The Social Significance of the Sacralized Body
in The Epistle to The Romans:
Pauline Subversion of Cultural Constructions of Human Worth

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Abstract

The hierarchical stratification of Greco-Roman culture emphasized corporeal features as integral to maintaining social status. The elite body was protected from physical and sexual assault; the servile or low-status body was liable to such dishonoring treatment. The body and its presentation – its gestures, postures and clothing – formed a canvas which communicated to others a person’s social location. Low status, then, was a somatic phenomenon: the scars of floggings, for example, signaled one’s degraded status and left one vulnerable to further abuse. On the other hand, the primary literature characterizes the bodies of high-ranking males (the politician, the general, the paterfamilias) or of elite females (the priestess, wife or daughter) in sacral terminology.

This thesis investigates the meaning of Paul’s sacralization of the body in the Epistle to the Romans. Romans 12:1 states “παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς … παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ἐγέρας εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ”, that is: “I exhort you … to offer your bodies [to God] as a sacrifice which is living, holy and pleasing to God” (my translation). Given the predominantly low social status of his hearers, Paul’s construction of their bodies as holy helps establish an identity of high worth which conflicts with their social locations. Paul’s construal of these degraded bodies is at odds with the cultural norm to characterize only elite bodies in sacral and honorable terms. For many of Paul’s hearers, their bodily identity was the antithesis of the sacral.

I will argue that, by construing the Christ-followers’ bodies as sacral, Paul subverts the cultural construal of many of his hearers’ bodies. Those whose bodily experiences and appearances would have been construed by the social code as demeaning have this interpretation contested by Paul. For him, the suffering of the body is no longer an indication of degraded status; rather, it is to be considered sacrificial, viz., an aspect of worshiping identity. In contrast with the tendency of biblical scholars to neglect the lived experiences of Paul and his hearers as bodily beings, it is suggested that Paul is deliberate in claiming that it is the bodies of his hearers which are to be offered to God. Rather than demanding that the Christ-followers offer “themselves” to God in some abstract sense, Paul constructs their bodies as sacred phenomena which stand under God’s claim. By construing their low-status bodies in such terms, Paul subverts the dominant social narrative which read the bodies of the elite in terms of sacrality and honor and degraded those whose bodies were vulnerable to physical and sexual assault, thereby offering a potent counter-reading of the low-status body.
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This work is dedicated to
Isabella June,
Eva Faith, and
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our three precious children.
### Abbreviations

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Introduction

The basic thesis is that:

*the sacralization of the low-status body subverts cultural valuations of human worth.*

In Romans 12:1, Paul constructs the bodies of his addressees in sacral terms: “παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς … παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἀγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ” – “Offer your bodies as a sacrifice which is living, holy and pleasing to God.”

Commentators tend to abstract the bodies which are required away from their physical and social reality, translating with “offer yourselves” or “offer your whole persons” to God. However, this study questions the significance of the body being reclaimed by God. It will be argued that Paul’s making the body the medium of worshiping God must be heard within the cultural context which made bodily excellence or degradation a decisive factor in a person’s access to religio-political agency. In antiquity, a person’s identity was grounded in his or her corporeality. For example, the elite male’s bearing projected his honorability, whereas the slave’s vulnerable body announced his or her shameful state. Thus Paul’s ascription of sacrality to the bodies of his non-elite hearers is a repudiation of the dominant narrative which construed their degraded and servile bodies as evidence of their lack of relation to the divine. In defiance of the social construction of honorable identity, Paul resacralizes the bodies of his auditors and makes them agents who offer *latreia* – worship – to God. Thus, he gives them a cultic identity.

Chapter 1 presents the methodology I will be using, in particular my material hermeneutic. I am concerned to locate Paul and his hearers in their material, socio-economic context. Moreover, I will draw on approaches such as gender criticism which emphasize the embodied nature of identity. Chapter 2 provides a review of the scholarly literature. After presenting classical scholarship’s awareness of the way in which status was embodied in Greco-Roman society, I consider how Pauline research on Romans has largely neglected this theme. My basic conclusion is that Pauline scholars have too often abstracted the notion of body in Paul’s thought. Indeed, the fact that the body is the site of power relations and the very point at which personal shame or honor is made unavoidably public and inescapable is not clearly detected by commentators. Hence I offer my own definition of *σώμα* for Paul, viz., the body is the human as a “material-interrelated self.” As scholars do note, the body is the basis of personal interaction.
between the self and others. However, by adding “material” to this, I signify the weight of social concern which rested on the condition of the person’s physicality. From the cultural perspective, one’s material condition circumscribed one’s relation to power and value to the deities.

Part One (Chapters 3 & 4) establishes the relationship between social status and the condition of one’s σώμα or corpus in Greco-Roman thought. The aim is to demonstrate that cultural valuations of human worth were a function of bodily condition. Chapter 3 analyzes the Greek use of σώμα to show that low-status persons could be reduced to being mere bodies; chattel slavery is the extreme example of this. This physical reductionism constructed a person in a shameful state: he or she was treated as “depthless,” that is, as devoid of personality and so an instrument subject to another’s will.

Chapter 4 offers a more extensive study of the way status and corpus are associated in the Roman literature. I start by presenting “The Active Corpus.” The virile Roman male who acts out the religio-political ideology of power maintains his elite social status through the corporeal domination of his inferiors. The elite “read” one another’s bodily appearance, deportment and forceful conduct in order to evaluate one another’s claims to honorable status. I then present the way violence was used to extract value from the degraded “Passive Corpus.” Persons of subordinate social status were reduced to being sub-humans, mere bodies for exploitation. Whether through the private brutality of sexual and physical assault or the public displays of aggravated death, such inferior persons were forced to maintain their low position in the cosmic order. This state of bodily degradation was popularly held to continue even into the afterlife. The degraded body left its shameful imprint on the victim’s soul for eternity. From here I consider “The Sacred Corpus,” in order to show that sacral terminology correlates with the high status of religio-political agency. The elite body demonstrates its sacral status by being immune from degrading assault; conversely, the marred and sexually vulnerable servile body is the antithesis of sacred.

In Part Two (Chapters 5-7), I investigate “The Pauline Σώμα.” I aim to hear Paul’s sacralization of non-elite bodies within the highly stratified social context of Part One. I argue that the apostle’s call for the body to be offered to God presents a radical departure from the Greco-Roman hierarchical ideology. Paul views his addressees in their
degraded corporeal state – not as rightfully located near the bottom of the chain of being, but as valuable to, and claimed by, the God of Israel.

In Chapter 5, I outline my approach to the Epistle to the Romans. Here I utilize my concept of the body as the “material-interrelated self” and seek to identify the material, bodily experiences of Paul’s hearers. By characterizing their bodies in sacral terms and making them agents who offer latreia to God, Paul grants them a high status which conflicts with the degraded social location of many of his hearers. I am concerned to show that the recipients were indeed those outside of power and those whose bodies would have borne testimony to their shameful status.

In Chapter 6, I offer a reading of Romans 1:18-32 – where σώμα is first mentioned in the epistle – to show that Paul views the raison d’être of the body in terms of humanity offering latreia to God. In this passage, when Paul condemns humanity’s repudiation of the worship of the Creator he also portrays this in terms of humanity’s “dishonoring” of the body. I argue that this degradation of the body may be heard to include the violent corporeal treatment which the elite meted out to their inferiors in order to maintain the social order. In chapter one of Romans, then, the body meant for the worship of God – the cultic body – is violated. Paul condemns this violence as part of the human attack on God; in so doing he opposes the very modus operandi by which Greco-Roman society maintained its pyramidal structure.

In Chapter 7, I turn my attention to Romans 12:1-2 to show that in Paul’s salvific vision the body is reclaimed – resacralized – in order to be the means again by which the human creature may offer latreia to the Creator. The Christ-followers are thus to view their bodies, and themselves, as the medium for cultivating God: their bodies, in this sense, are cultic. Romans 12, then, is a reversal of Chapter 1. While this reversal is often enough seen by commentators, Paul’s criticism of violence against the body is not. I argue that Paul constructs what are culturally degraded bodies as in fact being sacral bodies. In keeping with the principle that one’s identity is grounded in one’s corporeality, Paul constructs his hearers as religio-political agents. Moreover, his application of high-status terms to non-elite persons is subversive of the identity which such persons had imposed on them by the dominant narrative.
Chapter 1: Methodology

This study is fundamentally an attempt to offer a reconstruction of the first-century social location of Paul and the hearers of his Epistle to the Romans as embodied persons. My approach is eclectic, utilizing a historical-critical method which is both deeply committed to the insights of ideological criticism and concerned with the material, social-cultural location of the original auditors. Brigette Kahl labels such an approach a “critical re-imagination,” namely

...a method that supplements the traditional set of historical-critical and ideological critical methodologies. It draws on images and other visual or written sources – including spaces, buildings, performances, and rituals – to deconstruct and reconstruct our perception of the ancient world in its interactions with the ‘word(s)’ of the text. In stark methodological contrast to the prevalent hermeneutical pattern of a dematerialized and disembodied theological reading, critical re-imagination seeks to restore Paul, his Galatian congregations, and their dissension about justification by law or faith to their specific material, sociopolitical, and historical context.1

My own approach can be discussed in terms of the three aspects which appear in Kahl’s description: historical criticism, ideological criticism, and what I will call a material hermeneutic (locating the original hearers in “their specific material, sociopolitical, and historical context”).

1. Historical Criticism

I intend to employ a robust form of historical criticism. I attempt to make sense of the Pauline text by situating Paul and his hearers within a certain reconstructed context. This is “historical” criticism.2 I realize that Paul and his hearers – in their own self-construals – are not fully retrievable, and that any construction of their situation is inevitably, to some degree, a projection of the historiographer. I hope therefore to avoid the fallacy of

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1 Galatians Reimagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 27 (italics original).
2 I have chosen to put historical in speech marks to emphasize the perspectival nature of reconstructions of the past. The distinction is further noted by Peter Barry, who describes new historicism as “a historicist rather than a historical movement. That is, it is interested in history as represented and recorded in written documents, in history-as-text.” An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 175. I will comment on the relevance of new historicism to my project shortly.
modernist epistemology that the disinterested scholar can become value-neutral and attain the “truth” of what occurred in the past.\(^3\)

This suspicion, of course, is influenced by the attitude of postmodernism which, as Melanie Johnson-Debaufre states, “…questions a modern privileging of traditional order, scientific rationality, and scholarly objectivity.”\(^4\) While I do not fully adopt a postmodern perspective, I endeavor to constantly stay alert to the constructed nature of “history” or discourse. Any human artifact – be it a text or a piece of art – represents a limited perspective on reality and so one must always realize that any given author, be it Cicero or Paul, is persuading his hearers regarding how the world should be.

Johnson-Debaufre states three principles for a critical approach to history: 1) “language shapes reality,” thus Paul seeks to persuade his audience of his symbolic world.\(^5\) 2) “What you see depends on where you stand,” thus we must ask from what perspective the text or receptions of the text are reconstructing “history.”\(^6\) 3) “History is an interpretation of the past, not the past itself.”\(^7\) Such axioms remind us to attend critically to the ideology – for example, concepts regarding the “natural” hierarchialization of social relations of power – which guided Paul, his original hearers, and his interpreters.

Following from the location-dependent nature of knowledge, Johnson-Debaufre notes three trends in Pauline historiography: 1) “De-Christianizing Paul,” 2) “Politizing Paul,” and 3) “Changing the Subject: People’s History and De-Centering Paul.”\(^8\) All three of these are important in my approach to Paul. Regarding the first point, I understand Paul to be thoroughly Jewish as he calls non-Jewish persons into the cult of the God of Israel through faith in the Jewish messiah. In terms of the second trend, while I have a nuanced appreciation of Paul standing in relation to the Roman Empire, I deem it essential to hear Paul’s letters, in Johnson-Debaufre’s words, as “instruments of political

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\(^3\) Cf. John Barton, “Historical-Critical Approaches,” in The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11-13. He summarizes the downside of unself-conscious historical criticism: “the concerns of the investigator colour, even determine, historical reconstructions. No-one is really ‘disinterested’; everyone has an axe to grind. We should therefore abandon the pretence of academic neutrality, and accept that our biblical study serves some interest or other” (Ibid. 13). I will state my own interests below.


\(^5\) Ibid. 15-16.

\(^6\) Ibid. 16-17.

\(^7\) Ibid. 17-18.

\(^8\) Ibid. 18-23.
and economic organizing and ideology rather than as theological treatises.” I would prefer to say “rather than as merely theological treatises.” I will repeatedly refer to both Paul’s language and that of his Roman elite contemporaries as operating to construct a *religio-political-social* system. There were no conceptually distinct realms of “religion” and “politics” in antiquity. This conflated expression presents the thoroughly interwoven nature of first-century life with regard to these three dimensions. A person or community was located on the honor-shame continuum which simultaneously narrated one’s value before the deities (“religio”), allocated one as either a wielder of power or bereft of power (“political”), and determined one’s social relations (“social”).

Finally, I place special emphasis on the third point. I wish to reconstruct the Greco-Roman attitude to the body and to read parts of Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans* in order to voice something of the story of those who were degraded in social and material terms. The crucial passages in Romans which establish God’s claim on the body are, in particular, 1:18-32 and 12:1-2. In the former, Paul castigates the violent treatment of the body which dishonors it; in the latter, he asserts the sacral nature of the body. My interest is in reconstructing the sociocultural setting in which Paul voiced his understanding that the God of Israel had laid claim to his hearers’ bodies.

Having made these qualifications, however, I still consider myself to be following a historical-critical method. As John J. Collins argues, the historical critical rubric – under which he assigns “source criticism, form criticism, sociological criticism, etc.” – covers those “methods which have in common … a general agreement that texts should be interpreted in their historical context, in light of the literal and cultural conventions of their time.”

Accordingly, I present this aspect of my approach as “historical”-criticism. My own reconstruction of the story of Paul and his hearers is only provisional; it is defensible in terms of the elements which I have chosen either to foreground or adjudge as less relevant. The critical element of the approach is where I lay my stress. In what follows I

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10 See for example: *Ibid.* I discuss this at length in Chapter 4.2.
11 Here I echo Colleen Conway, who states her concern as having “a historical and cultural focus: situating presentations of Jesus and God in their broader sociocultural setting.” *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 14. Her particular interest is in the way the New Testament negotiates the masculinity of Jesus in the face of cultural gender ideologies. I discuss this presently.
set out the questions which I deem most pressing in my reading of Paul. These questions are informed by the lessons of ideological criticism and by a material hermeneutic.

2. Ideological Criticism

A significant part of my concern is to elucidate the ideologies of both the Greco-Roman world and that of Paul’s vision, especially as these relate to the body. Accordingly, Chapters 3 and 4 analyze, respectively, the relationship between ἁρμα and corpus and a person’s location on the honor-shame scale.

W. Randolph Tate defines ideological criticism as the attempt “to uncover the ideology of a text and the ideological influences during the history of interpretation.” Tate observes that “texts are not value-neutral but, rather, reflect to different degrees the relations and structures of race, gender and class which empower some persons and disenfranchise others.” Furthermore, he notes three key places for discerning ideologies: “(1) the ideological context in which an author produces a text, (2) the ideology reproduced in the text itself, and (3) the ideology of a text’s readers.” A significant aspect of my project is to expose these three areas of ideology. In this study, the ideology of “the context in which an author produces a text” relates to the construction of power relations as idealized and implemented within Greco-Roman culture. In Chapters 3 and 4, I aim to demonstrate the association between, respectively, ἁρμα and corpus and a person’s religio-political-social status. I do this largely by analyzing appearances of these terms in the literary record. What is clear is that to characterize the body is to assign a person an identity. Particularly evident in the more extensive investigation of the corpus in Chapter 4, in which I also survey the social signification of characterizing certain bodies as sacred, is the fact that bodily condition is a function of, and basis for, one’s position in the hierarchical order.

Additionally, regarding both points 1 and 2, I will be arguing in Chapters 5-7 that – at least in Romans – Paul works from an ideology that is inherently countercultural.

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14 Ibid. 326.
15 Ibid.
16 In the literature review in the following chapter, I will interact with those Biblical scholars who do read Paul’s talk of bodies in a concrete sense. However, most find Paul to be reinforcing the cultural norm which constructed sexually vulnerable bodies as degraded. I will argue, however, that at least in Romans, a likely “reader response” (i.e., meaning for the first auditors) from a group comprised of many slaves or former slaves is that Paul was subverting the cultural ideology which made their degraded bodies signify a
That is, Paul makes the Christ-followers’ bodies sacral and so subverts the typical cultural construal of low-status bodies as evidence of shameful status. By constructing the (culturally) degraded bodies of his hearers in sacral terminology – for example, “present your bodies [to God] as a sacrifice [which is] living, holy and God-pleasing” (Rom 12:1, my trans.) – he is reconstruing their position in the cosmic order.

Finally, my assessment of the secondary literature as largely overlooking the social implications of the body which Paul reclaims for God in Romans is informed by my assessment of the ideology of Paul’s more recent readers. In particular, the privileging of the Cartesian disembodyed subject who is removed from concerns of the body seems to me to underpin the tendency of scholarship on Romans to overlook the materiality of the body. The most concrete construction offered by scholars of Romans regarding the αὐτοκτόνος is that it is “the medium of communication” with the environment. The brutal nature of this environment and the lack of personal autonomy in the case of the chattel slave are never considered. At its most abstract, the αὐτοκτόνος is read as merely a synonym for “the self” or “the person.” It seems possible that this lack of concern for the concrete nature of the body is a reflection on the economic and social location of commentators.

3. Material Hermeneutic

My driving concern has been to locate Paul and his hearers as embodied persons within the social and political contingencies of their lives. I seek to use “the body as a methodological starting point.” In the first-century context, this requires that the bodily nature of their identities be thoroughly lifted up to view. In other words, I am concerned to re-imagine Paul’s references to bodies (σώματα, corpora) and to re-imagine the way in which his hearers’ bodies were culturally constructed, (de)valued and treated. My reconstruction of the social profile of the original audience of the Epistle to the Romans establishes a high proportion of persons as either of slave or freed status. Accordingly, I ask what likely connotations would body-talk have evoked for them. I seek to follow J.

shameful identity. I will argue that Paul should be viewed as liberative in my reading of Romans, although I acknowledge the challenges of universalizing this reading over all seven of the undisputed Pauline texts.

17 The expression is used by Thomas J. Csordas to describe his approach to cultural analysis. He advises beginning with the body in order “to add sentience and sensibility to our notions of self and person, and to insert an added dimension of materiality to our notions of culture and history.” “Introduction,” in Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self, ed. Thomas J. Csordas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.
Louis Martyn’s advice and, with regard to Romans, “take a seat in one of the Galatian congregations, in order – as far as possible – to listen to the letter with Galatian ears.”

With reference to the Christ-followers in Rome, this means considering how those of degraded social status would have compared the typical construction of their bodies with Paul’s reclamation of them as embodied persons. Thus I take Paul to be offering an alternative “reading” of bodily condition and suffering which subverts the hegemonic cultural one. A new meaning is attached to corporally shameful status: bodily suffering and humiliation is now conformity to the faithful Jesus. A new identity of high worth is ascribed as the hearers learn to re-read their bodily degradation as a mode of cruciform, cultic offering to God. As sacral bodies – holy and pleasing to God – their identity is claimed to be no longer that of religio-political-social outsider but rather one of being aligned with the divine.

Fundamentally, while I appreciate attempts to locate Paul as subversive of Empire per se, I view Paul as constructing identity not in reaction to imperial power but in imitation of Christ. In this way, I seek to imagine the response of Paul’s original servile hearers. That is, how would they have interpreted his sacralizing of their bodies in the light of how social status was bodily encoded in Greco-Roman culture?

In 1980, Robin Scroggs captured the deficiency in New Testament scholarship which I wish to address: “Too often the discipline of the theology of the New Testament (the history of ideas) operates out of a methodological docetism, as if believers had minds and spirits unconnected with their individual and corporate bodies.” Scrogg’s concern is picked up by Brigette Kahl, who invites us to “re-imagine” the Galatians to whom Paul wrote. We must form fresh images or “see” afresh the concrete reality of their oppressed condition under Roman rule. Davina Lopez continues Kahl’s agenda by describing her own approach as informed by an overarching “non-idealist framework.” Lopez’s stance is worth quoting at length because of the challenge she sets in utilizing the historical-critical method:

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20 Kahl states that the recipients of the letter must not remain “[p]ale and abstract figures … faceless and disembodied.” *Galatians Reimagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 35.
Non-idealist approaches engender a re-examination of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis … and challenge it once again to become more critical through readdressing its general lack of consideration for ‘concrete realities of life, such as economic and political power structures, social struggles against oppression, exploitation, discrimination, and so forth.\textsuperscript{21}

The approach of both these authors is to hear Paul afresh having viewed his audience in their embodied relationships vis-à-vis the social structures of power. Magnus Zetterholm compliments Lopez’s critical approach. He states that “[b]y emphasizing other power structures than the ones that have usually been paid attention to, she is able to present a rather unique interpretation that appears as a challenging alternative to the traditional, idealistic perspectives on Paul.”\textsuperscript{22}

4. Embodied Identity

Throughout this project I work on the assumption that identity is strongly influenced through characterizations of the body. Two concepts are highly relevant to my reading of body terminology as it relates to the embodiment of identity: gender criticism and bodily knowledge.

*Gender criticism* employs a gender-sensitive lens in approaching ancient culture and is an approach well established in both Classical and Biblical scholarship, as I will discuss in the following literature review. Gender criticism is basic to my approach because it reminds us that the body in antiquity was material, even canvas-like – the body was seen and “read” having meaning projected onto it, and was so interpreted. Talk of the body, then, draws us into the web of ideology which idealized as manly that subsection of male bodies which dominated and penetrated the bodies of their inferiors. The failed masculinity of Jesus, for example, as he suffers rather than causes suffering in accordance with the cultural code, is vital to reconstructing the historical significance of the New Testament.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{22} *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 223. Zetterholm agrees with Lopez that even the new perspective of Paul continues to structure the power contest as between Paul and Judaism (i.e, Paul critiques Judaism), when the conflict is helpfully seen as being between Paul and Roman rule (*ibid*). This point is also basic to Kahl’s *Galatians* (e.g., 20-22, 75).

\textsuperscript{23} Thus Stephen Moore states: “Jesus’ passivity, his submissiveness, his stripping and whipping, his role as plaything in the rough hands of the soldiers, his … penetration and abject helplessness on the cross would all have conspired, in complicity with the hegemonic gender codes, to throw his masculinity into sharp relief – precisely as a problem.” Stephen Moore, “‘O Man, Who Art Thou …?’ Masculinity Studies and New Testament Studies,” in *New Testament Masculinities*, ed. Stephen Moore and Janice Capel Anderson
The imagery of the Roman world acted to naturalize the power of ruling men over against the impotency of those they subjugated. Manliness is associated with the former group; the rest – regardless of their biological sex – are constructed as feminized and servilized. Identity is therefore conveyed in strongly gendered terms: to be feminized is to be conquered and therefore dishonorable. Accordingly, a core tenet of gender criticism is attending to the resonances of discussions of the body in terms of how persons were constructed in terms of honorable masculinity or shameful femininity.

_Bodyly Knowledge_ is another important aspect of what I am calling a material hermeneutic, and is elucidated in Jennifer Glancy’s “nonreductive corporal epistemology,” through which she invites “the reader to reflect on what is known in the body.” She reflects on the nature of embodied experiences: “I also want the reader to think about what it means to be a particular body-self, to be, for example, a female slave or a female slaveholder.” In what is a fundamental axiom for my study, she states that one must articulate the stories of “the experience of being a body” in order to appreciate “how _corporal habituation shapes identity_.” Her objective is to “focus on ways that corporal habituation shapes identity and thus confines social arrangements and informs – or deforms – the moral universes of early Christian communities.”

As valuable support for this, Glancy offers the concept of “corporal knowledge:” “no clean line divides the body as mind from the mind that reasons.” Glancy gives the example of how a typist’s fingers “know” where to go to find the letters in producing a word. She also refers to Linda Martin Alcoff’s example of how driving on the unaccustomed side of the road is a disruption of normalcy and so brings “…us face to face with the wealth of knowledge we take entirely for granted, knowledge lodged in our bodies and manifest in its smooth mannerisms and easy movements.” In the context of sociocultural analysis, this corporal knowledge refers to all the conditioned habits of

(Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 11. The citation also occurs with approval in Conway, _Behold the Man_, 12. 
24 For a summary of this, see Lopez, _Apostle_, e.g., 6-7. I will discuss this at length in Chapters 3 and 4.
26 Ibid. 22.
27 Ibid. my italics.
28 Ibid. Glancy’s thesis is that Christianity largely perpetuated the semiotic norms of bodily condition, leaving slavery and oppression of women largely unproblematicized. Thus, it was the upper-class matronly body with its sexual exclusivity which could attain the social virtue of purity (see the chapter, “Embodying Slavery from Paul to Augustine,” 49-80).
29 Ibid. 12; cf. 10.
30 Ibid. 10; the citation is from Linda Martin Alcoff, _Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self_ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 108.
demeanor, posture, clothing, eye-contact and so on, by which persons signal their social status to one another.

The linkage between identity and bodily experience is a basic theoretical insight that guides my research. Social identity is a function of, for example, a person’s gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. Alcoff offers a “defense of identity as an epistemically salient and ontologically real entity. The reality of identities often comes from the fact that they are visibly marked on the body itself, guiding if not determining the way we perceive and judge others and are perceived and judged by them.” While Alcoff’s book *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* focuses on race and gender, both she and Glancy describe the way in which bodily features generally are the site of social identity. As Glancy states, “[b]odily knowledge of social location is learned from childhood, but once learned seems natural.” Alcoff observes: “We perceive and process and incorporate and reason and are intellectually trained in the body itself. This helps us to understand why race and gender are integral to the self: bodies are positioned and located by race and gender structures and have access to differential experiences, and may also have some differences in perceptual orientations and conceptual assumptions.”

Glancy also refers to the embodiment of identity as the “[c]orporal inflection of identity.”

A further citation from Alcoff is warranted in order to make concrete how identity markers are given symbolic and social value and how this is habituated in bodily practice. In the following Alcoff describes the role race plays in the United States; however, it holds equally true with regard to gender. She states:

Race operates preconsciously on spoken and unspoken interaction, gesture, affect, and stance to reveal the wealth of tacit knowledge carried in the body of subjects in a racialized society. Greetings, handshakes, choices made about spatial proximity, tone, and decibel level of voice, all reveal the effects of racial awareness, the assumptions of solidarity or hostility, the presumption of

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31 See Alcoff, *Visible Identities*, 5. This work is an important springboard for Glancy’s *Corporal Knowledge*.
32 *Visible Identities*, 5.
33 Race and gender are central because of their visible and somatic nature, whereas “[a]ge can be surgically masked, homosexuality can be rendered invisible on the street, and class can be hidden behind a cultivated accent or clothing style” (*Ibid.* 6).
34 *Corporal Knowledge*, 11.
35 *Visible Identities*, 114 (my italics). Glancy, too, approvingly cites a portion of this citation, viz., “[w]e perceive and process and incorporate and reason and are intellectually trained in the body itself.” *Corporal Knowledge*, 10.
superiority, or the protective defenses one makes when one routinely encounters a misinterpretation or misunderstanding of one’s intentions.\textsuperscript{37} 

Again, then, I will use “the body as a methodological starting point.”\textsuperscript{38} The body is the epistemological point of departure for self-knowledge. The individual knows herself or himself to be of a certain social identity via the bodily \textit{habitus} – conditioned practices – which she or he may exercise or be subject to in relation to others. The collective surveys the bodily features of persons – be it their gestures, postures, corporal scarring, for example – and reads their social location. Under the dynamic of social structures of power, the individual is habituated to use his or her body in accordance with his or her status. Consequently, status is embodied.

Glancy gives the example of the blind man in John’s Gospel, chapter 9:1-12. The disciples indicate “one common way that bodies were understood to be vessels of truth, in the association of physical debility with moral failure, character flaws, and dishonor.”\textsuperscript{39} Thus, in verse 2 they ask “who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” One can know the religious and social status of another by scrutinizing his or her bodily state. Moreover, the object of such social interpretation, the blind man, is himself able to “read” the same significance from his bodily condition: “What … [he] knows in his body is not only physical limitation or pain but also moral transgression.”\textsuperscript{40}

My approach to identity scrutinizes the material situation of the Christ-followers at Rome and argues that their bodily state is correlated with their religio-politico-social location. This is the benefit of utilizing a material hermeneutic. I realize that questions of theological interest such as the Christ-followers’ theological status within the worldview of either the culture or of Paul are intimately related to their material conditions. I suggest that Paul’s concern with the coming transformation of his hearers’ embodied lives accounts, at least in part, for why his message gained the followers it did. This is quite distinct from post-Enlightenment dualism which prioritizes the autonomous mind as the basis of human being. In the first century, one’s bodily condition told the story of one’s religious, political and social status.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Visible Identities}, 108. The entire citation is also found in Glancy, \textit{Corporal Knowledge}, 11.

\textsuperscript{38} Csordas, “Introduction,” 4.


\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.} 6.
5. Conclusion

I consider my approach to be one of historical criticism informed by ideological criticism and a material hermeneutic. It is important to maintain a degree of suspicion regarding “historical” reconstructions. I therefore emphasize the need for being critical by configuring the religious, political and social worldviews which are considered ideal by Greco-Roman culture, Paul and his hearers, and Paul’s modern-day readers. Ideological criticism cautions us to be aware of the way in which relations of dominance and submission are constructed as being natural and beyond scrutiny.

The lead question which directs my attention, though, is what might have been the embodied experiences of Paul and the auditors of Romans in their sociocultural locations. My material hermeneutic takes the body in its concrete, lived experiences of honorability and shamefulness as its “methodological starting point.” Brigette Kahl’s and Davina Lopez’s “non-idealist” methodologies are thus critical for my work as they foreground the material circumstances and embodied degradation of those outside of power.

Additionally, the notion of “embodied identity” is essential for this study: to characterize the body in antiquity was to ascribe identity. Gender criticism attends to the way that those outside of the elite group of ruling men were constructed in shameful and femininized terms. Relegation to this social categorization led to all manner of bodily vulnerability and an identity of shame. Moreover, I employ Linda Martin Alcoff’s and Jennifer Glancy’s concept of bodily knowledge – namely, that social habituation of the body is basic to the formation and maintenance of identity.

The following literature review will outline, firstly, the awareness amongst classicists that bodily condition is foundational to social location. Secondly, I compare this to the lack of attention in Biblical scholarship to the sociocultural implications of the materiality of the body in Paul. As a guide to my sense of the deficiency of Pauline research regarding the resonances of σῶμα, I consider Csordas’ critique of the American Ethnological Society’s 1990 meeting. The discussions centered on the topic of “the body in society and culture;” however, as Csordas observes, “it was evident that many participants were using the term ‘body’ without much sense of ‘bodiliness’ in their analyses, as if body were little more than a synonym for self or person.”41 Particularly, when it comes to reading Paul’s call for the body to be offered to God as “a sacrifice that

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41 Embodiment and Experience, 4. The application of this critique to New Testament studies is also found in Glancy, Corporal Knowledge, 21.
is living, holy and pleasing to God” (Rom 12:1), I will argue that he is subverting the dominant cultural narrative which construed the material reality of bodily degradation as evidence of a person’s alienation from the deities and social power.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

1. Classical Scholarship on the Body: The Embodiment of Identity

A fundamental perspective of classicists’ reconstruction of the ancient Greco-Roman world is well captured by Florence Dupont: “The Roman citizen consisted of a name and a body … The body of a citizen was the man himself, the ‘embodiment’ of the truth about him.”42 Dupont describes the social reality that a human being’s religious, political and social status was strongly associated with his or her bodily identity. The full Roman citizen – by definition a man – possesses a certain constellation of bodily features and behaviors which mark him as honorable. The following survey will indicate the scholarly description of the Roman construction of embodied masculinity, central to which is the notion that manly identity is founded on corporeal forcefulness. The honorable Roman dominates his subordinates by controlling their bodies. Such control is especially manifest in the imposition of sexual and violent relations. In classical scholarship this is designated the penetrative model of social relations. He who dominates with either the sword, whip or, symbolically, the phallus, was considered to have religious, social and political agency. In contrast, the slave is the archetype of the penetrated body and thus of degraded identity.

A. Embodied Identity: Gender, Sexuality and Power

Dag Øistein Endsjø’s book, Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity, considers Greco-Roman beliefs regarding the nature of the human being.43 Endsjø makes several key points which I will use to frame the first part of my review of Classical scholarship on the centrality of the body. His introduction begins with the following statement: “Flesh mattered to the Greeks” – that is, it was a priority within Greco-Roman culture.44 Endsjø substantiates this claim with reference to how the Greco-Romans identified the self with the body, and in terms of how the existence of the gods/goddesses

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43 Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009).
44 Ibid. 1. Although he refers to “the Greeks,” Endsjø is discussing the wider Greco-Roman viewpoint, in which he argues embodiment and its fragility were overriding concerns. Thus, he argues for the success of Christianity’s message of the resurrection of the flesh. Christianity captured the popular imagination by at least the early 4th century, because it addressed the widespread anxiety over death and the subsequent dissolution of the human being as the flesh dissolves and the “soul” enters the shadowy, subreal, existence in Hades (Ibid. 1-8).
was conceived. I will proceed with an overview of Endsjo’s discussion and will also incorporate the views of other scholars.

B. The Human “I” Identified with the Body: Conceptions of the Afterlife

The clearest statements on the relationship of the self and the body are found in reflections on death. Endsjo begins with citations from Homer’s *Iliad*, whose proem announces the slaughter inflicted on the Trojans by Achilles, “[whose fury] sent forth to Hades many valiant souls of heroes, and made them spoil for dogs and every bird” (1.1, italics added). Endsjo infers the following: “The corpse is no empty vessel but identical with the person: one is one’s body.”45 The separated soul is considered a powerless shade, so Endsjo observes:

One can not talk of any true survival without the body. To be dead, as Achilles pointed out in the *Odyssey*, was to ‘have perished’ or to have ‘decayed completely.’ As dead you were no more. Forever without your body, the psychosomatic unity of body and soul that counted for your identity had been shattered. With the body destroyed, all that remained was literally a shadow of your former self.46

Endsjo presents epitaphs which reinforce the body’s role as bearer of identity. For example, at approximately the beginning of the common era, a servant says on his epitaph: “I lie under a stone in a strange land, Inachus, the much bewept and obedient servant of Crinagoras.”47 The “I” who speaks from the grave, therefore, shows that a significant part of the person’s identity resided in the body. In addition to this class of epitaph, there are those which deny even the continuation of the soul in Hades. Of these Endsjo observes: “This, of course, is the most radical expression of a belief that any form of life was absolutely dependent on the unity of body and soul.”48 The common form of this sentiment was “*non fui, fui, non sum, non curo* (I was not, I was, I am not, I don’t care).”49 Nevertheless, Endsjo argues that the most common form of epitaph is that

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46 Ibid. 25 (italics original), with reference to *Odyssey*, 11.491.
48 Ibid. 28.
49 Ibid. 28, Endsjo points to Erwin Rohde for references: *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 544 and 578, n. 167; see also J. P. Toner, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 43. Toner notes that the saying was so common that it was often abbreviated to “nffnsnc.”
which has “the dead person … bilocated, considered to be simultaneously in the grave and in some other place.”

The critical point to take from Endsjø is that the living body is an essential element for human existence. In common thought, death either leads to a shadowy existence in the afterward or the cessation of the self. Importantly, Endsjø contends that the philosophical notion which held the body to be an encumbrance on the soul was a minority viewpoint. Thus the education system which was significantly based upon the inculcation of Homer shaped the Greco-Roman worldview well into imperial times. Paideia, then, was based on “Homer, Hesiod, and the classical tragedians … [which] proved to be much more influential than any philosophical speculations.”

The point is that the notion of σώμα σήμα (the body is a tomb) is an elitist position which never captured the popular mind. Endsjø cites Aristophanes, Plutarch, Strabo, Dio Chrysostom, Pausanias and Origen to the effect that hopeful philosophical anticipation of a disembodied existence was the hope of a small minority. Endsjø uses a citation from Henry Chadwick to buttress the rarity of viewing the body as a disposable appendage to the self: “Platonic metaphysics were the peculiar study of the few, of an intellectual aristocracy.”

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50 Greek Resurrection, 29.
51 So too Dupont: “As far as the Romans were concerned, bodies could not lie or dissemble: they were not, as certain Greek philosophers might argue, the tombs of the soul. The truth about a man was engraved in this body for all to read.” Daily Life, 239.
52 Ibid. 17.
53 Ibid. For the centrality of Homer in Greek paideia and later the complementary role played by Virgil’s Aeneid in Roman education, see Stanley F. Bonner, Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny (New York: Routledge, 2012), 213. The Aeneid (Book 6) has a vivid depiction of Aeneas’ visit to the underworld, which continued the Homeric imagery of the shadowy and mournful nature of human existence once the vigorous life of the body has finished.
54 Ibid. 12-19. Endsjø cites Strabo (d. ca. 24 CE): “Philosophy is for the few, whereas poetry is more useful to the people at large” (Ibid. 13 citing Geogr. 1.2.8). Plutarch bemoans the masses’ acceptance of Romulus’ apotheosis. He says that “the multitude (τοῖς … πολλὰς)” believed and rejoiced in the tale (Rom., 27.8). He goes on to describe persons whose bodies were said to have disappeared and so were considered to have been bodily divinized. “This is like the fables (τοῖς … ἑνδοκοιμομένοις) which the Greeks tell about …,” and he lists Aristæas, Cleomedes and Alcmenē (28.4-6). This ascription of “divinity to the mortal features in human nature” is to be rejected; it is foolish “to mix heaven with earth” (28.6). A philosophical flourish finishes the chapter: the soul, once purified of the body, returns to the gods whence it came (28.7-8). Later, Endsjø comments on this section of Plutarch: “The most dreadful aspect of these stories to Plutarch was apparently the popular conviction that these cases of physical resurrection still, even in the first century A.D., represented the best fate possible for any man or woman.” Greek Resurrection, 96.
55 Greek Resurrection, 13; the citation is from Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), xi. Ramsay MacMullen’s opinion is also adduced (Greek Resurrection, 13): “The inappropriateness of common forms of worship, seen through the eyes of Seneca or Porphyry, appears not to have deterred a single soul from the inheritance of his tribe. If anyone listened to the Epicureans or Stoics, no signs attest to this conversion. Which is not to deny that conversions … must have been made – but not in numbers at all detectable.” MacMullen, Paganism in the Roman Empire (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1981), 77 (italics original).
Endsjø’s proposition that the body is integral to the person being alive and thus that the disembodied soul is not immortal – that is, possessing life – is well borne out by other scholars. Florence Dupont discusses the double funeral process which facilitated the apotheosis of the Roman emperors. First the corpse was cremated, and later a wax effigy of the body was cremated. Dupont states the implicit logic: “There is no belief in an immortal soul in Roman religion… the apotheosis of the emperor had to do with the body, not the soul. In order to attain the state of a god, the sovereign was twice burned: once in flesh and blood, and again in wax.”

C. The Divinities as Embodied

Endsjø offers further support as to the centrality of the body to the ideal human existence: the deities and divinized heroes were commonly imagined as radiantly embodied. The deities were considered immortal: “hoi theoi athanatoi.”57 Endsjø observes that “[i]mmortality was the continuous union of body and soul. This [is an] understanding of immortality as a fundamentally physical state … The gods were originally considered immortal exactly because of their physical bodies.”58 Importantly, this physical immortality – the deities living as psychosomatic wholes – is the antithesis of the human state: humans are “hoi brotoi,” viz., “the mortals.”59 Even the cattle belonging to the deities on Olympos are physically immortal; so too are the deities’ possessions, e.g., their garments and weapons.60

Endsjø adduces Martin Nilsson’s statement that “…the gods were so consistently anthropomorphized that they were nothing but stronger, more powerful, and immortal men.”61 Again, the common conception of the divinities as physically immortal was denigrated by the philosophical minority. Nevertheless, even in the 2nd century C.E., the

56 “The Emperor-God’s Other Body,” in Fragments for a History of the Human Body (London: MIT Press, 1990), 396-419. She too downplays the role of philosophical anthropology: “Although certain individuals in Rome, receptive to Platonic philosophy, believed in the immortality of the soul, these beliefs had nothing to do with either the gods of the city or the public deification of the emperor.” Ibid. The rationale for the cremation of the wax effigy is not discussed.

57 Greek Resurrection, 39.

58 Ibid. italics original. Endsjø provides an example (Ibid.) from the Iliad, in which the human Diomedes wounds the goddess Aphrodite: “When he caught up with her as he pursued her through the great throng, then [Diomedes] the son of great-hearted Tydeus thrust with his sharp spear and leapt at her, and cut the surface of her delicate hand, and immediately through the ambrosial raiment … the spear pierced the chrōs (body or flesh) on the wrist above the palm, and out flowed the immortal blood of the goddess, the ichor, such as flows in the blessed gods.” (5.334-40).

59 Greek Resurrection, 39-40.

60 Ibid. 40-41.

Christian apologist Athenagoras decries the masses’ theology in which God and matter are confused and the gods were believed to be constituted “of flesh (sarkoëidēs)”. Accordingly, the ideal human body is modeled on the perfect, divine, body.

D. The Roman Self as Performed

Thus far the literature has presented the Greco-Roman prioritization of the body in constituting the human person as seen in ancient conceptions of the afterlife. I now consider how scholars discuss the essentiality of the body in social and political life. A fundamental premise regarding the body and its relation to a person’s social status is expressed in the metaphor of the mirror. Shadi Bartsch explains: “The ancient mirror is not a metaphor for the turning of the mind, pure nous, upon itself; what is mirrored is either the community or God.” Thus, crucially, she states that scholars must … consider the social nature of the judgment that motivates change; the idea of specular insight as revealing something to the individual that is particularly personal and unique is absent. This is not to suggest that the ancient self was only external in its manifestation, but simply to point out that our own sharp contrast between a hidden, private self and a visible exterior cannot be mapped onto these texts from antiquity. Even more important, self-knowledge was not usually conceived of as any kind of specular turning of the mind upon itself.

Here the “truth” of a person’s identity was not an interior reality or the product of autonomous self-knowing. Rather, a person was what he or she was seen to be; that is, what he or she was bodily seen to be. Bartsch outlines this in her chapter, “Scopic Paradigms at Rome.” The gaze, in Roman thought, was powerful and feared. The opinion of others as they interpreted the embodied self – its actions and deportment – constrained the shame-sensitive Romans. For example, the elite male is characterized by a certain anxiety: “One’s personal appearance was under … scrutiny for signs of moral excellence or deviance; the orator, for example, had to keep in mind the way his body and his movements could be read for signs of ‘effeminancy’ or lack of self-mastery.”

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62 Leg. pro Christ., 15 and 21 (in Greek Resurrection, 42).
64 The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 26. This contrasts with the Cartesian model of the self in which the basic drive is for the autonomous mind to reflect on itself and assess its moral status. In the Greco-Roman communal culture, it is the assessment of external observers which modifies behavior (Ibid.).
65 Ibid. 24; cf. Dupont, Daily Life, 10-12.
66 Ibid. 118.
In other words, the elite self – leaving the slave self to be considered shortly – was acculturated to perform according to the canons of virtue or virility. Erik Gunderson further explicates the pressure which the social gaze applied to the citizen in his role as orator: “The body can and will be read against its bearer. A body that consists of mere appearances, even if these appearances might be pleasing, is exposed to attack. There is something cruel or at least potentially cruel in the act of observation.”

That the Roman self is a performed and embodied self is widely attested in the scholarly literature. Anthony Corbeill adduces texts by Cicero, Seneca and Quintilian which reveal that every movement, be it a facial expression, intonation of the voice or gesture reveals the self of the orator. Corbeill observes that, culturally, “the body and its visible manifestations [are] a text to be read.” As Seneca puts it, “speaking style mirrors life style.”

Similarly, Gunderson reflects on the social norms which inferred meaning from the body:

Appearances must always correspond to some socially sanctioned vision of reality. This body is not so much a material substance, as a social one … The body is not raw biological material that is given its particular meaning by the unique, individual personality of its bearer: instead the body is just another symbol in a world of symbols over which the subject cannot be master… The body of the orator must be the body of the good man… Bodily excellence cites and performs the authority of the good man.

In short, the male citizen who knows himself to be on display and to be “read” is trained to be self-reflexive: “The orator reacts by observing himself, by being the first and harshest critic of his own body. To this end Quintilian evokes an illustration in which the great Greek orator Demosthenes practices his performance before a mirror in order to see, to know, and to correct the significations produced by his movements.”

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68 Again, Bartsch’s warning (Mirror of the Self, 24) that the modern notion of “a hidden, private self” must be laid aside is programmatic for reconstructing the embodied nature of identity in Greco-Roman society.
70 Ibid. 115.
71 Ep., 114.1, as referenced by Corbeill, “Gender Studies,” in The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies, ed. Alessandro Barchiesi and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 224. Corbeill comments: “During the Republic, rhetoric offered a public site for contesting the definition of maleness, with the political opponent being consistently stigmatized as effeminate, a charge that involves him in a host of vices associated with lack of control over the body.”
72 Staging Masculinity, 61.
73 Gunderson, “Discovering the Body in Roman Oratory,” in Parchments of Gender: Deciphering the Body in Antiquity, ed. Maria Wyke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 176, with reference to Inst., 11.3.68. Craig A. Williams notes the educational process which sought to acculturate the elite male body to social norms: “Masculinity is an achieved status, and a tenuous accomplishment at that. Boys must be made men, while girls just become women.” Roman Homosexuality, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010),
was to be read; the body signaled a person’s status and bore the story of his or her experiences. In Maria Wyke’s words, “[a]ncient bodies are … ‘parchments of gender’: textual skins on which gender is inscribed and on which can be traced other interconnected matrices of knowledge and power that give those bodies their seemingly legible contours… [bodies were] read, reread, and contested in antiquity.”

Accordingly, the potency of the gaze in Roman culture must be comprehended. Bartsch states that “[t]he gaze that compelled the elite to exemplarity was felt to be everywhere: the gaze of the commoners upon the magistrates and the nobility; the gaze of senators upon themselves in the Curia or in the court; the gaze of noble ancestors upon generations of their progeny.” Bartsch then cites Solimano’s summation: “Rome appears as a city full of eyes that watch and desire, that spy … and evaluate.”

David Fredrick points to Varro’s first century CE Dictionary, de Lingua Latina, noting that “video (I see)” is taken to be derived from “vis (force) … since it is the strongest of the five senses.” In antiquity, vision was considered penetrative, with “a fine stream of particles travelling from the eye to its object.”

Consequently, the elite were concerned to be on the active side of the visual exchange. Those reduced to being objects for visual pleasure – the actor, the gladiator, the slave – were socially degraded. Additionally, there existed a pervasive fear of the evil eye, the look of envy, which was forestalled by symbols of the phallus. Moreover, as

155 (Italics original). Williams’ treatment of gender and sexuality will dominate the next section; for now I explain his notion of “tenuous accomplishment” in terms of the constant risk the elite felt of falling short of bodily expectations and being assimilated to femininity and servility by being either bodily assaulted, soft in their deportment, or being enslaved to desire (Ibid. 155-56).


75 Mirror of the Self; 117.

76 Ibid. citing Giannina Solimano, La Prepotenza dell’occhio: Rifiessioni sull’opera di Seneca (Genoa: Università di Genova, 1991), 35.


78 Ibid., “Introduction,” 2.

Carlin Barton observes that being seen in a position of weakness was agonizing for a Roman: “Some of the most terrible dramas of Roman life had to do with uninhibited inspection.”[^80] In another essay entitled “The Roman Blush,” Barton highlights the Romans’ sensitivity to public scrutiny. Shame was the mark of sociality; it was “a revelation that one was sensitive to the eyes of one’s observers.”[^81] Indeed, it was the tendency of the emperors to refuse to be subject to shame, to refuse to know themselves as being seen or subject to the gaze, which explains much of the disintegration in elite social life during the imperial period.[^82]

This literature review presents Roman culture as highly sensitive to embodied identity: social status – importantly, religio-political-social position – was correlated with one’s ability to maintain boundaries around one’s bodily self. A degraded body bespoke the degradation of the self; to be a living human being in the fullest sense was to be a holism of body and soul, with the body being attractive, forceful, viz., masculine.

Dominic Montserrat captures the ancient preoccupation with the body and its semiotics of status:

> There can be little doubt that in antiquity, the male body provided an important symbolic gauge of discourses about power, identity and social position … The male body was a surface upon which power relations were mapped, and which could be exploited as a forum for the display of these dynamics. According to ancient physiology, the unmarked, unspecified and unqualified human body was male, providing the yardstick by which other kinds of bodies were measured and defined. A man’s physical characteristics were explained in terms of his innate

[^80] Barton, “Being in the Eyes: Shame and Sight in Ancient Rome,” in The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power and the Body, ed. David Fredrick (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 224. Two of her examples will suffice. Firstly, Livy records conquered Roman soldiers being sent under the yoke, and then comments, “and what was heavier to bear, [was doing so] before the eyes of the enemy;” see 9.6.3; trans. Canon Roberts (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1912). Secondly, Barton refers to Suetonius’ *Caligula* (36.2), in which his Caligula is represented as having “had the wives of his dinner guests pass before his couch while he leisurely and closely assessed them – like a merchant inspecting the goods – stretching out his hand to raise the chin of any woman who kept her gaze lowered from shame … In this way the women were violated twice over: firstly, by Caligula’s uninhibited inspection of their bodies and, secondly, by having to look at him while he examined them.” *Ibid.*


[^82] Anthony Corbeill argues that with Tiberius a new era in social relations occurs: “Tiberius refuses to become a spectacle; instead he makes himself a spectator.” Moreover, this emperor disengages from the Roman elite by refusing to manifest his intentions and character through his facial expressions and deportment. In effect, he refused to be seen, or read by others: “The elite [must now] hide their faces so as not to betray their own thoughts [to Tiberius] while they simultaneously baffle themselves in their attempts to interpret the expressions of the new leader.” *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 145. This contrasts with Republican politics in which “[s]eeing and being seen determined reputations, and the vocabulary of observation – nouns such as aspectus, os, vultus, and verbs such as video – dominates not only in Roman oratory, but in other republican texts that detail social and political etiquette.” *Ibid.* 147.
male claim to physical superiority; his body hair, for instance, was a visible sign of the internal heat which placed him at the top of the ascending scale of body supremacies concocted by ancient physiologists. Wearing a beard enabled the man to face the world with confidence, knowing that he was displaying a sign of his masculinity and his position at the top of the somatic hierarchy.83

E. Gender and Sexuality

I now turn to literature that considers how this somatic hierarchy worked itself out in social relations. Gendered identity expressed itself in relations of unequal power: the masculine elite subjected their feminized and servilized inferiors – whether they were male or female biologically – to a range of bodily violations. Sexual and physical violence were amongst the symbols which enacted the somatic hierarchy.

In keeping with the insight that bodily integrity is basic to honorable human identity, possessing sovereignty over one’s bodily boundaries was critical to such status. In contrast, the inability to safeguard one’s body from consumption in the form of being gazed at, by being sexually penetrated, physically beaten or executed, was the hallmark of degraded status. Two key topics encapsulate this dynamic: firstly, the way in which gender identity was constructed; and, secondly, the way this expressed itself in sexual practices.

Gender identity in antiquity refers to the way in which ideal human form and behavior were conceptualized as masculine over against the defective bodily and behavioral characteristics of the non-masculine or feminine. The benchmark for human excellence was founded on the forceful masculine body. Accordingly, Corbeill prefaces his comments by noting “…that gender is described as manifesting itself in bodily dispositions… therefore, the human body will emerge repeatedly as the starting point of the investigation [in to gender].”84 Ancient medical and philosophical texts present this bodily starting point. Masculinity is far more than a reference to biological anatomy.85 The “true” man in the gendered sense is the vir versus the generic homo.86

Williams makes this point well: “Masculinity refers to a complex of values and ideals more profitably analyzed as a cultural tradition than as a biological given: what it is

84 Corbeill, “Gender Studies,” 223.
85 Hence Gleason’s comment that “[m]asculinity in the ancient world was an achieved state, radically underdetermined by anatomical sex.” “Semiotics of Gender,” 391.
86 Corbeill, “Gender Studies,” 223.
to be fully gendered as a ‘real man’ as opposed to simply being assigned to the male sex.”

As a cultural phenomenon, conceptualizations of masculinity exist as ideologies, namely “the systems of norms, values and assumptions that were bequeathed to Roman men as part of their cultural patrimony and that enabled them to describe and evaluate individual experience in public contexts.”

The particular aspect of embodied identity which is fundamental for this study is the notion of penetrability. Kenneth Dover’s groundbreaking work *Greek Homosexuality* (1978) analyzed gender and sexual norms in classical Greece. In the context of what constituted an honorable pederastic relationship, in contrast with the dishonorable activity of male prostitution, Dover stated: “An honourable eromenos does not seek or expect pleasure from contact with an erastes … [and] never permits penetration of any orifice in his body.” That is, the body of the (male) citizen is protected from degrading sexual assault. On the other hand, those who submitted to sexual acts by playing the passive, feminine role were stripped of their citizen rights. Such actions, which should have been resisted, were deemed *hubris* and if forced on an unwilling male were punished by the “fierce sanctions … imposed by Attic law.”

Crucially, Dover summarizes the powerplay which underpinned sexual ethics, viz., its being “an aggressive act demonstrating the superiority of the active to the passive partner.” Playing the active role and so avoiding the passive role is “the antithesis between the abandonment or the maintenance of masculinity.” The power to sexually dominate the bodies of slaves, foreigners and defeated enemies was a defining characteristic of the Athenian citizenry, reinforcing their elite mentality.

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87 *Roman Homosexuality*, 4 (italics original).
88 Ibid. 3.
90 Ibid. 104. Dover notes that to perpetrate *hubris* on a citizen amounts to treating the victim as an object of sexual gratification. This is described as having “dishonoured (ἐτιμιαίωτητον)” the victim. The noun ἐτιμιαίωτητον refers to this somatic degradation and to the concomitant loss of citizen rights (Ibid).
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid. 105-09. “Anthropological data indicate that human societies at many times and in many regions have subjected strangers, newcomers and trespassers to homosexual anal violation as a way of reminding them of their subordinate status.” Ibid. 105. In the Athenian context, statues of the god Priapos – guardian of orchards and gardens – had exaggerated phalli symbolizing a thief’s liability to sexual – i.e., gender-humiliating – punishment (Ibid.).
94 Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 7. See also Corbelli, “Gender Studies,” 224. Eva Keuls reinforced Dover’s reading of the semiotics of sexuality: “The penis can serve … as a weapon of intimidation.” She notes that for Athenian men, “[a]nal sex is charged with aggression and domination: the submitting partner is in a helpless position, penetration
Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*, vol. 2, entitled *The Use of Pleasure*, concurred with Dover’s penetration model. Foucault describes “the model act of penetration,” namely “the principle of isomorphism between sexual relations and social relations … [in which sexual relations assume] a polarity that opposed activity and passivity – [these relations] were seen as being of the same type as the relationship between a superior and a subordinate, an individual who dominates and one who is dominated.”

A basic corollary of the penetration model is that persons did not define themselves in terms of the sex of their sexual partners. That is, a man who penetrated socially inferior males was not considered “homosexual;” neither did having sex with women make a man “heterosexual.” Williams sees this distinction as basic to his work: sexual *acts* may be so defined [i.e., as “homosexual” or “heterosexual”], but the ancients did not assign a *person* with an identity based on their sexual activity. Williams clarifies his point by noting that a man’s preferences for one or other of the two sexes did not impinge on the individual’s core identity. Rather, such a preference is as superficial as being inclined to women of a certain hair color.

Modern scholarship is thus broadly agreed that sexual behavior was regulated in terms of gender and not biology. Williams concludes that, “[f]irst and foremost, a self-respecting Roman man must always give the appearance of playing the insertive role in

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95 *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 215; cf. 85-86. The critiques of Foucault’s overuse of the category of discourse in analyzing ancient sexuality by Fredrick and Montserrat are well taken. The broader manner in which power-holders assert gendered representations of themselves and others must be interrogated in order to consider the lived and embodied experience of real individuals. Fredrick terms this “a less constructionist view of Rome,” in “Mapping Penetrability in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome,” in *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power and the Body*, ed. David Fredrick (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 237. Excellently, Montserrat seeks to ask about “the experience of the male body; what was it like to inhabit such a body in Roman Egypt? … This approach counters that of classicists concerned with literary evidence for the body, who are preoccupied with embodiments of sexuality and representation, or the body as a locus for theorization, in preference to the (re)construction of individual identities and bodily experiences in any lived or corporeal sense.” The theoretical approach is characterized as focused on “Foucauldian notions of power and control” (“Experiencing the Male Body,” 153-54).

96 *Roman Homosexuality*, 6 (his italics). Williams states that the tendency to categorize persons based on their sexual behavior is a feature of more recent Western culture, a development since the 18th century (*Ibid.* 6-7).

penetrative acts, and not the receptive role: to use popular terminology … he must be the ‘active,’ not the ‘passive’ partner.” Moreover, this is “the prime directive of masculine sexual behavior for Romans, and it has an obvious relationship to hierarchical social structures” – “masculinity is domination;” this is also designated the “Priapic model of masculinity.”

The recognition that sexual practice was expressive of cultural and social configurations of power is routinely found in classical scholarship. The implications for bodily experience and identity are crucial: the honorable holder of power – the fully gendered male – shames his sexual object. The concrete nature of this asymmetry of power is captured by Amy Richlin’s characterization: it was a “socket” mentality. The male penetrates the bodily orifices of his inferior; he does so honorably (provided the other is a socially sanctioned inferior), and he does so to the disgrace of the victim. Williams also notes that the status of the participants was a basic protocol regulating sexual ethics. “Freeborn Romans both male and female were officially off-limits sexual partners for a Roman man.”

Williams offers a helpful note on which to end this section on gender and sexuality: “Masculinity was not fundamentally a matter of sexual practice; it was a matter of control.” He further argues that, “…while the importance of the insertive/receptive dichotomy to Roman sexual categories has been recognized for some time, I wish to insist on its centrality. The question ‘Who penetrated whom?’ lies behind nearly every ancient

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98 Roman Homosexuality, 18.
99 Ibid. 18. Priapus is the Roman version of Priapos, “the patron saint or mascot of Roman machismo … [having a] hyper-masculine identity” (Ibid.).
100 See, for example, Clarke, “Look Who’s Laughing at Sex” (esp. 174); Eva Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, trans. Cormac Ó Cuileáinín (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992), e.g., 98, 145; Skinner, Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture (e.g., 208). See further the endorsement of the “penetration model” by Corbeil (“Gender Studies,” 224). Montserrat refers to the “real” men in the culture being “impenetrable penetrators” (“Experiencing the Male Body,” 157).
102 Roman Sexuality, 19. The legal category of stuprum defined the socially unacceptable modes of sexual connection and its precursor, solicitation. Williams makes this comment in his chapter, “The Concept of Stuprum:” “The concept of stuprum served to idealize the inviolability of the Roman bloodline, to maintain the distinction between free and slave, and to support the proprietary claims of the paterfamilias or head of the household” (Ibid. 104). In particular, he notes that the biological sex of the passive partner is not the issue, it is the other’s status He also observes that this attitude saw the Romans utterly despise pederasty as an institution for the moral education of future citizens, the very role it played in Classical Athens (Ibid. 103). See also the discussion on stuprum and the wider category of illicit sexual conduct in Cantarella, Bisexuality, 100-117; Skinner, Sexuality, 196; Matthew Keufler, The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 87-88; Rousselie, “Personal Status,” 317-19.
103 Ibid. 155.
allusion to a sexual encounter, even between women.”

In Skinner’s words, “[i]n contrast to our system of sexual identities defined by the biological sex of the partner, Roman culture built its sexual taxonomy – its method of assigning identity – upon discrete practices.”

F. Embodied Identity and Corporal Violence

A final area in which classical scholarship allows a reconstruction of the varied nature of embodied experience as it relates to social status is that of liability to corporal violence. In effect this is simply a broadening out of the gendered nature of sexual experience. The elite Roman male inflicted his sexual desires on the bodies of his inferiors; concomitantly, he could inflict corporal punishment on them as well. Conversely, the elite body was exempt from sexual and physical violation. A basic aspect of a person’s identity – be it honorable or shameful – was dramatized by his or her exemption from or vulnerability to physical punishment. In a helpful article, David Fredrick cautions the need for an expanded conceptualization of the “penetration model,” in which sexual invasion is one symptom of a person’s inability to sustain a protective bubble around oneself in order to stave off the array of threats which come from the social environment. Fredrick’s reconstruction of the array of “vectors of power” in the Roman situation is insightful:

For the elite Roman male, freedom from penetration applies not just to the actual surface of the body but to its social surface as well… the establishment of personal boundaries, access to privacy, the means to meet physical needs, and the ability to control the flow of information in one’s environment. Movement down the social scale corresponds to an increasing liability to sexual and violent penetration (inevitably, an increasing liability to pain), together with diminished control over one’s own space and an increasing level of psychological distress.

104 Roman Homosexuality, 177.

105 “Introduction,” 18. The “discrete practices” are those reflected in the Latin sexual vocabulary in which precise terms define the active and passive partner and actions with reference to which bodily orifice was penetrated. The least humiliating connection was vaginal, then anal, and the most disgraceful was offering oral pleasure. Therefore, a basic mode of derision was to label a Roman citizen a cinaedus or pathicus – both terms imply the other as gender defective and penetrated (Ibid.) Cf. also Richlin, “Not before Homosexuality,” 531.

106 “Mapping Penetrability,” 236-37. Fredrick refers to two works which have inspired his broader formulation of penetrability: D. Bell and G. Valentine, eds., Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities (London: Routledge, 1995), and D. Sanders, “Behavioral Conventions and Archeology: Methods for the Analysis of Ancient Architecture,” in Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study, ed. S. Kent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46-51. Similarly, Aline Rousselle states: “There were no such things as bodies in general: in this domain, as in every other in the Roman Empire, we must take into account juridicial (as well as social) status, freedom, citizenship, family status (whether or not enjoyed with full rights), membership of the orders and, finally, degrees of honor (to
In formulating this statement on the array of ways in which social identity was manifest in terms of bodily experience, Fredrick expands upon Jonathan Walter’s insight that “[s]exual penetration and beating, those two forms of corporeal assault, are in Roman terms structurally equivalent.”¹⁰⁷ David S. Potter offers a parallel to Fredrick’s broader concept of penetrability:

Social distinction in the ancient world could be measured in terms of an individual’s ability to control the actions of his or her body. No members of the ruling classes could soil their bodies with the performance of banausic tasks: the ruling classes were those that oversaw the bodily labors of others. They also sought to ensure that their bodies did not smell like lower-class bodies, and they were concerned to control the smell of their physical environments.¹⁰⁸

Accordingly, being able to protect one’s body from penetration – from sexual assault and corporeal violence – is part of the wider ability to protect the self from humiliating encroachments by others. Matthew B. Roller observes:

Being ‘not penetrated’ [sexually] may be a necessary condition for ‘manliness,’ but is hardly sufficient. The ‘manly’ ethical categories of virtus and ἀνδρεία must, like most other Roman ethical qualities, be won and maintained by the performance of consequential actions in the public eye, in this case normally (if not exclusively) through displays of valor in combat.¹⁰⁹

Naturally, the degree of entrenchment in the body or vulnerability to the invasion of one’s bodily perimeter existed on a continuum. The height of impenetrability is the elite male, especially the emperor; the most vulnerable is the chattel slave who was constructed as a mere body, open and exploitable at the slave-holder’s pleasure. Elite women were strictly guarded, with their sexual integrity being linked to the perpetuation of both the household (that is, bearing legitimate heirs and heiresses) and the city or

state, while nearer the chattel slave’s level of vulnerability is the freed person, the prostitute, the actor and the gladiator.

These low-status persons were liable to physical and sexual degradation at the pleasure of their superiors. In particular, the cues of degraded status were socially legible on the bodies of the vulnerable. The marks of servile scarring on the slave’s back marked him or her as a vulnerable body and invited further degradation. Other indicators of personal station were also readable: a person’s clothing and ornamentation, habitus (conditioned postures and deportment), exercise or not of the gaze (willingness to make eye contact) all bespoke one’s place in the religio-social-political system. As Skinner notes, “[a]ttention to intricate gradations of social position spilled over into sexual relations and became a controlling factor in the construction of Roman sexuality.”

2. Biblical Scholarship: Embodiment of Identity, Gender and Sexuality

Bridgette Kahl and Davina Lopez are two of several biblical scholars who are studying Paul in the light of the embodied conditions of the first century. They have argued that the apostle should be read as one who opposed the hierarchical organization of power. Both scholars depict the binary polarities which shaped the hierarchical social relations at the time of Paul. The Aristotelian binaries, which are reproduced in Roman rule, are displayed as follows by Kahl in the form of a semiotic grid:

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110 Regarding the matrons’ sexual integrity and the city’s welfare, Roller comments: “Exemplary women from early Rome, such as the Sabine women, Horatia, Lucretia, and Verginia, function this way: their bodies are the objects of contestation among rival groups of men. But this contestation has further consequences: threatened or actual sexual violations of these women’s bodies echo, or constitute, threatened or actual political violations of the civic body. Women’s bodies function in these ways because they are conduits for both lineal descent and marriage relations.” Ibid. 39.

111 Thus, Richlin notes that “[p]роstitution was legal, and any free Roman male could penetrate his male or female slave or freed concubine, while slaves and freedmen were themselves so disdained that their sexual passivity would be conformed, encouraged, or even assumed (likewise, their assumed sexual penetrability contributed to the disdain in which they were held).” “Not Before Homosexuality,” 533. Such publicly “consumable” persons were marked as infamis by the censors on the public records and debarred from citizen rights, as expressed especially in their vulnerability to sexual and physical assault. Bartsch, Mirror of the Self, 153; Rousselle, “Personal Status,” 315.

112 Sexuality, 196. Similarly, Richlin observes that sexuality is a crucial domain in which “the highly class-stratified nature of Roman society” is manifest; thus, social status and sexual experience are two systems which “can hardly be understood independently.” “Not Before Homosexuality,” 532.

113 Kahl, Galatians, 19; cf. Lopez, Apostle, 21-22, 126-128.
The square represents the imperial construction of reality: A and B are higher and so superior to Non-A and Non-B which they dominate. The categories A and Non-A represent the persons or groups relative to the religious-cosmic construal of power – those on the inside/upside of power are the gods and the Romans; the Non-A persons on the outside/downside are the non-Romans, the foreigner, the slave. Complementing the persons of A and Non-A are their ideologically assigned values: the positive values of B equate to A, and Non-B with B. Both scholars emphasize that bodily identity and vulnerability were basic to one’s location in the social structure.

Both scholars’ readings of Paul through this cultural grid construct a detheologized and concretized view of Paul’s vision of the human condition and “salvation.” Kahl, for example, discusses how Roman imperial art, with its representations of powerful males dominating dying foes, communicated the cosmic “norm” that the elite should rule as regents of the gods. One such image is of a Roman

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114 For this explanation of the semiotic square, see Kahl, Galatians, 18-19.
115 Kahl states that those located in the inferior position are constructed as female, body, and passive (Galatians, 19). Lopez stresses the liability to penetration that signals the vulnerable corporeality of the marginalized (Apostle, 128).
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knight dragging a subdued Gaul by his long (= barbaric) hair. Kahl offers the following methodological reflection: “With whose eyes, then, did Paul see – from above the horse or from beneath it, with the eyes of the vanquished or of their conquerors?” I intend to follow her lead, as I ask how Paul’s construction of the sacral body would have impacted a “Peter” whose scarred back marked him as degraded – a corporeal degradation which Paul also shared. With “Peter” I refer to the following image which I discuss more fully later in the thesis:

“Peter”: A Whipped Slave, Baton Rouge (Louisiana), 1863.

An important point is that both scholars find that Paul stands in solidarity with those who are oppressed. Lopez finds that Paul’s message enacts a “critical subversive practice in his Roman imperial ideological context.”

On the other hand, there are biblical scholars who view Paul as imposing his own mode of dominating relations. Jennifer Wright Knust states that “Paul upheld widely shared assumptions regarding sex, gender, and status. He may have been highly critical of outsiders, yet he reinscribed the gendered sexual norms he shared with many of those

116 Ibid. 28. Similarly, Lopez reads Paul in the light of Roman imperial art and its feminizing of subject nations. She rejects the standard theological reading of ἐθνῶν (nations) – i.e., their simply being “non-Jews” – and sees “both the gendered and sexual connotations of the term nations, as well as its broader political relevance” (Apostle, 7). She defines her approach this way: “A gender-critical re-imagination of Paul as apostle to the defeated nations is, at its core, a non-idealist mode of reading and seeing New Testament texts… I endeavor to bring the Gentiles down to earth and locate them in the material and social reality of the Roman Empire that serves as the context of Paul’s letters.” Ibid. 8. The consequence is that “Paul’s letters, then, can be re-read as a ‘rhetoric of resistance,’ promoting alternatives to imperial oppression.” Ibid. Accordingly, she focuses on “the material reality of Paul’s context.” Ibid. 17.

117 The original caption reads: “‘Overseer Artayou Carrier whipped me. I was two months in bed sore from the whipping. My master come after I was whipped; he discharged the overseer.’ The very words of poor Peter, taken as he sat for his picture.” Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flagellation (03/10/2012). Cf. the cover of Page DuBois’ book, Slaves and Other Objects, for a similar picture with the intent to concretize the discussion of “bodies.”

118 Apostle, 19. Kahl also understands Paul to side with those dominated by Roman rule (Galatians, 4-5, passim).
he criticized.”

In this reading, Paul in seen as perpetuating the same deprecating view of the penetrated body which was maintained culturally. The question is this: What attitude did Paul have towards slaves and other low-status persons whose sexual availability was a necessity for their survival. Glancy states that modern scholarship has not considered the conundrum faced by the slave vis-à-vis Paul’s rejection of porneia. Glancy’s own answer is that slaves would “have been excluded from membership in the Christian body.”

Joseph Marchal is another scholar who rigorously somatizes the context of Paul and his hearers and finds Paul to have excluded slaves from insider status. In a paper on Philemon he makes “the expectation that slaves’ bodies will be accessible and available for sexual use” the basis of his reading. He connects Onesimus (the-useful-one, from δύναμις) with the typical term denoting slaves’ sexual and functional “usefulness” (χρήμα). Marchal opines that only “a few scholars have begun to consider this element in examining Pauline materials.”

Marchal, like Glancy, given crucial insights into the concrete, bottom-up/marginalized interpretative location of many of Paul’s hearers, views Paul as reinforcing the slaves’ alienated and abused condition. In this light, Paul’s play on Onesimus’ name reflects “a cold, even flippant attitude toward slave bodies and their disposability for a range of uses.”

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120 “Obstacles to Slaves’ Participation in the Corinthian Church,” Journal of Biblical Literature 117/3 (1998): 482-83: “Either the community excluded slaves whose sexual behavior could not conform to the norms mandated within the Christian body, or the community tolerated the membership of some who did not confine their sexual activities to marriage.”

121 Ibid. 483.


123 Ibid. 760ff.


125 “Usefulness of an Onesimus,” 761. Harrill similarly understands Paul to view Onesimus as a “living tool” manipulated by two masters (Paul and Philemon) (Slaves, 16).
slaves, Marchal concludes that “…it is not impossible that Paul is arguing that Onesimus is ‘good-for-use’ as a slave, and thus ‘easy-to-use’ sexually, for the letter’s addressee, for other community members, but also even for Paul himself.”

Despite the qualification (“it is not impossible …”), Marchal clearly understands Paul to condone and personally exploit slaves as sexual objects. Only “unnatural” uses, those that violate the isomorphism between erotic contact and the kyriarchial order, are off limits. Cultural stratification of human worth must not be contravened; Paul expected his male converts to be men – sexually penetrative. Basically, whatever they wish to penetrate is their business.

My intention is to problematize this portrait of Paul-the-reinscriber-of-cultural-power-relations. As I did with Glancy, I note my appreciation that Marchal’s historical reconstruction foregrounds the Mediterranean norm of dehumanizing slaves by reducing them to mere bodies. However, my contention is that by resacralizing the σώμα with reference to low-status persons, Paul counters the degrading of low-status persons. His identifying of his hearers in high-status terms – they and their bodies are “holy” – is, I will argue, subversive and not reinscriptive of the cultural distribution of power.

3. Biblical Scholarship on the Body and Romans

The next area of interest is in how scholarship on the Epistle to the Romans tends to understand the body. Whereas the classical scholarship and some biblical scholars consider the social meaning of the body, I suggest that the secondary literature on Romans has largely abstracted the meaning of the body. Here I proceed with Bultmann, Käsemann and Dunn, who have a more abstract or theological view of the body, and then move to Gundry, Jewett and Scornaienchi, who emphasize its physicality.

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126 Ibid.
127 Ibid. 769. Here he adduces Brooten, “Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism,” 216, 241-53. Brooten’s reading of the censure of homosexuality in Rom 1:26-27 takes male failure to be active and female failure to be passive in their sexual roles as Paul’s target. Later, I will argue that the aura of violence that surrounded sexuality in antiquity militates against Brooten’s (and thus also Marchal’s) construction of Paul. That is, feminizing another male by making him pathetic in the sex act was violently degrading: such inhumanity was Paul’s target. In addition to Brooten, Marchal makes his point with reference to 1 Thess 4:4. The “vessel” which prevents the masculine converts from wronging each other is the slave. The slave, therefore, is the porneia-avoiding adiaphoric mode for releasing the sex drive (Ibid). For this, he leans on Glancy’s comments on the passage in her Slavery in Early Christianity (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 60.
128 Later, I will discuss the way in which σώμα itself is understood by Biblical scholars with regard to Romans 12:1 (Chapter 5.2).
A. Bultmann

For Bultmann, the person can be conceptually “divided” into a “Subjektsein” and an “Objektsein” – i.e., self can be distinguished from self, but not as “I” from “non-I.”

Knowing and expressing oneself as the object of one’s own will (and not another’s) is the basis of authentic living. The “self” that is known and directed – the Objektsein – is called σωμα. Σωμα is “Selbstverhältnis.” However, the self risks falling under the will of another, a vulnerability which is “inherent to human existence.”

Bultmann tells us that σωμα is the whole person in a specific respect, thereby supporting an aspectival anthropology.

His famous aphorism – “man does not have a soma; he is soma” – acccents the essentiality of σωμα to personhood. He equates σωμα with the entire person which can be “denoted” by σωμα.

Sw/ma in passages such as Rom 12:1 (“offer your sw/mata a sacrifice”) and Phil 1:20 (“… that Christ may be exalted in my sw/mati”) are taken to mean “self,” “person,” or an appropriate personal pronoun. That is, “offer yourselves a living sacrifice,” “that Christ may be exalted in my person or me.” Bultmann’s viewpoint, then, focuses on the individual as a self-determining being.

B. Käsemann

Käsemann, in his comments on Rom 12:1 (“offer your σωματα to God”), translates σωματα as “bodies” and states that “σωμα should not be flattened to a cipher for the person.” Rather, σωμα means corporeality.

As σωμα, humanity is capable of

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130 “Man is called soma in respect to his being able to make himself the subject of his own actions or to experience himself as the subject to whom something happens. He can be called soma, that is, as having a relationship to himself” (Ibid. 1:195-96, italics original).

131 Ibid. 1:196.

132 “By ‘body’ [Paul] means the whole person – undoubtedly in some specific respect [in being subject to one’s own or another’s will]” (Ibid. 192). “Aspectival” refers to the understanding that a person should be viewed wholistically with given aspects being emphasized, as opposed to a partitive perspective. This latter perspective views a person as comprised of discrete parts.

133 Ibid. 194.

134 “Man, his person as a whole, can be denoted by soma” (Ibid. 1:195).

135 Ibid. 194-96. John A. T. Robinson follows Bultmann, stating that “[i]ndeed σωμα is the nearest equivalent to our word ‘personality’… [t]he σωμα is the whole person.” The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology (London: SCM Press, 1952), 28. Thus, to “offer your bodies” in Rom 12:1 means to “offer yourselves” (Ibid.).

136 Commentary on Romans (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 327; he refers to the “corporal nature of our service” as seen in Rom 6:11ff.
communication with God – the “Creator who does not renounce his claim to the world.” As embodied creatures, humans are seen as standing in solidarity with the larger cosmos, the materiality of which – like the human body – is under divine claim.

However, in commenting on Rom 6:12 (“do not let sin reign in your mortal σῶμα”), he states that “the idea of the organism” is an incorrect interpretation. Somehow Käsemann can affirm the corporeality of sōma (in Rom 12:1) and deny its reference to the organism, or physique, here. He goes on to endorse Bultmann’s description of Paul’s anthropological terms as meaning “existence in a certain orientation.” His functional emphasis in this passage seems to displace “corporeality” so that physical embodiment becomes “belonging to one lord or another and representing this lord both actively and passively.”

Nevertheless, Käsemann is a significant advance on Bultmann. The communal and theocentric sense of somatic embodiment opposes Bultmann’s individualistic reading. Käsemann sees sōma as representing the “possibility of communication” in relation to God, others and creation. Bultmann’s “self-relationship” is corrected by the following rebuttal: “Die Bedeutung von σῶμα [ist] Welt- und Schöpfungsbezogenheit.”

However, while Käsemann helpfully draws out the implications or resonances of σῶμα – interrelationship – he fails to consistently depict the substantival nature of the term. This seems strange in the light of his denial that sōma means “person.” It is inadequate to deflect the holistic meaning of sōma (i.e., = “self”) and then to merely interpret the term functionally or relationally. Rather, persons are in relationship with the world and creation because of a shared corporeality.

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137 Romans, 327.
138 Romans, 176.
139 Romans, 176.
140 Ibid.
143 I note that Scornaienchi cites Käsemann’s 1933 work, Leib und Leib Christi, in which σῶμα is made to mean “person.” Ibid. 40; Leib und Leib Christi (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1933), 121. However, as noted, in Käsemann’s Romans (1980, German original), he states that “σῶμα should not be flattened to a cipher for the person” (327).
C. Dunn

Dunn’s understanding of σώμα in Paul is conveniently stated in his Theology of Paul the Apostle – namely, relationality. He prefaces his discussion of Pauline anthropology with an emphasis on its relational dimension: “Paul’s theology is relational … [t]he classical Greek philosophical debates about existence and subsistence … are remote from Paul … his concern was rather with humankind in relation to God, with men and women in their relationships with each other.”

Dunn acknowledges that the denotation of subsistence – viz., objective corporeality – was foremost in Greek usage of σώμα. He points out that for Homer σώμα is always “dead body, corpse.” Further, he detects this concrete meaning in the LXX and the NT (outside of Paul). However, Dunn distances Paul from what one would assume constitutes a consensus of use. By “consensus” I refer to the meaning of σώμα in secular Greek, the LXX, and non-Pauline NT. Dunn argues that Paul never deploys σώμα as “corpse,” and so Dunn cautions that “reading Paul’s anthropology in the light of modern usage [“material organism” or “corpse”] or ancient Greek usage is likely to distort our appreciation of Paul’s thought from the outset.”

I would suggest that Dunn’s definition of σώμα as “embodiment,” i.e., a relational concept, constitutes a subtle de-emphasizing of physicality. For him, σώμα is “the means by which the person relates to the environment;” “it is the embodied ‘me,’ the means by which ‘I’ and the world can act upon each other.” Other terms used include “corporeality” and “corporateness;” further, “[t]he body is the medium of [interpersonal] interaction and cooperation.”

As long as one does not push the question of what the body is, and focuses on what it does, most of Dunn’s exegesis of individual σώμα passages is perfectly agreeable. Romans 12:1, together with Rom 6:13ff, indicate offering one’s “body” in the sense of

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145 Ibid. 56. He omits to mention that the crudity (viz., ‘non-abstractness’) of the term is so prevalent that it also refers to the carcass of a dead animal (Iliad, 3.1; 18.148).
146 Ibid.
147 Dunn notes the consistent physicality of σώμα across these domains; however, Paul is the exception (Ibid.).
149 Ibid. 56.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid. The idea of interaction with the world echoes Käsemann’s “communication” definition.
152 Ibid.
offering up “themselves precisely as bodies, themselves in their corporeality, in the concrete relationships which constituted their daily living.” My definition of σώμα as “material-solidaritous self” is quite consistent with Dunn up to this point, although his accent falls on the “solidaritous” element.

D. Gundry

Robert H. Gundy has reacted strongly against the tendency to abstract σώμα from its physical denotation. In addition, he champions a modified form of dualism. He calls his position “duality,” viz., the union of the incorporeal and corporeal “parts” or “substances” of the person.154

Regarding the physical nature of σώμα in Paul, Gundry argues that “sōma … refers to … an organization of physical substance … [it] possesses a constancy of physical meaning.”155 It is never “a technical term for the whole person;” instead, it is used for “man’s physique.”156 This stress is an extremely helpful counter to the definition of σώμα as “whole person” or “self.” It leads him to object to Bultmann’s “desubstantializing of sōma”157 and its corollary: “dematerializing and existentializing sōma entails dematerializing and existentializing the resurrection.”158 He argues further that to acknowledge the body as an essential part of the self does not justify Bultmann’s “leap” in making sōma a reference to the whole person.159 To “offer your σώματα” (Rom 12:1) is not to “offer yourselves” but to offer your physical bodies – an emphasis necessitated, in Gundry’s view, by the Greco-Roman deprecation of the body.160

E. Jewett

Robert Jewett argues that it was the anti-body tendencies of some of Paul’s audiences which account for the apostle’s counter-accent on the cruciality of corporeal existence. Hence the title of his work, Paul’s Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in

153 Ibid. 58.
154 Duality “affirms that man is made up of two substances which belong together though possess the capability of separation.” Sōma in Biblical Theology (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 83-84. Duality contrasts with dualism, which poses an antagonistic relationship between body and soul.
155 Ibid. 84.
156 Ibid. 83.
157 Ibid. 167 n. 4.
158 Ibid. 168.
159 Ibid. 34, referring to Bultmann, Theology, 1:194, 196.
160 Ibid. 35.
Conflict Settings. In his discussion of σῶμα in Romans, Jewett defines σῶμα as corporeality. The term indicates

the somatic ground of existence in both aeons ... σῶμα can be used to depict the whole scope of salvation including the resurrection (Rom. 8:11) and redemption (Rom. 8:23) of the body and the bodily worship in the world (Rom. 12:1), which is the form of ethical activity the new aeon inaugurates and makes possible. The agent of somatic salvation is the “body of Christ” (Rom. 7:14) whose death and resurrection marked the turning of the aeons.161

Jewett’s “somatic” concept is thoroughly substantive when he comments on Rom 8:10. Here “the body is dead because of sin” is glossed thusly: “The phrase ‘because of sin’ [occurs] in order to insist against gnostic dualism that it was not the material constitution of the body but sin which was responsible for death.”162

However, regarding σῶμα in Rom 12:1, he takes a similar approach to Dunn, viewing it as “the basis of relationship and identity.”163 Jewett describes this verse as the one time the technical sense of “unity and relationship” is used in Romans.164 He does appreciate the physicality of the body: “Rom. 12:1 assumes that God takes pleasure at the dedication of the living body.”165 Nevertheless, it is only a slight change of perspective to move from Jewett’s focus on that which is facilitated by the body, viz., unity and relationship, to bringing bodily corporeality and the resulting interrelationality to centre stage. I would propose my “material [and] solidaritous self” as the better rubric.

F. Scornaienchi

Scornaienchi conceives of σῶμα as the vulnerability of the person in his or her physicality to outside coercion. Scornaienchi describes the dissolution to which the person as σῶμα is naturally subject; it is only once the person has entered the redemptive process that the body is liberated from sin and death. He is similar to Gundry in that he stresses the

162 Ibid. 458.
163 Romans: A Commentary (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 728-29. Cf. his gloss on “the redemption of our body” (Rom 8:13): The body is “the basis of communicating and interacting with the world.” Ibid. 519 (here he refers to his Terms, 218-219, 254-79).
164 Terms, 457. The non-technical sense of σῶμα is the physical body.
165 Ibid. 302. Unfortunately, he goes on to describe this as “spiritual worship.” However, this misinterpretation of λογική λατρεία is corrected in his Romans to “reasonable worship” (730). “Spiritual” introduces a dualism into Paul’s thought which tends to distract from the goodness of embodied living, which when done in accordance with God’s will is “pleasing to God.” Gupta raises a similar repudiation of the spiritualizing or dematerializing of worship, which he states is “the exact opposite of what [Paul] intends,” in Worship that Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul’s Cultic Metaphors (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 121).
physicality of the body: “Die grundsätzliche Bedeutung von σώμα wird bei Paulus durch die hellenistische Semantik bestimmt.”¹⁶⁶ The corporeality of the term is thus fundamental to Paul.¹⁶⁷ In essence, “die Grundbedeutung von σώμα unaktiv [ist].”¹⁶⁸

In its natural condition, then, σώμα is passive: it is subject to death and other external forces. Scornaienchi notes that σώμα appears commonly, in both Pauline and Greek thought, in association with slavery and death. So “τὸ σώμα τῷ κυρίῳ” (1 Cor 6:13) together with “ἡγομόσαστε γὰρ τιμῆς” (v. 20) indicates that believers “als Sklaven gekauft worden.”¹⁶⁹ “Der Mensch als σώμα ist daher als inaktiv gedacht und wie ein Sklave in ständiger Gefahr, von anderen beherrscht und bestimmt zu werden.” To replace σώμα with a personal pronoun – indicating a self-determining “I” – is highly inappropriate.¹⁷⁰ Slaves belong to their masters as “bodies.” The only personality to be exhibited by the slave is that of the master. Scornaienchi understands that σώμα connotes the human experience of being tyrannized. Σώμα is thus a symbol of power relations.

For Scornaienchi, the inactivity of σώμα (i.e., its non-self-determining nature) is also seen in its subjection to death. Thus Scornaienchi points to the νεκρῶσις of Abraham’s σώμα (Rom 4:19) and the θητώς … σώμα (Rom 6:12). In this light, he observes that Bultmann’s description of σώμα as the “man himself”¹⁷¹ does not account for the subjection of σώμα to death. Rather, viewing σώμα as the physical body accounts for its liability to death.¹⁷²

Against this background of the “inactivity” (or, as I would prefer, enthralled activity) of σώμα and its liability to outside mastery, the salvation process is seen to be a

¹⁶⁷ On the physicality of σώμα in Paul, Karl Olav Sandnes comments, “Paul has in mind the bodily consequences of faith, i.e. the physical embodiment of the true worship mentioned in Rom. 12:1-2.” (Belly and Body, 16). In context, he is asserting that in both Rom 12:1 and Phil 1:20 (“that Christ may be exalted in my body”) σώμα is not simply a reference to the entirety of Paul’s being. Sandnes’ overall thesis is that the sharp boundary between past bodily conduct and sanctified Christian conduct is critical in establishing Christian identity. The concreteness of the before and after of somatic lifestyle is thus foregrounded (e.g., Ibid. 175-177). Consider also Gupta’s opinion that 1 Cor 6:14 and 15:44 indicate that the “physical body is one of the Lord’s instruments/members and will be raised.” “Which ‘Body’ Is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul beyond the Individual/Communal Divide,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 72 (2010): 527. Here Gupta also endorses Gundry’s corporeal σώμα conception. See also Gupta’s Worship that Makes Sense, 117f.
¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 49.
¹⁶⁹ Ibid.
¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 50; emphasis original.
¹⁷¹ Bultmann, Theology, 1:201.
¹⁷² “Σάρξ und σώμα,” 50-51.
dramatic endowment of agency. “Verlieht dieses eschatologische Ereignis [i.e., Christ’s 
resurrection] dem σῶμα eine neue Bedeutung,”173 although under new mastery the 
transition from death to life entails a move from “Destruktivität” (which σάρξ still 
represents) to “Konstruktivität.” The believer “wird … zu einem konstruktiven Leben 
gerufen.”174

Regarding σάρξ, Scornaienchi comments firstly on the Greek background in which 
σάρξ and σῶμα are equivalents. “Beide Termini beschreiben den Menschen in seiner 
Materialität.”175 He notes that in the LXX σάρξ is used in general of living persons. Σάρξ, 
in representing ἰπώκη, “bezeichnet in der Regel nur den lebendigen Menschen.”176 Σῶμα, 
on the other hand, refers to the person as an object. The human as such is either a (non-
self-determining) slave177 or a corpse.178 The crucial difference between the two terms in 
LXX use, which flows through into Paul, is that “[σάρξ ist bei Paulus grundsätzlich 
durch den Lebenshauch belebtes Fleisch, d. h. der Mensch, der lebt und aktiv wirkt, war 
auch im Alten Testament verwurzelt ist.”179 To summarize Scornaiench’s σῶμα 
conception: emphasis falls on the passivity and naturally subordinated condition of the 
person as σῶμα. The association of σῶμα with slavery and death in the LXX, secular 
Greek and the rest of the NT is found in Paul.

This overview of the contributions of Bultmann, Käsemann, Gundry, Dunn, 
Jewett and Scornaenchi indicates the principal emphases associated with σῶμα. Gundry 
in particular accents the corporeality of the body; in this he is supported by Jewett and 
Scornaenchi (and to a lesser extent Dunn). Bultmann and Robinson, and to a lesser 
degree Käsemann and Dunn, dematerialize the body. This de-emphasizing of substance 
allows for the functional or relational implications of bodily existence to be foregrounded. 
For Bultmann and Robinson, this means that a reference to one’s σῶμα is a reference to 
the “whole person(ality).”

The overarching principle that σῶμα refers to a person in relationship with the 
social environment was well stated by Käsemann, Gundry, Dunn, Jewett and 
Scornaenchi. In accordance with my thesis that σῶμα-talk constructs identity and human

173 Ibid. 51.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid. 44.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid. 45.
178 Ibid. 46, n. 42.
179 Ibid. 46, emphasis original.
worth, the details – social, political and religious – of lived experience in the first-century Roman Empire need to be filled in. In my view, Gundry and Scornaienchi offer the best analysis by underscoring the physicality of the body as it so interacts. Particularly helpful is Scornaienchi’s association of the slave’s experience and the body. Thus, whereas Jewett glosses the σῶμα to be offered in Rom 12:1 with “the basis of relationship and identity,” by referencing the slavery association Scornaienchi alerts us to the potentially domineering nature of these relationships. It is this point which I will develop. Paul’s call for an offering of the σῶμα challenges the cultural power configuration which already lays claim to the possession of persons precisely as bodies.

4. My Definition: Σῶμα as “Material-Interrelated Self”

Material: Σῶμα in Paul designates the person as a “material-interrelated self.” Σῶμα in Paul is generally a reference to the person as viewed from the corporeal standpoint. As such he or she is connected to the social and natural environments. The person is capable of being influenced and influencing, but a substantive nuance should also be detected in σῶμα and connected terminology. That is to say, as σῶμα, the person is a material-interrelated self. This emphasis on the physicality of σῶμα aligns with Gundry and Scornaienchi’s analyses.

Interrelated: A closely associated emphasis is the interrelationality afforded by corporeal existence. The person is a material-interrelated self. As σῶμα, the material aspect of the person makes him or her a body-in-motion or connection. The above observation, that as σῶμα humans are bound up with the material fabric of the cosmos, means that we stand in relationship with both other humans and the rest of creation. The broad notion of “interrelationality” is deliberately ambiguous. What is the nature of human “interrelations?”

My thesis has two parts, which correspond to both a positive form of relations and a negative. In constructing a high-worth, cultic identity, Paul presents the body as sacral.

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180 Romans, 728.
181 I have decided to speak of “Material-Interrelated Self” because “interrelated” allows ambiguity regarding the nature of the relationship the person as a material reality has with the social and material environment. Paul works to construct the person as a “Material-Solidaritous Self,” that is, in positive relationship (solidarity) with God, others, and the rest of creation. On the other hand, the destructive power of the ruling system treats the subordinate as a “Material-Dominated Self,” i.e., the person is considered an object to be dominated.
182 For example, μέλη (limbs, members), Rom 6:13, 19; 12:4; κοιλία (belly), Rom 16:18; 1 Cor 6:13; κολλώμενος τῇ πόρνῃ (sexual coitus), 1 Cor 6:16.
Those so characterized stand in a relationship of solidarity with others who are “in Christ.” Hence it would be appropriate to define σῶμα references to the Jesus-followers\(^{183}\) with “material-solidaritous self.” However, much of my concern is to demonstrate the negative function of σῶμα-language within the Roman religio-political system. Part One, on the Greco-Roman background, seeks to demonstrate that for the non-elite, σῶμα-language inscribes violent, hierarchical power. In this context, Paul’s affirmation of the sacrality of the body amounts to a subversion of the culture’s construction of the body as the “material-dominated self.”

**Self:** Another basic concern is to lock in the essentiality of the body to human being: σῶμα is the material-interrelated self. Asserting the “selfhood” of σῶμα (its essentiality to human personhood) in relation to low-status persons was radically counter to both the philosophical prizing of the rational soul (σωματικόν) and the valuing of only the σώματα of the elite in Greco-Roman culture. For Paul, σῶμα-talk assumes the existence of a volitional self.\(^{184}\) For the culture, all too often, persons lost their volitionality and were dispossessed of their bodies. This of course is the quintessence of chattel slavery.

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\(^{183}\) Terminology such as “Messiah-followers,” “Jesus-believers,” “saints,” etc., is used in a conscious aversion to the anachronistic “Christian(s).” William S. Campbell notes that “Christian” implies non-Jewish identity, which is incorrect for the Pauline era. *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 13.

\(^{184}\) By “volitional” I refer to a person’s ability to choose his or her moral, religious and political actions.
PART ONE: Σῶμα AND Corpus IN THE GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND

Chapter 3: Greek Σῶμα

The question “whose σῶμα?” is pivotal for constructing the Greco-Roman understanding of the body. A slave’s σῶμα? Or a free citizen’s (and therefore male) σῶμα? Thus arises the basic polarization of humanity in the ancients’ worldview: those who rule and those who are ruled; those who are active and those who are passive. The active body is forceful, masculine – it orders and penetrates the weak. The passive body is servile and feminine – it is subject to the rule of a (“true”) man. It is penetrated, degraded and devalued (to differing degrees). Σῶμα-language indicates power relations and a dominating will. For the active body that will is the self; for the passive it is a heteronomous will.

In the classical Greek literature, σῶμα spells an acknowledgment of the materiality, or concreteness, of the individual – whether this is stated or not. Additionally, depending on the context, the instrumentality of the σῶμα – its functionality – may be at the fore; nevertheless the body’s physicality is always presupposed. The following analysis offers the crucial insight that σῶμα signals possession and domination: body-talk is master-talk. Slaves are at one end of the spectrum, for whom the notion that a body could be pronounced theirs is a category mistake. Slaves did not possess their σῶματα – they were σῶματα, viz., bodies possessed by another – i.e., their masters. On the other side of the divide were free, male citizens who stood possessively in relation to both their own bodies and those of their slaves. The male citizen’s honor was at stake regarding his management of both his own body and his manly domination of the bodies of his subordinates. In contrast, the slave, as J. E. Lendon observes, is “the archetype of the man without honour,” who is completely determined by an extraneous will, which I will describe as “volitioned.”

185 I omit an inquiry into the relationship of the male citizen to his wife, children and freedmen. The principal aspect of the master-slave relationship is domination – the absolute right to enforce obedience – while the other relations entail power-over. Christ L. De Wet explains: “Hierarchical power dynamics can be dialogical and negotiated, while domination is violent enforcement of actions already decided upon by the [hierarch, the paterfamilias].” “The Body as Property: Towards a Theory of Exclusion of Slaves in the Christian Household Hierarchies in the New Testament,” Ekklesiastikos Pharos 91 (2009): 325.
Two points should be made at this stage. Firstly, σῶμα does not bear a depth of signification for the Greco-Roman. It is a relatively “depth-less” term. Over against the modern notion of σῶμα referring to the whole person(ality), the term is basically two-dimensional. When a speaker describes a “slave” or a “free” σῶμα, the concern is not with inner, psychological experiences or the like. It is a flat account of the other as a material organism present in the objective environment. This is quite a dehumanizing and therefore disturbing mindset for the modern thinker to grasp, because we are accustomed to conceiving of the true person in terms of inner depth.\(^\text{187}\)

But in the Greco-Roman world the person qua σῶμα is one capable of acting in the environment; the person is capable of utilitarian contribution to the goals dictated by that person’s station. In this framework a slave could be an instrument in production, while a free male’s utility was achieved through somatic employment in the service and defense of the city-state. The spheres of operation were vastly different for the free male citizen and the slave. For the former, existence qua σῶμα meant the potential for agency and the achievement of honor; for the latter, embodiment connotes self-alienation – being an extension of another’s will.

Therefore, secondly, related to the flat instrumentality of the σῶμα is its inherent association with a directing will. Social mores determined what constituted the appropriate function of a particular body. For the free male, one’s body was to be governed and used in “virtuous” ways: managing one’s affairs and serving the state during times of war and peace. This body was defined in opposition to the slave body. It was to be upright, dignified, and only scarred on the front through manly confrontation with the enemy.

The slave body, on the other hand, was a dominated entity. It was “volitioned” – an instrument of the owner’s will. As enslaved-bodies, they “retained human intelligence and emotion in bodies no longer their own.”\(^\text{188}\) As we shall see in more detail shortly, Aristotle’s definition of the slave sets the scene. As a spokesman for the elite, he states: “The slave is … a human being belonging by nature not to himself but to another … he is an article of property, and an article of property is an instrument for action seperable from


its owner.” Essentially, slaves were alienated from their own bodies, which were typified as stooped, sun-burnt and lacerated on the back by beatings designed to inculcate the slave’s subordinate position.

As we look through the following “somatic” landscapes and note the different relations that free and enslaved persons had to their bodies, it will be helpful to envisage the different σώμα- concepts that Rom 12:1 (for example) would have aroused. To “offer your σώμα as living sacrifices” would have had vastly different nuances for a slave versus a free auditor. The affirmation of universal somatic value inherent in Paul’s parenesis was countercultural for the free hearers. The body is jolted into a sacral narrative; priestly cruciformity is now the appropriate goal of embodied existence, not social honor exclusively available through manly dominance. For the more philosophically inclined, the body’s transience is no longer a case for its inferiority. But perhaps even more striking would have been the injunction on slaves or freed persons – the social discourse of their alienation from their bodies was being collapsed. Now a new realm of service was to be entered. To this social construction of various bodies and their worth we now turn.

