in the New Testament,[74] leading him to question which socio-cultural *Sitz im Leben* is indicated by such concerns. Winter draws heavily on a short essay by Elaine Fantham et al.,[75] to argue that scholarship has inappropriately accepted a monochrome conception of first-century women. Drawing on the insights of Fantham et al. and a range of primary sources[76] he attempts to demonstrate that there is evidence for the emergence of women in the first century who rejected traditional societal roles and expectations:

> The 'new' wife or widow in the late Roman Republic and early Empire was the one whose social life was reported to have been pursued at the expense of family responsibilities that included the complex running of households. Life

[74] Winter particularly addresses 1 Cor. 11:2–16 and Titus 2.3–5 in addition to the passages in Timothy. Another significant thesis regarding the socio-cultural background of these passages in 1 Timothy is Hoag, *Wealth*, where he argues that what is in view is "the social norms linked to Artemis" (228) amongst the rich of Ephesus, which impacted dress, morality and theology. One may hesitate to utterly discount such a thesis in the absence of evidence against it, but his evidence base is exclusively *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus. One may doubt both whether this is sufficient for confident reconstructions of the social milieu of 1 Timothy and whether the rich portrayed in the *Ephesiaca* can be assumed to be present in significant enough number in the church to which 1 Timothy is addressed, to make complete sense of these passages.

[75] "The 'New Woman': Representation and Reality," in *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text*, ed. E. Fantham et al. (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 280–93.

[76] Split into three bodies of evidence: contemporary writers; poets and playwrights; Augustinian legislation.

> beyond their household could involve illicit liaisons that defied the previously accepted norms of marriage fidelity and chastity. (5)

Such behaviour included the way women chose to dress – rejecting traditional style and opting for clothing and hairstyles usually associated with *hetairai* (36); it was also associated with the increased participation of women in philosophy and didactic discourse (59–74). The reason for these developments is attributed by Winter to the improvement in the legal position of women in this period (21–22) and increased social freedom. The emergence of the 'new women' provoked a double response from the emperor: a propaganda offensive promoting traditional values (7) and legislation aimed at punishing those who acted or advocated such behaviour and rewarding the pursuit of traditional morals (39–58). With specific reference to 1 Timothy 5, Winter notes that the description of the author in verses 11–15 is mirrored in contemporary sources:

> Cicero wrote of the 'widow casting off restraints, a wanton living promiscuously, a rich woman living extravagantly and an amorous widow living a loose life.'[77] Her legal position allowed her to throw caution to the wind on being released from the constraints of her marriage; this was a huge concern in the Empire. (129)

He demonstrates that each of the behaviours mentioned was of concern regarding widows (134–35). As such, his thesis has significant explanatory power for why the author of 1 Timothy

[77] Cicero, *pro Caelio*, 38.

employs the characterisation he does, and why the proposed alternative is a return to traditional domestic duties: this was the nub of the issue.

I am convinced that Winter's argument is strong enough to deserve attention in interpreting 1 Timothy 5, but with a serious qualification: many of the primary sources that Winter appeals to for evidence of the 'new woman' are highly polemical, satirical or by their nature difficult to consider reliable as an accurate portrayal of reality.[78] The nature of the evidence should make one much more tentative than Winter is in his analysis. That the evidence is not as strong as he adduces is suggested by the fact that the existence of the 'new women' is "*not* generally accepted"[79] by the acadamy. For Lynn Cohick, "the existence of the "new woman," who was sexually promiscuous and upset the balance of propriety in Rome and beyond, is more a poetic fiction and a political smear than a

[78] For example, the quote from Cicero on the last page is taken from a speech made in defence of a client; the success of his defence relied on discrediting the woman in question, so it can hardly be taken as an accurate record of her behaviour! The problems are drawn out by Suzanne Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres and Real Life* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 153–56.

[79] Suzanne Dixon, "Review Article: B.W. Winter, Roman Wives," *JTS* 56 (2005): 558–61, 560. See also the review article by Thomas A.J. McGinn, "Paul's Women," *The Classical Review* 55 (2005): 645–47. The same criticism is made of the essay by Fantham et al. on which Winter so heavily leans: E.W. Leach, "Reviewed Work: Women in the Classical World: Image and Text by E. Fantham et Al.," *Studies in Iconography* 18 (1997): 225–28: "The 'excursus' on the so-called 'New Women' of the Later Republic is likely to present the thorniest problems of discrimination… Not mentioned (save by an item in the bibliography) is the counter-current of contemporary scholarship that grants only a fictive, literary existence to the teasingly contradictory elegiac mistress…" (227).

historical reality."[80] The same could be said for the too-ready acceptance that what is documented in Rome would have spread to Ephesus in a straightforward manner.[81] Having said this, there is clearly enough evidence to make his thesis *possible*, and the evidence of the New Testament itself is often given scant attention in determining how *probable* it is. Moreover, Winter's case also gains plausibility by its sheer realism in recognising that the moral behaviour of any group of women at any time in history is likely to contain variance which would naturally lead to ethical discourse about such variance; matters of sexual behaviour, clothing, duty and social behaviour are some of the most likely issues of deviance and debate. In relation to 1 Timothy 5, Dixon comments that she is "fascinated by the strength of feeling – especially fear – expressed by powerful groups towards the relatively helpless,"[82] but this begs the question. If there was no social reality to be reckoned with why did the author give the instructions he did in the manner he did?

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[80] Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christian: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 75. Cohick presents a robust critique of Winter's position.

[81] See McGinn, "Paul's Women," 646. To the same result, one may also question who the targets of the Augustinian legislation really were. Judith E. Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford: OUP, 1995): "the Augustinian legislation was originally designed to promote marriage and child-bearing (and to discourage extramarital and sexual activity) among those Romans whose moral and social behaviour was of the greatest importance to Augustus - that is, the Roman senatorial aristocracy" (105).

[82] Dixon, "Review," 561.

7.4. Summative discussions

7.4.1. The structure of 1 Timothy 5.3–16

It is now possible to suggest how the structure of this section should be understood.[83]

5.3 Controlling instruction: support real widows
- 5.4–5a First distinction: real widows defined by circumstance (family)
- 5.5b-6 Second distinction: real widows defined by character
- 5.7–8 Clarification: the duties of the family

5.9–10 Real widows
- 5.9 Defined by circumstance (age) and sexual fidelity
- 5.10 Defined by character (fulfilment of "church family" duties)

5.11–16 Reject younger widows
- 5.11–12 First problem: sexuality and illegitimate marriage
- 5.13 Second problem: illegitimate behaviour
- 5.14 Solution
- 5.15 Justification
- 5.16 Clarification: the duties of widows OR

5.16: Clarification: the duties of the family

The justification for this suggestion is the exegesis presented above and will not be repeated here, other than to make two points that the structural summary draws out. First, when presenting the positive requirements for 'real widows' a double distinction runs throughout: character and circumstance. In verses 4–8 when circumstance appears to be primarily in view, we must not ignore

[83] Of the commentators, this structure is closest to that of Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 580–81.

the strong emphasis on appropriate character (5b-6). It has been argued above that positive character requirements focus on sexual fidelity and the fulfilment of familial duty to both the natural *oikos* (5b, 9, 14, 16) and the *oikos* of God (10). Second, the negative restrictions are both stated strongly, but the main addressees of the rhetoric are different: where the emphasis is on the circumstances of the widow, that is, whether she has family to support her, the focus is firmly on the family (4, 7, 8); where the emphasis is on the character of the widows she is the target of the discourse (6, 11–16). This implies that there were two problems connected to the support of widows in the Ephesian church.

7.4.2. Benefit register or a widows' order

Before presenting my conclusions and summation, we must offer a final analysis of whether the 'benefit register' or 'widows' order' interpretation is best supported by our exegesis. Both positions face problems, but the problems for the 'widows' order' interpretation are more severe and admit of less convincing defences.