1. The “Depthless” Σῶμα: The Body as Instrument

My concern here is to document the universal tendency in secular Greek to use σῶμα to refer merely to the physical dimension of a human being. Commenting on ancient bills of sale and wills, Jennifer Glancy observes that slaves are viewed “not as persons but as things, as ta σώμαta doulika, slave bodies.” By “depthless,” I wish to draw attention to the fact that “σῶμα” does not have a more-than-physical connotation. Quite the opposite is the case. Whether a fuller notion of personality, in addition to bodily existence and bodily utility, was posited of a particular individual depended on his or her social-economic status. Indeed, “bodily utility” refers to the usefulness which the inferior

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189 Pol. 1254a1ff. Cf. Aristoph. Plutus, 7, in which the slave Cario bemoans his lot: “… fortune does not allow him (the slave) to dispose of his own body (τοῦ σῶματος), it belongs to his master who brought it.” Aristophanes, trans. Eugene O’Neil, Jr (New York: Random House, 1938).

190 The evidence treated here relays how the upper-class conceived and treated their social inferiors. Clearly, despite this evidence, marginalized persons still experienced themselves as persons: they had defacto marriages and left inscriptions documenting other key relationships (see Dale B. Martin, “Slave Families and Slaves in Families,” in Early Christian Families in Context, eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 207-30). My concern is to demonstrate the dominant ideology and the range of bodily experiences lower-class persons experienced. 191 Slavery in Early Christianity (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 7; cf. 10-11.
individual could offer to the superior person who was considered to be both person and body.

The polarities of low-positioned slaves and high-positioned free (male) citizens will be juxtaposed in the following presentation to show the consistently “depthless” (personality-less) quality of σώμα-terminology. By “personality” I mean “a self-conscious or rational (esp. embodied) being.” In addition to self-awareness and rationality, I understand persons to have volition, desires, emotions and moral conscience. Naturally, too, personhood is essential to one’s sense of identity: reduction to mere σώμα in the case of slaves went hand in hand with their “natal alienation.”

What is clear is that while the slave remains mere σώμα, the citizen, in addition to possessing his own σώμα, is conceived of as having the noetic aspects of personality, viz., volition, sensitivity to shame, etc. However, for both, σώμα per se does not indicate full personhood. Indeed, for the slave, σώμα signals (to the modern mind) the truncation, or non-consideration, of the slave’s selfhood. As the archetype of a human reduced to a mere object, the slave was bereft of the “depths” of personal identity which constitute a fully human existence. Peter Garnsey summarizes these deprivations:

A slave was property. The slaveowner’s rights over his slave-property were total, covering the person as well as the labour of the slave. The slave was kinless, stripped of his or her old social identity in the process of capture, sale and deracination, and denied the capacity to forge new bonds of kinship through marriage alliance. These are the three basic components of slavery.

To be conceived of as a mere σώμα, then, was to be subordinated within a cultural ideology that denied a person’s human worth; he or she was considered to lack these

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192 Cf. Rosivach’s observation that the Athenian outlook held the barbaroi – the natural slaves – as inherently inferior and allowed them to treat them “as property not as persons.” Vincent J. Rosivach, “Enslaving ‘Barbaroi’ and the Athenian Ideology of Slavery,” Historia 48/2 (1999): 144. I will discuss this philosophy of ruling and ruled elements in greater detail shortly. Rosivach also notes that chattel slavery is facilitated by a psychological hardening that mutes moral issues by denying the personhood of the other (Ibid. 142).


194 The description of slavery as “natal alienation” is Orlando Patterson’s. He informs us that a slave is “a socially dead person. Alienated from all ‘rights’ or claims of birth, he ceased to belong in his own right to any legitimate social order.” Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

195 Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1 (italics added). John DeFelice also informs us that under Roman law the same hierarchical brutality held; slaves were “viewed as chattel or little more than two legged livestock, res rather than persona. Legally, a slave was a non-person and had no personality.” “Women, Slaves and Society in Rome’s Empire and the Early Church,” in The Light of Discovery: Essays in Honor of Edwin M. Yamauchi (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2007), 108.
crucial dimensions of human existence. Such a person was a passive body. In Glancy’s words, “slavery was identified with the body.” Body as slave identification may also be described as an assimilation of the person to mere body. Patterson captures the anguish of the experience of the slave-as-σώμα: “The dishonor the slave was compelled to experience sprang … from that raw, human sense of debasement inherent in having no being except as an expression of another’s being.”

Thus, σώμα does not penetrate beyond the physicality and functional potential of one’s humanity; so reduced, one becomes an embodiment of an extraneous will (“an expression of another’s being”). Shortly, I will rebut the tendency to downplay the barbarism of slavery in the classical world. For now, Kelly L. Wrenhaven is worth citing: “The idea that the Greeks had a desire to depict the humanity of their slaves in its own right is anachronistic and largely incompatible for slave-holding societies, where such ideas can pose a serious challenge to the status quo and might even be dangerous. To borrow Patterson’s words, … ‘In our anachronistic arrogance we tend to read the history of ideas backward.’”

The term σώμα, then, is chillingly depthless. I wish to underscore Wrenhaven’s (and Patterson’s) remark that the humanity of slaves is denied in the elite Greco-Roman literature. The important feature of the de-humanization of slaves for our study is their assimilation to body and exclusion from rationality. Moreover, there is a correlation between softening the de-humanization of slaves and understanding the apostle Paul to call Christians to “offer [their] persons” to God. I intend to explicate this link in due course. For now, the primary resources will be examined to show the depthless nature of those individuals associated with σώμα.

196 Helpfully, Joseph Roisman defines “ideology” as “a set of beliefs, attitudes and assumptions held by members of the society that guides, justifies, or helps to explain conduct and social environment.” The Rhetoric of Manhood: Masculinity in the Attic Orators (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 7. I emphasize the socially constructed nature of the elite power discourse in anticipation of the counter-discourse active in Paul’s letters. Suffice it to say for now, in DeFelice’s words, “[w]hile Paul chose not to confront the system of slavery and status in the Roman world, he did choose to ignore it.” That is to say, Paul rejected the validity of the system. “Women, Slaves and Society,” 123 (italics added).

197 Glancy, Slavery, 1.

198 Slavery and Social Death, 78.


Aristotle affords ready access to the aristocratic view of σώμα generally and the slave’s σώμα in particular: “The body and the slave are in the class of tool (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ἑνῷ δέ εἰσίν [=ὁργανον] σώμα καὶ δοῦλος).”\(^{201}\) The “slave is as it were a member or tool of his master,”\(^ {202}\) with this relationship compared to that of the soul’s (ψυχή) rule of the body (σώμα) and the craftsman’s use of his tool. In each of “…these pairs there is no partnership; for they are not two, but the former is one and the latter a part of that one, not one itself; nor is the good divisible between them, but that of both belongs to the one for whose sake they exist. For the body is the soul’s tool born with it, a slave is as it were a member or tool of his master, a tool is a sort of inanimate slave.”\(^{203}\) Likewise, Varro (first-century BCE) offers a three-fold classification of agricultural “instruments”: “Instrumenti genus vocale et semivocale et mutum, vocale, in quo sunt servi, semivocale, in quo sunt boves, mutum, in quo sunt plaustra (the class of instruments which is articulate, the inarticulate, and the mute: the articulate comprising the slaves, the inarticulate comprising the cattle, and the mute comprising the vehicles).”\(^ {204}\) The slave is the instrumentum vocale – a tool with the power of speech.

The slave, then, is illustrative of mere σώμα: tool-like, possessed by the superior party, a means to the master’s ends. The slave is a mere instrument. Σώμα expresses this lack of depth; in contrast, the master is associated with the rational soul, the purposeful artisan and the ruling party. Aristotle argues that on the continuum of ψυχή, λόγος (reason) or νοῦς (intelligence) versus σώμα, ὀρέξεις (desire) or παθητικός μόριον (the emotional part of the soul), slaves should be defined in somatic terms.\(^ {205}\) A slave can “participate in reason so far as to apprehend it but not to possess it.”\(^ {206}\) The slave’s best “function is the use of the body;” “…the usefulness of slaves diverges little from that of

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\(^{201}\) Eud. Eth. 7.1242a; cf. Ibid. 1241b. All references to the Greek and Roman primary sources are from the Loeb Classical Library unless otherwise stated. On Aristotle’s role as spokesman by providing “a more philosophically sophisticated version of the cultural assumptions of his fellow members of the slave-owning elite,” see Rosivach, “Enslaving ‘Barbaroi’,” 144.

\(^{202}\) Eud. Eth., 7.1241b; cf., Pol. 1254a

\(^{203}\) Ibid. 7.1241b.

\(^{204}\) Rust. 1.17.1.

\(^{205}\) The assimilation of the master to reason and the slave to body supports Aristotle’s, what I will call “philosophy of domination.” I will discuss the subordination of that which is somatic in the next section.

\(^{206}\) Pol. 1254b.
Indeed, the slave is as suitable a target of hunting as an animal. The slave is an animalized body.

The only difference between the slave qua σώμα and a tool (ὅργανον) is that, whereas the tool is inanimate (ἄγγελος), the slave is animated. The tool, and so the slave as a member of this category, “exists for the sake of its work.” Thus we arrive at Aristotle’s definition of a slave, whose “essential quality” is that of being “…one who is a human being belonging by nature not to himself but to another [he] is by nature a slave … he is an article of property … an instrument for action separable from its owner.”

The critical point at this juncture is the tendency to assimilate the slave to (mere) body. Aristotle’s reductionism in the 4th century BCE is seen in the 2nd century CE dream manual of Artemidorus, where the slave is a body possessed by the master. Thus to dream of “[h]aving sexual intercourse with one’s servant, whether male or female, is good; for slaves are possessions of the dreamer, so that they signify, quite naturally, that the dreamer will derive pleasure from his possessions, which will grow greater and more valuable.”

Artemidorus decodes dreams of bodies as slaves. “Slaves indicate the bodies of their masters. The very man who dreamt that he saw his household slave sick with a fever became ill himself, as one might expect. For the household slave has the same relationship to the dreamer that the body has to the soul.” The slave and the σώμα

207 Ibid.
209 That slave ideology conceived of the slave in animalized terms is commonly expressed in the literature. See, for example, De Wet, “The Body as Property,” 325; Bradley, “Animalizing the Slave Body,” passim. Bradley argues that Apuleius’ presentation (The Metamorphoses) of Lucius the free-born citizen being transformed into a donkey “captures the essence of the process of enslavement and what the process meant in human terms through the connection it establishes between animal and slave” (113). The brutalization Lucius receives while in the form of a donkey, without capacity for self-defense, is described by Bradley as “the process of animalization” (Ibid.). Ibidem, “‘The Regular, Daily Traffic in Slaves’: Roman History and Contemporary History,” Classical Journal 87/2 (1991-92): 129. Wrenhaven draws attention to the way slave vulnerability to the whip symbolized “animal-like subjection to the master” (“Slave Body,” 104).
211 Pol. 1254a. Peter Garnsey draws our attention to similar comments in Aristotle’s Eudemian Ethics: “Since the relations of soul and body, craftsman and tool, and master and slave are similar … the body is the soul’s tool born with it, a slave is as it were a member or tool of his master, a tool is a sort of inanimate slave.” Eud. Eth. 1241b18-24, cited in Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 120. Garnsey’s observation of Aristotle’s overall treatment is worth noting: “…his living tool seems to have very little that is human about it.” Ibid. 123. In the Roman context, Glancy describes how an injury to a slave was of significance only inasmuch as it constituted an injury to the owner. “Family Plots: Burying Slaves Deep in Historical Ground,” Biblical Interpretation 10/1 (2002): 57-58. The slave is thus an extension of his or her owner.
213 Onir., 4.30, 199.
dissolve into one another.\textsuperscript{214} In terms of demonstrating that σώμα does not imply personality, I repeat Artemidorus’ words: “…the household slave has the same relationship to the dreamer that the body has to the soul.” That is, the authentic human being – the master – is assimilated to soul, whereas the slave is mere object responding to the commanding reason of the master. Crucial, too, is his aside “as one might expect” – it was culturally commonplace that the slave was the master’s body at a distance.

Artemidorus also indicates the cultural association of slave and σώμα through his hierarchical organization of the body. Dreams which envisage a body will symbolize the master as the head and the slave as the body.\textsuperscript{215} Indeed, for a slave, dreams of the gods relay the slave-master relationship. “A slave dreamt that he was playing ball with Zeus … Zeus signified his master.”\textsuperscript{216} Should a non-managerial slave\textsuperscript{217} dream that he is beheaded, his freedom is portended, “…for the head is master of the body, and when it is cut off, it signifies that the slave is separated from his master and will be free.”\textsuperscript{218}

The notion of alienation from control of one’s own body will be examined in greater detail below. For now, the point is that the slave as σώμα, tool, or article of property indicates that the inner psychological world of such a human is irrelevant to the ancient Greek citizen. The slave is without his or her own “head,” and is thus mere body. As σώμα the “person” (in modern thought) has been dis-integrated and so only the physical element or work potential is signaled by the σώμα-rubric under which he or she is situated. Within the temporal brackets provided by Aristotle (4\textsuperscript{th} cent. BCE) and Artemidorus (2\textsuperscript{nd} cent. CE), a large amount of primary material confirms the tendency to dehumanize certain individuals through construing them as mere σώματα.

The reductionism inherent in the label σώμα vis-à-vis slaves is seen throughout the Greek literature wherever slaves are simply termed σώματα: “bodies.” Dionysius reports that “[t]here were many bodies [captured], also a large amount of money and corn (ἡν ἄνδειππα ἐν...\textsuperscript{214} Cf. Glancy, \textit{Slavery}, 9.
\textsuperscript{215} The foot represents the slave (\textit{Onir.}, 1.2). In the dream of a son, the head as the symbol of authority symbolizes his father (\textit{Ibid.}).
\textsuperscript{216} \textit{Onir.} 4.69, 213.
\textsuperscript{217} Artemidorus distinguishes between two classes of slaves: those who act as agents or managers, and common slaves who do menial work (1.35). They are also presented as slaves who are or are not “entrusted with the care of the house” (2.49). The issue is whether the slave holds a position of trust (2.47). Artemidorus stresses the necessity of interpreting the dream after considering the dreamer’s “identity, occupation, birth, financial status, state of health, and age.” (1.9) For further discussion see Dale Martin, \textit{Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 19-22.
\textsuperscript{218} \textit{Onir.}, 1.35.
Often these remarks are made in the context of military defeats, and the fates of the conquered are described in terms of what happened to (previously) “free” and “slave” σώματα. Polybius, in the second-century BCE, recounts that most of the inhabitants of Megapolis fled before they were invaded. Those who fled are described as “τῶν ἐλευθέρων καὶ δουλικῶν σωμάτων” – literally, “free and slave bodies.” He then mentions another city, from which σώματα – war captives – were sold after a siege. Tellingly, in another instance, “τὰ … ἐλεύθερα σώματα” were ransomed, while “τὰ … δουλικά καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν οἰκεῖον (the slave things, i.e., the slaves and the remaining booty)” were carried off. The tallying of “ἐλεύθερα σώματα” with slaves, and other items of wealth seized by the victorious army, or their being the subordinate party (without reference to other items) in a military setting is amply testified in the literature. Polybius describes the escape of “free and slave bodies (τῶν ἐλευθέρων καὶ τῶν δουλικῶν σωμάτων).”

“Free-σώματα” also appear in commercial and criminal contexts. Loans were not to take the borrower’s body as security (“ἐπὶ σώμασιν ἐλεύθεροι”) ; that is, the person should not be enslaved to recoup loan monies. Further, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (late first-century BCE) reports, it was considered outrageous for violence (ὑβρίς) to be inflicted on “σώμα ἐλεύθερον.” When we investigate σώμα as the volitioned body (σώμα is always the material body subject to someone’s will) below, it will be seen that this hierarchical protection from corporal violence is exclusively a privilege of the elite. For now, I simply note that the “σώματα ἐλεύθερα” concept tends to reify the human being into an objective item. Our “depthless” nuance is basic, then, with σώμα drawing attention to the physical aspect and corporal vulnerability of the person without any contemplation of inner selfhood.

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220 Hist., 2.62.
221 Ibid.
222 Ibid. 2.6. For the recovery of “a thousand bodies of citizens (χίλια πολιτῶν σώματα)” without a ransom, see Demades, On the Twelve Years, 1.9. Seizures are made of “of ruling bodies (σώματοι ἡγμονικῶν)” in Plutarch, Pomp., 24.4 (my trans.). The expression “bodies captured in war (πολεμικά σώματα)” appears as well (Polyb., Hist., 4.52.7), here ‘to be returned without ransom.’
224 Polyb., Hist., 16.30; Plut., Luc., 21; Xen., Hell., 1; Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom., 8.16.
225 Hist., 2.62.10 (my trans.).
227 Ant. Rom., 4.36.
Against this foil of blunt physicality, the tendency of translators to euphemize the starkness of the original writers and Greco-Roman culture is of critical note. I contend that “σώματα ἐλεύθερα” should be rendered “free bodies,” which when captured and classified along which other objects are destined to become slaves unless a ransom is paid. I suspect that translators are reluctant to ascribe the de-humanizing perspective of the literal translation to the ancients and so soften the “σώματα ἐλεύθερα” rhetoric with “freemen (or “free men”),” “[those of] free condition,” 228 “free person,” 229 or simply “free.” 230

In another variation, Plutarch (late first-, early second-century CE) states the intention “ἐλεύθερον σώμα πρίασθαι ἐπὶ δουλεία ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοκομένων,” literally, “to buy a (previously) free body from those captured for the purpose of slavery.” 231 Goodwin’s translation softens this with “to buy a captive, who was once free, to be a slave.” However, for the original author, human beings are capable of being reduced to physical objects – σώμα signifies this reduction. Not to render his terminology literally (i.e., “captive” instead of “free body”) distorts the original worldview. Even the translation “the persons of free men” for “σώμασιν ἐλευθέροις” is insufficient, as the English “person” connotes “personhood” rather than straight corporeality. 232

This “euphemizing tendency” will be restated throughout this discussion. It has relevance for our eventual handling of the Pauline σώμα as the command to “offer your σώματα” (Rom 12:1) means the opposite of offering “yourselves,” your “personalities.” In light of the Greek background, personality (rational, moral agency) is omitted via “σώμα” and the person is reduced to physicality. The barbarity of the Greco-Roman cultural institution of slavery is also often understated through the romantization of the classical roots of Western history. Bradley provides clarity on this point:

There is little room for debate any longer about the inhuman character of chattel slavery in classical antiquity, whether in Rome or the classical Greek world. To the modern sensibility slavery represents the polar opposite of everything.

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229 Aeschin., 3., 5; Xen., Hell., 1; Polyb. Hist. 16.30 (here the phrase is “αἱ ... ἐλευθέρα τῶν σώματων”).
230 Polyb. Hist. 2.62.
231 Plut., X Orat., 7.
232 Dio. Hal., Ant. Rom., 4.9. Cf. Ibid. 4.36, where a crime concerning “σώμα ἐλευθέρον” is rendered an attack on “a person of free condition” (similarly, Ibid. 10.8).
laudable in the Greco-Roman civilization, an abomination for which no apology is possible and in which no redeeming features can be found.233

Once the centrality of σῶμα in describing the dehumanizing of persons in ancient thought is acknowledged, the subversive nature of Paul’s high valuation of the body comes into focus. Moreover, as we will see, construals of σῶματα in the LXX as references to persons and not to humans-as-physique will be readily debunked as sanitizing the actual record.234 I wish also to note my puzzlement at Glancy’s comments on how the ancients would have heard “τὰ σῶματα.” After arguing for the objectification of persons as chattel via the σῶμα language, she states, “I am not certain that ancient audiences would have heard the expressions ta sōmata and ta sōmata doulika as references to bodies or slave bodies. If the metaphor was no longer live, those who used the expression ta sōmata simply intended to say ‘slaves.’”235 However, the dehumanization, animalization, and indeed, cruelty and disgust which the free population was capable of inflicting on slaves indicate their conceiving of them as things and not persons.236

Beyond the plight of the once-free σῶματα falling into slavery, the de-personalizing of human beings is seen in the wider slavery discourse. Per Aristotle’s

233 “The Problem of Slavery in Classical Culture” (Review Article), Classical Philology 92 (1997): 274. De Wet’s comments should be noted here too. He argues that slave status must not be optimistically elevated to the point that they are members of the familia or οἶκος. Rather, “slaves should be seen as bodies, i.e., slave-corporeality, and their bodies as property.” “The Body as Property,” 321. For Page DuBois, the slave body is often left undepicted in modern accounts of antiquity, because it “interferes with or interrupts the surfaces of messages about an idealized past.” Slaves and Other Objects (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 101.

234 As do those who take “τὰ σῶματα τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ [Jacob’s]” (Gen 36:6) to refer to ‘persons’ of the household rather than slaves. See, for example, Kendrick Grobel, “Σῶμα as ‘Self, Person’ in the Septuagint,” in Neustamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann, BZNW 21 (Berlin, 1954), 55-56. Similar positions are taken by I. A. Ziesler, “Σῶμα in the Septuagint,” Novum Testamentum 25/2 (1983): 138, and Daniel Lys, “L’Arrière-Plan et Les Connotations Vétérotestamentaires de Sarx et de Sōma,” Vetus Testamentum 36/2 (1986): 198. Ziesler fails to convince because he imports modern sensitivities: “Slaves were more than bodies, and had minds and affections, abilities and personalities which must to some extent and on some occasions have impinged on the consciousness of their owners.” (Σῶμα,” 136). Gundry, on the other hand, is correct to note that σῶμα depicts “slaves as commodities,” not as persons (Sōma, 16).

235 Slavery, 11. Here, too, she thinks that a slave’s being counted in a census indicates his or her being conceived of as a person – the logic which I fail to follow. Additionally, Glancy’s reluctance to deduce that slaves would have internalized the degradation they experienced physically (Ibid. 28-29) seems inappropriate. The possibility of their not being psychologically traumatized seems to be a denial of the humanity of slaves.

236 For the relationship of disgust and cruelty in driving the vicious treatment of non-elite bodies, see Judith Perkins, “Early Christian and Judicial Bodies,” in Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, ed. Thorsten Fügen and Mireille M. Lee (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 247-50. She connects this with the process of “animalizing” the lower class and slaves. Her commentary relates to the first three centuries (CE) under the Roman Empire, and the new feature here is the elite’s combining of the lower-class free and the slaves in the category of penal somatic-liability.
verdict that “the body and the slave are in the class of tool (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ἐξδει σῶμα καὶ δοῦλος),” or Varro’s description of the slave as *instrumentum vocale*, slave-σώματα were persons-reduced-to-physique. In the contexts of their entry into slavery (capture or sale) or of their service, slaves are routinely catalogued with inanimate implements of production and animals. Polybius comments on the value of a region’s “moveable property excepting bodies (τῶν ἐπίπλων χορφίς σωμάτων).” Unqualified σώματα, in company with other articles of possession, means “slaves.” BDAG denote “slaves” as one meaning of the absolute use of σώματα, as do LSJ and other scholars. The female bodies of prostitutes were part of the “economic resources” of the slave-traders and slaveholders.

The animalization of the slave-σώμα confirms the “depthless” nature of σώμα. A further example of the fact that the human qua σώμα has been stripped of his or her humanity is seen in the label *andrapodon*. In this designation of the slave-σώμα, we have “as perfect an illustration as could be hoped for of the normative Greek construction of slaves as subhuman creature.” The slave as “ἀνδράποδον” is literally reduced to being a “man-footed creature.” Bradley informs us that this “common Greek term for ‘slave’ … was built on the foundation of a common term for cattle, namely *tetrapodon*, ‘four-footed creature.’” Thus, we see that “[t]he ease of association between slave and animal … was a staple aspect of ancient mentality, and one that stretched back to a very early period.” In the following examples, I will render the Greek ἄνδραποδον with “man-feet.” The neuter termination should also be noticed because it probably reinforces the dehumanization of the imposed identity.

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237 Hist. 2.62 (my trans.).  
238 See the LCL translations of the following: Strab., 4.6.8; 12.2.9; Polyb., 2.6.6; 3.17.10; 18.35.6; Plut., Ant., 7.4 (passim).  
239 BDAG, s.v σῶμα, 2; LSJ, s.v σῶμα, 3. See also R. Eduard Schweizer, “Body,” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 768. However, pace BDAG, a comparison of the colloquial “get some bodies for the job” with slave-σώματα is hardly appropriate. Our “bodies” do not carry the de-humanizing content of the ancient use, in which bodies are captured, sold and employed. For “σώμα” as a synonym for δοῦλος see also Glancy, *Slavery*, 10. Similarly, Wrenhaven comments that “[b]y the Hellenistic period, the Greek word for ‘body,’ soma, had become a metonym for ‘slave.’” “Slave Body,” 98. Margaret Killingray suggests that “σώματα” is a technical term for slaves. “The Bible, Slavery and Onesimus,” *Anvil* 24/2 (2007): 89, n. 6.  
240 Rebecca Flemming, “Quae Corpore Quaestum Facit: The Sexual Economy of Female Prostitution in the Roman Empire,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999): 42. She also refers to sources which show the large number of male slaves engaged as prostitutes in the Roman Empire (*Ibid. 45*). Flemming notes that the verb prostituere, “to set before,” is used of wares or objects for sale including the prostitute as available body (*Ibid. 43*).  
242 “Animalizing the Slave Body,” 110. The link between ἄνδραποδον and tetrapodon is confirmed by LSJ (s.v ἄνδραποδον).
Plutarch records that the general Marcellus “permitted booty to be made of property and man-feet (χρημάτων καὶ ἀνδραπόδων), although he forbade his men to lay hands on the free bodies (τῶν ... ἐλευθέρων σωμάτων) and strictly ordered them neither to kill nor outrage nor enslave (ἀνδραποδίσασθαι) any Syracusan.” Other catalogues of ἀνδραπόδων with captured “cattle, arms and all sorts of military stores” abound. Here we see the animalizing connotation of the term andropodon in both its nominal and verbal forms. The term is technically a reference to enslavement resulting from military defeat, thus bearing the nuance, for those previously free, of a shameful loss of station through inferiority in battle.

The slavery discourse, in animalizing the slave-ἀνδράποδον indicates the derogatory nuance that the slave-σώμα possesses. While the slave is often simply the ἀνδράποδον, the slave as σώμα is made apparent through the parallelism of “ἐλευθέρα σώματα” and “ἀνδράποδε” Dionysius states that the Volscians captured, “…on the one hand, many free bodies of Romans (πολλὰ μὲν σώματα Ῥωμαίων ἐλευθέρα) and, on the other, man-footed-animals, oxen, … cattle (πολλὰ δ’ ἀνδράποδα …).” A reference to an ἀνδράποδον is thus a reference to an animalized σώμα. In other cases, rather than being called ἀνδράποδα, slaves are catalogued as σώματα in conjunction with “βοσκῆματα,” “θρέμματα” or “τετράποδα” – all three terms can be rendered by “cattle.” Σώμα is, therefore, a depthless, dehumanized concept.

The dehumanization of the enslaved σώμα is also seen as σώματα (“slaves”) are catalogued with other items of property. Polybius reports that Hannibal captured “an immense booty in money, bodies, and property … the bodies were distributed according to merit among his men (χρημάτων πολλών καὶ σωμάτων καὶ κατασκευὴς … τὰ δὲ σώματα διένεμεκατὰ τὴν ἄξιαν ἐκάστοις τῶν συστρατευμένων).”

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243 Marc. 19.2 (LCL modified): Perrin’s translation reads “… property and slaves … lay hands on the free citizens.”
245 Cf. LSJ, s.v ἀνδραπόδον.
247 Plut. Eum., 8.5; Dio. Hal., Ant. Rom. 7.63.3.
248 Polyb. Hist. 2.26.5; 4.29.6; 4.38; 4.75.2.
249 Polyb. Hist. 1.29.7; 4.75.7.
250 Polybius states: “Those commodities which are the first necessaries of existence, cattle and slaves (τὰ τε θρέμματα καὶ τοῦ ὕπατος ἐξ ἡς δουλείας ἀγομένων σωμάτων πλῆθος) are confessedly supplied by the districts round the Pontus in greater profusion.” Hist. 4.38.
251 Hist. 3.17.10. I have slightly modified Shuckburgh’s translation, rendering σώματα with “bodies” instead of “slaves.” Cf. Dio. Hal., Ant. Rom., 7.37.5; 17.14 (cf. 3.57.2); Strab., 12.2.9.
Slave-σώματα appear in these catalogues in settings of both military capture and trade. In the former case, they are often “αἴχμαλωτα σώματα” – those captured by the aίχμη, the tip of a spear. Demosthenes states that “three thousand captured bodies (τρισχίλια δ’ αἴχμαλωτα σώματα)” were brought to Athens. Polybius notes that a Roman general organized the deportation of “the ships and the bodies which had been captured (τῶν αἷμαλῶτων πλοίων καὶ τῶν σωμάτων).” The victims are then described as “the things of bodies, taken alive (σωμάτων τὰ ληφθέντα ζωγρиф).”

In sum, the “depthless” σώμα is seen in the ability of the ancients to reduce a human being to mere body. As such, the person is animalized and socially alienated – bereft of the familial and civic networks which anchor honor/human worth. The person is considered an extension of the master’s body, subject to a heteronomous will. It is the body as an instrument under an external will which we will now consider.

2. The Dominated Σώμα: The Body as Volitioned Instrument

The previous section outlined the ancients’ willingness to depreciate the body as the lowest aspect of personhood. The literature reveals their capacity to conceive of the nonelite in depersonalized and material terms. A category of human beings was considered to be mere bodies, bereft of independent will and the value which characterizes personality. Σώμα terminology implies a dominating will: the body is subject to either one’s own or another’s volition and operates instrumentally to express that will. While the slave as the archetype of the despised person was considered a mere body without human personality, the high-status members of society took pride in dominating their slaves qua bodies and their own bodies. To dominate one’s local body and one’s remote bodies (slaves, children and wife) is a variation of the same manly activity – the active body subordinates the passive body. Through the exercise of force, the male citizen would compete for the greatest prize among the Greco-Romans: honor. This section, then, will investigate, firstly, how the aristocrat dominated his slaves qua σώματα and secondly, how he managed his own body to compete for honor and so avoid assimilation into servitude or σώμα.

252 Cf. LSJ, s.v αίχμη.
253 Lept., 77. Cf. Diodorus Siculus (late first-century BCE), 2.18, 13.73; 17.14, 46; 20.23, 80; Plut., Regum., 81; Dio Chrys., Or., 7.133; Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom., 6.94.
254 Hist. 1.61.
The goal of these two sub-sections is to further demonstrate that σῶμα refers to the material aspect of a person and that reduction to being mere σῶμα dehumanized the person, with brutal consequences. Whereas the previous section on the “depthless” body underscored the dehumanized object which a person qua σῶμα was thought to be, this section emphasizes the resulting praxis. We move, then, from theory or concept to the practical treatment inflicted on σώματα.

A. Domination of Those Reduced to Σώματα

Here we consider how a person could be stripped of the depths of personality through the imposition of a heteronomous will. This section investigates how being associated with or being σῶμα was basic to a person’s subordinated rank under the dominant party. At the superior end of the spectrum was the free-born, male citizen. He was deemed virtuous – accorded honor – through manly employment of his own σῶμα and through absolute control of his subordinates’ σώματα. Thus we consider, firstly, the basic Greek worldview that constructed what I call a “philosophy of domination.” That is, naturally ruling and ruled elements were inherent within the fabric of the cosmos. This allowed for the male elite (associated with natural rule, and reason) to subordinate the “Other” (the barbarian, slave or woman). Secondly, the hierarchy of somatic domination between persons is investigated, with an emphasis on how the slave was a factor in a power dynamic (the “household”), bereft of kinship relations and thus subject to degrading corporal violence. Here the justification of bodily brutalization because of the “other’s” assimilation to σῶμα is of particular importance.

The rationale for inter-human somatic domination stemmed from the Greek model of reality in which all things could be classed as either “that which rules” or “that which is ruled.” Again, this hierarchical understanding of reality will be called the “philosophy of domination.” Our focus is on the ancient justification of the rational subjugating the corporal. Aristotle stated this division between the dominant and the dominated thus: “Authority and subordination are conditions not only inevitable but also

255 This antithesis should be seen as an aspect of the general Greek tendency to antithesize. Greek self-definition was by way of contrast: overagainst the Greek citizen is the “Other”: barbaroi, women and slaves. So too, within the arrangement of the household, women, children and slaves are set in an opposition to the male head (Pol., 1235b1ff). For the staple of defining the non-Greek “other” as barbarian and slaveish, see Hdt., 8.142-144; also Cartledge, The Greeks, 127-29; Paul Millett, “Aristotle and Slavery in Athens,” Greece & Rome 54/2 (2007): 181. Millett cites Euripides (IA, 1400): “It is right … that Hellenes should rule barbarians, but not barbarians Hellenes, those being slaves, while these are free.” See also Rosivach, “Enslaving ‘Barbaroi’,” 142-44.
expedient; in some cases things are marked out from the moment of birth to rule or be ruled (τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀφροχοθαι τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀφρόχειν).”

Commenting on this passage, De Wet makes us aware that “Aristotle somatizes the slave-experience by identifying it with the birth-event of the human being,” by which I take him (De Wet) to mean that the ancients were capable of conceiving of some persons in wholly somatic – and thus abject – terms.

Clearly for Aristotle, the body falls under the rubric of “τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀφρόχειν” I have already discussed his categorization of both the body and the slave as a tool: “The body and the slave are in the class of tool (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ἐξουθεν [ὡς ῥηγαίνῃ] σῶμα καὶ δοῦλος).” Elsewhere he states that the “slave is as it were a member or tool of his master.”

The slave, therefore, is merely a functional tool whose distinguishing quality vis-à-vis an inanimate implement is the capacity to remotely execute the owner’s intentionality. Such a view allows Aristotle to represent the slave σῶμα as something that exists for the sole purpose of the master’s good. Most tellingly, to be thus somatized (reduced to mere σῶμα, dominated object) is to belong to one’s master.

The fresh point here is that in his philosophy of domination, Aristotle postulates that, at its simplest, the soul (ψυχή) rules over the body (σῶμα). Thus he insists that “an animal consists primarily of soul and body (τὸ δὲ ζῷον πρῶτον συνέστηκεν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος), of which the former is by nature the ruling and the latter the subject factor.”

Anthropoi are then discussed. Aristotle moves seamlessly from the soul-body polarity to the soul = master, body = slave polarity. The soul-body hierarchy is not true within each person; persons are bifurcated by their association with one or other end of the continuum. Σῶμα qua σῶμα is inherently the minor factor within some relationship of power, as the follows table depicts.

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256 Pol. 1254a20. Cf. 30-32: “In every composite thing, where a plurality of parts, whether continuous or discrete, is combined to make a single common whole, there is always found a ruling and a subject factor.”

257 “The Body as Property,” 325.

258 Eud. Eth. 7.1242a.

259 Eud. Eth. 7.1241b; cf. Pol. 1254a; 1255b10.

260 Eud. Eth. 7.1241b20.

261 Pol. 1254a1-19; especially 6: “The slave … wholly belongs to the master.” Here Aristotle ties possession with service; cf. Ar., Plut., 7. In Anth. Gr., 5.302, we are told, “ὡς ἀνθρωποὶ σώματος ἀλλοτριοῦ” Paton translates this as “[the law] prosecutes for outrage on slaves.” However, a more literal rendering is “[the law] prosecutes for outrages on a body (= slave) belonging to another.”

262 Pol. 1254a; cf., Eud. Eth. 1249b5-10.
### “Ruling” vs. “Ruled”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Ruling”</th>
<th>“Ruled”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ψυχή (νοῦς, λόγος), man, male</td>
<td>Σώμα (ὁρεύεις, τὸ παθητικὸν μόριον), lower animals, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions to …</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>[Authentic human: Greek, male citizen]</td>
<td>Natural slaves “whose function is the use of the body”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “who participates in reason so far as to apprehend it but not to possess it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- both animal and slaves provide “bodily service”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freemen’s bodies “erect … serviceable for a life of citizenship”</td>
<td>Slave bodies “strong for necessary service”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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263 The elements of both tables are found in Pol. 1254b1-30; cf. Ibid. 3.1277a1ff. In Eth. Nic. (1118b3), those who are governed by physical appetites (“mad-bellies”) and so fail to live by reason are “of especially slavish nature (οἱ λίαν ἀνδραποδότηκες).” That is, the slave (or animalized human – ἀνδραπόδος) is the paradigm of the person in which irrational matter has subjugated the intellect.

264 Aristotle’s views on the male-female polarity are well summarized by Cartledge: “The male-husband [is to rule the oikos/polis] … because ruling requires the exercise of reason, and in that department women are congenitally inferior to men. How so? Because the ratiocinative capacity (logistikon) of their psukhē is akuron, ‘inauthoritative’, ‘without authority’.” The Greeks, 69; cf. 109. Thus, along with the slave, women are assimilated to the somatic, and thus subordinated, end of the continuum. 

265 Pol. 1254b15. Rosivach helpfully defines Aristotle’s notion of η φύσις: “Not some external generative or ordering principle (‘Mother Nature’) but rather that within something that makes it what it is.” He observes that teleology as facilitated by capacities and functions are central to what is natural for a thing. “Enslaving ‘Barbaroi’,” 145. Aristotle’s sense of what is mandated by Nature – e.g., “these are by nature slaves (οὐκοῦν … εἰσι φύσει δοῦλοι)” (Pol. 1254b19) – will later be contrasted with Paul’s construction of what accords with nature (for him, the Creator’s will). For Paul, “natural” is a theological description: somatic self-offering to God is λογικὸς (Rom 12:1), in accordance with the cosmic norm, rather than the domination of a sub-set of humanity.
Again, it is apparent that for Aristotle the basic philosophy of domination that sees the soul rule the body maps out onto the various classes of human beings. Some, endowed with reason, are naturally the ruling class. In contrast, others are “by nature” purely somatic beings whose usefulness depends on their being supplied with the intelligence they lack. This process of “supplying” direction and purpose to the otherwise stupid body is, of course, the dominating institution of slavery. For if intelligence is not apportioned to all persons in the manner that bodies are, then the brutal governance of the body-class (of which slaves are the archetype) is justified. Δουλεία (slavery) is, for Aristotle, “to live not as one likes (τὸ ζῆν μὴ ὡς βουλέταν).” Rackham’s use of “like” for βουλέμαι can be improved by noting LSJ’s entries: to “deliberate,” to “determine with one’s self,” or to “resolve.”

The slave is the one who lacks autonomous will and self-direction or self-determination. In short, in Garnsey’s words, Aristotle understands “the natural slave … to suffer from a deficiency of the reasoning part of the soul.” This noetic deficiency is compensated for by a somatic excess: the slave is purely associated with irrational matter and so driven by an external intellect. The overarching point is that oὐμα implies a dominating will, and this is most clearly seen in the case of those who are fully assimilated to oὐμα. The natural slave was merely a body that required an extraneous will due to its own lack of personality. Vlastos’ summation of Aristotle’s outlook is apt:

266 Pol. 1.1252a20: “For he that can foresee with his mind is naturally ruler and naturally master, and he that can do these things with his body is subject and naturally a slave.” The slave is oὐμα, the “doer,” rather than the thinker/director. Later Aristotle states: “The master must know how to direct the tasks which the slave must know how to execute” (1255b20). Rosivach summarizes: “The master thinks with his mind, the slave works with his body.” “Enslaving ‘Barbaroi,’” 146. For Plato the slave can form an opinion based on observation, but being bereft of λόγος cannot give a rational account of his or her knowledge (Leg., 966b).

See also Gregory Vlastos, “Slavery in Plato’s Thought,” The Philosophical Review 50/3 (1941): 289-91. Vlastos summarizes Plato’s view that “the defining concept of the slave [is]: a servant destitute of logos.” (Ibid. 297, with reference to Tim., 46d4). Fascinatingly, Vlastos (“Slavery in Plato’s Thought,” 300-01) also alerts us to Plato’s philosophical and cosmological assumptions in which inert matter is acted upon by an extraneous, divine mind. His opponents were the Ionian, materialist scientists who understood reason and self-regulation to be inherent within material items. They were atheistic, while Plato was theistic. At the human level, then, the slave is assimilated to matter and the intelligent Greek freeman to ruling logos.

267 The natural slave is “φύσει δούλος” for example in Pol. 1254b20 (passim). After the argument outlined in the above tables, Aristotle admits that nature often gets it wrong. Rather than the free man getting the erect body which is suited for political life, “as a matter of fact often the very opposite comes about – some persons have the bodies of free men and others the souls” (Ibid. 1254b33ff.). That is, nature does not always give the citizen the ideal body and soul. Garnsey’s assessment should stand: “Natural slavery as presented by Aristotle is a battered shipwreck of a theory.” Ideas of Slavery, 107. For nature’s capacity to misallocate souls and bodies, see Euripides’ El., 370-75: “…human nature has confusion in it … a mighty soul in a poor man’s body (γνώμην τε μεγάλην ἐν πένητι σώματι).”

268 Pol. 1317b13.

269 LSJ, s.v βουλέμαι κτλ.

270 Ideas of Slavery, 38.
“…slavery is good for the slave (as well as for the master): better to be ruled by an alien reason, than not to be ruled by reason at all.”

The best way to pull these various threads together is with the stark observation that the *slave is the owner’s body at a distance*. The observable entity called “the slave” is simply a body, an object or tool; his or her σώμα, however, does not belong to the slave. The slave belongs to the master. Thus Aristotle says that, as an “article of property,” the slave is an “instrument for action separable from its owner (κτήμα δὲ ὀργανον πρακτικῶν καὶ χωριστόν).”

Or, again, “… the slave is a part of the master – he is, as it were, a part of the body, alive but yet separated from it (ό δὲ δούλος μέρος τι τοῦ δεσπότου, οἶνον ἐμψυχόν τι τοῦ σώματος κεχωρισμένον δὲ μέρος).” Millet summarizes with “[h]is [the slave’s] whole function is to be a tool and possession of his master; and since he performs only physical tasks, he is part only of the master’s physical nature.”

The slave’s work is by definition somatic, viz., “σωματικὰς ύπηρεσίας (bodily service).”

We can conclude, then, that the slave is reduced to being a body devoted to expressing the master’s personhood – not his or her own. Patterson captures the condition well:

What the captive or the condemned person lost was the master’s gain. The real sweetness of mastery for the slaveholder lay not immediately in profit, but in the lightening of the soul that comes with the realization that at one’s feet is another human creature who lives and breathes only for one’s self, as a surrogate for one’s power, as a living embodiment of one’s manhood and honor.

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271 “Slavery in Plato’s Thought,” 302. He states that Plato would concur with Aristotle’s defense of natural slavery (*Ibid.*). For Aristotle’s view that advantage accrues to the natural slave by being wisely dominated, see *Pol.* 1255b10-15.

272 *Pol.* 1254a15.

273 *Ibid.* 1255b10. The relevance to the “body of Christ” metaphor used by Paul should also be noted.


276 *Slavery and Social Death*, 78 (italics added). Patterson’s sense of the surrogacy nature of the master to slave relation is that the slave functions as a substitute body: “The master’s existence is enhanced by the slave’s, for in addition to existing on his own account his consciousness is mediated through another consciousness, that of the slave. In other words, another person lives through and by him – becomes his surrogate – and the master’s power and honor is thereby enhanced.” *Ibid.* 97, cf. 304. Moreover, consider Cilas Kemedjio’s comments, which though referring to New World slavery, capture the somatization and de-personalization of slaves: “The slave trade produced slave bodies. Slavery reproduces slave bodies by means of a systematic practice of rape. Through isolated or collective actions, the slaves and their descendents undertook the subversion of the ‘yoke of slavery’ … slavery [is thus] the total alienation of the will at the individual and collective level.” “Rape of Bodies, Rape of Souls: From the Surgeon to the Psychiatrist, From the Slave Trade to the Slavery of Comfort in the Work of Edouard Glissant,” *Research in African Literatures* 25/2 (Summer 1994): 52.
Importantly, the surrogacy of the slave as “body double,” as Glancy puts it, reinforces his or her role as an honor conduit, rather than as participating in the honor game. She observes that “slaveholders used slaves as surrogate bodies to surround and buffer their own bodies and thereby safeguard their honor.” To allow for the elites’ corporal inviolability, the slave acted as the somatic shield. In Glancy’s words, “[t]he slave body was subject to insult, abuse, and penetration. Still more, the slave was a body, available for the slaveholder’s use as a surrogate.”

Building on Glancy’s insights, De Wet cogently argues against slaves’ membership within the family structure. Any honor “afforded” to slaves was a result of their representation of the slaveholder. The slave’s power to conduct business and act as the master’s agent was a reflection of the owner’s dignitas, the slave being a mere extension of the owner. De Wet notes that “[t]he power exercised by slaves was transferred power. Slaves were merely social power catalysts. They did not have power of their own to exercise in a hierarchy. The body of a slave may be viewed as the extension of the body of the owner.”

The concept of deflected honor helps us interpret several passages in the literature which decry violence against slaves. In reality the (upper-class) authors are probably best understood as concerned with the property rights of the slaveholders. Just as the “good” slave elevates the master’s prestige, it is criminal to detract from his or her prestige by harming his or her slave (as it would be to deface any other possession). Athenaeus (3rd cent. CE) notes in his Deipnosophists the liability of a person who “ill-treated a slave (τις εἰς δοῦλον σώμα ὑρίστη).” Aristotle’s treatment of natural slavery in his Politics is evoked in part by those who reject such a position.

Despite this basic tendency to protect slaves for the owners’ sake, Dio Chrysostom (later 1st cent. CE) offers a powerful antithesis. In a rare instance of egalitarian logic, he argues against corporal violence on theological grounds:

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277 Slavery in Early Christianity, 11-12, 15-16 (passim).
278 Ibid. 147.
279 Ibid. 93 (italics original); the recurrent emphasis on the slave’s reduction to somatic existence is basic to her book.
281 “The Body as Property,” 326. Also relevant is Wrenhaven’s observation that the possession of beautiful slaves, “like other beautiful belongings, were a potent advertisement of the wealth and good taste of their masters.” (“Slave Body,” 112). That is, the good slave reflects well on the owner; worth is seen in terms of representation – enhancing the master’s prestige, not one’s own.
282 E.g., Pol., 1254a19.
It is our duty, therefore, to give some heed to this [the exploitation of slaves in brothels] and under no condition to bear this mistreatment of dishonored and enslaved bodies (τὴν εἰς τὰ ἄτιμα καὶ δοῦλα σώματα ἀφροῦν) with calmness and indifference, not only because all humanity has been held in … equal honor by God … [as demonstrated by all persons possessing] reason and the knowledge of evil and good.\(^{283}\)

This is certainly a striking parallel to the theological definition of honor which is basic to Paul’s thinking. However, Dio’s argument is the exception which proves the rule – that in general anti-violence is concerned with the master’s welfare.

In short, representation of the owner’s prestige is the reason for the slave’s precarious “honor.” “Acting honorably is not the same thing as being honorable.”\(^{284}\) And, as a final point, the legal statuses within Roman law during the Empire are not as simple as “slave” versus “free/d.” This will be elaborated below; suffice it to say here that only the honestiores (“the more upright”) were legally precluded from corporal punishment. Slaves and the low-class free/freed were the humiliores (“the more base”) and were lumped together and vulnerable to physical torture. Bruce W. Frier dates this civic inequality (gradations of freedom) as beginning in the early empire.\(^{285}\)

My proposition – that the slave is reduced to being a body devoted to expressing the master’s personhood, not his or her own, combined with Patterson’s observation of surrogacy and “living embodiment” – can be distilled as follows: The slave was the embodiment of the master’s personhood. “Σώμα” language, again, is seen not to hold the key to whose personality is refracted through the body in question. Σώμα is depthless, not indicating the depths of personhood. Moreover, σώμα implies a dominating will; the only issue is whose personality the σώμα is embodying. Recall also Aristotle’s emphasis on the slave-σώμα as “doer:” the master “foressees with his mind (τῇ διανοιᾷ προορᾶν),” whereas “he who can do these things (the master’s instructions) with his body is subject and naturally slave (τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον τῷ σώματι ταύτα ποιεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει

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\(^{283}\) Or., 7.138.

\(^{284}\) Patterson, Slavery and Social Death, 80. He emphasizes that honor is not just about results but intent – i.e., having autonomous will; by definition, then, the slave is excluded. The precarious nature of even an imperial slave or freedman’s position can be seen from Augustus’ punishment of two of them. Polus, “a favourite freedman,” says Suetonius, was ordered to commit suicide for committing adultery with a free-born Roman woman. Thallus, an imperial secretary, leaked the contents of an official letter and had his legs broken (Aug., 67). For further examples, see Patterson, “Slavery and Social Death,” 307.

Elsewhere, the greater the use of the body, the greater the servility of the task. Σώμα, as dominated body, is primarily instrumental, viz., a “doing” thing.

Importantly, Patterson characterizes the master-slave relationship as one of parasitism. Personal parasitism entailed “the slaveholder [feeding] on the slave to gain the very direct satisfactions of power over another, honor, enhancement and authority. The slave, losing in the process all claim to autonomous power, was degraded and reduced to a state of liminality.”

B. Violent Domination of the Volitioned Body

The Aristotelian theory finds awful expression in the brutality meted out to those conceived of in somatic terms. The liability of those somatically constructed to corporal violence demonstrates the association of σώμα with physicality under domination. For those assimilated to body, their lack of intellect meant that persuasion was not considered a valid option for correction. “Children and slaves are corporally chastised, children because their intellectual abilities are not yet developed to understand verbal admonitions, and slaves, because, by their nature, they will never have the intellectual skills needed for full understanding.” Plato had paved the way for Aristotle in this regard: a free man, or “even my own son,” he says, is not to be “compelled” (from βιαζομαι, to force or dominate). “To a slave, however, I would give advice, and if he refused it I would use compulsion (προομισσιον).”

Other authors perpetuate the Aristotelian stereotyping of the stupid slave who requires physical coercion. Xenophon’s Socrates characterizes those who are “ignorant of the beautiful and good and just” as “ανδραπόδωδες,” i.e., slavish or animalistic. Elsewhere, while “men (ανθρώπως)” can be directed by “word or reason (λόγος)” by being persuaded that it is good to comply, “slaves” are completely different. “But in dealing with slaves the training thought suitable for wild animals is a very effective way

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286 Pol., 1258b35: “... the most servile [industries are] those in which the most uses are made of the body (δουλεύουσα εἰς ὅπου τοῦ σώματος πλεῖσται χρήσεις).”
287 Slavery and Social Death, 337 (this occurs within his chapter “Slavery as Human Parasitism,” 334-342).
289 The potential of the slave-σώμα to respond to “advice” (cf. συμβουλεύομαι) must be seen within Plato’s overall scheme, in which the slave (the logos-deficient body) can rote learn right action but not rationally account for its rightness (cf. Vlastos, “Slavery in Plato’s Thought,” 289).
290 Mem., 4.2.22. Rosivach (Enslaving ‘Barbaroi’,” 148) notes that Xenophon describes Socrates’ interlocutors who can not answer his questions as “slavish” (Mem., 4.2.39).
of teaching obedience,” viz., with food or praise.\(^{291}\) Slaves – as non-ἀνθρωποί – are somatically determined, controlled (and controllable) by gastric stimulation or the pleasure of being petted. Physical coercion is the logical mode for governing those who are somatically conceived.

The Attic orator Demosthenes argued that the “strongest necessity that a free man feels is shame for his own position (ἐλευθερός μὲν ἀνθρώπῳ μεγίστῃ ἰνάγκη ἢ ὑπὲρ τῶν γεγονόμενων αἰσχύνη).” By contrast, “for a slave necessity means stripes and bodily outrage, unfit to name here (δούλῳ δὲ πληγαὶ χῶ τοῦ σώματος αἰκισμός δ ... [οὗ] λέγειν ἄξιον).”\(^{292}\) The compulsion of πληγαὶ – blows or strikes – and the αἰκισμός – torture or outrage – of the body is the suitable means of directing the slave who lacks the capacity for shame.

Indeed, this is the distinguishing factor between free men and slaves. “For slaves, the body is answerable for all offenses … while for the free, it is possible to protect this (τοῖς μὲν δούλοις τὸ σῶμα τῶν ἀδικημάτων ἀπάντων ὑπεύθυνόν ἔστιν, τοῖς δ’ ἐλευθέροις ... τοῦτῷ γ’ ἔνεστι σῶσαι).”\(^{293}\) In this case Androtion, the defendant, has subverted this principle and “taken vengeance on the bodies (of free persons), as if they were man-footed animals (εἰς τὰ σώματα, ὡςπερ ἄνδραπόδοις, ἐποιήσατο τὰς τιμωρίας).”\(^{294}\) For the slave, his or her body is the sole resource with which satisfaction for wrongdoing can be made.

Even in the case of kings who offer themselves to a superior as servants, the accent falls on their somatic subservience. Plutarch describes four kings who attended the Armenian tyrant Tigranes (d. 55 BCE). Their service was deemed “to be the plainest confession of servitude (ἐξομολόγησις ... δούλειας), as if they had sold their freedom and offered their bodies to their master (ἀποδομένων τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῷ κυρίῳ).”\(^{295}\) Slavery, the forfeiture of freedom, is considered shameful and is depicted in bodily terms.

Dinarchus (4\(^{th}\) cent. BCE) records that the Thebans, while subject to the aggression of Philip of Macedon, were tired of “[enduring] slavery, or [witnessing] the

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\(^{291}\) Oec., 13.9.  
\(^{292}\) Orat., 10.27 (largely repeated in his Chers., 51).  
\(^{293}\) And., 55; cf. Tim., 167.  
\(^{294}\) And., 55; cf. Tim., 167.  
\(^{295}\) Dionysius of Halicarnassus (late 1\(^{st}\) cent. BCE) has his character Appius recall the time when the citizens were subject to “corporal punishments which they received from them [the kings] (καὶ τῶν εἰς τὸ σῶμα τιμωρίων, αἰς ἱκολάζοντο ὑπ’ αὐτῶν).” Ant. Rom., 6.24.2.  
\(^{296}\) Luc., 21.5. I have followed the LCL, except where I have rendered σῶμα literally with “bodies” rather than “persons.”
outrages perpetuated against the bodies of free men (οὔδὲ τὴν δουλείαν ὑπομένειν, οὔδὲ τὰς ὀβρεῖς ὡς εἰς τὰ ἑλεύθερα σώματα γιγνομένας).”  

Similarly, Isocrates (ca. early 4th cent. BCE) mentions that subjugated free persons must even “in their own bodies submit to greater indignities than those which are suffered in our world by purchased slaves (καὶ τοῖς σώμασι δεινότερα πάσχουσι τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν ἄργυρωντήτων).”  

Isocrates’ point is the brutality of the treatment being meted out, which exceeded the typical benchmark of abuse, the misfortune of the “silver-bought slave.” At base, the issue is the free person’s utter aversion to somatic disgrace – and thus public symbolization as servile – in contrast with the normalcy of the slave being so treated.

Plutarch continues the theme of domination as somatically focused for slave-σώματα. “Every malefactor,” he says, “who suffers in his body bears his own cross to the place of his execution (τῷ μὲν σῶματι τῶν κολαξιζόμενων ἔκακος κακούργων ἐκφέρει τὸν αὐτοῦ σταυρὸν).” The body is the locus of pain inflicted for contravening societal norms. In another example, king Idrieus is presented by Isocrates as only rational for seeking to destroy a hostile empire which has “never ceased to plot in order to gain mastery of his body and all his possessions (βουλομένην τοῦ τε σώματος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν χρημάτων ἀπάντων γενέσθαι κυρίαν).”  

The slave, however, is the archetype of the human whose σῶμα is the focus of physical domination. He or she was conceived of as (mere) σῶμα, and thus decoupled from λόγος, νοῦς and the potential for actions which might earn ἄρετη (virtue or honor). As mere “body” the slave is under the absolute control of the master. As σῶμα, he or she is subject to an external will and thus “volitioned.” A rhetorical questioner posits, “must slaves obey their masters or disdain the wishes of those who are masters of their bodies? (δεσποτῶν … ύπηκόους εἰναι δούλους χρῆ ἢ ἀπαξιῶν ἀ δοκεῖ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος κυρίοις).”  

The answer, of course, affirms the necessity of obedience. Elsewhere the

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296 Din., Dem., 19. (I have substituted “persons” with “bodies” when translating σῶμα).
297 Paneg., 4.123. (again, I use “bodies,” not “persons”).
298 De Sera., 9 (italics mine).
299 Phil., 103 (italics added); my trans. Again, I use “body” instead of “person” for σῶμα.
300 Philost., V.A., 7.42 (Conybeare’s trans., slightly modified: I replace his “persons” with “bodies”). Here the somatic subjection of the slave is contrasted to the free man’s rule of his own body: “…but I am master of my own body and guard it inviolate (τοῦ δ’ ἐμοῦ σώματος ἐγὼ διστάντης καὶ φυλάξω αὐτὸ ἀνυλλόν)’ (my trans.). More on the free man’s relationship to his own σώμα is to follow.
slave is literally “a body belonging to another (σώματος ἀλλοτρίου).” The slave Cairo in Aristophanes’ play Plutus observes that “… fortune does not allow [the slave] to dispose of his own body, it belongs to his master who has brought it (τοῦ σώματος … οὐκ ἔξ τῶν κύριων κρατεῖν ὁ δαίμων, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐωνημένου).”

The volitioned nature of the slave-σώμα is clearly demonstrable from the slave’s liability to corporal violence. In this we have both proof of the slave’s reduction to instrumental body and his or her perceived lack of intellect. In Glancy’s words, “[r]elationships of power, of domination and submission, and of honor and shame were enacted somatically.” Glancy makes this statement in a section entitled “The Whippable Body.” The adjective “whippable” summarizes the approach of the elite to the slave qua σώμα. Indeed, ὁ μαστιγίας (“one that wants a whipping”) commonly refers to the slave who is liable to bodily compulsion. Plato comments, regarding the μαστιγίας, (slave), that his dead body will continue to bear scars from the whip (“ἐξαίτη τῶν πληγῶν σώλας ἐν τῷ σώματι”). The slave is the model of the body subjected to physical brutalization.

Athenaeus (late 2nd cent. CE) praises the prudence of the Athenians for protecting their slaves, which sets limits against wanton violence. “Even if any one personally ill-treated a slave, there should be a power of preferring an indictment against him who had done so;” in Greek: “ἐὰν τίς εἰς δούλου σώμα ὑβρίση γραφάς ἐλναι κατὰ τοῦ ὑβρισαντός.” Again, the body is clearly that which is targeted in an assult. The point to

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301 I have translated “τοῖς τοῦ σώματος κυρίοις” as “masters of the bodies” in order to show that the slave is a body under the master’s rule.
302 Anth. Gr., 5.302.
303 Plut., 7.
305 Ibid. 107. Here she refers to Plautus’ description of a slave as ueueberabilissime “eminently beatable” (Asul. 633). Wrenhaven notes that the whip has been popular universally because it symbolizes the slave’s “animal-like subjection to the master.” She also brings out the animalizing implication of the andrapodon label. “Slave Body,” 104.
306 LSJ, s.v. μαστιγίας.
308 Deip., 6.6.92, trans. C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854). Of course such laws were not founded on egalitarian principles – an attack on a slave amounted to an incapacitation of the master’s resources.
reiterate here is the way domination is imposed on the physicality of the other. Σώμα is the object of the dominating will; its treatment manifests the aggressor’s brute superiority.

i. Sexual Violence

One area in which somatic domination is clearly evident is in the sexual abuse suffered by those reduced to σώμα. Beginning with the trade in slaves intended for sexual exploitation, we find the typical person-reduced-to-σώμα formula. In his Against Neaera, Demosthenes’ character Apollodorus prosecutes the Athenian Stephanus for compromising the well-being of his (Stephanus’) οίκος and the state, through his wish to elevate his prostitute Neaera to the position of wife.\(^{309}\) The point I wish to highlight is Neaera’s characterization: she is a somatized sexual object. Prior to Stephanus’ relationship with her, she had been purchased by two men who paid “thirty minae as the price of Neaera’s body … to be their slave (τιμήν τριάκοντα μνάς τοῦ σώματος … αύτῶν δούλην εἴναι).”\(^{310}\) “And they kept her and made use of her as long a time as they pleased.”\(^{311}\) Earlier in her life, Neaera had already been sold along with six other girls; the slaveholder “gave up (i.e., sold) the bodies of all seven (τὰ σώματα ἀπέδοτο ἀπασῶν ἐπὶ τὰ οὐσῶν).”\(^{312}\)

When Aristotle censors those of unmoderated passions, he views them as dissatisfied “with the enjoyment of one body (οὐχ ἕνος σώματος ἀγαπᾶν ἀπόλαυσιν).”\(^{313}\) Similarly, Hippocrates’ oath specifies the repudiation of sexually exploiting patients: “[I will abstain from] … abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free (ἀφροδισίων

\(^{309}\) Roisman gives a helpful summary of the context (The Rhetoric of Manhood, 39–40). The prosecutor’s concern is that the low-bred τορναί (prostitutes) and ἑταιρεία (courtiers) will be able to bear children with the rights of citizenship (Neaer., 112–13). Stephanus is alleged to have attempted to pass off Neaera the alien as an Athenian free woman (Ibid. 49).

\(^{310}\) Ibid. 29 (I have followed the LCL, except that I render σώματος as “body” – hence the italics – not “Neaera’s person”). The Greek states literally that 30 minae was “the price of the body;” it is as a body that she was purchased. In the next phrase the body is referred to with the personal pronoun: “they purchased her (αὐτήν).” However, the bodily and slavish reduction of Neaera should override any tendency to retroreflect personhood from the pronoun. The paying of a price (τιμή) to secure control of another’s σώμα should be compared to 1 Cor 6:20: “… you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body (Ἡγησόμεθα γὰρ τιμῆς δοξάσας δὴ τὸν θεόν ἐν τῷ σώματί ὑμῶν).” In both cases, purchase means absolute ownership with a somatic focus.

\(^{311}\) Ibid. 30. Again, “they made use of her (ἐχρωστῶ … αὕτη)” is a reference to her as sexual object, hardly a statement of her being engaged as a person.

\(^{312}\) Ibid. 19. I give my translation as DeWitt’s translation has the mistress sell “them” rather than them qua bodies. The somatic focus is reinforced by their being sold due to their deterioration in this regard: “When she had reaped the profit of the youthful prime of each, she sold them (viz., the bodies).”

\(^{313}\) Rh., 2.23.8. I follow the LCL, except that the italicized “one body” literally translates the Greek, in which there is nothing to justify Freese’ translation: “the enjoyment of one woman’s person alone” (italics added). The point is the bodily focus of sexual interest; the sex could be male or female.
Plutarch describes how, after his dethronement, the tyrant Dionysius had to watch as his wife was abused: “[His enemies] transgressed the law with their most debauched pleasures extracted from the (i.e., her) body (εἰς τὸ σῶμα ταῖς ἁσελγεστάταις ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἰδιονύσις παρανομηθεῖσιν).”

Similarly, Dio Chrysostom’s castigation of prostitution depicts the somatic reductionism imposed on the exploited. They are depicted as “captured bodies of women or children or otherwise purchased with silver (αἰχμάλωτα σώματα γυναικῶν ἢ παιδῶν ἢ ἄλλως ἄργυρων).” Their suffering is somatically configured as “outrage against the dishonored and slavish bodies (τὴν εἰς τὰ ἄτιμα καὶ δοῦλα σώματα ὑβρίν).” In all these instances, sexual vulnerability is concretized through viewing the person as a somatic entity.

In terms of the actual work done as a sex-slave, somatic terms continue to predominate. Revisiting the example of Neaera, she is described as having “worked with her body as a courtesan (ἡγάζετο τῷ σῶματι ώς ἐπαίρα οὐσα).” DeWitt’s translation is “she made her living by prostitution as a courtesan,” and so seems to take τῷ σῶματι as a dative of advantage. However, rather than σῶμα having the sense of person (she worked for her body, for herself), it indicates the means by which she performed her trade. As a slave, she did not “make a living” (pace, DeWitt) for herself, but rather for her owner. Thus in section 19, when she is sold it is because her body is past its prime and her mistress has already exploited her for maximum profits. Moreover, her mistress, Nicarete, is said to have generated her “livelihood from the (slave) girls.”

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314 *Hp. Jusj.*, 1. My italics indicate my alteration of Jones’ translation which read “[I will abstain from] … the seduction of females and males, of freemen and slaves.”

315 *Tim.*, 13.5 (my trans.). Elsewhere, Plutarch recounts the noble woman Timoclea’s lament on being captured, that she would have preferred death and the loss of every other possession in order to have “preserved my body free from abuse (τὸ … σῶμα … ἀπόρρητον ἄμετρως διεφθάλεσα) (De Mul. Vir., 24; my trans.). For a similar account, see Plutarch’s *Dio.*, 3.1, where the noble woman commits suicide after being attacked.

316 *Or.*, 7.133 (my trans.).

317 Ibid. 138. Again, I provide the translation to highlight the somatic reductionism; Cohoon translates this as “mistreatment of outcast and enslaved creatures.” Rather, it is through subordination to mere corporal functionality that the violated slaves are dishonored. It is vital to note that, in context, Dio castigates this domination of sex slaves on the basis of their being fully human, viz., having God-given honor, reason and moral conscience.

318 *Neaer.*, 49.

319 Xenophon observes that a wife’s willing sexual availability makes her a superior partner to a slave because “the girl’s services are compulsory.” *Oec.*, 10.12.

320 A similar example is adduced by *LSJ* with the meaning “a person, human being” (s.v σῶμα).

321 *Neaer.*, 18.
Another common variation on the corporal violence topos is subjection to sexual violence. The abused party is constructed in somatic terms. Both beatings and sexual violation constitute the shameful inability to protect the integrity of one’s σώμα, and thus are hallmarks of servility. Aeschines’ (4th cent. BCE) prosecution of Timarchus seeks to assassinate his character. He is charged with willingly selling himself at the “shame of his body (ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος αἰσχύνη);” he “submitted to the abuse of his body (τὴν ὑβρὶν τὴν εἰς τὸ ἐαυτοῦ σώμα ὑπερεώρακε),” viz., he made himself the object of sexual penetration – which is a failure to protect the boundaries of one’s own person. That the violation was “εἰς” his body should be taken in a literal, dynamic sense. He is “not … pure of body (οὐκ … καθαρὸς τὸ σώμα).” 322 In a similar vein, Xenophon describes pederasty as a “reaching for the boy’s body (τις παιδὸς σώματος ὀρεγόμενος).” 323 Slaves are thus isolated at the bodily-dishonored end of the continuum. Indeed, Aeschines informs us that the death penalty holds for those convicted of shaming their bodies through male prostitution. 324

**ii. Slavish Deportment and Status**

Here, a brief comment on the purpose of somatic subjugation is in order. The body through its deportment, bearing and scars communicates the social status of the person. Bodies tell a story; the story of where a person was located within the power continuum. Glancy tells us that “[t]he scars of a first-century body instantiate relationships of power, of legal status (freeborn, freed, or enslaved), of domination and submission, of honor and shame, and of gender.” 325 The body that is dominated, made prone (denied upright posture) and beaten is literally being cowered, being lowered. Such a person is thereby dishonored. Brent D. Shaw presents the ideology of the masculine and feminine body as constructing “males as persons who had bodies that stood erect, inflicted pain, and died.

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322 The citations are from Aeschin., In Tim., 87, 116 and 188, respectively. Roisman informs us of the code breached by Timarchus; he wasted his patrimony because of his addiction to pleasures and so is forced to prostitute himself to maintain his lifestyle. In this, he “violated the masculine ideal of self-restraint; [and] more closely resembled the Athenian stereotype of women as consumers than that of men as producers.” The Rhetoric of Manhood, 89. I note, too, that the link between the impurity of the body – in context, the resultant unsuitability of the man for the priesthood and civic-religious office – should be observed.
323 Lac., 2.13. Here the Spartan Lycogoras is denouncing the practice.
324 In Tim., 1.87.
325 “Boasting of Beatings,” 101. Here she also talks of “Paul [relying] on a vocabulary of corporeality shared by his readers.” (italics added). Later the *sermo corporis* – “the vocabulary of battle scars” – is mentioned (Ibid. 106).
on the field of battle; female ones as suffering bodies, lying prone, giving birth in bed.”

Later he enlarges on this comment:

...a physical position closer to the ground was implicitly regarded as being morally inferior and bad. The connection between bodily position and moral evaluation ... is clearly indicated by the history of the words that were used to describe being low to the ground or prone – tapeinos and allied terms (meaning low, prone, close to the ground, are consistently associated with being poor, weak, insignificant, and womanly). ... To be tapeinos was to be weak, poor, submissive, slavish, womanish, and therefore had an indelible connection with shame, humiliation, degradation and, inexorably, with that which was morally bad.

The αὐτοκρατορία, then, becomes a placard announcing an individual’s worth on all fronts, viz., social status and moral value. Virgina Burrus captures well the power dynamic involved. Through torture the hierarchical order is re-imposed: it is “an excruciating reinscription – indeed branding – of slave status.” Exhausted, bleeding and humiliated, the slave has literally been molded into the role of dishonored and cowered subordinate. The body is both the means and the location of this very concrete, enacted domination. This theme of the body as a “text,” a signifier or status, will be developed further in the discussion of the Roman corpus. The point for now is that Greco-Romans were highly attuned to scrutinizing one another qua bodies for indications of status and human worth. The dishonor of the passive, controlled body was a physically located reality: human worth was read off the corporeal characteristics. On the other hand, the active and manly body was honorable.

327 *Ibid.* 303. Shaw is contrasting this cultural discourse with the Christian prizing of humility as a virtue.
Chapter 4: Roman Corpus

1. Introduction

The Roman worldview maintained a cruel stratification of human worth, and the body was central to the enactment of this regime. At root, there was a bifurcation between those who actively used their bodies to subordinate others and those whose bodies were mastered and thus passive.\textsuperscript{329} The former, the “actives,” were the \textit{viri}, a subgroup of men who competed for honor (esteem from their peers). The latter, the “passives,” were the non-\textit{viri} who were controlled by the former. “Activity” and “passivity” as I use them in this context refer not to action, but to power relations. Personhood is predicated on the “active” male whose inner self (will, intellect, etc.,) control both his own body and the body of his subordinate “passives.” Their egos are suppressed through brutal conditioning, so that their bodies become extensions of his ego.

Two fundamental insights of this study warrant comment at the outset. First, the passive body is characterized by physical reductionism (the “depthless” and “volitioned” Greek \textit{σώμα}). Second, human worth is based on the objective state of the body, viz., honor is based on one’s objective physicality. Physical reductionism captures the necessary implication of viewing certain persons as mere factors of production. The fully orbed conception of the person as a self with volition, desire and intellect who finds expression in bodily presentation and usage simply collapses. The Greek \textit{σώμα} was a dominated phenomenon, and in the case of the slave, subject to a heteronomous will. Here, too, the Roman passive \textit{corpus} entails an (at times brutal) suppression of the inner ego or sense of self and a corresponding elevation of the corporal dimension of the target person. “\textit{Corpus},” therefore, connotes body-under-control, with physical reductionism and body-discourse being marked by volitional unilateralism. One will is in play: the dominant and external will which controls the passive self. Unilateralism stresses that the ego, or self-determination, of the target is squashed; “rightness” then consists in the subordinate submitting to the ascendant \textit{vir}’s agenda. The active party subsumes, parasitically, the ego of the passive body.

\textsuperscript{329} From the same perspective, Holt N. Parker describes the “deep misogyny” of Roman society, in “Why Were the Vestals Virgins? Or the Chastity of Women and the Safety of Roman State,” \textit{The American Journal of Philology} 125/4 (Winter, 2004): 589. He catalogues instances of “witch-hunts” against seditious women, then states that the women were thought of as “a witch-world whose values were distorted parodies of the values of patriarchal society: women as active, rather than passive; as sexual subjects, rather than sexual objects; as murderers, rather than victims.” \textit{Ibid.} 592.
The second insight is that honor corresponds to a person’s physical state. Physicality-based honor refers to the manner in which one’s physical features were judged and the person was valued accordingly. Beauty, height and clothing were all factored, as were demeanor, gait and physical scarring. This bodily human valuation was a one-way street: once tarnished, always tarnished. Modes of redemption were basically non-existent; once a body was marked or conformed to a degraded norm it could not be renewed. One’s objective, physical state determined one’s status.

2. Orientation to the Roman Corpus: Religious, Political and Social Setting

The active-passive polarities divided humanity into sub-species, with a steep gradation of worth accorded to the various classes. The Roman attitude is an extension of the Greek. For Plato, “endurance of wrong is not a man’s (ἀνδρός) part at all, but a slave’s (ἀνδρατός), for whom it is better to be dead than alive,” for only the former can avenge insults. A basic element of the following analysis is the Roman construction of the active male as the true human being. Over against this, the widespread practice of infanticide (child-exposure) sets a baseline for their stratification of human worth. A pregnant Roman wife living in Egypt received the following written instruction from her husband: “If it is a boy, rear it; if it is a girl, throw it out.”

A further baseline is established by the Roman practice of brutalizing the bodies of both those outside the honor-class and those of failed members. In accordance with Plato’s impotency-means-subhumanity formula, the basic question for the locating of a person’s human worth was whether or not his body penetrated the other – with whip, whip.

330 For the idea of grades of humanity, see Holt N. Parker’s observation regarding Roman wives: “They are central to the family yet not fully members of it; who are necessary to produce children yet expendable; who are, in short, human but less than human.” “Why Were the Vestals Virgins?,” 592 (italics mine). Richard Horsley notes that “…the binary division between those who possessed true humanity and those who were mere property” (“Slave Systems,” 30). Davina Lopez argues that “…hierarchical differentiation grants ‘people’ status to the dominant group and denies it to the subordinate groups.” Apostle, 171. She also observes how imperial ideology makes “not-human” those who are outside of power (Ibid. 172).

331 Grg., 483 a-b. The passage also emphasizes the slave’s social powerlessness: he can neither protect himself nor “anyone else for whom he cares.” For the Greeks such impotency was worse than death.

sword or penis. Women by definition, then, were passive. So too were those who suffered the violation of their bodies and were thereby disqualified from the elite group of males. The constant risk of being made passive was a part of elite life. Not even the elite body had certain value. All bodies were at risk of degradation.

It was exclusively active viri who participated in the “honor game.” The passives merely facilitate their achievements. So Valerius informs us that the “richest nourishment of virtue is honour (uirtutis uberrimum alimentum est honos).” Such a sentiment is entirely elitist: uirtus is only accessible to the vir – the elite male. Quintilian, as a teacher of rhetoric, is instructing elite male youths when he opines: “Virtue brings praise … but pleasure brings disgrace (virtus facit laudem … at voluptas infamiam).” He is not enunciating a global truism. He speaks to the active strata of humanity – to the upcoming viri. As we shall see, the vir who is in the running for virtus and laus (praise) is not marked by voluptas, pleasure and indulgence. The latter is the domain of the passives within society, should they be left to their own devices. The “active/passive binary paradigm” is analogous to a closed-fist versus an open palm.

In what follows I will argue that the basic premise in their collective psyche was that honor works itself out in the currency of human value. To have honor was to have human worth; not to have honor was not to have human value. The Roman honorific system, then, must be understood in all its elitist outworkings: a small minority were considered truly human with participation in the competition for approval (i.e., honor) from their elitist peers. Those who had honor were conceived of as human; those without it lacked human value. Like the unwanted infant who is disadverted, the low-class or failed vir could be brutally terminated.

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333 For the phrase “a player in the game of honor,” see William Ian Miller, Humiliation and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 118. Honor is the programmatic term that represents the target of the Romans’ cultural code.

334 Val. Max., 2.6. Cicero states that “honour is the prize given for virtue by the citizenry” (Brut., 281, cited in Garnsey, Social Status, 223).


337 The quote and analogy are from Joy Connolly, “Mastering Corruption: Corruptions of Identity in Roman Oratory,” in Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations, ed. S. Murnaghan and S. R. Joshel (London: Routledge, 1998), 131. The analogy derives from the stoic Zeno as retold by Cicero (Orat., 32.113). Manly dialectic speech equates to the fist; rhetoric which aims merely at appetitie and emotion (characteristic of slaves/women) is seen in the passive open hand.
The ideal participant, the active *vir*, is symbolized by the *phallus*. His was the role of combative, forceful and penetrating control as a member of “the Roman penetrative hierarchy.” He was to exercise force in mastering and protecting his own body. He was to forcefully order his own household. He was to act with martial valour, dominating his enemies; and he was to support the interests of the state in all other ways. Virtue was exercised by the forceful male whose use of his *phallic* potency (both real and symbolic) was basic to the bifurcation of society. The *vir* and the sexually *patientia* (phallicly penetrated body) are conceptual poles. The active or phallic male dominates other forms of humanity who have in common their subjection to force. That is, they are *passives*, whose bodies are penetrable – either through beatings or rape. Such are not termed *viri*, but usually *hominis* (human beings, e.g., women, male slaves, freedmen, low-class citizens) or *pueri* (boys). “Active” or “passive” status was not a biological/sexual identity but gendered around the elites’ control of resources and capacity for force.

Overall, this category of passivity is characterized as *muliebris* – womanliness, or non-*vir*-ness – which includes the low-class woman whose body is violable or open. On

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338 This expression is Shane Butler’s, “Notes on a Membrum Disiectum,” in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, ed. S. Murnaghan and S. R. Joshel (London: Routledge, 1998), 248. He observes that the phallus signified the “sexual and political domination exercised” by the adult male citizen against “…slaves of both genders [who] were supposed to be passive objects of their masters’ will and desire.”

339 Cicero conveniently draws our attention to the three basic realms (in bold) in which virile agency was expected: “To wound one's body (*corpus*) is a trifle; to wound one's life (*vitae*), one's character (*famae*), one's safety (*salutis*), like this, is a more serious business. If you had discharged your household (*familiam*), a matter which would have concerned no one but yourself; your friends would have thought that you should be put under restraint; could you have disbanded the protection of the republic (*rei publicae*), the garrison of the province, without the orders of the Roman senate or people, if you had been in your sound senses?” *Pis.*, 20.47-48, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. C. D. Yonge (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891). Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Cicero are from this source.


341 The centrality of the phallic conception of *vir*-hood to the active class is seen in the Romans’ detailed sexual vocabulary. Precise terminology indicates which orifice (vagina, anus, mouth) a man phallicly attacked; each locus is ranked in its shaming (i.e., dehumanizing) effect on the victim. For details, cf. Holt N. Parker, “The Teratogenic Grid,” in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 48-49. Consider also Catullus’ threats to prove he is not passive (i.e., is a *vir*) to his detractors by attacking them anally and (even more humiliatingly) orally (16.1-2 & 14; cf., *Ibid.* 21.7-8). Anthony Corbeill mentions not only the phallicly-assertive threats in “*invective poetry,*” but also those found in graffiti, in “Dining Deviants in Roman Political Invective,” in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 110.


343 Suetonius thus draws attention to the unusualness of Claudius’ lack of sexual appetite for males (*Claud.* 33).
the other hand, the high-class female is the *matrona*, whose proximity to a *vir(i)* makes her sacrosanct and off limits. In the final analysis, any given person finds his or her niche in Roman society in terms of *activity* or *passivity*, that is, in terms of participating in the imposition of societal norms or in being ordered by them. The basic emblem of this dominating prerogative is the *vir*’s sex-organ or its phallic symbol (e.g., sword, whip, rod, etc.). One’s bodily experience is the outworking (and reinforcing) of one’s location in this power dynamic. Do you penetrate (order) or are you penetrated (ordered)? This is the Roman “ideology of domination.” Naturally, this phallic ethos is basic to military service.

The basic bifurcation of actives and passives concurs with the Greek outlook of “that which governs” over against “that which is governed.” I have called this Aristotelean duality the philosophy of domination. The basic dynamic of religious, political, and indeed cosmic reality is that active persons were to control passive bodies. Thus, when we hear Valerius’ maxim that “the greatest nourishment of glory is honor,” we must calibrate our modern ears to hear the sinister elitism at its heart. To attain honor, one must be a *vir* – virile – capable of wielding deadly force. One must belong, and demonstrate fitness to belong, to the class of the governing, the ordering, the *active*. Passive victims can provide an occasion for the showcasing of virility.

Before continuing with the implications of this basic structure, a qualification is in order. Despite the usefulness of conceptualizing Roman society as a simple polarizing of “active” and “passive” persons, a principle of “relativity” does operate. Thus a slave who was the financial agent of a wealthy master might be “passive” with reference to his master, but “active”-by-association as he calls his customers to account. The “honor” or power exercised by the slave is at all times a mediated state; he is never intrinsically honorable. Yet we do see a kind of honor-by-association at work in practice.

344 *Ibid.* 34.
345 *Ibid.* 54; this is similar to my rubric: “the philosophy of domination.”
Furthermore, despite their lower-class or even servile status, persons would celebrate their standing amongst those within their honor-niche. Although the elite would have scorned their pretense of possessing honor, many slaves and freed-persons took pride in recording their social status on their tombstones. In other words, within one’s passive relation to an ascendant *vir*, there was still room for feelings of human value for at least some low-class persons.\(^{347}\) At all times, such a sense of status was a basking in the reflected honor of one’s superior. Nevertheless, honor – amongst one’s class peers – was celebrated. Within the basic polarities of society, sub-continua of honor existed which provided an agonistic outlet for those of comparable honor – even if the honor circulating at this lower level could never register on the macro-continuum of “true” honor.

It is helpful to think of Roman society at the larger level as an honor-continuum. The rest of the population outside the key group of virtue-competitors were the non-*viri*, whereas the antithesis of the elite were the slaves. Less extremely devalued were others amongst the free population, for example, actors and prostitutes. These were tolerated because of the societal needs they met.\(^{348}\) However, due to the livelihood they made from their bodies, they were dishonored. By contrast, the Roman matron was much closer to the elite end of the honor/human-value spectrum. Her worth depended on the safeguarding of her sexual purity, which in turn was contingent on the protection of her significant *viri*. She remained a member of the “passive” pole of society as she fell under the authority or either her husband or father.\(^{349}\)

\(^{347}\) Martin provides examples of these inscriptions (*Slavery as Salvation*, 47-49). He notes that their enjoyment was of a “status-by-association” (48).

\(^{348}\) McGinn refers to the outlet which prostitutes provided for sexual energy as helpful for the perpetuation of elite society. They were like a “‘lightning rod,’ or distractions [taking] male predators away from respectable women.” *Prostitution*, 345. Given their social utility, then, prostitutes, actors and gladiators were not social outcasts but highly regulated persons who inhabited the margins of society. *Ibid*. 15.

\(^{349}\) Roman marriage traditionally involved the woman being transferred to the power (*manus*) of her husband. However, this became less common under the empire (Goodman, *Roman World*, 176; Jill Harries, *Law and Crime in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 86. Saller concurs, noting the “fragility of Roman marriage” during this period (“Slavery,” 82). Unless transferred out from her father’s *patricia potestas*, she retained her own inheritance rights (*Ibid.* 71) and so had fairly significant independence (*Ibid.* 77). In any case, she remained “passive,” in that she was subject to either father or husband at all times (Harries, *Law and Crime*, 86). The legal status and independent wealth (or lack of wealth) of the wife will be important. *Cum manus* marriage involved legal subordination to the husband as new holder of *patricia potestas*. *Sine manus* marriage, in contrast, saw the wife remain under her father and thus she was an heiress and more capable of independence from her husband. For an outline of *cum* and *sine manus* marriage, see Annalisa Rei, “Villians, Wives, and Slaves in the Comedies of Plautus,” in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, ed. S. Murnaghan and S. R. Joshel (London: Routledge, 1998), 98.
A. Religio-Political Agency and the Corpus

The Roman philosophy of domination is consciously embedded within a cosmic and religious narrative. The forceful *vir* is not simply socially constructed; he is a representative of the deities and a local expression of cosmic order. The *vir*, and collectively the elite, were subordinate to the Roman gods and the principles of just and sacred conduct. In Kyle’s words, Rome is both “an ordered society and … a sacral community.”

Enforcing the bifurcation of society was considered a divine mandate. Elite males acted in the three spheres of self-management, household and state, inspired by a religio-political narrative. Ittai helpfully points out that “[n]either Greek nor Latin had any pre-Christian term for ‘religion’ or ‘politics’ in our sense of the word.”

The *vir* was the medium of divine order within his realm of power. As such, he was the household’s priest and the arbiter of morality. He was the *paterfamilias*: father of the household, with *familia* referring broadly to his “estate, household and its property,” that is, to both people and property. He held *patria potestas*: the power of life and death. His was the duty to maintain the household (his family, clients, property and slaves) in an orderly system. Moreover, his forceful maintenance of order can be configured in terms of tending sacral space. Success in his spheres of agency maintained reciprocal relations with the deities; to fail, by becoming passive, was to lose their blessing and incur their wrath. The arch-traitor Antony is characterized by Octavian as having abandoned his ancestors, his country and the Roman gods.

i. Theology of Elite Rule

Tradition mythologized Rome’s hegemony as a divine sanction. Romulus, Rome’s father, is said to have been conveyed to the heavens during a storm and thus deified. Livy writes that “[the Romans] all with one accord hailed Romulus as a god and a god’s son,

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350 *Spectacles*, 35. In the original context, Kyle argues that animal and human deaths in the arena serve to reinforce the social order. I will elaborate in due course on how the liquidation of bodies in the arena bespeaks Rome’s overwhelming domination over nations which would oppose her.


353 Cf. Harries, *Law and Crime*, 86. M. I. Finley refers to a 4th cent. CE edict of Constantine in which the *patria potestas* is still termed the “right of life and death.” Finley glosses with “…he was exaggerating, but around a hard core of reality.” “The Silent Women of Rome,” 149 (he does not supply the primary reference details).

354 “He has abandoned his whole ancestral way of life, has embraced alien and barbaric [i.e, Egyptian] customs, has ceased to honour us, his fellow-countrymen, or our laws, or his fathers’ gods.” Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 25.
the King and Father of the Roman City (deo nato, regem parentemque urbis Romanae).”

They then prayed to Romulus for the pax of divine protection of his progeny. Pax is the pact of reciprocal divine-human relations that brings security and order. This is commonly termed the Pax Deorum (Pax Deum), and it was of the utmost seriousness in the viri’s conception of their duty to enforce, i.e., represent, divine order.

The next movement in Livy’s record of the Romulus myth is Romulus’ injunction: “Declare to the Romans the will of Heaven that my Rome shall be the capital [literally, “head”] of the world (mea Roma caput orbis terrarum sit); so let them cherish the art of war, and let them know and teach their children that no human strength can resist Roman arms.” After this enunciation, Romulus “ascends on high.” Rome is thus divinely sanctioned – by “the will of Heaven” – to be the virile “head” to the (by implication) “body” of humanity. The vocation of the Roman viri is thus a celestial mandate: head the nations; be the active principle which orders the otherwise chaotic body.

The seriousness of the pax deum is not to be underestimated. The emperor himself assumes the highest priesthods and heads the army. From the microcosm of the familia to the macrocosm of the state, Romans sought to represent the divine will. Thus the paterfamilias was both a priest and a ruler; the emperor was both Pontifex Maximus and Dictator Perpetuus. Indeed, the Pontifex Maximus had the responsibility of “directing sacred rites” and “watching over private sacrifices and preventing any departure from established custom.” What the father is to the household (religio-social dominus, master) the emperor is to the state: pater patriae (Father of the Fatherland). In

355 Livy, 1.16.3. I gained this reference from Valerie M. Warrior, Roman Religion: A Sourcebook (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), 131. N.B. Livy makes it clear that he is dubious about the account. Nevertheless, as mythology it crafts the collective story about Rome’s divine commission. The deification of many of the emperors indicates clear cognizance of this myth. Warrior observes: “Livy’s account has unmistakable allusions to [Julius Caesar’s] … deification by Octavian.” Ibid. 131.
356 OLD, s.v pax 1, 2; cf. Livy, 1.16.3.
357 For references see OLD, s.v pax 1, 2.
358 Livy, 1.16.7-8.
359 There are multiple other expressions of Rome’s heavenly commission. Scipio announces to his would-be assassins: “Supposing I had died, would the commonwealth have shared my fate? No, Jupiter Optimus Maximus would never have allowed a city built for eternity, built under the sanction of the gods, to be as short-lived as this fragile mortal body of mine.” (Livy, 28.28.11).
360 The concept of Roman religion as banally do ut des should be avoided. The Romans did not seek to manipulate the gods but to maintain pax – covenant relations – with them (cf. Warrior, Roman Religion, 4, and n.3).
361 These were the titles already held by Julius Caesar at his death (Ibid. 132).
their paternal roles, both figures combine religious and governing duties. At both the private and public levels, the body is possessed, utilized and forced within this wider rubric of religio-social order.

ii. Household

The religious milieu surrounds the familia – the household property and its occupants. The familia was maintained as sacral space, to be free of moral disorder. Each household had its own protective deities: the Lares (who protected the entire household), Penates (who protected the store-cupboard), Genius (its guardian spirit) and Vesta (the goddess of the hearth). Moreover, the spirits of deceased kinsfolk were to be cultivated, through the honoring of tombs, bringing gifts (grain, salt, bread) and prayers. These infernal demigods (they reside in the underworld) are worshipped, particularly in February and May. Cicero enjoins: “The rights of the gods of the dead shall be sacred. Consider dead kinsfolk as gods.” In this worldview, the religious milieu around the household was a pressing reality.

The pater is, for example, instructed by Cato the Elder to offer (using professionals) prayers and sacrifices to Mars, the god of agriculture, in order to purify farmland. The crucial term in the prayer is lustrare, “to purify ceremonially.” The pater regulates the religious and social order of his micro-state, the household. Cicero argues for the sacral identity of the house of a Roman citizen:

What is there more holy (quid est sanctius), what is there more carefully fenced round with every description of religious respect, than the house of every individual citizen? Here are his altars, here are his hearths, here are his household gods (di penates): here all his sacred rites (sacra), all his religious ceremonies

363 These were either the spirits of dead household members or protective spirits related to the location of the household (Klauck, Religious Context, 59).
364 For this list, see Warrior, Roman Religion, 25. Klauck observes that Vesta (Greek Hestia) was “the goddess of the hearth and of the fire that burnt upon it, goddess of domesticity and concord.” Religious Context, 59.
365 Leg, 2.22. Also, Ovid instructs: “Honour is paid, also, to the grave. Appease the souls (animae) of your fathers and bring small gifts to the tombs erected to them. Ghosts (manes) ask but little: they value piety (pietas) more than a costly gift.” Fast., 533ff.; trans. James G. Frazer (London: Heinemann, 1959).
366 Cato the Elder (Agr., 141) states: “The following is the formula for purifying land (agrum lustrare sic oportet …” The prayer and sacrifice are intended to move Mars to “remove sickness … barrenness and destruction, ruin and unseasonable influence [and cause] my harvests, my grain, my vineyards, and my plantations to flourish … preserve in health my shepherds and my flocks, and give good health and strength to me, my house and my household.” It is clear that sacred space is simultaneously orderly and flourishing, hence my insistence on the cosmic dimension of the religio-political framework.
367 OLD, s. v lustrō, 1.
(religiones) are preserved. This is the asylum of every one, so holy a spot (sanctum) that it is impious to drag any one from it.368

In Harries’ words, the familia’s “religious character and continuity was expressed in its sacra [rites], which further identified the family … as religious construct.”369

In turn, religious practices sustain the elite strata of society. For perpetuating the ruling class, marriage is of primary importance. In M. I. Finley’s words, “[t]he whole structure of property rested on [marriage] … both the indispensible family cult and the institution of citizenship required the orderly, regular succession of legitimate children in one generation after another.”370 This basic unit is the mechanism for reproducing and maintaining society. The father’s authority (patris potestas) afforded him the role of defining membership in the familia. Abortion, without the pater’s consent, was in effect theft – it deprived him of his property.371 Further, it was the pater’s symbolic action of accepting a newborn into his arms which demonstrated its position in the household; without such action it was bereft of social anchorage. Child exposure was the all too common alternative.372

The wife’s role as producer of legitimate heirs was predicated on her chastity. The raped maiden, Verginia, was killed by her father. She was of value only when chaste; violated, she was a symbol of the territory of the paterfamilias having been attacked. Hence her father destroyed her. The dead corpse expunges the vir’s stigma.373 Moreover, a woman did not have an individual identity – her name was a variant of the family name.374 Finley argues the logic of the viri: “The Romans wished to suggest very pointedly that women were not, or ought not to be, genuine individuals but only fractions

368 Dom, 41.109. For this as the classic statement of domestic religiosity, see Klauck, Religious Context, 58.
369 Law and Crime, 86 (italics added).
373 See: Livy, 3.50.6. Livy has the Father adjudge her as servilized by the rape: “He thought it better to lose his child by death than by dishonor;” her life was dearer to him than his own provided she had her “liberty and purity (i.e, be pudica).” As S. R. Joshel observes, the raped body of either a Verginia or a Lucretia (the paradigmatic, virtuous Roman wife who committed suicide after being raped [Livy, 1.58.]) is a blight on the father or husband’s house. “Still alive [the defiled woman] would display the violation of the husband’s home.” “The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy’s Lucretia and Verginia,” in Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources, ed. Laura K. McClure (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 179.
374 Finley describes this as the case until “fairly late in Roman history … Claudia, Julia, Lucretia, are merely family names with a feminine ending. Sisters had the same name and could be distinguished only by the addition of ‘the elder’ or ‘the younger’ … and so on.” “Silent Women,” 148.
of a family.” Harries states that “the body of a woman was at the service of her family and of the state.” In these powerful roles, as husband, father and patron, the pater acts as divine orderer (defining the unit’s boundaries and membership): he acts in a priestly role.

iii. Army

This religious milieu also surrounded the Roman army. The verb *lustrare* is applied to rituals for purifying the militia. The general offered prayers, *devotio*, to the gods to dedicate an upcoming campaign. Scipio committed what would finally be the concluding phase of the Punic wars to the “gods and goddesses” by entreating them for success. When soldiers breached the military oath (*sacramentum*) which they had taken to bind themselves to their general, it was termed impiety “towards the gods who were witnesses of your vows.” Additionally, religious rituals occurred daily within the camp.

Moreover, war was conceived as a religio-social event. Rituals were in place to prove that a proposed war was both just and divinely sanctioned. Dionysius of Halicarnassus relates how Roman successes were natural given their religious zeal: “...the piety practiced by the Romans (*τη' Πολεμιών εὐσεβείαυς*) [brought] ... a most successful outcome to all their wars.” He goes on to highlight the initiation of war as “a most pious (εὐσεβεστάτας)” undertaking. Allies who violated treaties were first approached via diplomats. Failing this, priests were then used to petition the gods and sanction military engagement. These procedures “guard against the Romans undertaking ... any unjust war (πόλεμον ... ἔξωκον).” In his triumphal procession, the general dressed as Jupiter, even if just for a single day. Again, the hegemony of Rome is an earthly enactment of Jove’s rule of the universe. The deification of Romulus, through to

375 Ibid. 149 (italics added).
376 Law and Crime, 89. Flemming observes that “…in the Roman world in general a daughter’s sexual choices, her control over her body, were severely limited. Her sexuality was, in a real sense, for her father and family to dispose of, either in marriage or otherwise.” “Quae Corpore Quaestum Facit,” 42.
377 Cf. OLD, s.v lustrō 1b.
378 Livy, 29.27.2-4. For further references, see Warrior, Roman Religion, 39-46. Goodman (Roman World, 25) records ceremonies with which campaigns were initiated and concluded.
379 Livy, 28.27.9-10. The gods are “deos sacramenti testes.”
380 Goodman, Roman World, 118.
381 Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom., 2.72.3-4 (my trans.).
382 Ibid. For other references to the avoidance of unjust war, cf. Warrior, Roman Religion, 71-81.
383 Livy records that “[a] triumphing general drives through the City in a gilded chariot, apparelled in the splendid vestments of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.” The general is en route to the capital to act as a priest and offer sacrifice (10.7.10). For other references, see Warrior, Roman Religion, 128-29.
that of the emperors, was part and parcel of this divine sanctioning of the rule of elite Roman males.

iv. Rome

Rome itself was deemed sacred space. This is a natural inference from its being a divine epicenter of rule. State functions were assisted by the four pontifical colleges. The official cults were maintained in order to preserve the *pax deorum*. In essence, this is the societal expression of the priestly-ruling function of the *paterfamilias*. In this context, *supplicatio* was a collective prayer offered by officials to request the gods’ favor, to expiate miasmic events/entities (e.g., an androgyne), or to give thanks.\(^{384}\) Additionally, the parallel invocation of the goddess *Vesta* at both the private and public level demonstrated that the state was basically a *familia* writ large. The Vestal virgins tended the goddess’ fire at her temple on the Capital, just as the *paterfamilias* sought her blessing in the ordering of his mini-state at home.

The pontifical officials were tasked with ensuring that the gods were approached in a decorous fashion. Cicero records the concern to maintain religious order: “No individual shall take gods for himself, either new or alien ones, unless they have been recognized by the state.”\(^{385}\) Livy records the religious chaos occasioned by a plague in Rome during 429 BCE. “Alien and unknown expiatory sacrifices intended to beseech the gods to show favour” cropped up everywhere. The official response was conservative: “The aediles were charged to see that only the Roman gods were worshipped, and this in no way other than that inherited from the fathers.”\(^{386}\) The logic was that rituals and conduct that corrupted ancient mores constituted a breach of the *pax* with the gods.

The state suppression of the Bacchanalian cult (186 BCE) is highly revealing in this regard, and indeed foreshadows the Roman response to fledgling Christianity. The senate judged that the cult’s sacrifices followed foreign rather than ancestral ritual and risked destroying true religion.\(^{387}\) The chaos induced by the rituals included banqueting, promiscuous debauchery, and nighttime mingling across social boundaries. Men prophesied during fits of ecstasy; women wore immodest dress and loosened their hair.\(^{388}\)


\(^{385}\) *Leg.*, 2.19.

\(^{386}\) Livy, 4.30.9-11.

\(^{387}\) Livy, 39.16.6-12.

\(^{388}\) Livy, 39.13.8-14, cited in Warrior, *Roman Religion*, 101-02. The points of correspondence to the Corinthian pneumatics are noteworthy.
The point is that the State moved aggressively against the cult because it simultaneously cultivated irreligion and social chaos. Mixing across the lines of class separation courted the collapse of the pyramidal hierarchy and was deemed offensive to the gods. The gods “were indignant that their own divinity was being polluted by crime and lust.” This is an official characterization of the Bacchic intermingling of classes as criminally and sexually subversive. The gods themselves are enraged by such disorder; it was a rejection of the human order mandated to reflect their orderliness.