There are two problems facing the 'benefit register' interpretation. The widely acknowledged one is the nature of the τὴν πρώτην πίστιν in verse twelve, which has been fully discussed above; most commentators import an explanatory factor from outside the text – that the illegitimate marriage is one to an unbeliever, thus compromising *faith* interpreted as Christian belief. This is true, and it is a weakness, but one must also see that the

'widows' order' interpretation also imports an explanatory factor from outside the text – that the vow is a vow of celibacy. Thus, neither interpretation escapes the accusation of going beyond the text at this point. The second problem is one that emerges from our exegesis:[84] the illegitimate behaviour characterised by the author in v. 6 would require the widow to have relative wealth; why, then, would a relatively wealthy widow be particularly concerned about being placed on a benefit register that seems only to seek to provide for her basic needs? Does this not incline one to consider that being a 'real widow' was about more than financial support? The question is particularly important for evaluating Winter's thesis.[85] Certainly, if the widow of v. 6 is considered the same problem as the widows of verses 11–15 then one must admit the logic of this line of thought. One solution, though, is that the widow of v. 6 is *not* the same widow that is in mind for verses 11–15. In the former, the behaviour requires wealth but is not connected with being 'registered'; in the latter, the behaviour condemned does not require wealth and is connected with being 'registered.' Thus, the text provides a ready solution to the proposed problem, although the issue is less easily resolved the more one adopts Winter's thesis.

[84] I cannot find discussion of this problem in any commentaries consulted.
[85] This is because the 'new woman' Winter describes is always conceived of as having relative wealth. This supports my view of his thesis – that it is most valuable in that it discerns a range of moral behaviour that was present in the first century, to which both Christian and secular authors responded, rather than a particularly accurate description of a regular reality faced by the majority.

The problems facing the 'widows' order' interpretation are more numerous and more significant. First, most specifically, the advice of the author to younger widows to remarry (14) seems to militate against the thesis of an order which required celibacy after one's first marriage; why would younger widows knowingly exclude themselves from participating in the order, when the text presumes their desire to join/remain?[86] The best solution seems to be that the author's advice to remarry presumes that those he addresses would not qualify for the order even if they remained celibate;[87] but is it likely that behavioural faults would still disqualify an individual decades later, if those in question amended their behaviour? Second, is it plausible that those aged sixty and above had the capacity to undertake the duties of an order, usually considered to be similar to the list of good works in v. 10? If not, one must presume the duties of the order were largely limited to prayer; but there is no evidence for this in the text.[88] This, in fact, is the third problem – the sheer lack of positive evidence for a widows' order: "there is no evidence in the text that there was any organizational structure beyond meeting the widows' needs."[89] By contrast, there

[86] Trebilco, *Early Christians*, suggests that the reference in v. 14 is to 'widows' who have never previously married (526); this interpretation depends on a widows' order that also admitted virgins, for which we have no evidence in the text. He appeals to Ign. *Smy* 13.1, on which see below.
[87] Fee, *Timothy*, 123.
[88] The characterisation of v. 5 is concerned with how the destitute widow seeks support, rather than a prescription of her duties.
[89] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 275.

is plenty of positive evidence for the 'benefit register' interpretation; this is clearly the main concern of the text. Ultimately, the 'widows' order' interpretation depends on a reconstruction that is almost entirely independent of our text; the 'benefit order' interpretation depends on a reconstruction largely based on our text, considered plausible in a wider context. As such, the final problem with the 'widows' order' interpretation is that its plausibility rests on the evidence of later sources. The usual claim is that a widows' order is clearly established in the second century,[90] (usually citing Ign. *Smy* 13.1; *Pol.* 4.1; Pol. *Phi.* 4.3; Tert. *Veiling of Virgins* 9) but an analysis of these texts *does not* provide evidence of an order: "none of these statements remotely suggests such a ministering order. To the contrary, the passages allude to widows' existence as a recognizable entity and reflect concern for their care."[91] We have to reach into the third century to find secure evidence of a widows' order.[92]

In the final analysis, the problems facing the 'widows' order' interpretation are terminal. We have discussed above the position of Knight and Johnson, who travel as far as one can go in this direction whilst remaining constrained by the evidence; neither can conceive of an order, but rather the possibility that some widows were given the security of permanent support, in exchange for

[90] For many scholars, this naturally coheres with their late dating of 1 Timothy.
[91] Fee, *Timothy*, 125.
[92] E.g., *Didascalia Apostolorum* 14–15.

which they *may* pray for the church or offer occasional services. Anything more than this is without foundation.[93]