The sacrality of Rome itself is underscored by the activity of the gods at every level of private and public life. Like the sacrality of the household, the city and its boundaries were also holy. Accordingly, taboos had long been in place regarding excluding corpses from the city confines. This reflects “Roman religious concerns about pollution within the city’s sacred boundaries.” Corpses were thought to defile because they were the ultimate expression of human chaos. Advanced decomposition involves the body becoming liquid, losing its structure, its orderliness. This is the antithesis of the religio-social construct cherished by the Roman elite, which necessitated the removal of corpses from sight. In contrast, preserving the sexual purity of elite women – the matronae, and the matronae-in-waiting – is framed as a preservation, in micro, of the city and by extension the state. Like the city, the high-class woman’s body “is protected by political and ritual sanctions; both are sacred.”

v. Emperor

The Emperor was also integral to the religio-political scheme. He was promulgated as the ideal vir. In Edwards’ words, “[e]mperors should be sources of order and authority, incarnations of gravitas.” Although most of the emperors failed to be embodiments of traditional Roman values, they were the focus of the honor system. What the emperor was to the empire, the viri were to be to their familiae. The emperor was the sublime

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389 Livy, 39.16.6-12. Similarly, Tacitus’ portrayal of the Christians who were scapegoated by Nero for the fire of 64 CE could be noted here. In a slew of invective, the historian called them “odio humani generis (hateful to the human race)” (Ann., 15.44). They are chaotizing, following “superstitions” that pervert the pax deorum and risk embroiling all humanity in divine wrath. He reiterates that, given their willful harming of humanity, they deserved their aggravated deaths.

390 Apuleius’ main character, Lucius, anticipates returning to Rome, viz., “this sacred city (sacrosanctum istam civitatem)” (Met., 11.26).

391 Kyle, Spectacles, 129. He notes that hygiene issues were also in play.


393 “Unspeakable Professions,” 90.
benefactor; when others hosted shows and games they did so in association with the imperial cult so that, ultimately, popular gratitude redounded to him.\(^{394}\)

The emperor was styled the *pater patriae* – Father of the Fatherland.\(^{395}\) As the imperial period developed, the emperor commanded increased ascendency. Thus treason, *maiestas*, became defined in terms of slighting the emperor, who was the personification of the state. Treason was a religio-political attack on the divine representative.\(^{396}\) The entire machinery of the imperial cult was designed to validate the emperor’s absolute authority on the basis of divine mandate. The emperor was the supreme embodiment of piety, acting as ascendant priest.\(^{397}\) Augustus thus assumed all the important priesthoods for himself.\(^{398}\) The priestly colleges, under the emperor, were charged with knowledge of Rome’s holy books (the Sibylline Oracles) and scrutinizing foreign cults for their legitimacy within the Roman pantheon.\(^{399}\)

Overall, what has been said of the emperor is true of the active *viri*, in miniature. These were religio-political agents who controlled their own and passive bodies; indeed, they acted as exponents of cosmic order.\(^{400}\) The body, then, naturally had to be highly regulated. From the body of the active, penetrating *vir* and the defended *matrona* through to the violable bodies of the prostitute, convicted criminal and slave, the individual body must function *according to its societal niche*.\(^{401}\) Every body was a walking placard evidencing its location in the hierarchy. The body had value as it fulfilled its niche in terms of its active or passive, ordering or obeying role. Contraventions, viz., disorderliness, were confronted with severe force in order to reinscribe the offender’s rightful place in the regime.

My aim now is to show the realities of physical reductionism and physicality-based honor as they occur within the cosmic, religio-political framework which I have

\(^{394}\) Hopkins notes that “[t]he very largest shows were closely associated with emperor worship, so that the donor’s glory overtly subserved the religious and political order.” *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13 (italics mine).

\(^{395}\) Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 29. This title was given to Augustus in 2 BCE.


\(^{397}\) For references to Augustus, Claudius and Titus as *Pontifex Maximus*, see Goodman, *Roman World*, 104-106.


\(^{399}\) Ibid. 33.

\(^{400}\) Again, imperial hegemony’s bringing peace to the otherwise dangerous forces of nature appeared in the propaganda of the period (Klauck, *Religious Context*, 296-98).

\(^{401}\) Mary Douglas offers food for thought, claiming that the individual body serves “as an image of society.” *Natural Symbols, Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon, 1970), 70. However, restricted access to elite bodies is in stark contrast to the public availability of the low-class, archetypically servile body. Her insight therefore only holds for the privileged and sacred body which symbolizes the orderly, hierarchical polity.
just described. The corpus was a social phenomenon amongst the Romans. The body was a “document” – it had “words” or symbols to be “read.” The body was subject to social gaze, and this looking at the other’s body is always intentional: it is a scrutinizing, assessing gaze which seeks to canonize the other on the scale of human worth.

To set the scene, I offer an extreme example from Valerius Maximus which graphically illustrates the power dynamics behind the Romans’ visual assessment of the body. Valerius catalogues numerous instances of the dictator Sulla’s “insatiable savagery” during the late Republic: “[Sulla] had the severed heads of the victims, still all but retaining expression and breath, brought into his presence, so that he could chew them with his eyes, since it was forbidden to do it with his mouth.” The italicised words translate the Latin “ut oculis illa ... manderet.” This tendency to use the eyes to gaze upon the corporal material of the other with a view to detecting and savoring weakness will guide the selection of the following material.

3. The Active Corpus: Appearance, Habitus and Forceful Action

According to Florence Dupont, “[t]he Roman citizen consisted of a name and a body … The body of a citizen was the man himself, the ‘embodiment’ of the truth about him.” This what-you-see-is-what-you-get quality is vitally important. A person’s social status was permanently on display, and its cues were constantly being surveyed. Edwards’ thought experiment is worth noting here: “The ancient Romans have been so domesticated that many modern western men (fewer women, perhaps) have been able to imagine themselves, their rusty Latin refreshed, easily adapting to life in the time of Cicero or the younger Pliny. But language is not the only barrier which separates us from the Romans. Entire vocabularies of gesture differ from one culture to another.” To these “vocabularies of gesture,” and of appearance and conduct, we now turn.

A. Scrutinizing Appearance

The Romans shared in common with the Greeks the notion that beauty and moral excellence – and, as I contend, human worth – coincide. The Greeks described this phenomenon with the expression καλὸς κὰνθανάτος (‘such a man was both handsome and

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402 9.2.1 (italics added).
404 Pol., 63 (italics added).
morally excellent’).\textsuperscript{405} Endsjø reflects the Greco-Romans’ evaluation of the body: they had “a profound cultural preoccupation with the body. The desire among people to improve their physical bodies and to hail those whose bodies were close to perfect was an inseparable part of Hellenism.”\textsuperscript{406}

The ideal Roman body was muscular and sizeable. It projected the capacity for forceful action. Thus Marcus Centenius is described by Livy as an elite centurion by reason of his “huge body and his courage (\textit{magnitudine corporis et animo}).”\textsuperscript{407} Livy intends for the centurion to be “pictured” by his audience, and he goes on to describe Centenius’ elite status as occurring because he is “conspicuous among the centurions of the highest rank.” “Conspicuous” translates as \textit{insignis} – Centenius is “clearly visible or recognizable” and also has the moral nuance of his being “noteworthy, remarkable.”\textsuperscript{408} This was a man who caught the eye and his striking-the-eye quality had both an aesthetic and a moral element. In Hellenistic terms, he was \kα\lambda\omega\z\kappa\acute{a}\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\z. Signal visual impact coheres with virile agency and thus honor/human worth.\textsuperscript{409} \textit{Viri}-in-training, i.e., high-class youths, are also praised for their conformity to physical ideals.\textsuperscript{410} Accordingly, an ugly body, viz., an effeminate and weak body, was a devalued body.

\section*{B. Scrutinizing Bodily \textit{Habitus}}

Of course, manly excellence is not merely the possession of a virile-looking physique. The Roman concept of \textit{habitus} describes the ways in which the body was conditioned to be held and presented in order to project a certain social status. The \textit{OLD} includes “expression, demeanour, manner, bearing … physical attitude, posture” under the term.\textsuperscript{411} Additionally, \textit{habitus} includes dress,\textsuperscript{412} and “physical make-up, build, form (with

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\textsuperscript{405} Cf. \textit{LSJ}, s.v \kappa\alpha\lambda\omega\z.
\textsuperscript{406} \textit{Greek Resurrection}, 22. His comments are in the context of sport and athletic bodies; however, they apply just as well to military capabilities.
\textsuperscript{407} Livy, 25.19.9.
\textsuperscript{408} \textit{OLD}, s.v \textit{insignis}, 1-3 and 4-6, respectively.
\textsuperscript{409} Numerous other examples can be adduced. “ Bodies of ideal beauty (\textit{corpora ... speciosissima})” which are “beautiful” or “decorous (\textit{corpora decora})” are those apt for war or wrestling (Quint., \textit{Inst.}, 5.12.21). Livy praises the soldier Navius, a \textit{vir} who possesses a “huge frame (\textit{ingens corpora})” (26.5.14); cf., Val. Max., 8.12. ext. 6; Tac., \textit{Germ.}, 30.2. Livy makes it clear that manly attributes were “gifts of the gods (\textit{munera data a dis})” (3.11.6); for Valerius, it is Nature who supplies these gifts (7.3.6).
\textsuperscript{410} Pliny the Younger lauds the “striking physical beauty (\textit{eximia corporis pulchritudo})” of his friend’s teenage son (\textit{Ep.}, 3.3.4; my trans.). Tacitus speaks glowingly of the resiliency trained into German children, who “grow up with those stout frames … which we so much admire (\textit{in haec corpora, quae miramur, excrescunt})” (\textit{Germ.}, 20.1).
\textsuperscript{411} \textit{OLD}, s.v \textit{habitus}, 2.
\textsuperscript{412} \textit{Ibid.}, s.v \textit{habitus}, 3.
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emphasis on visual aspect)” are also incorporated.\textsuperscript{413} *Habitus* refers to the “shared meanings” that a Roman audience would have derived from visual clues – facial expression, head tilt, tone, gestures, clothing, etc.\textsuperscript{414} Again, my concern is to reiterate that the body was an entity subject to constant visual scrutiny. Depending on one’s status, one’s body (and its ornamentation and clothing) was enculturated, viz., habituated, to signal one’s social locality, and thus human worth.\textsuperscript{415}

Suetonius presents us with a visual criticism or “reading” of the emperor Galba (d. 69 CE). The historian underscores the incongruency between Galba’s lifelong “bodily presence and self-cultivation (*corpus aut habitus*)” which were unimpressive and effeminate, and the “spirit (*animo*)” which he displayed in death.\textsuperscript{416} The factors which signaled virile masculinity to the sign-reading Romans – size and strength – were missing in Galba. He was of “low stature, splayfooted, and bandy-legged,” and, regarding personal grooming, “almost womanly in his self-presentation, with his body plucked of hair (*munditiarum uero paene muliebrum, uulso corpore.*)”\textsuperscript{417} Additionally, he wore a

\textsuperscript{413} *Ibid.* s.v *habitus*, 5. *Habitus* as a basis for stratifying human worth is intermediary between the judging of simple appearance (bodily formation) on the one hand, and forceful conduct on the other (which is treated next).

\textsuperscript{414} For the idea of shared meaning/interpretation, see Glancy, “Boasting of Beatings (2 Corinthians 11:23-25),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123/1 (2004): 101. Aspects of a son’s *habitus* could be considered reminiscent of the father. One lad was considered an illegitimate son of Julius Caesar because he was “very like Caesar in looks and carriage (similem Caesari … forma et incessu)” (Suetonius, *Jul.* , 52.2). Walters points us to another aspect of *habitus*: the *bulla* (necklace) worn by the *praetextatus* (teenage male citizen) which broadcasted his inviolability. He was not to be sexually solicited (“Invading the Roman Body,” 35).

\textsuperscript{415} For the distinctive garments of Roman citizens, for example the toga for men and the *stola* for matrons, see Jonathan Edmondson, “Public Dress and Social Control in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome,” in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, ed. J. Edmondson and A. Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 22 (*passim*). Tertullian decries women who have rejected those “garments which were the evidences and guardians of dignity … they have abjured stole, and chemise, and bonnet, and cap; yes, and even the very litters and sedans in which they used to be kept in privacy and secrecy even in public.” *Pat.* , 4.9; trans. S. Thelwall, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885); cf. Hor., *Sat.* , 1.2.150-60. The *bulla* (necklace) worn by young boys had a similar deterrent role against sexual predation. See George, “Slave Disguise,” 42; Harries, *Law and Crime*, 95. Walters informs us that should a high-ranking woman be sexually propositioned or despoiled while in a prostitute’s attire (a grey toga), a charge of *stuprum* (sexual assault) would fail. “Invading the Roman Body,” 34-36; also, Harries, *Law and Crime*, 49. Elite dress codes were legislated by Augustus as part of his moral reforms (McGinn, *Prostitution*, 154-58).

\textsuperscript{416} *Galb.*, 12.1 (my trans.). *Habitus* as a basis for stratifying human worth is intermediary between the judging of simple appearance (bodily formation) on the one hand, and forceful conduct on the other (which is treated next).

\textsuperscript{417} *Ibid.* 12.1 (my trans.). Here *munditia* in the collective plural refers to “elegance or refinement of appearance, manners, or taste (or of language).” *Munditia* is clearly being treated as an aspect of *habitus*, hence my translation “self-cultivation.” The extended meaning of *munditia* comes from the basic sense of “cleanness” (*OLD*, s.v *munditia*, 1 and 2, respectively). Again, we see that positive evaluation correlates physical qualities (being separate from filth) with moral rectitude, even though here Galba is criticized for being excessive in his self-grooming. Thus, the manners of *habitus* which he encodes with his body are *muliebris*: “of, belonging to, or used by, a woman or women” (*OLD*, s.v *muliebris*, 1). When applied to a man, this is strongly prejorative, gendering him “effeminate,” which in sexual contexts is “to be used as a catamite” (*Ibid.* 2). The picture of Galba’s corporal effeminacy is strengthened when we note that *munditia* is cognate with *mundus*, which as a noun means “the article a woman uses to beautify herself,
wig to cover his balding head, and went to great lengths to prevent a beard from growing.418

Next we consider how the emperor Claudius is criticized in the literature for his less than ideal physical formation. Suetonius presented Augustus as writing to Claudius’ mother Livia in 12 CE and deliberating over Claudius’ suitability to be future emperor. “[Is] the boy sound and, so to speak, whole (holocleros) … [or, is he] deficient and wanting as regards the soundness of his body and spirit (eίς τήν τού σώματος καὶ είς τήν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρτιότητα)”419 Augustus’ acute sensitivity to the visual evaluations his successors would face at the hands (i.e., “eyes”) of the Roman audience is apparent. The risk is that making Claudius a public figure will expose his physical deformities to scrutiny, and that, in effect, he would be “presented as the cause of ridicule (praebenda materia deridendi).”420 The populace who is attuned to gauging worth by visual clues are “the persons who are accustomed to spy out and sneer at such things (hominibus τὰ τολμαῖται ακόπτειν καὶ μυκτηρίζειν εἰςθόσιν).”421

In the next section, Augustus is presented as answering Livia’s queries about Claudius’ more immediate public involvement. Again, he is wary of Claudius making a spectacle of himself. He may officiate at a banquet for the priests provided “he does not do anything which could make him conspicuous or laughable (ne quid faciat quod conspicui et derideri possit).”422 Regarding his seating at the games themselves, he is not to be in the Imperial viewing box, “for he would be conspicuous by being exposed in the very front of the auditorium (expositus enim in fronte prima spectaculorum conspicietur).”423 These examples reinforce the impression of Roman society as those who “chew with their eyes.” Galba, and especially Claudius, were exposed to Roman scrutiny and fell short in both bodily conformation and habitus and were thus devalued on
the honor-scale. The belief that physical features betray character underpinned the pseudo-science of physiognomics.

Appearance and attitude also combine in Suetonius’ opinion to form an ideal man. He presents the emperor Caligula as having possessed all the noblest endowments of body and mind (corporis animique virtutes) in a higher degree than had ever before fallen to the lot of any man; he stood out for the extraordinary quality of his appearance and force (formam et fortitudinem egregiam), [he had] great proficiency in eloquence and other branches of learning, both Greek and Roman; besides a singular humanity, and a behaviour so engaging, as to captivate the affections of all about him.

It should be noted that all these aspects – handsomeness, courage, oratory, learning, humanity and sociability – constitute corporal and mental virtutes (virtues, excellencies). Exceiling in virtutes, Caligula is an exemplary vir – and bodily presence informs this status.

The critical point from these passages, from the effeminacy of Galba, and particularly in Augustus’ sensitivity to Claudius’ “unsoundness” – i.e., lack of corporal idealism – is the Roman scrutinization of bodily clues to gauge a person’s social and human worth. This is physiognomics in action. Critical eyes probe persons on every level of the social continuum to determine honorability or disgracefulness.

While the assessment thus far has focused on the visual scrutiny applied to high-end individuals, the later section on the passive body will show the way the bodies of low-end persons were decoded to determine their worth. The key difference is that the low-end body is fixed in its association to the low and debased; the high-end body attempts to resist this assimilation.
underscoring “the hold which physiognomy exercised over the Greek and Roman consciousness throughout antiquity.”

In a similar vein, Edwards also draws attention to the body as “a place where nature and culture met. It was a text to be deciphered, to be read.” Edwards cites Pierre Bourdieu’s opinion that cultures in general treat the body as a “mnemonic” which reproduces the dominant value system. “They entrust to it, in an abbreviated and practical, i.e. ‘mnemonic’ form, the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of the culture.” This means that corpus and habitus – appearance and conditioned conduct – remind, as it were, onlookers of excellency and baseness. The primary literature abounds with other instances of character (human worth) being “readable” from the body, or the body-in-motion.

A sub-par intellect and malformed body was the worst possible combination. Such a man becomes visual prey for the elite. Tacitus derides a certain Julius Pelignus, procurator of Cappadocia, who was “despised for both his laziness of mind and the ridiculous quality of his body (ignavia animi et deridiculo corporis iuxta despiciendus).” Whereas Caligula’s excellent formation and force caught the eye in the positive sense, Pelignus’ corporal and moral defects were visually striking in the negative sense.

Garland articulates the power dynamic which underpinned derisive laughter. Cicero conceptualizes laughter in this way: “Laughter has its foundation in some kind of deformity and baseness.” “Deformity and baseness” render turpitudo and deformitas; both words combine the sense of aesthetic ugliness and moral foulness. The visual evaluation combines with a moral correlate and the response is derision. Cicero’s next

428 Beholder, 89.
429 Catherine Edwards, Politics of Immorality, 90 (italics mine).
432 Ann., 12.49 (my trans.). Tacitus continues that Pelignus was familiar with the Emperor Claudius, who found Pelignus amusing: “[Claudius] used to overcome the dullness of his leisure by entertaining himself with the society of jesters” (my trans.).
433 Beholder, 73-86.
434 Orat., 2.236 (Garland’s trans., Beholder, 74). Garland lists many other instances of deformity giving rise to cruel laughter in the Greco-Roman sources.
435 Turpitudo is literally “unsightly appearance, ugliness” and the morally “shameful quality (of a person’s character, actions, etc.)” (OLD, s.v turpitudo, 1 and 2).
statement is that “those things which are laughable remark upon and point out that which is ugly (haec enim ridentur … notant et designant turpitudinem).”\(^{436}\)

Corporal formation, then, informs evaluations of human worth, and a negative assessment, expressed in laughter, is highly public in nature. The ridiculous is perceived and broadcast socially to engender laughter: social scrutiny entails marking out (notant) and pointing out (designant) to others the baseness of one’s victims. Garland summarizes the various roles that laughter played in Greco-Roman society: Laughter brings group cohesion: the able-bodied express solidarity as they ridicule the malformed “other.” Laughter is cathartic: the able-bodied person’s fear of sliding into disability and impotency is dispelled by humor. Finally, laughter is pathologic: deformity arouses a “secret will to oppress.” The elite were bolstered in the eminency of their self-conception by witnessing and spotlighting the degradation of others.\(^{437}\)

C. Scrutinizing the Body for Forceful Conduct

The active *viri* were expected to use their bodies in a forceful manner. In addition to the scrutinizing gaze being directed to the *corpus per se* and to the *corpus* as cultivated and presented (*habitus*), a criterion of corporal excellence was forceful conduct. Virile conduct is essentially forceful, subordinating action against inferior persons. In this section, I will focus on the way in which numerous occupations (acting, prostitution, gladiating, etc.) were deemed dishonorable because they centred upon the body being made a public spectacle. By contrast, the elite male was an agent, exercising force in the realms of significance (politics, war), not in the realm of fictive amusement.

An examination of the elite’s construction of human worth reveals that *forceful dominance over others* plays a central role. This is the “philosophy of dominance” in action: that which governs is superior to that which is subject to force. Of initial importance is the fact that even the valued body, viz., the force-able, virile body, is neither inherently valuable nor can it ultimately escape liquidation (i.e., death and decay).

Therefore the body’s value is founded on its *instrumentality*, and its transitory nature spurs on the quest for the permanence which a glorious reputation affords. The social mandate for the *viri* to maintain order is further seen in festivals which cultivated the ancestral spirits. Funerals involved the elaborate impersonation and memorializing of

\(^{436}\) *Orat.*, 2.236 (my trans.).

\(^{437}\) *Beholder*, 74-75.
the honorable dead. Polybius states that the funeral ritual involves persons wearing the masks of “men renowned for their excellence … [orators present] the successes and achievements of each of [those whose] images are present, beginning with the oldest. … But the most important result is that young men are inspired to undergo every extreme for the common good in the hope of winning the glory that attends upon the brave.”

Service of the household and state is the most honorable exertion open to the active vir. Cicero rouses his compatriots to “love our country … obey the senate … consult the interests of the good” through bodily sacrifice. Then he continues: “Let us hope for whatever we choose, but bear whatever befalls us, let us consider, lastly, that the bodies of brave men and great citizens are mortal (corpus virorum fortium magnorum hominum esse mortale), but that the impulses of the mind and the glory of virtue are everlasting.”

Aeneas, the exemplary vir, asks “is death a thing so much to weep for?” in comparison with the duty to protect household and country and to be a worthy “offspring of my kingly sires.” For Aeneas, the soul (anima) will live on after descending into Hades. As in Cicero, masculinity is seen in powerful conduct for the benefit of family and country and in pursuit of honor. For the elite, the body is not of intrinsic value; rather, it is instrumental in the pursuit of the ultimate prize of glory. The reality that honor was gained and sustained by force is central to this study. By definition, the vast

438 Polyb., 6.53-54.3.
439 Thus Cicero (Sest., 21.47) states: “The duration of life is brief, that of glory everlasting … as death was appointed for all men, it was desirable that life, which must some day or other be given up to necessity, should appear to have been made a present of to one's country.” Cf. Livy, 28.28.10-11.
440 Sest., 21.68.143. He has just enjoined: “Let us … fix our eyes on the glory which we shall receive from posterity.” Cicero also utilizes the philosophy of the soul’s perpetuity: “…[wise men] thought that the minds of wise and brave men were then in the greatest degree sensible and vigorous when they had departed from the body (cum e corpore excessissent)” (Ibid). In Cicero’s more philosophical work, De Republica, the prospect of the soul’s eventual release from the body is framed to spur political service. However, here the ultimate reward is not human recognition, but the posthumous return to the “proper abode” of the mind, viz., the celestial realm (Rep., 6.26). Alan E. Bernstein contrasts Cicero’s rhetorical use of various models of the afterlife. His oratory tends to more traditional concepts of Hades and suffering for malefactors, whereas his philosophical works have a celestial existence for refined souls. The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 120-21.
442 Ibid. Interestingly, Aeneas describes his upcoming descent as an “unstained soul (sancta ad vos [i.e., to the spirits of the dead] anima ... descendam).” The ascription of sanctity to the soul will feature in the later discussion of sacral language.
443 Hence the heroic words of Livy’s Gaius Mucius, who enters an enemy camp as an assassin. The mission fails. Nevertheless, he is said to have thrust his own hand into a fire to signify the steel of Roman resolve. Mucius declares: “See how cheap they hold their bodies whose eyes are fixed on renown (quam uile corpus sit is qui magnum gloriam uident)” (2.12.13). Likewise, Tacitus comments that the body is perishable, while the “soul is everlasting;” therefore, the “fame that waits on noble deeds” should be life’s pursuit. Agr., 46.3; trans. Sara Bryant, Complete Works of Tacitus (New York: Random House, 1876).
majority of the population is excluded from the contest for glory. Their bodies do not serve in achieving virtue for their own selves: they are mere instruments which serve the elites’ pursuit of glory.

i. Threats to the Active Body: Feminization

It was critically important that the body remained forceful and did not become passive. This passivity was associated with over-consumption, softness, effeminancy and servility. The viri were to be marked by disciplina. Joshel observes that discipline was essential to gaining and ordering the empire. But discipline requires the will to maintain personal virility, which then emanates out through an orderly familia and, collectively, a stable state.\footnote{Joshel, “The Body Female,” 174.} Joshel is helpful at this point regarding the symbology and utility of Roman discipline: “A Roman’s rule of his own body provides an image of Roman domination and a model of sovereignty – of Roman rule over non-Roman, of upper class over lower, of master over slave, of man over woman, and of Princeps over everyone else.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Whereas a subordinated, attentive, non-vir body bespeaks the potency of the elite, the orderly vir’s body betokens the potency of the privileged religio-political representatives. Discipline indicates a readiness to act to maintain order, a vigilance which can be translated into ultimate force whenever necessary.

The widespread view of the ancient world was that the female body was a malformed version of the male. Aristotle’s zoological hierarchy saw woman as “the first step along the road to deformity.”\footnote{Garland, Beholder, 1, with reference to Gen. an., 4.767b 7ff.} In the Roman context, Pliny the Elder asserts that Nature has fashioned everything for man.\footnote{HN., 7.2.} The concepts of masculine and feminine align with the categories of Roman and alien.\footnote{Edwards, Politics of Immorality, 5.} Assimilation to the feminine linked a man with non-vir status. Persons would cast their opponents as declined from the norms of virile corporeality and character and thus as feminine and servile.\footnote{Cicero’s vilification of the two consuls who forced his exile exploits the odium of sexual passivity. One of them, Lucius Piso, is cast as having been from “…the earliest period [of his] life … openly subservient to everyone’s lusts; who had not the heart to repel the obscene impurity of men from the holiest portion of his body (a sanctissima quidem parte corporis)” (Red. Sen., 11; the use of holiness language should be noted).} It was these moral lapses which account for periods of decline in the Roman state.\footnote{Sallust recounts how Sulla immersed his army in avarice (avaritia), the luxurious (luxuriosus), and the pleasurable (voluptaria), and so hastened its (and the state’s) moral decay. Such conditions “effeminize the virility of body and mind (corpus animunque virile effeminat);” they “softened the soldiers’ brave...
nocturnal *convivial* (banquets) were famous in this regard. Nighttime gatherings, illicit sexual romps and religious mayhem were all linked in the Bacchanalian saga of 186 BC and were condemned in feminized terms.

Indeed, perhaps the worst form of accusation is for an elite male to be feminized in sexual terms. To have one’s body sexually penetrated, that is, to be pathic, was indicative of abject subordination. Forceful agency is lost as one is sexually, forcefully violated: the phallic role has been forfeited. Whoever’s body is penetrated sexually is necessarily the womanly or dominated party. Cicero ridicules Mark Antony by setting him up as a woman who had been captured in marriage by Curio. Antony had firstly exchanged the manly toga (*toga virilis*) for the woman’s (*toga muliebris*); such a garb comports with his being “a public prostitute, with a not low price for his foul behavior (*primo volgare scortum; certa flagitii merces nec ea parva*)” Curio then intervenes, taking Antony “from earning his living as a prostitute (*te a metricio quaestu abduxit*).”

Antony comes to play the role of wife; he receives the *stola matrona* and is settled in *matrimonium*.

The vilification continues with Antony configured in a servile and sexually subservient role. Antony was sold as a boy, and is therefore a slave (“*puer emptus*”). This purchase (i.e., marriage) was for the sake of Curio’s lusts and Antony is depicted as more under the power of his master (“*in domini potestate*”) than any other slave. Antony, too, equally lusts after his pathic role: his lust urges him on (“*hortante libidine*”).

disposition (*ferocis militum animos molliverant*).” This feminized appetite was “unbounded and insatiable” (Cat., 11).

In Corbeill’s words, the banqueter was the “strangely androgy nous glutton of sex and food,” the “effeminate feaster” (“Dining Deviants,” 107; also, 122-24).

Livy presents women as the instigators of the religious frenzy: “Then there are the men who are just like women, engaging in illicit sexual intercourse and causing defilement (*deinde simillimi feminis mares, stuprati et constupratores*)” (39.15.9; the underlined section is my literal translation). Valerius Maximus records several humiliating punishments which citizens faced for their sexual crimes: being scourged, beaten, castrated, or gang-raped slaves (6.1.13). Valerius notes approvingly, “[n]one of these was penalized for indulging his anger.” That is to say, sexual violence had its place – even against the erstwhile vir who had forfeited his rights.

Phil., 2.44 (my trans.).

**Ibid.** (my trans.).

Antony’s proposed enjoyment of the sexually pathetic role exacerbates his shame. In a similar way, Cicero caricatures Caesoninus Calventius as having the philosophy that “in every part of the body” there ought to be pleasure. In the context, he is “impure” and “lustful” and so “every part (*in omni parte corporis*)” will be a not so subtle allusion to his enjoying the passive role (Red. Sen., 14-15). Similarly, Suetonius records Curio the Elder’s famous feminizing of Julius Caesar as “every woman’s man and every man’s woman (*omnia mulierum uirum et omnia uiorum mulierem*)” (*Iul.*, 52.3). This aphorism is used to support Suetonius’ contention that Caesar had “an evil reputation for shameless vice and adultery.”
The sexual passivity of either the male or female body constitutes its degradation: honor, again, is based on one’s physical state. Corbeill draws attention to how an active *vir* who lapses into passivity has assaulted the natural order. Passivity, in the case of the should-be-*vir*, is a religio-political offense. In *Responses of the Haruspices*, Cicero attacks a citizen who changed his name to Fonteius. Such an act of impiety, disowning one’s family, breaches the law of Nature that “attaches us to our parents, and to the immortal gods, and to our country.”

Later, Cicero presents Fonteius’ monstrous disruption as catalyzed by a shameless regard for his own body and his sisters. He disdained “all the parts of his body (*omnibus corporis sui partibus*).” Cicero asks of him, “what ship in a public river was ever so open to all men as his youth was?” He committed these “crimes against his own self and his own relations (*quanta sunt quae in ipsum se sceler, quae in suos edidit!*).” He treated his sisters as prostitutes. The openness of “his youth” is a reference to his pathetic sexual role. “*Vulgata omnibus … istius aetas* (his youth was open to all)” presents his “youth” – i.e., his offering of his *corpus* during his youth – as vulgar or open for public consumption.

Again, I note that such shameful treatment of one’s body was only a possibility for the elite. It is they who are held in the nexus of parents, the gods, and state obligations. The slave who is by definition natally alienated has a body which is sexually available based not on his or her own preferences, but on his or her master’s. A man of moral integrity – indeed, a *man* or *vir per se* – was by definition *virile* or forceful, that is, aggressive in preventing his body from being penetrated or assaulted.

Although Cantarella seeks to show that the Roman bisexual ethic developed to the point that “the romantic love of *pueri* was now fully accepted,” her thesis is, in my view, unsustainable. She characterizes Catullus’ erotic attraction to Juvenius as “a passionate and romantic love, not at all different in style from his love for Lesbia.”

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457 “Dining Deviants,” 108.
458 *Har. Resp.*, 27.57. Cassius Dio’s Octavian denigrates Mark Antony in very similar terms (50.27.6). Slaves, of course, were a different species given their lack of a familial nexus. Again, as those natally alienated, they were outside the honor-class who were eligible to contend for family and state.
459 *Har. Resp.*, 27.57.
460 Cf. Valerius’ laudatory account of a young freeborn Roman who became a bondman through defaulting on debt. “He refused to play the passive role (*stuprum pati noluerat*)” demanded by his creditor and was (illegally) subjected to “servile lashes (*sevilibus … verberibus*)” (6.1.9). The same historian records a soldier who with impunity killed his military tribune for sexually soliciting him (6.1.12).
461 *Bisexuality*, 121. She refers to the period of the late Republic.
However, without doubt Catullus still acts as an exponent of the virile power norms. He is the suitor while Juventius, playing the role of the desirable object, is feminized. In poem 16 (lines 1, 2 & 14), Catullus responds to two men who doubt his virility by threatening to sexually assault them.

Indeed, all of Cantarella’s examples of how “pueri were no longer merely supposed to satisfy requirements of a purely physical sort [but] had become love objects” fail, in my view, to undermine the same basic priapic mandate. At one point she herself summarizes the situation with “the same basic rule of sex,” viz., that bisexuality and subjugation of the object persists; however, onto this “are grafted the new elements introduced by contact with Greece.”

Overall, it is hard to see why the language of “love” should be used to characterize this perceived development. The term should be rejected as it obscures the violence against the passive body which was signified through sex. My presentation of the Roman ethos stands: the body of the elite male retains its claim to religious and political agency by forcefully guarding against penetration and other modes of assault. The darlings of the poets – whether male or female – remain objects which are sexually commodified. The veneer of loving relationship is still shot through with power differential – the “lover” poet still vigorously retains the prerogative of unilateral possessor of the active, virile role.

Cultural constructions of the body in, for example, art and drama distinguished the “closed” elite body from the “open” dishonorable body. The representation of orifices are critical to the contrast. In Stallybrass and White’s words, the

Elsewhere, she considers this evidence of a wider cultural phenomenon, viz., “a real love affair between the lover and the beloved youth” (Ibid. 125).

Ibid. 139. After discussing Catullus (121-128), she adduces other poets such as Tibullus, Propertius, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace and Ovid (128-141). In all the material, the poets clearly speak from the vantage point of the agent who satisfies his erotic desire on the other who acts as object.

Ibid. 137.

Ibid. 136. The misapplication of the term “love” is even more apparent when what in fact was violent sexual commodification of slaves is defined using love. For example, “… the Romans made love to their slaves even in the first centuries of their history” (Ibid. 99).

Smith too doubts that Cantarella has proven the widespread acceptability of erotic homosexual relationships. In his view, “only a handful of elite, philhellenic poets in the late Republic and Augustan age manifest such an attitude.” “Ancient Bisexuality and the Interpretation of Romans 1:26-27,” Journal of the American Academy of Religion 64/2 (1996): 233, n. 22. I have taken the time to critique Cantarella because, when I exegete Romans 1:18-32, I will argue that Paul is critiquing the violent abuse of the body – and not simply sexual indulgence – which is signified through sexual relations in antiquity. Nevertheless, despite my concern to emphasize the power dynamic of sexual relations, the possibility that sexual relations were experienced as loving interactions cannot be excluded.
classical statue [i.e., representative of the ideal body] has no openings or orifices whereas the grotesque costume and masks emphasize the gaping mouth, the protuberant belly and buttocks, the feet and the genitals … [o]utsiders are constructed by the dominant culture in terms of the grotesque body. The ‘grotesque’ here designates the marginal, the low and the outside from the perspective of a classical body situated as high, inside and central by virtue of its very exclusions.

The Roman vir, then, excelled in corporal formation and integrity (non-penetrability). In contrast, the grotesque body is “open” and unconcerned about defilement and so unable to avoid being defiled and causing defilement. We should note though that mulier, as in the technical phrase for feminine passivity, corpora ... muliebra pati (being womanly bodies), denotes a low-class woman. The high-class matrona possesses honor (human worth), provided her sexual exclusivity remains intact.

ii. Threats to the Active Body: Servility

When the elite body became passive it was also assimilated to the servile. Edwards informs us that “[i]mmoderate pursuit of low pleasure was associated with women, slaves, and the poor – those who had to be controlled by others if they were not to fritter away their lives in self-indulgence.” Accordingly, Seneca judges that “virtue is a lofty quality, sublime, royal, unconquerable, untiring: pleasure is low, slavish, weakly, perishable.” The servilized agent fails to utilize his body to enact force, and is instead governed by the body (as if by an external will); in this way he is made passive.

The slave is routinely made the paradigm of the pleasure addict. Edwards tells us that “moralists frequently associate sensual pleasure with ‘lower’ beings, such as the poor, slaves and animals.” Seneca presents luxuria as promoting vice (vitta). Eventually, luxuria makes “the mind the servant of the body and [orders] it to be a slave to pleasure (animum corpori addixit et illius deservire libidini iussit).” Mastery of the body, rather than servitude to it, is analogous to the way a master has absolute control

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468 Cf. Catherine Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 73, for references. Also Walters, “Invading the Roman Body,” 34.
471 Politics, 190.
472 Ep., 90.19 (my trans.).
over his slave. So for Seneca, one acts as a guardian of the body, meeting its needs. However, “we must not be slaves to it [the body]. He will have many masters who make his body his master.”473

The elite vir does not play the part of a slave, but is vigorous in the master role. Seneca delineates the individual virtutes: fortitudo (bravery) comes first and scorns that which is fearful; it “looks down upon (despicit)” and “drives out” anything which might bring “our liberty under the yoke (sub iugum libertatem nostram).”474 Assimilation to both the feminized and servilized body was to be avoided at all costs by the elite. Only then would his body maintain its forceful position and be preserved from degradation.

iii. Threats to the Active Body: Becoming a Spectacle

The body was valued in relation to its ability to generate force in the private sphere of the familia and the public spheres of civil and military service. The elites’ fear of acting in spectacle occupations is informative. Actors, gladiators and prostitutes were all considered to make a living with their bodies by displaying their bodies.475 They performed in a fictive world, not the realm of merit. The elite wanted their honorable activity to be seen, but they loathed the idea of being displayed as mere amusement. This discussion is an extension of the elite’s sensitivity to being ridiculed for poor aesthetic qualities and feminized/serviled conduct.

A striking example of their aversion to being displayed is found in Tacitus’ castigation of Nero. Under the rubric of Nero fostering vice in the capital, Tacitus catalogues its manifestations. There existed a

… compulsion to drive Roman nobles into disgracing themselves on the stage, under the pretense of being orators and poets. What remained for them but to strip themselves naked, put on boxing glove, and practice such battles instead of the arms of legitimate warfare? (vim adhibeant ut proceres Romani specie orationum et carminum scaena polluantur. quid superesme nisi ut corpora quoque nudent et caestus adsumant easque pugnas pro militia et armis meditentur?).

474 Ep., 88.29 (my trans.).
475 They were those who quaestum corpore facere (make a living using the body). Livy describes the former harlot Pacula Cluvia as a woman who had “once made a living with her body (quondam quaestum corpore fecisset)” (26.33.8, my trans.). Cf. Tac., Ann., 2.85; Germ., 12.1-2; Plaut., Poen., 5.3.21; Val. Max., 6.1.6. Further references are available from McGinn, Prostitution, 122-23; Richlin, “Not before Homosexuality,” 559. In the Greek context, this was seen in the case of Neaera. She was described thus: ἱργάζετο τῷ σώματι ὡς ἐπικρα ὀσύν (she worked as a prostitute using her body)” (Neaer., 49).
The elite’s abhorrence of being made visual prey is readily detected. The nobles resist the publicity: Nero and company “…forcefully presented [them] to the task (vim adhibeant ...).” 

Once on stage, the victims “are polluted (polluantur)” by having been a species – spectacle, or eye-feast – as they played the role of actor/pretender. The degree of self-degradation is such that Tacitus deliberates, “[w]ould it have been worse if they had stripped their bodies naked (quid superesse nisi ut corpora quoque nudent)?” Such self-exposure is tantamount to posing nude, laying oneself open for the scornful assessment of onlookers.

The next jab is in reference to their nudity occurring in the context of a fictional conflict. The boxing match is beneath the genuine societal agent because he acts in the real arena of battle. Actors merely play as soldiers with weapons (“pro militia et armis”). The vir acts with force on the battlefield for the benefit of the state and his own reputation. He does not act inconsequently for the sake of amusement, where he would be degraded as mere eye-fodder. In this worst case scenario, the erstwhile agent has been made an object of gaze, while the onlookers are made his superiors, his scrutinizers.

Again, I emphasize that such openness was perfectly acceptable for the marginal infames and slaves. Their bodies were called upon to service the elite – to provide entertainment and pleasure. The high-class person, however, risked slippage into this grouping through such conduct. Penetration or violation need not be a tangible event: sight is penetrative.

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478 Polluantur, from polluo (“to make foul or dirty,” to “degrade,” or “to make ceremonially impure,” OLD, s.v polluo) is important here. The high-class body, being privileged, has sacral associations and so is violated by its exposure. In anticipation of the section on sacrality, I note the exclusivity conveyed by holiness terms as it refers to those of high religio-political status.

479 The designation infames means those without shame. It involved the censor discovering one’s occupation and putting a note beside one’s name on the census. Legal rights were thereby greatly curtailed – preeminently one’s body became liable to punishment. Infames is glossed by Amy Richlin with “‘marked by official social stigma’” (“Not before Homosexuality,” 551). Cf. also Edwards, Politics of Immorality, 123; OLD, s.v infamis, 2b. Tacitus deprecates “a certain Cassius, an infamous mime through [i.e., by utilizing] his body (Cassium quondam mimum corpore infamem)” (Ann., 1.73, my trans.). A similar expression is used by Petronius as he satirizes the lusty matron who has an appetite for her social inferiors. She “…burns for a gladiator, or a mule-driver covered in dust, or for an actor disgraced by displaying [himself] on the stage.” The disgraced actor is “histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus” – he is led out to the stage, and his self-showing degrades him (Sat., 126, my trans.). In the wider context, Petronius assimilates the gladiator, the muleteer and the actor to the class of servus (slave) and sordes (dirt, filth). Their occupation as visual entertainment renders them filthy and devoid of human worth.

480 Additionally, penetration can be effected verbally. A verbal proposition of a high-class matrona or puer was deemed such a violation (Walters, “Invading the Roman Body,” 36-37).
to a status of infamis, finds its antithesis in a verdict of integra persona – “whole person.”

Thus, while his or her body is not penetrated, as it is in the case of a prostitute (male or female), the actor’s integrity is breached by being passively subject to the audience’s subordinating gaze. The gladiator suffers in both respects; he is brutalized by the blade and is eye-fodder simultaneously. The male passive is described in the Digest of Roman law as “eum qui corpore suo muliebria passus est (a man who has undergone womanish things in his body).” In this same source are included condemned criminals, gladiators, actors and pimps.

Richlin notes a common denominator, which is “[doing] something bad, usually involving the public use of their bodies.” Members of this group were considered slave-like in that they sold their bodies for the pleasure of others. The active male was to maintain his honor/human worth by keeping his body subject to restriction; it was to be active and not passively subject to physical and visual penetration. The legal and social backlash was massive if a vir or his honorable dependents made themselves corporally available. Indeed, were they to continue in the honor-class under such circumstances, the whole reproduction of the elite strata would have been in jeopardy. The strict protocols

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481 Richlin, “Not before Homosexuality,” 556.
482 It must be acknowledged that some high-ranking men (and women) did act as gladiators – indeed, the Senate condemned this by edict during the reign of Augustus (Suet., Aug., 43). Nevertheless, Tacitus’ comment is indicative of the basic elite attitude to the profession. Suetonius records Nero’s compelling the elite to confront beasts and to other roles in the arena (“uaria harenæ ministeria”) (Ner., 12). Suetonius makes it clear that this was contrary to their class status. “Some [of the senators and knights] were of unbroken fortunes and unblemished reputations.” According to Cassius Dio, when knights, for example, did fight it would seem that they were making a last ditch grasp for a gallant reputation. These men “were disregarding the penalty of disenfranchisement … [t]he result was that they suffered death instead of disenfranchisement.” Even Augustus watched with enthusiasm (56.25). This comports with Suetonius’ comments that some of those who fought did so despite their honorability – most fought out of desperation. Tertullian best summarizes the Roman attitude to the gladiatores: “artem magnificant, artificem notant (the art they glorify, the artist they disgrace)” (De Spect., 22).
483 Dig., 3.1.1.6. I cite this from Richlin, “Not before Homosexuality,” 558. Here she argues that though the Digest was compiled in the 530s CE, it represents ancient tradition. She also shows that similar terminology is used in Julius Caesar’s lex Julia municipalis (ll. 112-23) of those who are banned from civil service (“Not before Homosexuality,” 559; cf. Edwards, “ Unspeakable Professions,” 70).
484 “Not before Homosexuality,” 558-59.
485 Ibid. 559. The references under vulgo (“publicly,” “promiscuously”) are heavily weighted towards prostitution and the passive, sexual availability of the body (OLD, s.v vulgo1).
486 Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 76. In particular, the prostitute exemplifies this category (Ibid. 81).
487 The jurist Paulus (fl. early 3rd cent. CE) presented the infames as liable to corporal punishment. He characterizes them as having done “something contrary to the public order” (Sent., 5.26; cited in Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 74).
which guarded the exclusivity of the *matronae* (elite wives) further defined the antithesis between the open and restricted body.\(^{488}\)

Overall, the disgraceful public displaying of the body threatened active, virile status. The body retained its value – and legal protection from violating force – as long as it conformed to the restrictions and norms of high society. Its aesthetic conformity, conditioned deployment (*habitus*) and forceful conduct supported its worth. Non-virile corporeality was constructed in terms of assimilation to the feminized and servile body. Both were characterized by disorderly conduct and, in particular, sexual penetration and physical assault. Crucially, once one had been deemed *infamis* – officially disgraced – one was locked into that social space. Once one was reduced to a physical commodity, one was effectively dispossessed of one’s body because the body was called to serve the appetites of others. This physical reductionism, with its concomitant suppression of the ego, indicates that exterior wills utilize the body. Moreover, the perpetuity of the degradation shows that defilement was indelible. The body is a constant biographic. Once stained through physical or visual penetration, the infamy could not be lifted. The precarious value of the body could be lost, and once lost it was gone for good.

**D. Virile Wounds: Testimony of Manly Force**

The wounded body further demonstrates how it acts as a perpetual expression of one’s experiences and so one’s human worth. Honorable wounds, viz., war wounds, are important because, against this background of socially contesting a *vir*’s forcefulness, they signify valor. On the other hand, servile, rear wounds, which will be considered below, betoken one’s degradation.

Frontal wounds non-verbally communicate a man’s virility. Such wounds stop critics in their tracks. Livy has Servilius announce: “I possess a body adorned with honorable scars, every one of them received in front.”\(^{489}\) Sallust presents the “new man” Gaius Marius as giving a speech defending his right to be a general despite his lack of

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\(^{488}\) Valerius describes the idealized past in which divorce was rare and well-born women were chaste and avoided wine. (2.1.4-5). He states further: “… in those days the eyes of ambushers of other men’s marriages were not feared. On the contrary, both the act of looking (which was done in holiness) and that of being looked upon were done with equal modesty (nulli enim tunc subsessorum alienorum matrimoniorum oculi metuebantur, sed pariter et uidere sancte et aspici mutuo pudore custodiebatur)” (2.1.5, my trans.). Valerius’ point is that intentionality is inherent within gaze or “looking.” “The eyes of the ambushers” refers to the intentional, preparatory phase before a literal domination of the woman is attempted. Tacitus similarly lauds German mores with respect to women, who “live fenced around by chastity, corrupted by no seductive spectacles, no convivial incitements” (*Germ.*, 19.1).

noble ancestry. Marius says of the nobles (those with a consul as a direct ancestor):

“They despise my humbleness of birth . . . but [I] think that he who best exerts himself is the noblest.”

Forceful conduct is all that counts for Marius; “best exerts himself” translates as *fortissimum*. The man who displays the greatest physical power, strength or bravery is accounted the highest nobility. Sallust’s elite code is clear: manly conduct deserves honour and the verdict of human worth. Naturally, those outside the sphere of even contending to demonstrate such action (slaves, non-citizens, women) are non-agents and thus dishonorable.

Marius then continues to acknowledge that his lack of ancestry means he cannot display the symbols of trustworthiness (*fidei causa*) which the elite typically trade in, viz., “the statues, or triumphs, or consulships of my ancestors.” But he can present the conclusive proofs of his martial prowess: “I can show you spears, a banner, caparisons for horses, and other military rewards; besides the scars of wounds on my breast (*alia militaria dona, praeterea cicatrices aduerso corpore*). These are my statues; this is my nobility; honors, not left, like theirs, by inheritance, but acquired amid innumerable toils and dangers.”

The italized section is of particular relevance. “Military rewards,” the *militaria dona*, are the tokens of recognized achievement. These validate his claim to nobility; they encapsulate his capacity to generate martial force with his body. Critical amongst these are his *cicatrices aduerso corpore* – the wounds or scars *at the front of his body*. *Aduerso corpore* recounts the location of his body when the wounds were received – he was squarely confronting the enemy; he was head-on. The wounds are not the rear wounds of a fleeing coward. By exposing his chest he can silence his critics. His body acts as a permanent biographic of his virility. He is an honorable man who forcefully engages his body. By implication the rival nobility are passive, they rest on inherited

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490 *Iug.*, 85; the historical setting is ca. 110 BCE.
492 *Iug.*, 85.
493 For *fortis* as referring to physical prowess and bravery see *OLD, s.v fortis*, 1 and 7, respectively. Cf. *fortitudo* for which forcefulness both physically and mentally predominate (*Ibid. s.v fortitudo*).
494 N.B. While the slave is the archetype of the person absolutely devoid of honor, even the *matrona* has honor in a reflected sense. Yet hers is always a contingent honor: if her sexual purity is violated, she is declassed. Also, if her significant *viri* are dishonored, so too is she.
495 *Iug.*, 85 (italics added).
496 Cf. *OLD, s.v aduersus*, 4 and 5.
symbols and their bodies indulge in luxury.\footnote{The enervating effect of luxury is a massive theme for Sallust. Marius decries the nobles’ indulgence in “the pleasures of indolence” and their “scandalous … inaction (socordia – laziness).” This compares with his own habituation to “every kind of toil and danger” (Ing., 85). His is a body of forceful action; theirs are soft and consumptive, that is, passive and effeminate.}{497}

The symbolic value of frontal wounds is confirmed repeatedly in the literature. Livy recalls an aged veteran contending for his rightful participation amongst the honor-class. Bystanders give \textit{verbal} testimony “that he had commanded companies” and that he held “other military honors.”\footnote{2.23.4.}{498} The man himself then placards his true status but he must surmount the dishonorability cued by his servile appearance: “His dress was covered with filth, and the condition of his body was even worse, for he was pale and half dead with emaciation \textit{(obsita erat squalore uestis, foedior corporis habitus pallore ac macie perempti)}.\footnote{OLD, \textit{s.v.} \textit{foedus}, 1 and 4, respectively. The coincidence of physical appearance (“offensive to sense,” and thus, by implication, spatially low, dirt-proximate) with the moral evaluation (“shameful”) should be noted.}{499} The phrase \textit{foedior corporis habitus} stands out: even more \textit{foedus} (“offensive to the senses,” “disgraceful”) than his filthy garb is his bodily \textit{habit}.\footnote{Livy, 2.23.4.}{500}

Nothing he can \textit{say} can surmount this degradation. His physical state crystallizes his dishonorable status. Even popular testimony is insufficient. However, what he can utilize are his martial wounds: “The man himself displayed the scars on his breast which bore testimony to his honourable service in various battles \textit{(ipse testes honestarum aliquot locis pugnarum cicatrices adverso pectore ostentabat)}.\footnote{Ibid. 2.23.7.}{501} His body is made eloquent as he “broadcasts” his wounds. And, akin to Marius, these are \textit{cicatrices adverso pectore} – scars on a chest that faced the enemy full-frontally.

A “mighty uproar” ensues; any other old, emaciated, foul man would not evoke a second look. However, the gross incongruence of honorable virility wrongly reduced to outsider status provokes the crowd. Of particular interest in Livy’s characterization of the man’s unjustly degraded status is his mutilated \textit{back}. Having shown his frontal wounds, the old man dramatically juxtaposes his rear wounds. “He then showed them his back, disfigured with the wales of recent scourging \textit{(inde ostentare tergum foedum recentibus uestigiis uerberum)}.\footnote{Livy, 2.23.4.}{502} Again, a \textit{tergum foedum} – a back made foul/disgraced – is not unjust \textit{per se}. But such a state foisted on a member of the honor-class is abhorrent.
Overall, Livy’s veteran affords us a clear view of how bodies were decoded for meaning: a person’s status or claim to a certain social locality and human worth were “read off” his or her bodily clues. Livy provides an instance of what Leigh calls “the pathetic significance of the pectus-tergum opposition.” The wound elicits the pathos of respect or disgust based on its corporal position. The ancient eye was attuned to scrutinizing corporal scars and interpreting human worth accordingly. The virile wound thus transforms the body into a document that crystalizes a biographic of force. Many of the accounts of the frontal scar occur when honorability is being challenged. Visual communication trumps oral defense: frontal wounds confirm the defendant’s honorability, repulsing degraded status.

This section on the value of the elite body has considered the scrutiny it faced and its potential for degradation. The elite male was assessed for his conformity to the ideal of the forceful, manly body. His was an active body which controlled, coerced and penetrated passive bodies. Aesthetics, *habitus* and imposing conduct were all criteria for worth. The elite body was devalued if it became passive: penile penetration and servile brutalization both meant assimilation to the feminine and the servile, the essence of which was passivity. The visual penetration inflicted through acting as a gladiator or an actor also made the theatre or arena a potentially dangerous place for the *vir*.

A person’s value was thus a function of the objective state of his or her body. Once degraded, the body became a biographic which indelibly records the person’s experiences and passivity. Humiliation is therefore as permanent as one’s anatomy –

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503 Livy recalls a very similar incident (6.14.3-13) in which a “centurion renowned for military prowess had been condemned for debt.” Marcus Manlius acts as the man’s redeemer and curries favour with the plebian populace. Manlius calls the veteran’s state “slavery and bondage (*in seruitutem ac uincula*).” The veteran’s acts validate his virility in the public “displaying [of] the scars he had received in the Veientine, the Gallic, and other successive wars.” The man excites the emotion of the crowd (“*ipse tumulum auget*”) because they have a visceral response as they decode his wounds. The visuality of the scar-speech is emphasized. He is “*in tumultuosam turbam* (in the middle of the turbulent crowd)” and he “*cicatrices ... ostentans* (holds forth his scars).” While his wounds are not explicitly termed *adversus*, i.e., frontal, this is clearly assumed.

504 Matthew Leigh, *Lucan Spectacle and Engagement* (Claredon: Oxford University Press, 1997), 214-15, cited by Glancy, “Boasting of Beatings,” 107. Plin., (*HN*, 7.28) lists two exemplars of valor who had, respectively, 45 and 33 wounds “on the front of” their bodies. Cicero tells of Marcus Aquilius’ lawyer, who, having finished his speech, “tore [Aquilius’] robe away from his chest, in order that the Roman people and the judges might see his scars, all received in the front (*cicatrices ... aspicerent adverso corpore exceptas*); and at the same time he enlarged a good deal on that wound which he had received on his head from the general of the enemy.” *Verr.*, 2.5.3 (italics mine). Even the Catilinarian conspirators are seemingly honored for their posthumous condition, being found “all with wounds in front (*omnes tamen adversis vulneribus considerant*)” (*Sall.*, *Cat.*, 61). Tacitus states that Roman soldiers received “*pectoribus ... honesta vulnera* (on their chests, wounds commanding respect)” (*Ann.*, 1.49, my trans.). Later he records the Britons’ oath not to “shrink from weapons or wounds” (*Ibid.* 12.34).
honor or dishonor is enshrined in the mnemonic body. This was seen by contrast with the honorable frontal wound which had the capacity to silence critics without the need for words. By maintaining his virility, a man retained the will to power over others. In this, he maintained possession of his own body, to use it as an instrument in competing for honor. Passivity, on the other hand, meant physical reductionism. Here one is dispossessed of one’s body, one’s ego is suppressed and supplanted by an exterior will. To the degradation of the passive body we now turn.

4. The Passive Corpus: Possessed, Controlled and Destroyed

I will now present the Roman construction of the passive corpus: its possession, control, and – when irreversibly offensive – its destruction. This is a focus on the treatment of the passive pole of the active-passive binary of (Greco-)Roman society. Again, the categories of activity over against passivity depict those with significant personal honor and intentionality versus those whom they control. The passive body is the body which is acted upon by an exterior will. Such a person suffers physical reductionism: the master’s ego suppresses his or her own sense of self and takes possession of the body. This extreme unilaterality is most clearly seen in the master-slave relationship. Wives, children, clients and freedpersons all exist on the continuum, but are, by being “free,” not animalized chattels. In any case, the extent to which one lacks independent control of resources dictates one’s passivity or dependence.

A. Ideology of Control: Religious, Political and Economic Order

The religio-social conception of the mandate of the active person to maintain order must be stressed. The gods have blessed Rome with her empire. Rome’s success is a function of piously representing divine order within her realm. The image from Livy is of Rome

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506 M. I. Finley makes the unilaterality of the slaveholder’s rights over the slave, as would be the case for any other chattel, the critical feature of the dynamic. Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology (New York: Viking, 1980), 73-74.

507 The extent to which women were constructed in liminal – i.e., outsider – and servile terms has already been discussed. Parker’s summary of their marginal status is helpful: “Wives were … consistently portrayed as gluttonous, bibulous, and sex-crazed, and thus in need of constant supervision.” “Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives: The Crisis of the Outsider-within and Roman Exemplum Literature,” in Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations, ed. S. Murnaghan and S. R. Joshel (London: Routledge, 1998), 156. The woman is characterized and degraded by virtue of her biology. She is sub-human and dangerous.
being the “head” of the nations.  This role as *caput* entails the elites’ volition being imposed and made manifest in the *corpora* of individuals and nations. Ritualized death in the arena, for example, functioned as an ideological instrument for “reproduction of the relations of production.”

This filtered down to the *paterfamilias*’ rule of his bodies, i.e., slaves, at the level of the individual household.

In less extreme form, Roman elite exercised control over those outside their chattel slaves, through the patronage system. The sensitivity of the masses to this system is routinely seen in the literature. Clients scrutinize their *pater* (patron) for his expectations. Dio Cassius describes the “…rivalry and jostling around the great man’s doors [here, Sejanus], the people fearing … that they might not be seen by their patron … for every word and look, especially in the case of the most prominent men, was carefully observed.” The elite, then, could order society simply by their words and looks; however, their potency was often much more brutal in nature.

The slave, in contrast, related to his or her ascendant *vir* not as *patronus* but as *dominus* (master). The slave is under the *dominium* – the legally sanctioned possession and right to rule – of the master. He or she is coerced *qua* body into the religious, political, and economic program of the *vir*. As I stressed in discussing the Greek conceptions of the slave, far from the modern idea of *person* (with the implication of self-determination), the slave is reduced to being a *body* vacated of autonomous will. The will of the *paterfamilias* directs the subject body. The passive body is co-opted as a factor of production into the slaveowner’s economic agenda. The *dominus*’ social existence depended upon generating a surplus through production and trade which could then be

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508 These are the mythical words of the deified Romulus indicating that heaven wills Rome to rule and that “no human might can withstand the weapons of Rome” (Livy, 1.16).
510 58.11.5.2. Sejanus attracted the type of attention that was afforded a particularly powerful patron. Of course, the greater the *vir* the more clients he had, and so the greater his influence.
511 Dio Cassius goes on to note that for any *vir* below the emperor, pardoning a slight is taken as weakness, “…whereas to attack and to exact vengeance is considered to furnish proof of great power” (58.11.5.4).
512 A similar term to *dominus* was *erus*, which denotes the man by whom a slave, animal or implement was possessed (*OLD*, s.v *erus*). Accordingly, Finley notes that this archaic word underscores the commodity, or property identity of the *servus* (*Ancient Slavery*, 73).
513 *OLD*, s.v *dominium*. Thus, being under another’s *dominium* is basic to the jurist’s definition of slavery: “… *quis dominio alieno ... subicitur* ([the slave is one] who is subject to the dominion of another.” Finley stresses the utter subordination meant by *dominium* (*Ancient Slavery*, 165, n. 20).
514 I take this cue from Foucault’s language of the “‘political economy’ of the body.” However, I deliberately add the note of religious motivation. He argues that the body is involved in a “political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it.” In such a system, “it is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and docility, their distribution and their submission.” *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 25-26.
converted into the various trappings of social prestige. In addition to the utility of transforming resources into saleable products, pliant slave bodies displayed the owner’s virility and thus augmented his social standing. Almost by definition, the elite strata required a surplus in order to have time free for political engagement. Following Foucault’s lead, the force, the utility, the docility of the body is a function of its conformity to an imposed power structure.

Disobedience, as an affront to a man’s force-ability, threatened the validity of his membership within the religious-political community, for the elite strata saw themselves as ordering the social and physical environment to reflect the cosmic order. Pliny characterizes the Romans as “the people who have conquered the earth and have subdued the whole world, who govern tribes and kingdoms, who give their laws to the outside world, who are, you might say, a part of heaven on earth.” The orderly orbit of servile bodies around the master and his household validated his membership in the forceful elite.

i. Logic of Punishment: Medical Analogy

The logic of punishment is the concern to maintain religio-social order, especially the pyramidal hierarchy. Thus we see that the unsuccessful and servilized vir is deemed to have struck at “the moral and religious order of the community.” In the worst case, elite viri were reduced to the status of convicted criminals, the noxii. The noxii are those who “have done harm” (from the verb noceo). In Kyle’s words, “noxii had damaged something and they were condemned to be damaged.” The Roman preoccupation with

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516 Cf. Ibid. 265, where the role of slaves in “ensuring the social reproduction of the elite” is stressed.
517 Discipline, 25.
518 On the cosmic hierarchy held by Romans, Bradley notes: “For Greeks and Romans, the association between the slave and the animal was undoubtedly due in part to the way in which both society and the natural world at large were hierarchically ordered: the slave by definition was inferior to the master and so closer to even more inferior forms of life.” “Animalizing the Slave Body,” 112.
519 I cite this from Mary Beard and Keith Hopkins, The Colosseum (London: Profile Books, 2005), 37 (no primary reference is provided).
520 Kyle, Spectacles, 97. His comment relates to the crime of maiestas, which degenerated into anything which offended an emperor. Nevertheless, this is the major basis for which viri were executed. Similarly, a pontifical scribe, Lucius Cantilius, was scourged to death in the Comitium (ca. 220 BCE) for having sex with a vestal virgin. Livy describes this gross impiety (nefas) as religiously portentous: it was thought to explain the Roman defeat by Hannibal at Cannae (22.57.2-6). Religio-political transgression destabilizes society.
521 Spectacles, 95. I will elaborate on this category at length when I investigate the violence imposed on the low class and slave body. I note, for now, the case of Vitellius, the Roman general who became emperor.
elitist notions of law and order, with *pax* or with *concordia*, meant that deviations were gravely construed.

A medical analogy from Cicero configures offence and punishment in terms of personal hygiene: “If there is any thing in our own body which is injurious to the rest of the body, we allow that to be burned and cut out, in order that a limb may be lost in preference to the whole body. And so in the body of the republic, whatever is rotten must be cut off in order that the whole may be saved.”522 The “whatever is rotten (*quicquid est pestiferum*)” correlates with the citizen who is “worthless, and wicked, and impious” and “mischievous, wicked, lustful, impious, audacious, criminal.”523 Such a man is conceptualized as a diseased and infectious limb, who has failed as a member of the elite and is to be amputated and made an outsider. In the medical realm, the *membrum* (limb) is rendered harmless by “being burnt [off] and cut [out] (*uri secarique*).”524

We should emphasize that here Cicero refers to “the citizen.” A man who was previously a *vir* – a member of “the actives” – is now portrayed as having misused his agency to harm the collective. He must therefore be made passive, and excised. The invective (“worthless, wicked, lustful”) correlates with terms used to construct the feminine and the servile “Other.” The same construct applies to the lowly citizens and slaves who reject their appropriate deferential roles and so “harm” the state – and, once condemned as *damnati*, they are labeled *noxii*.

**ii. Contestation**

In slavery two selves compete for one body. Interpersonal violence was inevitable as the master aimed to maintain the utilitarian value of his servile bodies.525 This signification of violence is seen in the case of Boudicea, the Queen of the British Iceni tribe, who was

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522 *Phil.*, 8.5.15; the analogy had been made long before Cicero; cf. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 825ff.
523 *Ibid.* 8.5.15-16. Opposed to this list of pejoratives are the virtues of temperance, innocence and modesty. Also, the model citizen (limb) is sanctus. I will discuss this further in the following section on the sacral body; for now I note the incorporation of sanctity into the composite of the virile and civic man.
524 In *SHA* (18.3-6), the senate is described as demanding that Commodus’ body be abused because he abused the “body” of the state: “Let him be mangled … He is a foe to the gods, slayer of the senate … He who slew the senate, let him be dragged with the hook …” I note particularly that causing chaos is a religio-social crime. In being “dragged with the hook,” he is made a contagious body which is too obscene to be touched.
scourged by the Romans and whose daughters were raped (late 50s CE). She incites her people to revolt, interpreting the outrage thus: “I am avenging lost freedom, my scourged body (verberibus corpus), the outraged chastity of my daughters. Roman lust has gone so far that not our very bodies (corpora), nor even age or virginity, are left unpolluted.”  

Importantly, she motivates her compatriots with the assurance that “heaven is on the side of righteous vengeance,” viz., the violators have transgressed the religious/cosmic order.

The powerful feature of Boudicea’s revulsion is her utter refusal to learn the lesson of her newfound subjugation. Their brutalized bodies were intended to mark the liminal process of being transferred from honorable to degraded status. She repels the symbology and contests her right to her own body. By inciting vengeance for “my scourged body” she announces that this “item,” as it were, is essential to her sense of personhood – she will not part with it. By contrast, we see that the brutal violation of the slave body – whether by the whip or the male sex-organ (the proximity of the two is seen in the Boudicea narratives) – intends to submerge the victim’s sense of self. The brutalization of the body inculcates that it is not under the sovereignty of the self, it is not to be contested by the person. Rather, through violence the person is dispossessed of his or her body. William Fitzgerald’s insights are apt: the slave is alienated from his or her body; the slave loses ownership of his or her body.

That violence in slaveholding arises from a contestation for the body by two egos is seldom so explicit. I will use Boudicea’s quite literal repulsion of the dominant narrative to name the phenomenon of contestation as “Boudicean conflict.” This is the self rejecting another’s attempt to dispossess it of its own body. This queen as female contestant is particularly noteworthy: she refuses to allow her body to be the basis of her degradation, and she certainly rejects cultural notions of the feminine’s inherent inferiority. Additionally, “Boudicean Conflict” is seen not only as the slave defies the master and earns a beating, or in the slave’s attempt to runaway, but also in the arena. I will give instances of suicides by condemned criminals who preferred to kill themselves.

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526 Ann., 14.35. LCL slightly modified (i.e, “bodies” for their “persons”).
527 Ibid.
528 “Liminality” refers to powerful dramas which mark a person’s transference between social groups. I will discuss this in more detail presently.
529 The opposite attitude is seen in the Metamorphoses, where an evil wife “enslaved her body” to alcohol and adultery (9.14). Literally, “she continually sold [her] body to adultery (continuo stupori corpus manciparat)” (my trans.).
530 Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 97. He makes these comments with reference to Lucius’ experience as the donkey in the Metamorphoses.
rather than dramatize the elite narrative of control. The martyrrological accounts which are regularly couched as contests also show that in death some sought to retain control of their own bodies.

Once successfully brought to submission, the servilized body has the “anti-value”\textsuperscript{531} (from the humanitarian perspective) of signaling the elites’ hegemony. The brutalized body, whether through whipping or aggravated death, becomes an inscribed message between the high-class Romans and the rest of society: deviation will result in corrective force. This is triangular semantics, in which the free talk to one another and to their other subordinates by means of the brutalized slave body.\textsuperscript{532}

As an “anti-value” the body of the slave or \textit{damnati} encapsulates a history of conflict. On the one hand, it betokens previous defiance (thus it needed reordering). It was anti-utility, or anti-value. On the other hand, the master or state finally reinscribed proper submission. If the offender could not be reclaimed as a serviceable unit, value was extracted from the body so that it might discharge its debt for having offended religious-social norms. This value obtains from its agonized demise being an endorsement of Roman power. The broken body has placard value.\textsuperscript{533}

The next section will supplement this deterrence value with the sheer pleasure derived from the spectacle of the suffering body. The \textit{noxii}, in Plass’ words, “[pose] danger to order by their very existence, captives and deserters are anomalies, ‘dirt’ in the system most efficaciously disposed of by means of the violence they represent.”\textsuperscript{534}

Unleashing violence on the dangerous body is a statement of possession and mastery, a buttressing of the cosmic order. Such displays evoked the pleasure of ascendancy for onlookers.\textsuperscript{535}

\textsuperscript{531} I take the hint for the expression “anti-value” from Pope John Paul II’s statement that the Manichaean devaluation of the body and sexuality value these as an “anti-value.” See the Pope’s lecture series on the Theology of the Body, “Realization of the Value of the Body According to the Plan of the Creator,” <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/jp2tb44.htm> (31 March 2014).

\textsuperscript{532} I follow Fitzgerald, who speaks of “triangular relations between slaves and free” (\textit{Slavery}, 56). It is helpful to note that the message passes from superior to inferiors as a warning. This triangulation, I will argue, is writ large as the Emperor displays criminals in the arena for aggravated executions.

\textsuperscript{533} At times a literal placard was used to specify the criminal’s malefaction. Cassius Dio recounts an instance where a slave is paraded through the forum, en route to the cross, wearing a sign stating his offence of having abandoned his master to attackers (54.3). Cf. the \textit{titulus} of the gospels which records Jesus’ crime.

\textsuperscript{534} \textit{Game of Death}, 36.

iii. Liminality

Importantly, the contestation for possession of the body between the self and the master, or the malefactor and the state, meant that the victim’s liminality was dramatically displayed. The *limen* referred to the beam in the doorway to a house over which one stepped on entry or exit. Metaphorically it means the shift into a new state or condition. Given the equation of physical punishment with servile status, the dramatic torture symbolized that a person had crossed from honorable social standing to outsider. He or she was liminoid. Of course for the slave, who is already deracinated outsider, physical brutality only reinforces his or her marginal status.

This is why the liminal process in shifting a person upward from servile to free status was taken so seriously. Emancipation involved crossing the “great divide between slave and free.” The language of “metamorphosis” is used by commentators. Changes in social status had to be clearly signaled. The mystery religions and Christianity apply the same principle: the initiate moves from outsider status (death) to insider status (new, social, life).

The imposition of liminality is seen in Eusebius’ accounts of Roman attitudes to the submissive bodies of Christians who were social non-beings. He presents physical torture as having been exacerbated by the soldiers’ orders not to acknowledge the

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536 *OLD*, s. v limen, 1-3.  
538 Douglas comments on those in a marginal state: “They are somehow left out of the patterning of society, … are placeless.” *Mary Douglas: Collected Works: Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 96. Later she emphasizes the dangerous power held by those at the margins: rites are required to cope with their polluting effect (*Ibid.* 96-98).  
539 For the modes of manumission rite (including a contrast with Greek practices), see Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (Leicester: Apollos, 1999), 71-73. Striking among the forms is the slave’s being touched by the praetor’s rod: the chattel was thus “declared [to have been] really a free person wrongfully enslaved” (*Ibid.* 71). Also, in a private manumission, the slave might be invited to dine with his master or be declared free before friends (*Ibid.* 72). Social being was thereby afforded to the *liberatus*.  
540 *Fitzgerald, Slavery*, 87. I have already noted the continued, though lessened, state of *passivity* in which the freedpersons and poor free existed. Although slaves might become citizens if manumitted before a public official versus privately (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.24.4; cf. Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 72). In Fitzgerald’s words, “[t]he freed slave retained obligations toward his or her owner as well as certain legal disabilities, and inhabited legally, socially and morally, an *in-between world*.” *Slavery*, 85, italics mine. Certainly he or she was less marginal than the slave, but still far from the honorable status of the elite. Hence the corporal violability of the slave-class extends to the *humiliores* (the more base, and not *honestiores*) of the citizen strata during the principate. Lest a humanitarian note be detected in manumissions, the slave would often have replaced themselves before being freed, as many left children behind (Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, 116).  
mangled humans.\footnote{Hist. Eccl., 10.7: “[The Governor of Alexandria] said that they [the soldiers] were not to have the least concern for us, but were to think and act as if we no longer existed, our enemies having invented this second mode of torture in addition to the stripes.” Trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, rev. ed. (Stilwell, KS: Digireads.com Publishing, 2005). The events date to around 306 CE.} This is the second torture, he says, in which the Christians were treated as if they did not exist. They were socially liminoid, destined to be expelled – on the precipice of the underworld. The soldiers looked right through them, as it were, as if they were transparent. The Romans refused to show them compassion, refused to acknowledge them as fellow human beings. This, again, concurs with the meaning of the ludi victims – they are devoid of honor and so non-beings. The only value which they hold is to embody Roman supremacy, to exhibit the cues that they are supplicants before the system they have harmed. On a wider scale, those reduced to liminoid status are seen as justly subjected to bodily tortures and aggravated death, be it privately by the whip or publicly in the arena.

\textit{iv. Cruelty}

A few observations to situate the interpersonal cruelty of the Romans are in order at this juncture. Certainly the Romans were human beings with the capacity for compassion. Tacitus recounts how the freeman Attilius built a defective wooden amphitheatre which, upon its collapse, led to many deaths and severe wounds from crushing. The scene is one of onlookers “bewailing brothers, kinsmen or parents … there was a rush to see the lifeless forms and much embracing and kissing.”\footnote{Ann., 4.62-63.} Moreover, the nobles offered medicine and physicians; Rome herself was grieved. Tacitus even notes that Nero’s cruel treatment of the Christians as scapegoats for the burning of Rome became so extreme that it elicited compassion (“\textit{miseratio oriebatur}”).\footnote{Ann., 15.44. Pliny the Elder describes elephants suffering in the arena during a display put on by Pompey. The elephants won the hearts of the crowd, who with tears asked him to stop the cruelty (\textit{HN.}, 8.12). Plass gives other examples of the crowd moved to compassion (\textit{Games of Death}, 21).} Several factors need to be considered to understand the Romans’ proclivity to violence. First and foremost is Rome’s military ethos. Brutality was basic to Rome’s founding, survival and expansion. Decimation as punishment for cowardly soldiers is the readiest symbol of their do-or-die psyche. The dehumanizing effects of cradle-to-grave violence are also noted by Tacitus, who states that Romans were steeped in it from the womb.\footnote{Dial., 29. Cf. Augustine’s depiction of the visceral pull of arena bloodshed (\textit{Conf.}, 6.8.13).}
Next is the severity of daily life for those outside the elite. The tenement blocks which provided housing en masse were known as insulae. They were dangerously overcrowded and highly flammable. Some of the wealthy left Rome during the oppressive summer heat to escape the disease which spread through the overcrowded lower classes. Life expectancy was short: between 20 and 30 years. Living conditions were impoverished. Thus the bloodlust at the “games” is at least in part a reflection of the severe conditions which had to be foisted on the outsider if the spectating masses were to feel, by comparison, superior.

The societal demand for violence also arises from a sense of what constitutes justice in relation to the offenders’ crimes. Crime was interpreted in a religio-political sense. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity with which the Roman masses held their religio-cosmic constructs. Belief in a potent spiritual world which interacted with the natural world was common: superstition and fear of spells were widespread. The language of criminality in the characterizations of arena victims, which we observe next, is replete with notions of offending the gods and human society. As a programmatic example, Tactius understood the early Christians to be “odio humani generis (haters of the human race).”

Offenders, then, are a danger to the established order. Their punishment is necessary to rebalance relations with the gods and so ensure social harmony. Sensitivity to divine hostility or favour flourished at all levels of society: portents, signs and omens were divined by professional ministers. Gifts were made to propitiate and thank the

546 Goodman, Roman World, 165. He notes that the better off had housing behind their own workshops, while the poorest begged and slept in the open.
547 Ibid. 177-78. Having analyzed inscriptive evidence, B. Shaw graphs how mortality rates were highest between August and October. The rate in September was over double that of the annual average. “Seasons of Death: Aspects of Mortality in Imperial Rome,” Journal of Romans Studies 86 (1996): 115.
549 Warrior, Roman Religion, 140ff. She provides examples of spells which consecrated the victim to the chthonic deities. Pliny the Elder (HN., 28.13) says that if “…we support the view that the gods hear certain prayers or are moved by any form of words, we must answer ‘yes’ to the whole question of whether words and incantations have power.”
550 Ann., 15.44. The Christians hated society – meaning that they did not care about honoring the pax with the gods. The context is one of re-establishing divine favor after the conflagration of the city.
551 During Nero’s chaotic reign, Tacitus mentions the “prodigies, presaging doom” which the “people talked much about” (Ann., 15.47). Livy records the birth of an androgyne (207 BCE) which the Haruspices interpreted as a prodigy: “It must be removed from Roman territory, far from contact with the earth, and drowned at sea.” (27.37). This event occurred in the wake of the Hannibalic victory at Cannae (216 BCE), hence the attention to divining the will of the deities. Livy also mentions, inter alia, as prodigies: vestals’ affairs (22.57.2-6); temples and tombs struck by lightening; a mice infestation in Jupiter’s temple; and a lake flowing with blood (27.23.1-4). Tacitus is critical of Tiberius for failing to recognize the Tiber’s
In this context, the fear of a worsened condition drives the desire to squelch agents of chaos. The severity of the crime of threatening the peace demanded the “just” response of destroying the criminal. This mass hostility to the dangerous non-conformists bespeaks their belief that humanity is a quality of those who contribute to the greater good. To fail in this is a form of sociopathy. In any case, the Romans’ sense of proportional justice was akin to that of (roughly) contemporary cultures.

B. Reclamation of Passive Bodies in Private

The more private and less extreme counterpart of the public spectacles of the arena were the beatings of passive bodies. The passives, again, are those subject to a dominant vir – most regularly the paterfamilias. His right to enforce conformity to his will played out on the bodies of his subjects, be they wives, children or slaves. Saller configures the continuum of passivity: “In the symbolic system of the Roman male, slaves and women were assimilated in the subordinate category of the passive. But within the passive category, there was considerable difference between the legitimate wife in an honorable marriage, who had the power to initiate divorce and walk away from an abusive husband, and the powerless slave, male or female.”

flooding of parts of the city as a divine communiqué (Ann., 1.76). Cf. Garland (Beholder, 72) for the “religious odium [attached] to the congenitally deformed,” who were signs of divine displeasure. The Roman custom was to devote gold to the gods by placing it in various temples after triumphs, or in response to “prosperity or their alarm” (Tac., Ann., 15.45).

St. Paul acknowledges the justice of capital punishment to maintain social order. Officials who so act are God’s ministers (Rom 13:1-7). Tertullian agrees, but deplores needless sadism: “It is good, no doubt, to have the guilty punished. Who but the criminal would deny that? And yet the innocent can find no pleasure in another’s sufferings: he rather mourns that a brother has sinned so heinously as to need a punishment so dreadful.” De Spect., 19.

Kyle includes a section on the role of death spectacles in pre-modern societies to normalize Roman activity (Spectacles, 133-140). Examples given include: Assyrian and other Near Eastern peoples, Mayans, Aztecs and American Indians. Public executions were held throughout medieval Christendom right through to early modern Europe. Often the body and corpse were violently dismembered (Ibid. 133-34). However, he notes that the Greeks “had no institutionalized program of spectacles regularly producing numerous, noxious corpses” (135).

Regarding wives’ liability to corporal attack, Clark draws our attention to graphic evidence from Augustine’s Confessions regarding his mother Monnica’s experience. “Many wives, who had much milder husbands [than Monnica’s Patricius], carried the marks of the blows even in their disfigured faces.” 9.9, The Confessions of Saint Augustine, trans. E. M. Blaiklock (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), slightly modified. See also “Wives, Slaves,” 114. As detailed earlier, a wife’s being married cum manu or sine manu influenced the extent of her subjection to her husband. In the latter case, she remained under her father as an heiress and so had scope for greater independence from her husband.

“Gender and Status,” 89. As with all relationships Roman, the strength of the honor-nexus surrounding the wife (i.e., her father’s social standing and wealth) would determine her passivity relative to her husband. Not all wives in an “honorable marriage” would have been sufficiently resourced to leave the relationship (see previous footnote).
We will focus, however, on the value of the slave body, although I stress that the lot of women must be kept in mind as the slave’s situation is reviewed. The slave and the woman hold parallel statuses in the Roman mind.\textsuperscript{557} Slavery was a massive institution in the empire, with an estimated six million slaves, or ten percent of the population. Two to three million of these were concentrated in Italy.\textsuperscript{558} By definition, punishing a body indicated that the victim was bereft of other markers of worth, which would otherwise generate honor or protection by offering an extra-corporal resource for the satisfaction of wrongdoing. Given the large numbers of slaves in Rome, elite males and their honorable dependents were marked as forceful by the pliancy of their attendant bodies.\textsuperscript{559}

i. The Slave as Body

Positively, the slave’s value was \textit{qua} body. He or she was a unit of economic productivity or a display item. We should note that the utility value of the slave body applies to others of the low-class. Given that status was a function of resource possession, birth/class, and, above all, patronage, one’s being merely of utility value indicated the lack of these other components of human worth. In any case, “[t]he use of torture … had been extended to all \textit{humiliores} during the Principate.”\textsuperscript{560} Nevertheless, by law, the slave was the most disadvantaged: a chattel, covered by property laws.\textsuperscript{561}

Varro’s (1st cent. BCE) farming manual terms the slave an \textit{instrumentum vocale}: a talking implement otherwise akin to farm animals and vehicles.\textsuperscript{562} Such is the logic

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{557} Thus St. Paul’s subversion of corporal degradation of slaves will also target the negative construction of the feminine. Additionally, the corporal vulnerability of children should be noted. Although (freeborn) children were beaten, it was considered in refined thought to risk servilizing them. Cf. Quint., \textit{Inst.}, 1.16; Plut., \textit{De Lib.}, 12. Beatings did, however, occur. Augustine talks of being “soundly beaten” for misbehavior as a schoolboy (\textit{Conf.}, 1.14).
    \item \textsuperscript{558} For these admittedly “highly speculative” estimates, see Morley, “Slavery under the Principate,” 273. He notes that Egyptian census data provides the 10 percent of total population benchmark.
    \item \textsuperscript{559} I will discuss the display value of slaves in detail shortly. For now, I note Apuleius’ need to defend his status before the court in the light of his \textit{not} having a slave retinue, without which one’s virtue was in doubt (\textit{Apol.}, 17; cf. Wiedemann, \textit{Greek and Roman Slavery} (London: Routledge, 1981), 86.
    \item \textsuperscript{560} Aubert, “Double Standard,” 103. The \textit{infames}, as discussed above, by making a living \textit{ex corpore} were debarred from citizen rights and exposed to corporal punishment. This applied to actors, gladiators (most of whom were slaves anyway), and prostitutes. Fergus Millar, in “Condemnation to Hard Labor in the Roman Empire, from the Julio-Claudians to Constantine,” \textit{Papers of the British School at Rome 52} (1984): 125, considers the abuse faced by bodies of the low-class free as a “radical innovation” of the imperial period.
    \item \textsuperscript{561} Dig., 1.5.4.1. Cf. Goodman, \textit{Roman World}, 177; Harries, \textit{Law and Crime}, 46; Finley, \textit{Ancient Slavery}, 73.
    \item \textsuperscript{562} Rust., 1.17.1. Of course slavery offered a continuum of experiences, from the agricultural worker or domestic help through to a free-ranging agent who made loans and entered contracts on behalf of the master. Morley also offers examples of slaves as ship-owners, salesmen, bankers, and as owning their own slaves (“Slavery under the Principate,” 278-79). Nevertheless, only the lucky few could hope for
\end{itemize}
behind the crucifixion of a slave who deserted his master when attacked by robbers. By acting in his own interests, he dispossessed his master of the body he owned. I would suggest that, by a similar logic, a runaway slave should be considered a thief: he is removing the master’s corporal chattel.

A slave’s value often arose from his or her acting as an ornament of social status. As bodies displayed, slaves enhanced the “splendor of the visual entertainment [which a host] could offer his guests.” After all, “the performers were often his own property.” The elite fussed over the dress of attendant slaves. Seneca scoffs at “…how anxiously they set out their silver plate, how diligently they tie up the tunics of their pretty slave-boys.” Tacitus records Tiberius’ answer to the Senate’s desire to legislate restrictions on showy opulence. While the emperor finally rejects the measures, he does describe the outlandish display as follows: “The vast dimensions of country houses … The number of slaves of every nationality … The masses of silver and gold … The marvels in bronze and painting … The apparel worn indiscriminantly by both sexes …” The slave, then, was often “a luxury object of display.” The picture is intensified when we consider those slaves who were purchased because they were monstrum (deformed), for example dwarfs and hunched-backs.

manumission in a significantly upward direction. Hence Martin: “For a select few … slavery could bring access to financial resources, citizenship, education, and the patronage of higher status persons.” Slavery as Salvation, 32, emphasis added; cf. Morley, “Slavery under the Principate,” 285.

The stimulus for this insight comes from an incident related by Cassius Dio (54.3). Here a slave is crucified for abandoning his master to attackers.

Finley comes close to this understanding, viewing the runaway situation as a “loss of property” (Ancient Slavery, 111).

Regarding subordinate bodies on display bolstering prestige, see Morley, “Slavery under the Principate,” 284: “…the ownership of slaves was one of the most important markers of social status;” “Romans established new rules for social competition, in which the display of one’s dominance over others took on a particular importance.” Parkin and Pomeroy refer to slaves as “an almost totally malleable product: they could be used to display the wealth of their owners” (Roman Social History, 154).


Ibid.

Brev. Vit., 12.5.

Ann., 3.53. Later, the noble Narcissus agrees to losing the trappings of his station: “the palace, the slaves, and the other furnishings of Fortune” (Ibid. 11.30, my trans.). Cf. Seneca’s depiction of the exile who longs for his “furniture, … silver vases, … slaves enough to crowd however large a house, … precious stones …” Cons. Helv., 11.1.3 (trans. Aubrey Stewart, Minor Dialogs); cf. his Ep., 41.7.

Fitzgerald, Slavery, 38.

Dwarfs and other human curiosities used to intrigue onlookers. Quintilian likens flowery rhetoric to the spectacle value of human monstrosities; these are “distortis et quocunque modo prodigiosis corporibus ([figures that are] distorted and in any respect monstrous).” Inst., 2.5.11 (my trans.); see also Plut., Mor., 520c for a presentation of the “monster market.” Garland, Beholder, 53-58.
ii. Constructs of the Slave qua Body

Despite their inclusion within the *familia* (again, household, not family), most slaves were characterized as outsiders and so inherently dangerous. I described above the tendency to characterize the feminized (penetrated and soft), luxury-addicted, and immoral *vir* in terms of the slave. To repeat Seneca’s belief: “Virtue is something lofty, exalted and regal, unconquered, indefatigable; pleasure something low, servile, weak, unstable.”

Tacitus draws out the implications of this low (i.e., moral-less) instability: slaves pose perpetual danger to the elite. The senator Caius Cassius demanded the traditional execution of any entire household of slaves when one had killed the *paterfamilias* (Pedanius Secundus, the city prefect and ex-consul). A popular backlash in solidarity with the household slaves ensued. Undeterred, Cassius called for an exemplary response, because “…it is only by terror you can control such a motley rabble (conluviem istam non nisi metu coercueris).” Earlier, Tacitus recounts how Augustus had had an ex-consul “overawe the slaves and that part of the population which is disorderly and reckless (quod civium audacia turbidum), unless it fears a strong hand.” With the italics I wish to accent that violence by the state (and, privately, by the *paterfamilias*) has a positive aim: preserving order.

Pliny also sums up the volatility of the servile nature. After Largius Macedo, of praetorian rank, was murdered by his slaves, he states, “…you see to what affronts, indignities, and dangers we are exposed.” The maxim runs: “as many enemies as you

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572 Seneca nostalgically writes that this was not always the case. Slaves were once treated with familial regard (*Ep.*, 47).
573 *Vit.*, 7.3.
574 Finley suggests that the strong emotions were aroused because the slaves had been workmates and friends of those in the free community. Some sense of connection is needed to explain their empathy, for this is the same crowd which enjoys the cruelty of the games (*Ancient Slavery*, 103).
575 *Ann.*, 14.44; for “conluviem istam” Morley translates “such a medley of humanity” (“Slavery under the Principate,” 285). Two further points bear emphasis here. The masses rally in sympathy with the plight of the 400; it came to “actual insurrection” (14.42). Again we see the capacity of the Romans for compassion. Next, the fact that innocent slaves will die is acknowledged; however, the principle is that to manufacture a “great precedent” innocents must die with the criminal. The example to support this is the traditional military punishment inflicted on a cowardly unit: decimation (every tenth soldier was beaten to death by his comrades). Tacitus’ speaker finishes with the injustice being outweighed by “the public advantage” (14.44). We will shortly see this attitude dramatized in the brutalization of cowardly and dangerous bodies in the arena.
576 *Ann.*, 6.11 (LCL, slightly modified).
577 *Ep.*, 3.14.5; the Latin for these three nouns is “*quot periculis quot contumeliis quot ludibris.*” Morley translates as the elite being vulnerable to “indignities, outrages and dangers” (“Slavery under the Principate,” 285). In any case, these unite to threaten Roman law and order. Pliny does preface this general lament for the uncertainty of slaveholders with an acknowledgment of the “haughtiness and severity” Macedo had displayed. Pliny’s implicit recognition of the humanity of slaves in their right to calculated treatment should be noted.
have slaves." The slave is natally alienated and bereft of patronymic name; he or she is the quintessential outsider, lacking social legitimacy. The process of deracination is expedited by destroying the old identity through imposing the new label (something less than a name). The brutalized slave is more likely to cooperate with the dispossession of his or her body once his or her identity as person has been replaced by that of thing as reinforced by the dehumanizing label.

Consider too that household rituals narrated the slaves’ non-being. During the Compitalia in January, the Lares (household gods) were cultivated at crossroads. Here (gendered) wooden dolls were hung to represent each member of the household – the idea being that the deities would be attracted to these surrogates and spare the actual person. However, slaves were represented by a wooden ball rather than by a doll. The symbols dramatize the humanity of the free over against the non-humanity of the servile.

The general rubric of the slave as threat to or refracts into other negative characteristics: servility correlates with moral and aesthetic bankruptcy. As mentioned earlier, Cicero assimilated Chaerea to the opposite of the liberalis; he had a “dirty and impure character (persona illa lutulenta, impura).” The slavish defendant is filthy and immoral. So strongly was dishonesty ascribed to the slave that their contribution to court cases was only admitted after torture. Cowardice, too, is linked to the slave: “Slaves as a class are utterly cowardly whenever there is any cause for fear.”

Moreover, the slave was associated with the animalistic. Plautus’ comic slaves are derided as whip-worn like donkeys. The reason for their whip-fodder status is explained: whenever possible the slave thieves, drinks, eats and runs away. Typically,

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578 Sen., Ep., 47.
580 Cf. Bradley, “Animalizing the Slave Body,” 114-15. On deracination, consider the quip by a Plautine slave: “Quem patrem, qui servos est? (What father, when his is a slave?)” (Plaut., Capt., 574, cited from Finley, Ancient Slavery, 75). The expression “deracinated outsider” is Finley’s, Ibid. For the elite male’s tria nomina (“three names”) versus the slaves’ single label, see Saller, “Gender and Status,” 86.
581 Ibid. 87-88 (with reference to Festus, 272L).
582 QRose., 7.20-21.
583 For example, Tac., Ann., 1.23; 2.43; 3.14, 3.23, 3.67, passim.
584 The narrator of Achilles Tatius’ (later 2nd cent. CE) Leucippe and Clitophon, 7.10. I cite this from Fitzgerald, Slavery, 40, n. 23; he refers to how slaves were constructed as being “proverbially cowardly” (Ibid).
585 Pseud., 136 (I cite this from Fitzgerald, Slavery, 40-41).
586 Ibid. 41.
says Seneca, slaves are treated “as if they were beasts of burden.” The legal *Digest* (compiled early 6th cent. CE) comments on the *Lex Aquilia* and its assimilation of slaves and animals. Gaius notes “…that the statute treats equally our slaves and our four-footed cattle which are kept in herds, such as sheep, goats, horses, mules, and asses.” The *Lex* itself states: “If anyone wrongfully kills another’s slave … or his fourfooted beast, let him be condemned to pay to the owner whatever was its greatest value in the past year.” The animal identity of the slave feeds into the wider motif that the utilitarian value of the slave body is constantly under threat from the slave’s proclivity to chaos. If order is to be maintained over the inherently disorderly body, it is to be achieved through force.

Even in the 5th cent. CE, the Christian Salvian indicates that evil character is typically projected on to the slave.

Accordingly, the *servile supplicium* (punishments appropriate to the slave) were the most severe meted out by the Romans. Such punishments were considered just for those condemned to servile status. Tacitus records how the criminal action of a Roman knight during Tiberius’ reign deserved the worst response; “…neither dungeon or halter nor *tortures fit for a slave* (*serviles cruciatus*) would be punishment enough for him.” In the light of his crime, he was reduced to being even lower than a slave. The most unruly element in society, the slave, required the most vicious punishments to drive their conformity. The tyrannical emperor Gaius is castigated by Seneca for misapplying servile tortures to senators. The emperor “[tore] three senators to pieces with stripes and fire like criminal slaves.” The emperor had reclassified the men as servile, leaving their bodies open to attack. Anywhere the body is attacked, the person is constructed as servile, viz., a possessed and animalized item.

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587 *Ep.*, 47.
588 *Dig.*, 9.2.2.2; quoted in Bradley, “Animalizing the Slave Body,” 111. The *Lex Aquilia* was enacted around 286 BCE and so represents basic structures of Roman thought. Regarding slaves as assine, Fitzgerald points to an ancient piece of graffiti, in which a picture of a donkey is subtitled with “work, ass, as I have worked, and it will be to your advantage.” *Slavery*, 129, quoting Eck and Heinrichs, *Sklaven und Freigelassene in der Gesellschaft der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Darmstadt, 1993), 102. Bradley, too, states that the donkey was “the very symbol of misery and slavery” (“Animalizing the Slave Body, 118; he provides numerous references, n. 18).
590 However, a carrot and stick approach was used. Inducements came from the potential for manumission, often when a sufficient *peculium* (savings for self-purchase) had been achieved, or when a *serva* had produced enough children. *Contubernium* (cohabitation, informal marriage) was also allowed at times.
592 *Ann.*, 3.50.
593 *Ira*, 19.
iii. Reclaiming the Slave Body: Corporal and Sexual Violence

I will now present illustrations of how threats to servile, corporal and utilitarian value (i.e., “disobedience”) were put down. Corporal punishment was the attempt to reinstate a non-conforming passive body in its serviceable role. The bodily answerability of the slave, the infames, and increasingly the humiliores stems from their corporeality being their primary contribution to the Roman system. The Greek perspective is instructive in this regard. Demosthenes articulates it with the formula that slaves answer for offences bodily, free citizens financially.594 As a physically reduced item, the slave can only answer corporeally.

Demosthenes’ comment attunes us to the Roman logic of attacking the slave body to instill compliance. Undoubtedly, this is the typical means of accessing and controlling his or her personhood.595 Roman sources rehearse the mantra of the low-end body’s liability to brutality, and the implicit rationale is that this is their sole resource that can be offered to satisfy for wrongdoing.

The Whip: Rescripting a malevolent slave was a symbol-laden process. The animal whip,596 the nude back, and the cowered posture all reinforced the victim’s

594 And., 55 (as cited earlier). The full citation is: “For slaves, the body is answerable for all offenses … while for the free, it is possible to protect this. For it is in the shape of money that in the majority of cases the law must obtain satisfaction from them (tois μὲν δούλοις τὸ σῶμα τῶν ἀδυκτίμων ἀπεκτόν ἕπειθοιν ἔστω, τοῖς δ’ ἐλευθέροις … τοῦτο γ’ ἐναστί σῶμα). Εἰς χρήματα γὰρ τὴν δίκην περὶ τῶν πλείστων παρῆ τούτων προσέφη λαμβάνειν.” I follow Murray, except that I translate σῶμα using “body” and so displace his “person.” Dem., Tim., 167.
595 I signal the tendency of the elite to conceive of the slaves in reductionistic terms. Nevertheless, the personhood – volition, love and intelligence – of slaves is amply visible. I will expand on the proofs of the slaves’ inclination to self-determination in more detail below. My point is that, in the final analysis, a relation of domination existed between paterfamilias and servus, between active and passive; and inducements aimed at the slaves’ self-interest (peculium, savings for self-purchase, contubernium, slave-marriage) did exist. Fitzgerald refers to “the carrot and the stick of slavery, peculium and whip” (Slavery, 39). Nevertheless, attacking the corpus was the easiest means of brutally inscribing the social order. Of course, a slave’s occupation would determine the quasi-honor he or she possessed; the lowly agricultural slave was more at risk of a beating than the (relatively) high-end financial agent: “slavery” was a continuum. Cf. Finley, Ancient Slavery, 77.
596 The de jure position was that the whip could not be used on a free person; however, the rod (fustis) could be (Millar, “Hard Labor,” 128). Garnsey confirms this: “In Imperial times … [the rod] was regularly employed against men of low rank (whether citizens or not) as an alternative to the fine” (“Harshier Penalties,” 149). I italicize the reference to financial means because, bereft of the anchors of status, the body is the locus for attacking the person. Soldiers, in contrast, were beaten with a vine (the centurion’s symbol), not a whip, and they were sexually impenetrable (Walters, “Invading the Roman Body,” 40). They were thus less degraded than had an animal whip been used. Free men, too, could not be struck with a whip, though a rod could be used on a vulnerable free man. See Fergus Millar, Rome, the Greek World, and the East, vol. 2, Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 126.
rightful social niche. The outpourings of violence and humiliation were intended to mould the slave into his or her role as attentive body-double for the master’s will. Seneca presents the common assumption that justified the use of the whip: the slave is a dumb animal. However, to his enlightened Lucius he prescribes verbal admonition, not the “use of whips, by which mute (animals) are corrected (verberibus muta admonentur).” This animalized status is the antithesis of the free person: those condemned to the mines lost their free status, as servile whippings (uerberibus seruilibus) were par for the course.

A particularly rich window on the experience of slaves is found in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. Here the main character, the noble youth Lucius, is transformed into a donkey, a parable of the person reduced to slave status. When Lucius depicts the scene of suffering endured by both beasts and the slaves laboring in the mill, Bradley comments that they are constructed to form a single familia.

Detailed and factual accounts of the whipping of slaves which can be used to reconstruct its symbolism are not common in the historical record. One assumes that such events were all too common and so morally normative that they warranted little attention. Nevertheless, drawing on the *Metamorphoses*, Bradley asserts that “[t]he transformation of Lucius can be taken as a paradigmatic illustration of the animalization of the slave in real life.” Lucius himself narrates from within the donkey’s body: “Deprived both of human gesture and voice, I silently expostulated with her [the witch whose potion was responsible for his deformation] … with humid eyes … I, though I was a complete ass, … yet retained human sense.”

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597 For the whip as symbol, see Hdt, 4.1-4. Here a slave community defies its masters and the masters decide to face them in battle holding whips (“they will remember they are slaves”). The slaves flee from the battlefield and are subdued. Finley comments that this is pure ideology, but indicative of the elite mind (*Ancient Slavery*, 118-19). For the humor derived from the whippable-slave topos in Roman comedy, see Fitzgerald, *Slavery*, 32-41. Bradley (“Animalizing the Slave Body,” 117) evidences the importance of the whip as a symbol of power in iconographic evidence, such as the tomb of the baker M. Vergilius Eurysaces.

598 *Ep.*, 47.19. In section 5, Seneca refers to “…cruel and inhuman conduct towards [slaves]; for we maltreat them, not as if they were human beings, but as if they were beasts of burden (ne tamquam hominibus quidem, sed tamquam iumentis abutimur).” I also note the exploitative nuance of *abutimor*, literally “I use up, consume, exhaust,” i.e., exploit in a parasitic manner.


601 In the upcoming section on the punishment of déclassé elite, whose downfalls were more noteworthy, we pick up more details about the ritual and symbolic effects of whipping.


603 *Met.*, 3.17.
Lucius’ experience of the whip involves the elements of being led to a post, being bound to it, and then the torture itself. There is no mention of being denuded to expose the bare skin for laceration – this is simply a given. The degradation experienced during the ordeal is apparent. “The men of the town … took me and bound me to … a post, and scourged me with a great knotted whip till I was well nigh dead.”

Another whipping scene is described thus: “They [many young men] stripped me of my harness, bound me to a certain oak, and lashing me with that whip which was furnished with the pastern bones of sheep, after the manner of a chain, they almost brought me to extreme death.”

Again, the overall image of spectators, binding, and lashing draws attention to the cruelty of the process. The shame of being naked and its concomitant sense of vulnerability is further emphasized in his “being stripped of my harness.” Helpful corroboration of the Roman data on the whipping procedure is to be found in the Mishnah. The victim was immobilized in a cowering position for the abuse.

The irony is that the Romans created a self-fulfilling prophecy. The degraded body bespoke moral delinquency; moral delinquency was then readily detected and motivated further corporal abuse. Glancy observes the unwinnable lot of the slave: “That one’s body was whipped and therefore whippable constituted evidence of suspect character.”

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604 Cf. 10.46, where an innocent woman is “stripped naked” and then whipped. The emphasis on stripping, binding and whipping is also found in GelL., NA, 10.3.2-17 (cf. Saller, “Corporal Punishment,” 153). Here citizens are wrongfully treated as slaves, although I note that rods and not whips were used.

605 Met., 4.18. I have modified the translation by Thomas Taylor, *The Golden Ass (Metamorphoses)* of *Apuleius* (La Vergne, TN: Lightning Source Inc., 2011). Lucius narrates that he defecates under the trauma, and that a “fetid odor … was emitted from my now broken shoulders.” The touch of anthromophism in “broken shoulders” reinforces that *human* experience is being conveyed under the guise of bestial identity.

606 Met., 9.36.

607 The mishnaic description of the 39 lashes focuses on the symbolics of humiliation. The wrongdoer is stooped, bound to a pillar, and his garments are torn to leave his torso naked. A leather whip is used (again, this is a tool for controlling animals); only self-befoulment halts the torture (m. Mak. 3.12-14; quoted by Glancy, “Boasting of Beatings,” 125).


609 Ibid. Virginia J. Hunter’s summation of the Athenian slave’s situation is applicable here: “The whip, in particular, set the slave apart, being symbolic of his or her degradation. Nude and broken, the one who was whipped became a loathsome spectacle, all honor and integrity gone. Perhaps it was for this reason that the use of the whip as a penalty was considered too demeaning to contemplate against the free.” *Policing Athens: Social Control in the Attic Lawsuits*, 420-320 B.C. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 181.
Contestation: The ideology which utilized the whip as a tool for violently taking possession of another’s body was outlined earlier under the rubric of contestation for the body, and I called this “Boudicean conflict.” The flogging of the British tribal queen Boudicea and the rape of her daughters powerfully states the element of contestation for the body central to violence. Like Boudicea, those vying for a status higher than their due were also dramatically reinscribed in their inferior condition with the whip. A Gaulish nobleman comes to Rome thinking himself a citizen after Julius Caesar had granted citizenship to his colony there. The consul Marcellus wishes to enact the Senate’s repudiation of this and has the man whipped. Marcellus tells the foreign nobleman that “…he laid that mark upon him [i.e., the scars of the whip] to signify he was no citizen of Rome, bidding him, when he went back again, to show it to Caesar.”610 In effect, elite males (Caesar and the senators) contest for power, and the site of this is the body. This is a prime example of triangular communications: the elite contest power on the vulnerable, low-class body.611

Generally, then, the brutal violation of the slave body – whether by the whip or male penetration – intends to submerge the sense of self in the victim. Most slaves, and other outsiders like the Gaul, were unable, due to their social alienation, to mount a valid Boudecian counterattack to avenge their scourged bodies. The brutalization of the body inculcates that it is not under the sovereignty of the self. Rather, through violence the person is dispossessed of his or her body.612 Accordingly, I reiterate that elite children were not to be servilized by the whip.

Scars: The scarred and maimed slave body was inherently debased because the ancients prized corporal beauty and conformation. As noted already, the scarred back was a mnemonic of shameful passivity – the polar opposite of manly wounds on the front. Scars were the silent signals of chattel status, as were other bodily and habitus cues. Hairstyle, dress, posture, being nameless (in the familial sense), and sexualized

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610 Plut., Caes., 29, italics added.
611 Fitzgerald gives as another example “…the whipping-boy, the slave who is punished in the place of the free.” He refers to an incident in Plut., Mor., 70e: A teacher disciplines his students for overeating at lunchtime; a slave is beaten during the afternoon lecture to inculcate the need for self-control. Fitzgerald observes: “The most striking aspect of this story is the way that messages pass between the free through the slave” (Slavery, 57).
612 Fitzgerald makes similar comments with reference to Lucius’ experience as the donkey in Metamorphoses, viz., that the slave is alienated from his or her body; the slave loses ownership of his or her body. Slavery, 97.
grooming\textsuperscript{613} should all be associated with the literal scar.\textsuperscript{614} The slave was thus constructed as a degraded person through coercive conditioning to the \textit{habitus} of passivity.\textsuperscript{615} Elizabeth Grosz’ argument that “culture constructs biological order in its own image”\textsuperscript{616} applies well to the way Roman phallocentrism enforced its ideology onto the slave body. The person was marked as an object of force, not a forceful, active \textit{vir}.\textsuperscript{617}

Again, to fail to defend the body from the assaults of either beating or penile and other phallic penetration marked one as pathetic. The horror of lashing-wounds was that they memorialized one’s dehumanized condition by locking the slave into the social construct of animalized human.\textsuperscript{618} The marks, one assumes, would regularly have been conspicuous and so sensitive “body-readers,” i.e., onlookers, would have immediately discerned and mirrored back the person’s worth. The whip drove the slave further and further outside the bounds of society. It is as if force sculpted the victim into his or her useful role.

Of essential importance is the fact that shame is made as permanent as one’s corporeality. The slave’s brutalized body forced the slave “to recognize his status \textit{as a slave};” such a body “would represent a statement to other slaves.”\textsuperscript{619} Honor and human worth were thus indelibly undermined by the biographic of one’s degraded physicality – not to mention the degraded \textit{habitus} (demeanor), clothing and hairstyles which would have marked the slave. Social association with a slave was thus considered demeaning.\textsuperscript{620}

\textsuperscript{613} I will expand on the sexualized body of the slave shortly. I refer to the depilation and other feminized traits foisted on male slaves to enhance their value as pleasure objects.

\textsuperscript{614} In contrast, elite bodies were clothed and ornamented to signal their exclusivity. Tertullian clusters together “the corpse-bearer, the pimp, the gladiator trainer” by virtue of their attire (\textit{P."}., 4).


\textsuperscript{617} By presenting Grosz’ comments on gender construction, I underscore the cultural correlation between slave and woman under the rubric of passivity/penetrability.

\textsuperscript{618} The mill scene in \textit{Met.}, 9 offers a particularly grim picture of the disfigured servile body. “Good Gods! What abject fellows (\textit{homunculi}) were the men that were there! All their skin was marked black and blue with welts (\textit{vibicibus lividis totam cutem}); backs given to floggings (\textit{dorsumque plagosum}) were more shaded than actually covered by tattered clothing.” The description continues, noting that the slaves were naked, some had foreheads marked with letters (\textit{frontes litterati}), the heads of some were half-shaved, others had their ankles fettered. They were also “deformed, with pale complexions (\textit{lurore deformes})” (9.12). Physical deformity here becomes a perpetual mnemonic of one’s degraded status.

\textsuperscript{619} Hunter, \textit{Policing Athens}, 182 (italics hers). Here she comments on the vindictive attitude of a mistress (Bitinna) towards her slave (Gastron) in Herodas’ fifth mime.

\textsuperscript{620} Seneca says that he smiles at those who “think it degrading for a man to dine with his slave.” He asks, “why should they think it degrading?” (\textit{Ep.}, 47.2). Later, he recalls the ancestral practice in which slaves were actually considered members of the \textit{familia} (with more of the meaning of family). The typical Roman, though, is presented as being aghast at Seneca’s advice to treat his slaves in a “kindly, even …
In this context, I restate a basic premise for this study: Within the Roman cultural narrative, honor is based on one’s physicality. Even on manumission, the degraded body was a source of shame. Suetonius records Augustus’ decree that “…none who had been put in chains or tortured, should ever obtain the freedom of the city in any degree.”

When Tiberius, in a case of mistaken identity, had mutilated an innocent, he orders him killed in any case. He reasons that his deformed body means he “can’t live with such dishonor.”

Another corporeal abuse which degraded the slave body by scarring was branding. Valerius Maximus records a slave who had been “…put in chains and branded with inexpiable letters on the face to his extreme indignity.” The historian notes the symbolic value of the branding (or scars): “He [the slave] … was nothing but the shadow and semblance of his punishments.” His forehead becomes a permanent signifier of the great disgrace he bears (summam ... contumeliam). Again, conformity to physical norms of wholeness and integrity ought (in the elite mind) to be indicative of religio-political agency (i.e., moral worth). The disorderly slave, though, was fair game for such measures, as were those low-class citizens whose punishments rendered them servile. Branding marks the slave as an owned chattel.

Slave deformity magnifies the way in which the elite valued the security of their own bodies. Corporally-based honor or dishonor reinforces the divide between the

affable” manner. The slaveholder responds to this type of socializing with “there is nothing more debasing, more disgraceful, than this” (Ibid. 13-14).

621 Aug., 40.4.
622 Cassius Dio, 58.3.7.
623 Valerius describes the brand as “inexpiable litterarum nota per summam oris contumeliam inustus” (6.8.7). Shackleton Bailey (the LCL translator) notes that inexpiables means “in effect ‘indelible.’” More specifically, it is a brand which cannot be expiated. Inustus (from inure, “to burn”) indicates that letters were branded on with a hot iron. There is disagreement among commentators as to whether the verb inure is to be taken literally. See C. P. Jones, “Stigmata: Tattooing and Branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity,” Journal of Roman Studies 77 (1980): 153. He comments that the marking of slaves would have involved both tattooing and branding; he thinks that the burning referred to here may be figurative and thus ultimately be a tattoo (Ibid). Constantine is known for banning the applications of markings to the human face, because of its association with the imago Dei. Commenting on this, Millar argues that the treatment was “almost certainly tattooing” as opposed to branding (“Hard Labour,” 128). Fitzgerald refers to tattooing on the brow as the common response to runaways (Slavery, 17; he follows Jones in this).

624 Val. Max., 6.8.7.
625 Caligula was infamous for breaching this principle in maltreating those of high station. Suetonius records the “savage barbarity of his temper” as seen in his “disfiguring many persons of noble rank, by branding them in the face with hot irons” (Calig., 27). The point is the shocking juxtaposition of their rank (“multos honesti ordinis”) and their bodily degradation (“deformatos”).

626 Cf. Millar for “the nexus of presumptions which associated lower social class with liability to beatings, to cruel forms of execution and to hard labour in various forms” (“Hard Labour,” 127).

627 Xenophon states that branding will denote slaves as state property (Vect., 1.14-17). Of course, having FVGITIVUS (“runaway”) tattooed on a slave’s head would impede his or her ability to fake non-chattel status.
actives and the passives. The construction of the slave body ideologically is mutually reinforced by its being empirically degraded. The slave body could not be further from the sacredly exclusive body of the priests who were proximate to the divine. Seneca the Elder presents the cultural logic: “A priest whose body has a blemish (sacerdos non integri corporis) is to be avoided like something of an ill-omen… Once a man becomes priest, more careful watch must be paid for any disability; if a priest is maimed, the gods must be angry.”628 Likewise, the Vestal virgins were to be corporally perfect. “[Non] corporis labe insignita sit” – she was, literally, to be unmarked by any stain of the body.629 Certainly this includes the hymen being intact, but sound vision and hearing are also demanded.

Apt here are Douglas’ insights that meticulous care of certain high-value physical bodies seeks a parallel protection of the threatened civic body. She notes that it is protection of “the political and cultural unity of a minority group” which is at issue.630 The basic elite ideology is expressed in Chariton’s novel Chaereas and Callirhoe. The aristocratic character Dionysius states: “It is impossible for a body not free-born to be beautiful (ἀδύνατον … καλὸν εἶναι σῶμα μὴ πεψυκὸς ἐλεύθερον).”631 The overarching point is that the whip, scarring, and the other ornaments of servile position drive the slave further and further from the integral bodies of the honorable.

**Sexual Exploitation:** The next major area in which the slave offered utility value was as a sexual object. Horace is graphic; the master’s lust should target the slave:

... When your prick swells, then,
And a young slave girl or boy’s nearby you could take

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628 Controv., 4.2. For more on the Greco-Roman collation of physical and moral excellency required of divine ministers, see Klauck, Religious Context, 30-32. For example, Klauck summarizes Plato on the topic. Priests and priestesses were to be “free of physical blemish … of legitimate birth, coming from a respectable family, and also free of blood guilt and other crimes; this last requirement applies to their parents too.” (Leg., 6.7.759a-760a, cited in Klauck, Religious Context, 31).

629 Gell., NA, 1.12.2-3. Warrior outlines the context of this piece as the “taking” of the girl to live in the sanctuary of the deity Vesta (Roman Religion, 55). Hence the association of proximity to the divine and physical perfection. Cf. Dionysus of Halicarnassus for the requirement of chastity during their 30 years of service and their living in the goddess’ temple (Ant. Rom., 2.67.1-2).

630 Purity and Danger, 124. To cite Douglas (Ibid.), “I am suggesting that when rituals express anxiety about the body’s orifices the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group.” The vestal “orifice” relates to maintaining virginal status in order to parallel the desired preservation of the state under the pax Deorum. The association of penetrated Vestals and the Roman defeat at Cannae (i.e., the near-penetration of Rome herself) in 216 BCE indicates the relation of these sacral human and civic bodies. The guilty Vestals were killed to expiate their impiety (see Livy, 22.57.2-6).

631 2.1.5 (I follow Goold, except that I replace his “person” with “body” in rendering σῶμα).
At that instant, would you rather burst with desire? Not I: I love the sexual pleasure that’s easy to get. 632

This passage shows the sexualized commodification of the slave, whether male or female, as outlet for the slaveowner’s libido. The overlap with the liability of the slave body to the whip is apparent: as a degraded person, the slave has no right to guard his or her body from penetration. 633 However, a beating aimed to reinstate a slave in his or her useful role; sexual exploitation could be either part of daily service or punitive. In either case, sexuality is monopolized by the master as the slave is reduced to object status. The slave is sexually alienated from his or her self, having no discretion to mark the boundaries of self-space.

That sexual possession indicated the abject domination of the self is seen in the case of the noble Micca, who refused to be so treated. In a similar manner to Boudicea, she refused to be forced into the liminal existence which would have been inflicted by the sexual submission demanded of her. Plutarch records how Lucius, the military captain of a Greek despot, desired the maiden, but her father refused. “He would rather see her put to death than that her virginity should be filthily and wickedly violated.” 634 Lucius responds with violence. “He rent off her clothes, and whipped her stark naked, she stoutly enduring the smart in silence.” Finally, he “ran the maid through as she lay with her face in her father’s bosom.” 635 Sexual violence imposes servility and bodily possession. Micca, in Plutarch’s elitist rhetoric, preferred death to such submission.

The element of human worth being physically dependent must be seen here. Should Micca have lived without her virginity, she would have been perpetually marked

633 Petronius’ character, the freedman Trimalchio, is famous for acknowledging that as a slave he gave both his master and mistress sexual gratification. Regarding the master, “…I was my master’s feminia (woman) for 14 years, giving him pleasure (ad delicias feminia ipsimi domini ... fui)” (Sat., 75.11, my trans.). Again, whoever was passive/pathic is constructed as female. A judge (4th cent. CE in Hermopolis) characterized a female prostitute as “available to anyone who wanted her, just like a corpse.” BGU IV 1024-27 (cited from Glancy, “Family Plots,” 62). Similarly constructed as available were actresses (whether slaves or infames), who could be raped without legal protection (Harries, Law and Crime, 89). Importantly, daughters and wives were largely under sexual control – albeit to enforce chastity rather than the slave’s availability (cf. Fleming “Quae Corpore,” 42; Garland, Beholder, 52).
634 Plut., De Mul. Vir., 15, trans. W. W. Goodwin (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1874). This dovetails with Verginius’ slaying of his own daughter Verginia, rather than have her outraged as if she were a slave (Livy, 3.50). As he stabs her, he says “…in this the only way I can, I vindicate, my child, thy freedom” (Ibid. 3.48). Livy’s lesson for the elite is clear: wives and daughters are to be chaste, otherwise they are better off dead. Had the sexual violation occurred it would have meant the loss of freedom (i.e, servility) and the concomitant loss of human worth.
635 Ibid.
as “filthily and wickedly violated.” The case of the paradigmatic Roman noblewoman Lucretia confirms this. Her “beauty and exemplary purity” inflamed her rapist, Sextus Targuin. Having been raped, her husband seeks to console her that she is guiltless: “It is the mind that sins, not the body … where there has been no consent there is no guilt.” She, however, rejects this narrative. The body once defiled destroys personal honor. She kills herself, noting her wish to be an example to Roman matronae. The rapist left the scene “exulting in having successfully attacked her honour.”

This, then, is the lot of the slave, male or female, who suffered sexual assault. Continued existence in this state, to which the idealized high-class preferred death, is one void of human worth. So when Tiberius wished to abase Agrippina the Elder, he employed “the foulest charges (foedissimis criminationibus). He reproached her with unchastity (impudicitiam).”

Slaves were also utilized to provide aesthetic titillation and sexual pleasure for guests during banquets. This role brings a sexual dimension to their role as display markers of the social standing of the host, mentioned above. After-dinner entertainers and attractive slave boys featured as sexual fodder. The glabri, for example, were slaves favoured by the wealthy Romans as sexual targets. Glaber means hairless and so smooth – in other words, “an effeminate type of slave.” To maintain their value as sex objects their bodies were manipulated: men were feminized to remain passively alluring. Catullus refers to the puer delicatus (sexualized slave-boy) as a “concubinus (he-concubine)” who is miserable at the prospect of losing his master’s attentions once the latter is married. The poet also addresses the master: “Anointed groom, you will be criticized for keeping away from your bald, effeminate slaves, but keep away from them

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636 Ibid. 1.57.
637 Ibid. 1.58.
638 Ibid.
640 Cf. Edwards, Politics of Immorality, 188. She notes that the excessive cost of such sexually desirable slaves was castigated by the moralists. Of course their cost is the point: they mark the hosts’ wealth.
641 OLD, s.v glaber, 1b.
642 Seneca describes the treatment of the sex slave “…who serves the wine, must dress like a woman and wrestle with his advancing years; he cannot get away from his boyhood; he is dragged back to it; and though he has already acquired a soldier’s figure, he is kept beardless by having his hair smoothed away or plucked out by the roots, and he must remain awake throughout the night, dividing his time between his master's drunkenness and his lust; in the chamber he must be a man, at the feast a boy” (Ep., 47.7). For the sexual exploitation of beautiful slaves, amounting to “complete control over the body,” including castration, see George, “Slave Disguse,” 47.
643 61.134-45 (concubinus appears five times in various forms). The poem is set on the occasion of the master’s wedding day. Both the master and the slave-boy are depicted as mourning the loss of the relationship.
… they are not permitted to a married man!” The entrenchment of social alienation is thus reinforced by the manipulation of normal processes of maturation. The slave body is groomed to fit the stereotype of the sexual passive.

I have already outlined how the Roman conception of sexuality is broader than biological function. The wo/man who is penetrated is inherently inferior. Naturally, the degree of humiliation from being the passive/penetrated body – whether vaginally, analy or orally – would be determined by the relative social statuses of those involved. The matrona of independent means would presumably feel less humiliation than the pathic slave boy. In remaining faithful to her husband and producing legitimate heirs, she can maintain the status of being chaste, whereas the slave is merely an object of gratification. The point is that sexual connection is an enforcement of the religio-political order. To paraphrase the comments I made earlier regarding the elites’ fear of being pathic, “obscene impurity [anal penetration]” must be violently repelled. Such violation defiles “the holiest portion of [the] body,” the “sanctissima … parte corporis.” The slave, though, through such connections is a degraded body.

The inescapability of sexual exploitation finds expression in Seneca the Elder’s aphorism: “Impudicitia in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in liberto officium. Male sexual passivity is a disgrace for the freeborn, a necessity in a slave, and a duty for the freedman.” Winterbottom translates impudicitia here as “virtue.” However, Finley’s gloss justifies my cumbersome translation of this term as “male sexual passivity”: the “pathic recipient” is meant. The slave as possessed body is compelled to serve in this role, whereas it would be shameful for the active vir to do so.

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644 *Ibid.* 61.140-149. Translation by Brendan Rau, <http://rudy.negenborn.net/catullus/text2/e61.htm> (21 June 2012). “Bald, effeminate slaves” translates glabris, from glaber. Martial also mocks the husband-to-be for his sole sexual experience being with boys; heterosexual sex is “ignotum ... opus (unfamiliar work)” (Epig., 11.78; published 96 CE). Alistair Elliot translates the first two lines of this poem as “You must try embracing women, Victor; you must. / Make your prick learn this unfamiliar lust (ignotum ... opus).” In *Epigrams of Martial: Englished by Divers Hands*, ed. J. P. Sullivan and Peter Whigham (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

645 That an increasing degree of humiliation is inflicted by vaginal, anal and, worst of all, oral penetration is shown by Parker, “The Teratogenic Grid,” 53-54.

646 I refer to Cicero’s villificatio of Piso (*Red. Sen.*, 11).

647 *Controv.*, 4. Pr. 10 (modified).

iv. Psychology: Summary

The ideology of the slave as “other” – as property and animal – legitimated the use and abuse of the victim’s body. This physical reductionism made the slave a mere body and suppressed his or her sense of self. The narrative of a slave’s worthlessness and social exclusion starved the slave of psychological nourishment and inspiration to mount a claim to repossess the body for his or her own self. The body’s debasement (by the whip or penis) bound it to perpetual debasement. Object lessons as to the abject suffering which would be meted out to disobedient slaves were readily at hand. Non-terminal force dehumanized by seeking to sever the basic human instinct that one’s body is the exteriorizing of one’s own selfhood. Through bodily brutality this linkage was suppressed. The symbolic and narratival worlds which surrounded the slave scripted the slave in his or her degraded state. The whip, the brand, dress, the lack of a name and kinship ties sculpted the slave, body and mind. The religious narratives of the household also supported the hierarchical regime. Thus, as noted, at the Compitalia festival household deities were cultivated, with the elite represented by wooden dolls, the slaves by wooden balls. Slaves were no doubt also warned of the chastisement inflicted by the infernal deities which awaited the disobedient in Tartarus.⁶⁴⁹

These social strictures held the slave in a chattel construct. He or she was an item of property, grouped with animals in the statutes, and so constantly at risk of sale. Bradley is incisive: “[The possibility of sale] must have been an emotionally debilitating experience for slaves, one that reinforced the slave’s powerlessness and the state of suspended death in which all slaves lived.”⁶⁵⁰ We recall Patterson’s summation of the institution of slavery as “natal alienation.” The slave is “a socially dead person. Alienated from all ‘rights’ or claims of birth, he ceased to belong in his own right to any legitimate social order.”⁶⁵¹ Finley is surely correct to surmise that the majority of slaves must have simply accommodated themselves to this state in order to survive.⁶⁵²

By contrast, the elite Romans were held in their social strata by the collective anchors of ancestry, wealth, patronage links and achievements. In combination, these factors “held” a person in his or her class against opposing forces, such as the private

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⁶⁴⁹ Cf., Verg., Aen., 6.611. Here the ideological construction of Hades protects the master-slave relationship and other aspects of hierarchical piety.
⁶⁵¹ Slavery and Social Death, 5.
⁶⁵² Ancient Slavery, 116. The inner angst, however, must have differed between the verna (home-bred slaves) and those captured at an older age. The latter are more likely to have been scripted in their social legitimacy and so would have felt the declassing acutely.
snickering which the malformity of some of the emperors generated. However, the slave’s vulnerability to sale confirms that the slave is not held in social space by anything enduring. The potential for being uprooted by sale, like the whip, marked the slave as chattel. The brutality of the whip is paralleled by “the brute fact of buying and selling human beings.”

Lucius’ soliloquy in the Metamorphoses provides our richest access to (an admittedly elitest representation of) the slave mind. Bradley summarizes the insights Lucius affords us: “To assimilate the slave to a lower form was to assert an incontestable domination of the slave, to adopt a strategy of total commodification physically and of total humiliation psychologically.” In the final analysis, the body was never offered by the slave. The body was taken after repeated violence, physical and mental, had made the self terrified of autonomous self-expression through the medium of the body. The slave was held in this suspended state of bodily dispossession by the massive force of cultural ideology which conflated him or her with the dangerous, the animal and the feminine. The slave was defilement waiting to happen given the degradation and openness of his or her body.

C. Execution of Passive Bodies in Public

i. Religio-Political Ideology of Ritualized Violence

The foregoing has shown the dispossession of the slave body as the process by which hierarchy was maintained within the micro-realm of the familia. The same logic drove the use of lethal force in the macro-realm of state-sanctioned violence. Now the emperor, indeed Roma herself, took possession of offending bodies. Because of the grotesque violence inflicted on the victims, I suggest it be described as “liquidation.” A chilling instance of liquidation is seen in Josephus’ own treatment of his opponents in Tarichaeae. Josephus acted as if he meant to confer with them over their political concerns, but then dragged them into the inmost room of his house. Then “…he whipped them [i.e., had them whipped] until all their organs were visible (ἐμαστιγώσεν μέχρι όλων τῶν ἑαυτοῦ Ἰωσήφ).”

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654 “Animalizing the Slave Body,” 123.
To liquidate is to render the opponent impotent, thereby making a mockery of his power claims. Examples of this abound in the literature.

These bodies are possessed as the state demonstrates its control over evil and wields the forces of life and death. The spectators united with the emperor over against those who had offended against Roman order. The very rigid, class-based seating of the arena demonstrated this. The orderly social body outside the podium wall of the arena looked on with ascendancy as malefactors were dramatically executed. Hopkins observes that in the amphitheatre, as the Emperor decided how to set his thumb regarding a fallen gladiator’s fate, “at that moment he had 50,000 courtiers.”

“War defined Rome,” states Santosuosso. The violence of the household, as previously discussed, corresponds with the state’s proclivity to violence. Whether against foreign enemies on the furthest frontlines or against enemies within (criminals), Rome takes possession of hostile bodies. Arena violence is simply the in-house expression of “sacred imperialism.” Decimation evidences this strict militarism on the battlefield. Indeed, bloodshed on a massive scale formed the basis for the elite Romans’ honoring of each other: at least 5,000 enemy dead were required for a triumph. Violence was

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656 B.I., 2.612 (my trans.).
657 Nero, having been declared an enemy of the state, was to be “punished according to ancient custom (puniatum more maiorum).” Although Nero committed suicide first (68 CE), he was to have been stripped naked and his neck secured to a forked stake. Then “[his] body [was to have been] beaten to death with rods (corpus virgis ad necem caedi)” (Suet., Ner., 49, my trans.).
658 Suetonius relates Augustus’ seating reforms which “corrected the confusion and disorder” of the social classes at public events (Aug., 44). Tacitus relates the “discrimina ordinum (distinctions of the classes)” exhibited in the seating arrangement in Pompey’s theatre (Ann., 13.54). Slaves, the togaless poor and women stood or sat at the back. Elizabeth Rawson, “Discrimina Ordinum: The Lex Julia Theatralis,” Papers of the British School at Rome 55 (1987): 87-90. The central heights seated the plebs in white togas (Ibid. 94); soldiers and veterans were more highly honored and so closer to the front (99). The famous front XIV seats held the knights, who were at times subdivided by age (102-106). Senators were seated at the very front (107-109). Jonathan Edmondson observes that “…the division of the population into orders or ranks (ordines) was one of the defining features of Romaness.” “Public Spectacles and Roman Social Relations,” in Ludi Romani: Espectáculos en Hispania Romana, ed. T. Nogales Basarrate (Madrid, 2002), 6. He diagrams the theatre seating requirements (13), noting Augustus’ attempt to extend the theatre stratification to the arena (15). By the time of Nero, “elaborate hierarchical seating” was enforced at the arena (16).
659 Death and Renewal, 16.
660 Antonio Santosuosso, Storming the Heavens: Soldiers, Emperors, and Civilians in the Roman Empire (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 79. Hopkins begins Death and Renewal with the assertion, “Rome was a warrior state” (1).
661 Ibid. 117.
662 Regarding decimation, Polybius transmits the practice in which around one in 10 men were chosen by lot and beaten to death by their comrades; their offense was cowardice, viz., disorder (6.38; he comments on an early 3rd cent. BCE incident). Cf. Livy (2.59) for the earliest record of decimation (471 BCE), which punished “an army which had been false to military discipline and had deserted its standards.” Also, Plut., Ant., 39.7; Crass., 10.2; In Ant., 44.3, failed soldiers offer themselves up for decimation. Also, Augustus used decimation in 17 BCE (Suet., Aug., 24).
663 Val. Max., 2.8.1.
manifest in the realm of the household through whippings and sexual assault. Criminals experienced it in the rituals of death in the arena.

The religio-political narrative of elite rule was pressed at the games. The gods were represented as both present and participating. Tertullian records how an image of Jupiter was present at the games and laved with blood, the blood of a *bestiarus* (beast-fighter). This pouring of blood onto the statue of Jupiter Latiaris continued until approximately the time of Constantine. In the province of Spain in 44 BCE, games were to be given by leading citizens “in honour of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva.” Tertullian states that the amphitheatre was consecrated to a plethora of Roman gods and goddesses. He explicitly mentions Mars and Diana. The deities were central participants at the games.

Historically the gladiatorial contests were true to their name, *munus* – “a dutiful service” which aimed to appease the shades of the dead “by human blood.” The ritualized killing of the arena was steeped in Roman beliefs about divine beings (celestial and infernal) and the potency of the shades of the dead. Social cohesion, symbolized by the hierarchical seating, was fostered by the death spectacles as the Romans reassured themselves of their divinely bestowed superiority and potency to repel harm. Tertullian claims that the Romans “allay/relieve death with murder” in the arena.

The use of dramatic violence in the arena acts out the Roman religio-political identity. What Livy depicted through Rome being the head of the body of the nations, Cicero puts thus: “It is impossible for the Roman people to be slaves; that people whom the immortal gods have ordained should rule over all nations ... Either you must conquer, O Romans, which indeed you will do if you continue to act with such piety and such unanimity, ... liberty is the inalienable possession of the Roman people.” Again, the militarism, arena violence and the householder’s whip enact this divine mandate to rule.

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667 *FIRA*, vol. 1.182-83 (as cited by Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 13).

668 *De Spect.*, 12.


671 *Phil.*, 6.19. The same ideology is found in the *Aeneid*. Aeneas’ father predicts his son’s hegemony: “Yours will be the rulership of nations ... these will be your arts: to teach the ways of peace to those you
The religo-political and social influence of the games was vast. With up to 50,000 spectators present in the Flavian arena (commissioned 80 CE), the extravagance of the games was used to inculcate elite rule. The amphitheatre was mythical space: the infernal gods were impersonated. Historic instances where law and order were reinstated were dramatized. Powerful messages were communicated regarding Rome’s power being an extension of the mythological struggle of good and evil, order and disorder. “Mercury” and “Pluto” were present in the arena; the former probes the bodies with a hot iron to confirm their deaths, the latter carries or drags them out. New gladiators were initiated by being flogged with whips representing infernal demons. Coleman comments: “The outcome of fatal encounters in the amphitheatre was predictably ritualized in terms of the transition to the underworld.” She adds that the “amphitheatre [was interpreted] as the threshold of the underworld.” To run afoul of Roman authority was to face a cruel death and transition to the power of the infernal deities. Kyle argues, moreover, that public, ritualized executions were a variation of the formal process of devotio, by which Rome consecrated her enemies to the infernal gods.
Roman possession of the body found its ultimate expression in the violent termination of the lives of offenders. Two basic classes of malefactors are discernable here: the elite *vir* who offended against the *maiestas* of the state or emperor, and the common criminal or slave. The former group were commonly tortured, executed and exposed on the *Scalae Gemoniae* (Gemonian Steps) in the capital; the latter featured as gladiators and victims in the arena. The posthumous treatment of both sets of corpses is critical. Exposure and non-burial – often by purging them away in the Tiber river – was understood to damn the shades of the dead to a restless existence in the next world.

An earlier section (“The Active Corpus”) highlighted the elites’ tendency to scrutinize one another’s worthiness of membership, but often their attacks remained at the level of caricature and invective. The elite scrutinized bodily appearance, *habitus*, and forceful conduct to vie for honor within the category of virility. Now we turn our attention to *viri* who were officially expelled. Here mudslinging hardens into official verdict as the active person is degraded to passive body. He is at the same time constructed in feminized/sevile terms – he is made an outsider. Dramatic displays of violence signaled his new liminoid condition.

Historically, the great boon of Roman citizenship was exemption from bodily chastisement. Cicero, in his prosecution of Verres, the Sicilian governor who whipped and crucified citizens, stated that one of Verres’ victims cried out “*civis Romanus sum*”; this ought to have “[warded] off all blows, and [removed] all torture from his *corpus*.”

Public abuse of a formerly honorable body is instantly liminal. However, such treatment ought to have occurred only after due legal process. Lawful punishment signaled that the person has been expelled from elite status to servile, and thus abuseable, status. However, this “citizenship shield” dissipates under the empire. Now the line bifurcating the active and passive elements of society falls within the citizenship group. Goodman observes that increasing rates of citizenship under the empire did not come “without a price, for the expansion of citizenship cheapened the currency.”

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677 *Verr.*, 2.5.162.
678 He continues to say that by 180 CE the majority of the populace in the empire held citizenship. Yet “…even those who bore their Roman names with pride might be treated by the state as little better that conquered barbarians” (*Roman World*, 137). The final ratification of universal citizenship for the free in the empire occurred in 212 CE via the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (Wiedemann, *Emperors*, 69).
were the citizens *par excellence*. They were the *honestiores* (more upright) over against the low-class citizens, the *humiliores* (more base).\(^679\)

Nevertheless, regardless of a person’s status *de jure*, the ascendant authority of the emperor and his magistrates meant that a person could be *de facto* assimilated to the base strata by virtue of his crime. “Could” is the operative word. Even emperors had to respect the honor nexus of wealth, powerful friendships and client base which anchored an elite enemy.\(^680\) The empire is renowned for the innovation of the *cognitio* process, whereby a judge both determines guilt and calculates the appropriate penalty.\(^681\) A Roman judge would give consideration to a defendant’s status or *persona*. However, in the case of *maiestas* (treason), the emperor’s sensitivities determined a person’s “guilt.” As we shall see, the law-less emperor was considered a blight on Roman morality and stability.\(^682\)

Once condemned, both the (formerly) elite and the low-class criminal become *damnati* (condemned criminals). Tarius Gratianus of praetorian rank was “condemned under the … law [against maiestas] to capital punishment (*extremum ad supplicium*).

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\(^{679}\) Scholars differ regarding the time period to which they relate the *honestiores/humiliores* distinction. The exact vocabulary of *humiliores/honestiores* does not appear in the literature until the 3rd century (Paulus’ *Sententiae*). Although Walters sees the *honestiores/humiliores* distinction as operative “by the middle of the second century” (“Invading the Roman Body,” 38), Garnsey argues that it was not until the second and third centuries that the *humiliores* were officially liable to the same punishments reserved for slaves (*Social Status*, 104). However, the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 CE, which granted citizenship to all free persons in the empire, sets a clear *terminus ante quem* for the redefining of social worth within the citizenry; cf. Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London: Routledge, 1992), 69. In any case, the concept of a dual citizenry was a staple under the empire. Punishment as a function of *persona* (legal and social position) had gone on for decades. *Persona* was generally qualified with a synonym of *honestus or humilis*. Cf. Garnsey, *Social Status*, 221-23; also Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 74. Presently, I give numerous examples of how the citizen, not to mention the slave body, was brutalized by dictators and tyrannical emperors, regardless of legal definitions. Emperors could declass the elite on a charge of *maiestas*, almost at whim.

\(^{680}\) For example, Cassius Dio tells us that Sejanus, Tiberius’ archrival, was finally worked into a corner by the emperor and executed in 31 CE. Due to Sejanus’ clientele network and the honor in which he was held, even Tiberius had to take his time in bringing about his downfall. Dio records Tiberius’ difficulty in killing Sejanus “openly and safely” (58.6.2); the emperor “feared that some disturbance might result from [putting him to death openly]” (58.10.2).

\(^{681}\) Previously the law had determined the penalty. On the *cognitio* see Garnsey, *Social Status*, 103-104. Jean-Jacques Aubert concurs, noting that magistrates implementing the *cognitio* had a “free hand in deciding the penalty of convicted criminal.” He notes that the governor who judged the Christians of Lyon (177 CE) beheaded Roman citizens but executed the low-class in aggravated style. “A Double Standard in Roman Criminal Law? The Death Penalty and Social Structure in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome,” in *Speculum Iuris: Roman Law as a Reflection of Social and Economic Life and Antiquity*, ed. Jean-Jacques Aubert and Boudewijn Sirks (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 99.

\(^{682}\) Seneca comments on the frenzy of bloodletting under Tiberius: “There was such a common and almost universal frenzy for bringing charges of treason, that it took a heavier toll on the lives of Roman citizens than any Civil War; it seized upon the talk of drunkards, the frank words of jesters; nothing was safe – anything served as an excuse to shed blood.” *Ben.*, 3.1.26. Kyle comments that in the case of *maiestas*, the accused “faced the worst penalties and even fewer or virtually no safeguards – even for the elite” (*Spectacles*, 97).
The high-class Gratianus had run afoul of Tiberius, who unilaterally declassed him in order to corporally attack him. Pliny the Younger records another instance where a corrupt judge had a knight beaten and condemned to the mines ("damnatus in metallum"). Seneca also reasons that, before Caligula violates senators, he has already conceptualized them as slaves. Therefore the emperor flogs, racks and burns the elite as if they were "nequam mancipia (worthless slaves)."

The term damnatus renders a person a low-class criminal. The damnatio ad or in (condemnation to or by) formula was basic to Roman penology. In addition to being damnati, malefactors are termed noxii (the noxius ones, i.e., harmful to society). At the civic level, the noxii bring harm to the public order and so have a debt to discharge – one which can only be repaid corporally. The sense of their indebtedness is seen in two of the terms regularly used to describe their punishments: poena and supplicium. The whole scenario is very much that of the malefactor being humbled into a servile position, possessed by the state and left to make satisfaction for wrongs done. The malefactor is

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684 Ep., 2.11.8. Similar to the last case, the lack of respect for class-based corporal sanctity is bemoaned (cf., Millar, “Hard Labour,” 137).
685 Ira., 3.19.2. The slave as mancipium is an object whose ownership was settled by the purchaser laying hold of it with his hand (manus) (OLD, s.v mancipium). The link between having the object in hand, in one’s possession, and the right to inflict torture should be noted.
686 The convicted character Androclus describes his master as having “…had me condemned to death by being thrown to the wild beasts (is me statim rei capitalis damnandum dandumque ad bestias curavit)” (Gell., NA., 5.14.27).
687 Damnatio ad gladium (to the sword), in ludum gladiatorium (to the games of the gladiators), ad bestias (to the wild beasts in the arena), ad crucem (to the cross), and ad metellum (to the mines) are all common (Garnsey, Social Status, 125-136; these references are predominantly from the later jurists but they still codify earlier terminology). Decapitation was the least dishonorable, then crucifixion and burning; being made human meat for the beasts was the most humiliating (Kyle, Spectacles, 91; cf. Coleman, “Fateful Charades,” 55, n. 105).
688 The noxius object is that which inflicts harm, that which is “harmful, injurious, noxious” (OLD, s.v noxius, 2).
689 Both terms, damnati and noxii, are juxtaposed in the Metamorphoses. Lucius (the donkey) describes a wealthy man preparing to host gladiatorial games. The public will be treated to pleasures commensurate with his fortune. Gladiators and venatorii (beast-fighters) prepare; “in another place, criminals (noxii) [are] … food to fatten wild beasts.” The valuable wild animals will be the “noble sepulchres of condemned heads (damnatorum capitum)” (Metam., 4.13).
690 Poena, Greek ποινή, denotes “the penalty paid in satisfaction for an offence” or the “revenge” inflicted by the aggrieved party. It also indicates that the wrongdoer has failed “to meet an obligation” (OLD, s.v noxius, 1, 2 and 3, respectively). Punio is the cognate verb, meaning to punish, or exact retribution (Ibid. s.v punio). Cf. Suet., Claud., 34.1; the “poenasque parricidarum” (punishments for killing parents) was aggravated death (Ibid. 14.1). Also, the historian describes an execution as “spectaculo poenae” – a spectacular punishment (Suet., Calig., 27.4). Tertullian describes “poenas” with references to the beasts, crosses and flames (Apol., 49.3; Ibid. 15.4). Tac., Germ., 12.1-3, shows the distinctive death penalties (poenarum) inflicted by the Germans on cowardly versus homosexual behavior.

691 The damnati, when punished (forced ad supplicium), are made to play the supplicant. The suppex (supplicant) sought the favor of the wronged party through humble entreaty. The OLD suggests its etymology as sub-placos: subordination aimed at pleasing a superior (s.v suppex).
above all a debtor to society. The idea that arena victims were possessed bodies is readily seen from their slave status. Josephus tells us that male captives from the Jewish war were sold as slaves if they were under 17 years old; otherwise they went to the mines or the provincial “arenas to be destroyed by the sword and beasts (θαρησομένους ἐν τοῖς θέστροις σιδηρῷ καὶ θηρίοις).”\(^{692}\) Others, “the tallest and most beautiful” youths, had been held back for Titus’ triumph.\(^{693}\)

The body which could not be reconciled to its subservient and utilitarian role still holds out the value of acting as a power-display piece for its public master. The *damnati* had failed to render the value to society which they were obliged to render, regardless of their social class. Now they must discharge that debt with the only resource they have, namely, their bodies. Seneca comments on one group within the *damnati*, the gladiators. They fight because they are compelled by the *sacramentum* which they have undertaken. They have no extra-corporeal resources whereby they might repay their debt to the religio-social order against which they have offended. Thus, “security is taken [i.e., the oath to fight to the death] … from the men who hire out their strength for the arena, who eat and drink what they must pay for with their blood.”\(^{694}\) The somatic currency of strength and blood is all that the *damnati* have to meet their obligations to their owners.

Thus I arrive at my basic proposition: for the social debtors, the *damnati*, their slavery offers best utility through their destruction for public sport. The final act of dispossessing the self of the body is aggravated death in the arena. The arena is the final enforcement of their corporally-owned status. Those bodies, from which utilitarian value could not be extracted as working slaves, provide the “anti-value” of becoming brutalized corporal testimonies to Rome’s imperial power.

The degraded body is at base a communiqué of power. Harries states that “terroristic torture is the infliction of pain to deter others” – the state uses violence to both warn others and affirm its “power … over the body of the criminal.”\(^{695}\) Seneca states the logic of terrorist violence: “The more public an execution is, the more power it has as an example and lesson.”\(^{696}\) Often enough punishments were chosen which bore a

\(^{692}\) *BJ.*, 6.418.
\(^{694}\) *Ep.*, 37.1.
\(^{695}\) *Law and Crime*, 33. She contrasts this with “judicial torture” which aims to uncover the truth, not to kill the victim.
\(^{696}\) *Ira*, 3.19.
symbolic connection to the crime. Accordingly, many of the Christians blamed by Nero for the fire in Rome (64 CE) were burnt to death.

**iii. Death in the Arena**

The narrative of state potency and possession of criminal bodies enacted in the arena is clarified by those cases where *damnati* refused to acknowledge their bodies as dispossessed. This is a variant of Boudicean conflict. In a similar mode of resistance, several suicides of condemned criminals are recorded in the literature. Moreover, the martyrrological topos of the Christian athlete who competes with the state commemorates the same repulsion of the dominant discourse.

Regarding suicides – *self*-killings – the should-be victims have tenaciously retained the body under *autonomy*. Suicide is a refusal to submit the body according to the imperial discourse. Tiberius says of a prisoner-suicide, “Carnulius has escaped me.” Seneca, in his letter *On the Proper Time to Slip the Cable*, lauds a German P.O.W. who has been made a *bestiarius* (wild-beast gladiator):

> The only thing which he was allowed to do in secret and without the presence of a guard” was to relieve himself. Yet, even under these restrictions he asserts his autonomy – self-rule – and uses a toiletry stick-and-sponge to asphyxiate himself. “He blocked up *his* windpipe, and *he* choked the breath from *his* body … That was truly to insult death! … What a brave fellow! *He* surely deserved to be allowed to choose *his* fate! … How bravely he would have wielded the sword!”

I italicize the personal pronouns and adjectives to highlight how Seneca praises his self-assertion and steely claim on his own body. This reference occurs within a consideration of those who “shatter the shackles of human slavery (*servitutis humanae*...**

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697 Aubert, “Double Standard,” 105-106.
699 That submission – cowering and anguish, as well as physical destruction – was basic to the Roman propaganda enacted in the arena is vividly attested by Martial; he presents the refusal to be dispossessed as a major inversion of the natural order. Even the animals are said to have recognized the imperial order by offering themselves in a kneeling posture before the Emperor Titus. Thus the elephant acts deferentially:

> How the pious and supplicant elephant worships you, Caesar!
> This one who just now had instilled fear into a bull,
> He does this [adores] without orders, no instructor has taught it,
> Believe me, even that one senses our god! (Spect., 17, my trans.).

See also *Ibid.* 30, in which a hind acts the supplicant before Titus and is saved from the pursuing dogs.

700 Suet, *Tib.*, 61.
701 *Ep.*, 70.20, italics mine.
Seneca offers another incident in which a gladiator en route to a show leans down from the cart, puts his head through the wheel and breaks his neck; in this way “he made his escape.” Similarly, a provincial prisoner who murdered the praetor of Nearer Spain was caught and “dragged back to torture;” breaking free, he smashed his head against a rock, falling dead. These suicides, and others, demonstrate the rare refusal to submit the body in a public display of subordination to the regime. It is precisely this recognition of the sovereignty of the state which violated bodies generally did express.

A refusal to recognize this also occurs in the martyrological narratives. Eusebius presents the logic of state punishment in the case of Sanctus, a Christian embroiled in the 177 CE persecution at Lyons. “Wicked men hoped, by the … severity of his [Sanctus’] tortures to wring something from him which he ought not to say. His only response, however, was ‘I am a Christian.’ He confessed this instead of name and city and race and everything besides.” This only intensifies the governor’s and his torturers’ resolve: they have “a great desire to conquer him.”

On another occasion, Eusebius claims that tortured Alexandrian Christians (307 CE) “[shamed] the adversary by their constancy.” As noted already, these Christians were scrutinized for signs of submission: “[The governor] left officers … [to] observe if any of them, overcome by tortures, appeared to yield.” No mercy was to be shown to the victims; their guards were “not to have the least concern for us, but were to think and act as if we no longer existed, our enemies having invented this second mode of torture in addition to the stripes.” The italicized words show the symbolism which torture imposes. These instances of refusal to be dispossessed of the body fall under the rubric of “instances of the conflicts of the divine martyrs.”

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702 Ibid. 70.19; also, in Ibid. 70.26 a barbarian stabs his own throat to commit suicide, which is described as an honorable death.
703 Ibid. 70.23.
704 Tac., Ann., 4.45. The suicide is neither praised nor censored by the historian; the murder, however, was “an atrocious crime.”
705 Hopkins presents a letter from Symmachus (consul in 391 CE), who conveys the onerous costs of hosting ludii for the public. 29 Saxon prisoners of war strangled each other on the night before their appearance in the games (Ep., 2.46 cited in Death and Renewal, 8). The mass suicide of Jews on the eve of the capture of Masada in 73 CE is another case in point. Josephus presents the Roman response: “Nor could they do other than wonder at the courage of their resolution, and the immovable contempt of death, which so great a number of them had shown” (BJ, 7.406).
707 Ibid. 8.10.9.
708 Ibid. 8.10.6-7 (italics mine); cf. n. 553.
709 Ibid. 8.10.12.
iv. Death on the Gemonian Stairs

Roman public space – be it the arena, an amphitheatre, the forum, the Gemonian Stairs, or even crossroads – displayed brutalized bodies and corpses to promulgate Roman law and order. The Gemonian Stairs, in the heart of political activity (north of the Forum), were the locus under the principate for the public execution and corpse display of political (i.e., elite) criminals. They were known as the “staircase of wailing.” Other loci used for execution were the Tarpeian rock and the *carcer* (prison), both proximate to the Forum. Linderski observes that both modes of death – falling to one’s death, and (usually) strangulation, respectively – were “ritual abandonment of the miscreant, the sacer, to the gods.” Cadoux lists the *carcer*, the Tarpeian rock and the Gemonian Steps as near to each other and deliberately located in the political thoroughfare. “They were all part of the apparatus for deterring crime, by impressing the populace with the consequences of committing it.”

Strangulation in the *carcer* and then exposure on the Stairs was a typical imperial death sequence. It constituted severe corpse abuse. Valerius Maximus states that “…the abhorred stigma of the Gemonian Steps befouled [the victim’s corpse].” Consider, for example, the execution of Titus Sabinus (consul 47 CE, Vespasian’s brother) in 69 CE. Tacitus informs us that “[t]he body of Sabinus, pierced and mutilated and with the head severed from it, was dragged to the Gemonian stairs.”

As another instance, Tactius records that the elite Agrippina the Elder committed suicide and so narrowly forestalled being “strangled by the halter and flung down the Gemonian steps.” The historian’s next comments afford insight into the message of public execution and corpse exposure. Agrippina “voluntarily perished” because she

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710 Valerius Maximus states that the Steps could be seen from the Forum (6.9.13). Barry notes that the Stairs were reserved for high-ranking victims; baser criminals were executed in the arena or other locations (“Scale Gemoniae,” 224).
712 Cadoux demonstrates that the site overlooked the forum (*Ibid.* 215).
714 “Roman Carcer,” 220.
715 *Ibid.* 214. For the association of precipitation from Tarpeian rock with the *carcer* and the Stairs, see Cassius Dio (59.18.3; this describes executions under Caligula); also Cadoux, “Roman Carcer,” 220.
716 Val. Max., 6.6.3a. The Latin says, “corpus ... detestanda Gemoniarum scalarum nota foedavit.”
718 Ann., 6.25; cf. Suet., *Tib.*, 53.2. Both historians say that Tiberius boasted that strangulation and the Steps had not been necessary, giving him the appearance of clemency. Tiberius was Agrippina’s father-in-law (*Ibid.* 53.1).
“could not endure equality and loved to domineer [and] was with her masculine aspirations far removed from the frailties of women.”719 This remarkably politically active woman (the mother of Tiberius’ successor, Caligula) was not willing to submit to Tiberius, and hence committed suicide.720 Both the shame of the unchastity rumour and the prospect of a public death ritual are woven together by Tacitus as the means of humiliation to which the proud woman would not yield.721

William Ian Miller offers an insight into the significance of the sheer degradation of such deaths. The destruction of the external integrity of the body magnifies the potency of the aggressor. “Broken bodies, partial bodies, are the stuff of horror and require great force.”722 The liquidated body now documents the impotency of the victim and the potency of the aggressor. What we see here is the body being the locus for power displays between political contestants in a larger-scale expression of the master-slave dynamic. Miller comments on how members see those they violently expel: “The humanity of their victims is a pretense … [he or she] is pretending to be a human. [The elite have the power] to declare whether or not someone is a member of the species.”723 It follows that humanity is a gradated attribute. The body as wounded entity documents the person’s new niche in the social hierarchy: “Roman civic status was written on the body.”724

v. Corpse Violation and the Damned Soul

Roman abuse of damnati corpses was understood as extending the victim’s degraded status into the afterlife. This indicates that bodily condition continued to define a person even after this life. Again, we encounter the popular conception of the human person as a

719 Ibid.
720 Again, this is a variation on the “Boudicean conflict” principle. Agrippina refuses to submit to the autocracy of the emperor. Another high-ranking political prisoner who committed suicide was Herennius Siculus (late 2nd cent. BCE); he dashed his head on the doorpost entering the carcer to forestall the executioner (Val. Max., 9.12.6).
721 The gendering of the masculine pole of “active” over that of the feminine and “passive” is striking here too. Inequality, in the Roman elite scheme, was something pathic, to be borne: she, however, “could not endure equality” translating “aequi impatiens.” Literally, she would not bear passively with being equated with others. Rather, she “loved to domineer” – “dominandi avida;” she was eager to be dominant. Next, her “masculine aspirations (virilibus curis – literally, concerns pertaining to elite viri)” displaced the natural “frailties of women (feminarum vitia – literally, defects/faults of women).” Here was a women who pressed into the masculine (elite male) domain, and her self-killing stated her refusal to be ousted from this condition. The defectiveness, passivity and impotency of those who do actually conform to their feminine/servile establish the baseline which makes Agrippa’s qualities so noteworthy.
722 Humiliation, 68.
723 Ibid. 165.
724 Beard and Hopkins, Colosseum, 77.
psychosomatic whole. Upon death – the soul leaving the body – the “I” of the person is identified with both the corpse and the soul. As Endsjø comments, “[w]e often find epitaphs stating how the dead person is in fact bilocated, considered to be simultaneously in the grave and in some other place. The deceased was simultaneously both present and absent as the soul and the body each constituted half the entire person.”725 The dead shade, therefore, is permanently marked by the body’s honorable or shameful condition at death.

The religio-political narrative presented the infernal deities as avengers upon those who harmed Roman order. Several elements show the construction of the criminal corpse as defilement: the use of hooks to transport it; its exposure and non-burial, e.g., through being dumped in the Tiber; and the belief in the anguish of the soul – i.e., the posthumous shame – of those whose corpses were uninterred. Bodily degradation could not be escaped.

I mention again that the arena was configured as sacred space: the infernal deities were represented as present. “Mercury” and “Pluto” ferried the corpses out of the gates of death to be processed. Gladiators bound themselves by servile oath to serve the infernal deities through unrelenting combat. The noxii, too, should be considered sacer (consecrated) at the negative pole of this concept.726 Livy demonstrates how the principle of negative sacrality worked. Anyone who harmed (“nocuerit,” cf. noxius) the sacrosanct (in the positive sense) person of the magistrate was sacer to Jupiter (“eius caput Iovi sacrum esset”). Literally, his head was devoted to Jupiter.

This is expanded upon with “Iovi sacrum sanciri (he is bound over to Jove).”727 The meaning of sacer Iovi is explained in a parallel prohibition. Any authority who

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725 *Greek Resurrection*, 29. As an example, Endsjø cites an epitaph from Phrygia: “Here their beloved land holds Aculinus and his wife; for the soul of each has fluttered away” (*Ibid*). The identity of Aculinus and his wife are somehow both in the grave and absent. For the wider presupposition of psychosomatic unity as the common belief, see *Ibid.* 24: “Without one’s physical body, one was no longer a complete person. For the Greeks, human nature always equaled a psychosomatic unity.” He shows that the Homeric picture constructs the soul without the body as dead – it is the union of the two which constitutes life (*Ibid.* 24-27). Moreover, and quite crucially, because Hellenistic culture and *paideia* were founded on Homeric literature, it is this view of personhood which dominated the popular mind (*Ibid.* 27). The rarified view of some of the philosophical schools that the soul is immortal, and that the body should be happily abandoned at death (or the other extreme, that the body and the soul are material and so decay), is not the popular consensus. Plutarch criticizes the masses for believing that Romulus’ apotheosis involved his body being translated to heaven: The souls of good men, *having been freed* from “mortality and sense [= the body] … ascend from men … to gods” (*Rom.*, 28.8, my italics; see Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection*, 56).

726 That is, consecrated/devoted to destruction. Again, for the very helpful insight of the “positive/negative poles of sacer” I am indebted to Plass, *Games of Death*, 71. I only touch on the issue of penal sacrality here and will develop it in greater detail in the section on “The Sacral Corpus.”

727 3.55.7-8.
leaves the Plebs without the right of appeal to the people is “to be punished on the back and the head (tergo ac capite puniretur),” viz., scourgèd and decapitated.\textsuperscript{728} The basic message of the symbolism of the arena was that the condemned were on the precipice of Hades, sacred to the chthonic deities, and the crowd participated in expediting their transition there. Linderski summarizes this same ideology with respect to the carcer and precipitation from the Tarpeian rocks. Both were ritual abandonment to the infernal deities to whom the victim was considered sacer (devoted). He describes the carcer, with its underground chamber, as being “a place of abandonment.” “Those who crossed its gates descended to the netherworld to die of hunger or strangulation” – they were “hostes publici [enemies of the state].”\textsuperscript{729}

\textit{Hooks:} The corpses of criminals, whether of previously high status or not, were routinely dragged by a hook to avoid the need for contact.\textsuperscript{730} Seneca confirms the ante and posthumous uses of the hook when he notes that the uncus “drags both living men and corpses.”\textsuperscript{731} The message was clear: these were pollutants, in need of ritualized processing and removal to avoid contaminating the community. The meaning of the symbology is most clearly spelled out in relation to high profile victims. After the emperor Commodus was murdered (192 CE), the Senate are said to have chanted:

\begin{quote}
The foe of his fatherland, the murderer, the gladiator, in the charnel-house let him be mangled. He is foe to the gods, slayer of the senate … He who slew the senate, let him be dragged with the hook (\textit{unco trahatur}); he who slew the guiltless, let him be dragged with the hook … He who spared not his own blood, let him be dragged with the hook.\textsuperscript{732}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{728} \textit{Ibid.} 3.55.14.
\textsuperscript{729} \textit{Review of Du chatiment dans la cité}, 378.
\textsuperscript{730} Cicero lists the horrors against which Roman citizenship should act as a shield: “scourging, … the hook, and finally, from the terror of the cross” (\textit{Rab. Perd.}, 16: “\textit{a verberibus, ab unco, a cruces denique terrore}”) (my trans.). Elsewhere Cicero provides more evidence: “A hook was fixed into that runaway slave,” referring to a tyrannical consul. The Latin regarding the hook is chilling: “…\textit{uncus impactus est} (the hook was impacted, fixed) into the escaping slave (\textit{fugitvo}, referring to the consul)” (\textit{Phil.}, 1.5.1).
\textsuperscript{731} \textit{Ira}, 3.6 (trans. Aubrey Stewart, \textit{Minor Dialogs}). Seneca goes on to present the various instruments of torture – the rack, the cord, the dungeon, the cross, fire, and the hook, \textit{inter alia} – as the tools of Anger (\textit{Ira}), amongst which she stands and which she empowers. See also Seneca’s passing comments (\textit{Ep.}, 82.3), which equate the morbidity of the (metaphorically) dead luxuriant and “he who is dragged along by the executioner’s hook.” Here the hook is used on a corpse. Ovid issues the following imprecation against his enemies: “You’ll forgo your life, un lamented: and the mob will all applaud while you’re dragged away, at the executioners’ hands, and their hooks are buried deep in your bones (\textit{infixusque tuis ossibus uncus erit})” (\textit{Ib.}, 165-66). See also, \textit{Flor.}, \textit{Epit.}, 2.9.14 for two other leading citizens, “Baebius and Numitorius [who] were dragged through the forum on the hooks of the executioners (\textit{per medium forum unci traxere carcificum}).”
\textsuperscript{732} \textit{SHA.}, 8.3-20.5 (cited from Kyle, \textit{Spectacles}, 225).
That his death is being constructed as a source of defilement is heard in the senate’s imprecation which scatologizes Commodus: “Let the memory of the foul gladiator (impuri gladiatoris) be utterly wiped away.” Kyle glosses with “[Commodus] polluted himself by acting as a gladiator.” A variant expression of the senate’s desire to violate the corpse by dismemberment is also found in the historical record.

The context in which the hook was employed is further portrayed in the declassing violence inflicted on Sejanus (31 CE) and the emperor Vitellius (69 CE). It is the dramatic liminality of such persons which evoked the historiographical interest. Both, like Commodus, were transitioned from insider to outsider status and so the dramatic fall from grace was recorded for posterity – a noteworthiness which the death of common slaves and damnati could never have generated.

Guilty of maiestas, Sejanus has crossed the threshold of high-rank and becomes an exemplar of the damnati, or the noxii. What we see of him, we see of him qua dehumanized outsider. Juvenal uses the cataclysmic social fall of Sejanus as material for his tenth satire, “The Vanity of Human Wishes.” “The head of the mighty Sejanus, the darling of the mob, is burning and crackling, and from that face, which was but lately second in the entire world, are being fashioned pipkins, pitchers, frying-pans and slop-pails!” The former Praetorian Prefect’s demise is next depicted with “Sejanus ducitur unco Spectandus,” which Ramsay translates as “Sejanus is being dragged along by a hook, as a show and joy to all!” “Being dragged by the hook” is thus a powerful symbol of humiliation. The larger symbolism of the violently treated body is in play: the person once a source of danger and a threat to the religio-political order has been subjugated. The Schadenfreude of the populace was enormous.

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733 SHA., 19.1 (cited from Kyle, Spectacles, 225).
734 Kyle, Spectacles, 225.
735 Cass. Dio, 74.2.2-4.
736 However, the generalized data from a document detailing the legal obligations of the public undertaker, the manceps, in Puteoli is noteworthy (AE 1971 no. 88, II.13-14; cited from Kyle, Spectacles, 163). The manceps was to manage the polluting effects of the corpses and of his staff who handled them. The stipulation occurs in the context of the manceps’ handling of low-class and servile bodies. He was required to have the necessary equipment for torturing slaves for private slaveholders, or convicts for the magistrate. His staff were to reside outside the town; they could only enter for official business and were required to wear a special cap. One stipulation required that “…if he is ordered to drag away the corpse [of a damnati] with a hook, the work-gang is to be dressed in red and ring a bell.” The workgang is prohibited from touching the corpse; the public obviously desired to hold itself at an even greater distance. Cf. Parkin and Pomeroy, Roman Social History, 174-5.
738 Ibid.
Similar, too, is the case of the emperor Vitellius who, in 69 CE, was treated “ceu noxii solent (as is customary for criminals).” All the semiotics of impotency are assigned to him: he was “half-naked,” bound, with “clothes torn.” Finally he was forced, by the sword tip under his chin, to keep his countenance up to public gaze. Associated with these degradations were those which degraded him to the animal and scatological. “Some of the mob … [pelted] him with dung and mud (stercore et caeno incessentibus).” The mob’s action is described with incessere, which connotes either physical or verbal attack – or, as here, probably both. The former emperor is debased to stercus (dung, excrement) and caenum (dirt, filth) and is thereby signified as unworthy of human contact.

The picture of his being assimilated to polluting substance is rounded out with his being tortured to death, i.e., further mutilated, and “then dragged by a hook into the Tiber (inde unco tractus in Tiberim).” Crucially, his torture and, according to Cassius Dio, his dismemberment were inflicted on the infamous Scalae Gemoniae (the Gemonian Steps). John W. Burke states that the stairs were the place of “official imperial advertisement … the meaning of the locus is self-evident.” The reason for this self-evidence is that the stairs were synonymous with judicial condemnation and the utter degradation of the corpse through its being hurled from the top of the stairs and then being exposed at the bottom for a period of time before being dumped in the Tiber to be cleansed away.

Barry summarizes the import of the Stairs: “Exposure on the Stairs functioned as a clear advertisement of the crime, the identity of the criminal, and the punishment.” Moreover, the note of possession should be inferred from the account. The corpora exposed to abject debasement on the Scalae Gemoniae are powerful exempla of the emperor’s possession of, and control over, his subjects. As possessed bodies, the once high-ranking viri (and often their dependents) are utterly degraded – they have been servilised, with all the concomitants of animalization and scatologization. Again, the cultural axiom is that only the servilized body is corporally attacked.

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739 Suet., Vit., 17.1 (my trans.).
740 Ibid. 17.2.
741 Ibid.
743 On the length of time being anywhere from several hours to a few days, see Barry, “Scalae Gemoniae,” 223; Sejanus’ corpse was exposed for three days according to Cassius Dio (discussed next).
745 Cf. Barry’s observation that “[t]he larger message of the spectacle of exposure was the awesome power of the emperor to exercise violence over the individual.” “Scalae Gemoniae,” 230.
The progression to the stairs, as so humiliatingly recounted of Vitellius, defines “the identity of the victims as criminals and enemies of the state and thus defined the act of killing as deserved punishment sanctioned by the community.”

Regarding exposure, Cassius Dio records that the soldiers “cut off [Vitellius’] head and carried it about all over the city.” The symbology of this act is apparent enough – the focus of Vitellius’ powers, his head, is now utterly abased, a trophy of his rival Vespasian’s supremacy.

The hook, then, was part of the paraphernalia used to corporally broadcast the state’s valuation and execration of the offensive individual(s). It remained a powerful symbol for centuries.

The use of the hook on the corpses of the noxii after their deaths in the arena is of a piece with the scatologizing of these déclassé victims. As Kyle observes, “[h]ooks added insult and provided a way to avoid personal contact with an obscene body.”

The official document stipulating the undertaker of Puteoli’s duties made clear the defiling nature of the corpse. The mode of transporting the corpse – “unco extrahere (they drag it out with a hook)” – signals that the work-gang itself is unwilling to touch the corpse. That this is the body of a noxii is clear not only from the hook, but also because the stipulation occurs in the context of the mancers being charged with punishing and torturing those condemned by the magistrate. Also, the hooked corpse is being taken to “ubi plura cadavera erunt (where there were many corpses).” This likely refers to a pit where “those deprived of a proper burial were deposited in a specified area and left to rot.”

For the erstwhile-elite, the noxii and the common slave, the denial of burial indicated their utter lack of human worth.

*Non-Burial and Purging in the Tiber:* The use of the hook established bodies as defilement, while the further posthumous abuse of non-burial accentuated this message.

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746 Ibid. 244.
747 64.22.
748 For the decapitated head as a relishing of ascendancy, see Florus’ statement that Marius had the head of one of his enemies placed on his own dining table (*Epit.*, 2.21.14).
749 Even as late as 468 CE, the Christian Sidonius Apollinaris tells of his friend, the high-ranking Arvandus, who was convicted to death for treason. The symbology of the hook and Stairs were still nightmarish. Arvandus is depicted as “shuddering through the long hours at the thought of the hook and Gemonian stairs, and the noose of the brutal executioner.” *Epist.*, 1.7.12; trans. O.M. Dalton (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1915). Sidonius remarks that only death can alleviate his friend’s situation, because he is “branded with such marks of shame” (i.e, his fall from grace to prisoner). *Ibid.* 1.7.13.
750 *Spectacles*, 156; cf. 270.
Sejanus’ death evidences the ritualized use of the Stairs: his body was “cast down the Stairway, where the rabble abused it for three whole days and afterwards threw it into the river.”752 Terribly, his children were also executed and exposed on the stairway.753 A similar example is that of Sabinus, “one of the prominent men in Rome,” who had been imprisoned, killed and flung down stairs before being hurled into the Tiber.754

As Kyle argues, “[w]hen hooks or the Stairs are mentioned, dumping in the Tiber can be assumed.”755 The disposing of the corpses in the Tiber river was a crucial means to sever any polluting contact between the deceased and the community. Washing with water was basic to personal cleansing from defilement.756 On a larger scale, the logic of a large body of water providing the medium whereby the land and the community it sustains might be decoupled from miasmic bodies is basic to ancient thought.757 In order to remedy the corrupting impact of the defiling body, it must be cut off from human and terrestrial contact.758

The defiling nature of exposed corpses and their non-burial is seen when Tacitus recounts Tiberius’ purge of Sejanus’ supporters: “there lay, singly or in heaps, the unnumbered dead, of every age and sex, the illustrious with the obscure… Spies were set round them, who noted the sorrow of each mourner and followed the rotting corpses, till

752 Cass. Dio, 58.11.5.
753 Ibid. 5-6. At the sight of her children’s corpses, Sejanus’ wife commits suicide. In order to transition Sejanus’ daughter into the category of the debased, the judiciary had to deal with the dilemma of her virginity. Cassius Dio notes that it was illegal to execute a virgin and so the executioner rapes her first. Apparently, the integral body of the girl is too incongruous with the condition she is to enter.
754 58.1-3. Sabinus’ case has the poignant anecdote of his pet dog who remained near him during his imprisonment, death and dumping, at which the dog “leaped into the river with his body.” Although express mention of his exposure on the Stairs is absent from Cassius Dio, Pliny the Elder relays this. He tells of the faithful pet refusing to leave the corpse of his master, and howling as he lay exposed on the Stairs, before following “the cadaver as it was thrown into the Tiber (cadavere in Tiberim abiecto) (HN., 8.145).
755 Spectacles, 219. Cadoux concurs: “It seems to have been regular practice for the bodies to lie for some days on the Steps and then to be dragged to the Tiber by hooks and ropes” (“Roman Carcer,” 218).
756 Fresh from the battlefield, Aeneas refuses to touch his household gods and other sacred items. “Sinful for me to touch them, when I have just withdrawn from battle, with blood on my hands, until in running water I am purified (donec me flumine vivo abluero)” (Aen., 2.718-20; cf., Macrob., Sat., 3.1.1).
757 Livy recounts how an androgynous child was considered to be a symbol of divine displeasure. “The diviners … said that this was a dreadful portent, and the thing must be banished from Roman soil, kept from any contact with the earth, and buried in the sea. They enclosed it alive in a box, took it out to sea, and dropped it overboard” (27.37). “Dreadful portent” translates “foedum turpe prodigium” – foedus (foul, hideous, ugly) and turpis (ugly, repulsive, foul) in reality compound the sense of the prodigy’s pollutant nature. Similarly, Domitian orders the destruction of the tomb of one who had acted sacrilegiously, “and to sink in the sea the bones and relics buried in it.” Suet., Dom., 8.
758 Holt N. Parker offers an excellent discussion on the use of water, especially the Tiber or the sea, to expiate a prodigium. The prodigium – such as a child born with four hands, eyes, or ears; a child born with two lots of genitalia (a hermaphrodite); or a penetrated Vestal virgin – had crossed the boundaries of normal categories. As a pollutant force, he or she must be removed. He or she is also a pharmakos – a victim whose death diverts divine wrath. “Why Were The Vestals Virgins?,” 586-87.
they were dragged to the Tiber, where, floating or driven on the bank, no one dared to burn or to touch them.\textsuperscript{759} These pollutant corpses are vile in every sense – physically odious as they rot, and rejected as enemies of the religio-political order. The denial of burial by disposing of corpses in the Tiber extends the degradation heaped on the criminal.

Such persons were so radically condemned and socially deracinated that mourning was prohibited.\textsuperscript{760} Familial displays of concern were construed as defiance of the state’s construction of the person. It is important to note how this aligns with the slave’s radical alienation from kinship structures. Enemies of the state were made liminal and transferred into a servile state through dramatic public displays of violence. The hook, corpse exposure, and denial of burial rituals also reinforced their outsider status. In other words, the state has taken possession of its enemy and imposed a servile, dehumanized condition. The popular cry against Tiberius at his death was “\textit{Tiberium in Tiberim!}” (Tiberius to the Tiber!).\textsuperscript{761} They also desired that his corpse be hooked and exposed on the stairs, and suffer the half-cremation which \textit{noxii} suffered in the arena. That is, they desired a caricature of the decorous full cremation and burial of his ashes (which he did in fact receive).\textsuperscript{762} Non-burial signifies the official construction of persons as pollutants and removes them from the social rituals which validate their connectedness; it is essentially servilizing.\textsuperscript{763}

\textbf{Effect on the Soul:} Belief in Hades as the abode of the dead was basic to Roman popular thought and the elites’ ideology of control.\textsuperscript{764} Naturally, then, it was brought to bear on the rejection process. I noted earlier the mythic construction of the arena space which presented it as the portal to the underworld. The infernal deities, Pluto (Greek Hades), Mercury (Greek Hermes), and Charon (the boatman of the river Acheron) were

\textsuperscript{759} \textit{Ann.}, 6.19.
\textsuperscript{760} Tacitus recounts that spies monitored “the sorrow of each mourner,” to record those who acted as if the deceased were socially valid (\textit{Ibid.}).
\textsuperscript{761} \textit{Suet.}, \textit{Tib.}, 75.1.
\textsuperscript{762} For these details, see \textit{Ibid.} 75.
\textsuperscript{763} For further details of prohibitions against mourning see Kyle, \textit{Spectacles}, 236, n. 62.
\textsuperscript{764} I will detail how Cicero, for example, uses infernal suffering in his political/criminal rhetoric while he disavows it in his philosophical works. Both the belief in Hades and in the continuance of bodily degradation as imprinted on the soul can be traced back to the Homeric worldview. Endsjo notes that, for example, warriors’ wish in the \textit{Iliad} that their enemies’ corpses be devoured by animals, and so not receive proper funeral rites, stems from the desire that they be annihilated and denied a posthumous existence (\textit{Greek Resurrection}, 32-33).
all impersonated by gladiators who transported the corpses out of the arena through the gateway “porta Libitinensis” (the Gateway of Libitina, the goddess of funerals).765

The case of Tiberius’ imprecated corpse – “Tiberium in Tiberim! (Tiberius to the Tiber!)” – contains both the elements of corpse desecration and his subsequent damnation by the gods of the netherworld. The full curse is this: “Some [cried] out, ‘away with Tiberius to the Tiber,’ others [exclaimed], ‘may the earth, the common mother of mankind, and the infernal gods, allow him no abode in death, but amongst the wicked.”766

The background of Roman beliefs regarding the afterlife is summarized by Barry: “The common view in the Graeco-Roman world held that those whose bodies were denied burial were denied immediate access to the underworld and endured a restless existence between the world of the living and the dead.”767

Thus Virgil’s Aeneas entered the underworld and discovered that unburied corpses control the destiny of their shades.768 He asks his guide, the priestess Sybil, why Charon (the ferryman) takes some souls across, while others are forced back from the boat. She replies, “[a]ll this crowd you see are the helpless ones, the unburied (haec omnis, quam cernis, inops inhumataque turba est). That ferryman is Charon: the ones he conveys have had burial (hi ... sepulti).”769 The period of their haunting the banks before being ferried across is 100 years.770

Once in Hades souls are judged by Minos, who “examines the record of each.”771 On his judgment hinges one’s turning right into Elysium (the abode of the Blessed)772 or

765 Kyle, Spectacles, 156.
766 Suet., Tib., 75.
767 “Scalae Gemoniae,” 228. The belief that the shades could terrorize the living is seen in the opening of the mundus funeral pit. Gifts were deposited in the pit to appease the shades. War was not to be conducted on these days. For a description, see Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, “The Specters of Roman Imperialism: The Live Burials of Gauls and Greeks at Rome,” Classical Antiquity 26/2 (October, 2007): 298-99.
768 The enduring aspect of the deceased person is variously called an umbra (shade) or an anima (soul). For example, the underworld is “umbrarum hic locus est (this place is the land of the shades)” (Aen., 6.390); trans. C. Day Lewis, Virgil: The Aeneid (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952). Anima is used when the priestess invokes the chthonic deities: “you gods who rule the kingdom of souls! (imperium ... animarum)” (Aen., 6.264; cf. 319, where the animae of the unburied cannot cross the river); the dead are still conceived of as having transparent bodies, whereas Aeneas’ corpulent body made Charon’s boat “[creak] under his weight” (6.413).
769 Ibid. 6.325-26.
770 Ibid. 6.329. Their lot, however, can be overcome by even a delayed burial. The condition is simply that “sedibus ossa quierunt” – “[Their] bones have found peace in the graves” (6.328). The shade of Aeneas’ unburied comrade Palinurus pleads for him to release him to cross the river. To do so, Aeneas is told: “Redeem me from this doom … Please sprinkle dust on my corpse … So that at least I may rest in the quiet place, in death.” 6.365-66, 371.
771 Ibid. 6.431-32.
left to Tartarus. Tartarus, the destiny of the wicked, is a place of punishment.\textsuperscript{773} The fiery river, Phlegethon, flows around Tartarus. “From within can be heard the sounds of groaning and brutal lashing, sounds of clanking iron, of chains being dragged around… Here Rhadamanthus rules, and most severe his rule is, trying and chastising wrongdoers, forcing confessions from any who, on earth, went gleefully undetected.”\textsuperscript{774}

According to Servius’ commentary on the \textit{Aeneid} (4\textsuperscript{th} cent. CE), Virgil’s infernal punishments are modeled on the execution process which took place in the \textit{Tullianum} – the underground vault of the \textit{carcer} where strangulation occurred.\textsuperscript{775} From this observation of Servius it seems fair to surmise that the torture of the underworld as seen in \textit{Aeneid} book 6 is a projection of the physical brutality meted out in Roman punishment. A vice catalogue is included to show the types of egregious acts which warrant punishment in Tartarus, all of which involve breaches of \textit{pietas} (dutiful consideration of the gods, state and family).\textsuperscript{776} Particularly important are sins which pervert the hierarchical system: patrons are not to defraud their dependants (viz., clients); slaves are not to disobey their masters.\textsuperscript{777}

In addition to non-burial damning the soul, the debasing scars of the body persist into the next life. Deiphobus, another of Aeneas’ comrades, retains the “ghastly wounds” whereby he died. “His whole body [was] a mass of wounds, most horribly mangled about the face – the face and both the hands, head mutilated with ears torn off, and the nose lopped …”\textsuperscript{778} Dido, the queen of Carthage, who committed suicide when Aeneas jilted her, is spotted by him, “with her death-wound still bleeding.”\textsuperscript{779} The bodily continuity, albeit at a shadowly level, speaks of the effect which earthly experiences continue to exert on one’s infernal state, not to mention the obvious continuity of memory, emotions and relations which Virgil configures in the epic.\textsuperscript{780}

\textsuperscript{772} Aeneas meets his late father, Anchises, in Elysium: “The Happy Place, the green and genial glades where the fortunate live, the home of the blessed spirits.” The land is well-lit and fertile, having “a sun and stars of its own.” \textit{Ibid.} 6.638-642. Cf. Plut., \textit{Sert.}, 8.2.

\textsuperscript{773} \textit{Aen.}, 6.543-43.

\textsuperscript{774} For the burning river Phlegethon (“\textit{Tartareus Phlegethon}”), see \textit{Ibid.} 6.551. For Rhadamanthus (Minos’ brother) as torturer, see \textit{Ibid.} 6.567-70.

\textsuperscript{775} See the comments in Cadoux, “Roman Carcer,” 215, regarding Serv. \textit{Aen.}, 6.657.

\textsuperscript{776} \textit{Ibid.} 6.608-18.

\textsuperscript{777} \textit{Ibid.} 6.609 and 611, respectively.

\textsuperscript{778} \textit{Ibid.} 6.494-97.

\textsuperscript{779} \textit{Ibid.} 6.450.

\textsuperscript{780} Cf. Bernstein’s comment: “The continuity of emotion suffered in life and death is indicated visibly by the presence of physical marks.” \textit{The Formation of Hell}, 65. For the stigmata and emotions at the time of death being retained by shades, see also Barry, “\textit{Scalae Gemoniae},” 228.
The *Aeneid* provides a rhetorical description of the afterlife which exhorts virtuous conduct appropriate to one’s station in the honor hierarchy. The crucial element for this study is the way corporal abuse stigmatizes the person in the next life and non-burial creates a period of agonized suspension. The sights and sounds of state torture continue to plague offenders in Tartarus. Certainly the religious beliefs of the Romans did vary, from the extreme of the materiality of the soul and thus its extinguishment at death\(^\text{781}\) to the infernal reality presented by Virgil. Nevertheless, despite the refined philosophical speculations of some, it seems highly likely that the existence of spirits, magic, the deities and a fearful abode of the dead did exercise the popular psyche.

In addition to the *Aeneid*, consider Ovid’s imprecation of his political foes. He longs for them to die unlamented, to experience the executioners’ hook. Then he insists on the denial of funeral rites: “Let the flames … flee from you: let the honest earth reject your hated corpse.” Next he prays for the corpse to be eaten by vultures, dogs and wolves. Then the infernal implications are presented: “May you be in a place far from Elysian fields, and be exiled, where the guilty host abide … There let one of the Furies rake your flanks with her whip … another give your scored body to her hellish snakes.”\(^\text{782}\) This vitriolic attack underscores the degrading effect of non-burial and a mutilated corpse and aligns it with posthumous suffering. In contrast to Virgil, however, no mention is made of a 100-year languishment waiting to enter the underworld. Rather, torment is immediate upon entering Tartarus.

Indeed, it was the popular belief that the spirits of the dead remained near their bodies, which necessitated using the Tiber to purge the bodies, and thus their shades, away from the community.\(^\text{783}\) From Virgil, we saw that the unburied are not sealed away in Hades. Likewise, the imprecations against the dead Tiberius – “May the … infernal

\(^{781}\) In addition to Cicero, consider the position of Lucretius that “...the fear of Acheron be sent packing / which troubles the life of man from its deepest depths” (3.37-40); cited in Tobias Reinhardt, “Readers in the Underworld: Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 3.912-1075,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 94 (2004): 27. Reinhardt states the poet’s underlying philosophy: “Lucretius explains the basics of Epicurean psychology and tries to show that the soul is (like the body) material and hence mortal” (*Ibid.*). He cites ll. 830-31 as proof: “Therefore death is nothing to us, it matters not one jot / since the nature of the mind is understood to be mortal.”


\(^{783}\) Cf. Kyle: “Even the premature, violent deaths of worthless humans required some ritual removal and cleansing so that the spirits of the dead, which stayed near the body, would not trouble the living.” *Spectacles*, 213.
gods offer him no abode in death, but amongst the wicked” – reinforce the horrors of non-burial.  

The evidence in this section on the ritualized executions, the treating of damnati corpses as defilement (via exposure, the hook and purging in the Tiber), and the humiliation of the victims’ shades through non-burial depicts the breadth of the Roman regime’s control of the body. While the slave was by default a possessed body with its self displaced, on offending against Roman order any person could be reconstructed in servilized terms. The narrative legitimizing his or her bodily degradation made the offender an item of filth, defiling the community. He or she was cut off from familial and social connection, unmourned and unburied. This reduces the victim to the liminality of the slave. Thereafter, the infernal judges and torturers continued the chastisement begun on the earth. The terrors of violent physical suffering, humiliation, posthumous exposure and corpse mutilation, combined with the narrative of being hated by the gods, create a powerful ideology which maintained the hierarchical social reality. This is the cultural ideology which claimed the human body.

5. The Sacral Corpus: Religio-Political Valuation of Human Worth

This section demonstrates that the religio-political account of “activity” and “passivity” is supported by the Roman conception of sacrality. The sacred person, place or thing holds particular value for maintaining social order; the profane is outside this valued category. The aura of sacrality reinforces elite institutions, making them divinely sanctioned. In essence, that which is sacred is possessed and/or protected by the gods. I will begin by showing this through the definitions of two key terms: sacer (sacred) and sanctus (holy).

Next, I will present three basic contexts in which these terms are found: in relation to the deities themselves and their abodes; in relation to the Vestal priestesses; and in relation to elite male religio-political actors including the emperor. I discuss the sanctity of the matronae along with that of the Vestals.

The final section considers the negative pole of sacrality. In contrast to the positive sacrality of the elite, this is the mode of sacrality whereby an offender is made the possession of the (usually infernal) deities. Here I examine the capital punishment formulae in which a man’s “head” was made sacer to the gods for gross offences.

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784 Suet., Tib., 75.
consider also how entire armies were “devoted” to the infernal gods by Roman generals. Given that the Greek historians refer to these events as a kind of human sacrifice, I align these violent modes of appeasing the gods with the dramatic deaths of the arena. A mode of sacrality which was part of the collective consciousness, and potentially achievable by even the lowest individual, was that of being executed as a possession of the deities.

Another important theme is the highly regulated nature of sacrality. Valid sacrality was only conferred through State institutions. Private rituals were not able to “consecrate” an item, that is, make it sacred. The classification of persons and things – whether sacred or profane – was a strictly guarded prerogative of the elite. Implications for bodily worth and so vulnerability flowed from how one was categorized.

A. Sacral Terminology

Sacer (sacred) and sanctus (sanctioned) are the two terms I will focus on to show the ideological construction of sacrality. In essence, sacred things (res sacrae) have been consecrated to the deities by state officials. They are possessed by the gods. That which is sanctus is protected by the gods. Sacratae leges (holy laws), for example, are those which make the offender sacer, thereby assigning him or her to the possession of the gods. The context will determine whether what is sanctus (divinely protected) is also inherently sacer (divinely possessed). Macrobius presents the distinguishing principle: Aeneas called the priestess “sanctissima (most holy)” and this is “no different from calling [her] ‘sacram (sacred)’ [because] … he saw [her] to be a seer, and possessed by a god, and a priestess.” Some relationship to the divine must be indicated for the sanctus (holy) to be intensified to sacer (divinely possessed).

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785 I am working from Valerius Flaccus’ definition of “sacred laws.” Flaccus flourished during the reign of Augustus. His work is transmitted through Sextus Festus’ Dictionary (later 2nd cent CE). I cite the Latin from W. M. Lindsay, Sexti Pompei Festi. De urborum significatu quae supersunt cum Pauli Epitome. Thewrewkianis copis usus edidit (Leipzig, 1913). Flaccus states that “[s]acred laws (sacratae leges) are those which make something holy (sanctus, i.e, under sanction) – whoever breaks these becomes sacred (sacer) to one of the gods, as does his household and money.” Festus, 422 (my trans.).

786 Sat., 3.3.7 (my trans.). Macrobius flourished early in the 5th cent. CE. The author claims to cite ancient authorities verbatim (Praef. 4). Robert A. Kraster states the special authority Virgil holds for Macrobius, who “…presents Virgil as the master of all human knowledge, from dictio and rhetoric through philosophy and religion.” Macrobius: Saturnalia, Books 1-2, ed. and trans. Robert A. Kaster, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), xii. Book 3.1-12 is a discussion of “Pontifical Law in Virgil” (Sat., li). The alignment of sacer with sanctus referred to in the case of the priestess occurs as an elucidation of Trebatius’ definitions. Gaius Trebatius Testa was a jurist who flourished during Augustus’ reign. His work De Religionibus (On Religious Mores) is lost, but cited by Macrobius. Together with the citations from Virgil, Macrobius offers great insight into sacrality during the 1st cent. CE. The awe which Macrobius afforded Virgil reinforces my earlier claims that his depiction of
In more detail, the OLD defines sacer as “consecrated to a deity, sacred, hallowed … of sacrificial victims … offerings … temples and other holy places.”\textsuperscript{788} The cognate verb sacro (I make sacer) means “to set apart for the service or honour of a deity, consecrate.”\textsuperscript{789} Both the adjective (sacer) and verb (I make sacer) can denote either extreme of positive or negative holiness. To be sacer can mean either (positively) “under divine … protection,” or (negatively) “one whose person and property are forfeited to a god by reason of an offence against divine law.”\textsuperscript{790} The basic notion is being possessed by a god or gods.\textsuperscript{791} Sacred phenomena are beyond “monetary valuation.”\textsuperscript{792} I will discuss the official procedures for establishing this condition shortly.

Another way to nuance sacrality is in terms of subjection to divine law. Thus “res sacrae (sacral things)” are “divini iuris (of, i.e., subject to, divine law)” and so are differentiated from res profanae,\textsuperscript{793} which are “humani [iuris] (of, i.e., subject to, human [law]).”\textsuperscript{794} Often that which is sanctus will also be subject to divine law.\textsuperscript{795} As noted already, the “sacred laws” which protect sacred items prescribe the penalty of being consecrated to a deity through execution.

Turning to sanctus, a range of meanings is found, from the most intense, which is synonymy with sacer, to “holy,” “untainted” or “incorrupt.”\textsuperscript{796} The emphasis, however,
seems to fall on divine protection: violators of the sanctus face divine wrath.\textsuperscript{797} I will follow the ancient commentators in comparing the two terms.\textsuperscript{798} Macrobius comments that “sacrum est (the sacred is), as Trebatius says, … ‘whatever is considered to belong to the gods (quicquid est quod deorum habetur.”\textsuperscript{799} As mentioned already, Macrobius sees those things that originate with or belong to the divine as sacer even if they are characterized as sanctus.\textsuperscript{800} However, when explicit association with the divine is missing, then the person or thing is simply untainted or uncorrupted.\textsuperscript{801} The flavor of divine association, though, is always close at hand.\textsuperscript{802}

The Digest differentiates the terms by emphasizing that divine sanction is imposed on the violation of the sanctus. “The word ‘sanctus’ is used in a special sense to denote things which are neither sacred (sacer) nor profane (profana), but are protected by some kind of sanction (sanctione quadam confirmata).”\textsuperscript{803} The death penalty is explicitly mentioned.\textsuperscript{804} A legate of the Roman people was sanctus, and thus protected from harm: literally, he is not to be the object of violation.\textsuperscript{805}

The semantic domain of sacrality in Latin is conveyed by the Greek terms ἄγιος and ἱερός. “Ἀγιος probably covers more of the sacer territory. \textit{LSJ} delineate it under the

\textsuperscript{797} Thus the \textit{OLD} has “… under divine protection, … holy, sacred” as one meaning of sanctus (s.v sanctus, 2).
\textsuperscript{798} Macrobius prefaces his comparison stating that “…in the pontiffs’ edicts it is a matter of greatest concern to determine what is ‘sacred’ (sacrum), what ‘profane’ (profanum), what is ‘holy’ (sanctum), what ‘filled with religious scruple’ (religiosum).” Sat., 3.3.1.
\textsuperscript{799} \textit{Ibid.} 3.3.2. Macrobius goes on to mention that “our poet,” i.e, Virgil, follows this usage, and so mentions the gods to justify employing “sacer.”
\textsuperscript{800} He states that both the “most holy prophetess (sanctissima vates)” who guides Aeneas into the netherworld and the “holy fires (sanctos … ignes)” of religious rituals can equally be called sanctus (Sat., 3.3.7).
\textsuperscript{801} \textit{Ibid.} 3.3.6. The examples are that of a “holy soul (sancta ... anima)” and a “most holy wife (sanctissima coniunx).” The sanctity of the Roman wife will be a topic in its own right shortly. Suffice to say, it refers to her corporal exclusivity.
\textsuperscript{802} After the “holy soul” and the “holy wife,” Macrobius mentions, without shifting topic, the “holy laws (leges sanctae),” that is, laws protected by the gods. The translator comments that the contravention of such laws made the malefactor “sacer,” in that case the gods would punish him, as “merely human punishment would be inappropriate.” \textit{Ibid.} n. 20.
\textsuperscript{803} \textit{Dig.}, 1.8.9.3.
\textsuperscript{804} An example is the violation of walls which are sanctus (\textit{Ibid.} 1.8.1.pr.). “If anyone violates the walls, he is struck in the head (capite punitur).” \textit{Ibid.} 1.8.11, my trans. I have woodenly rendered the formula for capital punishment capite punitur (he is struck in the head) because of its antiquity. I will discuss its appearance in the XII Tables and its relationship to the killing of sacrificial animals.
\textsuperscript{805} \textit{Ibid.} 1.8.8.2 (citing the jurist Marcianus, d. ca. 230 CE). The text describes how sanctus status was marked by the legates carrying sagmina (herbs) “in order that no one should violate them (ne quis eos violaret).” The Digest is giving the etymology of sanctus from the sagmina carried by the officials. The \textit{OLD} confirms the link (s.v sagmen). The action of \textit{uiolatio} means “profane treatment (of what is sacred,) violation” (\textit{Ibid.} s.v uiolatio’). The cognate verb, \textit{uiolo}, is “to disturb the sanctity of, violate, profane” the sacred (\textit{Ibid.} s.v uiolatio). The \textit{uiolatio} (violation) of walls is subject to capital punishment (\textit{Dig.}, 1.8.11).
rubric “devoted to the gods.” In the “good sense” it means “sacred, holy;” while in the bad sense it denotes being “accursed, execrable.” Regarding ἱερός, items are listed which relate to human cultivation of the divine. Thus the plural substantive – ἱερὰ – can mean sacrifices, temples, sacred objects or rites. The adjective characterizes an item as “under divine protection,” which aligns with sanctus. It is also translated as “hallowed, consecrated.” In any case, the Greek terms are best viewed as together denoting sacrality. When Plutarch describes the sacrosanctity of the tribune of the plebs (to be examined shortly), he calls the officer “ἰερὸν … καὶ ἁυλὸν (consecrated … and inviolate).”

A fundamental feature of Roman sacrality is that it must be established by State officials. The Digest states that “[s]acred things (sacrae … res) are those which have been consecrated by an act of the state, and not privately.” The Emperor’s will determines whether a site is made sacred: “A public site can only be made ‘sacred’ where the Emperor dedicates it or gives permission to dedicate it.” Macrobius pithily defines sacer in this way: “Anything marked out for the gods is said to be ‘consecrated (sacrum vocatur).’” On the other hand, the sanctus thing or person is under sanction – protected by the divine from violation.

In the final analysis, if not always synonymous with sacer, the sanctus is always very closely associated with it. The sacer, the sanctus and the religiosum combine to form a category of high-worth phenomena which contrast with the profanum. As already noted, the commonality between the two terms is seen in the compound sacrosanctus (sacrosanct), which I discuss shortly in relation to the corporal inviolability of elite officials.

806 LSJ, s.v ἱερός (italics theirs).
807 Ibid. (italics theirs).
808 Ibid. s.v ἱερός, III.
809 Ibid. II. 3 (italics theirs).
810 Ibid. II. 2 (italics theirs).
811 Ti. Gracch., 15.2.
812 This is not to deny that local processes of consecration took place. The sick in Epidaurus, for example, on being healed, “consecrated [gifts] to the god [Aesculapius] (mercedem sacraverunt deo)” (Livy, 45.28.3, my trans.).
813 Dig., 1.8.6.3. The text emphasizes the ineffectiveness of private consecrations: “…if any one affects to make something sacred on his own behalf privately, the thing does not become sacred but remains profane.” See also 1.8.9pr.: “Sacred places [sacra loca] are such as are dedicated by the state (publice sunt dedicata), whether in a city or in the country.”
814 Ibid. 1.8.9.1 (citing the jurist Ulpianus, d. ca. 228 CE).
815 Sat., 3.7.3. Public rites of consecratio are in view in the passage.
The paired processes of *dedicatio* (surrender) and *consecratio* (transformation into divine possession) marked the transformation of an item from human to divine possession.\textsuperscript{816} A further extension of the *consecratio* was damning a malefactor to death as possession of the gods; one also finds the process of *devotio*, in which enemies were guaranteed to the gods. Both of these examples of negative sacrality will be discussed presently. By way of summarizing the controlled nature of sacrality, I adduce Festus: “…the sacred is that … which has been dedicated and consecrated to the gods (*quod dis dedicatum atque consecratum sit*)”; moreover, “the Roman pontiffs do not consider something to be sacred … if it has been dedicated to a god by private religious rituals (*privatis ... religionis*).”\textsuperscript{817}

**B. Elite (Positive) Sacrality**

The next step is to demonstrate how sacrality ideology (combining *sacer* and *sanctus*) functioned to perpetuate the strict stratifications of Roman society. I want to show how the terminology constructs a divine evaluation of a person (place, or thing). Positive sacrality constructed a person as proximate to the divine – as a powerful agent. He or she (in the case of the Vestals) was active in maintaining the religio-social status quo. The jurist Gaius expresses this in his formulation of the binary basic to the Roman worldview. Classification of phenomena as either sacred or profane is “*summa rerum divisio* (the main division of things).”\textsuperscript{818}

Religio-political sacrality binds divine and political/military institutions together as the transcendant source of authority. The alignment of the theologically and politically valuable, in the class of the sacred over against that which is not proximate to the divine, maintains the power relations between the “actives” and the “passives” of society. It is the forceful, ruling body which is sacred/valuable. The passive body is largely excluded from the category of holiness. Even the sacrality of the *matrona* hinges on her being

\textsuperscript{816} Jerzy Linderski comments that the “…transfer of a thing from the human into the divine sphere was accomplished through the act of *dedicatio* and *consecratio*, the former indicating surrender of an object into divine ownership, the latter its transformation into a *res sacra*.” He further observes that high officials were required to enact the sacrality (“*Dedicatio*,” *OCD*, 422). See also Linderski’s comments under “*consecratio*” (*Ibid.* 362), where *dedicatio* and *consecratio* are called a “twofold act.” The *OLD* defines *consecratio* and its verb *consecro* as devoting a person, positively or negatively, to the divine (*s.v* *consecratio* and *conseco*).

\textsuperscript{817} Festus, 424 (my trans.).

\textsuperscript{818} The whole discussion of Book VIII in the *Digest* occurs under the heading, “On the Division and Quality of Things (*De Divisione Rerum et Qualitate*).” I have modified Munro’s rendering “On the Division of Things and Their Respective Natures.” The English “quality,” I feel, better captures the relative value assigned to each category; “nature” is too neutral.
appropriately passive; she was not to be sexually violated. By contrast, the active *vir* forcefully acts to govern others. The slave and the low-class citizen are to fulfill their economic roles with due submission (i.e., passivity). They will only enter into sacrality if condemned of a crime and devoted to the deities through state execution.

**i. Gods/esses**

The natural place to set a benchmark for sacrality language is from predications of the divine and their abodes. Cicero addresses Jupiter thus: “O sacred Jupiter (*sancte Iuppiter!*).”

The pious Aeneas urges his crew to set sail at the inspiration of an unnamed deity to whom he says, “we follow you, O holy one of the gods (*sequimur te, sancte deorum*).”

The bodies of the deities are called holy in several places. Lucretius (d. ca. 50 BCE) addresses a goddess by referring to “your … holy body (*tuo … corpore sancto*).” Later he has Nature set the bounds in which all things reside, including “the holy bodies of the gods (*divum corpora sancta*).”

Valerius describes the “most holy treasury (*sanctissimi thesauri*)” of Proserpine’s temple at Locri.

Livy makes clear why the sanctuary is sacred: it is the goddess’ “own temple (*suam templum*)” which she will defend. Additionally, groves, the birds used in augury, streams and sacrificial fires are all described in sacral terms in the literature. Weapons, too, could be deemed sacred.