7.4.3. The problem and its solution

The context which is implied by the text is that the Ephesian church was materially supporting widows. What we cannot know is to what degree, how such support was administered or whether there were any restrictions on beneficiaries. What evidence we do have suggests that the support was comparable to inter-familial maintenance and that, if there were restrictions, they were few and underdeveloped, with the exception of one: it appears that only widows who were members of the church are in view; there is no evidence the church was engaged in supporting widows beyond the church. The instruction of verse three implies a shared ethical value, namely, that the support of widows, broadly put, was right. The rest of the text (vv. 4–16) is concerned with further explaining and qualifying this agreed value.

The problem is thus the problem of an existing system, rather than the proposal of a new one. The problem is twofold: First, some families had shifted the burden of material care for their widows onto the church, which was putting pressure on the church's resources. The author's clarification of the duties of households

[93] Also very close to this position is Roger Gryson, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, trans. J. Laporte and M.L. Hall (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1976), 9–10.

may well imply that there was some confusion between the duties of a Christian towards one's own *oikos* and the *oikos* of God. It is not difficult to imagine how such confusion may have arisen and how early Christian communities like that in Ephesus may have taken considerable time working out how to live in the new paradigm. Less generously, one may also easily imagine how the situation allowed some to deliberately take advantage of the blurred boundaries for their own financial benefit. Thus, our reconstruction gains plausibility from, and further reinforces, the contention of this study that the financial aspects of familial reciprocity were taken seriously within the fictive family of the church. The second problem is the ethically questionable behaviour of some widows, which emerges from the author's characterisation which, though clearly polemical, at least indicates the general areas of behaviour that were of concern. There are essentially three options, which are not mutually exclusive: 1) Some widows were rejecting traditional morality and gender roles. Their behaviour was sexually liberal; their time was spent in social pleasures and was notably less domesticated in its literal sense; many were choosing not to marry, some may have been marrying unbelievers; some were perhaps displaying material indulgence (v. 6).[94] 2) Some widows were engaging in heresy, which was the source of questionable ethical practices. This may have been connected to the false teachers, the

[94] Winter's thesis is the best case for this interpretation.

Artemis cult of the city or simply magical practices that were commonplace. They may have been marrying unbelievers.[95] 3) Some widows were remaining idle. They chose to enjoy their social circles, leading to disruptive speech and becoming 'busybodies' amongst the community whilst leading unproductive lives.[96]

The solution the author prescribes is a set of three restrictions, two of which are justified (one clearly, the other indirectly) and one of which is not. The first restriction is that no widow will be supported who has descendants; the burden is placed firmly on the natural *oikos* and reinforced with appeal to both cultural norms and the divine will. This clarifies where responsibility falls in the overlap of the natural *oikos* and the *oikos* of God; the result should be to cut the number of supported widows. The second restriction is that of age – no widow under sixty will be supported; no reason is given by the author.[97] Whatever the rationale may be, the implication is clearly that the number of widows 'enrolled' would be curtailed, perhaps dramatically. The third restriction is that of character and is therefore the most complex: to gain support widows must 'fit the mould' created by verses 5, 9–10. Although there is no clear justification, there is an indirect one, for when the author discusses younger widows, he states that to change their behaviour in line with his suggestions would avoid reproach (14)

[95] Hoag, *Wealth*, 228 and *passim*, elucidates one plausible reconstruction as to how this situation may have developed.
[96] E.g., Johnson, *Timothy*, 267, 275.
[97] For suggestions see n. 46.

and apostasy (15); by implication, therefore, restricting support on the basis of such character requirements aims at the same, that the church would avoid the bad reputation that might result from effectively sponsoring disapproved behaviour. A further reason for this restriction may be drawn from the nature of the positive requirements of verse 10. As we observed, the "good works" required can be seen as service rendered to other members of the church; essentially, this is an appeal to family reciprocity – one is only entitled to familial benefits (support in old age) if one has fulfilled family obligations (care for the family prior to old age). Finally, we may suggest one further justification – that removing support may lead to changed behaviour amongst the troublesome widows; such seems to be implied in v. 15. Thus, the best result of such a restriction might be changed behaviour; but, if this did not emerge, the church would be protected from external hostility and accusations that it was funding troublesome behaviour. Similarly, Johnson has pointed out that if the problematic behaviour was partly sexual in nature, it would also have been a possible scandal for the young widows behaving in such a way to be maintained by money under the control of a group of older men.[98]

[98] See Johnson, *Timothy*, 275.