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819 Mil., 31.85 (my trans.).
820 Aen., 4.576 (my trans.).
821 1.38 (my trans.).
822 Ibid. 1.1016 (my trans.).
823 1.1. ext.1. Livy describes the same location with “the sanctity of [this] temple (*sanctitate templi*)” (29.18.3). Later the treasury is described as “inviolate (*intactis illis thesauris*)” (29.18.8); its content is called “sacred money (*sacram pecuniam*)” (29.18.6, 15).
824 Ibid. 29.18.17. He also calls the site the goddess’ “own habitation and her own temple (*suam sedem suoque templum*);” which she protects (29.18.18, my trans.). Elsewhere, Livy refers to “the two holiest temples in the world (*duo sanctissima in terris templa*) which were violated by human blood” (45.5.11).
825 Regarding temples, the god Aesculapius is said to have avenged the felling of “a grove consecrated to his temple (*consecratum templo suo lucum*)” (Val. Max., 1.1.19). For groves, Cicero talks of “most holy groves (*sanctissimis lucis*)” (Mil., 31.85; my trans.). Cicero describes augury birds as “the holy bodies of birds (*corpora sancta Avium*)” (Div., 1.108, my trans.). Concerning streams, Tacitus mocks Nero for polluting “the sacred waters” of a stream by washing his body in them; the illness which ensued evidenced the gods’ anger (Ann., 14.22). Virgil terms sacrificial fires “holy fires (*sanctos ignis*)” (Aen., 3.406).
826 The anti-Roman, pro-Carthaginian faction gathered at Leontini in Syracuse (ca. 214 BCE). They prayed to Olympian Jupiter “to be propitious and lend them those sacred arms to use in defence of the shrines of the gods and in defence of their liberty (*propitius praebeat sacra arma pro patria, pro deum delubris, pro libertate seie armantibus*)” (Livy, 24.21.10, slightly modified).
ii. Vestal Virgins

The Vestal virgins offer great insight into what constituted a (positively) sacral body. Livy records how Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome (d. ca. 670 BCE), established the cult. “By the rule of virginity and other ceremonies, he invested them with awe and sanctity (virginitate aliiisque caerimoniis venerabiles ac sanctas fecit).” Immediately, two factors emerge for female sanctity: an unpenetrated body, and participation in official rituals.

The pollution of the Vestal body through sexual contact is regularly recorded. Pliny the Younger reports how Domitian (ca. 89 CE), in his capacity as Chief Pontiff, had Cornelia the head of the Vestals executed for sexual misconduct (incestum). As she was being lowered into a pit to be buried alive, she slipped and the executioner offered his hand to steady her. “She declined it and drew back, as though she put away from her with horror the idea of having her chaste and pure body (casto puroque corpore) defiled by his loathsome touch. Thus she preserved her sanctity to the last (novissima sanctitate).” The cultural logic was that only the corporally whole Vestal could cultivate divine favor. Accordingly, a condemned priestess would defend herself by pointing to her record of effective service.

Virgil’s characterization of the Volscian warrior-virgin Camilla also illumines the corporal purity of the Vestals. Camilla was a priestess, “...well pleased to serve Diana alone, to remain a virgin forever, worshiping Chastity and the chase.” As her death looms near, Diana seeks revenge against the virgin’s killer, wanting “retribution in blood

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827 I leave a discussion of priestly sacrality until the section on the emperors. I note, too, that while these men and the Vestals came from the social elite, in the Hellenistic context temple-ministers could be called “ἱερὸς δουλὸς.” Cf. Beate Dignas, Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 193-94. Dignas states that despite doulos (slave) featuring in their title, the ministers were maintained by cult and “belonged to” the deity, and enjoyed “a privileged, protected status.” Ibid. 194.
828 1.20.3 (slightly modified). The only priestesses officially recognized in Rome, the Vestals were expected to remain virgins for 30 years (Plut., Num., 10.1).
830 Parker notes that incestum is a more severe charge than stuprum (illicit sexual contact, whether adultery or rape). “Both familial incest and the Vestal’s incestum [involve] ... not just legal but religious consequences, and so, danger to the state as a whole.” “Why Were The Vestals Virgins?,” 583.
831 Ep., 4.11.7-9; citation section 9.
832 For example, one Taccia prays to Vesta, desperate for exoneration from an incestum charge: “I have done your rites (sacras) with chaste hands (castas manus)” (Val. Max., 8.1.absol.5). Cornelia – in the case retold by Pliny – exclaims: “How can Caesar think me guilty of incest, when he has conquered and triumphed after my hands have performed the sacred rites?” Ep., 4.11.7; trans. John B. Firth (London: Walter Scott, 1900).
833 Aen., 12.582-84.
… from the man who wounds and profanes her hallowed flesh (*quicumque sacrum violarit volnere corpus*)."\(^{834}\)

Another important window onto the Vestals’ sacrality is afforded by Plutarch and Dio of Halicarnassus. From their comments, we can also confirm the overlap of the Greek terms ἡγιώς and ἱερός with the Latin sacer and sanctus. Plutarch presents the priestesses as “παρθένους ἱερὰς Ἐστιάδας,” that is, “holy Vestal virgins.”\(^{835}\) Their role was to guard “τὸ πῦρ ἅγιοστείαν (the consecrated fire).”\(^{836}\) The characterization of Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome and possible establisher of the Vestals, further colors the Vestals. He is called “Romulus … [the] eminently religious (Ῥωμύλον θεοσβή διαφερόντως).”\(^{837}\)

Plutarch’s account of the live-interment penalty continues the sacral characterization. The priestesses are, again, routinely called “the holy virgins (τῶν ἱερῶν παρθένων).”\(^{838}\) They are “consecrated [to this office] (καθεἱερωθηναῖ).”\(^{839}\) Most interesting for this study, the historian emphasizes (as did Pliny in his description of Cornelia) that the virgins’ σώματα were holy. They were entrusted with the perpetual fire because “…the nature of fire [is] pure and uncorrupted, and therefore [it was dedicated] to chaste and undefiled bodies (ὡς καθαρὰν καὶ ἅφθαρτον τὴν τοῦ πυρὸς οὐσίαν ἀκηράτοις καὶ ἀμίαντοις παρατιθεμένου σώμασιν).”\(^{840}\)

The assimilation of the purity of fire to that of the virginal body is striking. The adjectives καθαρός (physically clean, spotless), ἅφθαρτος (incorrupt, undecaying), ἀκηράτος (undefiled, pure) and ἀμίαντος (undefiled, pure) in relation to the priestesses qua bodies emphasize that their sacrality arises from their untouched corporeality. Honorability – whether in terms of sacrality or chastity – is corporeally based.

\(^{834}\) Ibid. 12.591.

\(^{835}\) Plut., *Rom.*, 22.1.

\(^{836}\) Ibid.

\(^{837}\) Ibid.

\(^{838}\) Ibid.

\(^{839}\) Ibid., *Num.*, 9.5; also 9.8, 10.1, 10.7. I note the proximity of Plutarch to the 1st cent. CE milieu; he was born ca. 46 CE and died ca. 120

\(^{839}\) Ibid. 10.1; this action is done by the Pontifex Maximus. The verb is καθεἱερών: to consecrate, dedicate. They are thereby installed in a “sacred office (ἱερουργιας)” (Ibid. 10.2). Thus they had a striking effect on those who came in contact with them: a convict en route to execution would be freed; a person who passed under the litter which carried them would be executed (Ibid. 10.3-4).

\(^{840}\) Ibid. 9.5. I have basically followed Perrin (LCL), except that she has “chaste and undefiled persons” whereas I have rendered the Greek literally with “chaste and undefiled bodies.” Plutarch gives this as one of two possible reasons for the association of fire with virgins; the other is that fire is barren. Regardless, the purity of the priestesses as unpenetrated bodies is clearly part of the cultural script around sacrality.
Elsewhere, Plutarch describes the execution by burial of another deflowered priestess. He calls her a “σῶμα ταῖς μεγίσταις καθιερωμένον ἁγιστείας (a body which has been consecrated to the highest services of religion).”841 Similarly, Dionysius of Halicarnassus recounts the pleading of the Vestal Aemilia: “Ὁ Βεσταὶ … [I have kept] a pure mind and holy body (ψυχὴν ἐχονσα καθεραν καὶ σῶμα ἁγιόν).”842

The notion of being worthy to be so devoted is clear: her body must be of outstanding quality. Commenting on the account of Aemilia, Parker gives society’s collective interpretation of the Vestals as signifiers of the state’s wholeness. “The Vestal was thus the totem of Rome, and her sacred character derives from her status as the embodiment of the clan … as long as the Vestal remained intact, so did Rome.”843 The disqualified priestess shows how, at this elite level, bodily connections defile and so exclude from the category of sacrality.

The implication is clear; once defiled, there is no mechanism for re-sacralization. In the case of the Vestals, their physical wholeness was the basis of their purity and, once this was lost, their dishonor was a perpetual, embodied stigma. Noteworthy, too, is Plutarch’s account of the death procession and rite in which the Vestal is made liminoid through public ceremony. She is fastened to a litter with her mouth muzzled; the crowds make way and “follow it without uttering a sound, in a terrible depression of soul. No other spectacle is more appalling.”844 This de-socialization is further dramatized as the priest ushers her into her underground chamber. She herself is veiled, the chief priest “[stretches] his hands towards heaven and [utters] certain mysterious prayers,” and after guiding her to the staircase, “he turns away his face, as do the rest of the priests.”845 Thereupon, her chamber is covered over. These public acts, her veiling, and the drama of the priests turning away as they reject her, all show the liminality inherent in the execution process. Her initial entry into the state of sacrality was facilitated by ritual, and her being expelled was enacted with equally powerful symbolism.

These images of sacrality from both the Roman and Greek perspectives converge to present the exclusivity of the holy body. The Vestals have a “castum et purum corpus (chaste and pure body)” or an “ἀκήρατον καὶ ἀμίαντον σῶμα (pure and undefiled

841 Ibid. 10.5. Again, I follow Perrin; she has “a life which had been consecrated,” whereas I use “a body.”
842 Ant. Rom., 2.68.4, (slightly modified).
843 “Why Were the Vestals Virgins?,” 574.
844 Ibid. 10.7 (italics mine). I emphasize spectacle in order to highlight the public announcement being made through the ritual.
845 Ibid.
Only six women held the office of Vestal virgin at any given time. Naturally, other cues of dress, hairstyle, and undoubtedly bearing pointed out the priestesses. Edmondson draws our attention to the privilege which the elite women of the imperial household had of sitting with the Vestals at the games. These women sat in a location of extremely high status in a special enclosure next to the host of the games.

iii. Matronae

The Roman wife was also characterized in sacral terms in order to entrench her sexual exclusivity. I have opted to treat the matrona in connection with the Vestals because of the way the two groups were marked by strong sexual boundaries. Parker presents the underlying logic: “To control women and their sexuality was to control the state.” Most often elite women are lauded for their chastity, rather than their sanctity per se. John Scheid argues that “the supreme virtue of women” was pudicitia, which he defines as “purity and modesty of manner … [including also] the idea of conjugal faithfulness and discreet behavior, essential to a good reputation.”

Praise of matronly sanctity is also found in inscriptional evidence. He compares this with the Vestal’s “supreme body.”

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846 Respectively, Plin., Ep., 4.11.9; Plut., Num., 9.5.
847 Ibid. 10.1.
848 For the Vestals’ special veil (the suffibulum) and hair ribbon (the infula), see John Scheid, “Claudia the Vestal Virgin,” in Roman Women: Edited and with a New Introduction by Augusto Fraschetti, trans. Linda Lapping (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 25. He describes an altar with a Vestal statue from the 2nd cent. CE. He also remarks: “[The Vestals’] virginal status was defined by the same symbolic garments as those worn by the matrons.” “Vestal Virgin,” 30.
849 Edmondson, “Public Spectacles,” 14 (cf. 19).
850 Parker, “Why Were the Vestals Virgins?,” 588.
851 For example, Cicero calls Quinta Claudia “the woman who was considered the chastest of the matrons (femina … quae matronarum castissima putabatur)” (Har. Resp., 13.27).
852 John Scheid, “Claudia the Vestal Virgin,” 33 and 27-28, respectively. Elizabeth Forbis presents an epitaph for a mother recording the following virtues: “modestia, probitas, pudicitia, obsequium (compliance), lanificium (preparation of wool), diligentia, and fides.” “Women’s Public Image in Italian Honorary Inscriptions,” The American Journal of Philology 111/4 (Winter, 1990): 494. Forbis records the eulogizer’s comment that “praise for all good women is simple and similar.” The list of domestic qualities were stock staples (Ibid. 493-94).
853 An honorific inscription by a collegia of builders (224 BCE, Volsinii) praises their patroness, stating “[I]et us co-opt her in honor of [her elite male relatives] and because of the chastity of her morals and the purity of her preservation of traditional sanctity (pro morum eius castitatae et ian priscarum consistudinis sanctitatae).” I cite this from Emily Hemelrijk, “Patronesses and ‘Mothers’ of Roman Collegia,” Classical Antiquity 27/1 (April, 2008): 116 (with slight modification). The comments on the historical setting occur at Ibid. 115. Nevertheless, although chastity is praised more often than sanctity, Hemelrijk’s analysis of the inscriptional evidence finds that the “traditional female virtues,” i.e., the private values of chastity and fecundity, are typically absent from public inscriptions. Rather, they inscribe the woman’s social status (and the status of her significant males as proof of hers) along with her benefactions (Ibid. 129-30).
854 Additionally, see Forbis for the lack of praise for domestic virtue in the inscriptional evidence (“Women’s Public Image,” 504). She notes that quite the opposite is the case in the idealizing modes of epitaphs and literature; here “chastity, marital fidelity, wifely and motherly devotion, dedication to housework” are praised (Ibid. 493).
virtue” of castitas (chastity, i.e., sexual abstinence).\textsuperscript{854} The Vestals simply embody an absolute abstinence and so are qualified for service of the goddess Vesta. Undoubtedly, the collocation of the priestesses and the matronae was a statement that the latter should model the Vestals in guarding the integrity of their bodies within their marriages.\textsuperscript{855}

Pliny the Younger demonstrates the overlap of Vestal and matronly sacrality. He writes of his concern at the ill health of the matron Fannia. Fannia had caught a fever from the Vestal virgin Junia, whom she had been nursing back to health. Sick virgins were removed from the atrium of Vesta and entrusted “into the care of some matron.”\textsuperscript{856} Again, we have confirmation of the association of the elite matron and the Vestals. The chastity of the priestesses is considered safest, outside their usual quarters, in the hands of the matrons who prize this quality in themselves. Additionally, Pliny extols the virtues of Fannia, in the light of her probable death: “Who knows when her like will be seen again. What chastity, what sanctity, what dignity, what constancy! (Quae castitas illi, quae sanctitas, quanta gravitas quanta constantia!)”\textsuperscript{857}

Valerius Maximus also associates a woman’s pudicitia and castitas (chastity) with sacrality. The first chapter of his sixth book is called “De Pudicitia (Of Chastity).”\textsuperscript{858} He invokes “Chastity” as a goddess. She resides “in the hearth consecrated to Vesta,” and at “the most holy marriage bed of Julia (sanctissimumque Iuliae genialeum torum).”\textsuperscript{859} She watches over Juno’s “sacred couch,” and dwells amongst the other deities “on the pinnacle of the Palatine.”\textsuperscript{860} In league with Juno, a major goddess in Rome,\textsuperscript{861} Chastity was a personified force that protected the chastity of boys, youths and women.\textsuperscript{862} Again, the overlap of the Vestals and the matronae is evident.

\textsuperscript{854} “Claudia the Vestal Virgin,” 28; cf. 30-33.
\textsuperscript{855} I have noted already the shared attire of the groups and the privilege elite women had of sitting with the priestesses at public events.
\textsuperscript{856} Ep., 7.19.2.
\textsuperscript{857} Ibid., 7.19.4.
\textsuperscript{858} 6.1.
\textsuperscript{860} 6.1.praef.
\textsuperscript{861} Juno was often called “Queen.” She was the goddess of women and also “military prowess, fertility and political organization.” She was also a member of the “Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva.” James Boykin Rives, “Juno,” OCD, 778-9.
\textsuperscript{862} In his opening invocation, Valerius appeals to Chastity to protect “the emblems of boyhood,” “the flower of youth,” and “the matron’s robe” (6.1.praef.).
The historian continues to give examples of *pudicitia* and/or *castitas* being violated, viz., where *stuprum* was committed.\(^{863}\) The overlap with sacrality language is apparent. When the Greek woman Hippo drowns herself to avoid being raped by enemy soldiers, “the glory of her sanctity [was] consigned to eternal memory (*sanctitatis ... gloriam aeternae traditam memoriae*).”\(^{864}\)

Valerius’ linking of the ideal matron with Vestal sacrality is seen in an anecdote reminiscent of the execution of the Vestal Cornelia mentioned earlier.\(^{865}\) It was forbidden for any man who summoned a *matrona* to court “to touch her body (*corpus*).”\(^{866}\) Thereby her “matronly honor (*matronale decus*)” was safeguarded. Moreover, “the matron’s robe should not be violated by the contact of a strange hand (*ut inviolata manus alienae tactu stola relinqueretur*).” The matronly *stola* or robe symbolized a woman’s chastity, protecting her from pollution.\(^{867}\)

Religious purity and chastity were sacred realities; they were of significant importance in cultivating the gods and fostering the wellbeing of the state.\(^{868}\) Augustus, the moral reformer, put away his adulterous daughter Julia, according to Tacitus, for having “…assaulted religion (*laesarum religionum*) and [having] violated [Rome’s] majesty (*violatae maiestatis*).”\(^{869}\) Here Tacitus confirms that illicit sexual contact harms the religio-political system.

However, when they behaved appropriately, the household of the empire’s elite women is marked as “that most holy household (*sanctissimi penates*).”\(^{870}\) Augustus’ sister Octavia, as a preeminent woman, is called “the most illustrious and most holy [sister] (*clarissimae ac sanctissimae sororis*).”\(^{871}\) In Livy, the emphasis falls on the ideal

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863 6.1.1-ext. 3 (i.e., the entire chapter).
865 She was executed by Domitian; as she faltered, she refused the executioner’s offer to steady her, as it would defile her (*Plin., Ep.*, 4.11.7-9).
866 2.1.5a (my trans). For “*corpus*” Shackleton Bailey has “person;” however, “body” is more accurate.
867 So Ovid warns the prudish matron to avoid his poetry: “Stay far away, you slender headbands (*vittae*), symbol of modesty, and you long ruffle (*instita*), you who cover the feet” (*Ars am.*, 1.31-32). Similarly, matrons who wear the *stola* and the *vitta* are protected by them “from being touched with pollution” (*Tr.*, 2.251-252). I cite both these from Edmondson, “Public Dress and Social Control,” 24.
868 For Valerius’ connection of the sexual violation of matrons and noble youths with religio-political decay, see 9.1.7 (where the duty to act as impartial judges was traded for illicit sex). Cf. Mueller, “*Vita, Pudicitia, Libertas*,” 239. Mueller also demonstrates the same connection in Apuleius (*Ibid.* 227, n. 17), and Cicero (*Ibid.* 239).
869 *Ann.*, 3.24 (my trans.). The crime of harming the State’s or emperor’s majesty is that of treason. For commentary see Mueller, “*Vita, Pudicitia, Libertas*,” 229-30. Similarly, Tiberius banished actors because they corrupted the morals of women and encouraged sedition (*Cass. Dio*, 57.21.3).
870 9.15.2.
matron’s *pudicitia* – with sacrality present by allusion.\(^{872}\) Thus, in his account of Lucretia’s rape, Livy repeats that it is the matron’s *pudicitia* which the rapist destroys. Lucretia responds to her husband’s greeting by saying “…what can be well with a woman who has lost her purity (*pudicitia*)?”\(^{873}\) The sacrality of her body is implicit when she describes herself with “my body alone has been violated (*corpus est tantum violatum*), my heart is guiltless.”\(^{874}\)

Violation is often ascribed to sacral phenomena, and so the association is at hand here. Nevertheless, the matron is not directly qualified with “sacred” or “sanctified.” As noted when discussing Lucretia earlier, her body is the site of her worth. Her “honor had been defeated (*expugnato decore muliebri*)” by the physical penetration.\(^ {875}\) Her purity – the matronly approximation of sacrality – was a physical quality and, once defiled, she enters an objective state of dishonor irrespective of her subjective non-compliance.

The same dynamic is found with the betrothed virgin, Verginia. Livy reiterates her fundamental quality, *pudicitia*.\(^ {876}\) Here, though, we have the association of *pudicitia* with the maiden’s free status.\(^ {877}\) Her violation was based on a ruse to treat her as a slave.\(^ {878}\) *In nuce*, it is “as a slave” that she was to have been “taken off to sexual violation (*ad stuprum*).”\(^ {879}\) Verginius, the maiden’s father, sums up his reaction: he would act in similar fashion to “protect his own body (*suum corpus*).”\(^ {880}\) The implication is that by slaying his daughter to prevent her rape he protects her from violation, but he does so to protect her *qua* body.

In sum, honor resides in the *pudicitia* of the virginal/matronly *corpus*. Once tangibly lost, it leads to a state of sub-human existence from which death is the only escape. While Livy does not directly predicate the sacrality of the matron, that chastity *is*

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\(^{872}\) Seneca is the same. For him, “the greatest evil of the age” is “unchastity (*impudicita*)” (*Cons. Helv.*, 16.3). His mother Helvia, whose “greatest glory has been [her] modesty (*maximum decus visa est pudicitia*)” (16.4), has not worn fitting clothes, “which showed the figure as plainly as though it were naked” (16.3). Also, she has taken pride in her fecundity, never aborting a child for the sake of vanity, as so “many other women” do (*Ibid.*).

\(^{873}\) *Ibid.* 1.58.7., section 5. In section 10, her suicide is designed that “no impure woman (*ulla impudica*) shall live through the precedent of Lucretia” (my trans.).

\(^{874}\) *Ibid.* 1.58.7.

\(^{875}\) *Ibid.* 1.58.5; my trans.

\(^{876}\) *Ibid.* 3.45.6; 3.48.8; 3.50.6, 8.

\(^{877}\) *Ibid.* 3.50.6 (cf. 3.50.10). Having slain his own daughter, Verginius recounts his logic, that “[t]o him the life of his daughter had been dearer than his own, if she had been permitted to live with liberty and purity (*si liberae ac pudicae vivere licitum*).” Here I follow Forster, except that I use “with liberty” for *liberae*. For *liber* as the property of the free person over against being a slave, see *OLD*, s.v *liber*, 1.

\(^{878}\) 3.48.3; 3.50.6.

\(^{879}\) 3.50.6 (my trans.).

\(^{880}\) 3.40.9.
the essence of her value is evident from other sources. So Macrobius understands a reference to “the most holy wife (sanctissima coniunx)” to focus on the “honor of the chastity of the uncorrupted” woman. In contrast, the polluted matronly body has lost its sexual exclusivity. Catullus describes the virgin who loses her chastity thus: “She has lost her chaste flower from her polluted body (polluto corpore).” This description captures the way a matron’s honor was corporeally located.

iv. Elite Males

The sacrosanctity of the tribunes of the plebs is another example of the sacrality enjoyed by elite religio-political figures. The personal inviolability of this magistracy became a paradigm for the sacrosanctity assumed by Caesar and Augustus and ensuing emperors. Livy states that the Plebians, in 449 BCE, established “the personal inviolability of the tribunes.”

They performed ancient rites to renew the tribunician status, so that they would be sacrosanct (ut sacrosancti uiderenter), and in addition to securing their inviolability by the sanctions of religion (religione inuiolatos eos), they enacted a law that whoever offered violence to the magistrates of the plebs … his head (caput) should be devoted to Jupiter, his possessions sold and the proceeds assigned to the temples of Ceres, Liber and Libera.

The tribunes of the plebs were high-ranking magistrates entrusted to protect those outside the patrician class from illegal abuse. Their protection from physical assault is expressed by their being made “sacrosancti,” that is, “protected by a religious sanction from violation, sacrosanct, inviolable.” This expression is a conflation of sacer and sanctus – to be sacer by reason of protective sanction. Such were “inuiolatos (not to be violated)” or not to be “harmed.” As noted earlier, Plutarch refers to the tribune as “sacred and inviolable (ιερὸν … καὶ ἄσωλον), because he was consecrated to the people.

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881 Sat., 3.3.6 (my trans.).
882 62.46, my translation.
883 In the example from Livy which I now present, other magistracies are mentioned, viz., “tribunes, aediles [and] decemviral judges” (3.55.7). However, the tribune of the plebs is the office with which sacrosanctity is most commonly associated in the literature, thus I will refer to this. Livy himself, despite saying that all the plebian magistrates are sacrosanct, seems to acknowledge the jurists’ interpretation that the aediles are not sacrosanct (Ibid. 3.55.7). His final statement is that the “tribunes of the plebs were [in the jurists’ opinion] ‘sacrosanct’” (3.55.10).
884 3.55.6.
885 3.55.7 (significantly modified).
886 “The right of appeal … the one defence of liberty” was ensured by tribunes (Ibid.).
887 OLD, s.v sacrosanctus. For another instance of the sacrosanctity of the tribunes in Livy, see Ibid. 9.9.
888 OLD, s.v sacrosanctus.
889 “[W]hoever offered violence” against them, translates “qui … nocuisset.”
and was a champion of the people.”890 With the Greek terminology, one has the divinely sanctioned nature of the office reinforced. Both Greek terms refer to that which is possessed by the gods and under their tutelage. Festus makes the protected nature of sacrosanctity clear: “If any one violates it, he is executed.”891

Two factors are made explicit in establishing their sacrosanctity: religious rites and legislation. “Certain sacred, and ancient rites (relatis quibusdam ... caerimoniiis)” were used to bring divine protection to the officers, leaving them “inviolate.” Moreover, a law892 was passed to entrench this sanction. This legislation therefore secures the sacrality of the officers by means of sanction. Violators are bound over as sacer to Jove, to face execution and the loss of property.893 Likewise, Plutarch recorded that sacrosanctity belongs to the officer who “had been consecrated to the people (τιφ δήμῳ καθωσίω).”894

Cicero refers to the abuse of a tribune during the chaos of the late Republic. The violations occurred in a scene of religious and political chaos. “You saw the houses of the magistrates attacked, the temples of the gods burnt, the fasces895 of a most admirable man and illustrious consul burnt, the most holy body (sanctissimum corpus) of a most fearless and virtuous officer, a tribune of the people, not only laid hands on and insulted, but wounded with the sword and killed.”896

Here Cicero recoils at the sight of the mutilated “most holy body” of the tribune. He was a man “most fearless and of the best quality (fortissimo atque optimi).”897 His was a body protected by religious sanction – it was not to have had even a hand laid upon it. The consul is also associated with this sacrality; he is mentioned after the destruction of the temples and before the tribune. As an outstanding political figure he was “summi viri et clarissimi consulis (a most admirable man and illustrious consul).” Summi viri is

890 Ti. Gracch., 15.2.
891 Festus, 422 (my trans.).
892 Lex Valeria Horatia was passed in 449 BCE.
893 Paradoxically, the offender also becomes sacred. I will address the (negative) sacer status of the offender below as the sacer to a god(s) formula is common in a penal context.
894 Ti. Gracch., 15.2. The verb καθοσίω means to “dedicate” (LSJ, s.v καθοσίω) – that is, to make ὡσίος: “hallowed” (LSJ, s.v ὡσίος).
895 The bundle of wooden sticks carried by the lictors who accompanied the magistrates. They represented the latter’s authority.
896 Red. Sen., 3.7 (with slight modification of “most holy body” for the translator’s “holy person”).
897 Fortissimus is the superlative of fortis – “strong,” “brave” (OLD, s.v fortis). It is central to the characterization of viri as active exponents of force.
literally “greatest vir” – a reference to his being a true, forceful man.\textsuperscript{898} Aeneas, the exemplary vir, was willing to die to defend his home. He prays to the spirits of his ancestors in the underworld: “My holy and guiltless soul shall descend to you (\textit{sancta ad vos anima atque istius nescia culpae descendam}) … I have not been unworthy of my kingly sires.”\textsuperscript{899} The correlation between elite male rule and sacrality is evident.\textsuperscript{900}

Other authors continue the alignment of sacrality and elite religio-political agency. For Seneca, Cato the younger, a military leader and candidate for consul (51 BCE), was a paragon of Stoic self-restraint and sanctity. A grieving mother is told not to mourn excessively, for her dead son “was not holier than Cato (\textit{non fuit sanctior quam Cato}).”\textsuperscript{901}

Quintilian inculcates morality into his students to prepare them for scrutiny by “the most holy Censor (\textit{sanctissimus censor}).”\textsuperscript{902} Another striking example of elite male sacrality is found in Valerius Maximus’ description of the aged Scipio Africanus.\textsuperscript{903} “So great a man” is called “a gift of the gods.”\textsuperscript{904} Visitors admired his doorposts “as if they were the most religious of shrines, a sanctified temple (\textit{tamquam aliquam religiosissimam aram sanctumque templum}).”\textsuperscript{905} “The spectacle of his presence” causes “admiration,” and visitors “left gifts as is customary for a god.”\textsuperscript{906} Overall, these references demonstrate that sacrality is appropriate terminology for the elite leader.

\textsuperscript{898} In a similar way, Cicero calls upon the mythic example of Hercules to inspire patriotic sacrifice. The hero is called “that most holy Hercules (\textit{illo sanctissimo hercule})” (Sest., 68.143, my trans.). Elsewhere, Cicero lauds Quintus Scaevola (consul 95 BCE and pontifex maximus 89 BCE) as a “\textit{vir sanctissimus atque ornatissimus} (a man most holy and most decorated)” (Rosc. Am., 12.33, my trans.). As such, Cicero laments his corporeal violation. In another trial, Cicero describes the ex-consul Torquatus as “a most holy and a most dignified man (\textit{sancitissimo et gravissimo viro})” (Pis., 20.47, my trans.).\textsuperscript{903} Aemilius who speaks here would, in two years’ time (from the historical setting of the dream), destroy Carthage (146 BCE).

\textsuperscript{901} Cons. Marc., 22.3 (my trans.).

\textsuperscript{902} Inst. 4. pr.3 (my trans.).

\textsuperscript{903} This Scipio was the illustrious general/politician who finally defeated Hannibal in the battle of Zama in 202 BCE.

\textsuperscript{904} 2.10.2.

\textsuperscript{905} \textit{Ibid.} my translation.

\textsuperscript{906} Valerius also recounts how generals performed sacrifices to the “immortal gods,” practiced self-restraint, and so “learnt … how holy they must keep their hands (\textit{quam sanctas manus habere deberent})” (2.2.8, my trans.). Likewise, the consul Nascia received the Idean mother (a goddess) with his “most holy hands (\textit{sancitissimis manibus})” (\textit{Ibid.} 7.5.2). He also describes Meneius Agrippa (consul 530 BCE) as a man who, through a reversal in fortunes, had “poor [hands] indeed, but [these were] sanctas (clean, holy)” (\textit{Ibid.} 4.4.2). Similarly, he describes the Areopagus in Athens as a “most holy council (\textit{sancitissimum consilium})” (\textit{Ibid.} 2.6.4).
v. Priests and the Emperor

I have already outlined the cultural view that the priest’s body was to be free of physical deformity. The sacrosanctity of the emperor’s body also featured in Roman thought. From Julius Caesar on, it was standard for the Emperor to be Pontifex Maximus. This tradition was not broken until the Christian emperor Gratian refused the mantle in 375 CE. Appian describes how the Senate declared Caesar to be “τὸ σῶμα ἱερὸς καὶ ἁγιός εἶναι (a sacred and inviolable body)” (my trans.). Cassius Dio also records that Caesar was to “enjoy the immunities granted to the tribunes, so that if any one insulted him by word or deed (ἦ λόγῳ αὐτῶν ὑβρίση), that man should be an outlaw and accursed (ἱερός).”

Caesar’s “holiness” means that he is not to suffer physical or verbal hubris, while the one who offends against him in either manner becomes “holy” in an entirely different way: the offender becomes devoted to the gods (ἱερός, sacer) as punishment. According to Dio, the same sacrosanctity was granted to Octavius. The name “Augustus,” which the Senate conferred on Octavius in 27 BCE, expresses his sacrality. After Augustus, “…all emperors permanently exercised the tribunician powers as the legal basis of their civil power.” From this, we see that the emperor as the supreme religio-political agent was constructed as a sacred body, viz., he was corporeally inviolable.

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907 See Chapter 4.4.B.iv.
909 Ibid. 214-15.
910 B. Civ., 2.16.106. Later, Appian describes Caesar’s murders as having “performed their crime, in a sacred place, on a man sacred and inviolable (ἐς ἁγιόν καὶ ἁγιόν).” Ibid. 2.17.118 (my trans.). Caesar is also referred to as that “sacred and honored man (ἱερὸς … καὶ τιμίος ἀνήρ)” (Ibid. 2.18.131; my trans.).
911 Hist. Rom., 44.5.3. Appian recounts that Caesar’s corporal sanctity was modeled on the sacrosanctity of the Tribune of the Plebs (B. Civ., 2.19.138). Cassius Dio also mentions that, along with his inviolability, Caesar’s son, “should he beget or even adopt one, should be appointed high priest.” That is, priestly function is closely associated with sacral identity.
912 Hist. Rom., 49.15.5-6. Octavius also grants to Octavia and Livia “the same security and inviolability as the tribunes” (Ibid. 49.38.1).
913 Cf. Klauck’s observation that Augustus “comes from the sacral vocabulary” (Religious Context, 299); he notes that the Greek equivalent is ἱερός.
vi. Generalized Male Sacrality

Sacrality language filters down to describe other males who embodied civic and religious virtues. A passage from Sallust is useful because it characterizes the sacrality of the warlike male against the femininity and servility of the sub-male. The historian has the Republican General Marius refer to the gender lessons learned “from my father and other holy men (ex parente meo et ex alis sanctis viris),” namely, that “vain indulgences belong to women, and labor to men (viris laborem).”\(^{915}\) The speech clusters discipline and military force with the mores of his “[sanctified] father and the other sanctified men.” “Labor,” “glory,” “arms and armor,” “the toil and dust of the field” and bravery mark the true man. The sub-vir is feminimized and servilized. Concerned with the “vain indulgences of women (munditias muleribus),” they are “slaves of gluttony and debauchery.”\(^{916}\)

The conspirators were also vilified as “slaves … of debauchery” because that cast them as enjoying the passive role in sex.\(^{917}\) Literally, they were “dedicated … to the most shameful part of the body (turpissimae parti corporis).” For the true male who models his holy forebears, the body is not to be sexually penetrated. The part in view is the anus; when invaded it becomes “most foul/shameful.” On the other hand, Cicero presents the true man as bound to consider this “the most holy … part of the body (sanctissima … parte corporis).”\(^{918}\)

In another trial, Cicero constructs the ideal vir as “holy (sanctum), temperate, innocent, modest.” The opposite is the defendant Publius Clodius, who is “worthless, wicked, impious … lustful.”\(^{919}\) The one brings health to the “body of the Republic,” the other “is rotten,” infecting it. Later in the trial, he ironically calls Dolabella (a partisan of

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\(^{915}\) Iug., 85 (modified). The double use of *viri* – elite males – as authentic actors should be noted. With “other sanctified men,” Marius declares his father to be *sanctus.*

\(^{916}\) These references are cropped from *Ibid.* The expression “slaves of gluttony and debauchery” renders “dediti ventri et turpissimae parti corporis.” Literally, these are “surrendered/dedicated to the stomach and to the most shameful part of the body.” The expression “dedicated to the stomach” is Sallust animalizing his enemies. Elsewhere he describes “animals as obedient to their stomachs (pecora … ventri oboedientia)” (*Cat.*, 1.1).

\(^{917}\) In *Ibid.* 13.3, Sallust caricatures them as “men who [sexually] play the woman (viri maliebria pati)” (my trans.).

\(^{918}\) Cicero, *Red. Sen.*, 11 (my trans.). The defendant is castigated for having not repulsed “the obscene impurity of men from the holiest portion of his body.” Next he is characterized in feminine and servile terms (*Ibid.* 13-15, my trans.).

\(^{919}\) *Phil.*, 8.5.16.
Mark Antony) a “most holy man (sanctissimi viri).”\footnote{Ibid. 8.19.42.} In reality, Cicero considers both Dolabella and Mark Antony to be “most impure (impurissimos),” engaging in pathic sex.

The true man is forcefully active and sacral; passivity – femininity and servility – aligns, therefore, with the profane. Not to guard one’s body from sexual penetration is to forfeit the aura of sacrality.\footnote{Valerius Maximus also signals that “sanctity” depends on avoiding sexual violation. A tribune was found guilty of stuprum, that is, “the crime of unchastity (crimine impudicitiae)" against his (male) assistant. The historian states that the senior figure should have instructed the young man in virtue rather than being a “corruptor of his sanctity (sanctitatis corruptor)” (6.1.12).} Quintilian similarly portrays the true man in terms of sacrality. The excellent orator and his speech are virile; speech marked by “effeminate and voluptuous charms” is condemned.\footnote{Ibid. 5.12.20.} Speech should be “manly and pure (mascoli et incorrupti)” as befits the “grave and sanctified man (gravis et sancti viri).”\footnote{Ibid. 1.22.1, my trans.} Sacrality is further evidenced by the civic virtue of exemplary Roman men. Pliny the Younger praises the sanctity of Corellia Hispulla’s father. He was a vir “most dignified and most holy (gravissimum et sanctissimum virum).”\footnote{Ibid. 4.2.125, slightly modified.} Pietas (piety) – the essential Roman concern for fidelity to the gods, the state and one’s compatriots/family\footnote{Plin., Ep., 8.3.6.} – was described by Cicero as a “most grave and sanctified name (gravissimum et sanctissimum nomen pietatis).”\footnote{Ibid. 10.1.115, where ideal speech is “chaste, forcible, correct, and often spirited (sancta et gravis oratio et castigate et frequenter vehemens quoque.” The excellent orator is “the best of men (optimo viro)” and his career “the most holy of employments (opere sanctissimo)” (Ibid. 12.11.1; my trans.).} Similarly, Sencea lauds “fidelity [as] the most holy good of the human heart (fides sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum).”\footnote{Plin., Ep., 3.3. In another letter, Pliny praises the jurist Titus Aristo: “None is more grave, more sanctified, more learned than him! (nihil est ... illo gravius sanctius doctius)” (Ibid. 1.22.1, my trans.). The letter continues to praise him as frugal and hardworking; he is also “chaste, pious, just and courageous” (Ibid. 1.22.4-7).} At the
international level, compacts between nations are “sacred and inviolable (sancta atque sacrata).”

One Ciceronian passage in particular helpfully synthesizes the ideas of the Roman citizen’s sacrality and corporal inviolability. Cicero presents the rights of all citizens to have immunity from flogging and crucifixion. He then states that such protection stops “the assembly [being] polluted by the contagion of an executioner … the forum of the Roman people ought to be purified from all such traces of nefarious wickedness … the assembly ought to be kept pure (castam), the campus holy (sanctum), the body of every Roman citizen inviolate (inviolatum corpus omnium civium Romanum), and the rights of liberty unimpaired.” After this, he observes that “the Porcian law removed the rods from the body of every Roman citizen.” The citizen’s body is clearly marked by sacrality with religio-political implications, viz., it is not to be assaulted. Collectively, the citizenry’s political venues have the same value.

The above discussion of sacral language has shown that the concept, in its positive aspect, relates to those of high social value. It is the religio-political agent – the Vestal virgin, the priest, the Emperor, and the virtuous elite male – who is characterized as sacral. The chastity of the matrona similarly merges into this domain. Such persons have bodies which are sacred: they are – or should be – kept exclusive. In particular, appropriate sexual exclusivity is basic to the maintenance of their corporeal sanctity. For the elite male agent this correlates with always taking the active role in sexual and forceful encounters. Bodily sacrality maps on to the polarities of honor and shame.

C. Negative Sacrality: Consecration to the Gods for Destruction

The next aspect of sacrality is the concept’s negative pole. To be sacer in the negative sense is to be a person or thing consecrated to a god (or gods) for destruction, as I briefly noted in relation to Dio’s comments on those who violate the sacrality of the emperor. We may refer to this as penal sacrality. Two instances of this mode of sacrality demonstrate the Romans’ religious construction of malefactors. The first is the individual condemned for what was initially treason, but was later subsumed under the crime of maiestas – that is, harming the majesty of the Roman state or, increasingly, the emperor.

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928 Livy, 39.37.16.
930 Ibid. 4.11. I follow Blake Tyrrell, except that I translate corpus with “body” instead of “person.”
931 Ibid. 4.12, my trans.
The second is the general’s promise to consecrate an enemy army to the infernal deities in exchange for Roman victory.

The basic formula for the consecration of the individual criminal is demonstrated by the XII Tables. “If a patron should defraud his client, let him be made sacred (sacer esto),” Livy, as mentioned already, recorded that the sacrosanctity of the plebian tribune was protected by a severe penalty against an offender. Anyone who physically harmed the officer (and other magistrates) stood accursed. Hence the malefactor’s “head should be sacred to Jove (caput Iovi sacrum esset), his possessions sold and the proceeds assigned to the temple of Ceres, Liber and Libera.”

The formula is also found in Verrius Flaccus’ Dictionary. For example, any one who beats a parent is to be executed: “Let him be sacred to the gods of parents (divis parentum sacer esto).” Likewise, although without the mention of a deity, Flaccus records, of anyone who shifts a boundary stone, that “he himself and his oxen are to be sacred (et ipsum et boves sacros esse).” The sacer-to formula in this negative context gives “sacred” the sense of “accursed and devoted to” the relevant deities. I will retain the original language of “sacred” to reinforce the binary nature of the concept: that is, the concept of sacrality contained a polarity.

In some instances, Jupiter is specified as the god to whom the offender is consecrated. This was seen in Livy’s account of the establishment of the plebian Tribunician’s sacrosanctity. Regarding anyone guilty of violating the officer, “his head is sacred to Jupiter (caput Iovi sacrum esset).” As another example, Festus refers to an undefined law and states its penalty: “Let [the offender] be sacred to Jove (Iovi sacer esto).” On other occasions the gods are given generically. Thus “sacred laws

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932 Duo. Tab., 8.21 (my trans.). Servius references the law (Comm., 6.609). His comments relate to the scene in the epic where torture is inflicted on the impious in Tartarus. The fraudulent patron is included in the vice catalogue which merits infernal suffering.

933 3.55.7 (modified). The historical context is 449 BCE. A similar formula occurs later without the reference to the possessive deities. Anyone who aimed to be king would have “his head consecrated [i.e., to a god] and also his goods (sacrandoque cum bonis capite eius)” (Ibid. 2.8.2, my trans.).

934 Flaccus flourished under Augustus. His work is transmitted by Sextus Festus.

935 Festus, 260 (my trans.).

936 Ibid. 506 (my trans.).


938 Ibid. 506 (my trans.).

939 Ibid. 2.8.2 (my trans.). The full account, having devoted the man himself to Jove, requires the sale of his household with the proceeds going to the deities Ceres, Liber and Libera. Earlier, Livy has recounted how any one guilty of aspiring to be king would have “his head, with his possessions, made sacred (sacrandoque cum bonis capite eius)” (Ibid. 2.8.2, my trans.). Here no deity is made explicit, but Jove should be retrojected from the 3.55.7 incident.

939 Festus, 5 (my trans.).
(sacrae leges)" are those whose transgression makes the offender (and his family and possessions) "sacred to one of the gods (sacer alicui deorum)." Pliny lauds Trajan in his Panegyric for having "consecrated his own head, his own household to the wrath of the gods" should he act illegally in the role.

The basic elements that make an offender penally sacred are seen in the following quote from Festus. In this we see a mirroring of the official channels which were needed to positively consecrate an item or person to the gods: “A man is sacred (homo sacer is est), whom the people judged guilty of malefaction; it is not divine law that he be sacrificed, but he who kills him is not guilty of murder.” The historical context is the same as that just referred to in Livy, namely, the plebian uprising and their formation of political power. The judgment of the people refers to the civic assembly passing the death penalty; accursed status is only achieved by an official act of the collective. The act of making negatively sacer, just like its positive counterpart, “puts a man apart from his fellow citizens and marks him as the property of a god.”

Controversy existed as to whether this action constituted human sacrifice to the gods. The Roman elite rejected the equation; for them, only barbarians performed human sacrifice. However, the Greek historians, followed by the Christian apologists, made the connection. The Roman Festus, on presenting the sacer-formula, inserts the caveat that the malefactor was not killed as a sacrifice in accordance with divine law (“neque fas est eum immolari”). Bennet observes that the ability for anyone to kill the malefactor is unlike the controlled ritual of the typical animal sacrifice. In my opinion, Festus is acknowledging the similarity of the death to sacrifice, and thus seeks to distinguish it.

The basic Roman hostility to human sacrifice is stated by Pliny the Elder. “An incalculable debt is owed to the Romans who destroyed these monstrous practices (monstra), in which human sacrifice was considered an act pleasing to the gods (hominem

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940 Ibid. 422.
941 Pan., 64 (my trans.). Fowler states that he refers to the chthonic deities (“Original Meaning,” 62).
942 Festus, 424 (my trans.). The Latin is: “At homo sacer is est, quem populus iudicavit ob maleficium; neque fas est eum immolari, sed, qui occidi, parricidi non damnatur.” The infinitive “immolari” (to be sacrificed, immolated) will be discussed shortly, with regard to whether the killing of the offender was considered a sacrifice to the deities.
944 Cf. Rives, “Human Sacrifice,” 74-77. The bathing of Jove’s statue with arena blood, as mentioned above, is a common topos for the apologists (Ibid. 75ff.).
945 Festus, 424. That the execution of the sacer criminal may have once been seen as a sacrifice is intimated by the ancient mode of decapitation with the sacrificial axe. An axe was also used for the sacrificial animal. This explains the references to the “head (caput)” as the object which is sacred to the deity. Bennett, “Sacer Esto,” 9.
occidere religiosissimum erat) and eating the victim was thought to be beneficial to one’s health.”

Human sacrifice, for Pliny, is to kill with the expectation that the gods will be pleased, and then to eat the victim – a parallel, of course, with animal sacrifices.

The animal sacrifice was strictly controlled with key elements, including bloodshed, burning, and the examination of entrails by diviners. The animal was to be seen as a “willing” victim – going without compulsion to the altar. This is the mode of sacrifice which the Roman elite would not have applied to humans. J. Rives catalogues other Roman thinkers, including Cicero and Tacitus, who present human sacrifice as an abomination. For Livy, it is “a rite most un-Roman (minime Romano sacro),” In 97 BCE, the senate formally prohibited human sacrifices. However, Pliny the Elder, who conveyed this fact, comments that “…from this period the celebration of these horrid rites ceased in public, and, for some time, altogether.” Despite the official stance, human sacrifice occurred and was part of the collective consciousness.

Nevertheless, as I hope to show, the Romans certainly understood that violent death, after religious ceremony, could be offered as a benefaction to the gods, as a means of insuring the flow of reciprocity between humans and the divine. The Romans had two modes of presenting live-beings to the gods, the first being the “voluntary” death of an animal, and for this they used the term “sacrifice.” The second mode was the violent

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948 HN., 28.10. Fowler’s sketch of animal sacrifice is helpful: “All sacrifice at the altar was accompanied with prayer;” also, “[t]he language of the oldest prayers make it clear that the deity was believed to be glorified or strengthened by the process” (“Original Meaning,” 59).


950 Klauck describes how “the animal should go freely” to the place of sacrifice. Its head would also be sprinkled with water to stimulate a jerk which would be seen as its “nod of consent” (“The Religious Context,” 16).

951 Rives, “Human Sacrifice,” 69-74. Important for my study is the repeated “barbarian” idea that human victims are pleasing to the gods. Rives’ citation from Pomponius Mela’s work on geography (written under Claudius) is worth citing. The Gauls are “…an arrogant and superstitious people, at times even so savage that they believe that a human being is the best victim and the one most pleasing to the gods”. Ibid. 77 quoting Sit. Orb., 3.18. See also Várhelyi for comments on how the elite of the “Hellenized Romans …unavoidably aim at dissociating themselves from the ritual” (“The Live Burials,” 284).

952 22.57.6 (my trans.).

953 HN., 30.3. The Latin is “ne homo immolaretur (that no man should be sacrificed).”

954 Rackham (the LCL translator) comments on “for some time” by noting the coincidence of human sacrifice and magic during the early principate. The use of human sacrifices and magical curses was alleged by Piso against Germanicus in 19 CE (Tac., Ann., 2.69). Suetonius recounts Augustus’ execution of 300 prisoners at Perugia as human sacrifice: “Some authors write, [they] were slaughtered, like victims (hostiarum more mactatos), before an altar raised to Julius Caesar” (Aug., 15). I comment further on macto – “I sacrifice, kill” – shortly. Hostia is a basic term for the sacrificial victim.
death of human beings, from which both the gods and Roman society derived pleasure, as evil was averted and pax maintained.\textsuperscript{955}

However, the Greek historians, let alone the Christians, reject the distinction of the refined Romans that violent deaths of the penalty \textit{sacer} were not human sacrifice.\textsuperscript{956} Dio of Halicarnassus understood the ancient injunction against boundary tampering thus: “[Numa] … enacted that if any person demolished or displaced these boundary stones he should be looked upon as devoted \textit{as a sacrifice} to the god (\textit{i`ero.n} … \textit{ei=nai tou/ qeou/}), to the end that anyone who wished might kill him as a sacrilegious person (\textit{w`j i`erosulon}) with impunity and without incurring any stain of guilt.”\textsuperscript{957}

The Roman authors, by contrast, described the offender as \textit{sacer} to the deities; Festus explicitly denied a sacrifice construal. However, Dio not only denotes the sacrificial nature of the killing by using \textit{i`ero}, he also locates it within a discussion of sacrifices. The preceding section discussed the annual sacrifices (“\textit{qusi,aj}”) that were made to “Jupiter Terminalis” and the other “gods of boundaries.” In the succeeding section, Dio presents his contemporaries sacrificing (“\textit{th`ou`ou`a`l}”) to the stones themselves “as gods.”

The contemporary relevancy of these rites for Dio’s (Augustan) period should be clear. Sacrifices \textit{are} currently made to the deities that protect boundaries. One assumes, given Dio’s interest, that the historic background of human-sacrality was known. He states that “[m]emorials of this custom are observed by the Romans down to our times … they look upon these boundary stones as gods and sacrifice to them yearly.”\textsuperscript{958} Admittedly, the sacrifices are explicitly non-animal, non-blood ones. The point is that penal-sacrality \textit{as sacrifice} was a live category for Dio’s Roman contemporaries.

Dio continues his construal of the \textit{sacer}-punishment when he comments on those who breach the fidelity demanded by the patron-client relationship. Such may be killed

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{955} Again, I note that gladiatorial contests were originally performed as part of funeral rituals. As such they were \textit{munera} – gifts under obligation – required to appease the shades of the dead. More generally, during the drama of the arena, characters impersonating the infernal deities “claimed” the bodies of the victims. The point is well supported by Várhelyi, “Live Burials,” 289-291.
  \item \textsuperscript{956} The Christians were known for their prejudice against Rome. However, Plutarch, for example, was generally favourably inclined. Cf. Rives, “Human Sacrifice,” 84.
  \item \textsuperscript{957} \textit{Ant. Rom}., 2.74.3. I modify Cary’s translation only by adding the italicized gloss “\textit{as a sacrifice}” (justified next). For the god as probably being Infernal Jupiter, see Fowler, “Original Meaning,” 60.
  \item \textsuperscript{958} \textit{Ant. Rom}., 2.74.4. I follow Cary, except my lacuna is an omission of his “purely as a religious form” – i.e., they observe the rites as mere ritual – which is not justified by the Greek text. There is no reason to think that Dionysius is doubting the conviction that divine sanction protects property holdings.
\end{itemize}
“as a sacrifice to the infernal Jupiter (ὡς θύμα τοῦ καταχθονίου Δίος).” He then adds:
“It was customary among the Romans, whenever they wished to put people to death without incurring penalty, to devote their bodies to some god or other, especially to those of the Netherworld (τὰ τούτων σώματα θεῶν ὀτρωδήτων, μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς καταχθονίους κατανυμαζεῖν).”

The fact that this “was customary” suggests that the notion of human sacrifice existed in the popular consciousness. Dio is explaining the cultic commemoration of boundary stones in his own time and context; for him, the contemporary festival cannot be explained without its historical human-sacrifice background.

Plutarch reinforces Dio’s interpretation. He reports how the illicit divorcing of a wife had once been grounds for penal sacrality. Anyone who wrongly divorces his wife forfeits half his possessions to her; the other half is “consecrated to Ceres (τὴς Δήμιτρος ἱερῶν [ἐνα].)” However, he personally “shall be sacrificed to the infernal deities (θυσεθαι χθονίοις θεοίς).”

A further instance of sacrality interpreted as human sacrifice relates to the historic instances of live burials of Greek and Gaulish (male and female) couples in Rome’s cattle market. The live interments seem to comport with current Roman practice, hence both Plutarch’s and Pliny’s concern to address the phenomenon. Pliny states: “Our own age even has seen [the interments].”

This occurs in the context of the importance of verbatim prayer formulae, physically perfect animal sacrifices, the self-devotion of the Decii, and the sanction of live-burials which threatened the sexually active Vestal.

Pliny then observes that the prayer rituals used at the time of the Greek/Gaulish

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959 Ibid. 2.10.3 (my trans.). For θύμα as “victim, sacrifice,” see LSJ, s.v θύμα. That “Infernal Jupiter” refers to Dis or Pluto, cf. Bill Thayer, <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Dionysius_of_Halicarnassus/2A*.html#note10> (15/7/2012). Additionally, Kaster (the LCL translator) remarks that “Ve(d)iovis was a chthonian reflex of Jupiter” (Macrobius: Saturnalia, 3.9.10 n. 79).

960 Ant. Rom., 2.10.3; I follow Cary, except that I render σώματα as “bodies,” versus their “persons.” For “κατανυμαζεῖ” as “to be devoted to the gods,” see LSJ, s.v κατανυμαζεῖ, II.

961 Rom., 22.3, my trans. That the passive infinitive is rightly translated “be sacrificed” is confirmed by Bennett, “Sacer Esto,” 9. Pace Perrin, who renders it actively: “He shall make a sacrifice to the gods of the lower world.”

962 Such live interments are recorded in 228, 216 and 113 BCE; the violation of Vestals also coincided with the later two dates. See Beard, et al., Religions of Rome, 158-59. That Vestal deflowerment signified a breakdown of divine pax has already been discussed. Beard, et al. note, regarding the Greek/Gaulish live-burials, that “[i]n the most general terms it is clear that Rome’s good relations with the gods are being restored by the sacrifice of the two pairs of (potential) enemies” (Ibid. 159).

963 Plin., Ep., 28.3.

964 Ibid. 28.1-2. The Decii were a family from which two generations of generals famously devoted themselves to the gods in return for Roman victory. I discuss this in more detail shortly.
interments are of the highest potency, which in the context relates to effecting divine favor. The rite “…has been proved effectual by the experience of eight hundred and thirty years.” Evidently, the Greek/Gaulish live-interments still occurred and are associated with the contemporary practice of burying Vestals alive. Plutarch supports this assessment, referring to “mysterious and secret ceremonies” which continued in his time as memorials to the Greek/Gaulish interments. Plutarch seeks to offer some level of justification for the Roman practice. To begin with, he admits the Romans’ inconsistency on the matter. On the one hand, Plutarch wonders that the Roman officials were repulsed by the Bletonesians’ “sacrificing of a man to the gods ([:B]λετονη[ς]ιους ἀνθρώπων θεύκεναι θεοῖς).” Next the historian asks how the Romans can justify their harsh response. They were on the verge of “punishing their magistrates” and “prohibited the like action for the future” – although they themselves, “not many years preceding,” had buried the Greek and Gaulish couples. “It seems absurd,” says Plutarch.

He proposes two solutions to the inconsistency. Firstly, it was sacrifice to daimons which the Romans made. “To sacrifice humans to the gods is irreligious (θεοῖς θύειν ἀνθρώπους ἀνόσιον),” whereas it is “necessary to do so to Daimon.”

Secondly, perhaps the unique authority of the Sibylline books which demanded the burials is sufficient justification. The oracle was found to have predicted the deflowerment of three Vestals and to have demanded the live burials “to avert the impending calamity … in order to appease some alien and foreign daimons (ἄλλοκτοις τιοὶ δαίμοσι καὶ ξένοις ἀποτροπῆς ἔνεκα).” In any case, Plutarch is obviously attempting to defend the Romans from the perception that they actually sacrifice people. At the same time,
Plutarch’s concern with the issue indicates that some Greeks viewed Roman practice as barbaric at this point.\textsuperscript{970}

In sum, the Roman elite rejected human sacrifice. Festus explicitly states that “…divine law does not allow the sacred offender to be sacrificed (neque fas est eum immolari),” though he can be killed with impunity.\textsuperscript{971} I would suggest that the Roman definition of human sacrifice is overly sophisticated and is seen through by the Greek historians. Polybius offers a fitting overview. He says of the Romans’ religious hysteria after their defeat by Hannibal, “[t]he city was one scene of vows, sacrifices, supplicatory processions, and prayers. For the Romans in times of danger take extraordinary pains to appease gods and men, and look upon no ceremony of that kind in such times as unbecoming or beneath their dignity.”\textsuperscript{972} The point is that Greco-Roman society had a strong awareness of how persons were to be made sacral and devoted, negatively or positively, to the deities. Human sacrifice was not a respectable mode by which bodies were sacralized.

The second type of penal-sacrality moves from the killing of the individual offender to that of offering an enemy army, en masse, to the gods. Two religious processes are interrelated here: evocatio and devotio. The enemy, and often the consecrating general, are made, in effect, sacer to the Netherworld deities. Due religious process was paramount: a pontiff led the general in the precise prayer formula.\textsuperscript{973} In the evocatio, the general calls on the tutelary deities of the besieged city to leave it, take up residence at Rome, and be cultivated there.

Livy records the calling forth of the Veii’s guardian deities in 396 BCE.\textsuperscript{974} Macrobius describes this as “the Roman’s most ancient custom and their most secret

\textsuperscript{970} Rives, “Human Sacrifice,” 84. The thrust of this article is that human sacrifice was used by the Romans as a feature that confirmed the barbarian status of non-Roman nations – and that later the Christian apologists, pre-empted by Plutarch (and other Greeks), used this against them.

\textsuperscript{971} Festus, 424 (my trans.).

\textsuperscript{972} 3.112.

\textsuperscript{973} Thus, when the general Decius devotes himself and the enemy to the gods (to be discussed further shortly), he says “we need the help of the gods! Let the Pontifex Maximus dictate to me the words in which I am to devote myself [as a substitute] for the legions.” Livy, 8.9.4. Livy narrates that only “a consul, or dictator or praetor” may utter the rite (Ibid. 8.10.11). Macrobius also stresses their exclusivity: “Only dictators and generals” may use them (Sat., 3.9.9). The point is that only the very elite may engage the gods and define sacrality.

\textsuperscript{974} For example, Livy reports that during the siege of Veii (396 BCE), the general vowed to give their goddess, Queen Juno, “a temple worthy of thy majesty” at Rome (5.21.3). She is then described along with other gods as having been “called upon in prayer (literally evoked) to leave their city (ex urbe sua evocatos) … [for] new abodes in the temples of their foes” (5.21.5). Servius records a similar evocation of Juno from Carthage (146 BCE in Comm., 12.841). According to Mary Beard, an inscription from Isaura Vetus (Asia
He cites the evocation “spell (carmen)” by which Juno was enticed to forsake Carthage (146 BCE) and indwell the Aventine hill at Rome. Two elements are striking: abandonment, and the use of temples and games as enticement. If she abandons Rome’s enemies and resettles in Rome, then the general vows “…that I will make temples and games for you.”

This promised reciprocation is important because of the light it sheds on the meaning of the games. Death in the arena, as I argued earlier, is framed as a religio-mythic reality. The ritualized executions and gladiatorial contests (again, originally as munera – funeral duties – which were enacted to appease the shades) were to confer benefits on the gods. The gods were honored in the arena – hence the inducement of temples and games in the evocation. What is clear is that military loss or a prolonged period of uncertain fighting – the stimulus for the evocation – was interpreted as divine displeasure. Hence, during wartime stress, the gods were placated by the dedication of enemy armies. In Rome the games saw internal enemies transferred to divine possession in the arena. In both contexts, pax with the gods is maintained through violent deaths.

In the military context, Livy tells us that the Roman general P. Decius Mus (in 340 BCE) devoted himself and the enemy to the infernal gods “…to expiate and appease all the anger of the gods and to avert destruction from his people and bring it on their enemies.” This devotio occurred with dramatic ritual. The general addressed various gods, acknowledging to them that “[to you] belongs the power over us and over our foes.” The divine party called to witness the vow is comprised of “Janus, Jupiter, Father Mars, Quirinus, Bellona, Lares, … Novensiles and Indigetes … [and] Divine

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Minor) records an evocatio from ca. 75 CE (“Evocatio,” OCD, 559). It is a well-known religio-political rite.

975 Sat., 3.9.1. He records that “…all cities are protected by some god … [and] they used a specific spell to call out the gods that protected it (certo carmine evocarent tutelares deos).” In light of this, the Romans kept secret the name of their own guardian deity to prevent its evocation. Ibid. 3.9.2.

976 Regarding abandonment, the spell states: “May you desert the people and community of Carthage, leave their sacred places, temples and city, and depart them, and upon this people and community heap fear, dread, forgetfulness, and come to Rome …” (Ibid. 3.9.7).

977 Ibid. 3.9.8.

978 Ibid. 8.9.8. Later, Decius is described as having drawn onto himself “all the dangers that threatened from the gods supernal and the gods infernal” (Ibid. 8.10.7).

979 The pontiff instructs him, before he prays, to “veil his head in his toga praetexta, and rest his hand, covered with the toga, against his chin, then standing upon a spear to say these words …” (Ibid. 8.9.5). The drama is also recorded by Macrobius. The general who cursed Carthage called on Tellus (the earth-goddess) and Jupiter as witnesses. “When he mentions Earth, he touches the ground with his hands; when he mentions Jupiter, he raises his hands to heaven; when he mentions taking on the vow, he touches his chest with his hands.” Sat., 3.9.11.

980 Ibid. 8.9.6.
Manes. According to Macrobius, the actual deities to whom Carthage was devoted were the (infernal) “Father Dis, Veiovis, [and the] Manes.”

He then enters into the fray of fighting to be killed by the enemy, who were “paralysed as though by some death-dealing star,” while the Romans were “freed from all religious fears” and victorious. Death brings a benefit to the infernal gods and they offer the return benefit of a military win. Although Decius was famously killed in this case, Livy gives some guiding principles for the devotio. Should the general not be killed, he “can no longer discharge any religious function, either on his own account or on behalf on the State.” The general, it appears, has almost defrauded the gods by surviving; he is therefore compromised as a priestly agent into the future. It goes without saying that these intricate rituals and the concern to foster divine support bespeak the religio-political nature of the Roman worldview.

Within this context of calling the gods to transfer allegiances (evocatio), the general promises additional benefits, beyond Roman worship, to the gods. In addition to pledging his own life, the general consecrates the enemy army in advance to the chthonic deities. I would argue that both the general’s commitment of his own life and his devotion of the enemies were considered to have made himself and the opponents sacer to the gods.

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981 Ibid. 8.9.5-6. The deities Novensiles and Indigetes are unknown; the Dis Manes are infernal deities (Beard, et al., Religions of Rome, 158, n. 6 and 7, respectively).
982 Sat., 3.9.10. Father Dis (Dis Pater) is Pluto, king of the underworld. Kaster (LCL translator) notes, regarding this passage, that “Ve(d)iovis was a chthonian reflex of Jupiter” (n. 78). These infernal powers, then, are logically asked in the spell to “deprive [the enemy] of heaven’s light” by bringing them to death. Moreover, these three are promised the sacrifice of “three black sheep” (Ibid. 3.9.11), the color appropriate to the infernal gods (cf. translator’s note, 79).
983 Livy, 8.9.10, 13.
984 Livy notes too that the general could devote a member of the army in his place. If this soldier was not killed, then an image of the man was to be buried at a depth of at least seven feet and an animal killed on the spot “as an expiatory sacrifice” (Ibid. 8.10.12). The theo-logic seems to be that the gods have been deprived of the good of the death and so require the slain animal as satisfaction. Yet such sacrifice is not up to the value of a general’s life, so the general’s “defrauding,” as it were, of the gods disqualifies him from religious agency in the future. Additionally, the burial of an image (i.e., substitute) that diverts the attention of the infernal powers accords with the rationale of appropriate burial already argued for. Unburied criminals must be purged away by the Tiber, for example, to prevent hauntings; the live-burials of Greek and Gaulish couples appeased the daimons that would otherwise avenge the dead of these nations. These rites carefully manage failed undertakings and placate the gods.
985 Accordingly, the spear upon which the general stood to utter his devotio becomes hallowed. Should the enemy capture it, “a suovetaurilia (pig, sheep and bull) offering must be offered as a propitiation to Mars.”
Technically, to consecrate an item or person it must first be possessed; only then can it be transferred into divine ownership.\textsuperscript{987} A general can do this regarding his own life. Nevertheless, Decius does also make the enemy sacred to the deities. He summons the gods as witnesses, and makes the following promise: “I now on behalf of the commonwealth of the Quirites, on behalf of the army, the legions, the auxiliaries of the Roman People, the Quirites, devote the legions and auxiliaries of the enemy, together with myself to the Divine Manes and to Tellus.”\textsuperscript{988}

Despite the absence of a sacer cognate, the general’s act of self-commitment is rightly called “a self-consecratio;” his self-dispossession sees him “surrender his life into the possession of the gods, [and] make himself sacer.”\textsuperscript{989} In the run-up to Decius’ self-giving, he and the other consul are visited in parallel visions by a “form greater and more awful than any human [being],”\textsuperscript{990} by whom they are told that one of them, together with the enemy army, “were destined as a sacrifice to the Dii Manes and to Mother Earth.”\textsuperscript{991} The Latin behind the expression “destined [to be] a sacrifice” is literally that one general and the enemy army “were bound to (deberi)” the deities. The consuls summarize the message as “what the gods had decreed.” Certain lives had been claimed by the deities as the price for Roman victory; in response a general is “devoted” to the gods.\textsuperscript{992}

The Roman Postumius later distinguishes himself in military service. He is praised in equal measure with P. Decius’ “act of devotion,” and his own action is specified as having handed himself over to the enemy’s wrath “as an expiatory victim for the Roman people (piaculaque pro populo Romano).”\textsuperscript{993} Additionally, Decius’ own son, whom I discuss next, would later present Decius (his father’s) self-devotion in sacrificial terms. “The offering [he] made … was in the eyes of the immortal gods pure and holy (purum piumque).”\textsuperscript{994}

\textsuperscript{988} Livy., 8.9.8 (slight modification). She was the Roman earth-goddess being its protective deity. See Herbert Jennings Rose and John Scheid, “Tellus,” OCD, 1437. Tellus and the Dis Manes – the shades of the dead – represent the infernal gods to whom the enemy was guaranteed.
\textsuperscript{989} Versnel, “Roman Devotio,” 407.
\textsuperscript{990} Livy, 8.6.9.
\textsuperscript{991} Ibid. “Mother Earth” is a variant for Tellus.
\textsuperscript{992} Ibid. 8.6.13. The general’s devotion of the opposing army is not specified here, but should be assumed.
\textsuperscript{993} Ibid. 9.10.3-4.
\textsuperscript{994} Ibid. 10.7.4. The speech is in the context of the Plebs demanding that their leadership – already consuls, generals and triumphators (such as the illustrious P. Decius Mus) – be awarded equal pontifical roles alongside the patricians. Roman victory on the day of Decius’ self-sacrifice is proof that he would have been a fitting priest.
The language of sacrifice is used in another example of a general enacting self-devotio. P. Decius’ son, also called P. Decius Mus, devoted himself (295 BCE) and Rome’s enemies (Sannites and Gauls) in an act Livy explicitly calls a sacrifice. Before calling the pontiff to lead him in the devoting prayer, Decius announces his destiny to bring the Romans to victory. “This is the privilege granted to our house that we should be an expiatory sacrifice (piacula simus) to avert dangers from the State. Now will I offer the legions of the enemy together with myself as a sacrifice (mecum hostium legiones mactandas) to Tellus and Dii Manes.”

“Mactandas” describes himself and the opposition as “having been offered or sacrificed” – a common word for the sacrificial act. The implication of violence is seen in its also meaning “to kill,” or “to punish.” Having so offered himself, he describes himself as an agent of the deities: “I carry before me terror and rout and carnage and blood and the wrath of all the gods, those above and those below.” Additionally, the Romans would consecrate weapons seized from a defeated enemy.

Comments from later authors demonstrate that the deaths of the Decii were seen as sacrificial. Indeed, by using the term consecratio they were seen to have made themselves sacer. Florus, writing during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, states: “Decius, in the manner of his father, presented his head, having devoted it, to the Dii Manes;” such was “a solemn … consecration (sollemnem ... consecrationem).”

Even Augustine in the 5th cent. CE remembers the self-devotion of the Decii: “They devoted themselves to death, consecrating themselves (se ... consecrates) in a way by sacrificial formulas,” and thus they placated the gods “with their blood.” In other words, violent death is a mode of sacrality which pleases the gods.

The devotion of the enemies is essentially a commitment to make them sacer in the future. This futuristic element distinguishes it from a general’s self-consecratio. It is
a promise to surrender them *conditional* upon the gods enabling Roman victory. Hence Macrobius records that for the Carthagian devotion the general prayed, “[m]ay you consider those cities and fields and the people’s lives and lifetimes devoted and sacred (*devotas consecratae*) according to those laws under which enemies have at any time been devoted (*devoti*).”\(^{1002}\) For my purposes, the association of *devotio* and *consecratio* is important. By juxtaposing the two terms, Macrobius understands the vowing of enemy lives as simply a prospective consecration. In effect, the city and its inhabitants were made provisionally *sacer* to the gods, contingent only upon Roman victory.

To summarize, the Roman system of sacrality, in its positive aspect, reinforces the high-value religio-political identity of the elite. The aura of the deities – the source and goal of the sacred – garbs the elite and so justifies their control of the power hierarchy. Importantly, sacrality is strictly controlled: state institutions make sacred. “Sacred” refers to that which is (officially) transferred into divine possession. “Sanctity” describes that which stands under divine protection.

Crucial persons were characterized as sacral, *viz.*, Vestal virgins and *matronae*, as well as elite male leaders (tribunes of the Plebs, outstanding politicians and generals, and the emperor). Sacrallity can also be a more generalized quality typified by those who embody civic and manly virtue. Often it is attached to the body *per se*. Particularly striking is the insistence on the Vestals’ sexual wholeness which flows onward to the chastity expected of the Roman wife. The high worth of being sacred is founded on bodily features. Once a woman’s virginity was lost, for example, so too was her value – there is no means of re-sacralization.

Sacrality has also been seen to have had a negative expression. Wrongdoers were made *sacer* to the deities – they were consecrated to destruction. The gods and goddesses were understood to derive benefit from human death. At the larger level, generals would consecrate themselves and the enemy forces to the infernal deities in order to persuade the deities to grant Roman victories. This led to the distinction between the two Roman modes of benefiting the deities through death: the “voluntary” slaughter of animals, and the violent death of humans. While the Romans insisted that only the former was “sacrifice” (a making *sacer*) to the gods, Greek historians defined instances of human

\(^{1002}\) *Sat.*, 3.9.10 (LCL modified). Where I have “devoted and sacred,” Kaster has “cursed and execrated.” I point out the underlying idea of being made *sacer* to continue the emphasis on the polarity inherent in the concept. The historian mentions other towns devoted to destruction: Fregellae, Gabii, Veii, Fidenae (all Italian); also Corinth (146 BCE), and “many armies and towns of our enemies the Gauls, the Spaniards, the Africans, the Moors, and other nations that the old-time annals mention” (*Ibid.* 3.9.13).
executions in sacrificial terms. Death, then, was the Roman means of enforcing the sacrality which underpinned its religio-political structure. Persons either respected the high-value, sacral elite whose power was divinely underwritten, or they risked violent destruction as possessions of the gods.

6. Conclusion

The Roman religio-political system was at its core a cruel stratification of human worth – a bifurcation between those who were active and their passive subordinates. A person’s body was the locus where this power dynamic played out. Active bodies were honorable, viz., valuable: they penetrated, ordered and coerced the degraded body of the passives, or powerless. The various expressions of interpersonal violence – whipping, branding, sexual violation, inter alia – all demonstrate the contestation for the body. That is, two selves compete to use the body as a means of self-expression. This is the essence of the cultural struggle to use ideological and physical modes of compulsion to so suppress the ego of the passive that he or she allowed the superior – paradigmatically, the master – to take control of his or her body.

Moreover, the utter essentiality of the body to personhood arises from the basic Greco-Roman understanding of personhood. That the person is a psychosomatic unity meant that even on death the honorable or shameful state of the body would mark the person’s soul for eternity. Some philosophers may have envisaged the soul being alive without the body, but this simply is not the view of the masses.

The section on “The Active Corpus” highlighted how seriously the elite took the display of their physical attributes as these undergirded honorability. A powerful physique, combined with a virile demeanour, clothing and speech (viz., habitus) were to be further demonstrated in forceful action. The frontal martial wound was the hallmark of the highly valued virile identity. The elite scrutinized each other ruthlessly for any lack of conformity to these norms. To be vilified as a penetratable body – as feminine and servile – was an intense slur. The competition for honor expressed itself as the elite “read” each other for virile conformation and action. The body acted as a signifier of status. The bisexuality of elite males was shown to be another mode in which virile religio-political agency was enacted.

In the section “The Passive Corpus,” the Roman religio-political ideology that mandated the rule of the elite over weaker forms of humanity was elucidated. Here I
developed the idea of “contestation for the body.” Passive bodies – particularly the slave as chattel – had the raison d'être of exhibiting the superior’s will. Those persons who refused to be dispossessed of their bodies, i.e., to be obedient, were violently reinscribed in their roles. This reclamation of passive bodies aimed to derive functional utility and it occurred in two major spheres. The first was privately in the household: inferior persons were assaulted by both the whip and the master’s penis. The second was with state sanction – that is, publicly. Public displays of violence symbolized the liminality or extra-social identity of the malefactor.

In particular, the Gemonian Stairs (for political outcasts) and the arena (for criminals) indicated their degraded social status. The violence inflicted on their bodies, as well as the construction of the arena as the precipice to infernal punishment, and then the hooking of their corpses to prevent defilement all symbolized the victims’ offensiveness to the religio-political status quo. The purging away of the dead in the Tiber entrenched the message of malefactor as defiling body.

A critical insight from these sections was that honor/human worth finds its seat in the physical body. Whereas a frontal, martial wound communicated virility, the rear scar of the whip or the implication of anal, vaginal or oral penetration all sealed a person’s degraded fate. The further stigmata of branding or tattoos, clothing, stooped demeanor, and the like, were all readily detected by the Romans, whose facility for corporal scrutinization applied not only to themselves (within the elite) but to those outside.

In the final section on “The Sacral Corpus,” I presented the way in which sacral terminology reinforced the religio-political power structure. The key terms, sacer and sanctus, while perhaps distinguishable as divinely possessed and divinely protected respectively, fundamentally coalesce to couple elite ascendancy with divine mandate. Those who are marked by sacral language are either capable of using force to protect their own bodily boundaries or are under the protection of others.

It was further found that definitions of sacrality, or processes for transferring items or persons into divine ownership, were strictly controlled by the state. Exemplars of positive sacrality were the deities themselves, Vestal virgins and Roman wives, and elite male leaders – ultimately finding expression in the emperor. The language also filters down to characterize the typical Roman male who conformed to cultural expectations of virility. Strikingly, the corpus or σῶμα itself is routinely made the subject of sacral language.
The other pole of sacrality is that of negatively being devoted to the deities for destruction. Such a person had offended against the religio-political order. Entire armies were consecrated to the infernal deities in return for Roman victory. The deities were benefited by the violent deaths of those so consecrated. While the Romans rejected the implication, Greek historians and Christian apologists construed such penal sacrality as sacrificial. So powerful was the Roman sense of the alignment of divine and political power that those punished as malefactors remained degraded into the afterlife. Scars and other cues of degraded status remained, and evil behavior in terms of transgressing the androcentric power norms was punished in Hades.

The fundamental finding from the overall study of the Roman corpus is that the Romans communicated honor and shame with the body. The state of a person’s body established his or her religio-political agency and social worth. The body is the site of power displays and the ordering of persons. To ascribe sacrality to a given body is to contact the heart of the religio-political system. Only those of the highest worth, at the apex of the pyramidal society – those proximate to, and representative of, the divine – were so characterized, in the positive sense of the concept. In contrast, the offender against the regime would experience sacrality through being consecrated to the deities through a violent death.

The construal of the corpus established the identity of the person. Once the body was penetrated, beaten or otherwised violated, the person was permanently dishonored. There existed no Cartesian dualism which could allow the degraded person to view the body as non-self and so sustain a sense of valuable selfhood. Florence Dupont’s maxim is vital as a summary of the ancients’ mindset: “The Roman citizen consisted of a name and a body … The body of a citizen was the man himself, the ‘embodiment’ of the truth about him.” Likewise, the degraded body of the slave embodied the truth of his or her identity as dehumanized chattel.

1003 However, the dualism of the Stoics offered them a way to withstand the cultural mandate that a violated body constituted a degraded identity. Epictetus offered advice for remaining equanimous before a tyrant’s threats of torture: “If I cherish my body, I make a slave of myself, if I cherish my property, I make a slave of myself.” Epict. Diss., 25.23, from Épictet : Discourses and Selected Writings, trans. and ed. Robert Dobbin, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2008). For him, the “I” looks on the body as an external akin to a possession and so its destruction does not affect one’s identity. I consider this option for resisting the elitist construal of the body and identity as one of disassociation (from the body). It was not utilized in general within the culture. I will argue below that Paul takes the opposite resistive route by finding hope in maintaining association with the body.

Chapter 5: Approaching *The Epistle to the Romans* Against the Cultural Background of \(\Sigma\omega\mu\alpha\) as “Material-Interrelated Self”

1. Introduction

The analysis of \(\sigma\omega\mu\alpha/corpus\) in the Greco-Roman context has demonstrated that characterizations of the body are strongly connected to human identity, viz., one’s religio-political-social value. The body was a crucial site at which conformity to the power structure was detected and (re)imposed. Non-conformity resulted in the self being dispossessed of the body through non-terminal and terminal acts of institutionalized violence. The integrity or violation of the body was universally the symbol of the potency of the hierarchical ideology. One was demonstrably located either high or low on the honor scale through one’s somatic features. Demosthenes’ statement captures the bodily-focused ideology: “For slaves, the body (τὸ \(\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\)) is answerable for all offenses … while for the free, it is possible to protect this.”

I wish now to demonstrate that the body-as-political-site requires Paul’s claim on the body to be heard as a religio-political assertion. Given the system’s possession of bodies – and the capacity to retake possession through violence – Paul is to be understood as entering a competitive exchange with the kyriarchial holders of power. Paul’s target is fundamentally the unjust structures of human domination that manifest the rule of Sin and Death, i.e., “this age” (Rom 12:2). In the first century Mediterranean context, this rule was simultaneously instantiated by the Roman Empire and the social system which underpinned it, viz, the mandate of competition for honor at the expense of the “Other.” As an ambassador for the new aeon’s theo-political power and its agenda of social justice, Paul claims the person-as-body from its present power-matrix and for God. To configure this “from-ness” is basic to this study. My thesis is that the sacralization of the low-status body subverts cultural valuations of human worth.

1005 *And.,* 55.


1007 By sacralizing the bodies of those degraded and thus standing against the dominant construal of low-status persons, I am not imagining that Paul actively encouraged them to violently resist their abusers. The monolithic nature of chattel-slavery economics and imperial rule make this inconceivable for Paul apart
There is thus both a negative and a positive element. Firstly, Paul’s construction of the body subverts the cultural norms of evaluating human worth (the person as “material-dominated self”). Secondly, he revalues the body – and so the person – in sacral terms. He or she is now a perpetual cultic entity in relationship with God and others (hence a “material-solidaritous self”). As such, the Christ-believer willingly implements the destiny of the entire cosmos in that fraction of the cosmos which is her or his body (cf. Rom 11:36).

2. Scholarship on Romans 12:1: The Abstract “Σώμα”

The basic concern I have with secondary literature on Romans is the assumption that Paul is addressing persons who have, unproblematically, command of their own bodies. “Offer your bodies to God” is generally constructed in merely theological terms without consideration of the political and social implications of such a move. Such abstraction removes the addressees from their material and dominated somatic locations, such that σώματα does not refer to the “material-dominated self” of historical-cultural reality. Commentators regularly gloss σώματα in a way that indicates they have not appreciated the political location of the person qua body. In a culture which reduced many persons to the state of being mere bodies (will-less and heteronomously determined), Paul’s accent on the body creates an integrated self against the dominant discourse.

A. Scholarly Assumptions about Paul and the Body

The scholarly assumption that Paul addresses autonomous agents whose bodily conduct is a matter between them and God (without social and political repercussions) is commonly found in readings of Romans 12:1. Barrett states that “[b]y ‘body’ Paul means the whole human person, including its means of expressing itself in common life.”\textsuperscript{1008} Similarly, Dodd glosses σώμα with the “individual personality as an acting concrete whole.”\textsuperscript{1009} Both authors take “body” as a symbol for the integral person expressing his or her selfhood in the world. Others simply reduce the term to “self” – thus, “offer

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\textsuperscript{1008} Barrett, Romans, 231.
\textsuperscript{1009} Dodd, Romans, 190.
yourselves.” The powerful tensions of external ownership (for slaves) and bodily violation suffered in the course of survival (for many freedpersons and the poor) are not considered.

The assumption that Paul addresses persons who are whole-beings is further seen in Schreiner’s abstract reading: “The word σωματικός [should not be] taken literally … [it] refers to the whole person.” Moo, too, downplays a reference to “the physical body as such;” instead, σώμα means “the entire person, with special emphasis on that person’s interaction with the world.” Moo even acknowledges this construct as a “‘theological’ meaning,” without considering the social/political demands already in place for bodily performance. I will address the fallacy of bifurcating reality and its interpretation between the “theological” and the “political” shortly.

At the same time, Moo’s “special emphasis” on interaction with the environment does pave the way for my consideration of what exactly the “world” is and what it does to the marginalized. With the notion that σώμα construes the person in his or her openness to the “world,” a significant advance is made on the simple σώμα=self (vis-à-vis God) formula. The “world” violently demanded degrading services of the body, but this disintegration of the person addressed by Paul’s cultic paraklēsis (encouragement) is basically absent in the literature.

As seen in the Literature Review, Dunn too accents the body as the means of interaction – “σωματικός clearly stands here for the person” – but he hastens to add “not just the person, but the person in his corporeality, in his concrete relationships within this world; it is because he is body that man can experience the world and relate to others.” In this communicative emphasis, I showed that Käsemann was foundational. The following comment of Käsemann programmatically points the way for my thesis. Σωματικός indicates that “[w]hat is at issue is not just our private existence but the earthly possibility

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1012 Moo, *Romans*, 750-51. Despite Moo’s adducement of Käsemann’s notion of means of communication (Ibid. 751, n.2,9), the latter rejects the body = person equation. I discuss Käsemann shortly.


1014 Paul’s paraklēsis is arguably encouragement in the light of social threat – more concretely, in the face of threat to the material-self (for a full discussion, see Chapter 7.2.A).

of this to communicate with all its possibilities with the Creator who does not renounce his claim to the world. Hence σῶμα should not be flattened to a cipher for the person …

It is our being in relation to the world.

Wright’s description of σῶμα = σώματα. It is “the complete person seen from one point of view: the point of view in which the human being lives as a physical object within space and time. This whole self is to be ‘presented’.”

Sanday and Headlam’s argument is likewise succinct and on point. Σώματα is “…to be taken literally … as is shown by the contrast with τοῦ νοὸς in ver. 2.”

Seifrid argues for a reference to the material body since Paul’s paralkēsis “takes up the concrete references to the bodily members that Paul draws from Scripture (3:13-15; 10:6-15; see also 6:12-14, 19).”

Jodoin concurs: Σώματα is the “capacité de communication … Le corps n’est pas une partie de l’être humain, mais plutôt l’aspect visible, tangible, biologique et historique de l’être humain dans sa totalité.”

These references, which begin to move us out of the “theological” or abstract (σῶμα = person/self), are helpful but still deficient. While they acknowledge the person as a physical reality and a communicative entity, no political subversion is detected. While the “material” element of my σῶμα as “material-dominated self” is acknowledged, the note of domination is not. The violent nature of first-century claims on the body is not framed as that from which the body is claimed and that against which the new ideology of the sacral, integrated person is promoted. At least there is the formulation of the person as a material self; there is a basis for discussing the person as a body which is whipped, coerced and sexually assaulted. Amongst the bodies which Paul claims as holy were those of low-status who were liable to such degrading treatment.

1016 Käsemann, Romans, 327 (italics mine).
1017 As is his tendency, Käsemann’s accent on God as Creator is extremely important. God’s reclamation of the material body from the present power-structure/injustice is basic to Paul’s “this-worldly” salvation. In time, I will develop my concept of God’s being “materialistic,” in the sense that God is possessive of and pleased by the material world.
1019 Sanday and Headlam, Romans, 352.
B. Jewett: The Vulnerable Body

With Jewett a further step is taken toward my thesis, viz., the heretofore vague notion of “communication” is sharpened to allow for these violent and degrading attacks of the powerful on the bodies of the poor. Jewett comments in his discussion of Romans 12:1 that the body refers to the person as capable of communication: “Σώματα … implies the basis of relationship and identity.” He then makes the crucial move away from sacrificial living being individualistic and pietistic. Rather, the metaphor of “[a] sacrifice killed or burned on the altar … [s]urely [envisions] an element of communal risk” given that “one speaks of placing the entire membership of the house churches on the altar.”  Wright, though less incisive, can be cited at this point too. He realizes that with οὐκα Paul looks in two directions: to material reality, and to life “within the multiple pressures and temptations that this [world of space, time and matter] places upon us.” The nature of these “pressures” is left tantalizing unspecified; the “world” placing (benignly?) these burdens is too obscure.

In two footnotes, Jewett argues for the “element of … risk” attached to the embodiment of the sacrifice metaphor. Firstly, a sacrifice is “not only used, but used up,” which informs Paul’s description of “the deterioration of his body under the impact of persecutions and missionary exertions.” This is to say, in my words, that the brutalization of the body by opponents of Paul’s religio-politically subversive gospel was a standard aspect of Paul’s experience. Secondly, and right on target for my interests, Jewett states that “Paul makes no distinction between slaves and free persons in formulating this admonition [i.e., ‘offer your bodies a sacrifice …’] … early Christianity held each person, whether slave or free, to the same ethical standard. This stance also entailed a measure of risk.” Thus, with a footnote, Jewett scratches the surface of the topic I delve into here. If the ekklēssiae mandated that the slaves and the poor among them avoid sexual relations over which they had no control, they would have been signing them up to a world of pain and ultimately an aggravated death. If this were the case, to say that a “measure of risk” was assumed is, historically speaking, a vast understatement.

1022 Romans, 728.
1023 Ibid. (italics mine).
1024 Romans, 704 (italics mine).
1025 Romans, 728, n. 44 (Jewett is citing from his Terms, 301-2).
1026 Ibid. n.45.
Is Jewett correct? Did Paul hold “each person, whether slave or free, to the same ethical standard?” An affirmative answer, in my opinion, fails to empathize with the structural violence which controlled the slave’s body. My response reframes the issue: Sexual (im)purity is decried by Paul because it is fundamentally a manifestation of hubristic violence. The Daseinsweise of Adamic humanity under Sin and Death enact sexual brutalization and degradation of each others’ bodies as a result of their corrupt creatureliness (i.e., their failure to “worship and serve … the Creator,” Rom 1:25). Hence they prey upon one another, aggrandizing the self by dealing death in sexual assault (1:26-27) and interpersonal predation as catalogued in 1:29-31. The Adamic aeon is marked by the ethos not of neighbor-love, but of death-dealing to the other. So neighbor-love, the giving of the “kiss of peace” (16:16), and so on are the mark of the “in Christ” community over against the neighbor-destroying ethos of the Adamic world.

Accordingly, the “pressure” from the “world” in the somatic terms of turning the other into a unit of sexual or productive utility is portrayed by Paul as hubristic (God-defying) violence (the antithesis of neighbor love). To the extent that the reign of Sin and Death is inescapable before God’s final triumph, so too are the violations of the body inflicted by those who wield power within the old age. The victimization of the slave and marginalized qua bodies is just that, victimization, and not culpability. For this reason, Jewett’s position that the slave was deemed morally perverse for suffering sexual violation is to be rejected; it does not recognize the extent to which agency was reduced in the ancient situation. The overall construction of modern human agency ought not to be retrojected back onto those who could not repel polluting sexual attacks without facing frightening consequences. Even Jewett’s notion of an “ethical standard” being violated

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1027 I see the perverted “desires of their hearts (ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδίων κατῷ)” which lead to the degrading of their bodies (1:24) as the desire to abuse the other, to reduce the other to object of self-gratification. That is, as I deem important to demonstrate below, epithymia is not (sexually) “lust” (so ESV, NRSV, NASB and NIV) but “a great desire for someth[ing]” (BDAG, s.v. ἐπιθυμία). The sexual perversion of vv. 26-27 – within the inclusio of vv.24 and 29-31 – is colored in terms of violating the other, viz., violating the sacred, in view of 12:1.

1028 For example, 8:6: “τὸ … φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θέων” which I would gloss with “the mindset [aroused in the human subject] by the Flesh is [to deal] death [to, or to prey upon the other].”

1029 Seyoon Kim stresses that, in my words, “in Adam” and “in Christ” provide the macrostructure of the letter. “The redeemed existence in Romans 12:1-2 is composed as an antidote to the fallen Adamic existence described in Roman 1:18-32.” “Paul’s Common Paraenesis (1 Thess. 4-5; Phil. 2-4; and Rom. 12-13): The Correspondence between Romans 1:18-32 and 12:1-2, and the Unity of Romans 12-13,” Tyndale Bulletin 62.1 (2011): 119. I strongly concur with his (controversial) position that Adam’s story shapes 1:18ff. Additionally, from him (passim), I have taken the term Daseinsweise for the modes of existence under the two Adams.
assumes that a (modern) self-determining will is being addressed. Such was not the case for the slave.

Given my concern to hear Paul with the ears of those outside the culturally affirmed constructions of high-value persons, i.e., the non-masculine/non-penetrative *men*, I resonate with feminist and liberationist perspectives. Following Schüssler Fiorenza, my reading location attempts to be that of “wo/men.” She encourages the use of the expression wo/men to get readers to ask whether or not they are being referred to when the “so-called generic terms, such as ‘men,’ ‘humans,’ ‘Americans,’ or ‘professors’ are used.”

For my part, wo/men captures those outside the penetrative, forceful, land-owning elite of Paul’s world; they were the “true” men, yet many (biological) men were assimilated to the category of women because they were under the power of others. Her challenge is well taken – that simply designating Paul “counterimperial” leads to the failure to “inquire as to how … imperial language functioned in the past, and still functions today.”

My reading of Paul will seek to negotiate these portrayals of Paul. I will argue that Paul himself, with his emphasis on Christ *crucified* – the object of kyriarchal abuse, the one who was made impotent in solidarity with wo/men – establishes the apostle’s vision as a radical alternative to the status quo. *In nuce*, the sacralizing of the body – be it a slave’s, a prostitute’s or any other wo/man’s – establishes a sacral, high-worth identity that subverts the cultural construal of the degraded body.

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1031 Against the position I will take, Schüssler Fiorenza states that “[t]he Pauline and post-Pauline literature … [legitimates] in Christological and the*logical terms subordination to the emperor, the slave-master, the father, and the husband” (*Ibid.* 5). For a similar stance to Schüssler Fiorenza’s, see Tat-siong Benny Liew, “Redressing Bodies at Corinth: Racial/Ethnic Politics and Religious Difference in the Context of Empire,” *in The Colonised Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 143; and Jeremy Punt, “Pauline Agency in Postcolonial Perspective: Subverter of or Agent for Empire?” *in The Colonised Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 60. These oppressive figures form the collective structure of “kyriarchy.” Of course, a large aim of this study is to argue that Paul sides with those feminized and servilized against these structures. The challenge is to show this for Paul in the undisputed letters over against the accommodation to household power-relations in the deutero-Paulines and Pastorals. Regarding the * in the*logical, she does this, I presume, to disrupt the masculinizing of God.
1032 *Ibid.* 4. Also, see Jeremy Punt: “Paul did not do away with high status; he did not attack hierarchy; he did not urge equality … For Paul, therefore, the problem was not so much the prevailing structure as who populated which parts of it.” “Pauline Agency,” 60.
3. My Approach to Romans: Portrayal of Two Humanities

What we moderns know as the Epistle to the Romans is best read as performative rhetoric. This takes the work from the genre of theological compendium composed of doctrine (chapters 1-11) and ethics (12-15:13) and hears Paul-the-rhetor as he pictures, stories, and draws the audience away from the out-group’s identity and ethos and to the in-group’s identity and ethos.

The use of the term “ethics” as descriptive of Paul’s thought has drawn trenchant criticism. Ruben Zimmermann has argued that Paul should be viewed in terms of ethos rather than ethics. He shows that “ethics” is the “systematisch-theoretische Untersuchung dieses Bereichs des gelebten Ethos.” “Ethos,” on the other hand, is less reflective, less logical, being the norms which a group espouses for its members.1033 Philip F. Esler proposes that Romans should be understood as constructing simultaneously group identity and its concomitant “understanding of ‘the good life,’ [which is] essentially … the condition of optimal human flourishing.”1034

This lens allows us to see Paul’s epistolary project – through all 16 chapters – as the formation of a community “in Christ,” which contrasts with the out-group who are “in Adam.” Victor P. Furnish argues that “… Romans has, almost from the beginning, a hortatory aspect of which chaps. 12-15 are only, so to speak, the denouement.”1035 Elliott claims that the “deep exigency” from Romans 1:15 is the calling of the Gentiles to the obedience arising from faith(fulness) (1:5), which is existence in “the sphere of Christ’s

1035 Theology and Ethics in Paul, rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 101 (italics added). By “almost from the beginning,” Furnish reaches back at least to 1:16-17 (that is, the call to action is implicit in the person of faith being the object of the righteousness of God). Ibid. 106.
lordship [which] both demands and creates holiness” (vv. 6-7). It is this formation of identity which drives Paul’s proclamation of the gospel to the Romans. Paul explicitly tells them that his letter will be proclamation, that is, demand. Hence Elliott’s punchline: “The exordium prepares the audience for a letter that will ‘demand something of them.’”

This process of constructing two alternative Daseinweise, two modes of human being, around the polar figures of Adam and Christ occurs from the first verse. Always, whether implicitly or explicitly, Paul is forming common ground and calling his hearers to the “in-Christ” identity and the neighbor-love with which it is consonant, at the same time as he calls them away from the harming of the other which marks those “in-Adam.” Many commentators observe that Romans 12:1-2 acts as an “antidote” to 1:18-32. Several categorize 1:18-32 as the “Adamic reign” precipitated by “Adamic sin.” On the first point, Peterson notes that “[w]orship terminology is reintroduced at this key point in Paul’s argument [Rom 12:1] to demonstrate how the problems created by humanity’s failure to worship and serve God appropriately (Romans 1-2) have been dealt with by God himself.” The following schematic demonstrates the way Rom 12:1-2 answers 1:18-32:

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1037 Ibid. Note that it is Paul’s enthusiasm to realize the gospel among the Roman congregations which leads to his desire to visit them, viz., to preach the gospel to them and reap the “fruit” of transformed lives (Rom 1:13-15). All the subordinate clauses (the series of “γὰρ”) in verses 16-18 relate back to this rhetorical aim. Consider, too, Arnold Willer’s excellent observation that neighbor-love as Torah’s fulfillment (Rom 13:10) is a reconfiguration of the fidelity towards which divine faithfulness drives humanity (Rom 1:17: “καὶ πίστευς ἐν πίστει”). He notes: “… die Liebe … eine Gestalt des Glaubens ist.” Der Römerbrief – eine Dekalogische Komposition (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1981), 83.
1038 Rhetoric, 85-86. Elliott’s citation is from Epictetus: “There is nothing more effective in the style for exhortation than when the speaker makes clear to the audience that he requires something of them” (Diss. 3.33.33-38; Elliott’s translation). Similarly, W. Campbell observes that the epistle’s first 11 chapters are not a flow of information but an angling towards situational goals (Christian Identity, 159).
1039 For the expression Daseinweise, see Kim, “Paul’s Common Paraenesis,” 138.
1041 “Worship and Ethics in Romans 12,” Tyndale Bulletin 44/2 (1993): 278. Daniel Galadza approvingly summarizes Peterson’s position: “Romans 12 is the solution to, and reversal of, the problem of ungodliness
Commentators judge 12:1-2 to “respond to that earlier picture.” To worship God “serves as the polar opposite of actions carried out under the reign of sin introduced by Adam.” J.-M. Cambier observes: “L’homme païen qui ne peut adorer Dieu ni lui render grâce (Rom. 1, 21), le croyant peut accepter et vivre << ce qui bon, agreeable à Dieu, parfait >> (Rom. 12, 2d).” Thompson’s description presents the heart of Paul’s concern as the restoration of worship; persons come to “participate in the reversal of the downward spiral described at the beginning.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rom 1:18-32</th>
<th>12:1-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wrath</td>
<td>mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refusing to glorify or thank God</td>
<td>(thankful) sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dishonouring the body</td>
<td>offering the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἄσωμετός, idolatrous λατρεία</td>
<td>λογική λατρεία</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reprobate mind</td>
<td>renewed mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rejecting the δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ</td>
<td>approving the θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1042 Michael Thompson, Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1-15.13 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 82. The chart is also reproduced by Peterson (“Worship and Ethics,” 284). A similar table is produced by Jodoin, who further observes that 2:18’s “γινώσκω σε τῷ νόμῳ καὶ δικαίωσόσις τῷ δικαιώσεις” is answered by 12:2’s “εἰς τῷ δικαιώσεις ἡμᾶς τί τῷ θελήμα τοῦ θεοῦ” (“Une Intrigue Discursive;” 504). The characterization of the out-group is not confined to 1:18-32; indeed, it continues throughout the entire letter. Victor Paul Furnish considers that the “correspondence in vocabulary and concern between Romans 1 and 12 is striking.” Theology and Ethics in Paul, rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 103.


1044 Miller, Obedience of Faith, 87. Miller refers to the worship of both Rom 12:1 and 15:6 (Jew and Gentile are “with one voice [to] glorify … God”) as answering the problem of the opening chapters.