7.5. Summary

Once again, the problem addressed by the text can only be fully understood if we take seriously the material implications of the church's self-perception as an *oikos*. The assumed ethical necessity of providing for its widows points in this direction, but most convincing is that some members felt able to transfer the duty to provide for their elderly on to the church; such behaviour, and the requirement for the clarity which the author provides, is only coherent within the kind of framework I have proposed. Similarly, the character requirements for a supported widow function to guarantee that those receiving support have previously contributed to the fictive family in appropriate material ways; this is precisely what we should expect for a consistent application of the patterns we observed in Chapter 2: one's support in time of need is dependent upon fulfilment of one's duties over time. In addition to the duties of material support, widows were required to have fulfilled the duty of acceptable behaviour; such behaviour could also be perceived as preserving the wellbeing of the family as prohibited behaviour attracted external hostility and internal corruption: the same ethical reasoning is at work.

Chapter 8

8. Summary and Conclusions

Our study has been concerned with when, how and why the first Christians *restricted* their material generosity, according to the evidence of the New Testament texts. Here I summarise the central findings of each chapter for my thesis and draw the threads together. Not every significant argument or conclusion will be restated, but only those relating to our central theme.

Part 1 argued that the ethics and ethos of the first Christians can be most clearly grasped when the norms of their culture were understood. To this end, practices of generosity and its restrictions were studied in the comparative social structures of the *oikos*, voluntary associations and Jewish groups, all of which have been widely accepted as of significant comparative value for understanding the early church.

Most of the evidence for restricted generosity in the *oikos* (Chapter 2) pertains to gifts of capital rather than small-scale consumable goods. Of the evidence that does exist regarding the latter, much is associated with the Roman virtue of *pietas*; it was demonstrated that mutual material solidarity is one of its central duties. This duty was fundamental to parent-child and sibling relationships, but also extended to the wider family and even

members of the household who were not family. Even though non-Latin communities of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean (including Palestine) may not have expressed their values with the language of *pietas*, similar cultural norms can be evidenced. This, of course, was the cultural ideal; doubtless many households failed to deliver on the ideal. Significantly, we saw that restrictions to this family solidarity surround two concerns: whether the beneficiary was a legitimate member of the family and whether they had fulfilled their own obligations of *pietas*; one only gained family benefits if one had done their family duty.

Turning to voluntary associations (Chapter 3), I argued that although several influential voices claim that associations cared for their poorer members, this claim cannot currently be sustained by the evidence. Rather, any financial benefits gained by members of associations were strictly in return for their own financial contributions through fees and fines, or part of the communal honour-for-benfaction exchange. Although this presents a point of contrast between associations and the early church, there is still much to be learned as to the ethical norms prevelant in society: again, we can observe that financial practices were dominated by reciprocity; again, members were denied the financial benefits of membership for failing to undertake their own obligations, either of paying fees or keeping association rules.

Our final chapter in Part 1 examined Jewish groups (Chapter 4). Noting the traditional consensus that the early Christians modelled

their poor-care on the structured, widespread norms of the Jewish community, we noted that the usual evidence cited for Jewish practices is the rabinnic texts, an approach now considered methodologically problematic by the majority. Without denying that there was a strong ethic of poor-care in the Jewish tradition and second-temple literature, it was argued that there is actually very little evidence for organised poor-care in the first century; the only clear evidence is that related to Qumran and the Essene movement. Consequently, we cannot distinguish Jewish groups from other associations in this respect and cannot assume that any organised poor-care amongst the first Christians was modelled on that of Jewish groups. I repeat, though, that this is not to deny that poor-care may well have occurred on an individual, unstructured level within at least some Jewish communities.

Our examination of the New Testament first argued that the self-identification of the early Christians as a fictive family was connected to ethical expectations of financial practices within the community (Chapter 5): they were expected to demonstrate the mutual material solidarity that characterised the ideal *oikos*. The strongest evidence for this claim is texts that explicitly relate church-as-family to material solidarity. These conclusions reveal the first restriction on early Christian generosity – whether one was a family member or an outsider: the insider was owed demanding *oikos* solidarity; the outsider might be owed charity, but only after the needs of the family had been met.

This *oikos* reciprocity was argued to underlie the ethical logic of the letters to the Thessalonian church (Chapter 6). The material mutuality of φιλαδελφία was significant enough that some could abuse it by claiming support without working. The reason they did so cannot confidently be restricted to one cause and may well have been simple opportunism. Regardless, the authors' ethical logic insists that those refusing to work are failing to discharge their familial duty and should consequently be denied familial benefits. Not only is this seen to protect the community itself but also its reputation before outsiders.

Similarly, the study of 1 Timothy argued that the problem of which widows should be supported and who should support them most likely arose from the matrix of the early church's fictive kinship (Chapter 7). Again, the author's desired restriction of generosity is predicated on the logic of *oikos* reciprocity. It is clarified that church members should still support their own biological kin – real widows must be without living descendants. Furthermore, real widows must evidence behaviour that marks them out as genuine 'family' members. This is elucidated in terms of appropriate sexual morality and age, but most substantially as those who have already 'done their bit' for the community prior to needing support. The discussion of younger widows reveals that as with the Thessalonian correspondence, the author is concerned both for the internal wellbeing of the community and its public reputation.

Restricted generosity in the early church, according to the New Testament documents, was inseparable from the church's self-conception as a fictive family. The reciprocity expected within an ideal *oikos* was also expected within the church; in both cases familial benefits were restricted for those who failed to fulfil their own duties to the family. In addition to the specific scholarly debates addressed in this thesis, three further implications for the discipline may be identified: First, my findings insist that the financial mutuality of the early Christians be taken seriously – the 'problems' that appear to be present in the communities and the ethical logic of the texts become more explicable the more one is prepared to allow that this mutuality involved significant material generosity. Second, I have demonstrated that the vast majority of the material relates to internal mutuality; evidence for outward-looking generosity may be present but is much rarer and more ambiguous than has, at times, been assumed. Third, we can no longer assume that the poor-care practices of the first Christians were modelled on the organised poor-care of Jewish groups. This study suggests the reciprocity of the *oikos* as an alternative starting point for understanding the development of poor-care in the early church.[1]

[1] Of course, this need not be an antithesis for those who do not accept my argument regarding Jewish groups.

Appendix: A survey of metaphorical *oikos* language in the New Testament

The seven tables in this appendix aim to capture all the texts that employ metaphors drawn from the sphere of the *oikos*, demonstrating the immense frequency and variety of usage. In addition, they also present the occasions where some connection is drawn between finances, broadly conceived, and the family, both the biological family and the metaphorical family of the church. The information is presented by different corpora of the New Testament (Gospels, Acts, uncontested Pauline epistles, contested Pauline epistles, Catholic epistles, Revelation). Obviously, the material could be rearranged if so desired. Similarly, my categories aim to highlight relevant themes of my thesis; other ways of organising the evidence and additional categories could easily be found. These tables are a synthesis and expansion of information contained in Osiek and Balch, *Families in the NT World*; Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*; Sandnes, *New Family* and Burke, *Family Matters*.