1046 “Romans 12:1-2 and Paul’s Vision for Worship,” in A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology in Honour of J. P. M. Sweet, ed. M. N. A. Bockmuehl and M. B. Thompson (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1997), 124 (italics mine). Gupta also approvingly cites this characterization from Thompson. Excellently, Gupta observes: “The issue of true and false (cultic) worship” needs to complement “the righteousness of God” and covenant as central themes in the epistle (Worship that Makes Sense, 119). Moo also observes that the corrupt worship of Chapter 1 “finds its reversal in the Christians’ ‘reasonable’ worship and renewed mind.” Romans, 748. I flag in passing here a point I will develop shortly: Moo immediately makes the renovated mind central to the restored human – not even mentioning the sacralized body.
Consequently, Elliott is on solid ground when he describes the full significance of this “reversal” in relation to the macrostructure of the letter. It points “to a fundamental antinomy that gives structure to the letter: the contrast between humanity’s depravity … and the new life of holiness.”\(^{1047}\) This macro perspective is supported by Jodoin, who postulates: “Rm 12, 1-2 n’est pas qu’une simple reprise des chapitres précédents, elle est l’aboutissement d’un long cheminement (Rm 1, 18-3, 20).”\(^{1048}\)

The importance of this approach to Romans (and Paul’s other letters) is its reading of the constructions of the two antithetical humanities – and so the epistle in toto – as persuasive rhetoric. The thrust of Paul’s communiqué is, in Esler’s words, to reduce “…ethnic tension and conflict, especially between Judean and non-Judean members, by transforming the perceptions of all concerned so that they understand, accept and internalize the fact that they now belong to a new group.”\(^{1049}\) Esler continues by arguing that 12:1-2 evidences “…the basic strategy of ingroup/outgroup differentiation. The outgroups he has in mind are Judeans who have not converted to Christ and who continue with the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem and the sinful world (“age”), especially of pagan idolatry, in which all concerned are located.”\(^{1050}\) However, Esler’s application of social identity theory’s concept of differentiation is certainly on target. Paul is indeed “an entrepreneur of identity.”\(^{1051}\) The “Other” or outgroup, though, to Christic humanity (the ingroup) is the corrupt human-creatures of 1:18-32.

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\(^{1048}\) “Une Intrigue Discursive,” 503. As Kim shows, the contrast between the ethos of Adamic humanity and the holiness of those in Christ also shapes 1 Thessalonians and Philippians (“Paul’s Common Paraenesis,” 133-37).


\(^{1050}\) Ibid. 59.

4. My Approach to Romans: Reading Σωμα as “Material-Interrelated Self”

“Peter”: A whipped slave, Baton Rouge (Louisiana), 1863. 1052

My basic starting point is to imagine a “Peter” sitting amongst those who heard Paul’s epistle being performed in a Roman house-church. How would he, or a female slave, or an ex-slave (freedperson), or a marginalized poor person have heard the shocking idea that their bodies were sacral and under God’s claim? As I develop my case for Paul’s vision of God’s sacralizing of the body as a subversion of cultural ideology, I will be conscious of the two quite polar scholarly positions presented above. The first is that of the abstract “theological” body, viz., Paul claims the “person” for God. The second grasps the “concrete” body in Paul’s discourse but has Paul reinscribe elitist antipathy to the degraded body.

A. Précis of Cultural Interpretation of Σωμα

It will be helpful to briefly recap my principal findings relating to the Greco-Roman use of the body to construe and impose human identity, (dis)honor and human worth (or a lack thereof). The entrée into the ancient worldview is the polarization of reality between that which rules and that which is ruled.

The division of humanity into the poles of honorable and shameful was expressed in bodily experiences. For the Greek elite, their inferiors were deficient in reason and so assimilated to the body and thus in need of forceful domination. The Romans too judged the “Other” as morally and intellectually inferior and under divine mandate to be dominated. Non-elite persons were reduced to being mere bodies. They were animalized and dehumanized as mere σώματα in chattel lists, or as ἀνδρόποδα (man-footed animals)

1052 Image is taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flagellation (03/10/2012). See also the cover of Page DuBois’ book, Slaves and Other Objects, for a similar picture with the intent to concretize the discussion of “bodies.”
for sale. Roman law covered injuries to slaves, livestock and other implements under property law, not criminal law. The Greco-Roman outlook also categorized the feminine in servile and somatic terms. Aristotelian zoology has the female as a deformed male.

The outworkings of this ideology were thoroughly corporal and violent. In order to maintain the “correct” populations at the high and low dimensions of the semiotic grid, the ruling men assigned wo/men their various roles: wife, child or slave. The slave was the archetype of somatic degradation; other non-elite were at various degrees of improvement from their state. The crucial point is that one was given roles which engaged the body in different modes of dishonorable employment, e.g., prostitution, manual labor, etc. In the event of resistance, the low-status individual faced the violent reinscription of his or her status.

It is the liability of the non-elite body to degrading occupations and violence, and the way such bodies conveyed clear testimony to their dishonorable status, which must be the constant background to reading Paul’s references to the σωμα. This concretizing of the corporeal, concrete location of Paul’s hearers is best encapsulated, I submit, by understanding Paul’s hearers to be “material-dominated selves.”

**B. Social Location of Paul’s Hearers**

It is a relatively straightforward matter to show that Paul’s audiences in Rome and in the wider Mediterranean were wo/men: those on the outside of power. For Paul’s audience, σωμα refers to their being “material-dominated selves.” I utilize a comment of Jewett’s regarding humanity’s being “sold under Sin” (Rom 7:14) as programmatic here: “Sin functions in Paul’s expression as the alien power that enslaves its helpless victims, which would have been an emotionally powerful metaphor for Paul’s audience that consisted mostly of slaves and former slaves with first-hand experience of slavery’s abuse and degradation.”

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1053 Romans, 462. Jewett, however, misses the inference that Paul is subverting the dominant ideology which legitimated slavery. Those called “slaves” by the culture are not inherently shameful or naturally fitted for a servile role. Rather, the monstrous force of “Sin” has led to their condition of material abuse – the divine power does *not* ratify their degradation and ultimately will bring the reversal of this perverted state.
i. Kahl and Lopez: Imperial Ideology

An important optic for viewing the apostle’s construction of "sw/ma" is the way religio-political claims to power were validated by their claimants’ forceful, that is bodily, control of their opponents. Counterwise, a system which claimed legitimacy yet was populated by passive, vulnerable and unmanly bodies hardly fitted the cultural power script. Ideologies were embodiments; one’s ideological claims were falsified or validated by one’s corporeal state.

Throughout the empire, the imagery of both subordinated human bodies and imperial representations of active bodies dominating passive bodies communicated the divinely ordained right of the elite to rule. The two images below are indicative of Roman imperial propaganda which sought to naturalize the rule of Roman men.

Relief of Claudius and Britannia, South Portico of the Sebasteion, Aphrodisias (Asia Minor), ca. mid 1st cent. CE.

I incorporate these images here in order to draw in the analyses which Kahl and Lopez make of them. These Biblical scholars use the images and the window they afford into the first-century world to insist that Paul’s message be heard as robustly materialistic. The first one is of Claudius subjugating Britannia – representing Roman rule over the peoples of Britain.

This image is central to Lopez’s challenge to re-embody, or to re-imagine, Paul’s mission (it features on the cover of her Apostle to the Conquered). She calls for modern readers to imagine afresh the material context of Paul and his hearers as those outside of power, and it is the imagery of Roman imperial propaganda that should aid our

envisaging of the somatic-selves of those on the underside of power. In the Claudius-Britannia image, Lopez explains, we are enticed to view the world as naturally in submission to the elite: “The man is almost naked except for a cloak and military helmet. He is holding the woman down with his knee, and it looks as if he is about to violate her sexually or kill her. No matter the action, the scene is clearly violent. The female figure is also scantily clad, her right breast is bared, and she looks out since her head is being held up by the man’s left hand.”

The wider artistic context of the image is vitally important. As noted in the caption, it is found in the South Portico of the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias (Asia Minor). As “Claudius” yanks back “Britannia’s” hair, he forces her to look out over numerous other images of Roman subjugation of other feminized nations. Lopez informs us that as many as 50 nations were originally represented. Brigitte Kahl makes many of the same points using the imperial image of the “Dying Gaul” as her exemplar (as used on the cover of her Galatians Re-Imagined).

The basic thrust of the image is clear enough: the celtic peoples – the long-time threat to the Roman mandate to subdue and enforce “peace” – are represented as subdued. The Gaulish trumpeter is head-down, naked and defeated. He is dying; blood weeps from a stab wound under his right pectoral, and his sword lies uselessly under him. The

1055 Apostle, 1.
1056 Ibid. 2.
1057 The dating can be found in Kahl’s Galatians, 31. The Roman iconography presenting the Gaul’s as “falling and falling, dying or dead” asserts the former’s superior force/justice (Ibid.). Of crucial importance is Kahl’s note that, given the origin of the dying Gaul art form in Pergamon, “we might regard them as representations of the direct ancestors of Paul’s Galatians.” Ibid. (italics mine). More on this shortly.
epitome of disorder and lawlessness, the celtic barbarian, yields to Roman rule – future insubordination will only lead to the same outcome. All viewers receive this message of the inevitability, the naturalness of submission or death.\textsuperscript{1058} “Victory monuments” inculcate “the lawless being lawfully punished for any past, present, or future transgression of human and divine order.”\textsuperscript{1059}

Both Kahl and Lopez call Biblical scholars to enter this brutal material landscape in order to re-imagine the impact of Paul’s message. Lopez’s method is to “view” Paul and his hearers through the eyes of “Britannia;” indeed, to view the world, the nations, and the then power structures as she suggests Paul and his hearers did – to realize they shared “Britannia’s” outlook. The early Christ-followers were not on the Claudius side of the power divide. The upshot of re-seeing Paul and his hearers against the media of bodily brutalization is to shift exegesis “from center to margins, from high to low.”\textsuperscript{1060}

Her assessment of the abstract theologies generated by privileged males positioned on the inside/upside of power within Constantinian Christendom is valuable:

> The significance of the New Testament’s nations … cannot be simply that they are theologically not Jewish. The relief of Britannia and Claudius, and therefore the representation of the nations, shows them as lying at the intersection of gender and sexuality, religion and politics, and ethnicity and colonization. I submit that there is not a way to successfully separate out these factors within the material reality of Paul’s context.\textsuperscript{1061}

In effect, what Lopez’s non-idealist/materialist approach to Paul does with a focus on the nations – the brutalized populations “saved” through submission to Roman law and order(ing) – I wish to do with respect to Paul’s use of σωμα. Just as to hear “nations” is to hear brutal stratification, so too to hear “σωμα” is to hear religio-political constructions of human worth and locations vis-à-vis honor and power. In particular, Lopez’s stress that Paul’s “material reality” is shaped by the imperial propaganda of foreigners being naturally subordinate to Roman rule – religiously, politically and morally – squares completely with the accent I have sought to develop throughout this

\textsuperscript{1058} Ibid. 31-33. It should be remembered that, ca. 390 BCE, the Gauls entered Rome itself – hence their legendary status as terrorists against law and order.

\textsuperscript{1059} Ibid. 80.

\textsuperscript{1060} Apostle, 14. Here, Lopez is specifically assigning this marginalized viewpoint as basic to a queer approach.

\textsuperscript{1061} Ibid. 17 (italics mine). Earlier she has noted that, in traditional exegesis, ἐθνη (nations/gentiles) are reduced to a religious category, “marked by their un-choseness” and so with negative connotations (Ibid. 4). Moreover, she notes incisively that the nations are not a cipher for sexual immorality and/or idolatry – they, like Israel, are the objects of violence (Ibid. 124).
work. My constant use of “religio-political” to present the Greco-Roman worldview is validated by her position.

Kahl, too, by showing the ubiquity of the Gauls as crushed, barbarian “Others” refers to the fallacy of positioning the Galatian epistle in “a purely theological realm [with] the ‘Galatians’ … dwelling far above worldly circumstances, wrestling with more transcendent questions regarding human sinfulness and whether they could be justified by faith in Christ alone, rather than by Jewish circumcision and ‘works’ as well.”

Western scholarship is criticized for its “unreflective ‘methodological Docetism,’” its “idealism,” in short, its failure to emphasize “the concrete historical-material contexuality of the Galatian correspondence.” The “justification” brought by faith becomes the concrete hope of social and economic, i.e., material, justice to “the conquered nations (ethnē) under Roman rule.”

Additionally, Lopez draws together the suffering of the nations and that of Israel, both of which are gentes, the foreign nations, in Roman ideology. She discusses the imagery on the Judaea Capta coin issued by Vespasian to celebrate the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Here a Roman soldier stands upright, left foot on a Judaean war-helmet, a subdued female figure – smaller in size – kneeling, weeping, to the side.

Kahl, too, is helpful at this point. The anti-nomos rhetoric found in Paul must be seen not as Paul rallying against a monolithic Judaism, but against Torah as it is co-opted to maintain the hierarchy of self/God/power over the outsider. In effect, Torah/nomos has two faces: the call to vertical and horizontal love/fidelity. As accommodated to Roman lex, it calls to adamic self-over-other agonism and thus has a hierarchizing function.

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1062 Galatians, 34-35.
1063 Ibid. 35. “Methodological docetism” is an expression taken from Robin Scroggs, “The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament,” 165, cf. 179. For Scroggs, scholarship too often views author and recipients as grappling with ideas about themselves and God, versus the threats to their bodily wellbeing. Scroggs’ “sociology of early Christianity wants to put body and soul together again.” Ibid. 165.

1064 Galatians, 35; cf. Ibid. 281. God’s justifying activity is the rectification of “both the damaged relation between the human self and God, and between the human self and human other by grace.” “Justification by faith” (faith being the “radical trust of and commitment to the other of God-in-Christ, and the other of the neighbor-foreigner”) is thus vertical-horizontal. The social level of horizontal “justice, reconciliation, and peace” must be pressed to balance the Protestant emphasis on the individual’s “faith relationship” with God. Ibid. 281.

1065 For the discussion, see Ibid. 36-38. Additionally, a dagger depicted as resting on his groin area probably has phallic/penetrative implications (Ibid. 38).

1066 Ibid. 217. She understands the prophetic and exodus traditions to demand that the law function liberatively; however, Torah was also interpreted and wielded by the priestly/aristocratic fraternity which sought self-mainstainance under the various empires. The fiery denunciation of “Torah” in Galatians reflects Paul’s “profoundly ‘Maccabean’ anti-idolatrous zeal within an exodus framework” as he targets “prevelant (ab)uses of Torah by Roman nomos/lex.” I should flag here too the influence on my thought of Jewett’s helpful exegesis of Romans 7-8 with respect to Torah having both “perverted and restored forms” (Romans,
I would emphasize that Paul should be considered a Jewish reformer; his Jewish loyalties are palpably evident in Romans 9-11. Following Stendahl, Kahl observes that Paul knew nothing of a “Christian” identity; he was a part of Judaism.\(^\text{1067}\) Concretely, the Galatians/Gauls were under pressure to accommodate to Roman law and order(ing) so that by being circumcised they could pass as Jewish converts and justify their withdrawal from the civic cult.\(^\text{1068}\)

Several further methodological implications from Lopez’s and Kahl’s work warrant mention. First, Paul’s subversion of the gendered imaging of hierarchy imparts a profoundly elevated identity to what are (culturally) wo/men. His alternative vision in which wo/men stand as full members of the *ekklēsiae* – the self-determining societies of believers\(^\text{1069}\) – radically opposes the hegemony of the phallic actor. Lopez observes that even empire-critical studies have failed to grasp that gender is not simply a matter of the first century’s control of women’s bodies in *private*; rather, portraying wo/men as subordinate to men is basic to “public or civic hierarchy.”\(^\text{1070}\)

Second, the nations and Israel stand together in solidarity under Roman oppression. “The Romans/nations hierarchy [rather than the Jews/nations one] … is the more meaningful one in Paul’s context.”\(^\text{1071}\) This point supports my concern to set Paul’s vision in antithesis to the hubristic violence that is characteristic of adamic humanity.

The human tendency to aggrandize the self at the expense of creaturely acknowledgment of God and the welfare of the other is the foil for the identity/ethos which he crafts for his

\(^{481}\) regarding Rom 8:2). “The law of Sin” (Rom 7:23) is Torah as abused by Sin, such that it “twists performance of the law into a means of status acquisition” (Ibid. 470). However, Torah – in its “restored form” – liberates from death, being “the Torah of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus [which] sets you free” (Rom 8:2). Jewett explains that “v. 2a refers to the Torah derived from the ‘Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,’ a spiritual law that functions in the domain of Christ, setting believers free from the compulsion to compete for honor by misusing the law as a means of gaining status.” (Ibid. 481). This reading sets the stage for Paul’s later depiction of the nomistic contentions between the house-churches as being an example of adamic humanity’s competition for honor (Ibid. 473).

\(^{1067}\) Ibid. 20. Basic to my position here is the need to hear “Messiah” every time Paul says Χριστός; and that by Χριστός he means the Jewish/Judean king, through whose agency God reconciles the alienated nations to each other and God’s self (Rom 15:8-12). This is quite different from the terminology of “Christian” by which persons eventually differentiated themselves from Judaism. “Christian” would be acceptable to me if it meant “one who is loyal to the Jewish Messiah” – which clearly it does not.

\(^{1068}\) Ibid. 20-21; cf. 81-82.

\(^{1069}\) In my glossing of ἐκκλησία, I am conscious of reflecting Schüssler Fiorenza’s usage, viz., “the logic of radical equality” is conveyed by the word which “as a political term of ancient democracy, entails equality, inclusivity, citizenship, and decision-making power for all members of the Christian community.” Accordingly, biblical studies should be “reposition[ed] in the public space of the ekklēsia of wo/men … ekklēsia is not primarily a religious but a political term.” Power of the Word, 10.

\(^{1070}\) Lopez, Ibid. 123.

\(^{1071}\) Ibid. 124.
audience. Again, the “Jews” are not to be imported into Paul’s discourse as the “Other” against which he constructs the “Christian” self.

Both Lopez and Kahl demonstrate the urgency of understanding the ancient world in terms of what I would call a principle of *ideologies being embodiments*. One’s ideological structuring of power is ratified as an embodiment: powerful bodies prove claims to potency; weak bodies belie such claims. The hierarchical structuring of the divine-cosmic-elite over against the subjugated outsider is everywhere communicated, imaged, enforced and maintained through corporal domination. Claims to religio-political ascendancy were instantly falsified by their claimants’ passive, feminized and servilized bodies. My own analysis of the Greco-Roman alignment of the active, virile body with the divine and ruling elements of the cosmos, when taken together with Lopez’s and Kahl’s discussion of hierarchy and Roman imagery, demonstrates the thesis that bodily state validated or falsified one’s claim to ascendant identity.

**ii. Poverty (Economic) Scale**

Recently Steven J. Friesen and Bruce W. Longenecker have discussed the economic and social locations of the Pauline believers.\(^{1072}\) Both authors divide the economic spectrum into seven grades, with poverty scale 1 (PS1) being the wealthiest and PS7 the poorest.\(^{1073}\) Both agree that the elites in PS1-3 amount to approximately 3% of the population.\(^{1074}\) Longenecker argues that Friesen has understated the proportion of those in PS4, viz., persons with a moderate to significant material surplus above subsistence levels. For Longenecker they comprise 17%; for Friesen, 7%.\(^{1075}\)

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\(^{1073}\) “Poverty scale” is Friesen’s original terminology. Longenecker’s attempts to improve on this by calling it an “economic scale.” The issue is whether one should emphasize poverty as the dominant economic reality of the period; for me, the answer is yes. As I will outline, both authors acknowledge the ubiquitous and structural nature of poverty. Longenecker concludes that 55% of the population live at subsistence level (ES6-7), with another 25% existing in “fragile suspense” above it (*Ibid.* 269). Such a situation, to my mind, requires the adjective poverty, rather than the more neutral economic.

\(^{1074}\) The scales used by the two authors appear in Friesen, “Poverty Scale,” 347; and Longenecker, “Economic Scale,” 264. Friesen (and Longenecker by implication) grade the elites as imperial (PS1), regional (PS2) and municipal (PS3).

\(^{1075}\) Friesen makes “subsistence” concrete: having “the resources needed to procure enough calories in food to maintain the human body” (“Poverty Scale,” 343).

\(^{1076}\) Again, I refer to the tables in Friesen, “Poverty Scale,” 347; Longenecker, “Economic Scale,” 264.
Whether those in PS1-4 amount to 10% (Friesen) or 20% (Longenecker), 80%-90% hovered around the breadline. Longenecker acknowledges the reality of “structural poverty:”

With 55% of the Greco-Roman world skimming the surface of subsistence and occasionally dropping below it (ES6 and ES7), and with another 25% living in an extremely fragile suspension above subsistence level (ES5), studies of the early Christian movement cannot be immune to the pressing ‘realities of poverty’ that affected the majority of the imperial world.  

Indeed, Longenecker contends that close to 90% of the early Christ-followers belonged to this subsistence strata (i.e., his ES5-7); less than 10% (versus the typical 17%) had the moderate surpluses of ES4.  

At a practical level, he leaves the exegete in no doubt as to the priority of materially situating Paul’s congregations:

Adjusting the population percentages for the economic scale should do nothing to erode a necessary focus on economic exploitation, oppression and injustice in the agrarianism of the Greco-Roman world. This is where the economy scale for population percentages needs to be correlated with consideration of the socio-economic machinery that drove advanced agrarian systems and the matrices of socio-economic, religio-political status codes that animated most cultures of the ancient world, not least the Greco-Roman world.

In effect, by doubling back to this focus on the impoverished locations of the early believers, Longenecker supports the basic binary construct (rich versus poor) offered by Friesen and others. Friesen’s powerful critique of the secondary literature concurs with Longenecker’s charge that the first-century “social machinery” be analyzed in terms of how socio-economic and religio-political stratification was imposed and maintained.

Friesen comments on Western theology’s tendency to emphasize the inner benefits of peace and love while leaving social structures of poverty and injustice uncriticized.
Friesen notes the ubiquity of poverty: “Most of the inhabitants of the empire were born into poverty, and their only chance to escape it was the tomb.”\textsuperscript{1081}

Even though both Longenecker and Friesen claim to be offering more than a simplistic binary economic structure, I think this is basically where they arrive. This is particularly the case for the Pauline congregations. Their membership was clustered at the bottom end of the poverty scale and so they were “poor” in relation to the wealthy.\textsuperscript{1082} Methodologically, Pauline exegesis must take place through the eyes of those outside and underneath power, with sensitivity to their, and Paul’s, economic reality. “‘Paul the manual laborer’ need[s] to become central in our understanding of Paul’s life and mission. For the most part, however, specialists have not assimilated Paul’s economic life into their portraits of ‘Paul the apostle’ or ‘Paul the theologian.’”\textsuperscript{1083} Despite their different configurations of the middle strata (PS or ES4), I am most interested in both Longenecker’s and Friesen’s insistence that the concrete, marginalized status of Paul and his hearers be foregrounded in historical reconstructions. Accordingly, I find invaluable Meggitt’s stark dichotomizing of the empire between the 1% elite and the 99%.

The Pauline Christians \textit{en masse} shared fully the bleak material existence which was the lot of more than 99% of the inhabitants of the Empire, and also, … of Paul himself. Statistically this is unremarkable. To believe otherwise, without clear evidence to the contrary, given the near universal prevalence of poverty in the first-century world, is to believe the improbable.\textsuperscript{1084}

Even though 99% is probably too severe and leaves “poverty” un-nuanced (per Friesen’s and Longenecker’s critiques), Meggitt must be heard – as indeed both these scholars insist. The hearers of the Pauline message are overwhelmingly those on the underside/outside of social power, honor and human worth. In terms of the semiotic grid, they were the “Non-A” and the “Non-B” – the weak, the material, the feminized, the

\textit{Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later}, eds. Todd D. Still and David G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 43; the citation is from Greg Woolf, “Writing Poverty in Rome,” in \textit{Poverty in the Roman World}, eds. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 92.\textsuperscript{1081} \textit{Ibid.} 339.\textsuperscript{1082} Friesen aims to nuance the polemical binary construction offered by Meggitt (whose basic finding he endorses): “The problem with the binary terminology of rich and poor is that the term ‘the poor’ has to cover at least 90% of the population with little or no differentiation among them.” “Poverty Scale,” 339-40. On the Pauline membership, Friesen states: “Most of the people … – including Paul himself – lived near the level of subsistence;” there were no elites (PS1-3), and few had moderate surpluses (PS4) (\textit{Ibid.} 348).\textsuperscript{1083} \textit{Ibid.} 350; the citation and reference are to Ronald F. Hock, \textit{The Social Context of Paul’s Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship} (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), no page number given.\textsuperscript{1084} Paul, 99.
They were alienated from the power structure endorsed by the gods, the cosmos and the elite. Or, as I have discussed earlier, this is the dichotomy between the honestiores and the humiliores. Meggitt’s impoverishing of the early Jesus-followers over against Western scholars’ tendency to elevate them is followed by Edward Adams, who agrees that 99% of the population lived in “abject poverty;” they congregated in “lean-tos, ‘shanties’, insulae,” and so on, not the villas of antiquity.

Two final and basic observations are in order. Firstly, Richard L. Rohrbaugh points out that if one’s class (economically) was not supported by one’s status (access to power), one lived in fear of losing one’s position. While Rohrbaugh mentions the ancient fear of fate as standing behind this anxiety, we should also consider the elites’ disdain for those who rose from the underclasses to wealth and quasi-honorability. Petronius’s Satyricon, in which the wealthy freedman Trimalchio is lampooned for his inability to act with the decorum of the truly noble, is based on this phenomenon.

My point is that even those in PS4 who held a certain material surplus could be expected to be fearful of their future. Rohrbaugh observes that “[f]or the New Testament scholar, this might mean being in a better position to understand how the Christian hope for a new and alternative order was influenced by or was a response (reaction?) to the hopes and fears being expressed by those who despaired of the present system.” My earlier section on the risk that the elite, even emperors, faced of being expelled and brutally executed should reinforce the systemic fragility of material security.

Secondly, the alleviation of insecurity could not be found in class solidarity in the Marxist sense; connection to a patron was the basis of success. Longecker details how the vertical nature of the patronage system (the need to submit to, and be resourced by, a superior) prevents bonds of solidarity from developing horizontally across society. Whatever level of economic security might be achieved by the non-elite was predicated

1085 See Chapter 2.2.
1086 See Chapter 4.4.C.ii. Also cf. Paul, 50, for the application of this legal terminology.
1089 Ibid. 540-41. Rohrbaugh’s observation that even the elite would have experienced this fear of loss is endorsed by Longenecker, “Socio-Economic Profiling,” 38.
upon their playing by the rules of the cultural honor-shame code. The Christ-movement’s antithetical ethos in this regard only further alienated them from the patronage safety net.

In sum, the Pauline congregations should be located economically within the most impoverished strata of society. Around 90% of the Christ-followers lived at, or very near, subsistence levels. Securing resources to maintain the caloric requirements of the body was a day to day challenge; the majority of the remaining 10% enjoyed a modest material surplus. Poverty is thus the context of the early movement, and it is the experience not only of the congregations but of Paul himself. When we consider the endemic fear of loss, even in the highest strata, and the dependence on patronage (i.e., towing the cultural line), the impoverished state of the believers is confirmed. Paul’s hearers in Rome are to be placed at the bottom of the semiotic grid: they are the objects of force, those constructed as corporally open, passive, feminine and servile. From the cultural standpoint, to characterize them in terms of somatic sacrality is ludicrous. They were the “Peters” – their corporeal scars had only ever had the semiotic value of shame and degradation.

iii. Social Location in Romans 16:1-16

Romans 16 offers much helpful material for socially locating Paul’s hearers. As Moo notes, this section is “a goldmine … for those … interested in the socioeconomic composition of the early church.”1091 Peter Lampe’s classic study shows that 13 names out of the 24 individuals addressed can be assessed as to the probability of slave origins.1092 He states: “We can say that most probably four persons are freeborn and at least nine are of slave origin.”1093

1091 Romans, 918. I am assuming the integrity of chapter 16 with the original letter. As Moo observes, the real contention is over the doxology (vv. 25-27), which is variously placed in the tradition, while vv. 1-23 are never omitted from the Greek manuscripts (Ibid. 6-8). Similarly adamant over the inclusion of chapter 16 are Dunn (Romans, 2:884) and C. E. B Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975-79), 2:780. Jewett sides with these scholars, adding that the inclusion of 16 is foundational for reading the letter situationally (Romans, 9); such a reading is basic to my approach. For the integrity of chapter 16, see Harry Y. Gamble, The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 35.


1093 Ibid. 183. The freeborn (Latin) names are Urbanus, Prisca, Aquila and Rufus; the servile (Greek) ones are Nereus, Hermes, Persis, Ampliatus, Herodion, Tryphosa, Tryphaena, Iuna(nus) or Iunia and Iulia. The other 11 names, while Greek, are not necessarily servile but those of immigrants from the east whose status cannot be determined (cf. the chart, Ibid. 182). The first four servile names (Nereus, Hermes, Persis and Ampliatus) are clearly so. Ampliatus “was in the period of Augustus created for slaves;” Hermes (a god’s name) “was the Roman name for slaves” (italics original); Nereus (another god’s name) had “a
As noted earlier, “slavery was a massive institution in the empire, with an estimated 6 million slaves or 10 percent of the population. 2 to 3 million of these were concentrated in Italy.” Lampe concludes that, for Italy, “one could estimate that about 40 percent of the total population were living in slavery.” The upshot is that, regardless of the analysis of the nomenclature, slave origins are highly represented among the addressees (i.e., in concurrence with the two-thirds level found). Lampe’s “two thirds” assessment is widely followed in the literature.

In short, the significant presence of slave or freedpersons in the congregations is strongly attested by both the internal and external evidence. Many of the Christ-followers would have been located on the underside of power and so have experienced firsthand the way a degraded σώμα communicated and ensured a sub-human identity and function. Nevertheless, proximity to servility was only one factor in establishing a person’s social and political location.

C. The Degraded Σώμα as Falsification of the Gospel

Paul’s claims that the Christ-followers possessed a high-status identity is vulnerable to falsification by the empirical reality of their decrepit and violated bodies. By “high-status identity,” I refer to the culturally outlandish terms with which Paul designates his hearers. They are children of the divine, heirs of God (Rom 8:16-17); they are saints; and – of particular concern for this thesis – their bodies are sacral. Regarding these claims of high religio-political standing, I stress that Paul’s characterization embraces his hearers as “material-selves.” His claims should not be considered true – or should not be explained away – in some merely “spiritual” or abstract sense.

special affinity to slaves or freed slaves.” Ibid. 173-74. Dunn, without qualification, has 15 of the names belong to slaves/freedpersons, commenting that here we gain “a fairly clear picture of the extent to which the first Christian groups in Rome drew strength from the lower strata of Roman society.” Romans, 2:900. Morley, “Slavery under the Principate,” 273. He notes that Egyptian census data provides the 10 percent of total population benchmark. Ibid. 172. He refers to the information presented by Galen (5.49), that in Pergamon one-third of the population were slaves (Ibid. n. 53). With reference to Rome’s high proportion of persons with servile ancestry, he points to Seneca, Clem. 1.24.1; Tacitus, Ann. 4.27, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 4.24.4ff. Christians at Rome, 172. Moo, Romans, 918; Meggitt, Paul, 97, n. 109; Witherington, Romans, 10 (without reference to Lampe). Campbell summarizes Lampe by saying, “Paul greets primarily slaves and freedpersons” (Christian Identity, 77, n. 31).
i.  *Paul’s Association with the Body vs. Stoic Disassociation from the Body*

Another way in which Paul’s gospel can be seen as focused on the restoration of the material-self is by contrasting the somatic nature of his salvific vision with that of the Stoics. His picture of human flourishing *subsumes*, rather than abandons, the physical body, whereas the Stoics disassociated the “I” from the “non-I” of the body.

I have already argued for the way that, in general, honor was physically seated in the body. Livy’s noble matron Lucretia, for example, insisted that her honor was irremaribly violated once her body had been raped. She rejected her comforters’ appeals that she was guiltless through non-consent. Her body was her; her honor was physically dependent. Famously, she committed suicide. Other examples have also been given: Verginia, Micca, and Queen Boudecia. For Boudecia, only a retributive infliction of force would restore her honor in the wake of her body having been whipped (and her daughters’ having been raped). I choose these illustrations because they clearly demonstrate the principle that honor relies on the state of the body. The dishonor of the slave – at the lowest end of the spectrum – is irremedial because of his or her somatic degradation/penetrability. On the other hand, the manly frontal wounds of the warrior were a perpetual semiotic validating his claim to belong to the in-group of Men.

The Stoics had found a way to establish, nourish and retain a sense of honor *despite* an objectively violated body: the “real me” was to be disassociated from the “external” of the body. In the context of my desire to show that bodily state is essential to the validation of religio-political claims, the Stoics are vital as a counter-example to the norm that honor was physically seated. Theirs, however, was a minority voice: the proverbial exception that proves the rule. I proceed now by presenting a recent interchange over Stoic influence on Romans 12-13 which neglects corporeal renewal as essential to Paul in contrast to Stoicism. Then I demonstrate from Stoic sources that disassociation of the real “I” from the external of the body was basic to their identity and ethics.

ii.  *Scholarship on Stoicism and Romans 12-13*

Discussion between scholars for and against Stoic influence on Paul’s thought in Romans 12 and 13 has emphasized the reality of the apostle’s awareness of Stoic thought. Engberg-Pedersen reads Romans 12:1-2 and understands that when Paul “[d]escribes a radical change that *leaves behind* the body as the seat of *epithymiai* and consists instead
of turning the *nous* in the direction where one may speak of a *logos*-like worship, then he is … certainly moving within a specifically Stoic form of thought."\(^{1098}\)

For Engberg-Pedersen, not only is Paul affirmative of Stoic ethical ideas, he also follows their disassociative (my language) repudiation of the *σώμα* for the life of the *nous*. So Engberg-Pedersen asks, “… if the mind’s worship and renewal is another, and more forceful, way of speaking of a total (intentional) directedness towards God, why does Paul start out by speaking of the body?” That is, if rational ethics is so primary to Paul and the body relatively unimportant, why muddy the waters with a corporal reference? Engberg-Pedersen gives this answer:

> Clearly, because [Paul] intends to say that he is not just talking of a ‘mental’ thing, some more or less superficial piece of understanding which does not really commit the person. Rather, it is an understanding which *blots out completely any ‘bodily’ remains* in the person. The person who undergoes this metamorphosis by the renewal of his mind has been *completely* turned into a holy offering to God, that is, down to the very last bit of his individual, bodily existence.\(^{1099}\)

It seems that Engberg-Pedersen finds the reference to the body somewhat anomalous and in need of explanation. I have italicized his clarifying phrase “*blots out completely any ‘bodily’ remains*” as highly revealing. In Engberg-Pederson’s reading of Paul, the “body” is the non-mental aspect of selfhood which prevents sacrality. The more it is eliminated (“blotted out”), the more the good life of the *logikē latreia* comes to expression. Ideally, bodily existence is fully erased (whatever this means), for then the “person … by the renewal of his mind has been *completely* turned into a holy offering.” Engberg-Pedersen, in my view, distorts Paul’s salvific vision by having him follow the Stoic path of disassociation from the body in favor of noetic existence. Whereas Paul expressly has the body as the sacral item, Engberg-Pedersen has effectively made the mind the “holy offering to God.”

Other authors variously agree or disagree with Engberg-Pedersen over the extent of Paul’s affinity with Stoicism.\(^{1100}\) However, none of these authors comment on the

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\(^{1098}\) *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 263-64. The italicizing of “leaves behind” is original. He also views Paul as akin to Stoicism because of Paul’s conception of conversion as a change in self-perception. There occurs “*a move away from* an identification of the self with itself as a bodily, individual being” (*Ibid.* 10, italics original).

\(^{1099}\) *Ibid.* 263. Italics mine (except the second “completely” was originally italicized).

\(^{1100}\) Most notably, Philip F. Esler has opposed him: “Throughout the course of Rom 12 Paul works closely with ideas and language that have parallels in Stoicism and yet *thoroughly subverts them*” (my italics). “Paul and Stoicism: Roman 12 as a Test Case,” *New Testament Studies* 50/1 (2004): 124. Runar M. Thorsteinsson, on the other hand, supports Engberg-Pedersen: “The differences [between Pauline and Stoic
Stoic depreciation of the body vis-à-vis Paul’s explicit sacralizing of the body. The closest I have come to finding a mention of the Stoic depreciation of the body and Romans 12:1-2 is David Peterson’s brief mention of Philo in a footnote. As a Hellenistic philosopher, Philo can speak of the νοῦς, the διάνοια or ἄρχετή as sacrifices but never the body. I have found no trace in the literature that Paul’s high regard for the body counters the claim that Stoic thought is helpful in elucidating Paul. I would suggest that by sidelining the role of σώμα in Paul’s vision, scholars are evidencing the idealist/non-materialist tendency to abstract the apostle and his hearers precisely as Lopez and Kahl have censored.

iii. Stoic Disassociation from the Body

Given that the discussion of Stoicism and Romans 12 has not appreciated the antithetical attitude to the body of the Stoic system over against Paul, I will now sketch the former’s negativity. Seneca, during a period of illness, writes of the relief he finds in contemplating God’s creation of the universe. Such reflections “elevate and lighten the soul (animum), which is weighted down by a heavy burden and desires to be freed and to return to the elements of which it was once a part. For this body (corpus) of ours is a weight upon the soul and its penance.”

Liberation, for Seneca, is found at death when the prison-house of the body is left, and the soul “renews its life in heaven.” Virtue is the practice of pre-implementing morality] are clearly outweighed by the many, striking similarities.” “Paul and Roman Stoicism: Romans 12 and Contemporary Stoic Ethics,” Journal for the Study of the New Testament 29/2 (2006): 139.

1101 Esler sums up the nub of the comparison: Paul “…stresses [in Stoic-fashion] the rational basis underlying the attitudes and behavior he recommends … Paul assumes that moral knowledge and virtuous activity are inseparable.” “Paul and Stoicism,” 124. That is, the reclamation and sacrality of the body as a guiding ethical category is conspicuously absent from Esler; he implicitly erases the body too. Similarly, Thornsteinsson acknowledges the call to present the body which is understood to be “showing mutual love, care, respect and adaptability;” this is “the way in which this ‘living sacrifice’ is to be embodied” (“Paul and Roman Stoicism,” 144). Again, the sacralizing of the material organism is overlooked with an attitudinal focus taking centre stage. Thereafter, Thornsteinsson presents the alignment of Paul and Stoicism. For both, “total moral transformation” is not just “intellectual transformation but … a metamorphosis of both discernment and deed;” this is what offering the body means (Ibid. 148). Both ethical systems emphasize φρόνεσις (“inner intellectual judgments”) (Ibid. 149). Futher, offering the individual σώμα as one θεότητα is basically a call for practicing virtue socially. Thus the body metaphor in Rom 12:4-5 is taken as the real content of the opening σώματά which are offered (Ibid. 150-55). His analysis is excellent as far as it goes; however, the identity-forming/reforming significance of sacralizing the body is absent.

1102 “Worship and Ethics,” 274, n. 12.

1103 Ep., 65.16. In section 21, he continues: “… I was born to a greater destiny than to be a mere chattel of my body (mancipium sim mei corporis), and I regard this body as nothing but a chain which manacles my freedom … To despise our bodies is sure freedom.”

1104 Ibid. 16.
this ultimate separation from the body through disassociating from it in the present life. For example, the wise man refuses to compromise his ethical code in order to curry favor. “Never shall this flesh (caro ista) drive me to feel fear or to assume any pretence that is unworthy of a good man. Never shall I lie in order to honour this petty body (corpusculum).”¹¹⁰⁵ The security of the ego, apart from the suffering and deterioration of the body, is thus basic to Stoic identity and the rationality of their ethics. Disassociation from the body is a salvific axiom.

Similarly, Epictetus reinforces the urgency of bodily disassociation: “The knowledge of what is mine, and what is not mine”¹¹⁰⁶ is the discernment of what constitutes the real me versus the non-me of externals.¹¹⁰⁷ These externals, and the cares they generate, sully the freedom of the real I. So Epictetus offers an excellent definition of what I am calling “disassociation” when he counsels against identifying the self with the body. “There is only the one thing we can care for and devote ourselves to [viz., reason], we [should not] choose instead to care about and attach ourselves to a score of others: to our bodies, to our property, to our family, friends and slaves. And, being attached to many things, we are weighed down and dragged along with them.”¹¹⁰⁸

The salvific and ethical implications are neatly summed up when Epictetus constructs human identity as divine sonship. “If we could completely subscribe, as we should, to the view that … God is father of both gods and men, I don’t believe that we would ever think mean or lowly thoughts about ourselves.”¹¹⁰⁹ This sonship is realized through disassociation from the body. “Two elements are combined in our creation, the body, which we have in common with the beasts; and reason and good judgment, which

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 22.
¹¹⁰⁶ Epict. Diss., 1.1.21.
¹¹⁰⁷ “Externals” are τὰ ἐκτός: “things external and independent of our free choice” (Ibid. 1.4.27).
¹¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 1.1.14-15. Seneca echoes this categorization of the self over against the non-self of externals; he offers the immortal gods, whenever they please, to take his children, a part or the whole of his body, or his life. “Whatever you ask you shall receive with my good will” (Prov., 1.5; trans. Aubrey Stewart, Minor Dialogs). For more on the extent of the disassociation of the self from the body in Stoic thought, see Schweizer, “σώμα,” TDNT, 7.1036 (references here have Stoics describing the body, variously, as a “contemptible burden,” a “penalty,” a “fetter,” a “dark abode of the soul,” “it is alien to us,” “a corpse,” “a beast of burden,” “the product of filth”).
¹¹⁰⁹ Epict. Diss., 1.3.1. I leave open the question of Epictetus’ adherence to the culture’s gender hierarchy. Here “God is the father of both men and gods” renders ὁ θεὸς πατήρ ἐστὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν θεῶν. Quite possibly we could translate this with “God is the father of both wo/men and gods” because he uses the generic ἄνθρωπος. Additionally, Epictetus ascribes regal identity to even the slave, and thus presumably to women. By so portraying the slave, he makes those outside of power, outside of Men, of profound human value – a magnificent achievement in its historical context. To those who think a bill of sale creates superiority over a slave, he retorts: “Don’t you see that, instead of the laws of the gods [which establish pan-human kinship], you only have regard for the earth, the pit and the contemptible laws of the dead?” Ibid. 1.13.5. Shortly, I discuss further his attitude to slaves in the context of his social ethics.
we share with the gods. Most of us tend toward the former connection, miserable and mortal though it is, whereas only a few favour this holy and blessed alliance.\textsuperscript{1110}

Human potential is clearly realized through allying with the divine through developing “reason and good judgement;” “connection” with the animal element of the body is to be downplayed. This identity of rationality and sonship is simultaneous with one’s disassociation from the body and it provides a basis for maintaining a self-construct of high worth: one’s pride should be greater than it would be were one the emperor’s son, “knowing that you are the son of God.”\textsuperscript{1111} The abandonment of the body in securing identity finds further emphasis: “…you have something better than your paltry flesh (ἐξείς τι καὶ κρείσσον τῶν σαρκιδίων) [i.e., the mind]. So why turn away from this and why do you \textit{attach yourself} to that?”\textsuperscript{1112} The self will flourish increasingly as it detaches from the non-self of the body.

Ethical implications flow from this disembodied self-image. Regarding one’s self-treatment, one’s self-image is that of high value in the light of being “the son of God.” Persons should view themselves as “born for [i.e., deserving] fidelity [and] respect … [having] no mean or ignoble thoughts about themselves.”\textsuperscript{1113} The formation of a virtuous character is life’s priority: “Ask me what the real good in man’s case is, and I can only say that it is the right kind of moral character.”\textsuperscript{1114}

Social ethics – respect for one’s siblings (fellow children of God) – arise too, in the form of respect for others. “If what philosophers say about the kinship of God and man is true, then, the only logical step is to do as Socrates did, never replying to the question of where he was from with, ‘I am an Athenian,’ or ‘I am from Corinth,’ but always, ‘I am a citizen of the world.’”\textsuperscript{1115} With this cosmopolitan citizenship, one embraces others, embraces wo/men, as equals. Epictetus is asked: “‘How are we to bear with [tardy] slaves?’ ‘My friend, it’s a matter of bearing with your own brother, who has Zeus as his ancestor and is a son born of the same seed as yourself, with the same high

\textsuperscript{1110} Ibid. 1.3.3.

\textsuperscript{1111} Ibid. 1.3.2.

\textsuperscript{1112} Ibid. 1.3.6 (modified).

\textsuperscript{1113} Ibid. 1.3.4.

\textsuperscript{1114} Ibid. 1.8.16. Here, again the contrast is with physical attributes which are “qualities that are found in [persons] by chance” (Ibid. 1.8.14).

\textsuperscript{1115} Ibid. 1.9.1.
lineage… Remember who you are and whom you govern – that they are kinsmen, brothers by nature, fellow descendants of Zeus.”

Scholars have clearly seen the interface of Pauline and Stoic thought at the ethical level. However, Paul’s and the Stoics’ respective formation of flourishing identity – with or without the body – has been overlooked. Overall, it seems abundantly clear that Stoic identity and ethics, and their vision of flourishing human existence, consists in disassociating from the body. This is, as this thesis is arguing, the polar opposite of Paul’s salvific vision in which bodily travail is to be endured by the sustaining awareness that it (the self) and the cosmos are sacred and to be glorified in the final triumph of God (Rom 8:18-25).

Scholars’ comments on Paul vis-à-vis the Stoics tend to rush to the noetic element of his vision of metamorphosis without detecting the jolt triggered by his assertion that his hearers qua σώματα are sacral and thus of profound importance to the divine. By insisting that the body is integral to human wholeness/identity, Paul chooses not to use dissociation from the body in order to undermine the cultural script which views somatic condition (active/masculine versus passive/feminine) as proof of one’s religio-political status. Ultimately, he runs the risk of falsifying his gospel – his claims of his hearers’ ascendant status – by insisting on their association with their degraded bodies. Nevertheless, they are always material-selves; their “I”s are integrally assimilated to their corporeality.

iv. The Coincidence of the Encouragement/Hope Motif around the Body
I detect that Paul is sensitive to how his auditors’ somatic degradation could falsify his claims as to their status. I see a reflex in his discourse which seeks to compensate for the presently decrepit/abused body by futurizing it. The wholeness of the person qua body is so integral to his vision and to his soteriological claims that the body’s present state is

1116 1.13.3-4. Cf. Sen., Ep., 47, entitled “On Master and Slave:” “Kindly remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives and dies” (47.11). Section 12 summarizes his guidance to masters: “This is the kernel of my advice: treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters.”

1117 A helpful treatment of the harmony of the ethical systems is given by Thornsteinsson. He draws out the social impact of Stoicism with other references to Musonius Rufus’ (Epictetus’ teacher), Seneca’s and Epictetus’ challenges to love one’s enemies; retaliation is suited to the wild beast (“Paul and Roman Stoicism,” 157-58). Thornsteinsson refers to these enemy-love passages to counter Esler’s argument that Paul’s agape-ethic is antithetical to Stoic thought. Arguably, as Thornsteinsson thinks, the Stoics are actually more radical than Paul. Paul may be calling for love within the group, whereas the Stoics call for love to the outsider as well.
routinely comforted by portrayals of its destiny. Paul offers encouragement to wait patiently for the arrival of this future. In Rom 12:1, this encouragement is explicitly called παράκλησις. The felt need for congregations of Christ-followers on the borderline of material subsistence and corporeal stress/erasure was for restoration as somatic-selves.

Examples of this reflex are readily at hand. This move is most obvious in the references to the degraded σώμα and its future glorification in Romans 8. In verses 1-5, Paul makes lofty claims about the hearers’ identity, particularly their enjoyment of liberation. “[T]he law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set [believers] free from the law of sin and of death” (v.2). Their ethical identity is fundamentally pneumatic: they “walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (v.4). The two modes of existence are then described (vv. 5-8). The attitude oriented to flesh is (not leads to) death (“τοῦ … φρονήμα τῆς σαρκός θάνατος”); that of/generated by the Spirit is (not leads to) life and peace (“τοῦ δὲ φρονήμα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωῆς καὶ εἰρήνης”). I posit that the immediate response of the hearers in their degraded corporeal state – remembering that 90% of the Empire’s 60 million inhabitants lived on the breadline – would have been ‘how can this pneumatic identity be real if I am diseased, physically assaulted or otherwise dishonorable?’ For the real me – far from the refined Stoic capability to disassociate from “this petty body” – was the material-dominated self. How can Paul claim, then, that the divine Spirit generates life (and peace)?

Paul, I suggest, recognizes the incongruency of their present state and his claims, and moves to buttress against this empirical falsification. Hence verse 10: “…since Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of Sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” So yes, Paul concedes, Sin does retain its rule as death-dealing/corruption-inflicting power for the meantime. However, the Spirit guarantees the final alignment of their divine heirship and somatic condition. Verse 11 specifies how the

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1118 In Chapter 7 I will argue that Paul’s paraklēsis has the connotation of comfort in the face of suffering.
1119 Rom 8.1ff provides the answer to the plaintive question of Rom 7.24 (“who will rescue me from this body of Death [= mortal body, cf. Rom 6:12]?”). Dunn comments that the escape desired is not “from the body, as though the problem were materiality … [it is] escape from the body as bound to death, escape from an age under the dominion of sin and death” (Romans, 1.410). However, Dunn does not emphasize that such a somatic focus shows that Paul deliberately casts his soteriology as a renewal of the person understood as a material-self. In any case, Romans 8 goes on to say that the auditors enjoy a qualified emancipation through the divine pneuma.
1120 That Paul does not say “leads to” is also understood by Jewett, Romans, 487, n.126; he notes that this is Leon Morris’ view as well, in The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 305-06.
Spirit is life. As “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead (i.e., God),” this Spirit will facilitate God’s “[giving] life to your mortal bodies (ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ ἑσράτα σώματα ἰμῖν).”  

This futurizing of the body aims to validate the hearers’ confidence in a salvific vision which is at heart a reclamation of them as material-selves. The paradigm of divine faithfulness, expressed in the corporeal restoration of Jesus through the agency of the same Spirit who possesses believers, intends to stabilize their endurance during the current reign of death and decay. The essentiality of bodily renewal is emphatic in verses 22 and 23. Present suffering is a state soon to be eclipsed: “We ourselves … groan [enduring with the cosmos, a bondage to decay (vv. 20-21)]” (v. 22). This is a groaning until – a groaning with a certain terminus: “We wait for adoption, [which is] the redemption of our bodies (σώματος ἰμοίν)” (v. 23). The basic point is that the incongruence of somatic state and the claimed alignment with divine power and sacral identity does press on Paul’s discourse. Accordingly, the transience of the degraded body is asserted. A path of disassociating from the body as if it were not really part of selfhood (per the Stoics) is not part of the apostle’s outlook.  

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have endeavored to show that Paul discourses in a context in which one’s claim to religio-political status is typically validated or falsified by one’s corporeal condition. The discussion of Roman imperial imagery made this thesis concrete. Kahl’s and Lopez’ work on the images of the “Dying (Gaulish) Trumpeter” and “Claudius and Britannia” provided examples of how two Biblical scholars have utilized the media of the first century to help us reconstruct the somatic degradation and alienation from power experienced by the non-elite. Paul and his hearers assimilate to the feminized and servilized bodies represented by the subjugated “Britannia” and the dying Gaul. In cultural terms, Paul’s claim that the Christ-followers possess divinely endorsed status – “[you are] heirs of God” (Rom 8:17) – is ridiculous. The general evidence of widespread poverty in the Roman empire locates Paul’s hearers as predominantly from the non-elite strata of society; the social information of Romans 16 confirms this picture.

1121 For this as a reference to bodily resurrection, see Dunn, Romans, 1.432; Moo, Romans, 493.
1122 Consequently, I would take other references to future bodily transformation in Paul as – at least in part – driven by his awareness that his message of the renewal of the person as somatic-self is falsified by his and his hearers material degradation (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:12ff., etc.).
I have argued for Paul’s interest in persons as material-selves by discussing his tenacious claim on the body. I noted the risks this posed to his gospel in that his claims of religio-political status for his hearers was countered by their degraded conditions. I supported this by showing the contrast between Paul’s embodied salvific vision and the Stoics’ disassociation of the real “I” from the “non-I” or external of the body. I further argued that there appears to be a reflex in Paul’s discourse such that when bodily deterioration is mentioned it is supported by references to its glorious future. For Paul, the body is essential to human wholeness; for the Stoics, on the other hand, the body is something which weighs down the real self.
Chapter 6: The Cultic Σωμα is Degraded, Romans 1:18-32

1. Introduction

I have endeavored to show the degraded status and bodily experiences which many of the Christ-followers would have had in their historical context and the likelihood that Paul would have been sensitive to these concerns. With this in mind, I will now attempt to show that Paul’s castigation of the human unrighteousness in Romans 1:18-32 bears a particular emphasis on the abuse of the body.

I suggest that the core characteristics of the Adamic “outgroup,” i.e., the “other” or those outside the Christ-group, as detailed in 1:18-32, are captured by the expression “hubristic violation of the sacred.” I will develop this rubric in order to to point out how Paul configures fallen humanity’s repudiation of creaturely deference to God (hubrism) as linked to its violations of, or violence against, one another. Hubristic violence is basic to the ethos of the “other.” The basic question is this: Why does Paul specify that it is the body that is reclaimed by God in Rom 12:1-2 (cf. 1 Cor 6:12-21; 1 Thess 4:1-8)? I will argue that Paul views the body as cultic in nature—that is, as the means whereby humans perform latreia to God. The body is designed to facilitate the worship of God as it allows the person to embody the divine character in neighbor-love.

Stated another way, my thesis regarding Romans 1:18-32 is this: Paul views the violent degradation of the σωμα as symptomatic of humanity’s assault on the Creator’s supremacy. Once it can be seen that Paul critiques the distorted use of the body under the heading of “ἀδικία” (injustice, Rom 1:18), it becomes apparent that it is not, as most commentators argue, merely sexual sin which dishonors the body. Sexual sin is a subset of the wider human campaign for honor, which begins by assaulting God’s supremacy and then expresses itself through violent treatment of the body of the other. Moreover, the characterization of human viciousness in the vice catalogue (Rom 1:29-31) clearly depicts interhuman predation. Persons are, inter alia, “full of murder,” “haters of God,” “hubristic,” “creators of evil,” “lacking fidelity,” and “merciless.” If we perceive—rightly, I will argue—the violence unleashed on the body in its “degradation” (v. 24 and vv. 26-27), then we see that the cruelty spoken of in the vice list is simply a continuation of this theme.

In this light, on arrival at Romans 12:1, where the σωμα is reclaimed as sacred and as basic to latreia, we can see that Paul is specific in making the body that which is
targeted in salvation. Persons are restored to offering God worship as embodied creatures; the body is restored to its God-ward and neighbor-ward *raison d’être*. Paul’s sustained characterization of the cultural system of power-relations which violates the bodies of the marginalized is castigated as unjust. God stands against the abuse which the “elite” inflict on “inferior” bodies. A violated body does not exclude one from religio-political agency, *per* the social script. God views such degradation with hostility and accepts such suffering as sacrificial.

At the same time, I note how this supports my basic thesis that the sacralization of the body defies the cultural construction of human worth. Paul’s castigation of humanity’s degraded state is founded, at least in part, on his presupposition that the body is cultic in nature – it is designed to facilitate worship and neighbor-love. His theological-political reading of the body conflicts diametrically with the cultural ideology that the bodily state indicates one’s relation to the deities and power.

The cultural “reading” of the body is that those with religio-political worth, marked by *sacrality*, commit the predatory acts of commodifying and sexually/violently extracting pleasure from the bodies of the degraded. Paul disrupts this narrative. For him, violence is not virtuous; violence – especially as concretely inflicted upon the *σωμά* of another – is inherently *desecration of the sacred*. As such, desecration of the body is an act of arrogant defiance of God, and so symbolizes one’s alienation from, not alignment with, religio-political reality. With this understanding, once we return to Rom 12:1-2 we are in a better position to see that hubristic violations of Rom 1:18-32 are the polar opposite of the divine will, rather than *per* the cultural narrative, its instantiation.

Additionally, what is vital to my contribution to reading Paul is that the degradation of the mind must not be made the singular feature of human fallenness. Rather, the experience of the *σωμά* is equally as powerful a testimony to this. It therefore makes sense that Paul explicitly reclaims the body in Rom 12:1.

Commentators offer various epithets in an attempt to convey the core features of the characterization of humanity in Romans 1:18-32. I have already noted that for Moo the degraded mind and perverted worship form this core, and thus the reversal of 1:18-32 which occurs in 12:1-2 consists in “the Christian’s ‘reasonable’ worship and renewed mind.” Similarly, for Jewett, the section can be overviewed in terms of “mental and

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1123 Moo, *Romans*, 748.
psychic disabling.” However, I argue that Paul presents predatory actions upon the σώμα of one’s fellows as equally essential to the Adamic Daseinweise. The degradation of the “mind” or “heart” relates a corruption of “the motivational centre” within the person. The outworking of this darkened centre is concretized by the sacrilegious consumption of the body of the other. It is this sense of the “dishonoring of their bodies among themselves” (Rom 1:24) – that is, humanity’s violation of one another’s bodies – which I suggest is absent in most readings of Paul.

2. Cultic Nature of Σώμα as Presupposition of Romans 1:18-32

Fundamentally, Paul presumes the cultic nature of the σώμα when he associates its degradation with humanity’s repudiation of God. I will define how I am using “cultic” shortly. The degraded body is the symbol, even sacrament of human alienation from God. The logic, I suggest, is that God-the-Creator is worshipped as the body is used in accordance with the Creator’s design. This design is for a life of embodied gratitude towards God and embodied kindness towards one’s fellow humans. Attacking the creature – the σώμα – is an act of defiance against the Creator. One’s corporeality is one’s createdness, one’s being as an expression of God and one’s being for God.

I begin by defining “cultic.” Next, I set out the broader import of the entire passage, viz., the repudiation of creaturely status within its vertical and horizontal aspects. Here I draw out the implicit modes of worshipping conduct which humanity ought to have embodied. I then look at the structuring of verses 24-31. These are shaped by the thrice repeated pattern of human defiance of God, God’s response, and the resultant interhuman viciousness. After this, I can focus on verse 24, which I argue stands as a rubric for the description of the human condition. Persons are depicted as overrun by “covetous desires” (ἐπιθυμίαι), mired in a state of moral-cultic detestability to God (ἀκαθάρσια), which is manifest in the violent treatment of the should-be cultic σώμα.

1124 Romans, 149.
1125 See Jewett, Ibid. 167.
1126 Richard B. Hays pictures the abusive use and consumption of the body as “a ‘sacrament’ (so to speak) of the anti-religion of human beings who refuse to honor God as creator: it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual reality.” “Relations Natural and Unnatural: A Response to John Boswell’s Exegesis of Romans 1,” The Journal of Religious Ethics 14/1 (1986):191. Hays applies this only to homosexual behavior. However, I will argue that the range of assaults on the body which degrade it extend beyond the sexual. The violated body is the sacrament of human irreligion towards the Creator of the body.
A. Logical Structure of Romans 1:18-32: The Violated Σωμα Combines with Human Rejection of the Creator as the Antithesis of Worship

i. “Cultic”

By “cultic” I refer to Paul’s thought as conveyed primarily by λατρεία terminology, but also by such verbs (and their cognates) as δοξάω (glorify), ευχαριστέω (give thanks), σεβάζομαι (worship) and λειτουργέω (serve). Of course, to participate in ἁγιασμός (holiness) is to be qualified to exercise these actions before God. In order to remind the reader of Paul’s use of cultic language, I will regularly use the transliterated latreia for his concept of worship.

The most contentious aspect of my usage will be the realism with which I understand Paul to be utilizing his “worship” terminology. I am wary of the tendency to contrast Paul with the “literal” cult and thus have him speak “metaphorically.” For this stance, consider Gupta’s assumption that “Paul’s cultic language” equates to “how he expresses his thoughts metaphorically.” Gupta prefers to see Paul’s cultic talk as “metaphorical” rather than “spiritual” – that it might be in some way literal is not broached by him. Scholars tend to see Paul’s cultic and temple imagery vis-à-vis his gentile converts as an audacious “decentering of the sacred space of Judaism” – “the church has replaced the Temple.” Dunn views the sacrifice of the σώματα in Romans 12:1 as “sacrificial imagery [which implies] a replacement of ritual sacrifice” that ends the literal cultus.

In contrast, I struggle to believe that a first-century Jewish reformer (Paul was not a Christian convert) would view the summa bona of Israel’s cultus and other irrevocable (Rom 11:29) privileges (Rom 9:4-5; cf. 3:1-2 regarding the blessing of circumcision) as passé. Friedrich Wilhelm Horn argues, rightly in my view, that Paul understands his mission in terms of the eschatological pilgrimage of Isaiah 66:19-20, in which “Jerusalem, genauer der Tempel, Mittlepunkt und Zielpunkt des apostolischen Wirkens ist und in diese Bewegung bewusst auch die Heidenchristen einbezogen werden.” For Horn, not only is “die Zentralität Jerusalems” seen in such passages as Romans 9:4, 11:26

1128 Worship that Makes Sense, 46.
1129 See Richard Hays on 1 Cor 3:16-17, First Corinthians (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 57 (my italics).
1130 Romans, 2.710, original italics.
and 15:18-19, but also in the evidence of Acts. This gives credence to the accusation in Acts 21:28 that Paul had defiled the temple by bringing gentiles into it: “Paulus habe das Kollektendeglegationsmitglied Trophimus in den inneren Tempelbereich geführt.”

In so doing, Paul understands his gentiles to be (and acts on their being) “sanctified by the Holy Spirit” and actually suitable to be a temple offering. “… [B]ringt Paulus hier zu Ende, was seit Jesus [cf. Mark 11:17], vor allem aber durch den Stephanuskreis angelegt war: die Öffnung des Tempels für die Heidenchristen.”

In agreement with Horn, Fredriksen reiterates the literal relation to the cultus and temple which Paul affords his gentile converts: “The sanctity, dignity and probity of the Temple cult provides the inclusio that shapes the second half of [Romans], from 9.4 to 15.16-27.” That his gospel makes “ritual demands” is spelt out by Fredriksen. “Paul’s pagans, through Christ, have moved from wrong ritual – the worship of idols – to right ritual, the worship of the true god. They are thus fit for intimate contact with the divine.” Fredriksen also affirms the historical value of Acts 21:28: “I see Paul coming up to Jerusalem with the collection and, following the logic of his own convictions, walking with his Gentile brother-in-Christ into the Temple.”

Martin Vahrenhorst provides a helpful guide to hearing Paul’s cultic terminology. “Figurative” and “metaphorical” predicates should be used cautiously vis-à-vis Paul’s cultic language. Paul is metaphorical only to the extent that he presents an extension of the Temple cult, not its substitution. Paul’s positive use of cultic imagery evidences “ein positives Verhältnis zur Welt des Kultes.” Moreover, Vahrenhorst affirms the historical value of Paul’s participation in the Temple cult (Acts 21:26ff.). I will extend my discussion of cultic terminology in Chapter 7 where I discuss the worshiping identity which Paul provides his hearers in Rom 12:1-2.

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1132 Ibid. n. 68.
1134 Ibid. 203.
1136 Ibid. 249.
1138 Kultische Sprache in den Paulusbriefen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 12.
1139 Ibid.
1140 Ibid. 13 – original italics.
1141 Ibid. n. 43.

This extended cultic or worshipping activity is conceived of by Paul as embracing the whole person. The person as material-self is claimed for the cult of Israel’s God: it is simultaneously physical-spiritual activity. The following table based on Rom 1:21-28 sets out the (implied) thetic and antithetic modes of human activity in terms of worship.

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<td>21</td>
<td>Implicitly, therefore, worship is: knowing God, glorifying and thanking God</td>
<td>γνώσις τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὡς θεοῦ ἐδόξασαν ἥν πυχαρίστησαν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Worship, therefore, is: prizing the Shekinah presence of God(^\text{1142})</td>
<td>ἡλλαζαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθαρτοῦ θεοῦ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24(^\text{1143})</td>
<td>Worship, therefore, is a state of ἀγιασμός which correlates with rightly valuing the body as means of worship</td>
<td>παρέδωκεν ... ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν ... εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Worship, therefore, is obeying God’s truth; worshiping and cultivating God</td>
<td>μετῆλλαζαν τὴν ἄληθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ... ἐκβάθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-27</td>
<td>Worship, therefore, is heterosexuality which embodies the Creator’s intention</td>
<td>παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας ... i.e., homosexual perversion assaults the body’s τιμή (value)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Worship, therefore, is to highly value God as seen in just social conduct</td>
<td>οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα ... i.e., interpersonal violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1142}\) The “glory” referred to is “the radiant external manifestation of [Yahweh’s] presence in the Tabernacle or Temple” (Fitzmyer, Romans, 283; cf. Dunn, Romans, 1.59). Dunn comments on Romans 1:21 (human refusal to “glorify” God) that this describes the rescinding of “the appropriate response due to [God’s] δόξα, ‘glory,’ the awesome radiance of deity;” with this language “we move more fully into Jewish categories” (Ibid. my italics). Dunn fails to see the implication of the text: Paul sees the antidote to the collapse of human worshiping’s raison d’être in terms of gentile entry to Israel’s cult. Literal proximity to and cultivation of the Shekinah presence occurs at the Jerusalem temple. I treat this more fully below.

\(^{1143}\) I bolden this verse because it contains the nub of my argument. Central to the degradation of humanity is interhuman predation which is an assault on the τιμή (value) of the body which distorts its cultic telos.
The degradation of the human *raison d’être* is constructed in its theocentric and sociological dimensions in the right-hand column. In effect this column is a description of anti-worship and social pathology. Throughout, the anthropological assumption is of the human as thinking, willing and responsive agent (“spiritual”) and as enactor of those inward determinations through physical behavior (“physical”). The elements in the left-hand “worshiping conduct” column refer to the full physico-spiritual response of the human creature to God which lies implicit in the negative depiction.

Susan A. Harvey has written of the body as “the place in which alone Christians perceive and reflect the glory of God. Thus Christianity constructs the body liturgically, that is, as a place of prayer and praise.” Moreover, “God created the body to be a means of knowing God and of being in God’s presence.” This communicates well the body’s role as the medium for enabling the human person to fulfill the *latreia*-functions of “worshiping,” “serving,” and “rendering thanks” to the Creator. Harvey’s concept of the body simply needs to be broadened beyond knowing and responding to God, to reflecting God’s character to one’s fellow humans. The body is the medium of neighbor-love which fulfills the Law (Rom 13:10).

I therefore paraphrase the column in terms of its positive expectations: “knowing God,” “glorifying and thanking God as God,” (v. 21); “retaining [not exchanging] the glory of the immortal God,” (v. 23); retaining [not exchanging] the truth of God,” “worshiping and serving God [not the creation],” (v. 25); and “valuing God as worthy” of primary allegiance (v. 28). Each element clearly contains a moral mandate for appropriate action. Thus v. 21: “for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.” A genuine knowledge of God issues in a certain moral conduct. In context, this knowledge should lead to glorifying and thanking God. In terms of the rest of the letter, the somatization of worship is found in neighbor-love which fulfills the Law (Rom 13:9).

This understanding of idealized “worshiping conduct” as physico-spiritual is further reinforced in the content Paul gives the notion of “serving God (ἐλαστρευσαν)” (v. 25) throughout the letter. In announcing the gospel, Paul extends the reach of Israel’s

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1146 Fitzmyer glosses: “They deny that knowledge by their conduct and behavior.” *Romans*, 282.
cult. He “serves [God] (латре́й) with my spirit” (1:9). He and his ekklēsiae meet the material needs of the Jerusalem poor and this is configured using the similar term λειτουργία (15:27). The resumption of the term λατρεία (12:2) is unpackaged in terms of Christian agapē (12:9ff), which itself fulfills Torah (13:8-10). That this worshiping language occurs within the orbit of the Jerusalem cult is also confirmed by the decalogical echoes of 1:18-32. I will develop this insight more fully shortly. For now, suffice it to say that violation of the first table of the decalogue – idolatry and assaults on the divine glory – intermingles without hesitation with violation of the second table (assaults on the neighbor).

Another basic reason for emphasizing the somatic reality of the activities of worshiping conduct (“glorifying God,” “worshiping and serving God,” etc.,) is that the body’s wrongful employment is set in implicit antithesis to the role it should play. Being mired in “uncleanness” which is “the dishonoring of their bodies” (v. 24) must be heard as degrading the body by misdirecting it away from its cultic raison d’être and toward creaturely worship and ego aggrandizement (e.g., using the body to enact “envy, murder [and] strife” (v. 29; cf. 13:13) rather than neighbor-love). Additionally, vv. 26-27, which present the body as degraded through sexual perversion/violence, are still exemplifying the distorted use of the should-be cultic body. Sanctioned sexual relations are cultic: they fall under the rubric of “worshiping conduct.”

I wish to challenge the typical scholarly view which totalizes Paul’s castigation of fallen humanity in terms of sexual activity. While Rom 1:26-27 clearly concerns sexual activity, I argue that it is the violence of the distortion which is primary in Paul’s mind, and that this has been missed by commentators. More significantly, I argue that Rom 1:24 must not be reduced to sexualized sin: the “desires of their hearts” are not mere “lusts;” the “uncleanness” to which they are given over is not “sexual impurity.” Gaventa insightfully captures the obscuring effect this “preoccupation with a single issue” has on our hearing “Paul’s powerful depiction of a humankind that refuses to acknowledge God or its own status as creature … One of the many unfortunate byproducts of the various denominational wars on homosexuality is that discussion of this powerful passage has been confined to questions of sexuality;” this reductionism “precludes, conveniently so,
all consideration of the manifold ways in which human denial of God comes to expression."

My concern is to show that Paul critiques the violent nature of human relations. To this end the rhetorical purpose of the passage is more than just to denigrate pagan society “out there.” Rather, Paul is setting up out-group identity in terms of its violation of the neighbor-love principle which should be the ethos of the Christ-movement. What is more, from 2:1ff, a core instantiation of hubristic violence is judgmentalism and a lack of appreciation of divine mercy. Thus, “when you judge others … you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the same things” (2:1). Such a stance is to “despise the riches of [God’s] kindness and forbearance and patience” (v. 4). This “outsider” trait is later applied to the gentile saints in order to evoke esteem for their Jewish co-members (11:22).

In terms of my basic thesis that Paul’s construal of his hearers’ bodies and thus identities in cultic terms is counter-cultural, I note the starkness with which he confronts the religio-political status quo. Whereas in the culture the exhibition of power at the expense of the other was basic to protecting honor and showing one’s proximity to the divine, for Paul such violence is evidence of detestability before God. These modes of power, exclusionary accumulation of resources, and reducing the “other” to sub-human status are condemned by Paul as ἀεβία and ἀδικία (1:18). Paul is scathing of “the Mediterranean man” who is fixated upon honor, agonism and boasting.1148

Jewett, it seems, is a lone voice in recognizing the psychological succor which Paul’s inversion of the religio-political hierarchy offered. In relation to the sexual exploitation of the slave body, he notes: “The moral condemnation of same-sex and extra-marital relations of all kinds would confirm the damnation of their exploiters and thus raise the status of the exploited above that of helpless victim with no prospect of retribution.”1149

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1149 Romans, 181. However, I would want to emphasize the element of exploitation in Jewett’s reference to “sexual exploitation.” It is the violation of that which is under God the Creator’s claim of ownership which is the target of Paul’s castigation.
In this section I wish to focus on the structure of verses 24-31. Divine retaliation against humanity’s distortion of ἱλαρον is reiterated by the threefold refrain: “God handed them over (παρέδωκεν)” (vv. 24, 26 and 28). The movement from perversion of ἱλαρον as cause of divine judgment to degraded condition and social violence as outcome is expressed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Perversion of Cult</th>
<th>Divine Judgment</th>
<th>Cardic-Noetic Degradation / Condition before God</th>
<th>Resultant Social Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>ἠλλαξαν</td>
<td>παρέδωκεν</td>
<td>ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδίων (= cause of judgment)</td>
<td>τοῦ αἴτημα ἐσθῆσαι τὰ σώματα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-27</td>
<td>μετῆλλαξαν</td>
<td>παρέδωκεν</td>
<td>εἰς πάθη αἴτιας</td>
<td>μετῆλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-31</td>
<td>σύκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν</td>
<td>παρέδωκεν</td>
<td>εἰς ἀδόκιμον νῦν</td>
<td>ποιεῖν τὰ μη καθήκουσα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These three verses depict the “cognitive, moral and social pathologies” of fallen humanity.\(^{1150}\) The table shows that the σώμα is fundamentally the target once humanity falls from right relation to God. This is explicit in v. 24. The “σώματα” are devalued as they are pulled from their cultic purpose. The cultic nature of the body is next confounded through homoerotic sexuality (vv. 26-27) and, again, the body is implicated as it is employed to do vicious acts and is made the object of such actions (vv. 28-31).

The three configurations of how humans degrade one another as somatic beings is seen in the right-hand column (“Resultant Social Violence”). These three formulations illustrate the same idea: humanity’s repudiation of latreia is evidenced by violent social

\(^{1150}\) Esler, Conflict and Identity, 166.
pathology. Proving that this element of violence or viciousness is Paul’s basic concern here is the burden of this part of the study. Suffice it to say now that all these modes of assaulting the body are considered by Paul to be illustrations of \( \text{ἀδικία} \) (and \( \text{ἀοεκία} \)), the programmatic term introduced in v. 18 which evokes God’s wrath. When verse 29 initiates the vice list with \( \text{ἀδικία} \) as its lead term, it forms an inclusio with verse 18, and the picture of humanity degrading the body is framed by Paul as \( \text{ἀδικία} \). This unrighteousness covers the full spectrum of interhuman cruelty which unfolds once God has abandoned idolatrous humanity.

3. The Cultic \( \Sigmaῶμα \) is Devalued and Assaulted: Romans 1:24

I note the significance of the phrase “ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν” given that it anomalously disrupts the pattern of \( \piερβόκεν \ \alphaύτούς \ \delta \ \thetaεδ + \ \epsilonίς \ + \ \text{cardic degradation and/or state + resultant somatic violence} \). The phrase “ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν” summarizes humanity’s “actual condition, the character of their life.”\(^{1151}\) It “shows that those who were handed over were already immersed in sin.”\(^{1152}\) Gaventa is even more attuned to the meaning of the phrase: “The \( \epsilon \nu \) phrase is better understood as causal; that is, God handed them over because of the desires of their hearts, desires which have been described in the preceding lines of vv. 20-23.”\(^{1153}\) When Paul searches for a summary of the vertical hubris related in vv. 20-23 – and, indeed, for the anti-God rebellion of humanity depicted throughout the epistle – he lights upon “ἐπιθυμίαι” The human heart, mired in “covetous desires,” is at once at war with God and marked by the appetite to consume the other. Hence I move now to an analysis of this term and its two key fellows in v. 24, viz., \( \dot{\alpha}καθαρσία \) and \( \dot{\alpha}τμιμέζελν \) of the body.

\(^{1151}\) Cranfield, \textit{Romans}, 1.122.
\(^{1152}\) Moo, \textit{Romans}, 110. This is quite distinct from Fitzmyer’s reading, which misplaces the \( \epsilonίς \) before “desires” (rather than “uncleanness”) (\textit{Romans}, 284).
A. Ἐπιθυμία

The Greek term ἐπιθυμίαι (v. 24) should be consistently translated as “covetous desires.” The concept, rather bulkily, denotes both hatred of God – it sums up vv. 20-23 – and, as I will show, the appetite to violate the other for personal pleasure/status accretion. The term needs to be recognized as shorthand for the second table of the Decalogue, hence the use of “covetousness” in the definition. I begin by indicating how scholars often reduce the concept to sexual desire and so obscure the breadth of the term. Next I demonstrate the decalogical background of Paul’s thought as evidenced by both Jewish and Pauline use of the term.

Lexicons present ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖω as neutral and so morally connotated by the context. LSJ have it as to “set one’s heart upon a thing, long for, covet, desire;” objects include political office, sex or food and water. Similarly, BDAG discuss NT examples where good things are desired (e.g., “I desire to depart (τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦον) and be with Christ” Phil 1:23). Negative examples include sexual desire, but “gambling, drunkenness and gluttony” are also described in the sources as ἐπιθυμίαι.

God is said to have handed idolatrous humanity over “ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν” to impurity (v. 24); commonly this is reduced to sexual appetency. In my view, the translation “lusts [of their hearts]” (NRSV, NASB) simply begs the question and forecloses on the nature of these deviant desires. The NIV is even more tendentious in sexualizing the verse. God gives them over in “…the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies.” Commentators also tend to make sexual activity totalize the indictment: “their own depraved desires … the polluting of their bodies by shameful intercourse.” Schreiner states vis-à-vis v. 24 that “[s]exual sin is the first consequence of being handed over that Paul mentions.” “Lusts” of their hearts is a rendering often used by scholars. An extreme sexual reductionism is

1154 LSJ, s.v ἐπιθυμεῖω κτλ.
1155 BDAG, s.v ἐπιθυμία.
1156 Ibid.
1157 W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896), 40. Shortly, I will note those scholars who allow for a broader meaning here.
1158 Romans, 93.
1159 Barrett, Romans, 38. Also, Cranfield, Romans, 1.105. Fitzmyer translates with “the craving of their hearts for impurity” with his gloss confirming a sexual reductionism: “Pagan idolatry results in human degradation through lust, perversion, and sins against nature” (Romans, 284). Byrne has “lustful desires of their hearts” (Romans, 75).
presented by Ed L. Miller, who views the “impurity” (and thus the desires) of Romans 1:24 as shorthand for homosexuality per se.1160

The irony is that these same scholars who sexually reduce the term here broaden it back out to covetousness in its critical use in Romans 7:7-8.1161 Barrett seems to have sensed the contradiction but continues to allow sexual activity to truncate Rom 1:24: “‘Lusts’ … must here refer to sexual (or homosexual) passions (for the word see further on vii. 7).”1162 Regarding 7:7, Barrett provides a more profound concept of ἐπιθυμία:

“Desire means precisely that exaltation of the ego which we have seen to be of the essence of sin.” The person rejects his or her creatureliness seeking to elevate the self to Lord by dethroning God.1163 Indeed, most scholars who sexually reduce the term in Roman 1:24 use the word “covet” in 7:7-8.1164

i. Ἐπιθυμία in Paul (Romans)

I wish now to defend my thesis that a basic aspect of Paul’s indictment of humanity is its appetite to hubristically violate the sacred σώμα of the other. Again, the indictment has both a vertical and horizontal dimension: the attack on the sovereignty of God is captured by my term “hubristically.” This element of idolatry is well appreciated by readers of Romans, even if the aspect of hostility against God is not.1165 However, my emphasis falls on the nature of the social pathology which Paul attacks, viz., the horizontal violence. Paul is not concerned so much that human persons are engaging in sexual connections. Rather, it is the underlying desire to do violence to the other which is

1160 “More Pauline References to Homosexuality?,” Evangelical Quarterly 77/2 (2005): 131. Again, even if Paul was referring to sexual lust here, this would still bear a violent signification. A basic finding from the research I have done on the Greco-Roman context is that sexual activity occurs according to a priapic construction of power in which the penetrating man inscribes his superiority on the body of the degraded wo/man. Marchall notes: “The Romans’ priapic model of gendered and erotic practice [was] a protocol for the maintenance of Roman masculinity that centers on the insertive role.” “The Usefulness of an Onesimus,” 751.

1161 “What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet (τὴν ἀμφιθήμα τὸν ζητῆνει μη δὲ νόμων τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἐλεγεν, ὁτι ἐπιθυμήσεις). But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness (πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν). Apart from the law sin lies dead” (NRSV).

1162 Romans, 38 (my italics).

1163 Ibid. 141.

1164 Cranfield, Romans, 1.340; Fitzmyer, Romans, 462; Byrne, Romans, 216; so too does the NRSV, NASB and the NIV.

1165 Jewett, Romans, 160. Jewett observes that the background narratives for the “changing” of the worship of the Creator for that of images (Rom 1:25, cf. v. 23) – i.e., the Eden and Golden Calf narratives – have the agents actively create a substitute for God, not merely select from “preexisting alternatives.” This constitutes an “intended aggressivity” against God – a will to shame and degrade God. Ibid. n. 116. He emphasizes that commentators have, on the whole, failed to detect this element of willful assault on God.
essential to his view of the human condition.\textsuperscript{1166} Hubristic violence is the antithesis of neighbor-love. More succinctly, \textit{έπιθυμια} in this context is predatory in nature. I cite Käsemann’s treatment of \textit{έπιθυμια} in Romans 7:7, and suggest that it should supply the content of the \textit{έπιθυμια} which rule in humanity’s heart in Romans 1:24: “Covetousness … is absolutely the basic sin … [w]hat it denotes is the passion to assert oneself against God and neighbor.”\textsuperscript{1167}

Wilckens’ approach to \textit{έπιθυμια} in Romans 1:24 supports my “importation” of the predatory nature of the term from Romans 7:7 (“\textit{τήν τε γὰρ ἑπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἦδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν, Οὐκ ἔπιθυμήσεις}”) into this former passage. “Die Wurzel dieses Sprachgebrauchs ist das Schlussgebot des Dekalogs (vgl. Röm 7, 7); das >> Begehren << ist von daher alles fehlergerichtete Streben, in dem \textit{der Mensch zu sich selbst zu kommen sucht auf Kosten seiner Nächsten.}”\textsuperscript{1168} Ziesler also states that the “\textit{έπιθυμια}” of Rom 7:7-8 should not be given “a specifically sexual reference unless indicated by the context.”\textsuperscript{1169} The breadth of the objects wrongly desired is found in Paul’s statement that Sin hijacks the prohibition and “produced in me all kinds of covetousness (\textit{πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν})” (v. 8). Ziesler glosses: “This must tell very strongly against [the] solely sexual interpretation.”\textsuperscript{1170}

Jewett follows Ziesler’s lead, taking \textit{έπιθυμια} thus: “[What is forbidden is] coveting what belongs to others. Paul refers to a distortion in interpersonal relations … The sin of asserting oneself and one’s group at expense of others fits the

\textsuperscript{1166} Cf. Thiselton’s comments on the covetousness of the wilderness generation in 1 Cor 10:6: “It is ‘absolute self-willing’ that alienates human persons from God, not merely a shallow moralism in which sin is equated with acts which fail to correspond with a legal or moral norm.” Thereafter, he notes the sociological correlates of this aggressive self-assertion. \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians} (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 733. In turn, Thiselton acknowledges this formulation’s debt to W. Pannenberg, in \textit{Systematic Theology} (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 2.261.

\textsuperscript{1167} \textit{Romans}, 194.

\textsuperscript{1168} \textit{Der Brief an die Römer}, 3 vols (Zürich: Benziger, 1978-82), 2.108. Although, in my view, as I will develop shortly, Wilckens errs by making sexual activity the “zentrales Wirkfeld der \textit{έπιθυμια}” (\textit{Ibid}). Furthermore, it may be asked whether it is legitimate to read the earlier reference in the light of 7:7-8. I am arguing that Paul and his readers who have a background of catechesis in Torah (cf. Rom 7:1) would share the understanding that \textit{έπιθυμια} points to the depths of human self-assertion which manifests itself in diverse ways in interhuman predation.


\textsuperscript{1170} Ziesler continues: “Moreover, it is obvious that neither Exod. 20.17 or Deut. 5.21 limits ‘desire’ to sexual desire, and throughout the NT and LXX the words \textit{έπιθυμια} and \textit{έπιθυμεῖν} lack a specifically sexual reference unless the context requires it.” \textit{Ibid}. 45. 4 Maccabees 2:4 makes a distinction between illicit sexual desire (\textit{δοξολογοῦ} – this is clearly sexual given that it was withstood by Joseph who was “in his prime for intercourse” (v. 3) – and \textit{έπιθυμια}. Thus, “reason proved to rule over the frenzied urge of sexual desire, but also \textit{over every desire} (\textit{πᾶσας ἐπιθυμίας}).”
intensely competitive environment of Greco-Roman and Jewish culture.” Clearly these harmonize with Wilckens’ position on ἐπιθυμία, in which “der Mensch zu sich selbst zu kommen sucht auf Kosten seiner Nächsten.”

Next, I note that in Romans 7:7-13 Paul uses covetousness as basically a synonym for sin(s) as the instantiation of Sin’s hegemony. In 7:7 the logic is that to know sin is to know coveting:

… if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.
I would not have known what it is to covet
if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’

When verses 8 and 13 are read in stereo, covetousness is associated with death as effects of Sin. In verse 8 it is clear that “sin being alive” is evidenced by covetousness. In verse 13, Sin becomes “sinful beyond measure” – is seen most clearly – by its deployment of Torah “to work death in me.” Now, instead of generating “covetousness,” sin effects “death.” Death, of course, is the divine punishment for Adam’s primordial act of covetousness. Thus sin, covetousness and death are bound together in a tight nexus which is evocative of the primal story relating the pan-human condition. All the person-on-person hostility which is essential to the horizontal outworking of Sin’s power is typified by “covetousness” and its theological significance is sealed by the perpetrator’s subjection to death.

I have since found that Gaventa employs a very similar logic in reading ἀκακαιρία as the persona Sin takes in Romans 1:24. Ἀκακαιρία as synonymous with the cosmic power Sin is implied in Romans 6:19-20:

… you once presented your members as slaves to ἀκακαιρία …
When you were slaves of Sin (ἁμαρτίας) …


Lyonnet observes that in Shabbath 145b-146a, the serpent is said to have infected Eve with covetousness. This universal infection is terminated for Israel at Sinai through Torah; however, the nations remain infected (“Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas,” 162). For Romans 7:7-13 (in particular) as a casting of the human plight “in the light of the story of Adam,” see Witherington, Romans, 188-190. Dunn agrees, claiming that “most commentators” recognize Adam’s presence here (Romans, 1.378).

Cf. Fitzmyer’s insight: “Coveting is related to sin as the commandment is to the law.” Romans, 466.

That Sin produces death “to/for/by me” (ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἢνα φιλή ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἄγαθον μοι κατεργαζομένη θέλεσιν) should also be heard as Sin having subjected Adam/Adamic humanity to Death
seeing ἐπιθυμίᾳ-covetousness in terms of Adam’s hostility to the divine prohibition should be given due credence. In Lyonnet’s words, covetousness is “bref se substituer à Dieu, le péché meme d’Adam.”

This sense of ἐπιθυμίᾳ as destructive desires is further seen in Romans 6:12: “Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions (εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ).” Here the body is depicted not as the source of ἐπιθυμίᾳ, but as the instrument. The term continues to evince the core human appetite for hubristic violence. Jewett captures this: “To obey the ἐπιθυμίᾳ (‘desires’) of the body is to continue to aspire to relationships of domination that were endemic in the honor-shame culture of the ancient Mediterranean world.”

Again, ἐπιθυμίᾳ should be seen as encapsulating the will to dominate, with all its awful bodily expressions – sexual violence, torture and aggravated spectacles of death – that marked “the Mediterranean man.”

In context, such “desires” are worked out as bodily “members” serve Sin’s will. So in v. 13: “No longer present your members to sin as weapons of wickedness (ἁδικίας), but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and

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as agents of Death. Yes, the “I” dies (cf. vv. 10-11), but also, the “I” now deals death to others. An individualizing reading, then, is to be resisted. So when Torah is said to be intent on “bringing life (εἰς ζωήν)” but instead “brings death (εἰς θάνατον)” (v. 10), Paul means that the collective was to enjoy life (neighbor-love) and that the collective has been reduced to subjugation to Death and so persons are covetous and death-dealing. Jewett comments on v. 13 that in Christ Paul had realized that Sin had

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1176 “Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas,” 159.
1177 The σῶμα here is not being dualistically denigrated as the source of sinful desires because everywhere Paul ascribes this either to Sin or to the “flesh.” Romans 6:6 provides the key to σῶμα in a genitival construction with Sin (i.e, baptismal co-crucifixion has destroyed “τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας”). Jewett rightly glosses: This “…refers to the human body that stands in the generic sense ‘under the rule of sin and death.’” Romans, 403. Here Jewett cites Dunn (Romans, 1.320). However, both Dunn and Cranfield (Romans, 1.309) specify that it is man (not the σῶμα) which is under domination. Nevertheless the basic point is that “the body of Sin” is the body as subject to the lordship of Sin (per 3.9, 5:12ff., etc.). However, I emphasize Paul’s concern to reclaim the body as exponent of Sin’s power in the light of my thesis that the body was created with a cultic teleology. Thus the genitival construct of 6:12 – “εἰς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ” (= σῶματος, of the body) – refers to, and I cite Jewett, “sin’s death-dealing dominance over bodily relations” (Romans, 409). Also relevant is 8:13, in which the Spirit enables the killing off of “εἰς πράξεις τοῦ σῶματος” Again, Paul is not depreciating the body per se, but the body as subject to Sin and “the Flesh” (cf. Moo, Romans, 495; Gundry, Sōma, 39); also Jewett, for whom these are bodily actions of social aggressivity and agonism as outlined in 1:29-32, the bigotry of chapter 2, and the sins of chapters 3, 5 and 7. It is this very aggressivity – this perpetuation of the Adamic ethos – which is exhibited in the fractious exclusivity of the house congregations (Romans, 495). All in all, in both 6:12 and 8:13 Paul has coherently employed σῶμα instead of σώματος (pace Schornaicher on 6:12, “Σώμα und σῶμα,” 50, n. 55; Cranfield on 8:13, Romans, 395).
1178 Romans, 409. He favourably cites Moo, for whom such desires are “…the desire to have our own way, the desire to possess what other people have (cf. 7:7-8), the desire to have dominance over others.” Romans, 383.
present your members to God as weapons of righteousness (δικαιωσύνης).”\(^{1179}\) They had used their bodily members as “weapons inflicting cruelty in the service of Sin” (6:13, my translation of “ὀπλα ἁδικίας τῇ ᾠδρτία”). The metaphor of ὀπλα is military.\(^{1180}\) They were active in dealing death (they had been exponents of Death’s will, and so have now been “brought from Death, to life,” v. 13b). They had been combative in violating others. The somatic nature of the antagonism is clear: their “members” were the “weapons.”

Additionally, Sin exercised its dominion “ἐν τῷ θυητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι,” which could mean “through the instrumentality of your bodies which were subject to Death’s will” (v. 12). This “resulted in their carrying out the covetous desires of the body” (i.e., as exponent of Death’s lordship) – “ἐὰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ” Again, it is Jewett who concretizes Paul’s sense: “Actual bodily parts” are in view; these were used as “weapons” in a Roman military culture which “used its weapons to dominate others and, if they refused to be subjugated, to destroy them.” “Sexual misbehavior” is seen as one mode of domination, among “other destructive actions.”\(^{1181}\)

Lastly, on 6:12-13 I note that in v. 19 the Adamic existence is configured as slavery to ἀκαθαρσία (which I next argue is a state of detestability to God resulting from, inter alia, the violation of others). This detestability issued in “greater and greater lawlessness (τῇ ἀνομίᾳ ἐὶς τῇ ἀνομίᾳ)” (NRSV, modified). Covetous desires are now described in terms of the breach of Torah and cultic disqualification; salvation transforms ἀκαθαρσία into ἁγιασμός (= suitability to participate in the cult of Israel’s God, not a merely abstract “sanctification”). 'Ἐπιθυμία correlates, therefore, with a repudiation of the law – which for Paul is neighbor-love – and cultic unacceptability. And violent behavior (“lawlessness” = “members as weapons of unrighteousness for Sin” (6:12)) is basic to exclusion from God’s presence. Dunn catches the significance of “ἀνομία” The Christ-followers’ “present state … is a fulfilling of the law … What Paul looks for in his converts is what the law looked for.”\(^{1182}\)

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\(^{1179}\) I follow the NRSV, except that I use “weapons” where they have “instruments” (which is to follow their footnoted alternative). The NIV and NJB also have this unjustified neutral rendering of ὀπλα. I also draw attention to the ἁδικία and δικαιωσύνη given their profile in the programmatic verses 1:16-18. Here, ἁδικία arises from the core appetency of ἐπιθυμία; so, too, the “ἐπιθυμία of their hearts” (1:24) should be seen as the source of the ἁδικία opposed by God’s wrath (1:18).

\(^{1180}\) Fitzmyer, Romans, 446; Moo, Romans, 384, Dunn, Romans, 1.337-38. However, these commentators fail to detect an implication of literal violence which befits the martial language.

\(^{1181}\) Romans, 410.

\(^{1182}\) Romans, 1.347 (italics original).
The breadth of the term is further seen in Rom 13:9 (“... τὸ γὰρ ὁ λῃστὴς, ὃς ἀδίκητος, ὃς κλέψας, ὃς ἔπθεντος ...”). Adultery (obviously sexual), theft and murder are distinguished from the corrupt desires. That four of the commandments are cited is clear evidence that Paul is referring to the Decalogue. However, that he drops any specific objects of coveting (the neighbor’s wife, slaves, or any other possessions) indicates a radicalizing of the concept. The four commandments are chosen because they encapsulate actions which are antithetical to neighbor-love. The absence of any limiting objects for “Οὐκ ἔπθεντος” accords with the radical causality of evil which had been given in Hellenistic Jewish thought — to which topic we now turn.

### ii. Ἐπίθεμα in Jewish Thought

The concept of ἔπθεμα bears significant weight as Judaism’s summation of both the core corruption of the human condition and of the second table of the Decalogue. Philo argues in his De Decalogo that οὐκ ἔπθεμα (cf. Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21) “cuts off desire (ἐπθεμα), the fountain of all iniquity ... nothing ever escapes desire (τὴν ἐπθεμα), but like a fire in a wood, it proceeds onward, consuming and destroying everything.”

In the same work, Philo offers ample evidence for my contention that ἔπθεμα be given a broad and predatory sense, in which sexual violence is only an element. The consumption and destruction issuing from covetousness have earlier been sociologically portrayed: “Relationships are broken asunder,” “good will [changes] ... into an irreconcilable enmity,” “domestic seditions” plague kingdoms, “earth and sea [are] continually filled with novel and terrible calamities by naval battles and military expeditions,” “wars ... have all flowed from one source, namely, desire (ἔπθεμα) of money, or glory, or pleasure.” These afflictions which are aroused by desire drive

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1183 After surveying the commentaries, only Jewett refers the reader back to the analysis of Rom 7:7.
1184 Thus Wilckens: “[Paulus] nur die Dekaloggebote anführt, erhellt aus dem Zitat von Lev 19,18” (Römer, 3.69).
1186 In the Apocalypse of Moses, the serpent’s “poison” is figuratively “poured on the fruit” and this poison is “desire (ἔπθεμα), the root and head of every sin” (19:3); after this Eve eats the fruit and shares it with Adam. On “you shall not covet” as “a representative summation of the Mosaic Law” amongst Jews, see Moo, Romans, 435 (whence the citation); Jewett, Romans, 447; Käsemann, Romans, 194.
humanity insane. In 4 Maccabees 2:6, the prohibition against coveting is summarized thus: “...since the law has told us not to covet, I could prove to you all the more that reason (δ λόγιμος) is able to control desires (ἐπιθυμίαν). Just so it is with the emotions (πεθῶν) that hinder one from justice (δικαιοσύνης).”

The theological gravity of ἐπιθυμία as hostility to God and the assertion of the human will is a strong feature of reflection on Israel’s covenantal disloyalty. Numbers 11 recounts the Israelites’ complaints against Yahweh over the austerities of the desert vis-à-vis the meat, fish and other foods they had in Egypt. Quail from heaven was miraculously provided; however, Yahweh was furious and decimated the population, “...because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’” (Num 11:20, NIV). The place is named “Kibroth Hattaavah;” in the LXX this is “μνήματα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας” which the NETS renders as “Tombs of Craving” (11:34). The full verse in NETS reads: “And the name of that place was called Tombs of Craving, because there they buried the people that craved (τῶν λαόν τῶν ἐπιθυμητήν).” Lyonnet sees the deeper offense of the complaints and the wish to return to Egypt in terms of idolatry. Egypt is “la terre où l’on ne pouvait adorer Yahvé (cf. Ex. iii 18; v 1, 3).”

Psalm 105 (LXX) reflects on this incident in idolatrous terms, shifting from the Numbers 11 incident to the Golden Calf apostasy. The Numbers’ story is described as “they craved with craving in the wilderness (ἐπεθύμησαν ἐπιθυμίαν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ) and put God to the test in a waterless region” (Psa 105:14). The punishment of both these incidents is outlined in the psalm. Importantly, the Golden Calf incident is described as their having “exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass” (Psa 106:20, NRSV), and this stands behind the language of Romans 1:23 (”they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or

1188 Ibid. 1:152-53. As noted earlier, Lyonnet observes that in Shabbath 145b-146a the serpent is said to have infected Eve with covetousness. This infection then spread to all humanity, with only Israel receiving its antidote in the receiving of Torah, while the nations remain infected (“Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas,” 162).
1189 I note the collocation of ἐπιθυμίαι, πάθη and λογισμός which is here given a positive anthropological spin because of the aid of Torah. The same nexus of terms occurs in Romans 1:21-26. But there the futility of reason is asserted (ἐμπαθιάσαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἑορταζόντας ἑορτασμός αὐτῶν καρδία, v. 21); their hearts are mired in covetous desires (ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν, v. 24), and God hands them over to “passions which devalue (εἰς πέθην ἐτυμεῖαν).” For the 4 Maccabees’ citation of the 10th commandment as a summation of the Decalogue and the Torah see Nebe, “The Decalogue in Paul,” 74-75.
1190 “Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas,” 160.
four-legged animals or reptiles.”). That the Golden Calf incident elicited mercy makes it paradigmatic for viewing divine benevolence in Romans 9. The point of this intertextual confluence is that Paul uses biblical descriptions of Israel’s idolatry to portray general rebellion against God. His references to ἐπιθυμία present Israel’s hostility to divine mercy and her desire for self-satisfaction in the broadest sense.

Finally, the LXX gives expression to the Hebrew Bible’s characterization of righteous versus wicked persons through the correlation of ἐπιθυμία and violence. So Psalm 9:24 (LXX) says:

...the sinner commends himself for the covetous desires (ἐπιθυμίαις) of his soul and he who acts unjustly (ὁ ἀδικῶν) counts himself blessed.

In the context of the Psalm, the complex “covetous desires”/“acts unjustly” is clearly violent predation upon one’s fellows. Akin to the scripture catena of Romans 3:9-20, his “mouth is full of cursing and bitterness and deceit … He sits in ambush with the rich, in secret places to kill the innocent” (Ps 9:28-29). “The impious behaves arrogantly, the poor is set on fire” (v. 23). Critically, this is facilitated by the theological construct that God does not care about injustice: violence is perpetrated because “God has forgotten; he

1191 Both Romans 1:23 and Psalms 105:20 use the past tense of the verb ἀλλάσσω. For Cranfield, Paul “echoes the language used of Israel in the LXX,” both in Psalm 105:20 and also in Jer 2:11 (Romans, 119; cf. Fitzmyer, Romans, 283). Dunn has “the language [of Romans 1:23] determined particularly by Ps 106 [LXX 105:20]” (Romans, 1.61). He notes, too, the Jewish association of the fall of Adam and that of Israel in the Golden Calf incident. Further, he mentions the irony that “the illustration Paul uses to document the typical Jewish polemic against idolatry is Israel itself!” (Ibid. 1.73); pace Fitzmyer’s insistence that a reference to Israel mitigates the presence of the Eden narrative (Romans, 283). This is contra Moo, who dismisses a description of either Israel or Adam’s fall (Romans, 109). On the paradise narrative informing Romans 1, see also Willer: 1) God’s wrath targets the injustice of anthropoi (anthropos/oi = Adam); 2) the “desires of their hearts” accords with the forbidden fruit being “desirable” to Eve; and 3) most importantly, both texts deal with the deterioration between the Creator and the human creatures with normative conduct being the expression of the imago Dei (Dekalogische Komposition, 33-34).

1192 Lyonnet offers further reflection on Paul’s use of Israel’s history in 1 Cor 10. With reference to the Numbers 11 incident, Paul sums up the nation’s sin by warning the Corinthians: “These things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did (καὶ τὸ εἰσίν αἱ ἐπιθυμίαις κακῶν, καθός κάκεσθαι, ἐπιθυμήσαν) (1 Cor 10:6). Lyonnet observes that to desire evil is defined in the following verses (vv. 7-10), viz., idolatry, porneia, testing God and complaining. Together these “constituent simplement des expressions varies de ce péché source de tous les autres qu’est la „convoitise.“ “Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas,” 160. The idolatrous nature of “craving” in 1 Cor 10 is confirmed by Thiselton, for whom “craving represents the general stance from which the specific four failures of vv. 7-13 flow” (1 Corinthians, 731, italics original). Moreover, Paul’s Midrash of Numbers 11 constructs the “craving of the ‘strong’ at Corinth for participation in the cultic feasts and sacrificial events which constitute idolatrous practices.” Ibid. 733 (emphasis his). As already cited, Thiselton confirms the profundity of ἐπιθυμία for which I have been arguing: “It is ‘absoluteself-willing’ that alienates human persons from God, not merely a shallow moralism in which sin is equated with acts which fail to correspond with a legal or moral norm.” Thereafter, he notes the sociological correlates of this aggressive self-assertion. Ibid. Hays comments that the Israelites’ craving and ensuing actions amounts to a defiance of God (1 Corinthians, 163).

1193 I have slighly modified the NETS translation by substituting “covetous desires” for “lusts.”
has turned away his face” (v. 32). The psalmist laments God’s inaction: “God is not before him [the evil doer]” (v. 25). The pattern of Romans 1:18-32 is paralleled as the wicked despise God and so run amok socially.

The intertestamental works echo the same associations of “covetous desire.” In Sirach, the godless person is urged, “do not follow your inclination and strength in pursuing the desires of your heart (ἐν ἐπιθυμίας καρδίας σου)” (Sir 5:2). In the context, the same classic features – as noted of Psalm 9:24 above – are presented, viz., despising God’s judgment and thus having the sense of licence to prey on others. Even in Susanna, where the two elders’ ἐπιθυμία is the desire to have sex with the beautiful Susanna, this is still the passion to concretize the inner desire for self-gratification at the expense of the woman (1:21) and by spurning reverence for God (1:9). Their viciousness towards her – an essential feature of ἐπιθυμία – is reminiscent of the rape of the Roman matron Lucretia. Lucretia was “consumed” as an object by her rapist, having been threatened with the staging of her sexual intimacy with a slave should she not comply. This same threat is made to ruin Susanna (1:21), and when the elders’ plot fails, they move to have her executed for seduction (1:28).

Again, ἐπιθυμία – however manifest – entails the will to assault the other, and per Philo it is a root condition that overpowers the desirer. The New Testament use of ἐπιθυμία accords with my contention that “desire” in the negative sense is predatory and hubristic. James, “the most Jewish document in the NT,” likewise affirms the radical nature of covetousness: “desire (ἡ ἐπιθυμία) … gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.”

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1194 Livy, 1.58.
1195 Quite importantly, the author constructs the elders as being under a pathological compulsion to violate Susanna. So in 1:10, “…both were transfixed [literally, pierced] by her, and they did not tell one another their distress” (NETS). Then in v. 20 they are said to be “in covetousness” that is ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ. The same construction – ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν – occurs in Romans 1:24 (cf. Sir 5:2). Both instances bespeak being under the compulsion of this destructive core-passion – more on this shortly.
1196 For example, Mark 4:19 (the parable of the sower): “…but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desires (αἱ … ἐπιθυμίαι) for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing.” Also, John 8:44 (the Johannine Jesus rails against the Jews): “…you choose to do your father’s [Satan’s] desires (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας). He was a murderer from the beginning.” Finally, 1 Peter 4:3: “You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions (ἐπιθυμίαις), drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.”
1197 I cite Dunn (Paul, 98), who is making the case for covetousness as the root cause of sin in Judaism generally.
iii. Ἐπιθυμία in Greco-Roman Thought and in Romans 1:24

My concept of violent appetency finds clear support from the Greco-Roman philosophical view of Ἐπιθυμία. Diogenes Laertius (early 3rd cent. CE) offers the following characterization: “Ἐπιθυμία is irrational appetency (ἄλογος ὑπέξις), and under it are arrayed the following states: craving (σαμίξεις), hatred (μήνιξ), contentiousness (φλοινεικία), anger (ὀργή), sexual desire (ἐρως), wrath (μηνίξ), anger (θυμός).”1198 I note this reference in particular because of the general destructiveness it posits with the term. Moreover, this and other references are adduced by Vahrenhorst, who nevertheless proceeds to sexualize the term: “[die Begierden] … konkretisiert sich für Paulus zuallererst auf dem Feld der Sexualität.”1199

This analysis of Ἐπιθυμία demonstrates the sinister profile of the concept. Some scholars do counter the tendency to sexualize the cardic desires of Romans 1:24 and so provide a platform for my definition of Ἐπιθυμία as “the appetite for hubristic violence.” In particular, in addition to the Hebrew Bible/Judaic background, Romans 7:7-8 affords Ἐπιθυμία a theological gravity which should color Romans 1:24.1200 Accordingly, my exegetical procedure is to make the clearly expansive meaning of Ἐπιθυμία in chapter 7 paradigmatic for chapter 1. I reiterate the inconsistency of many commentators who move from a sexualized “lust” (or similar) in the former passage while (correctly) using coveting in the latter.1201

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1199 Kultische Sprache, 267. Earlier he had noted that humanity’s depravity “[f]ür Paulus zeigt sich das vor allem am Phänomen der widernatürlichen Sexualität” (Ibid. 26, n. 27). However, he failed to note (Ibid. 266-67) that the broader sense of Ἐπιθυμία is also found in his other Greco-Roman references (viz., Epict. Diss., 2.16.45; Plut., Mor., 449D).
1200 Wilckens is on point: “Die Wurzel dieses Sprachgebrauchs ist das Schlußgebot des Dekalogs (vgl. Röm 7, 7; das >> Begehren << ist von daher alles fehlgerichtet Streben, in dem der Mensch zu sich selbst zu kommen sucht auf Kosten seiner Nächsten.” Römer, 2.108 (my italics). However, he too errs, in my opinion, by making sexual activity the “zentrales Wirkfeld der Ἐπιθυμία” (Ibid.).
1201 Further to the scholars and translations adduced earlier, consider Moo’s comments on the verb ἐπιθυμεῖω in Romans 7:7: “Paul nowhere else uses [it] to describe sexual desire as such.” Nevertheless, this insight is dropped in relation to Romans 1:24, which he sees as one of only 17 instances in the Pauline corpus in which Ἐπιθυμία has a “focus on sexual desire.” Both citations are from his Romans, 434, n. 34. He tallies 17 uses outside of the Romans 7 context (which he has desexualized); however, this includes uses outside the undisputed letters. The other two sexual uses are from 2 Timothy. Given my view of the Corpus Paulinum, Romans 1:24 is seen by Moo as the only sexualized use of Ἐπιθυμία. Even Ziesler is not consistent in applying his insight from Rom 7:7 when it comes to Rom 1:24. He takes the Ἐπιθυμίαι (plural) of Rom 1:24 (along with 1 Thess 4:5) to “occur with strongly sexual connotations” (“Romans 7,” 44). I emphasize that the noun is plural in Rom 1:24 (as it is in 1 Thess 4:5) which Ziesler overlooks, even though the “all kinds of covetousness” of Rom 7:7 with its diversifying implication (“[t]his must tell very strongly against [the] solely sexual interpretation”) was so well flagged by him (Ibid.). Also, Wright reads Ἐπιθυμία in Rom 1:24 in sexualized terms (Romans, 430); while “covetousness” is used in 7:7-8 (Ibid. 562-63).
Jewett does begin to alert us to the implications of the plural form Paul uses in Rom 1:24. He understands the idolatrous heart which has been darkened for rejecting God (Rom 1:21) as mired in “the complex and devious cross-currents of human motivation … the ultimate goal of the scheming heart encompasses the entire self and aims to suppress and distort the truth about the relative status of God and the human being.”\(^{1202}\) Admittedly, Jewett sees “perverse sexual relations” as the verse’s main focus (which I think is true only at vv. 26-27). However, he immediately goes on to broaden the concept: “It should be noted ... that the body is also involved in almost all the other forms of antisocial behavior listed in this pericope (1:29-30).”\(^{1203}\) These “other forms” of vice are *in addition to sexualized activity.*

Similarly, Dunn maintains a broad lens on ἐπιθυμία in 1:24. Sexual desire may be included, but the gravity of Adam’s primordial sin, of Israel’s idolatrous cravings in Numbers 11, and of Romans 7:7 are brought to bear. The violent appetency of covetousness is alluded to. “Paul is still operating within the framework of the fall narratives: man’s desire for freedom from constraint to do what he wants is the primal sin (see on 7:7).”\(^{1204}\) Nevertheless, Dunn merely *alludes* to my conception of the violent nature of ἐπιθυμία without quite stating it. “Man’s desire for freedom” is not a benign impulse for fraternal liberty; it is the assertion of the self at the expense of, or through the consumption of, one’s fellow humans.

Käsemann also broadens ἐπιθυμία to “selfish desire,” again without detecting the implication of violence.\(^{1205}\) While I will elaborate on the violent nature of humanity’s exchange of God’s truth in detail shortly, my insistence that violence is basic to ἐπιθυμία aligns with Jewett’s description of the basic tenor of Romans 1:18-32. Humanity “changed” – i.e., distorted – “the glory of the immortal God” (ἡλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ, 1:23). Jewett glosses: “The aggressive intentionality that this wording

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\(^{1202}\) *Romans,* 168. He notes that the plural form indicates that it is not “desire” *per se* which is condemned by Paul as the Stoics did (*Ibid*). One implication of this is that ἐπιθυμία – far from having a pejorative and narrowly sexualized meaning – can be positive. Naturally, for Paul, the source of the desires is all important – for example, whether they are “of the flesh” or “what the flesh desires” over against “what the Spirit desires” (Gal 5:16-17).

\(^{1203}\) *Romans,* 169. That is, the darkened heart generates, in my words, appetites to destroy the other; such actions attack the sacral body of the victim. As I will argue below, the aggressor also attacks the cultic nature of his or her *own* body. Sexual perversion is only one mode of such violations. Similarly, Hays notes that “the failings in vv. 29-31 have nothing to do with sexual behavior.” “Relations Natural and Unnatural,” 190.

\(^{1204}\) *Romans,* 1.62.

\(^{1205}\) *Romans,* 48. He may well be still basically sexualizing the term. In his translation he uses “lusts of their hearts” (*Ibid.* 36), and he makes the homosexuality of vv. 26-27 color v. 24 (*Ibid.* 48).
would have conveyed to his audience has not been clearly perceived [by commentators].”

The anti-God hostility of these verses centres on humanity’s knowledge of God and God’s intentions for human conduct as worshiping agents and moral/social agents and humanity’s hubristic rebellion against this blueprint. The aggressive tenor of vv. 20-23 means, therefore, that εἰπιθυμίας far exceed sexual activity. Gaventa’s insight is worth citing again: εἰπιθυμίας as reflective of the anti-God attitude of humanity is “described in the preceding lines of vv. 20-23.” On the significance of humanity being “ἐν ταῖς εἰπιθυμίαις (in covetous desires),” this is the state which holds prior to humanity’s being handed over – that is, prior to humanity’s degrading of one another’s bodies (v. 24) and sexual perversion (vv. 26-27). Thus, when Paul searches for a term to encapsulate the anti-God hostility of vv. 19-23, he employs εἰπιθυμίας.

Further, in view of the parallel structure of idolatrous action > divine reaction > human wickedness in vv. 22-24, 25-27 and 28-32, the εἰπιθυμίας τῶν καρδιῶν (v. 24), the πάθη αἰτιμίας (v. 26) and the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς (v. 28) are artistic variations on the inward corruption of human beings. In the following table, I highlight this “cardic degradation” – the person’s perceptual, cognitive and volitional faculty is corrupted. In turn, each “cardic degradation” item correlates with a variegated configuration of social violence. The appetite to attack the valuable body (v. 24), the sexual violation of the body contrary to the Creator’s intention (vv. 26-27), and the vice-list actions (vv. 28ff.) all describe inter-human predation. All of these expressions of social pathology should be

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1206 Romans, 160. Again, I recite Jewett’s crucial insight that with the verb “change” Paul constructs humans as actively scheming and creating a substitute for God, not merely selecting from “preexisting alternative.” This constitutes an “intended aggressivity” against God – a will to shame and degrade God. Ibid. n. 116. This conception stands behind my use of “hubristic violence” to encapsulate the passage. However, while Jewett highlights the violent degradation of God in the passage, he does not seem to make violence the hallmark with regards to social relations as I do.


1208 Cf. Cranfield, for whom the phrase indicates “men’s actual condition, the character of their life” (Romans, 1.122). Also, Moo: “‘In the passions of their hearts’ shows that those who were handed over were already immersed in sin.” Romans, 110 (my italics). This is quite distinct from Fitzmyer’s rendering: “God delivered over to the craving of their hearts for impurity” (Romans, 284). Jewett makes the same mistake Fitzmyer does, reading the “wicked desires of the heart” (i.e., εἰπιθυμίας) as “the punitive custody into which God consigns sinners” (Romans, 168).

1209 Cf. Dunn, Romans, 1.53.

1210 This is missed by Wilckens, only sees the correspondences between vv. 24a and 26a (Römer, 1.109). I will discuss further shortly the cognitive/evaluative treason which is inherent in the three configurations. In short, in v. 24, humanity defies the divine valuation of the body and adjudges it to be of little value (“τοῦ ἀτιμάζων τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν”).
viewed as the social correlate of the rejection of humanity’s cultic raison d’être. I repeat
the following table to show the parallelism:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Cardic Degradation</th>
<th>Resultant Social Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rom 1:24</td>
<td>ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν</td>
<td>τοῦ ἀτιμαζομένου τὰ σώματα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 26</td>
<td>πάθη ἀτιμίας</td>
<td>μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν εἰς τὴν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>αὐθεντικὴν φύσιν</td>
<td>παρά φύσιν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 28</td>
<td>ἀδόκιμον νοῦν</td>
<td>ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The likely decalogical background to Romans 1:18-32 adds further evidence that ἐπιθυμία should be viewed broadly as self-assertion in defiance of God and at the expense of the neighbor. Most helpful in my seeing this has been Nebe’s observations. Regard this passage Nebe states that, despite the absence of “quotation or direct allusion,” “the contents and tendencies of the Decalogue and Nomos in general are important.” A key point is that the idolatry of Romans 1, especially the construction of images, is an unmistakable breach of the first tablet of the Decalogue. Nebe also asserts that the “ἐπιθυμία of their hearts” “reminds us” of the 10th commandment. The “Lasterkatalog” of 1:29-31 is self-evidently a stylizing of the Decalogue. Importantly, Nebe also detects the setting of wrath (Rom 1:18, 2:1ff) as akin to the frame for the Decalogue (Exod 20:5-7; Deut 5:9-11).

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1211 I have noted already Wilckens’ excellent observation that ἐπιθυμία in Romans 1:24 derives directly from the 10th commandment (Römer, 1.108). He comments, too, that just as “Götzendienst” is the root sin of the first table, “Begehren” – i.e., the 10th commandment – acts as “Überschrift über die gesamte Zweite Tafel” (Ibid.).
1214 These points are made in Ibid. where, interestingly, Nebe also ties homoeroticism to the commandment “you shall not commit adultery.” While I appreciate his sensitivity to grounding Paul’s portrait with reference to Paul’s undoubtedly decalogical worldview, I argue that, more profoundly, sexual sin is a manifestation of covetousness and the violent opposing of the Creator’s will. Wilckens also makes the reference to the 10th commandment in Rom 7:7, the key to understanding ἐπιθυμία here (Römer, 1.108).
1215 Ibid. 65.
1216 Ibid. 66. Nebe shows quite convincingly how the Decalogue shapes the dialogue with the Jewish interlocutor in Romans 2:17-29. Theft, adultery, worship of false gods, and profanation of the temple clearly relate to the Decalogue. Paul’s stylization is in keeping with the practice of other Jews (see as early as Hos 4:2; Jer 7:9) and is considered by Nebe a display of “a sense of free Decalogue reception.” Ibid. 67-68 (citation, 68).
To these I would add three basic points: the fulfillment of Torah (= negatively, not coveting; = positively, love of neighbor) is a central Pauline priority. Secondly, Paul explicitly characterizes his audience as “those who know the Law” (Rom 7:1). Thirdly, as a first century Jew, Paul’s thought is a priori moulded by the Decalogue.

This analysis of ἐπιθυμία in Rom 1:24 has defined the term as self-assertiveness in defiance of God and at the expense of one’s fellows. This accords with the theological gravity which the term has in the Jewish background, the New Testament, and in Paul. I have countered the tendency in the scholarly literature to sexually reduce these desires. For an audience which was familiar with the Law (e.g., Rom 7:1), the reference to ἐπιθυμία would have recalled the 10th commandment, as Rom 7:7-8 makes apparent. Moreover, the term as used in Rom 1:24 is shorthand for the hubris of humanity in rejecting Godward latreia, as outlined in vv. 19-23. I now proceed to look at the violent social entailments of the rejection of God as outlined in 1:24, viz., firstly, the state of ἀκαθαρσία to which God surrenders humanity, and then how the σῶμα is made the object of humanity’s predatory appetite. This procedure intends to show that it is the σῶμα – intended for both the cultivation of God and neighbor-love – which is reclaimed in Paul’s salvific vision. Thus, when the σῶμα is made sacral in Rom 12:1 it signals a reversal and critique of the ethos of “this age” (12:2) which manifests itself in violent treatment of the body.

B. Ἀκαθαρσία
The apostle’s construction of the human condition (being “mired in covetous desires,” “ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις”) is next nuanced as an enthrallment in “ἀκαθαρσία,” viz., moral and cultic detestability or disqualification. In response to human hubris, God surrenders humanity to this state. As with ἐπιθυμία, the dense theological gravity of the term

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1217 For example: Rom 2:27, 3:31; 6:19, 8:4; 13:8-10.
1218 By using the language of enthrallment, I signal that I read the cosmic hegemony of Sin and Death which is so apparent in Romans 5-8 as already present here. Commenting on Rom 1:18ff., Gaventa observes that “God surrendered humanity for a time to what we may call the anti-God powers, chief among which are Sin and Death.” “God Handed Them Over,” 43. She shows that the thrice-used παρέδωκεν (God “gave them up”) in 1:18-32 should be translated surrender, viz., as a handing over to a hostile power (Ibid.). See also her “The Cosmic Power of Sin,” 233, n. 15. David J. Downs follows her in this assessment, in The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 146. Another point offered by Gaventa is that near the end of chapter 11 (v. 32) God is said to have “imprisoned all in disobedience;” this “…offers a shorthand reference back to the scenario of 1:18-32.” “God Handed Them Over,” 53. Additionally, by accenting that both moral and cultic disqualification is inherent in the term, I signal my intention to dispel the artificial dualizing of the two realms. Paul as a first-century Jewish reformer is commited to a life which is cultically operative – even if the realms of the cult must now be paradoxically globalized (i.e., beyond Israel).


\(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) must be appreciated, and should not be monopolized by sexual overtones.\(^{1219}\) Because \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) is antithetical to “holiness” in Paul’s thought, I argue that it connotes humanity’s condition of being rejected by God or that God has dispossessed God’s self of humanity. Additionally, Paul’s reconfiguration of holiness language will become apparent: holiness is not a state but a moral condition, for it is often presented in parallel with righteousness terminology.\(^{1220}\)

My definition of \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) as a state of “moral and cultic detestability” is a mere sharpening of the lexicons’ data by insisting that the categories of “cultic” and “moral” not be absolutely distinguished. \(LSJ\) give the concrete basis of the concept as “uncleanness, foulness, of a wound or sore.”\(^{1221}\) In essence, the term refers to a state or action of one party which affects revulsion in a scrutinizing party. Epictetus describes social relations between parties as dependent on bodily hygiene. “Water, oil, hands, towels, brushes, soap, and other necessary apparatuses” facilitate the body’s cleansing from offensive matter (they are available “πρὸς τὸ καθήμερον αὐτό”).\(^{1222}\) Such hygiene is vital to maintaining human relations, so “…that you may be like a man; …that you may not offend those with whom you converse. Do you think it fitting to smell offensively? … [otherwise] either go to [live in] the desert … or live solitary at home”\(^{1223}\)

The point is that to be “unclean” is to be at fault in such a way as to cause revulsion in another. From Epictetus it is also clear that the state of being offensive is part and parcel of the activity of neglect which generates the state. To separate the two is

\(^{1219}\) As noted already, Miller’s thesis that \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία} = \) homosexuality is an extreme reductionism (“More Pauline References to Homosexuality?,” passim). Less outlandishly, Moo takes \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) in Paul to “refer generally to immorality, and especially sexual immorality” (\(\text{Romans}, 110, n. 90\)). Likewise, Cranfield comments that “\(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) is used particularly of sexual immorality” (\(\text{Romans}, 1.122\)). As examples of such a sexualized use, both scholars adduce 2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19 and Col 3:5 (\(\text{inter alia}\)). However, in these instances \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) is embedded within a raft of terms indicating hostility to God and one’s fellows (yes, πορνεία is present, but so are, for example, “fits of rage,” “idolatry” and “greed”).

\(^{1220}\) Vahrenhorst highlights this particularly well: “Als Gegenbild zu dieser unheilvollen Unreinheit [re: \(\text{Rom 1:24}\)] entwirft Paulus einen heilvollen Status, der durch die Begriffe Heiligung und Gerechtigkeit charakterisiert ist (\(\text{Röm 6,19ff}\)).” \(\text{Kultische Sprache in den Paulusbriefen} (\text{Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008}), 261.\)

\(^{1221}\) \(LSJ, (s.v \text{ἀκαθαρσία})\). \(LSJ\) proceed under the heading of moral versus ceremonial impurity. \(BDAG\) also have the two categories (\(s.v \text{ἀκαθαρσία}\)). Yet they err in making sexual sin basic to the “state of moral corruption.” Interestingly, they maintain that \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\) is stative (“a state of moral corruption”), even though it is the activity of sexual sinning to which they point. Overall, it is obvious that state/action must be fused (i.e., the uncleanness is both cultic – unsuitability for access to the divine presence – and a function of wicked actions). Again, though, my fundamental emphasis is on the element of revulsion inherent in the term.

\(^{1222}\) \(\text{Epict. Diss.}, 4.11.12. \) \(\καθήμερον\) is from the verb \(\καθάρισ\) (to cleanse, purify; cf., \(LSJ, s.v \καθάρισ\)) which is related antonymously to \(\text{ἀκαθαρσία}\).

\(^{1223}\) \(\text{Epict. Diss.}, 4.11.14-15.\)
artificial, and this is exactly what is done by scholars who treat the cultic/ceremonial state as separable from the moral activity which generates it.

i. Ἀκαθαρσία in Jewish Thought

Much the same concomitance of being detestable to God and acting detestably is found in the Hebrew Bible. Within the priestly literature in the Hebrew Scriptures, non-moral elements were understood to cause ceremonial disqualification. However, typically, moral and ritual disqualification are fused. Such instances provide the background to Paul’s thought because they stress that unjust behavior viscerally offends God. So Proverbs 6:16-19 (NETS):

[a foolish and lawless man] … rejoices in everything that the Lord hates;
yes, he is ruined by impurity of soul
(δι’ ἀκαθαρσίαν ψυχῆς) (v. 16).

The next three verses give examples of hated conduct or the conduct which makes the evildoer’s soul detestable:

An eye of an insolent one, an unjust tongue,
Hands that shed blood of a righteous person
and a heart that plans wicked schemes
and feet that hurry to do evil.
A false witness kindles falsehood
and sows discord among kindred (vv. 17-19).

The resonances here with Paul’s thought are easily recognized. Indeed, I cite this passage in part because of its affinities with the Scriptural catena of Rom 3:10-18. As I argued above, the Decalogue is clearly formative for both (despising the divine person/will and vicious behavior are paired). In particular, the “impurity of the soul” (=

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1224 For example, Leviticus 15:31: “…you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness (τῶν ἀκαθαρσιῶν αὐτῶν), so that they do not die in their uncleanness (τὴν ἀκαθαρσίαν αὐτῶν) by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.” The particular uncleanness in view had been enunciated in the previous verse, viz., menstrual discharge (= ῥοόν ἀκαθαρσίας). Similarly, conduct with a corpse creates ritual ἀκαθαρσία (e.g., Num 19:13), as does eating flesh which was wrongly sourced (e.g., Ezek 4:14).

1225 Jonathan Klawans observes that moral impurity “…results from committing certain acts so heinous that they are considered defiling. Such behaviors include sexual sins (e.g., Lev. 18:24-30), idolatry (e.g., 19:31; 20:1-3), and bloodshed (e.g., Num. 35:33-34). These [are called] ‘abominations,’” Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supercessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55.
that which “the Lord hates”) is clearly the breadth of violent social pathology of Prov 6:17-19. Other examples of this abound in the Hebrew Bible.  

ii. Ἀκαθασία in Romans 1:24

The first consideration in relating Paul to this background is his reconfiguration of “holiness” terminology. Traditionally, the Jewish conception was as follows:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unclean – ἄκαθαρτος / ακήρύκτωτα</th>
<th>Clean – καθαρὸς / ἱκερύκτωτα</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profane – κοινὸς / λίΠ</td>
<td>Holy – ἁγιός / ἃρτος</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That which is holy belongs to God, while a “profanation” (ἁλιεύμα) is a violation of the sacred. The profane or abominable assaults the holy. On the other hand, cleanness and uncleanness or purity and impurity describe a person or thing’s qualification or disqualification at any given moment to contact the divine sphere. That which is profane, however, is permanently disbarred. The holy can approach the sanctuary, for example. Leviticus 10:10 mandates sensitivity to the distinction: “You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.” Nevertheless, “cleanness” (purity) may be fleetingly compromised (“ritual” impurity) or it can be permanently incurred (“moral” impurity). For the latter, there is no washing or remediatory process. Thus capital punishment attaches to morally defiling acts such as murder, idolatry and sexual sins.  

The fascinating element of Paul’s thought is expressed in Romans 14. Here ritual purity as an essential feature of some persons or things is rejected:

Nothing is unclean in itself (οὐδὲν κοινὸν δὴ ἑαυτοῦ) (v. 14)
Everything is indeed clean (πάντα μὲν καθαρὰ) (v. 20).

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1226 Ezek 9:9, 36:17-18, 39:20-29; Jer 32:34-35 (LXX). In these instances, bloodshed, evil deeds, idolatry, and so on, cause detestability.
1228 Fredriksen notes that κοινὸς is used as a synonym for ἄκαθαρτος already by the time of some of the Hellenistic Jewish texts (e.g., 1 Macc 1:62) (“Judaizing the Nations,” 244).
1230 Klawans, “Gentile Impurity,” 291. That the bars dividing unclean from clean and profane from holy do not align indicates that holiness is a more restrictive category than clean. Items, for example, may be ceremonially clean yet still not have the degree of access to the divine of that which is holy.
1231 Ibid. 292; Fredriksen, “Judaizing the Nations,” 246.
1232 See the excellent discussion in Klawans, “Gentile Impurity,” 289-90.
Wilckens observes (re: v. 14): “Der Satz erklärt also den Unterschied zwischen kultischer Reinheit und Unreinheit für schlechthin nichtexistent.” Verse 20 states this positively: “>Alles ist (kultisch) rein!” For Paul, nothing is inherently koinó – “common” (“something that comes into contact with anything and everything” – because everything comes from God.

However, it is wrong to say that cultic or ritual purity is done away with by Paul; rather, the inherent goodness of creation is reclaimed. The mode of defilement which is left – given that temporary ritual impurity based on contact with a natural contagion has been eliminated – is that of morally heinous actions. This emphasis on āκαθαρσία as moral impurity which causes a sense of revulsion in God against the human actor accords with the Hebrew Bible.

Giving āκαθαρσία a broad construal as detestability before God due to violent moral agency is confirmed by Gaventa. She has argued that being “handed over” to āκαθαρσία (v. 24), to πάθη άτιμίας (v. 26), and to ἀδόκιμον νοῦν (v. 28) depict God as “surrendering” (her translation of παρέδοσαι) humanity to the anti-God/cosmic powers of Sin and Death. She reasons that all three expressions (what I have called the stylistic variations of cardiac degradation) “…have in view the enslavement of humanity to agents that are set over against God. Uncleanness, dishonorable passions and deformed mind are instances of synecdoche; they refer to the anti-god power, most especially the power of Sin.”

I build on Gaventa’s observation that by āκαθαρσία Paul refers to humanity’s core condition of enslavement to Sin. What she does not expand on is the nature of āκαθαρσία as detestability before God which stems from vertical and horizontal viciousness.

Next, the vantage point on “the power of Sin” conveyed by āκαθαρσία must be teased out. Naturally, my conception of āκαθαρσία as detestability is readily correlated with the profoundly important notion of “holiness” in Paul’s thought. That is, āκαθαρσία stands in distinction to the crucial āγ- complex of terms, such as āγιος, āγιασμός and

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1233 Römer, 90. Vahrenhorst observes that, for Paul, whether a thing defiles is wholly dependent on the estimation of the observer, as no objective basis exists (Kultische Sprache, 308-09).
1234 Ibid. 95.
1235 Fitzmyer, Romans, 696.
1236 Ibid. with reference to 1 Cor 10:26; Psa 24:1.
1237 “God Handed Them Over,” 49. She notes that āκαθαρσία and ἀμαρτία are parallel in Romans 6:19-20, such that “‘uncleanness’ offers an alternate way of speaking of the power of Sin itself.” (Ibid.). The same proof is convincingly offered for Paul’s use of πάθη and ἀδόκιμος νοῦς.
1238 However, I repeat her warning that sexual sin should not be made the dominant concern of the passage (“The Cosmic Power of Sin,” 233, n. 14).
which are generally translated by “holy”/“holiness” or “sanctified”/“sanctification.” To be conditioned by ἅγιασμα is to be the antithesis of “holy.”

However, I restate that my basic concern is to reiterate that the concept of holiness, the ἅγια- word-group, originally signaled divine possession. I demonstrated this earlier with respect to the sacer, sanctus conception amongst the Greco-Romans. The notion of possession – e.g., to be consecrated is to be officially made over to the possession of the gods – is radically seen in the positive and negative modes of the idea. Thus LSJ note regarding ἅγιος that in its good sense it means being “devoted to the gods,” while negatively it is to be “accursed.”

Both BDAG and TDNT fail to stress that being possessed is a feature of that which is holy. However, a fundamental passage on holiness such as Lev 19:2 – “You shall be holy (ἅγιοι), for I the LORD your God am holy (ἅγιος)” – seems to me to be predicated on the prior act of God in taking ownership of the nation. The possessive adjective in “I am the LORD your God,” indicates possession. The rest of the context affirms this: “You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine” (Lev 20:26).

In Exodus 13:2 consecration and possession are paralleled:

1239 Cf. BDAG, s.v ἅγιος, ἅγιασμα, ἅγιος, ἅγιον, ἅγιωμα, ἅγιωμα. Procksch notes that ἅγιος describes the “perfection of [God’s] being which transcends everything creaturely (“ἅγιος,” TDNT, 1.91), including God’s “moral antithesis to the nature of man” (Ibid. 92). That which is subsumed by the holy is “marked off from the secular” and both serves in the cultus (Ibid. 89) and is manifest in ethical behavior (cf. Lev 19:2 “You shall be holy (ἅγιοι), for I the LORD your God am holy (ἅγιος)” (Ibid. 92). Holiness, then, “always denotes a state and not an action” (Ibid. 89). In slight distinction, ἅγιασμα indicates “a process” of living befitting the divine will (Ibid. 113); ἅγιωμα, similarly, “is completed in ethical action,” while maintaining “its cultic character” in that it is the outworking of divinely initiated atonement (Ibid. 115).

1240 BDAG talk of dedication or consecration to God’s service in the sense of being reserved for God (s.v ἅγιος). Otto Procksch implies that possession is incidental to the concept. In discussing the verb ἀγιασόμαι, he states that generally the action is of God or God’s agents dedicating someone/something to God. It is only in the causative mode of the verb that “transfer to the possession of God (= exclusive belonging) occurs (“ἅγιος,” TDNT, 1.91). Indeed, under ἅγιασμα, the idea of possession is not stated (Ibid. 111-12).

1241 This is well appreciated by Vahrenhorst, who configures Paul’s self-understanding thus: “Er überführt Menschen in den Eigentumsbereich Gottes, so wie Priester es mit Opfergaben tun ([Rom] 15,16).” Ibid. 261; cf. 3, 171.

1242 LSJ, s.v ἅγιος.

1243 So Vahrenhorst: “ἄκαθαρσία … erschien schon in 1 Thess 4,7 also Gegenbegriff zur Heiligkeit” (Kultische Sprache, 266 – italics added).

1244 Moreover, the motivating refrain throughout is “because I am the LORD your God” (or truncated to “I am the LORD” (e.g., 18:21; 19:4, 10, 16, 18, 25, 30, 34, 37; 20:25 passim). The pentateuchal narrative context of delivery from Exodus sets the overall frame of possession as the spur to obedience (e.g., Exod 29:44-46). Moses petitions Yahweh to be merciful after the Golden Calf incident on the basis that “this nation is your people” (Exod 33:13). Also paradigmatic is Exodus 19:5-6 in establishing holy character as the outworking of the nation’s recognition of its “possessed” status. Moses is to report Yahweh’s words to
Consecrate (ἁγιασθῶν μου) to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the Israelites, of human beings and animals, is mine.

While I acknowledge my struggle to find scholars who accent being divinely possessed as basic to holiness, I contend that it is obvious in Paul’s thought. Similar to the Roman notion of sacer in which a priestly-political agent or a temple, for example, were not to be harmed, Paul issues the following ultimatum to the fractious Corinthians: “If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy (ἁγιος), and you are that temple” (1 Cor 3:17).

More important for this study is Paul’s affirmation in 1 Cor 6 of the sacrality of the body per se in terms of its being owned by God:

… do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy (ἁγιου) Spirit within you,
which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body. (1Co 6:19-20).

Clearly they participate in the realm of holiness as those indwelt by the divine Spirit (whose being “from God” implies possession). Therefore, the language of being purchased and being dispossessed of self-ownership binds holiness and divine possession together.1245

With this deficiency addressed – with possession foregrounded in the conception of holiness – we move into the commonly perceived nuance of the idea: proximity to the divine. Paula Fredriksen transports us back to the realism of Paul’s Jewish thought:

I want to suggest, then, that we understand Paul’s language of separation and sanctification in terms of the biblically based binary terms governing proximity to holiness … the operative terms, the one that evinces their eschatological change of status, is hagiasmos, holiness: they now through and by the Spirit, the nation: “Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy (ἁγιον) nation.”

Verse 13 asserts this possession in terms of orientation: “The body is meant … for the Lord.” That is, the raison d’être of the body is pleasing the Lord (and “the Lord is for the body” – committed to bringing this telos to fruition [through resurrection]). That “for the Lord” refers to possession by the Lord, see Hays, 1 Corinthians, 104. Also, he notes the incongruity of that which the Lord possesses being linked “to the sphere of the unholy” (Ibid.). The following portrayal of coitus with a prostitute contradicts the ethical exclusivity which is assigned to the body, which in verse 20 is framed as to “glorify God in your body.” The weight of the rhetorical question “[d]o you not know … that you are not your own?” (v.19) should also be observed. The “οὐκ ὀλιγεῖ” formula implies that this is fundamental knowledge which they are assaulting (cf. Thiselton, 1 Corinthians, 316).
miraculously – are set apart for and by God … the term means simply that, through Christ, in the Spirit, these Gentiles are no longer common (\(\pi\nu\tau\iota\) but holy (\(\pi\nu\tau\iota\)) and thus suitable to be brought close to holiness.\(^{1246}\)

I emphasize the realism of Fredriksen’s view of Paul’s outlook in distinction to the near ubiquitous tendency to metaphorize the cult and holiness in reading Paul. Fredriksen’s position is that holiness language is at once both levitical/cultic and moral.\(^{1247}\)

iii. ‘\(\alpha\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\omega\iota\alpha\) in Scholarly Treatments of Romans 1:24

Although scholars are aware of the broad sense in which \(\alpha\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\omega\iota\alpha\) signifies divine revulsion against sinful conduct, I have not found one who views violence as the underlying cause.\(^{1248}\) Jewett basically sees the concept in sexual terms, despite his insight that the concept refers to moral behavior which revulses God. I say this basically because Jewett acknowledges that sexual perversion is not the sole form of transgression in the passage: “The body is also involved in almost all the other forms of antisocial behavior listed in this pericope (Rom 1:29-30).”\(^{1249}\)

What I do find interesting is that to demonstrate that “almost all commentators”\(^{1250}\) are right to sexualize this verse, Jewett cites Dio Chrysostom’s account of slave prostitutes who are “bearing the insults in [their] dishonored and slavish bodies (\(\phi\varepsilon\rho\omicron\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma \tau\eta\nu \epsilon\iota\varsigma \alpha\omicron\tau\iota\mu\alpha\varsigma \kappa\alpha\ \delta\omicron\omicron\lambda\alpha\ \sigma\omicron\mu\omicron\alpha\varsigma\ \\omicron\beta\omicron\rho\iota\nu\)).”

As previously discussed, this passage in Chrysostom denounces not simply sexual activity, but the \textit{hubris} which violently commodifies the slave, reducing him or her to “dishonored and slavish body.” Chrysostom vents that such action despises the value God assigns all persons: “…all humanity has been held in … equal honor by God … [as


1247 “Paul, Purity,” 213. Thus, for example, having been “washed” the Corinthians are now “clean,” viz., cleansed from the moral aspect of levitical impurity, and they are “made holy” as God’s possession (1 Cor 6:11).

1248 Käsemann notes well that \(\alpha\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\omega\iota\alpha\) “blocks access to the sacred” (\textit{Romans}, 48). Jewett observes that “[a]lthough the ritual aspects of impurity were redefined and partially abandoned in the NT, the deep sense of revulsion about polluting behavior remains” (\textit{Romans}, 168). However, Jewett wrongly, in my view, equates ritual with cultic (that is, Paul is seen to have dropped ritual taboos and thus cultic ones too). Food taboos, for example, no longer condition one’s purity; however, one’s qualification to offer \textit{latreia} to God depends on exclusive worship and avoiding immorality.

1249 \textit{Ibid.} 169.

1250 \textit{Ibid.} 169, n. 41. Dunn’s understanding of \(\alpha\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\omega\iota\alpha\) is seen in the following: “By [Paul’s time, the term had] almost entirely lost its earlier cultic connotation and bears a clear moral sense … especially sexual immorality” (\textit{Romans}, 1.62, italics added). As I noted above with Jewett, the offsetting of “cultic” against “moral” is inappropriate. The entire setting is a construal of what constitutes humanity’s abandonment of its creaturely \textit{latreia}.

1251 \textit{Romans}, 169, n. 41 (refering to \textit{Or.}, 7.138, his trans.).
demonstrated by all persons possessing] reason and the knowledge of evil and good.’

Even if v. 24 referred to sexual misconduct, it is the violent consumption of the other which Paul deplores. In my view, though, it is vvs. 26-27, in which the hierarchializing action of same-sex intercourse is castigated, that present sexual violence as an instance of ἀκαθαρσία.

However, in accordance with the breadth of meaning I argued for ἔπιθυμίαι (= appetite to consume the other for the sake of self-aggrandisement), I suggest that ἀκαθαρσία be kept broad in its scope – “cultic and moral unfitness for entering the divine presence.” Consequently, I believe that the secondary literature confuses symptom with underlying condition. One expression of the unclean behavior is certainly sexual perversion (vv. 26-27), but the underlying condition is humanity’s being crystalized in its defiance of God, which I argue is its condition of hubristic violence. Klawan’s language in relation to the Hebrew Bible provides a neat summary here in relation to Paul’s thought: ἀκαθαρσία is used by Paul in the sense of heinous sin which “is a violation of the sacred.”

The next step is to consider how the human anti-God aggression overturns the divine intention that the σώμα facilitate cultic activity and, instead, violently degrades the σώμα. We move from humanity’s assault on the divinity of the Creator to the assault on what should be the divinelly-orientated (i.e., cultic) σώμα.

C. Ἄτιμαζω and the Σώμα – Humanity’s Assault on the Cultic Body

The verb ἄτιμαζωσθαι – “to value something as of no worth” – continues the depiction of humanity’s deliberate assault on that which God considers valuable. I begin this section by collating the elements in Romans 1:18-32 which show that humanity’s willful evaluation of God and the σώμα is at odds with God’s own valuation. Next, I show that the assault on the body acts against the cultic function Paul presupposes it to have. Finally, I analyze the expression “τοῦ ἄτιμαζσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν” itself. I intend to show that ἔπιθυμίαι – the craving to assert self at the expense of God and neighbor – led

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1252 Ibid.
God to surrender humanity to ἀκαθαρσία – detestability – which is itself socially manifest in violence inflicted on the σώμα.

i. Aggressivity of the Human Project: Reversal of Divine Valuation

Numerous elements in the passage stress that humanity possessed the knowledge of the Creator’s intentions but hubristically reversed the valuation and then violently enacted this. I have already referred to Jewett’s characterization of the passage in these terms. On the first use of the verb “they changed” the truth of God for idolatry (v. 23), he observes that this “picks up on the theme of an active campaign to distort the truth … the aggressive intentionality that this wording would have conveyed to his audience has not been clearly perceived [by commentators].”

The following table collates some of these elements of contrary evaluation and action, with emphasis on the devaluation of the body as part of this trend. The shift between the attack on the Creator per se and the assault on the σώμα supports the contention that the body is especially associated with the Creator. Verse 24 in particular is nestled between two statements (vv. 23 and 25) regarding the devaluation of God as worthy of worship.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hostile Evaluation/Action</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>τὴν ἄληθειαν ... κατεχόντων</td>
<td>The Creator’s will is known and suppressed&lt;sup&gt;1255&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>γνώντες τὸν θεόν οὐχ ός θεόν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ήχυριστήσαν</td>
<td>The Creator’s divinity and the worship it should elicit is known and spurned&lt;sup&gt;1256&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>ἠλλαξάν τὴν δόξαν</td>
<td>The Creator’s supreme worth is known and displaced with images&lt;sup&gt;1257&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα</td>
<td>The Creator’s cultic and moral intention for the body is known and overturned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>μετῆλλαξαν τὴν ἄληθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ</td>
<td>God’s supreme worth is known and displaced by idolatry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>μετῆλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν</td>
<td>God’s creative intention for the body is known and violated through sexual perversion (by females)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>ἀφέιντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρήσιν</td>
<td>God’s creative intention for the body is known and violated through sexual perversion (by males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>σύκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεόν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει</td>
<td>God is valued as unworthy of estimation as seen in violent human predation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνύσει... συνευδοκούσιν</td>
<td>God’s standards are known and violated; violators are congratulated for their wickedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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I have chosen to use “Creator” in addition to “God” to emphasize that Paul construes humans as creatures defying their Maker’s right to mandate the appropriate mode of relations between God’s self, humanity and the non-human creation.<sup>1258</sup> To a large degree, my contention that the degradation of the σῶμα is an overturning of the

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<sup>1255</sup> Cf. Cranfield: “Sin is always (cf. v. 25) an assault upon the truth of God ‘as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer’... the attempt to suppress it, bury it out of sight, obliterate it from memory” (Romans, 112; citation is from Barrett, Romans, 34). In this, the Lordship of God is attacked (Wickens, Römer, 105).

<sup>1256</sup> “Knowing” God refers to the Hebrew conception of “knowledge as an acknowledging, a motivational recognition which expressed itself in the appropriate worship and obedience” (Dunn, Romans, 1.59).

<sup>1257</sup> The profound sense of assault on God’s ontological splendor and beneficence (carrying on from v. 21 where gratitude was withheld) is wrongly described in terms of “folly” (as does Moo, Romans, 108, and Fitzmyer, Romans, 283). Rather, following Jewett, ἀλλασσομαι means not the “exchange” of God for other pre-existing idols, but the active distortion and manufacture of idolatry in order to displace and shame God (Romans, 160, n.116). More on this below.

<sup>1258</sup> Regarding v. 18, Dunn observes: “The indictment here is that failure to acknowledge God as Creator results inevitably in a sequence of false relations toward God, toward man, and toward creation itself. See further on 1:25.” Romans, 1.56 (my italics).
cultic and moral blueprint which God has for persons as embodied beings is made obvious when every reference to “God” is heard as a reference to the Creator. God-the-Creator is possessive of, and finds pleasure in, the material world. Human embodiment is a central aspect of this pleasure and the means by which God has ordained humanity to worship God and embody neighbor-love to one another and creation.

Particular attention needs to be drawn to the seamless shift from the use of ἀλλάντωσις and μεταλλάντωσις (to describe humanity’s assault on the Creator) to μεταλλάντωσις (to show the human attempt to define appropriate sexual relations). Once the distortion of the divine glory is seen in terms of aggression, then the distortion of sexual relations may be seen in the same light. One should recall here that the list of vicious actions in vv. 29-31 complement the sexual assault on the body (vv. 26-27) and so equally define what is meant by “dishonoring the body among themselves” in v. 24. Paul’s castigation of the aggressivity of humanity as intentional repudiation of God is quite at odds with the typical Hellenistic Jewish critique of pagan corruption in terms of ignorance or folly.

Perhaps the most fundamental observation I can make is that Paul views the attack on God the Creator as part and parcel of the attack on God’s creatures, which is elaborated in terms of violent abuse of the body. This accords with my argument that the Decalogue informs Paul’s thought here. The presupposition of the Ten Commandments is that the reverence of God is simultaneously an honoring of one’s fellows who are the Creator’s creatures. As I investigate in the next section, the high value of the σωμα stems, at least in part, from its being the vehicle by which humans can implement the divine blueprint for their lives in its vertical and horizontal dimensions.

1259 God is explicitly the one who has revealed God’s self “since the creation of the world” (v. 20); it is God “the Creator” who should have been worshipped instead of the creation (v. 25).
1260 Cf. Dunn’s observation that the three-fold use of the verb shows that sexual perversion “is of a piece with and direct result of” the dishonoring of God. Having attacked the Creator, the creature seeks to act as creator by redefining bodily relations (Romans, 1.74). On the repetition of the verb, Jewett also notes that the attacks on God and sexual sin have “a direct correspondence” (Romans, 173); cf. Hays: “[There is a] direct parallelism between the rejection of God and the rejection of created sexual roles.” “Relations Natural and Unnatural,” 192.
1261 Wisdom 13:1 is a critical point of comparison here: “For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works.” Gaca best illuminates the uniqueness of the culpability which Paul attaches to the pagan world. See “Paul’s Uncommon Declaration in Romans 1:18-32 and its Problematic Legacy for Pagan and Christian Relations,” Harvard Theological Review 92/2 (1999): 176, passim.
1262 The logic is akin to that found in James 3:9. The same tongue which praises God must also bless one’s fellows who are God’s image-bearers, who are, as creatures, valued by the Creator. To bless God is to value that which God has imbued with value.
ii. Cultic Value of the Body as Presupposition: The Insight from Betz

The cultic value of the body can be developed also from an insight offered by Hans Dieter Betz. Betz observes, with respect to the νοῦς (but not the σώμα), what I think is the obvious implication of this passage for Paul’s understanding of human corruption:

“Während der Intellekt ursprünglich und schöpfungsmaßig intakt war (1,20), wurde er durch Einwirkung des Zorns Gottes seiner Effizienz beraubt.”

The current state of affairs involves the mind which was formed for clear thought and devotion to God becoming debased through idolatry. The description “they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened” (v. 21) indicates that their thinking had been purposeful and that their minds had had sense and were once enlightened. Likewise, the “debased mind” (v. 28) had once been capable of recognizing the supremacy of God and ascribing God ascendant worth.

In view of Betz’s reference to the pristine mind/heart, I feel confident to argue analogously for the σώμα. If the fall has mired them in “uncleanliness/impurity (ἀκαθαρσία), namely, the dishonoring of their bodies” (v. 24), it follows that Paul views the pristine (pre-fall) σώμα as rich in value (τιμή). The body was created as the means of offering latreia to the Creator, viz., the embodied worship of glorifying and thanking God with its social aspect of loving and merciful relations. This is the cult which the σώμα makes possible, and an important theological basis for the body’s value. Again, the logic of the passage is that the cultivation of the Creator consists of worshiping and returning thanks to God. This worship is contravened by the hubristic violence which assaults the body of the other and so degrades the “value” of the σώμα.

iii. The Phrase Itself: τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα

The phrase functions to clarify the nature of the “ἀκαθαρσία/detestability” to which God has surrendered humanity on account of its “ἐπιθυμία/covetous desires.” That is, the genitive articular infinitive explains the nature of cultic and moral detestability (the ἀκαθαρσία to which humanity is assigned).


1264 The infinitive is taken as epexegetical by Moo (Romans, 112), Barrett (Romans, 38) and Jewett (Romans, 169). Käsemann’s construal of the infinitive as consecutive (Romans, 48) (i.e., God surrenders humanity … to uncleanness with the result that they dishonor their bodies) should be rejected. Even though the assault on the body is after God’s retribution, it still depicts humans’ willful distortion of God’s design.
The basic meaning of ἀξιμαζω is to “hold in no honour, esteem lightly.” BDAG define it as “to deprive someone of honor or respect, to dishonor/shame, an especially grievous offense in the strongly honor-shame oriented Semitic and Gr-Rom. Societies.” It seems apparent that the verb contains the elements of both evaluation and action. Once the sexual reductionism which I have critiqued with regard to ἐπιθυμία and ἄκαθορτοα has been eliminated, this verb can be read as an holistic reference to interhuman predation. The body is the target as humans extend their hostility against God to an attack on God’s human creatures.

That ἀτιμάζειν indicates a contest over a person’s or thing’s τιμή (“worth, value, price”) conforms with the other elements in the passage which present humans as overturning the rightful worth of God’s own self. With reference to the above table, I note that verses 18, 21, 23, 25 and 28 specify the devaluation of God, whereas verses 24, 26 and 27 nuance this same devaluation in terms of humanity’s devaluation of the body. In verse 24, the devaluation is depicted as generalized violence against the body; in verses 26-27, violent sexual perversion embodies hostility against the Creator’s will.

It seems clear that, in the context, the τιμή of the σώμα (and in vv. 26-27, the implicit mandate that sexuality should occur κατὰ φύσιν) derives from the body being supremely valuable within creation. The τιμή which the Creator attaches to the body is overturned by human violence against the body. As already noted, the close association between attacking the Creator and attacking the Creator’s body (the body created by God, for God) is evident in the oscillation between the two as closely associated objects of human hostility. Thus, God is despised (v. 23); the σώμα is devalued (v. 24); God is displaced by images (v. 25); and God’s intention for sexual relations is assaulted (vv. 26-27). Most telling is how those who devalue the body in v. 24 are immediately characterized as “those who change the truth of God into the lie (of idolatry)” (v. 25).

Several passages from the Greco-Roman background illustrate the contentious nature of the process for estimating honor. That is, ἀτιμάζειν occurs when one party devalues someone or something over against another party’s positive evaluation. Aristotle discusses “honor (ἡ τιμή)” and how it creates animosity. “Men form factions

Cranfield slightly prefers the consecutive to the epexegetical reading (Romans, 1.122). Dunn’s translation implies a final reading (Romans, 1.62). This should be rejected on similar grounds, as it implies that God intended humans to bodily degrade one another. Fitzmyer reads it as consecutive or final (Romans, 284).

1265 LSJ, s.v ἀξιμαζω.
1266 s.v ἀξιμαζω (italics original).
1267 LSJ, s.v τιμάω κτλ., II, 2 (cf. τιμέω κτλ.).
both when they are themselves dishonored (ἀτιμαζόμενοι) and when they see others honored (τιμωμένους); and the distribution of honors is unjust when persons are either honored (τιμωμένοι) or dishonored (ἀτιμώμενοι) against their deserts; just when it is according to desert.\(^\text{1268}\)

I submit that in Romans 1:24 the two parties who disagree as to the value of the body are the Creator and corrupt humanity. Paul understands God to be invested in the human body such that it is embued with meaning and value. The human quest for honor through conquest has as its signature violence against the inferior person’s body. Another relevant passage comes from Philostratus the Athenian (d. ca. 250 CE). He says that lions will gorge themselves on the flesh of a fresh kill (i.e., value it highly), but having become satiated they “care little for what is left over of it (ἀτιμάζουσιν αὐτῆς τὰ περιττά), because, I think, they feel sure of catching fresh quarry.”\(^\text{1269}\) The value of the victim’s body drops away once it has served its purpose. The process behind ἀτιμάζειν (evaluation and its enactment) hinges on the value various parties assign to something or someone.

I reiterate from my earlier work on the meaning of violence in the Greco-Roman world that the estimation of a person’s status is corporeally sited. The elite body was protected from phallic and brutal assault; the dishonored person/body was liable to both. Dio Chrysostom expresses this violence experienced by slaves as the “mistreatment of dishonored and enslaved bodies (τὴν εἰς τὰ ἀτιμα καὶ δοῦλα σωματα ἱβριν).”\(^\text{1270}\) At a less extreme level, the loss of citizen rights makes the person a “body dishonored.” Andocides (d. 390 BCE) describes the legal consequences for those who abuse public office, show cowardice on the battlefield, or abuse their parents; they “…were deprived of value in terms of their bodies (τὰ μὲν σώματα ἀτιμα ἵν), but retained their property rights.”\(^\text{1271}\)

\(^{1268}\) Pol., 5.1302b.
\(^{1269}\) VA., 6.24 (trans. F. C. Conybeare).
\(^{1270}\) Or., 7.138.
\(^{1271}\) Myst., 74 (my trans.; cf. 123). Douglas MacDowell comments that here the accused being σώμα ἀτιμον means the loss of “certain rights of action.” Andokides: On the Mysteries (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1962), 65. However, he misses the wider association between status and bodily condition/vulnerability. It is telling that a loss of citizenship status is defined in terms of the body losing its value. The extreme form of bodily dishonoring is execution, which the text describes as the body (σώμα) being put at risk based on the outcome of the trial (Myst., 5, 105). Again, the cultural background must be appreciated: high-value social status is evidenced by the body being exempt from torture and sexual assault; the “devalued body” has lost citizen protection and is concretely vulnerable to attacks. It is literally a “body devoid of value/honor.”
The passive nature of the infinitive in Rom 1:24 – “their bodies being degraded among themselves” – indicates that the degradation of the σῶμα attaches not only to those targeted in violent relations (per the cultural narrative), but also to the violator. The passive construction accrues the degradation back to the (culturally) superior party. In complete defiance of the masculine/penetrative construction of power, Paul states that the “elite” defile themselves in their pursuit of honorable superiority. The significance of the passive as generalizing the disgrace is not noted anywhere in the literature as far as I am aware. I believe this mutualizing of shame is clear when the assault on the body is seen under the rubric of “ἀσεβεία” and “ἀδικία” (v. 18) which is opposed by divine wrath. God stands against perpetrators of violence (vv. 28-32); contrary to elite ideology, the deity does not ratify their violence against others and the naturalness of the pyramidal shape of society.

iv. The Cultic Σῶμα is Devalued and Sexually Assaulted: Romans 1:26-27

My reading of verse 24 as a general expression of humanity’s “covetous desires (ἐπιθυμίαι)” which see God consign them in a state of “moral and cultic detestability (ἀκαθαρσία),” specified as “a devaluation and assault on the body (τοῦ ἀτιμάζοντος τὰ σῶματα αὐτῶν),” needs now to be related to the homoerotic sexuality condemned in vv. 26-27.

The precise nature of the sexual activity condemned in these verses is strongly disputed. I will proceed on the basis that Paul is condemning sexual acts between members of the same sex. The similarity between the sexual activity of the women (v. 26) and that of the men (v. 27) is indicated by their being coordinated with “ὁμοίως (in

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1272 For ἀτιμάζειν as passive (rather than middle), cf. Barrett, Romans, 38; Cranfield, Romans, 1.122; Fitzmyer, Romans, 284; Jewett, Romans, 169.
1273 However, Jewett inclines in this direction. As I will develop next, he too sees homoerotic sex in terms of the superior abusing the inferior party. But he does not see that Paul is allocating shame to the aggressive slave owner or patron who attacks the body of the slave; rather, he notes that Paul condemns the superior person for his or her exploitative aggression (Romans, 181).
1275 Jewett, Romans, 174-76; Dunn, Romans, 1.64; Fitzmyer, Romans, 285-86.
the same way).”

1276  However, it is possible that the clause “women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural” refers to women abandoning natural (i.e., “procreative”) sex for non-vaginal modes. Cf. James E. Miller, “The Practices of Romans 1:26: Homosexual or Heterosexual?,” *Novum Testamentum* 37/1 (1995): 10, *passim*. Having analyzed Non-Biblical and Biblical uses of ὄμοιος, Jamie A. Banister argues that v. 27 (male same-sex relations) need not necessarily supply the content of what is condemned in v. 26. “Other activities [apart from female homoerotic acts] … also could qualify [as ἁρμακτικός] and would not require a second female. It is possible that perhaps Paul did not have something specific in mind when he wrote v. 26.” ὄμοιος and the Use of Parallelism in Romans 1:26-27,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128/3 (2009): 588. He then notes Greco-Roman illustrations of ὀλίσβοι (phallic devices) which permitted women to take up the penetrative role either alone or with a partner. Indeed, women are rumored to have penetrated men with the devices (*Ibid.* n. 38).

1277  Dunn notes that the “shameless acts” men committed with men is “the genital act itself” (*Romans*, 1.65); cf. Moo, *Romans*, 116; Käsemann, *Romans*, 48-49.

1278  “Ancient Bisexuality,” 243-44. In context, Smith is countering Scrogg’s argument that pederasty was the basic sexual “model” in antiquity, but this is far too limiting.

1279  Martin, again, is helpful regarding the philosophical critique of homosexuality: “The problem had not to do with a disorientated desire, but with inordinate desire. Degree of passion, rather than object choice, was the defining factor of desire.” *Ibid.* 342. However, I doubt this is Paul’s primary concern. Martin understands sex “contrary to nature” to mean actions which are “beyond the proper limits prescribed by nature” (*Ibid.* 343). As I will argue, the language of “females” (v. 26) and “males” (v. 27) refers as much to the Creator’s design that these two categories remain distinct and that their biological compatibility be respected.

1280  For example, 1 Thess 4:1-8; 1 Cor 6:12-21.
Wilckens has seen that πάθη ἀτιμίας “repeats and makes concrete” the ἐπιθυμία and ἀτιμίας of v. 24.\(^{1282}\) However, he does not see that both instances of human appetency which exhibit themselves in bringing degradation do so by targeting the body. This is explicit in v. 24, which means – because I take it as programmatic – that the passions which degrade in v. 26 similarly degrade the σώμα. The focus on the σώμα as object is also to be seen, I will argue, in the vice list (vv. 29-31). Those who are “full of murder,” who are “haters of God,” and “hubristic” – in short, who are marked by ἀδικία – attack their “inferiors” corporeally. Again, the logic of the passage continues to be that human violence has as its target both the Creator and the σώμα created to offer λατρεία to the Creator.

Next, the use of the verb μεταλλάσσω is rhetorically powerful. Just as God’s own self was rejected for idols (“μετήλλαξα” v. 25), now “the natural usage” of the body (= the Creator’s will for the body) is violently distorted.\(^{1283}\) The campaign of distortion, having assaulted the Creator, finds its next most insulting expression in “degrading the σώμα” (v. 24), which is now configured as breaching the basic categorizations of human beings, viz., male and female.\(^{1284}\) The language of males (ἄρσενες) and females (ἡλεῖαι) emphasizes the sexual distinctiveness of humanity and so makes homogenital activity a breach of the creative principle: “male and female, God created them (ἄρσεν καὶ ἡλικια ἐποίησεν αὐτούς)” (Gen 1:27).\(^{1285}\)

\(^{1282}\) Römer, 1.109; also Dunn, Romans, 1.64. I take exception with their equating of “ἐπιθυμίας” with “πάθη” in necessarily sexualized terms. As I have argued above, the first concept is the more general, in which persons assert themselves against God. “Πάθη,” are arguably still a generic appetency to gratify the self at the expense of the other. Thus, πάθος is the “experience of strong desire, passion” (BDAG, s.v πάθος; LSJ do not explicitly mention that such desire need be “sexual” (s.v πάθος). As BDAG note, the context determines whether the desire is sexual. However, they see the term as referring especially to lust. Clearly, the πάθη in view are sexual in nature, but more profoundly they seek to violate the other, being “passions of [intending] degradation.” Additionally, men are said to have “burned in their desire toward one another (ἐξεκαίθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἐλλήλους)” (v. 27, NASB). LSJ state that ὀρέξεις is a “general word for all kinds of appetency” (s.v ὀρέξεις, their italics). BDAG acknowledge this but refer to instances where “sexual desire” is meant (s.v ὀρέξεις). However, BDAG’s first example is in fact that of a brother raping his sister. The brother’s ὀρέξεις is such that he “forced his sister (βιάζεταί τὴν ἀδελφήν)” (Joseph., AJ., 7.169). After the vicious act, “he hated her immediately, and giving her reproachful words, bade her rise up and be gone” (Ibid. 170). The sister describes this as an act of “hubris (ὁμήρην)” and “violence (βίω)” (Ibid. 170-71). Again, violence is basic to the desires Paul censures; their sexual expression is secondary.

\(^{1283}\) Women “μετήλλαξα” natural sexual relations (v. 26); men “ἀφέντες” (give up) natural sexual relations with women (v. 27).

\(^{1284}\) Jewett glosses that homosexuality represents, for Paul, “an arrogant assault on the Creator,” whereas “heterosexuality was part of the divinely created order for humankind and that sexual identity is essential to humans as σώμα” (Romans, 177).

The descriptions of sex “contrary to nature (παρὰ φυσίν)” as a repudiation of “natural intercourse (τῆς φυσικῆς χρήσεως)” are therefore an assault on the Creator. The Creator’s transcendence is attacked in the primal sin, and as a result humans are surrendered to a state in which they then attack the Creator’s intention for the σώμα, through sexual violence “against [God’s vision for] nature.” The proposed Stoic background to Paul’s use of φυσίς is inadequate. Rather, “nature” is the Creator’s intended order for creation.

Such a reading counters the common alternative, which is that the “nature” Paul wishes to enforce is the cultural order of man retaining the active/superior position over the woman. Holger Szesnat argues that Paul is concerned to uphold the hierarchical binary of superior/penetrative versus inferior/passive. Thus Paul “understood physis as the ‘proper, characteristic constitution’ of a man or woman – as perceived within their socio-cultural context.” Nature, then, means culture. Others, such as Brooten, Marchal and Martin, advocate a similar view of Paul as concerned to maintain the patriarchal signification of sex. Even Jewett thinks it is “clear” that Paul views natural intercourse as the “penetration of a subordinate person by a dominant one,” a female by a male. Paul criticizes female same-sex relations because the woman acts as dominant partner.

1286 So Käsemann: “Paul does not share the ideal underlying the Stoic slogans φυσικὸς and παρὰ φύσιν, because there is for him no nature either detached from God or identifiable with God” (Romans, 48).
1287 Hays glosses: “The complementarity of male and female is given a theological grounding in God’s creative activity. God has made them to become “one flesh” (“Relations Natural and Unnatural,” 191). Hays sees Paul’s language as intended to evoke Genesis 1-2. Cf. Moo, Romans, 115; Schreiner, Romans, 94; Dunn, Romans, 1.64; Fitzmyer, Romans, 286.
1288 “In Fear of Androgyny: Theological Reflections on Masculinity and Sexism, Male Homosexuality and Homophobia, Romans 1:24-27 (A Response to Alexander Venter),” Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 93 (1995): 42. This “proper, characteristic constitution” had just been described as follows: “Sexual contact is understood in public contexts as male-initiated, phallus-centred, and structured around the act of penetration” … [such acts are significant] within the terms of the social meaning of sex.” Ibid. my italics.
1289 Ibid.
1290 Cf. Brooten, Love between Women, 213-16 (passim); Marchal, “Usefulness of an Onesimus,” 761ff. Also Martin: “Sex in Greco-Roman society … was hierarchical, and sex acts (whether the couple was male – male, male – female, female – female, or any combination of human and animal) were almost always inscribed by the assumed superiority of the penetrator to the penetrated. A man’s desire to be penetrated was considered unnatural because he thereby renounced his natural position of male superiority and honor.” “Heterosexism,” 345.
1291 Romans, 176; he cites Brooten, Love between Women, 241. I say “even” Jewett, because he is usually attuned to Paul’s critique of power differentials and the toll this took on bodily existence.
1292 Cf. Brooten, Love between Women, 249ff. David W. Odell-Scott’s rebuttal of Brooten’s exegesis of Romans 1:26-27 is telling. He argues that Brooten is wrong to see Paul’s castigation of homoeroticism as a reaction against women taking a superior role. He does this by referring to 1 Corinthians 7, in which Paul casts the ideal sexual relationship as egalitarian. “The Question of Patriarchy and Heterosexual Eroticism in Romans and Corinthians,” in Gender, Tradition and Romans: Shared Ground, Uncertain Borders, ed. C. Grenholm and D. Patte (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 220. Nevertheless, Brooten is correct to see the
This reading of φύσις as cultural hierarchy, I argue, is in fact opposed by Paul.\textsuperscript{1293} Even if Paul were critiquing same-sex eroticism because a female is active, or a male is passive, he is still countering the social status quo. In the status quo, men penetrate wo/men. Paul would then be saying that no male is to be treated as a wo/man, i.e., to be degraded, which is itself subversive of the pyramidal structure of society.

When viewed together with the role of the σώμα in cultivating God, it becomes apparent that “natural,” for Paul, is sexual activity in line with the Creator’s intention. If the refusal to worship, glorify and render thanks to God correlates with homogenital acts, then heterosexual deployment of the body – in the right context, per the Creator’s design (κατὰ φύσιν) – was designed to be an aspect of humans glorifying God. Jewett notes the Pauline assumption at work, viz., “that there are ‘natural’ bodily relationships that are normative for humans.”\textsuperscript{1294} I would even argue that by φυσικός Paul refers to sex that accords with the raison d’être of the cosmos. Creation’s (and thus the body’s) purpose is to transmit the truth of God’s character.\textsuperscript{1295} Human beings embody the divine will when sexual activity occurs, not merely according to biological design but as an expression of love and lifelong exclusivity.\textsuperscript{1296} In this light, it makes sense that appropriate sexual conduct correlates with thanking, worshiping and cultivating God; such actions express the divine character.

What I find significant about the typical reading of this passage (vv. 18-32) is the failure to detect the element of violence bound up with sexual activity in antiquity. In the hierarchical signification of sex in antiquity, persons are reduced to objects and, as it cultural signification of sex in terms of hierarchy: “Egalitarian, mutual relationships were not part of the dominant cultural discourse of the time.” Rather, sexual relations are “asymmetrical” (\textit{Love between Women}, 216).\textsuperscript{1293} The use of φύσις in 1 Cor 11:14 (“Does not nature itself (ἡ φύσις αὐτῆς) teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him”) at first blush indicates that Paul can mean culture. But Paul uses the term in varying ways to suit his needs. Thiselton observes that Paul, “depending on the context of thought,” uses \textit{physis} to mean “the very ‘grain’ of the created order” or simply “‘how things are’ in more situational or societal terms.” \textit{1 Corinthians}, 845 (original italics). Thiselton concurs that \textit{physis} in Romans 1:26 occurs against the Hebrew background of God as Creator, whose design is apparent in the created compatibility of the sexes (\textit{Ibid.}).\textsuperscript{1294} Romans, 169. Jewett is commenting on Romans 1:24. He goes on to support his statement: “A similar assumption appears in 1 Cor 6:18, where the reference to sinning against the body implies the abrogation of the rightful use of the body through union with Christ.”\textsuperscript{1295} “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (Rom 1:19-20). Cf. Rom 11:36 (“all things ... are to God”). Creation exists to make God known – in moral terms this is the human responsibility to bring glory to God by manifesting the divine attributes of fidelity, justice and love.\textsuperscript{1296} So, strikingly, 1 Cor 7:4 construes the marital partners as having “ἐξουσία” – authority – over one another’s bodies, a prerogative otherwise held by the Lord alone (1 Cor 6:13).
were, consumed. This was most apparent in the earlier sections of this study which showed the corporeal vulnerability of the slave. Sexual activity κατὰ φύσιν (“natural”) accords with nature’s role to make the divine known. The “passions which seek to degrade the body’s τιμή (πάθη ἀτιμίας)” (Rom 1:26, my trans.) are those which operate outside this intrinsic design for the body. Paul is then attacking homogential acts precisely because they violently signify the alleged superiority of the penetrator and the degraded human worth of the receptive person (= object).

Even though the literature may present instances where homosexual relations are “mutual” or “loving,” the basic cultural view of the unequal statuses of the sexual parties must be kept foremost. Apart from a comment by Jewett, I am yet to find another commentator on Romans who understands that the sexual activity depicted by Paul is castigated because of the underlying violence it does to the σῶμα. The point is that for Paul’s addressees – who live outside of power – same-sex activity would certainly have signified to a large degree violent predation. Jewett is insightful when he describes Paul as comforting “Christian slaves and former slaves who had experienced and resented sexual exploitation, both for themselves and for their children, in a culture marked by aggressive bisexuality.”

We must keep in mind that this emblem of human corruption is adduced by Paul to make concrete the ἀδικία and ἀσέβεια which are both the cause of, and evidence of, God’s wrath. Sexual perversion is a demonstration of one way in which humans “degrade the τιμή of the body (τοῦ ἀτιμίας ἐσθαι τὰ σώματα)” (v. 24). The impression one gets from most scholars is that Paul opposes loving homosexual relations, ones based on consent in which both partners share in the enjoyment. Whatever the evidence for

Commentators often configure the “unnaturalness” of the sexuality Paul condemns by citing Greco-Roman parallels, which they take to mean that male-on-male eroticism is wrong in terms of breaching biological compatibility. Thus Hays cites Dio Chrysostom’s censure of homosexuality, in which “lecherous” perpetrators do not “refrain from dishonoring and corrupting the males” as mandated by the “clear and sufficient limit … set by nature?” However, Chrysostom’s real concern, in my view, is in the next lines: “The man whose appetite is insatiate in such things … will turn his assault against the male quarters, eager to befoul the youth who will soon be magistrates and judges and generals …” (Or., 7.135, 151-52). Having read this, Hays says nothing about what, to me, is the obvious violence against elite bodies which Chrysostom fears. Anxiety over “assault” and “befouling” the youth who will be the next generation of leaders means that homogential acts violate and cause a degradation in virile status. This – and not “unnaturalness” in some apolitical sense – is the social signification of homogential acts of violence. Jewett sees Paul as removing “any vestige of decency, honor, or friendship from same-sex relations” (Romans, 179).

Nevertheless, for Jewett, violence is otherwise not an element of the “unnaturalness” of the sexual activity Paul depicts.

Thus the title of Brooten’s book, Love between Women, is, in my view, a misleading summary of the significance of the relations Paul critiques in Romans 1:26-27.
such relations might be, they do not override the obvious fact that to protect oneself from penetration was basic to maintaining one’s virile status, or that such violation sealed one in a state of dishonor. One’s sanctity depended on protection of one’s orifices. One humiliated the other via sexual penetration and/or brutal corporeal assault. Indeed, it makes sense that this would have been the experience and meaning of homogenital activity for the addressees of the epistle, two-thirds of whom were slaves or of servile origin. Paul’s critique of this activity demolishes the theological grid of those who oppressed many of the hearers. God, in fact, views such assaults on the body as detestibly immoral; God is not to be viewed as sanctioning such action.

4. The Cultic Σωμα is Devalued and Assaulted: General Viciousness in Romans 1:28-32

I can now show that the vicious attitudes and actions of the final unit confirm my argument that violence against the body is a critical element of Paul’s portrayal of humanity’s alienation from God-the-Creator. I discuss, firstly, how vv. 28-32 form an inclusio with v.18 by making the variously configured assaults on God and others throughout the entire passage illustrations of ἁμαρτία (in-justice). Secondly, I will show that the range of vices in vv. 29-31 should be heard in concrete, corporeal terms given the violence of the cultural background. They represent a continuation of the degradation of the τιμή of the σῶμα (as seen in vv. 24 and 26-27). Finally, this construal of Adamic society should be seen as a full religio-political critique of Greco-Roman society. To characterize idolatrous society as “haters of God” and “hubristic” (v. 30), for instance, is highly culturally transgressive. This, again, fuels my thesis, that Paul is resacralizing the σῶμα in defiance of the cultural narrative which makes such bodily degradation of those outside power an expression of the cosmic order. The very mechanism – somatic assault – which voids the “inferior” person of any claim to religio-political agency is in fact emblematic of an assault on a valuable aspect of the Creator’s handiwork.

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1300 I cite again Cicero’s argument that men disqualify themselves from elite status by submitting to penetration. The true vir considers his anus “the most holy … part of the body (sanctissima … parte corporis)” Red. Sen., 11 (my trans.).
A. Ἀδίκια as the Rubric for the Bodily Degradation in Romans 1:18-32

In v. 29, Paul resumes the language of ἀδίκια which was used twice in v. 18. Those whom God surrenders “to a debased mind and to things that should not be done” (v. 28) are then described as “filled with every kind of unrighteousness (ἀδίκια), evil, covetousness and malice.” The term ἀδίκια (along with ἀσεβεία) was used in v. 18 as the basic term which summarizes human unrighteousness against which “God’s wrath” is directed. Fitzmyer glosses the term as “a generic concept dealing with social behavior, descriptive of the one who fails to render justice to other human beings.” Wilckens, Lohse and Dunn note that the resumption of the term in v. 29 acts as an inclusio. Dunn and Lohse make the implications of this clear. Dunn observes that “[t]he positioning of ἀδίκια, ‘unrighteousness,’ at the head of the list is no doubt deliberate, linking back to the double usage at the beginning of the section (v 18) and maintaining the implication that all which is to follow [i.e., vv. 19-32] characterizes man as forgetful of the Creator’s claim on him as creature.”

I suggest that Dunn’s statement gets the structure of the passage right and so correctly foregrounds ἀδίκια. However, “forgetfulness” does not quite encapsulate Paul’s portrayal of humanity as violently opposed to God. Nevertheless, once ἀδίκια is rightly defined as broadly synonymous with sin which opposes God’s just order (God’s δικαίωσις) and is manifest in violence against others, then it is apparent that the three elements (degradation of the body, v. 24; sexual degradation of the body, vv. 26-27; and the vice list) are illustrations of ἀδίκια. That is, Paul views the degradation of the body in v. 24 as ἀδίκια – not folly or forgetfulness of God, but a willful attack on that which is intended by God (= “the truth of God” v. 25, cf., v. 18). Sexual abuse of the...
body (vv. 26-27) is another perversion of the “right” use of the body planned by the Creator. The element of violence in ἀδικία is confirmed by the other vices in the catalogue, to which we now turn.

B. The Somatic Nature of the Unrighteous Actions in vv. 29-32

The element of corporeal violence inherent in the programmatic term ἀδικία is underscored by the terms of hostile attitudes and actions which follow it. As Jewett notes, “[t]he body is … involved in almost all the other forms of antisocial behavior listed in this pericope (Rom 1:29-30).”1305 Here is the NRSV’s translation of the list; I have included the crucial Greek terms which I will discuss: “They were filled with every kind of wickedness (ἀδικία), evil, covetousness (πλεονεξία), malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters (θεοστυχείς), insolent (ὑπερστάτες), haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless (ἀστόργους), ruthless (ἀνεκλείμονας).”1306

At the most basic level, the catalogue provides a rhetorically rich portrait of the meaning of the ἀδικία which elicits the divine wrath of v. 18. The terms present humanity in contravention of neighbor-love. Such vices mark the ethos of Adamic humanity which is antithetical to the ethos of the new humanity in Christ. Πλεονεξία refers to the desire to possess at all costs; it is “ruthless, aggressive self-assertion.”1308 As θεοστυχής – hateful towards God – the attack on one’s fellows is again seen to be of a piece with aggressivity towards the Creator.1309 The concept of ὑπερστάς refers to a contempt for the divine and a willingness to do violence against a fellow human being.1310 It has the connotation of taking pleasure in such sacrilegious acts.1311 The terms ἀστόργος

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1305 Romans, 169. He is making the point that the σώμα is involved in both the sexualized degradation and the viciousness of vv. 29ff.
1306 I have selected those terms which depict hostile action against others. However, the other terms, such as malice and (being full of) envy, etc., refer to the causative attitude. All these attitudes should still be heard in terms of their potential to result in physical violence.
1307 Cf. Lohse, Römer, 92.
1308 C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), 27; cited approvingly by Dunn, Romans, 1.68. Dodd continues: “It describes the man who will pursue his own interests with complete disregard for the rights of others and for all considerations of humanity.” He notes that it may or may not entail sexualized expression.
1309 Here is a crucial piece of evidence that Paul understands humanity’s “changes” (ἀλλάσσω and variant, used three times) as a violent assault on God and so too on other persons. Again, folly or forgetfulness misses Paul’s point. That the term is active (rather than “being hated by God”) is affirmed by most commentators (cf. Wilckens, Römer, 1.113; Dunn, Romans, 1.68; Jewett, Romans, 187).
1310 Cranfield, Romans, 1.131.
1311 Jewett, Romans, 187.
(heartless) and ἀνεκλεήμων (ruthless) depict a lack of human compassion. ’Ανεκλεήμων, in particular, stands in opposition to the ἐλεος (mercy) of God (cf. Rom 9:15-16).

In the context of Greco-Roman society, the attitudes and actions of the vice list aimed to establish honor by shaming the other. Such designs found expression in violent attacks on the other. As my research on the background has shown, the use of the whip or other forms of torture/aggravated death degraded the victim as a possessed, servilized and animalized sub-human. By seeing the terms in this corporeal light, this third and final variation of the way the body is degraded provides another window on how humanity in rebellion against God simultaneously violates one another.

Paul constructs idolatrous Greco-Roman society in blatantly unflattering terms. The honor-seeking mandate for imperial society is depicted as hateful towards God, a repudiation of the human-creature’s obligation to cultivate the divine. The ethos of violently shaming the other is construed as hubris. Attacks on one’s fellows are evidence of being in a state which morally repulses God. This, again, fuels my thesis, that Paul is resacralizing the σῶμα in defiance of the cultural narrative which makes such bodily degradation of those outside power an expression of cosmic order. Far from being sanctioned by the gods, the culture of violence is subject to divine wrath.

5. Conclusion: The Σῶμα is Cultic

Wilckens aptly summarizes Romans 1:18-32: “Als Feind Gottes wird der Mensch des Menschen Ausbeuter.”1312 The thesis of this overall study is that by making the σῶμα sacred, Paul subverts the cultural stratification of human worth. In Romans 12:1, when the σῶμα is made sacred and given to God as λατρεία, the chaos of humanity in revolt against God is on its way to being rectified. A leading concern is why it is the body that is reclaimed in 12:1. The first mention of σῶμα in the epistle is in 1:24. Because scholars pay scant attention to how the violated σῶμα is symptomatic of humanity’s perversion of λατρεία, I have examined this passage in some detail. It is the concretely assaulted σῶμα of chapter one which is sacralized in chapter twelve, in defiance of the social script which read the degraded body as rightfully located at the bottom of the divine/cosmic chain of being. Those who follow the imperial ethos and evaluate/treat the body as a degraded

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1312 Römer, 116, also cited approvingly by Wengst, “Homosexualität,” 78.
object are in fact those who willfully degrade the Creator’s supremacy (e.g., v. 25, passim). Thus, my thesis with respect to 1:18-32 is this: Paul views the degradation of the σώμα as symptomatic of humanity’s assault on the Creator’s supremacy.

I began by outlining the structure of the passage. The thrice-repeated “God handed them over” presents humanity’s idolatrous assault on God, God’s response of handing them over to cardiac degradation, and then the resulting social violence. The logic of the unit is that the assault on God leads to the human appetite to assault one another corporeally. The notion of violence is present in each of the three subunits as each illustrates the programmatic term ἀδικία which evokes the divine wrath of Rom 1:18.

Next I undertook a significant analysis of v. 24. Typically, scholars read the “ἐπιθυμίαι (desires)” for which God abandons humanity to “ἀκαθαρσία (uncleanness)” in sexual terms. I endeavored to show that the terms should not be subject to a sexual reductionism. Rather, both terms carry a dense theological meaning. Ἐπιθυμία, in accordance with the Biblical/Jewish background, is prohibited by the 10th commandment, itself a summary of the second tablet of the Decalogue. I therefore proposed, also following the use of ἐπιθυμία in Rom 7:7-8, that the term be defined as “violent appetency” or “covetousness.” Given that the addressees are “those who know the Law” (Rom 7:1), this general understanding would have been shared by Paul and many of his hearers. Moreover, ἀκαθαρσία refers to a state of moral and cultic disqualification before God. Heinous injustice excludes persons from the divine presence and participation in latreia. Both these terms may include sexual sins; however, they point to a core appetite to assault God and violate that which God imbues with worth, viz., the σώμα.

I then argued that the key phrase “τοῦ ἀτιμάζομαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν (the degrading of their bodies)” explains what is meant by ἀκαθαρσία. Persons manifest their state of moral detestability before God through their violent treatment of one another’s bodies which sees “their bodies being stripped of value” or τιμή. Here not only is the body of the beaten or sexually assaulted victim configured as degraded, but so too does degradation accrue to the attacker’s own body. Verse 24, therefore, is a holistic reference to interhuman predation rather than to sexual sins which are one subset of this wider category.

I noted also that Paul’s oscillation between humanity’s degradation of God and its degrading of the σώμα indicates the strong association he sees between the Creator and
the body. Those whose “bodies are degraded” are defined by the relative clause that follows immediately in v. 25: “Such persons [are those who] … worship and serve (ἐλαττορεύοντα) the creation rather than the Creator.” Consequently, idolatry and degrading the body which the Creator has designed as the medium of human worship go hand in hand. The degraded body is a crucial symptom expressing the extent to which creaturely latreia is vitiated.

What is it, in the context of Romans 1:18-32, which constitutes the τιμή of the body? The human person as a spiritual-physical holism can only perform the creaturely duties of worshiping, serving and rendering thanks to the Creator through embodied action.1313 The divine will – “the Law” – is fulfilled through neighbor-love which entails hands, feet, tongues, etc., not assaulting the neighbor (per Rom 3:10-18) but rather receiving him or her as family. It is this Christoform large-heartedness towards which Paul is driving the Romans ekklēssiae (Rom 14:1-15:13).

More briefly, I argued that vv. 26-27 describe that degradation of the body which is constituted by homogenital sex. The element of assault on the Creator continues as God’s will that sexual relations occur between male and female categories is perverted by homosexual violence. I referred to the wealth of information from antiquity that sexual activity signified power relations. Whatever may be the evidence for egalitarian, reciprocal sexual relations, these were not the norm. Typically, the dominant Man would penetrate the body of the subordinate wo/man. Given the social location of Paul’s hearers as those outside of power, whose bodies were open to the aggressive bisexual appetites of their superiors, for them at least the castigation of homogenital acts as contrary to divine justice would have meant a condemnation of these sexual actions as a violation of the body’s value.

Finally, the analysis of vv. 28-32 continued the theme that Paul is condemning the violent treatment of the body of the other. Verse 29 resumes the characterization of human sin as ἀδικία – the key word twice said to have triggered the divine wrath in v. 18. All the attitudes and actions of vv. 18-32 are illustrations of ἀδικία – the violent treatment of the other. A fitting summary, then, is to repeat Hays’ image and see the abusive use and consumption of the body as “a ‘sacrament’ (so to speak) of the anti-religion of human beings who refuse to honor God as creator: it is an outward and visible sign of an inward

1313 Again, the logic is akin to that found in James 3:9. The same tongue which praises God must also bless one’s fellows who are God’s image-bearers, who are, in some sense, as creatures, intimately associated with the Creator.
and spiritual reality.”\textsuperscript{1314} The whole ethos of violating the cultic body of the other in \textit{all the forms this violence takes} – whether in same-sex, violent penetration (vv. 26-27) or physical/social assaults (vv. 28a-31) – signifies the inward corruption which enthralls those who have rejected God.

The body, then, is inherently God-ward in its \textit{raison d'etre}. When God is assaulted, the body is deprived of its τιμή and made an item for consumption. However, the logic also works in the other direction: when persons are restored to right relation with God – to one of \textit{latreia} – the body has its value restored as well. The body – along with all of creation – is made theocentric again as it acts to make known the divine character (Rom 1:20). The body lives out its nature as part of a cosmos which is “from, through and to God” (Rom 11:36). Harvey’s language presents the body’s purpose. It is “our instrument of knowledge” (the location in which we receive God’s self-revelation); it is a medium of expression, enacting and manifesting our relationship with our Creator.\textsuperscript{1315} I have thus emphasized Paul’s Jewish theology: God is always God-the-Creator. God is materialistic; God takes pleasure in the material/
sw/ma and God is possessive of the material. “The All” is “\textit{for} God” (Rom 11:36); “the \textit{σώμα}” is … \textit{for} the Lord” (1 Cor 6:13). To assault God’s creaturely image-bearers as symbolized by the degraded \textit{σώμα} is to assault God-the-Creator (cf. James 3:9).

The next chapter contends that the addressees of the epistle were the subjects of corporeal assault. I return to my analysis of Romans 12:1-2 and indicate several elements which reveal Paul encouraging the Christ-followers to fidelity in the face of their bodily suffering. In the light of Romans 1:18-32, they can face this degrading treatment with the comfort that God opposes brutalization of the body as a desecration of that which enables the human creature to render God \textit{latreia} and embody the divine character through acts of neighbor-love.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1314} The words are Hays’ (“\textit{Relations Natural and Unnatural},” 191). Hays applies this only to homosexual behavior; not to the full range of somatic violence which I envisage.
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1315} “Embodiment in Time,” 13.
Chapter 7: The Σωμα is Sacralized, Romans 12:1-2

1. Introduction

This chapter continues to argue that σωμα be read as the “material-interrelated self.” This material self which was created to be the medium for receiving divine knowledge and responding to it with worship has been devalued through perverse social relations (Rom 1:18-32). In chapter 12 Paul encourages his low socio-economic auditors to a new cultic identity in which their degraded bodily status is freed from its typical cultural interpretation. With 12:1-2 we have Paul’s understanding of how the human person, whose bodily and psychic being was designed for worshiping the creator and for socially embodying the creator’s character, enters a process of restoration towards this cultic (theo-oriented) raison d’être.

In addition, Paul offers a fresh reading of the body in its fraility and violations. Freshly imagined in the light of Jesus’ own biography of degrading suffering, the violated body is reconstrued as sacrificial. Paul’s vision is inherently at odds with the cultural semiotics which govern embodied identity. The creator and cosmic sovereign in fact stands in solidarity with the marginalized and values their faithful suffering. The Greco-Roman theologies of the deities reinforcing a chain of power in which elite males rightly enforce their – the deities’ and their own – superiority on their subordinates is subverted in Paul’s vision.

2. Degraded Σωματα of the Addressees: Sacrifice and Domination

In the first section, I take up the negative aspect of Romans 12:1-2. Several features of Romans 12:1-2 support the idea that the Christ-followers were being encouraged in the face of physical threat. The passage – viewed as comfort in the face of the incongruence between the hearers’ high-status as divine heirs and their physical state – braces them in their experience of being temporarily “material-dominated selves.” I will firstly consider the significance of these verses being paraklēsis: consolation in the face of threat. Next, I will argue that the bodies of the auditors being envisioned as a thusia (sacrifice) bespeaks their experience of physical humiliation. Finally, I consider the element of resistance
contained by the call to non-conformity to “this age” and the exposure to violence this is likely to have entailed.

A. Παράκλησις: Encouragement in the Face of Danger

Παράκλησις and its verb, παρακαλέω, have a range of meanings, from urging strongly or exhorting to the more sensitive providing “someone with courage or cheer, comfort.”1316 LSJ note that παράκλησις covers both exhortation and consolation.1317 I would argue that Paul should not be heard as merely instructing them in their ethical duty but also as expressing his own tenderness towards them in their degraded bodily condition.1318

Commentators also tend to make παρακαλέω in Rom 12:1 the introduction to the so-called ethical section of the epistle. Moo is typical, seeing 12:1 act as a preface to a fresh section, focusing no longer on “instruction” but on “exhortation; [shifting] from ‘indicative’ to ‘imperative.’”1319 Moo favours the rendering “I exhort.”1320 Käsemann heads 12:1-13:14 with “General Exhortation: Various Dimensions of Daily Christian Life.”1321

However, the tendency to read the verb as “exhort” or “beseech” (as a personal request), rather than as “comfort” is, in my view, decidedly unhelpful.1322 If the earlier reconstruction of the bodily experiences of low-status persons in the Empire is accepted, it is unlikely that Paul is merely giving his auditors instructions for an innocuously lived “daily life.” As I will detail shortly in describing the corporeal violence implied by the Christ-followers collectively being described as a “sacrifice,” the notion that Paul is offering mere instruction is inadequate. Jewett offers an insight which buttresses this claim: “The dramatic urgency of Paul’s language [viz., depicting the congregants’ bodies as a sacrifice] is obscured by vaguely uplifting sentiments. A sacrifice killed or burned on the altar is hardly the appropriate metaphor for mopping the floor.”1323

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1316 BDAG, s.v παρακαλέω (italics original).
1317 LSJ, s.v παράκλησις. The consolation entry refers mainly to Biblical literature.
1318 The notion that Paul is politely pressuring the Christ-followers is implied by “I beseech you (to present your bodies)” (KJV, following the Vulgate’s “obsecro … vos fratres”) or the common “I urge you” (NASB, NIV, NJB).
1319 Romans, 744.
1320 Ibid. Likewise, for Dunn the verb introduces the paraenetic section of the letter being “an exhortation which summarizes the claim of his gospel” (Romans, 2.707); cf. Fitzmyer, Romans, 637.
1321 Romans, 742.
1322 Contra, for example, Moo, Romans, 748, n. 18.
1323 Romans, 728. The “vaguely uplifting sentiments” are seen in commentators’ often reducing “sacrifice” to mean selfless service of others. I would suggest that Dunn’s definition of “sacrifice” as “the daily
Paul realizes that his hearers’ situation involves physical risk if they are to offer their bodies to God. The language of their being a somatic sacrifice entails much more than merely serving selflessly within the congregation. This is an insight of great significance for my thesis that the bodies of the low-status Christ-followers were subject to degrading treatment. Jewett’s point remains undeveloped. He too holds the majority view that Paul’s paraklēsis is his “urging” of the saints to desirable conduct.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.} 727-27. This desired end, for Jewett, is that the hearers support Paul’s Spanish mission.}

Several factors support supplementing this view by paraphrasing Paul’s παρακαλέω as “I comfort you in your violated state.” Chiefly, I refer to the degraded somatic experience which characterized the servile and freedpersons of the Empire. I wish to consider firstly, though, the notion of comfort which could attach to the verb. I argue that this should be detected even in the extra-Biblical material, with consolation being particularly evident in the LXX background. Secondly, I will comment on how Paul’s offering of this encouragement “by the mercies of God” (= as comforted through God’s empathetic mercy) supports my expansion of the traditional notion that Paul is urging right behavior to include his imbuing this with an expression of compassion.

\section*{Semantics of Παράκλησις as “Comfort”}

In non-Biblical Greek, παράκλησις and παρακαλέω have the basic sense of calling with a view to bringing the other party into a relationship of solidarity, hence the intensification achieved by the adverbial παρα. The context determines in which direction the encouragement or instruction flows: from the caller to the called, from the called to the caller, or both. As an example of the first category in which the need lies with the caller, one might “send for, summon” the gods for aid, a doctor, or one’s friends for assistance.\footnote{\textit{LSJ}, \textit{s.v} παρακαλέω and παράκλησις.}

In the next category, the speaker sees the deficiency as residing with those addressed. Here, to “exhort, encourage” is illustrated by a general “who is exhorting [his soldiers] to brave danger (παρακαλοῦτι ἐπὶ τὸ κυνῳδεύειν)” in defence of their homeland.\footnote{Arist. \textit{Rh.}, 2.21.11.} Elsewhere the Athenians are eulogized as having “again and again, commitment of life” (Romans, 2.717) is indicative of these uplifting sentiments. Xavier Paul B. Viagulamuthu is similar, with “sacrifice” glossed as “the total surrender and homage of man.” \textit{Offering Our Bodies as a Living Sacrifice to God: A Study in Pauline Spirituality Based on Romans 12,1} (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 2002), 288. Again, this is not to overturn these insights, but to strengthen the notion of commitment (and risk) called for from the original hearers.
challenged [the other Greeks] to save the situation (πολλάκις εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀπαντάς παρεκάλεσαν) in the face of foreign aggression (κοινὸς πᾶσιν κίνδωνος τοῖς Ἐλλησιν). Polybius recounts the general Antigonus Doson, who shouted *paraklēsis* so vigorously that he ruptured a blood vessel and later died. Yet “he had inspired [the Greeks] with good hopes.” Those who are at risk of losing heart in the face of danger are reinvigorated by the *paraklēsis* of those who see clearly; such encouragement also inspires hope for the quality of life which virility affords.

From this vantage point on the terminology, it is apparent that *paraklēsis* can be a call to maintain fidelity to a certain moral vision of reality in the face of hostility. Given the element of encouragement obviously present, it makes little sense to exclude the idea of comfort or consolation. Thus I underscored the element of hope above: should the soldiers be manly, they can expect the accompanying rewards. Psychological distress is deflected by the comfort, encouragement or anticipation of benefit. Again, *paraklēsis* is offered to steel another in the face of threat. The idea of comfort should be detected alongside encouragement and instruction.

That *paraklēsis* is comfort or consolation is also clear in the LXX. In those Septuagintal books which are translations from Hebrew, in 61 out of the 78 instances where *παρακαλέω* is used it renders נמר in the piel and the hitpael mean, respectively, to “comfort, console” and to “be sorry, have compassion.” Bieringer states that Paul’s thought-world here hails from the Psalter’s and Isaian texts of consolation. His citation of Margaret Thrall’s summation is noteworthy: “In Deutero-Isaiah (e.g., Is 40:1, 51:12) the Hebrew verb (rendered by *παρακαλέω* in the LXX) is used in the context of the message of the dawning time of salvation, when God himself will ‘comfort’ his people. In Judaism, these scriptural passages led to the use of ‘comfort’ as a means of reference to this time of salvation.”

I particularly wish to emphasize the parallelism between *paraklēsis* as the offering of comfort and the anticipation of divine *sōtēria* that Bieringer demonstrates to be

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1327 Dem., Orat., 7.18.
1328 2.70.
1329 Further examples include: Demosthenes, Orat., 60.27; here *paraklēsis* called the soldiers to “choose to die nobly,” to “be valiant men,” and to value immortal fame over preserving their mortal bodies. Cf. also Euripides, Phoenissae, 1254; Hdt., 7.158; Polybius, Hist., 5.28. 2 Macc 15:7-11 may also be consulted.
1330 *BDB*, s.v נמר.
operative in both Isaian and Pauline thought. In Isaiah 49:8 the coming transformation is cast as “a day of salvation (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας),” which in verse 10 morphs to “the one who has mercy on them will offer comfort” (my translation of ὁ ἐλεών αὐτοὺς παρακάλεσεν). In verse 13 pending liberation is couched as “God has had mercy on his people and comforted the humiliated of his people” (my translation of ἡλέησεν ὁ θεὸς τῶν λαῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ταπεινοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ παρεκάλεσεν). Bieringer observes that this parallelism is likely to have inspired Paul in 2 Cor 1:6: “If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation (ὑπὲρ τῆς ἰμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας); if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation (εἴτε παρακαλοῖμεθα ὑπὲρ τῆς ἰμῶν παρακλήσεως), which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering.”

I endorse Bieringer’s conclusions and see them as a vital lens for reading Romans at this point. Paul offers paraklēsis – encouragement – to the Christ-followers in view of God’s coming triumph, which is simultaneously a comforting of them in their psychosomatic suffering. Divine paraklēsis succored Paul in his ordeals of mental and physical suffering as portrayed in 2 Corinthians. Pauline references to salvation, liberty and the unleashing of the dynamis eis sōtērian or God’s dikaiosyne (1:16-17) indicate the divine achievement of whole-person flourishing and the destruction of Sin and Death.

Again, I underscore the parallel linkage between divine dikaiosyne, sōtēria and paraklēsis in the Isaian outlook. So Isaiah 49:13: “Rejoice, O heavens, and let the earth be glad; let the mountains break forth with joy, and the hills with righteousness ([εὕφροσύνην] οἱ βουνοί δικαιοσύνην), because God has had mercy on his people and he has comforted (παρεκάλεσεν) the humble of his people.” The reference to sōtēria in 49:8 should be observed. This passage of Isaiah is indeed replete with images of somatic wellbeing: those who are despised and enslaved enter into sōtēria (49:7-8), those who are imprisoned and bereft of light receive exodus, those who are starving are fed and watered (v. 9-10). Other poignant images of whole-person flourishing are listed by Bieringer. He also lists the comforting or encouraging meaning of the παρακλήσις terminology in the

1333 Bieringer detects the same parallelism in 2 Cor 7:6. Here God had offered Paul paraklēsis through the advent of Titus (ὁ παρακλάων τοὺς ταπεινοὺς παρεκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Τίτου). The preceding verse indicates the psychosomatic distress which God ameliorated through Titus, viz., “when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way – disputes without and fears within.” Thus, the absence of sōtēria – the proximity of violence and even death – was overcome through an experience of divine paraklēsis.