	Redefinition of family		Relativizing family	*Oikos* language (used with reference to God, Jesus or disciples)					*Oikos* setting	Finances and biological family	Relating *oikos*/family metaphors and money
	explicit	*implicit*		*children*	*doulos*	*father*	*brothers*	*householder*			
Matt	12.46-50, 19.29-30	26.18-19, 13.55-58, 16.18-19?	4.21-22, 19.12, 29-30, 8.21, 10.37, 10.21, 35-37, 14.54-58	5.9, 45, 13.38, 18.3, 17.25-26	10.24-35, 20.27, 24.45-50, 25.14-30	5.16, 45, 48, 6.1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14-15, 18, 26, 32, 7.11, 21, 10.20, 29, 32-33, 13.43, 16.27, 17.24-27, 18.35, 23.9, 26.39, 42, 53	5.22-24, 7.3-5, 18.15-17, 21, 35, 25.40	13.24-30, 18.23-35, 20.1-16, 21.28-31, 21.33-39, 22.2-10, 24.45-51, 25.14-30	8.14-17, 9.10, 10.11-12, 26.6	15.3-6	19.29-30, 25.31-46
Mark	3.32-35, 10.29-30	3.21,31, 6.4, 14.12-16?	1.19-20, 10.29-30, 13.12-13	9.37, 42, 10.24	10.44, 13.34-35	11.25, 14.36		12.1-8, 13.34-35	1.29-35, 2.1-2, 15, 5.19, 38, 7.17,30, 9.28, 33, 10.10, 14.3	7.9-13	10.28-31
Luke	8.19-21	11.27-28, 18.28-30, 22.8?	4.23-34, 5.11, 9.60-62, 12.53, 14.26, 18.28-30, 10.59-62, 14.26, 12.52-53, 21.16	6.35, 10.21, 16.8, 20.36	12.37-47, 16.13, 17.7-10, 19.13-22	6.36, 9.26, 10.21-22, 11.2, 13, 12.30, 32, 22.42, 24.49	6.41-42, 17.3	12.36-48, 13.25-27, 14.16-24, 15.11-32, 17.7-9, 19.12-26, 20.9-15	4.38-41, 5.17f, 29f, 7.36,10.6		18.29-30
John		19.26-27	7.5-6	1.12, 3.3,5, 12.36, 13.33, 14.18, 21.5	13.16, 15.20	1.18, 3.35, 4.21-23, 5.19-23, 26, 36-37, 43-45, 6.27, 32, 37, 40, 44-46, 57, 65, 8.16-19, 27, 38, 42, 49, 54, 10.15-18, 25, 29, 32, 36-38, 11.41, 12.26-28, 49-50, 13.3, 14.2, 6-16, 20-31, 15.1, 8-10, 15-16, 23-26, 16.3, 10, 15-17, 23-28, 32, 17.1, 5, 11, 24-25, 18.11, 20.17, 21	21.23	14.2	12.2, 20.19		

	Redefinition of family		Relativizing family	*Oikos* language (used with reference to God, Jesus or disciples)		*Oikos* setting	Finances and biological family	Relating *oikos*/family and money
	Explicit	*Implicit*		*Brothers*	*Other*			
Acts				1.15-16, 6.3, 9.17, 30, 10.23, 11.1, 12, 29, 12.17, 14.2, 15.1, 3, 7, 13, 22-23, 32, 33, 36, 40, 16.2, 40, 17.6, 10, 14, 18.18, 27, 21.7, 17, 20, 22.13, 28.14-15	1.20, 4.29, 16.17, 20.19, 28	2.2, 2.46, 5.42, 8.3, 9.11, 10.2, 10.6, 12.12, 16.15, 16.31-32, 18.7-8, 20.20, 21.8		11.29

	Oikos language (used with reference to God, Jesus or the Church)												
	Children					*Father*		*Brother*	*Sister*	*Mother*	*Philadelphia*	*Other*	*Doulos*
	of God	*heirs*	*of Abraham*	*other*	*adopted*	*God*	*Paul*						
Rom	8.14-17, 19, 21, 9.8, 26	8.17	4.16-17		8.15, 23	1.7, 6.4		1.13, 7.1, 4, 8.12, 29, 10.1, 11.25, 12.1, 14.10, 13, 15, 21, 15.14, 30, 16.14, 17.	16.2, 1	16.13	12.10	8.15, 23; 9.4	1.1, 6.22, 7.25
1 Cor		6.9-10, 15.59		3.1-2		15.24	4.14-15	1.1, 10-11, 26, 2.1, 3.1, 4.6, 5.11, 6.5-8, 7.12-15, 24, 29, 8.11-13, 10.1, 11.33, 12.1, 14.6, 20, 26, 39, 15.1, 50, 58, 16.11-12, 15, 20	9.5			4.1, 9.17, 4.1-2	7.22
2 Cor	6.18					1.2-3, 6.18, 11.3,1	12.14-15	1.1, 8, 2.13, 8.1, 18, 22-23, 9.3, 5, 11.9, 12.18, 13.11					4.5
Gal	3.26, 4.5-7	3.29, 4.1, 7, 5.21	3.7, 29	4.28, 31	4.5	1.3-4, 4.6	4.19	1.2, 11, 2.4, 3.15, 4.12, 28, 5.11, 13, 6.1, 18				4.5	1.10, 5.13
Phil	2.15						2.22	1.12, 14, 2.25, 3.1, 13, 17, 4.1, 8, 21				1.1	1.1
1 Thess				2.7, 2.17, 5.5		1.1,3 3.11, 13	2.11	1.4, 2.1, 9, 14, 17, 3.2, 7, 4.1, 6, 10, 13, 5.1, 4, 12, 14, 25-27		2.7	4.9		1.9
Phlm							10	1, 7, 16, 20	2				

	Redefinition of family/ church as *oikos* of God		Relativizing family	*Oikos* setting	Finances and biological family	Relating *oikos*/family and money
	Explicit	*Implicit*				
Rom		8.29		16.5, 11		6.1-8, 12.9-13
1 Cor		3.9?	7.29	1.16, 16.19		
2 Cor						11.9, 12.14-15
Gal	6.10					6.10
Phil						
1 Thess						4.9-12
Phlm				2		17-18?

	Redefinition of family/church as *oikos* of God		*Oikos* setting		*Oikos* language (used with reference to God, Jesus or the Church)					Finances and biological family	Relating *oikos*/family and money
	Explicit	*Implicit*	*Household codes*	*Other*	*Children*	*Father*		*Brother*	*Household language*		
						God	Paul				
Eph	2.19		5.22-6.9		1.5, 1.11, 14, 3.6, 5.5, 5.1, 5.8	1.3, 17, 3.14, 4.6, 5.20, 6.23		6.21, 23	3.2, 6.6		
Col			3.18-4.1	4.15	1.12	1.2, 3, 1.12		1.1, 2, 4.7, 9.	1.7, 1.25 3.24, 4.7, 12		
2 Thess						1.1-2, 2.16		1.3, 2.1, 13, 15, 3.1, 6, 13, 15			3.6-15
1 Tim	3.15	3.5, 5.1-2	5.1-6.2			1.2	1.2, 18	4.6, 6.2	1.4, 3.1, 2	5.4, 8, 16	5.3-16
2 Tim	2.20-21			4.19		1.2	1.2	4.21	2.24		
Titus			2.3-10	1.11		1.4	1.4		1.1, 1.7		

	Redefinition of family/church as *oikos* of God	*Oikos* setting	*Oikos* language (used with reference to God, Jesus or the Church)					Relating *oikos*/family and money
	Explicit	*Household codes*	*Children*	*God as Father*	*Brother*	*Philadelphia*	*Household language*	
Heb	3.6		2.10, 13-14, 2.16, 12.5-9	2.11, 12.9	3.1, 12, 10.19, 13.22-23, 2.11-13, 17	13.1		13.1-6
Jas					1.2, 2.1, 3, 14, 3.1, 10, 12, 4.11, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 19		1.1	
1 Pet	2.5, 4.17	2.18-3.7	1.3, 1.4, 1.14, 2.2	1.2-3, 1.17	5.9, 12, 2.17, 5.9	1.22	2.16, 4.10, 5.2	
2 Pet					1.10, 3.15	1.7	1.1	
1 John			2.1, 2.18, 28, 3.1-2, 7-8, 10, 18, 4.4; 5.2, 19, 21, 3.9, 5.1, 18	1.2-3, 2.1, 14-16, 22-24, 3.1, 4.14	2.9, 10, 3.10, 13, 15, 17, 4.20-21, 5.16			3.17
2 John			1, 4, 13	2, 4				
3 John			4		3, 5, 10			
Jude				1			1	

	Oikos language				
	Children of God	*God as father*	*Brothers*	*Siblings*	*Doulos*
Revelation	21.7	1.6	1.9, 6.11, 12.10, 19.10, 22.9	12.17	1.1, 2.20, 6.11, 7.3, 11.18, 19.2, 5, 10, 22.3, 6, 9

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