Maccabean literature, commenting: “In all these places παρακαλέω conveys the connotation of strengthening and building up in the context of threat, danger and affliction.”

Jean-Marc Ela’s comments regarding the paraklesis in 2 Corinthians may also be noted:

Les forms verbales et substantives que nous avons notées dans le passage de 2 Cor, 3-4 sont en une determination precise. Elles sont nécessitées par des situation négatives que Paul appelle thlipsis et pathêmata (v. 5), autrement dit: la << détresse >> et les << souffrances >>... La << détresse >> et les << souffrances >> ne sont pas des entités abstraites contre lesquelles le discours paulinien présenterait une sorte de sagesse désincarnée.

That Paul’s paraklēsis may be heard as a comforting of those who suffer is made more likely by his explicit appeal to “the mercies of God.” From this perspective, he is saying “I encourage/comfort you through – i.e., enabled as you are by – the mercies of God to offer your bodies.” Commentators routinely note that “οἰκτηρίμων, mercies” in the plural reflects the Hebrew ḥesed. Dunn points to 2 Sam 24:14, where David says, “let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy (οἱ οἰκτηρίμοι αὐτοῦ) is great; but let me not fall into human hands.” As with many of the other occurrences of οἰκτηρίμοι/ḥesed, this passage is set in a context of fear of bodily harm. Divine mercy aids the person in the face of bodily threat. The collation of Paul’s παρακαλῶ statements and bodily suffering is further seen in Rom 15:30-31. Paul calls on the saints to pray for him as he anticipates taking the collection to Jerusalem. He calls them to his side to support him (παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς) so “that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea.”

I suggest, then, that Paul’s paraklēsis in Romans 12:1 be heard less as pure exhortation or instruction and more as encouragement and consolation to those who suffer the somatic degradation which divine σωτηρία and dikaiosyne are anticipated to remedy. In order to understand Paul’s collation of divine mercy and paraklēsis in Rom 12:1, I also submit that the interchange of the concepts in 2 Corinthians (cf. esp. 1:3) should be given due consideration.

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1335 Ibid. 5; the references are: 1 Macc 12:9 (which he notes is paralleled by Rom 15:4), 2 Macc 7:6, 7:21, 11:32, 15:17; 3 Macc 1:6, 3:8 and 16:24.
1337 The διά is thus taken instrumentally (so too Dunn, Romans, 2.709; Jewett, Romans, 727).
1338 Cranfield, Romans, 2.596; Fitzmyer, Romans, 639; Wilckens, Römer, 3.2, n. 7.
1339 Dunn, Romans, 2.709.
1340 Other examples are: (LXX) Ps 68:17, 85:15, 102:4; Joel 2:13.
In 2 Corinthians 1:3, Paul states: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies and the God of all consolation (ὁ πατὴρ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ θεός πάσης παρακλήσεως).” God’s mercies and consolation allow Paul to endure suffering (vv. 4-10). These sufferings clearly entail bodily degradation which barely falls short of death. Indeed, Christ’s violent passion is the lens through which Paul construes his experience. “The sufferings of Christ are abundant for us” (v. 5). In the midst of the missionaries’ abused biographic, divine mercies and consolation bring sustenance. In particular, it is the parakal-terminology which expresses the divine tenderness which has sustained the missionaries. The note of divine pity and comfort offered in the midst of bodily suffering is unmistakable in this passage.

When read in this light, Romans 12:1, in which Paul extends paraklēsis or comfort to his audience, is naturally supported by his reference to divine mercies. It is through divine mercy that the Christ-followers will be enabled to bear the suffering of their present socio-economic status. Despite being characterized by Paul as holding an elite identity (they are “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,” Rom 8:17), the saints must endure the violence implicit in their bodies being “sacrifices.” The sinister nature of this expression is our next topic.

B. Ῥοσία: The Dominated Body

In this section I argue that Paul’s description of the saints’ bodies as a “sacrifice (θυσία)” (Rom 12:1) reinforces my contention that he is sensitive to the corporeal suffering that characterized their lives. My primary question becomes, why is it that Paul wants his hearers’ bodies to be presented to God? I have argued throughout that scholars tend to theologize the body at the expense of perceiving its social significance. As I have shown, in Greco-Roman culture the security of one’s bodily boundaries signified one’s status and identity. For many of Paul’s hearers, as non-elite persons often of servile status, the openness of their bodies to the degradations of physical and sexual assault would have made their bodies an obstacle to participation in some mainstream religious cults.

1341 See also Carl J. Bjerkelund, Parakalō: Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalō-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967), 161.
1342 I will discuss in the next section that there is no “as” in the original. The metaphor is thus intensely striking: “present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy …”
Further, throughout the epistle Paul clearly characterizes the body as being subject to death. It is significant that it is the body as both a socially maligned phenomenon and as a death-prone phenomenon that Paul describes as capable of being “well-pleasing” to God. Framing the body as a sacrifice provides the saints with a countercultural way of construing their bodily suffering as an expression of cultic offering or worship. This is the reason, I will argue, that Paul immediately qualifies their offering of their bodies as a sacrifice as living: they are to present their bodies a living sacrifice. For low social status persons, the body as sacrifice would connote images of death. By making the sacrifice living, Paul assures them of the life-giving power of the God to whom they make their somatic offering.

Jewett, as noted, is the rare exception who detects how the term “sacrifice” reflects the threatening environment which surrounded the Christ-followers. While he sees the body primarily as “the basis of relationship and identity,” he notes the element of risk which is also present. To cite him again: “The dramatic urgency of Paul’s language [viz., depicting the congregants’ bodies as a sacrifice] is obscured by vaguely uplifting sentiments. A sacrifice killed or burned on the altar is hardly the appropriate metaphor for mopping the floor. Surely an element of communal risk is envisioned…” Now I reproduce his footnote to these comments: “The sacrifice would not only be used but used up, for normally that which was offered was either burnt on the altar or consumed in the temple by the priests. Paul apparently has something like this in mind, for he often refers to the deterioration of his body under the impact of persecutions and missionary exertions.”

1343 The failure to appreciate the degrading nature of the saints’ relationship with their social environment is typical in the literature. Barrett, for example, sees “body” as a reference to how a person expresses themselves “in common life” (Romans, 231). For Cranfield, it means offering the “whole of [one’s] concrete life” (Romans, 1.599; cf. Wilckens, Römer, 3.3; Dunn, Romans, 2.709). However, Moo detects an element of hostility: “The sacrifice we are called on to make requires a dedication to the service of God in the harsh and often ambiguous life of this world.” (Romans, 751); similarly, Byrne: “In their bodies believers feel and suffer the onslaughts of the old era” (Romans, 364); cf. Patte, Paul’s Faith and the Power of the Gospel: A Structural Introduction to the Pauline Letters (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 295. I do not wish to downplay the importance of interaction with the world as important to Paul’s thought. I merely want to supplement it by drawing attention to the social meaning of the body. In effect, I am spelling out the somatically brutal nature of these daily “concrete relationships.”

1344 Ibid. n. 44. He cites from his Terms, 301-302. As noted by Jewett (Romans, 728, n. 45), Daniel Patte also correlates, without any development, the saints’ vulnerability to persecution with Rom 12:1. The believers “agree to be persecuted, slandered, humiliated, sacrificed” (Paul’s Faith, 295). However, Patte’s comment relates to believers incurring violence because they oppose the value system of this age. While this is one avenue of suffering (cf. Rom 8:35-36), I am also interested in the possibility that Paul’s servile hearers would have heard the “sacrificial” nature of their bodily deterioration as a denouncement of the naturalized violence and degradation that marked their daily lives (as I read Rom 1:18-32).
Before I go on to develop Jewett’s notion of the bodily “sacrifice” as the presentation of physical suffering to God, I will make two comments. Firstly, I reiterate my earlier argument that Paul is misread through an anti-cultus lens. I would suggest that the notion of “Christian supercessionism” skews one’s reading of Paul’s sacrificial language and metaphorical application of the cult. I have already argued that for Paul the Jewish cultus, with its basic elements of temple, sacrifice and priesthood, is indispensible.\textsuperscript{1346} In the absence of firm evidence from Paul to the contrary, the importance of the cultic system should be assumed. Paul’s view of the priority of the temple, sacrifices and the priesthood – i.e., his ongoing self-identity as a faithful Jew – is represented by the viewpoint of the Rabbis, whose esteem of the cultus persisted even after the downfall of the temple. Sanders observes that “[o]ne will look in vain in the Rabbinic literature for any attack on these cultic acts [= sacrifices and offerings, connected with the Temple]; they were instituted by God and not to be questioned by man.”\textsuperscript{1347}

The wider point is that we may not know exactly how the ancients (not only the Jews, but other cultures) conceived of sacrifice as effecting atonement, but we can be certain it was viewed as fundamental in maintaining divine-human relations.\textsuperscript{1348} All too often one finds the assertion that in Romans Paul is pronouncing the “Christian” spiritual sacrifice/worship as having superceded the crassly literalistic system of Judaism.

\textsuperscript{1346} For a discussion of these as “the core of the Jewish cultic structure,” see Gupta, \textit{Worship that Makes Sense}, 37-42. He also discusses how the reading of Scripture, prayers, festivals and performance of the psalms were important concomitants.

\textsuperscript{1347} \textit{Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion} (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1977), 162. In a later work he stresses Jesus’ own approval of the sacrificial system (Matt 5.23ff., Mark 1:44); to which he adds: “Philo firmly believed in sacrifice, as did Tobit and Hillel” (\textit{Paul}, 139). Finlan similarly observes that while Sirach can speak of works of charity as sacrifices, he nevertheless has a high valuation of the cultus (Sirach 45:15-24); \textit{The Background and Content of Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors} (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 50-51. Finlan is wrong then, in my view, to cite Sirach as a demonstration of the spiritualization of the cultus which “hints at a devaluation of cult-practice” (\textit{Ibid.} 50). Later, Finlan documents Philo’s attribution of positive symbolic value to cult sacrifices (\textit{Ibid.} 58). Finlan also shows that the Qumran community applied sacrifice language to ethical conduct and longed for a purified temple system (\textit{Ibid.} 59-60).

\textsuperscript{1348} Sanders notes that the cultic acts were basically viewed as effective because they were ordered by God. Far from working in a magical or \textit{ex opere operato} manner, repentance was critical to eliciting forgiveness. \textit{Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion} (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1977), 158-68). Wright’s idea is that the sacrifices symbolized the liberation experienced at the exodus and anticipated in the future. \textit{The New Testament and the People of God} (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 274. Finlan probably offers the best explanation: “Sacrifice bespeaks ancient beliefs about the life-force residing in the blood, and the priestly ability to manipulate that life-force.” In time, however, this ancient metaphysical logic was lost: “Sacrifice dramatized an ancient concept of the supernatural that was no longer understood in Paul’s time.” \textit{Atonement Metaphors}, 11.
Fitzmyer, for example, frames the target of the ethics of Rom 12:1-15:13 as “the justified Christian.” They are “demands made on Christian living.”

My point is that the term “Christian” is a category mistake and an anachronism. Paul’s gentile, God-fearing converts from paganism were “grafted in” to the domestic olive tree (Rom 11:17-18). They are not “Christians” with the term’s connotations of their being a distinct group from the adherents of “Judaism,” as occurred in subsequent centuries. With the anachronism of “Christian” categorization, it is easy to view the Jewish cultic system as passed, as we are no longer within the thought world of Judaism. Thus Fitzmyer continues: “Paul implicitly compares Christians [offering their bodies] with animals slaughtered in Jewish or pagan cults… [rather than] dead animals.”

Commentators often reveal the supercessionist tendencies of their outlook in their comments on the way the presentation of the body constitutes “λογικὴ λατρεία (reasonable worship).” Whether this is translated as “spiritual worship” or (as most do) some variation of “reasonable worship,” it implies that Paul’s conception is superior to the materiality of the cultus. Moo understands Paul to be creating “a contrast between the Jewish and Christian form of worship. For Christians, there is no more ‘cult’ or ‘sacrifice’ in any literal sense.” This launches from what, in my opinion, is the radically faulty premise that Paul is instituting a new religion.

Part of the answer is to hold the “sacrifice” perspective of Christ’s death in dialogical tension with the martyrlogical meaning of his death. Thus Moo can pit the “once-for-all sacrifice of Christ” over against the sacrifices of the Jewish cultus.

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1349 Romans, 637, my italics; for Moo, Rom 12:1-2 “…summarizes the Christian response to God’s grace” (Romans, 748).
1350 Ibid. 638.
1351 Romans, 640. Paul’s description of the somatic sacrifice as “living” is often taken to be an implicit rejection of the dead animals of literal cult (Dunn, Romans, 710). Käsemann infers that “bloody animal sacrifices” are deemed “abhorrent” by Paul (Romans, 328). Byrne confirms this as the import of their “living” sacrifice, aligning Paul’s thought with the prophetic critique of sacrifice (Romans, 363). However, as Sanders has pointed out with reference to Rabbinic thought (Palestinian Judaism, 162-63), the prophetic censure does not imply the termination of the sacrificial system.
1352 For “spiritual” worship see Bruce, Romans, 226; Wilckens, Römer, 4; NRSV. For a variation of “reasonable” or “logical” see Cranfield, Romans, 2.595; Moo, Romans, 753; Byrne, Romans, 363; Paul J. Achtemeier, Romans (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1985), 195.
1353 Romans, 753-54. I take it that Paul would, if he could, extend his gentile converts’ participation in the worship of Yahweh to include their taking part in the literal cultus. They are, after all, an acceptable offering “sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:16) and so qualified for contact with the divine (more on this shortly).
1354 Ibid. 754. Of course Catholic and Protestant theologians handle this differently. Moo emphasizes the historical particularity of Christ’s sacrifice (as does Dunn, Romans, 710), versus the Catholic (via the Patristic) construal of the Eucharist as an ongoing sacrifice. Either way, as I argue below, the sacrificial metaphor applied to Christ’s faithful death (= his death atones for sin) should be held together with the martyrlogical significance of Christ’s death. This is also pace Finlan, who finally comes to the position
Gupta provides a helpful critique of the spiritualization and anti-ritualism operative in much of biblical scholarship.\textsuperscript{1355} His point is that it is distorting to read Paul through a dichotomy of “dispensable outer workings” (= ritualistic Judaism) over against Paul’s concern for “inner belief.”\textsuperscript{1356} From my perspective, it is important to supplement the sacrificial understanding of Christ’s death with his also dying as a faithful martyr. Christ’s death is similar to the faithful deaths of the Maccabean martyrs which were viewed as conciliatory. Also, like the Maccabean precedents, Christ’s death should not be viewed as terminating the Jewish cultus.\textsuperscript{1357}

My second initial point is to reiterate how I am using the term “cultic.” Clearly Paul applies the language of temple and sacrificial rituals in a metaphoric way when he applies them to Jesus’ death and to his own and his hearers’ religious experiences. As Gordon Lathrop observes, “Christ’s death was a public execution which, while it may have been marked by some grisly ritual characteristics, was \textit{thoroughly alien to the sacred cultic exchange}.”\textsuperscript{1358} He then notes that “sacrifice” is the wrong word to use, but that this is exactly the point.\textsuperscript{1359} The application of cultic imagery to Christ’s death and believers’ somatic offering to God is a powerful, live metaphor which aims to reconstruct the hearers’ symbolic worlds and self-images. They are now participants in the cult of Israel’s God. They also now offer “sacrifices” in the sense of transferring the possession of their bodies exclusively to God.\textsuperscript{1360}

Additionally, I note a dominant theme in Romans: the re-establishment of humanity in right worshiping relationship with the God of Israel. Paul demands that his hearers participate exclusively in offering worship to this deity. As Fredriksen states, this

\textsuperscript{1355}Worship that Makes Sense, 42-46.
\textsuperscript{1356}Ibid. 43. Gupta makes good use of Jonathan Klawans’ potent critique (Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple) of the anti-ritualism approach to Paul.
\textsuperscript{1357}Even further, for Paul the deeper meaning of Christ’s death is not simply its atoning for sins, but providing a means of participation in Christ’s death and resurrection which sever one’s enthralment to Sin (the cosmic power). See the discussion in Sanders, Paul: A Brief Insight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 126-30, for whom the participatory notion of transference from Sin to the realm of the Spirit is “the heart of [Paul’s] thought” (130). I note too the way in which the atonement passage (Rom 3:25, probably within a traditional formula inserted by Paul) is explicated in Rom 5:12-21 in terms of Christ’s liberating obedience, which terminates the rule of Sin and Death.
\textsuperscript{1358}“Justin, Eucharist and ‘Sacrifice’: A Case of Metaphor,” Worship (1990): 32 (my italics).
\textsuperscript{1359}Ibid. 33.
\textsuperscript{1360}For this as the Hebrew conception of sacrifice, see Jewett, Terms, 301. David Frankfurter defines sacrifice in terms of “moving an object [i.e., the possession thereof] across the boundary” of the human and supernatural worlds. “On Sacrifices and Residues: Processing the Potent Body,” in Religion in Cultural Discourse: Essays in Honor of Hans G. Kippenberg on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday, eds. Brigitte Luchesi and Kocku von Stuckrad (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 512.
is what “…absolutely all of the apostles in the early years of this messianic movement were demanding of their gentile followers: ‘No λατρεία to native gods’ which is, in other words, ‘to foreswear public sacrifice.’ This is a ritual demand … it was specifically a Judaizing demand.” Israél’s blessings, including the δόξα (divine presence at the Temple) and λατρεία (the cultic system), over which Paul exults in Rom 9:4, inspire his ministry. As Fredriksen comments, Paul anticipates the culmination of his own “priestly work” as consisting in his delivering his Gentile converts – now holy through the Spirit – to worship Israél’s God in Jerusalem (Rom 15:16).

The motif of Gentiles offering cultic worship – the fulfillment of the ancestral hope that the eschaton would see the Gentiles rejoicing with “his people” (= Israél, Rom 15:10) – drives Paul’s ministry. Within the epistle, the λατρεία which is corrupted by idolatry and social violence (cf. 1:25) is restored in 12:1-2 as the body is offered as a sacrifice which is cultically acceptable (“λογικὴ λατρεία,” v. 2). I use “cultic,” then, in the sense of worshiping activity that is harmonious with one’s identity as an exclusive worshipper of Israél’s deity. For Paul this worship is an extension, not a replacement, of the Jewish cultus whose eschatological fulfillment he anticipated in the pilgrimage of the gentiles to worship there.

In the remainder of this section I will, firstly, develop Jewett’s idea that the saints’ offering their bodies as a “sacrifice” refers to bodily deterioration. I discuss several passages where Paul construes, in cultic terms, his own bodily suffering at the hands of his social superiors. I will argue that this would naturally resonate with the experiences of his servile and low-status hearers, whose bodies have been dishonored by those whose actions he presents as being an affront to God (as per my reading of Rom 1:18-32). Secondly, I discuss the epistle’s motif that Jesus’ death, a vital expression of his pistis (fidelity/obedience), is the paradigmatic sacrifice or cultic service which the believers are called to emulate. I comment too on the patristic and martyrlogical construals of Christ’s sacrifice as the forerunner to the martyrs’ deaths. Finally, I observe that, in a similar way to Christ, Abraham displays his exemplary faith by his ability to overlook his bodily decay being confident in God’s power as life-giver. The point I will be endeavoring to make is that Paul understands faith to find one of its most pleasing

1361 “Judaizing the Nations,” 251.
1362 Ibid. 248-49.
1363 In the interim before the eschaton, the Gentiles may be debarred from the temple cultus because Paul’s fellow Jews do not share his view that being “in-Christ” is sufficient for full status within the Jewish community.
expressions when the believer commits his or her self to God despite his or her experience of bodily deterioration.

C. The “Cultic” Nature of Paul’s Suffering

Paul uses cultic imagery to depict both activities within his own ministry and the reciprocating acts of his churches.1364 My interest lies in how Paul similarly describes the physical suffering stirred up by his and his followers’ allegiance to the gospel. Philippians 2:17 is striking in this regard: “…but even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith (ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν), I am glad and rejoice with all of you.” Commenting on this passage, Jewett notes that it confirms the likelihood that the “sacrifice” called for in Romans 12:1 aligns with the bodily assaults Paul received from his opponents. As support, Jewett states that Paul’s “being poured out as a libation” is a premonition of his execution.1365 Importantly, the Philippians are central participants in this cultic activity. If the suffering Paul is the libation, they are – through their suffering and fidelity (τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν) – the “altar” upon which he is poured.

Given the context of the interlaced persecution which Paul and his recipients underwent (1:27-2:1), their “sacrifice and offering” should also be understood as including physical suffering. This impression is strengthened when the obedient death of Christ (Phil 2:5-11) is made the narrative which motivates, amongst other rhetorical concerns, their persistence in the face of their suffering.1366 Looking at Paul’s wider usage of cultic terminology, Candida Moss suggests that “[f]or Paul, communal meals, evangelization, and personal suffering could all be reconfigured as sacrificial activities.”1367

I do not wish to imply that physical death and suffering are the only things Paul has in mind when he uses θυσία in Rom 12:1. I am merely arguing that it is a vital

1364 For example, in Rom 15:16, he is “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” (cf. 2 Cor 2:14-16). In Phil 4:18, the Philippians’ gifts are deemed “a fragrant offering, a sacrifice (θυσία) acceptable and pleasing to God.”
1365 Jewett, Terms, 301-02.
1367 The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 81. Cf. Stephan Finlan: “Paul can turn to cultic models to express an apostle’s self-giving behavior and endurance of suffering, the holy character of Christians, foretastes of further experiences with the Spirit, and numerous other things.” Atonement Metaphors, 162 (italics added).
ennobling of the bodily suffering of his hearers. In keeping with my argument that Paul is offering paraklēsis (comfort) to those who are familiar with degrading somatic treatment and its social connotations, I have attempted to bring this element of the concept to the fore.

One final point should be made here. Throughout the epistle, Paul qualifies “body” with references to its enthrallment or degradation. The body is subject to Death or to Sin, for example. As I have already argued, Sin is a conditioning power which produces discrete actions of sinning resulting in death (Rom 6:23). Similarly, Death is a ruling power which produces death in the embodied person. Thus Rom 6:12 refers to Sin “exercising dominion in your mortal bodies (ἐν τῷ θητείῳ ὑμῶν σώματι).” Having “mortal bodies” means that their bodies are subject to the power of Death – they are dying.

The violence and deprivation that marked their daily lives is an expression of Death working toward its final goal. The body is the person’s concrete entanglement in this world of decay from which he or she needs rescue: “Who will rescue me from this body of death (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου)?” (7:24). In 8:10, Paul states: “The body is dead because of sin (τὸ ... σῶμα νεκρῶν διὰ ἀμαρτίαν), the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” The NIV nicely captures the first clause with “your body is subject to death because of sin.”

Human enthrallment to Sin and Death, therefore, finds its unavoidable expression in the death-prone nature of the body. When Paul speaks of the body being a sacrifice, we are cued to hear it as a reference to the body-as-prone-to-Sin-and-Death. The death-prone aspect of the Christ-follower, the body, has its deterioration construed as sacrificial.

Paul is therefore encouraging the saints to maintain their allegiance to their new theological identity despite their ongoing subjection to Sin and Death and the degrading bodily treatment through which these forces manifest their power. It could even be that

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1368 Other key instances in the epistle are 6:6: crucifixion with Christ occurs “so that the body of sin might be destroyed (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας).” The body is enslaved by Sin. At 8:11, future redemption will involve God giving “life to your mortal bodies (τὰ θητεῖα σώματα ὑμῶν).” Again, these are bodies subject to Death’s hegemony. Human deliverance, as the vanguard of cosmic renewal, is later portrayed as “the redemption of our bodies” from the universal power of Death (8:23).

1369 Gupta has also highlighted this aspect of Paul’s “body” language in the epistle: “All along in Romans, Paul has depicted the physical body as under the sway of Sin.” He observes too that the mortality of the body is part and parcel of human enslavement to Sin and Death. “What ‘Mercies of God’? Oiktirmos in Romans 12:1 Against its Septuagintal Background,” Bulletin for Biblical Research 22/1 (2012): 93. Gupta notes that it is therefore important not to generalize “body” to mean person. He refers with reference to Abraham (Rom 4:19) that the body is the “good-as-dead” body.
for Paul, and his low social status hearers, bodily degradation was *the* challenge to faith in God as cosmic restorer (as I will argue Abraham’s bodily decay was for his faith).

Whether their bodily deterioration was a direct result of the violent “dishonoring of their bodies” – as I argued in relation to Rom 1:24 – or more simply related to the deprivations of poverty and low-status which marked the first-century world, Paul calls for an ongoing fidelity to God. God as redeemer and creator will establish the cosmos and the body in a state of flourishing.

D. Embodied Faith(fulness) as Cultic Service

I wish to examine now the way in which Paul makes obedience – framed in terms of *bodily* cost – an essential element of cultic identity or worshiping God. In other words, faith(ful) living *is* cultic worship; worship *is* obedience. “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice … your reasonable worship” (= cultic imagery, 12:1) is restated as discerning or enacting “the will of God” (= obedience, v.2). I submit that for the Christ-followers this meant that their faithfulness in the face of the ubiquitous bodily suffering of their lives was being lauded as a cultic contribution. Given the cultural formula that high social status correlates with exemption from violence, they must endure their current circumstances by overcoming the challenge which their bodily state posed to their in-group identity. The conceptualization of bodily deterioration as “sacrifice” is a powerful live metaphor designed to support their living with the incongruence between their Pauline and quotidian statuses.

This very concrete reading of the somatic sacrifice in Rom 12:1 is confirmed by the two exemplars of *pistis* or obedience who stand out in the letter: (predominantly) Christ, and also Abraham. Both men overcame the hurdle to *pistis* posed by their bodily suffering (Christ) or bodily corruption (Abraham). The bodily suffering of each man is cultically construed – they both please God through their costly fidelity.

i. Christ’s Obedience as Cultic Phenomenon

Paul understands Christ’s presentation of his body as simultaneously an act of obedience and a cultic oblation. Christ’s death being a “*hilastērion*, through [his] faith, by his blood” (Rom 3:25) depicts Christ’s “sacrifice” as an act of supreme *pistis* that endured in
His culminating act of obedience—his death on the cross—is metaphorically presented by Paul as a sacrifice. Van Henten argues that the linkage between *hilastērion*, blood and *pistis*—found in the martyr accounts of both 2nd and 4th Maccabees and in Rom 3:25—means that “πίστις probably refers to the faithfulness of the martyr until death.”

Although the background and meaning of Christ as *hilastērion* is highly contested, my preference is to read ἱλαστήριον against the background of 4 Macc 17:22, where the bloody deaths of Israel’s righteous martyrs restored divine favor to the disobedient nation: “Through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice (τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῶν), divine Providence preserved Israel.” As Van Henten comments, “[w]ithin the LXX 4 Macc. 17.22 is by far the closest parallel to Rom. 3.25, because it is the only passage which refers to an expiation by the death of human beings.”

This reading meshes with the subjective reading of the “pistis Christou” debate. As Luke Timothy Johnson argues, that Jesus is the “hilastērion by faith in/through his...

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1370 That Christ’s death is here being presented as sacrificial is widely agreed (Dunn, *Romans*, 1.171; Sanders, *Paul*, 127). Finlan states that “the biblical ἱλαστήριον is the geographic center of the whole sacrificial cult (referring to the mercy seat) and... the metaphorical usage of ἱλαστήριον in connection with other clues of a cultic setting signifies a sacrificial metaphor” (*Atonement Metaphors*, 201). The reference to blood is the cultic ingredient which depicts the deaths of both Christ and the Maccabean martyrs in cultic terms (Ibid.). However, there are scholars who reject the sacrificial notion associated with *hilastērion*; see Ibid. 200, 207; also Stowers, for whom the reference to Christ’s “blood” in Rom 3:25 simply means his death without cultic overtones. *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 210. I will discuss the subjective genitive reading of the *pistis* reference shortly.


1372 That Christ’s death is here being presented as sacrificial is widely agreed (Dunn, *Romans*, 1.171; Sanders, *Paul*, 127). Finlan states that “the biblical ἱλαστήριον is the geographic center of the whole sacrificial cult (referring to the mercy seat) and... the metaphorical usage of ἱλαστήριον in connection with other clues of a cultic setting signifies a sacrificial metaphor” (*Atonement Metaphors*, 201). The reference to blood is the cultic ingredient which depicts the deaths of both Christ and the Maccabean martyrs in cultic terms (Ibid.). However, there are scholars who reject the sacrificial notion associated with *hilastērion*; see Ibid. 200, 207; also Stowers, for whom the reference to Christ’s “blood” in Rom 3:25 simply means his death without cultic overtones. *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 210. I will discuss the subjective genitive reading of the *pistis* reference shortly.


1374 The common opposing view that *hilastērion* refers to the covering on the ark in the Holy of Holies, and thus that Christ is now the place of atonement, assumes that Christ’s sacrifice replaces the temple system. See Stowers, who rejects this “supercessionism” view (*Romans*, 209-13). I have argued that such a termination of the cult is a post-70 CE anachronism that would not have existed in Paul’s thought.

1375 Background of Romans 3.25,” 107. Stowers makes much the same point, noting the ubiquity in Greco-Roman culture of the noble death tradition formulated in terms of such and such “dying on behalf of x” (either a city, for others or for an ideal (*Romans*, 211). Moreover, he comments (Ibid.) that the Maccabean literature is the background of Rom 3:25 because, apart from this single exception, “…the traditions of ancient Israel and Judaism in the second temple period lack the idea that a person could vicariously atone for others.”
blood” refers to the faithfulness or pistis of Jesus himself. As with the righteous Maccabean martyrs, Christ’s death conciliates the deity and is itself made possible by the exemplary human attitude of Jesus: he gives himself up for others as an act of pistis. Thus, Johnson comments: “The faith of Jesus and the pouring out of his blood, together, form the act of expiation.” Finlan reaches much the same conclusion: “The key factor that gives reconciling power to the deaths is the obedience of Jesus or the martyrs … Obedience amounts to ‘a perfect sacrifice.’

We reach what I think is a crucial insight from Finlan: the martyrlogical interpretation is the basic model for Paul’s soteriology, which is expressed using a variety of metaphors, including the cultic. This is strengthened by Van Henten’s observation, similar to the one I had already detected in Paul, that the Maccabean martyr accounts associate the hilastērion word-group with pistis terminology and with blood. That a martyr’s death is an embodiment of pistis or obedience (which is also how Jesus’ death is nuanced in Rom 5:12-21) is integral to constructing bodily suffering as a cultic phenomenon. After commenting on how Abraham’s exemplary faith is similarly an overcoming of bodily deterioration, I will go on to show that the saints were expected to model both Jesus’ and Abraham’s fidelity in the face of bodily suffering.

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1375 “Rom 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 44/1 (Jan, 1982): 79. For a recent summary of the vast literature on the pistis Christou debate, see Matthew C. Easter, “The Pistis Christou Debate: Main Arguments and Responses in Summary,” Currents in Biblical Research 9 (2010): 33-47. Easter concludes: “Both interpretations have their challenges, and neither can win the day on the basis of grammatical or immediate contextual arguments.” The real debate is “over the larger reading of Paul’s theology” (44). The point which I am working towards is that Christology should consider Christ as one whose pistis is paradigmatic for others to imitate. I will develop this shortly by noting how the early martyrlogies of the Church construed the saint’s death as an imitation of Christ’s (that is, there existed great diversity as to how Christ’s death had atoning value).

1376 Van Henten notes that in 4th Maccabees the virtue embodied by the martyrs’ steadfastness is εἰσοδέξια. He views this, though, as merely a synonym for πίστεις. In any case, there are two places where πίστεις and πιστεύω are applied to the martyrs (7:21; 17:2) (“Background of Romans 3.25,” 125).

1377 Ibid. 80. Thompson also notes that his contention that the sacrifice of Christ stands as a paradigm for the saint’s somatic sacrifice is reinforced by the subjective reading (Clothed with Christ, 83, n. 2).

1378 Atonement Metaphors, 204 (emphasis his). Finlan has taken the idea from David A. deSilva, 4 Maccabees (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 144. Moss views the Philippian hymn as calling the faithful to imitate Christ in terms of undergoing suffering. She views Christ’s obedience to death as the nub of the hymn, noting: “Christ’s obedience became the supreme example for the believer and was even the model for martyrdom.” Other Christs, 25-26.

1379 “In some ways, martyrdom may be the most fundamental of Paul’s models for interpreting the death of Christ. But it is hardly a separate image for Paul, since its meaning is conveyed through the sacrificial, scapegoat, and redemption metaphors … it may be the most fundamental of Paul’s concepts, but its meaning requires the usage of metaphors from the cultic and social realms.” Atonement Metaphors, 193 (his italics).

1380 “Background of Rom 3:25,” 126. While being less than fully confident in Van Henten’s conclusions, Finlan agrees that the ideas are common in both Paul and the Maccabean works (Atoning Metaphors, 206).
ii. Abraham's Pistis as Laudable for Overcoming Bodily Deterioration

In a similar manner to Christ, Abraham’s exemplary pistis had to hurdle the challenge posed to it by his bodily decay. Whereas Christ’s obedience climaxed in his submission to bodily violence, Abraham’s faith was tested by the weakness of his bodily condition. Abraham’s pistis has the nuance of “unwavering reliance on God’s promise.” He clung to God’s promise of supernatural progeny even though “his body … was already as good as dead” and Sarah was barren (Rom 4:18). Paul is specific that it is his (and Sarah’s) bodily decay which ought to have derailed Abraham’s confidence in God as Creator and promise-keeper. In Paul’s version, though, Abraham knows God’s power as Creator. For Abraham, God is the God “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (4:17). God is trusted to bring about a humanly impossible outcome which will require the dynamic revivifying of Abraham’s death-seized body (“his own body was already as good as dead,” 4:19).

This is a variation of the idea that bodily degradation would normally be an impediment to faith, which Paul seeks to alleviate in Rom 12:1. There the body’s deterioration is reframed as a sacrificial process: it happens within God’s control. The body may be decaying under either direct violence (per Christ’s faithful bodily self-giving) or under the generalized control of death and decay (per Abraham’s situation). Whatever the source of the body’s deterioration, faith responds by construing the faith-eroding testimony of the body in the light of God’s power to actualize the saint’s embodied participation in the new creation (Rom 8:23).

It may be countered that my emphasis on the active faithfulness of Christ’s pistis is absent from the description of Abraham’s faith. The contrast between working and having faith to achieve a right relationship with God in Rom 4:4 does indeed emphasize that “naked trust” is basic to Paul’s understanding of pistis. With Dunn, we can say that in context Paul is affirming that “covenant fidelity” is not the basis for being made righteous before God. Nevertheless, I see no reason why the wider meaning of pistis as faithfulness should be elided when chapter 4 is taken as as a whole. As Dunn notes,
Abraham’s faith is a clinging to the divine promise, or a “total dependence on God.”\textsuperscript{1386} Paul naturally returns to the way faith is manifested in tenacity. This clinging to the divine word is precisely that “obedience of faith” (1:5) which Paul had made programmatic at the outset of his letter.

I further wish to argue that Abraham’s \textit{pistis} should be viewed in cultic terms. I realize that commentators do not tend to see Paul as characterizing Abraham’s faith in these terms. Nevertheless, just as I have argued that Christ’s and the saints’ faith is fundamentally cultic (Rom 12:1-2), so too do I see Abraham’s faith portrayed as right worship. In this sense it is cultic: Abraham, as \textit{pistis}-exemplar, clearly participates in the re-establishment of divine \textit{latreia} which was corrupted in Rom 1:18-32. By his clinging faith, Abraham “gave glory to God” (4:20), precisely the cultic activity which humanity had spurned in chapter 1.\textsuperscript{1387} Abraham’s faith is a cultic/worshiping activity; it issues in a tenacity which is the essence of fidelity, and it conquers the blatant hurdle to perceiving of God as Creator, viz., the death-gripped condition of the body.

\textit{iii. Believers’ Bodily “Sacrifice” as Mimesis of Jesus (and Abraham)}

Paul utilizes the narratives of primarily Jesus’ \textit{pistis} and also Abraham’s to inspire the worshiping obedience of his hearers. Regarding Abraham’s example, I simply refer to the way in which the saints are described as those who share in the Abrahamic promise because they “share the faith of Abraham” (Rom 4:16). Literally, they are those “ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (out of the faith of Abraham).” Stowers renders this: “Abraham’s faithfulness was the basis for a covenant in which all of his descendants live.”\textsuperscript{1388} As those who “follow the example of the faith” of Abraham which Paul calls for, the saints were to demonstrate a trust in God which overcomes the already-dead and deteriorating nature of the body. In embodying such faith they, like Abraham, offer fitting glory or worship to God.

More importantly, the saints are to model the faithfulness which Jesus showed in his obedient death. I suggest that Christ’s death as sacrifice stands behind the conception of “sacrifice” which Paul calls for. Thus I paraphrase Rom 12:1-2 with “present your

\textsuperscript{1387} \textit{Ibid.} 1.237.
\textsuperscript{1388} “The echo of chap. 1 is deliberate … Abraham is now clearly to be seen as the model of the proper creature.” (Dunn, \textit{Romans}, 1.238). He is “the opposite of the ungrateful pagan of 1:21, 23” (Fitzmyer, \textit{Romans}, 388).
\textsuperscript{1388} \textit{Romans}, 202.
bodies (to God) a sacrifice (in imitation of Christ’s bodily self-giving) … this is your reasonable worship … this is your enactment of the divine will.” They implement the divine will through the offering of their bodies just as Christ did; they follow the one whose pistis and obedience was exemplary. As with the Maccabean martyrs, it is Christ’s obedience – which I suggest is encapsulated in the pistis Christou phrase – that makes his death worthy of sacrificial explication.\textsuperscript{1389}

It is Christ’s willingness to be obedient to the divine will to the point of death that Paul uses to motivate the Christ-followers to present their own bodies as sacrifices, regardless of the physical violence this might incur.\textsuperscript{1390} The prospect of physical assault was certainly part of Paul’s cultic service in his gospel ministry, and it is likewise an imminent threat and reality for his hearers. Paul refers to the “hardship … distress … persecution … [and] sword” which threaten the Christ-followers; they are “accounted as sheep to be slaughtered” (Rom 8:35-36). Thompson is right to observe that “[t]he giving up of Jesus’ body as a sacrifice for the sake of others (1 Cor. 11.24) … provides the archetype for Christian self-offering in Rom. 12.1.”\textsuperscript{1391}

Further, as I have already suggested, Paul’s affixing of the adjective “living” in order to immediately qualify their somatic sacrifice makes sense if “sacrifice” sounded the note of bodily deterioration for the first hearers. Despite the decay and violence they experienced in their bodies, life is their inheritance because of God’s faithfulness as creator and their participation in the resurrection life of Christ (Rom 6:3-4).\textsuperscript{1392}

\textsuperscript{1389} Again, see Finlan, \textit{Atoning Metaphors}, 204.
\textsuperscript{1390} Cf. Finlan’s comment that in \textit{Fourth Maccabees} the martyrs conquered the tyranny of Antiochus (8:15; 9:30), and “[s]o also do Christ and his followers conquer, despite, or perhaps because of, their acceptance of violence against themselves” (\textit{Atoning Metaphors}, 203).
\textsuperscript{1391} \textit{Clothed with Christ}, 83. Interestingly, Käsemann informs us that the admonitions of Romans 12:1-15:13 are an example of “Christian exhortation [that] deals with what is required only by way of example” (\textit{Romans}, 325). He notes that the call to mutual acceptance in 14:1-15:13 is based on “a christological foundation” (i.e., 15:7: “welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you”). He further notes that 12:1-2 is answered by 13:8-14, forming a unit. From these comments, we should see Christ’s example of welcoming the dishonorable (15:7) and fulfilling Torah’s injunction to “love your neighbor” (13:8-10) as a call to the mimesis of Christ. Accordingly, the call to offer one’s body as a sacrifice, itself pleasing to God and constitutive of appropriate λατρεία, should be seen as launching from Christ’s somatically costly precedent.
\textsuperscript{1392} Commentators routinely point out that the living nature of the sacrifice refers back to the divinely bestowed life they share in Christ. Cranfield refers to this living quality as being in “the deep, theological sense” of Rom 6:4 (\textit{Romans}, 2.600; cf. Dunn, \textit{Romans}, 2.710; Wilckens, \textit{Römer}, 3.4). What is missed is that the stress on the body’s certain life is, as so often in Paul, in dialogical tension with its present mortality. Thus, “we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (future tense, Rom 6:5); but as for now, despite all the affirmations of possessing divine life, the saints remain in death’s grip. 2 Cor 4:8-11 expresses the same tension; so v. 11: “… we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.” In Rom 12:1, Paul is likewise affirming that eschatological life is the future of the body, despite its present deterioration as a “sacrifice.”
Finally, it is noteworthy that the martyrologies generated by the early Church used a martyrological lens for construing Christ’s death. The scholarly consensus seems to be that the early Church viewed Christ’s death as a sacrifice which they could replicate through martyrdom. Hendrik Bakker summarizes the majority view of scholarship: “Ignatius viewed his death as a sacrifice that augmented Jesus’ death. Because Ignatius’ identity appeared, therefore, to join with Jesus’, and because he saw himself as a ‘scapegoat’ and a ‘ransom,’ his death has salvific significance. Consequently, the bishop comes to occupy an ambitious position that rivals Jesus.”

Candida Moss confirms the early Christians’ association of their own bodily suffering as imitative of Christ’s death. In her study of martyrdom in the early centuries, she attests that “the predominant model for explaining the function and purpose of the martyrs’ death is one of sacrifice.” She notes of Ignatius, for example, that “he viewed his death in sacrificial terms because this was the lens through which he interpreted the significance of the death of Christ.”

This section has sought to show that Paul viewed pistis as finding a crowning expression in an obedience to God which could look past the deterioration of the body. In the case of Abraham, his faith brought glory to God because it was tenacious to the point of ignoring the reality of his and Sarah’s bodily subjection to death and decay. In the case of Christ, his explicitly sacrificial death (Rom 3:25) is also that of an obedient martyr. As such, his willingness to suffer bodily violence models a paradigmatic degree of fidelity to the divine will which stands behind Paul’s call to the believers to be ready to

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1393 Hendrik Adrianus Bakker, Exemplar Domini: Ignatius of Antioch and his Martyrological Self-Concept (Groningen: University of Groningen, 2003), 189. Alexander N. Kirk, who disagrees with the majority viewpoint, catalogues an array of other scholars who support Bakker’s position that Ignatius understood his death to be “an atoning sacrifice for sin” or “to substitute for those to whom he wrote.” “Ignatius’ Statements of Self-Sacrifice: Imitations of An Atoning Death or Expressions of Exemplary Sacrifice?,” Journal of Theological Studies 64/1 (2013): 67-68. For Kirk, Ignatius is not seeking to copy Christ’s death but Paul’s example.

1394 Other Christs, 83.

1395 Ibid. Although I have thus far only adduced evidence regarding Ignatius’ self-concept, Moss can be referred to for evidence of “…the preponderance of sacrificial language and the breadth of its usage in the literature and liturgy of the early church” (Ibid. 83). In addition to Ignatius’ letters, she refers to the sacrificial conception of martyrdom in the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and Cyprian and Origen’s writings (Ibid. 83-84). Carol Straw informs us that Gregory the Great (d. 604 C.E.) considered Christian suffering as sacrificial, whether it was a literal physical martyrdom or ascetic struggling against evil. For him, believers needed “…to reciprocate the suffering and sacrifice Christ offered for their redemption.” “Martyrdom and Christian Identity: Gregory I and Tradition,” in The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus, eds. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 253-54. Gregory’s view is set in sharp contrast to Augustine’s, whose antithesis between (divine) grace and (human) faith combined with his seeing Christ’s death as sui generis (Ibid.).
suffer violence and to construe this, counterculturally, in the honorable terms of cultic sacrifice. Paul’s own bodily suffering – amongst the other facets of his apostolic activity – is likewise portrayed under the rubric of priestly service. Accordingly, I suggest that when we hear Paul call the saints to “present [their] bodies as a sacrifice” we hear them being called to a worshiping obedience which views physical deterioration and violence as cultic self-offering.

3. The Sacral Σώμα: Reconstructed Embodiment and Cultic Identity

In this section I will develop my thesis that Paul’s construction of his hearers’ bodies as a holy sacrifice does two things: firstly, it confers an identity of high status; secondly, it subverts their degraded status. A basic assumption for my thesis is that identity in the first century context was primarily embodied identity. Dupont’s statement is therefore foundational: “The Roman citizen consisted of a name and a body … The body of a citizen was the man himself, the ‘embodiment’ of the truth about him.”1396 Ideally, the honorable status of the Roman citizen was displayed in his or her appearance and was protected from physical and sexual assault. At the other end of the social continuum, the slave body was without honor and so open to all manner of degrading treatment.

Important too is the way in which Roman society mapped its conception of sacrality onto elite status. Those who acted as religio-political agents – the priests and priestesses, the Emperor and other ruling males, and Roman matrons – were discussed in the exclusive terms of holiness and chastity. It was they who safeguarded the cosmic order as representatives of the deities. The slave body, in contrast, was considered inherently dangerous and prone to bringing social disruption and pollution. In my section on “The Sacral Corpus” I found that for those of servile status, attaining “sacral” status was possible through being made “sacred” to the infernal deities as a death sentence during a Roman spectacle of aggravated death.

My concern to this point in examining the Pauline body in the Epistle to the Romans has been to argue that he was aware of the social status of many of his hearers and the bodily suffering and humiliation this entailed. A critical point has been that around two-thirds of his hearers were probably either slaves or of slave origin. I have argued that his description of Greco-Roman society as one which “dishonors the body”

1396 Ancient Rome, 240-41.
(Rom 1:24) carries a condemnation of the abuse which slaves and other low-status members of society experienced at the hands of their superiors.

A foundational assumption for my thesis is that the Epistle to the Romans should be read in the light of Greco-Roman society’s construction of identity based on the semiotics of the body. In terms of gender analysis, this is seen in the way the ideal man was an active body. He used force to maintain the bodies of his subordinates in their inferior role. The passive body, in contrast, refers to those bodies who were the object of power. They were subject to the shameful treatment of sexual and physical violence and were characterized, regardless of their gender, as feminine, servile and animal.

The concept that corporal habituation shapes identity has guided this study. That is, one knows one’s social place in and through one’s bodily conditioning. The slave conditioned by violence – whether overtly physical or that of social exclusion through natal alienation – embodied or displayed his or her status through mannerisms, appearance, bearing and bodily scars. It is of great importance that Paul, by characterizing the body, impacts the core of identity formation. Much of the time, however, I detect that Paul is conducting a “rear-guard action.” His vision of his and his hearers’ exalted identity is in constant dialogical tension with the reality of their physically humiliating experiences.

I have also argued that Paul’s framing of Romans 12:1 and following as paraklēsis bespoke his sensitivity in this regard, because the term often bears the implication of compassionate encouragement towards those who are suffering. I have contended that physical deterioration should be seen as basic to Paul’s call for the body to be offered as a “sacrifice.” In what follows, I will move from Paul sympathetically portraying his awareness of the Christ-followers’ bodily suffering to the positive terminology he uses to characterize their bodies. It is of great importance to this thesis that it is the body – the very aspect of their selves which socially sealed their dishonorable status – that Paul emphasizes as “sacral.” Paul’s call for them to “offer their bodies a sacrifice that is living, holy and pleasing to God” is a conferral of extremely high status. They were to know themselves as “sacral” bodies, as cultic agents who brought pleasure to God. This new mode of self-imagining was radically opposed to the narrative of stratified human worth which sustained hierarchical Greco-Roman society.

In what follows, I will argue that Paul confers a high social status on his hearers by characterizing the saints’ bodies in sacral terminology in Rom 12:1-2. Here I will offer a synthesis of the way those in Christ are characterized as being “holy ones” who
“serve” God and offer God latreia (worship). In the light of the OT and LXX, the saints are being called to an identity as worshipers, which I view as a leit-motif in the epistle. This holy/cultic identity defines them as belonging exclusively to God qua bodily beings. This has profound implications for their sense of bodily worth. Secondly, I will consider the role of this new construal of their bodies as holy and how this imagery conflicts with the dominant social interpretation of low-status bodies. Paul’s identification of the saints would have sustained them in the face of the incongruence between their “in-Christ” identity and their daily lives.

A. The Sacralized Body and Status: Holiness as Embodied Identity

Paul’s description of the saints’ bodies as sacral phenomena – “present your bodies as a sacrifice living, holy (ἁγι,აν) and well-pleasing to God (Rom 12:1, my trans.) identifies them as having high status. I wish to focus particularly on the adjective “holy.” Jewett is correct that the term “holy” describes “the sacrifice as set apart from the profane realm for the sole purpose of God.” However, he follows the scholarly trend of shifting attention to the nature of the sacrifice, which obscures the fact that in characterizing the sacrifice Paul is still characterizing the body. Moo explicitly denies that Paul is discussing the body with the three adjectives. None of the commentators I have reviewed keep the focus of the description on bodies being “living, holy and pleasing;” their attention shifts to the nature of the sacrifice.

With the subtle shift of attention to “sacrifice,” the way in which Paul is sacralizing the bodies of his hearers is missed. So Jewett’s identification of the sacrifice as “holy” and thus devoted to God fails to recognize that it is the bodies of the saints which are being thereby claimed as exclusively God’s property. I suggest that commentators are not seeing the bigger conceptual picture, which is that the hearers’ embodied selves are being claimed by God and are made intrinsic to their cultic identity. This is in keeping with the theological reading of the body employed in most of the literature, which overlooks the social significance of embodied identity in the first

1397 It is important to note that the typical EV’s (e.g., NRSV, NIV, NJB) “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” wrongly emphasize “living” (Moo, Romans, 751; Jewett, Romans, 729). All three epithets follow “sacrifice” in the Greek text, such that “living” has a theological meaning more akin to “holy” and “pleasing to God” than being an attack on the dead animals offered in the Jewish cultus (cf. Cranfield, Romans, 2.600; pace Jewett, Romans, 729). The saint may offer his or her body confident that it is embued with the resurrection life of Jesus (e.g., Rom 6:8, 11).

1398 Romans, 729.

1399 Romans, 751.
century. This sacral significance of their bodies is further characterized by Paul by its offering being a "λογικήν λατρείαν," i.e., "reasonable worship." The body is essential to the saints enacting their holy status and offering right cult to God.

At a broader level, Romans is arguably about God restoring humanity to right worshiping relations with Godself. Several conceptual domains overlap with that of worship to support this observation, viz., holiness, purity, faithfulness and obedience. Together, I take these to constitute Paul’s vision of humans being restored as worshiping or cultic agents. Again, with “cultic” I refer to human activity which is understood to please God or conform with the divine will. Clearly this is an extension of what scholars typically define as the literal cultus – the rituals of sacrifice occurring at the Jerusalem or pagan temples. My preference is to refer to the “cultic” identity of Paul’s hearers in terms of Paul’s own terminology by using the word latreia: they are latreic agents. They perform the activity of bringing latreia to God. With this transliteration of the Greek, we can refer to the broad range of human activity that Paul conceives as worshiping activity.

Grasping the latreic aspect of the saints’ identity provides striking evidence for the manner in which Paul negotiates their “in-Christ” identity in terms of continuity with Jewish identity. Basic to the Judaized elements of their new identity is the cultic demands which now constrain their Gentile identities. In this regard, Fredriksen insightfully comments, “[Paul’s] pagans, through Christ, have moved from wrong ritual – the worship of idols – to right ritual, the worship of the true god. They are thus fit for intimate contact with the divine.” The notion of being “fit for contact” refers to the holy status possessed by those who perform latreia. It is this broad rubric of latreic identity which grasps the various threads of identification that Paul uses regarding his hearers.

Holy and latreic identity go hand in hand throughout the letter. Paul’s hearers are described as saints and as those who offer fitting worship. This identity as those who live in the divine presence and who cultivate the divine places the bodily aspect of their

1400 For a discussion of λογικός as “reasonable worship,” see Jewett, Romans, 730.
1401 Coleman A. Baker provides a discussion of Social Identity Theory as it applies to Biblical studies. He notes that an important aspect of this theory is that various aspects of identity are included under a “superordinate identity.” “Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation,” Biblical Theology Bulletin 42/3 (2012): 130. Esler applies the theory to the fractitious Roman house churches. He sees the superordinate identity as that of being in Christ, with Judean and non-Judean identities still being preserved (“Social Identity,” 54). However, I maintain that the Jewish quality of the superordinate identity should be strongly emphasized. Even if they are not to be circumcised, and so remain “gentiles,” they are still absolutely debarred from idolatry. Being “in-Christ” is being “in the Jewish Messiah.”
1402 “Judaizing the Nations,” 249.
personal lives under strict conditions. Commenting on the first reference to the recipients of the letter as *hagioi* (Rom 1:7), Dunn says that “ἀγίοις derives its sense of ‘set apart from everyday use, dedicated to God’ *principally from the cult.*”¹⁴⁰³ This status results from the divine call – they are “κλητοί ἀγίοις (saints by virtue of having been called)”¹⁴⁰⁴ – and thus they are marked off, separated for God’s service by “the personal will of God.”¹⁴⁰⁵ Fitzmyer also captures the worshiping role essential to the “holy ones.” “*Hagios* has to be understood in its OT sense, ‘dedicated, consecrated,’ i.e., separated from the profane aspects of life *for an encounter with the awesome presence of God…* it is a description of persons, places, and objects *reserved for the awesome cult of Yahweh.*”¹⁴⁰⁶

i. *Holiness and Cultic Identity in the OT: Embodied Exclusivity*

Holy status, cultic identity and the constraints this puts on bodily life are basic to the OT identification of Israel.¹⁴⁰⁷ Thus Leviticus 19:2 (occurring within the so-called Holiness Code of chapters 17-26) declares (LXX): “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy (ἁγιοί), for I the LORD your God am holy (ἁγῖος).” The nature of “holy” living is expounded in the surrounding material. *Ritual* duties abound: shun idolatry and offer acceptable sacrifices (19:4-8). Moral behavior is also catalogued: leave harvest gleanings for the needy (19:9-10) and do not steal (v. 11). Famously, Leviticus 19:18 expounds on holiness with “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (cf. Rom 13:8-10).

I have italicized the *ritual* outworkings of holy status in order to emphasize that in the Jewish worldview it would be imprecise to use the term *cultic* as a synonym. Using “cultic” instead of “ritual” would wrongly imply that the moral code that befits holy status is somehow outside the domain of the cultic. All sanctioned activity, be it temple and sacrifice related, or the ethical behavior that accords with Yahweh’s character, is

¹⁴⁰³ Romans, 1.19 (italics added). Later, he observes that by being addressed as “God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints;” they are being “numbered with Israel … embraced within a specially cherished relationship with the God of Israel … called to be set apart, summoned and consecrated to the service of God.” *Ibid.* 1.25.
¹⁴⁰⁴ Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.69.
¹⁴⁰⁶ Romans, 239 (italics added).
¹⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 70; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 239. Dunn notes, with reference to Leviticus 20:22-26, that Israel’s holiness was to be manifest in the keeping of Torah. I will develop this shortly. For Paul, Gentile “holy ones” are to fulfill Torah as refracted through the love commandment (Rom 13:8-10); in other words, they are to implement the “will of God” (Rom 12:2).
All sanctioned activity is *latreia*; the whole of Israel’s life was to be an implementation of the divine will – a serving or worshiping of her God.

In the OT a basic Hebrew term for worshiping or serving Yahweh is פָּרָשָׁה. As a verb it has the basic idea of working or serving another. With respect to God or foreign deities, it means to serve or offer worship. The noun means a slave or servant either of a household, a king, or of God as a worshiper.\(^{1408}\) The terminology is translated in the LXX with both δοῦλος/δουλεύω (slave/to serve as a slave) and λατρεύω/λατρεύω (service offered to the divine/serve).\(^{1409}\) My concern is to offer a synthetic reading of the פָּרָשָׁה/δουλ-/λαטְרָא- terminology that shows the exclusive claim which Yahweh had on Israel as holy worshipers/servers.

My point is that in the Biblical literature these concepts synthesize so that the whole of human life is seen as lived in obedience to God’s will. From the Jewish perspective, all of life should be service to God. *BDAG* approach this breadth in their gloss on λατρεύω as being to “serve, … the carrying out of religious duties.” However, they then restrict this to ritual service. It is especially those religious duties “of a cultic nature.”\(^{1410}\) The concept of פָּרָשָׁה reveals that the Jewish vision is for all of life to be a serving of God; ritual participation is merely one, profoundly important, expression thereof. This is the way in which I want to use the term “cultic” or *latreic*. It refers to the full range of human activity done out of reverence for God as conveyed by פָּרָשָׁה, δουλεύω and λατρεύω (amongst others).

Looking at the δουλ-renderings of פָּרָשָׁה to begin with, we find that Israel is called to “worship” or “serve” Yahweh.\(^{1411}\) The term is often used in a polemical context of worshiping Yahweh exclusively and not foreign gods.\(^{1412}\) Crucially, in view of Romans as a letter envisioning the nations worshiping Yahweh with Israel (Rom 15:9-12), the OT anticipates the nations “serving” God.\(^{1413}\) While this “serving” activity may have a tabernacle/Temple setting (e.g., Psa 99:2, LXX; Ezek 20:40), it often involves righteous behavior in obedience to God’s will or Torah. This accords with my broader conception

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\(^{1408}\) *BDB*, s.v. פָּרָשָׁה.

\(^{1409}\) *LSJ* (s.v. λατρεύω and λατρεύω) state that the terminology also refers to labor done for other humans. *BDAG* only discuss the meaning of religious service.

\(^{1410}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{1411}\) For the serving (δουλεύω from פָּרָשָׁה) of Yahweh, consider: 1 Sam 7:3; 12:10, 20; Psalms (LXX) including 21:31 and 99:23. In Malachi 3:18, the righteous man “serves” God.

\(^{1412}\) For example, Exod 23:33; Deut 28:64; Psalm 2:11.

\(^{1413}\) For example, Psalm 72:11 (LXX): “May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service (δουλεύουσιν αὐτῷ”). See also: Psalm 101:23 (LXX); Zeph 3:9; Isa 19:23; 56:6, 60:12.
of latreic activity. 1 Samuel 12:14 reads: “Fear the LORD and serve him (δουλεύσητε αὐτῷ) and heed his voice and [do] not rebel against the commandment of the LORD.” Malachi 3:14 makes much the same point, as the impious assert: “It is vain to serve God (δουλεύων θεῷ). What do we profit by keeping his command?” In other words, “serving” God consists as much of moral action as it does of ritual action. Inner attitude is also important for right serving (e.g., Isa 29:13; Sir 1:28, 2:2).

It is an honor to be designated an ἴδιος θεοῦ (‘ebed Yahweh) / δοῦλος κυρίου (slave of the LORD). The description is used of, for example, Israel (2 Macc 7:6; 7:33; 8:29), Joshua (Josh 24:30, LXX; Judg 2:8), and David (Psa 77:70, 89:3, LXX; 1 Macc 4:30). Moses too, as πρεσβύτερος, is “ὁ πατὴς κυρίου” (Josh 1:7, 13). All of these persons were, ideally, examples of serving God in the broad sense of implementing the divine will. The importance of the breadth of the δουλ- terminology is detected by Cranfield: “In the LXX δουλεύειν is in fact the commonest expression for the service of God in the sense of total allegiance and not just isolated acts of worship.”

The other word group which the LXX uses (seemingly interchangeably) to translate ἴδιος is λατρεύειν. Fundamentally, λατρ- terms convey the worshiping activity of the ‘ebed Yahweh. I would suggest that the division of the ‘ebed’s activity into the traditional areas of “cultic” (= ritual) and “moral” would not have been primary to either the OT or Paul’s thinking. Rather, all activity done out of a consciousness of God’s exclusive claim on human energy is worship, service or cult. Following Thompson, worship – or what I am calling latreic agency – is “the celebration of God in his supreme worth in such a manner that his ‘worthiness’ becomes the norm and the inspiration of human living.”

As with the δουλ- renderings of ἴδιος, the ritual acts of the literal cultus are a basic feature of latreic activity. Thus, for example, 2 Kings 17:35: “You [Israel] shall not worship other gods or bow yourselves down to them or serve them (οὗ λατρεύεσσατε αὑτοῖς) or sacrifice to them.” In effect, this amounts to obeying the first “half” of the Decalogue which requires the exclusive worship and honoring of Yahweh. In addition,

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1414 Romans, 50. Cranfield is commenting on the Jewish background (‘ebed Yahweh) to Paul’s self-designation as a δούλος Χριστοῦ (Rom 1:1), which I will discuss shortly.
1416 Josh 22:27 illustrates λατρ- terms with the activity of the cultus and sanctuary: “We do perform the service of the LORD (τοῦ λατρεύειν λατρείαν κυρίῳ) in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and offerings of well-being.” Cf. 2 Sam 15:8; 1 Esdras 1:4, 4:54; 1 Macc 1:43; Acts 7:42.
though, λατρεία-language seamlessly covers the moral and social correlates of sole allegiance to Yahweh. Following the second half of the Decalogue is basic to the ‘ebed Yahweh’s identity. So we find ἴπτω/λατρέω-terms explained in relation to keeping the commands of Torah. Joshua 22:5 is a good example of this: “Take good care to observe the commandment and instruction that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hold fast to him, and to serve him (λατρεύειν αὐτῷ) with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Deuteronomy 6:13 makes much the same point: “The LORD your God you shall fear; him you shall serve (αὐτῷ λατρεύεις), and by his name alone you shall swear.” The context makes it clear that this service is righteous behavior and exclusive worship: “Keep these words that I [Moses] am commanding you today in your heart” (v. 6), instruct the next generation to obey them (vv. 7-9), “diligently keep the commandments” (v. 17) and repudiate foreign deities” (v. 14, that is, maintain an exclusive cultus). Deuteronomy 6:13 is important too because it is cited by Jesus during his temptation (Matt 4:10, Luke 4:8). While the emphasis is on Jesus refusing to offer Satan latreia in the form of proskukinesis (bowing down to offer Satan allegiance), the element of rejecting the conduct desired by Satan is at hand (vv. 3-7).

Latreical identity, therefore, consists of the core commitment to focus all one’s energies on celebrating the supreme worth of God alone and living out the divine will in social relations. In the following illustrations, I will no longer specify whether the context fleshes out latreia in terms of “ritual” or “moral” activity; I hope that I have shown the concomitant nature of the two concepts. The ἴπτω/λατρεία- terms frequently demand all of the human’s energies – “all of the heart” (or similar) – to be focused on God alone for their fulfillment. Deut 10:12, for example, demands: “Serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul (λατρεύειν κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου)” (cf. Josh 22:5, cited above; Deut 28:47). To “serve” God with all one’s energies is clearly parallel to the ethical demands that flow from the Shema, viz., “love (ἀγαπής) the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut 6:5).

Latreical activity, then, demands the person’s entire energies and it does so to the utter exclusion of cultivating other deities. The ἴπτω/λατρεία-terminology is, along with δωλε- terms, often polemical: worship Yahweh alone and reject foreign gods. For
example, repeatedly in Judges the Israelites rejected Yahweh and “worshiped (ἐλάτρευσαν) the Baals” (e.g., 2:11, 13, 19). The competitive nature of the concept is also seen in Josh 24:15: “Now if you are unwilling to serve (λατρέειν) the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve (λατρεύῃτε), whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve (λατρεύσομεν) the LORD.”¹⁴¹⁷ The cultivation of a rival deity is apostasy from the worship of the true God and the worst form of failure to embody the ‘ebed or latreic identity.

Moreover, the latreic identity is closely linked with the holiness of both God and the worshiper. God is holy and demands to be treated as such. So Joshua warns the people that idolatry will debar them from worshipping God: “You cannot serve (λατρέειν) the LORD, for he is a holy God (θεὸς ἅγιος). He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins” (Josh 24:19). Because God is holy, God’s worshipers must be holy: “I am the LORD your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy (ἁγιασθήσεσθε καὶ ἁγιοί ἑσθε ὅτι ἁγιός εἰμι)” (cf. v. 45, 19:2, 20:7, 21:8; Psalms (LXX) 98:5, 9). My point is that in order to have access to God, to offer worship, the person must be “holy” – set apart from ritual and moral defilement. Both right worship and upright conduct are basic to maintaining latreic and holy identity.

Finally, Leviticus particularly stresses the embodied nature of holiness and levitical holiness, which arguably informs Paul’s calling of his hearers to holy living.¹⁴¹⁸ Robert A. Kugler describes the significance of holiness and purity terminology for the person qua body in Leviticus thus: “All of Leviticus expresses considerable concern regarding the bodily experience of impurity and its impact on the divine-human economy.”¹⁴¹⁹ Kugler provides support for my synthesis of ritual and moral activity as basic to an identity of holiness by noting that the so-called Holiness Code (Lev 17-26)

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¹⁴¹⁷ Other examples of the competitive nature of latreia are: Deut 13:3, 7, 13; Jdgs 2:11, cf. vv. 13, 19; 3:6, 7; 2 Kgs 17:12, 16, 17:33, 21:21.
combines these two aspects. He states: “Purity and impurity have become matters of the use of the human body, of law-keeping, of covenental observance.”

My point in this section has been that the Jewish background to Paul’s thought configures the identity of those who are exclusively claimed for the cultus of Yahweh as one of holiness. Ritual and moral activity is bound up in the implementation of this identity. In particular, I have tried to show that the ἱεροτευκισμός/λατρεία/δουλεία-terms create a worshipping identity which places the person as an embodied self under the exclusive claim of God. The person qua body is consecrated to God.

ii. Holiness and Cultic Identity in Romans: Embodied Exclusivity

Returning to the Epistle to the Romans, it is important to utilize the concept of latreic identity which is the fusion of (traditionally understood) “cultic” and “moral” categories. This is also what I mean when I use the term “cultic.” Paul crafts his letter in terms of humanity being restored to a right worshipping relationship with God, and this offering of right latreia encompasses the repudiation of idolatry/celebrating God’s exclusive worth and its moral outworkings, viz., obedience, (gentile-appropriate) fulfillment of Torah, righteousness and holiness.

The latreia demanded in the letter has this broad sense: it is both vertical and horizontal in its entailments. The insight of the OT survey I have done is that theologically both δουλεία- and λατρεία- terms capture the broad meaning of ἱεροτευκισμός: “to serve.” I would therefore argue that, with Paul’s opening self-identification of “Παύλος δουλεύων Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ” (Rom 1:1), we should hear him saying “I am an ‘ebed Yahweh, one who serves Christ, a worshiper of God.” Dunn concurs, commenting on the Jewish background to this verse: “The Jewish worshiper quite naturally thought of himself as God’s slave;” he goes on to observe that the expression echoes “Israel’s conviction that it had been chosen by the one God to be peculiarly and particularly his – Israel as belonging exclusively to Yahweh and none other.”

In turn, as I will discuss shortly, belonging

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1420 Ibid. 19. Kugler contrasts this with the notion of purity in Leviticus 1-16, in which impurity is the result of “entities touching or breaking the boundaries of the human body.” In chaps 17-26, however, impurity is the result of how the human body is used (Ibid. 20, cf. 26). The embodied nature of purity continued to hold force until at least the Rabbinic period. Eyal Regev observes: “Rabbinic Judaism put emphasis on the body as the very site of human existence… [they] defined the human being as an animated body.” “Pure Individualism: The Idea of Non-Priestly Purity in Ancient Judaism,” Journal for the Study of Judaism 31/1 (2000): 191.

1421 Romans, 1.7. Dunn points out the intimate linkage between Christ and God at work here that allows Paul to be an ‘ebed Yahweh by being a δουλος of Christ (= the Jewish Messiah) (Ibid. 7-8). Cranfield also
exclusively to God is basic to being “holy” or set apart to God’s service, which places a profound exclusivity on bodily life.

The other references to Paul or the saints as *douloi* can be usefully read as a formulation of worshiping or *latreic/cultic identity*. As God’s slaves they belong wholly to God and are exclusively to devote their energies to God’s pleasure. The competing object of devotion, in particular the anti-God lordship of Sin (chap 6), is to be rejected. They are not to worship, serve or cultivate Sin. It is clear that to be a slave of Sin is to belong to Sin (Rom 6:6, 18, 20). Having been freed from Sin, they now belong to God and implement the divine will. This is nicely summed in Rom 12:11: “Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord (τῷ Κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες).” Similarly, in 14:18, to restrict one’s freedom out of love for a fellow saint is to “serve Christ (δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ)” and thus be “acceptable to God (κατά τὲρστος τῷ θεῷ).”

By identifying the saints as “slaves of Christ,” of God, or of the divine will, Paul is characterizing them as ‘*ebed Yahweh* – as worshipers or servers of God. In serving God, they are embodying the θυελλ/δουλ-/λατρ-terminology of the OT/LXX. While I have suggested the term *latreic* to express this role, in my opinion the term “cultic” is also appropriate. All ritual (right worship) and moral conduct constitute the holy lifestyle demanded of the ‘*ebed Yahweh*.

The epistle’s emphasis on restoring humanity to right *latreic* relations with God is further seen in the λατρ-terms themselves. Paul develops his first self-designation, *doulos Christou* (Rom 1:1), by describing himself as “worshiping” or “serving” God.

notes that by being a *doulos Kuriou* Paul emphasizes “the total belongingness, total allegiance” of his person to God/Christ (Romans, 1.50-51); see also John Byron, “Paul and the Background of Slavery: The Status Quaestionis in New Testament Scholarship,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 3/1 (2004): 124. Others view Paul as claiming a “high-status” position akin to the servus Caesaris. Cf. Michael Joseph Brown, “Paul’s Use of ΔΟΥΛΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΗΙΣΟΥ in Romans 1:1,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120/4 (2001). I view this position as untenable, especially given its premise that the ‘*ebed Yahweh* background is less likely given a minimal Jewish presence within the Roman house-churches (Ibid. 730).

1422 In my next section, I will argue that Paul’s construction of his hearers as “slaves of God/righteousness” and not “slaves of Sin” needs to be heard with the ears of those who were literally slaves. I will suggest that Paul’s discourse calls those saints who were enslaved to a new reality in which their literal slavery is ignored. Thus Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:22: “Whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord.” Given his radical eschatological expectation, Paul literally views those whom the culture labels “slaves” as being freedpersons; they are the Lord’s property. Rendering the human acceptable, or better, “pleasing to God,” is a basic way of stating the burden of the epistle in terms of forming worshipers (cf. Rom 12:1). I note too that in 16:18, false teachers “do not serve (οὐ δουλεύοντες) our Lord Christ, but their own appetites.”

1423 For the *doulos Theou* as exclusive worshiper of Israel’s God, see 1 Thess 1:9: “You turned to God from idols, to serve (δουλεύειν) a living and true God.” In the previous verse, Paul had praised the Thessalonians’ “faithfulness/πίστεις in God,” viz., their obedience to Paul’s gospel. Paul moves seamlessly between obedience and exclusive worship as aspects of the wider rubric of “serving” God.
Thus, Rom 1:9: “I serve (λατρεύω) [God] with my spirit” by announcing the gospel. He views his apostolic work as an extension of Israel’s cultic worship. This is the most logical presumption regarding a Jewish apostle who views “the gifts and the calling of God [as] irrevocable” (Rom 11:29) and who announces Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. This conceiving of his preaching as cultic service accords well with my overview of ἔργα δούλων terms. God is honored by all service rendered in celebration of God’s supreme worth. Further, λατρεία as temple-worship is esteemed as one of Israel’s current blessings (Rom 9:4). On the other hand, a failure to offer λατρεία to God and instead “serve” created things is the essence of humanity’s apostasy (Rom 1:25) and the source of the social harm persons inflict on one another (Rom 1:18-32).

All this means that Paul’s description of the saints as slaves of Christ/obedient to God, or as those who offer right worship, is a variation on the same theme: they are cultic or λατρεικ agents. They are being co-opted into Israel’s identity of being ‘ebed Yahweh. I suggest that Paul’s demands for righteous behavior and faith(fulness) – the obedience of faith (1:5; cf. 15:18) – are part and parcel of his desire to transform Gentiles into right worshipers of God. In this connection, I repeat my earlier statement that Christ should be viewed as the cultic agent par excellence. His faithful and obedient death in deference to the divine will, which is also described in sacrificial terms, marks him as the archetypal ‘ebed Yahweh.

When this broader cultic conception of Paul’s intention is accepted, it allows the ἁγιο- or holiness terminology to sound more strongly. As “slaves of Christ” or God, as those called to worship God through right cult and through obedience to the divine will, the “holy ones” fall under the exclusive ownership of God. In Rom 1:7, Paul addresses his hearers as “God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints (κλητοί)

1425 That the term reflects the background of Israel’s cult is generally acknowledged (Cranfield, Romans, 1.76; Dunn, Romans, 1.29; Jewett, Romans, 120). However, Dunn (Ibid.) is wrong, in my view, to describe Paul as “deliberately contrasting the worship appropriate in relation to the gospel with the typically cult-orientated worship of his fellow Jews.” Cranfield (Romans, 1.29) is much more nuanced, realizing that in the Jewish background cultic service is broader than just priestly functions. Cranfield reads λατρεύω as Paul signaling his conception of his ministry as worship or bringing God glory. Moreover, he notes that “cultic” has broader connotations in light of prophetic critique of abuses of the cultus. Such abuses treated the cult as a magical practice disconnected from moral character. The way in which Paul’s cultic self-identity is basic to his thinking is further seen in Rom 15:16 and 27. Jewett observes that this places the entire letter “within the context of the worship that all believers owe to God” (Ibid.). However, his view (Ibid. 121) that Paul is metaphorically employing liturgical language should be carefully qualified. In my opinion, Paul literally believes himself to be offering cultic service – service consistent with the Jerusalem cultus – to God by announcing the faithfulness of God in the Jewish Messiah.

It is hard to overstate the exalted status that “holiness” language claims for the hearers. Again I cite Fitzmyer: “Hagios has to be understood in its OT sense, ‘dedicated, consecrated,’ i.e., separated from the profane aspects of life for an encounter with the awesome presence of God... it is a description of persons, places, and objects reserved for the awesome cult of Yahweh.”

Whereas Fitzmyer sees Paul as flattering them with this “venerable designation,” I think Paul unconditionally believes they are members with Israel as God’s set apart people. Peter Oakes analyzes the hag-word group, noting it occurs 24 times in Romans. Eight times the Christ-followers are designated “the holy ones (ἁγίοι):” Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15. Crucially, the terminology overlaps with the slave of God theme I have been developing. As Oakes shows, slavery to God (Rom 6:22, or to righteousness, v. 19) – in my language being identified as ‘ebed Yahweh – results in ἁγιασμός (6: 19, 22). Conforming to one’s “holy” status is the goal of serving God.

Finally, in 15:16 Paul’s purpose regarding the Gentiles who fall under his apostolate is to prepare them as an acceptable offering “sanctified by the Holy Spirit (ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).” In 15:18, this overall cultic purpose of making the gentiles fit to enter the divine presence as worshipers becomes, seamlessly, their being called into a relation of obedience to God. Again, the letter can be seen as calling people to a latreic identity, viz., to offer acceptable worship and its concomitant moral entailments.

The essential operation of the Holy Spirit in conferring and maintaining this consecrated status is also stressed throughout the letter. It is “by the holy Spirit” that they are “made holy” (15:16). Four other references depict the Spirit as ἁγίος: 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13. Christ also is powerfully characterized as holy in the Christological formula of Rom 1:3-4. In verse 4, Christ “was declared to be Son of God with power according to

\[\text{Romans, } 239 \text{ (italics added).} \]

\[\text{The tendency of commentators to see Paul as anti-cult also surfaces regarding hagi- language. Moo understands Paul to be “transferring language used of Israel in the OT to Christians” (Romans, 54-55). I think it more likely that Paul is “extending” such language to non-Jewish people. Paul asserts that Israel (the “whole batch of dough” and the “branches”) are, i.e., remain, holy because of their connection with the patriarchs and the divine promise (Rom 11:16).} \]


\[\text{For ἁγιασμός as either the “process or result of becoming holy,” see Oakes, Ibid. Cranfield emphasizes the process, translating ἁγιασμός as “sanctification” (Romans, 1.327; cf. Moo, Romans, 405).} \]
the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead.” The “spirit of holiness” renders “πνεῦμα ἀγαθοτριῶν” and establishes Christ’s own holy identity. It refers either to Christ’s own spirit as participating in “holiness” or to the activity of the Holy Spirit. In either case, Christ’s role is to operate with divine power to establish holiness. Fitzmyer glosses the dynamic nature of holiness by saying that it is “…that which is opposed to the profane and secular and which ‘opens up access to God.’” Christ, then, whom I have argued is the archetypal ‘bed Yahweh, is profoundly involved in bringing others to this holy status. The holiness of Christ and of the divine Spirit attest to holiness being a core aspect of the identity of the Christ-followers.

Several scholars have suggested that worship be recognized as a vital theme in the letter. Gupta views the neglect of the topic as a result of readers’ preoccupation with the topic of “righteousness.” He notes, though, that before Paul gets to the so-called thematic verses of 1:16-17 he has already raised the theme of worship and obedience (vv. 5, 9). Gupta views these topics as being revisited “time and time again … with an important climax in 12.1 (and perhaps again in 15:16).” This supports my earlier argument that Romans 12:1-2 signals the reversal of the degraded worship that is outlined in 1:18-32. I will add here an insightful citation from Vahrehorst:

1431 Romans, 236 (he views the pneuma as a dimension of Christ’s own being). Others emphasize the dualism of Christ’s status being (pre-resurrection) “according to the flesh” that of (merely) the Davidic Messiah (v. 3), and then (post-resurrection) his being installed as “God’s Son in power according to the pneuma of holiness.” Jewett sees sars and pneuma as antithesized by the Hellenistic (pre)formula of the creed, with Paul adding that Christ is God’s Son in power according to the spirit of holiness (i.e., realm of the spiritual, the divine or the powerful). That the realm of spirit is qualified as “holy” by Paul is to strike from the outset the note that consecrated moral conduct and not libertinism is essential to those who are in Christ (Romans, 106-07). Cranfield (Romans, 1.63-63), Moo (Romans, 49-50) and Dunn (Romans, 1.14-15) also prefer the two-sphere perspective, seeing the reference as being not to a dimension of Christ’s own person but to the Holy Spirit.
1432 This may be as close as Paul comes to actually designating Christ as holy. However, even the Greek verb used to say that Christ “was declared/appointed (ὀρισθῆναι) to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness” (v. 4) seems to have a nuance of being separated (i.e, be made holy) to the role. BDAG state that ὄριζω has the basic meaning “to separate entities and so establish a boundary” (s.v ὄριζω). Nevertheless, they do not offer any cultic illustrations. The following terms are both found in the LXX: ὄριζω and ἀφορίζω (the intensified version, used by Paul of his being “set apart for the gospel,” Rom 1:1; cf. Gal 1:15; Acts 13:2). The terms occur in numerous uses in cultic contexts. Leviticus 20:26 is quite significant: “You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and I have separated (ἀφορίζω) you from the other peoples to be mine.” Elsewhere, that which is set apart is “holy” (Exod 19:23; 29:27; 36:37); indeed, the ἀφορίζω is “that which is set apart,” meaning various offerings made to the LORD (Exod 29:24, 26, Lev 10:15; Ezek 20:40). In Isaiah 52:11, the Israelites are called to “[t]ouch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves (ἀφορίσθε, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.” This text is cited by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:17 and points to the connection between holy status and these verbs in Paul’s thought.
1433 Worship that Makes Sense, 107.
1434 See especially Thompson, “Romans 12.1-2,” 124-127 for this line of thinking.
Kultische Sprache begegnet in diesem Brief in zentralen Kontexten. Wie eine Klammer umschließt sie den gesamten Brief, wenn Paulus der Gemeinde in Rom sein Wirken als kultischen Dienst, zu dem er ausgesondert ist (1, 1.9), präziser noch als Opferdienst beschreibt: Er überführt Menschen in den Eigentumsbereich Gottes, so wie Priester es mit Opfergaben tun (15,16). Daraus ergibt sich nicht nur eine Selbstvorstellung des Apostels, sondern auch eine kultische Beschreibung der Gemeinde: Christen sind geheiligt und damit so etwas wie Opfergaben. Diese Wesensbestimmung prägt die Ethik des Römerbriefes, die daraus die Konsequenz zieht, dass sich das ganze Leben der Christen – dieser Botschaft gemäß – als Opferdienst gestalten hat (12,1f).

Vahrenhorst asserts that the Christians have been made holy and that this “Wesensbestimmung” critically determines the identity of the saints and their ethical lives. He notes the critical element of “belongingness” to God which holiness entails: Paul’s latreic ministry makes persons “Eigentumsbereich Gottes.”

The discussion thus far of the ἱδονήλ-/λατρέ-/α`γι-terms in association with the ἀγια- group has hopefully shown the profundity and coherence of these concepts in forming the cultic identity of Paul’s hearers. Kathy Ehrensperger summarizes this in her statement that “holiness … constitutes … the ‘universal’ identity-shaping category for both Jews and Gentiles in Christ.”

iii. Holiness and Cultic Identity: Belonging Bodily to God

The key point I have attempted to prepare for in my synthesis of the ἱδονήλ-/λατρέ-/α`γι- terms is that this elevated sacral identity establishes the person – body and soul – as belonging exclusively to the cultus of Israel’s God. This holy status is fundamentally verified through bodily conduct and bodily contacts. Having the identity of one who belongs to God, who cultivates God, who serves God, establishes a profound claim on the person qua body. Every dimension of the person – spirit, soul and body – is under God’s exclusive claim. My particular focus is on how this identity constructs the person

1435 Kultische Sprache, 261.


1437 “Identity Shaping Dimension,” 105. She nuances the continuation of Jewish and Gentile identities within this holiness category thus: “Adherence to the Torah in its identity-shaping significance for Jews is not questioned by Paul, nor whatever constitutes characteristics of Gentile identity as long as this did not involve idol worship and behavior associated with it.”

1438 See 1 Thess 5:23: “May the God of peace himself sanctify (α`γιος) you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In commenting on this verse, Gupta notes that by hoping for the Thessalonians to be “sound and blameless,” Paul describes them using terminology from the Jewish purity system. Moreover, their impeccability is reminiscent of the “necessary physical and ritual integrity of the sacrifice and/or priest” in Jewish thought (Worship that Makes Sense, 57).
qua body as consecrated or belonging to God. As Paul says concisely elsewhere: “The body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Cor 6:13, NET). The saint is not to be involved in bodily connections or actions which compromise his or her sacred identity. Avoiding porneia is the obvious example of behavior which Paul views as particularly corrosive to the ἅγιασμός desired by God. Other modes of vicious, viz., bodily actions against others, are also a wrong employment of the body and are contrary to the sacral identity of those who are bound to offer latreia, right ritual and moral worship, to God.

In light of my concern to show Paul’s sensitivity to the victimized state of non-elite bodies, I wish to contend that a basic aspect of Paul’s sacral identification of his hearers is the implication that their own bodies should be exempt from violent treatment. Basic to Paul’s thought is that the saint qua body belongs to God. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 makes this point explicitly: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” In the context of chattel slavery, the “purchasing” of a slave emphasizes the new owner’s exclusive rights to the slave qua body.

The correlation of the themes of ‘ebed Yahweh identity, belonging exclusively and somatically to God, and holiness construct a coherent identity of lofty status in the first century context. The hearers are being told that their entire persons – body and spirit – are absolutely claimed for the latreic service of worshiping God in its ritual and moral

1439 Rom 13:13 (cf. the castigation of sexual licence in 1:18-32); 1 Cor 5:1-11; 6:9-20; 1 Thess 4:1-8. In 1 Thess 4:3, avoiding porneia is presented as fundamental to “the will of God, your consecration (θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἅγιασμός ὑμῶν)” (my trans.). Gupta comments regarding this last reference that the ritual and moral elements of holiness should not be dichotomized. That is, Paul has both in mind when describing their holiness (Worship that Makes Sense, 56, n. 12).

1440 For example, Rom 6:13: “No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness.” They now bodily belong to God and are to use their embodied agency to cultivate God. Co-crucifixion with Christ aims to bring about the destruction of “the body of sin … [that] we might no longer be enslaved to sin” (Rom 6:6). That is, the body is no longer to belong to Sin, to serve Sin, because God demands the exclusive allegiance of the ‘ebed Yahweh as worshiping and ethical latreia. The saints “belong to” Christ bodily “in order to bear fruit to God” (Rom 7:4). This bodily exclusivity is seen further in Rom 8:11, where the endowment of the Spirit intends to “give life to your moral bodies” – that is, to end their ownership by Death as the manifestation of their being owned by God. See also my earlier discussion of the way Paul correlates idolatry and inter-human abuse in Rom 1:18-32 (Chapter 6).

1441 So Thiselton, 1 Corinthians, 478. Gordon D. Fee notes that Paul “…asserts that the body in its present existence belongs to God.” The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 263. Hays makes the same point with reference to 1 Cor 6:13 (“the body is … for the Lord”), saying: “Our physical bodies no longer belong to us; they belong instead to Christ” (1 Corinthians, 104).
aspects. This is the upshot of the cultic identity which I have argued arises from the \(\pi\nu\\eta\gamma\iota\delta\eta\lambda\upsilon\upsilon\nu\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\) terms in association with the \(\dot{\alpha}\gamma\iota\) group utilized in Romans. That this is basic to Paul’s conception of his and the saints’ identity as exclusively possessed persons devoted to, in Fitzmyer’s suitably august expression, “the awesome cult of Yahweh,” is further reinforced by 2 Cor 6:16-7:1, where the concepts are nicely collated:

We are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty’ [citing Isaiah 52:11]. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.\(^\text{1442}\)

This means that offering cultic worship to God – being “the temple of the living God” – is the raison d’être of “in-Christ” identity. God is present among them and so their cultic purity – their not touching “anything unclean,” their cleansing themselves “from every defilement of body and spirit” which is perfecting “holiness” – is of paramount importance. Arie Leder observes that this is “language evoking the holiness instructions of Leviticus.”\(^\text{1443}\)

Returning to Romans, the same leit-motif continues as Paul explicitly formulates the sacral bodily identity of his hearers. He constructs their low-status and, for many, servile bodies as being claimed by God as “a sacrifice, living, holy and well-pleasing … [their] reasonable latreia” (Rom 12:1). Ehrensperger’s lens for reading Romans is thus vital. Paul reminds his Gentile Christ-followers:

To be in Christ means that the divine presence, that is, the presence of the Holy One, permeates their entire lives in all its aspects. This theme was introduced actually at the beginning of chapter 12, where clear indications of a holiness discourse are found. It is a discourse that shows striking similarity with themes combined in Leviticus 19, to the extent that part of Romans 12-13 almost read like a commentary on/homily to Leviticus 19.\(^\text{1444}\)

\(^\text{1442}\) For a discussion of the authenticity of this passage, see Harris, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 14-25.
\(^\text{1443}\) “Holy God, Holy People, Holy Worship,” Calvin Theological Journal 43 (2008): 216. Leder further argues that an unfortunate legacy of the reformation is a bias away from the priestly/cultic aspects of the Bible with a preference for the prophetic (Ibid. 219-23). Thus: “[w]ithout denying the role of prophetic [i.e., moral] holiness, it is crucial to recover the so-called priestly teaching on holiness, especially as it refers to the cult.” Ibid. 222.
\(^\text{1444}\) “Called to be Saints,” 102. This emphasis on being fit to offer latreia in the divine presence accords with Rom 5:1-2. Having “access to this grace in which we stand,” indicates the \(\pi\rho\sigma\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\iota\) or entry the saints have into the presence of God. The meaning is, in my view, cultic. Thus Käsemann glosses \(\pi\rho\sigma\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\iota\) with “unhindered access to the sanctuary as the place of God’s presence” (Romans, 133; for a
In other words, Paul constructs his low-status hearers’ in terms of Israel’s call to belong exclusively to God. Their bodies, therefore, are not to be “presented ... as slaves to impurity and to every-increasing lawlessness” (Rom 6:19, my trans.). They are not to use their bodies to harm others, but rather to offer neighbor-love. And of course they are also to maintain their consecrated status by avoiding illicit sexual connections.

B. Conflicting Construals of the Body: Paul’s Subversive Sacralization of the Low-Status Body

My aim now is to compare Paul’s identification in Rom 12:1 of his hearers as “holy” and as offering latreia to God – with all of its bodily implications – with the degraded concept of low-status and servile bodies which existed in the culture. Part of this discussion aims to situate Paul’s sacralization of his hearers’ bodies within the debate over the apostle’s attitude towards slavery. I described in my review of scholarship how there exist two basic approaches to the body in Paul. The first is the theological view of the body that abstracts it to being merely the basis of communication and relationships. In calling for the presentation of the saints’ “bodies” to God (Rom 12:1), Paul is here understood to be demanding the whole person or self. Over against this approach is the one I identify with, which asks about the social and political significance of the body.

In my review, I pointed out that those scholars who are interested in discerning Paul’s attitude towards slaves typically view Paul as reinscribing the same derogatory attitude that pervaded the culture. That is, he – along with the culture – conceived of slaves’ bodies as sexually and physically humiliated. This viewpoint interprets Paul’s sexual ethics as concerned with maintaining the gendered model of sexual dominance. The sexual code required the true man to dominate the bodies of his social inferiors.1445 Similarly, Glancy’s analysis of Paul’s sexual ethics in 1 Corinthians 5-7 finds that his...
“unequivocal separation of the body of prostitution from the body of Christ would seem to exclude all prostitutes, even enslaved prostitutes, from membership in the church.”

While I again state my appreciation for these scholars who seek to establish the material and bodily context of Paul and his audiences, my own investigations offer a different reconstruction. An important assumption has been that two-thirds of the Roman house-church members were either slaves or of servile origin. I deem it unlikely, therefore, that Paul is unaware of the degradations they faced given their low social status. My analysis of the Greco-Roman cultural configuration of social hierarchy showed that one’s social location was founded on the degree to which boundaries existed around one’s body.

In effect, I understand Paul to be sacralizing the low-status body in a way which creates a narrative around embodied identity which is entirely at odds with the stratified cultural narrative. Whereas it is the elite male, the matron, or the priestly class which are characterized as holy and chaste in the culture, Paul assigns such lofty characteristics to his degraded hearers. He negotiates an overall identity for his hearers which identifies them as holy and as exclusively consecrated to the worship or service of Yahweh.

Even if the explicit bodily implications of this identity were not spelt out, holiness in its OT perspective is fundamentally about the exclusive consecration of the person qua body to God. In Romans, though, as throughout the Pauline corpus, there is repeated emphasis on God’s bodily demands on the worshipper. Paul is constructing his audience in sacral and exclusive bodily terms, which directly conflicts with the cultural construal of their bodily disgrace and vulnerability. Paul recasts their physical suffering as sacrificial and valued by God. I would suggest that the sexual and physical vulnerability of slaves, far from being a barrier to their membership in the saints, was viewed as being a mark of their suffering in conformity with Christ who was likewise humiliated by the servile punishment of crucifixion.

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1446 “Obstacles to Slaves’ Participation,” 501.
Conclusion

This study has investigated the social significance of Paul’s sacralization of low-status bodies. What might it have meant to Paul’s original hearers to have had their bodies characterized as a sacrifice which is a holy offering that pleases God? Given the slave status or servile origins of many of the saints, they were culturally debarred from a sacred identity. Being unable to defend their bodily boundaries from the degrading assaults of others was a hallmark of shameful status. Paul, however, ascribes sacrality to these very bodies which were culturally the inescapable symbols of shameful status.

To answer this question I have delved into the likely bodily conditions, the lived experiences, of people from the different social strata of Greco-Roman society and the significance they attached to them. The overall finding is that identity was strongly related to embodiment. In Dupont’s words, “[t]he Roman citizen consisted of a name and a body … The body of a citizen was the man himself, the ‘embodiment’ of the truth about him.”

One’s bodily being – appearance, mannerisms, speech and forcefulness – was constantly on display and being read by the community. If the elite male feared being characterized as deficient in these areas, the slave was positioned at the opposite end of the spectrum. His or her body was basic to his or her shameful identity. The slave was conceived of as, not a person, but an item of chattel. His or her body was accordingly available for the absolute exploitation of the slaveowner, whether this be in the form of sexual use or beatings.

1. “Body” as Material-Interrelated Self

I have suggested that in the Greco-Roman context the body be conceived of as the material-interrelated self. This definition enables references to the body to be considered in terms of a person’s concrete bodily experiences and the social identity which followed from these. The materiality of the self is fundamental. Physical aspects of selfhood were constantly on display, were seen and read by onlookers, and acted as signals of one’s social standing. Several findings stand out here. First, the notion that anthropological dualism was rife amongst the ancients should be carefully qualified. Outside of certain philosophical approaches, the body was not pitted against the soul as an inferior part of the person. People were deeply concerned with bodily beauty, integrity, strength and

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1447 *Daily Life*, 239-40.
boundaries. The sense in which death was dreaded as an entrée into the shadowy existence of the underworld confirms this, as does the concern for a fitting burial and the belief that disfiguring wounds continued to mark the shades of the deceased.

Secondly, the scopic nature of Greco-Roman society has been emphasized throughout. There was no private, interior self which could be retreated to if one was judged poorly by onlookers. Shame at being seen to be dishonorable was a basic driver in social life. Personal appearance – the materiality of one’s personhood – was under constant scrutiny and signified one’s place on the honor-shame continuum.

Thirdly, I have utilized the concepts of activity and passivity to discuss the way in which physical domination operated to maintain the social order. The materiality of the body is particularly clear from this perspective. When persons qua bodies were evaluated by onlookers, they were scrutinized for signs of forcefulness or powerlessness. The elite male was praised for the strength and size of his body, and for his ability to unleash violence on his inferiors. The slave and other low-status persons were degraded because of their inability to resist the assaults of their superiors. In particular, masculinity was constructed using the symbol of the phallus: the ruling male acts with the whip, the sword or his penis to humiliate the bodies over which he rules. Jonathan Walter’s insight is that “[s]exual penetration and beating … are in Roman terms structurally equivalent.”[^1448] The passive body underwent the degradation of having its boundaries crossed and so was characterized as feminine and servile. Therefore, the materiality of the first-century approach to selfhood is demonstrated in the realm of gender and sexuality.

My stress on the physicality of references to the body and its social significance, while supported by classical scholarship, is largely absent from readings of Romans. I have offered a critique of the tendency in the secondary literature to abstract the σώμα by understanding it as “the self” or “the personality.” Typical translations of Rom 12:1 render it with “offer yourselves to God,” whereas I have argued that Paul is specific in claiming the physical body.

However, I have discussed how biblical scholarship, outside of Romans, has utilized awareness of the embodied conditions of first-century life. I have particularly employed the work of Brigitte Kahl and Davina Lopez to consider the material conditions in which Paul and his hearers lived. Both scholars have offered reconstructions of the all-pervasive imagery of Roman imperial ideology. The media of the day presented Roman

[^1448]: “Invading the Roman Body,” 39.
rule as that of elite, powerful males subduing feminized victims. Pauline “salvation,” in this context, is not an other-worldly hope, but a vision of just social relations and material flourishing in the present world. The following comment of Lopez has informed my reading of Paul’s sacralizing of the low-status body: Paul engages in a “…critical subversive practice in his Roman imperial ideological context.”

In contrast, there are a number of biblical scholars who view Paul as perpetuating the gender norms of society. From this perspective, Paul is understood to be implicated in the cultural norm of viewing the sexually exploited body of the slave as establishing a shameful identity. While I appreciate the attention this reading pays to the somatic conditions of first-century life, I have sought to contribute to the discussion the insight that it is servile and low-status bodies which Paul sacralizes in Romans. I have reasoned that Paul’s hearers would have experienced the range of degrading bodily experiences which the Greek and Roman sources recount of low-status persons – the very experiences the elite were desperate to avoid. Because Paul was aware of the bodily vulnerabilities of his hearers and underwent degrading breaches of his own bodily boundaries, his sacralization of such bodies constitutes a subversion of the cultural construal of their bodies. With this emphasis on the physicality of bodily life and the social significance of the violated body, I have stressed the body’s centrality to selfhood. Persons qua bodies were material-interrelated selves.

By highlighting the interrelationships afforded by bodily life, I have endeavored to highlight how references to the body imply that persons were located in social relations of power which were enacted through forceful control of the body. Every body stood in relation to others and had its social niche expressed through either its exemption from or risk of corporal force. Much of the scholarship on Romans is attuned to the connotations of communication and relationships which references to the body have. However, apart from several fleeting comments by Robert Jewett, the oppressive nature of these relations has not been considered. Many of the first century saints were likely to have had bodily experiences and features which would have signaled their degraded status. Nevertheless, Paul proclaims the sacrality of these very bodies, characterizing them as pleasing to God and thus he places them in solidarity with the divine.

1449 *Apostle*, 19.
2. Sacrality in Greco-Roman Culture

The way in which sacrality was culturally construed was an important aspect of this study. Who or what did the Romans characterize using sacral terminology? Or, more pointedly, whose bodies were described as holy? The Latin terms *sacer* and *sanctus* (generally corresponding with ἱγιος and ἱερός) which denote sacrality designate a person or thing as standing in relationship to the deities. When the relationship is positive, the person (or thing) is being identified as a religio-political agent, a representative of the deities and their hierarchical ordering of the cosmos. Such a person belongs to the gods and stands under their protection. Moreover, shifting an item into divine possession – making it sacred – required officially sanctioned rituals; it could not be done by private individuals.

Instances of persons who are described using sacral terminology include the Vestal Virgins (priestesses) and elite males. It is clear that personal sacrality was concretely configured in terms of the agent’s body being inviolate – he or she was not to be assaulted (and in the case of the Vestals, sexually active). The primary literature commonly describes elite males as holy, while also lauding their excellence in social and political terms. The honorable man is conceived as a religio-political agent. The censors, for example, who passed moral judgment on the public, are described as “most holy.”

The bodies of emperors are similarly described; priests too were to be free of bodily defects. The holiness of the emperors is modeled on the sanctity which was legislated for the tribune of the plebs. These officials were deemed sacrosanct and were not to suffer any violence. Likewise, the Vestal Virgins who maintained the virginity necessary for their role are presented as holy bodies. Elite Roman women are also lauded for their chastity, which indicates the priority of bodily exclusivity in maintaining high-status identity.

The other mode of sacrality, the negative pole, continues the concept’s association with divine order. Social malefactors, and indeed entire enemy armies, were “made sacred” to the deities through religious rituals. Culturally, the closest low-status and servile persons could come to “sacral” identity was to be a victim of the arena which was dramatized as a place of entry to the underworld.

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In short, holy identity correlates with the other markers of elite status. In particular, sacral terminology is applied to those whose bodily boundaries are sacrosanct. In the case of elite males, their forcefulness aligns with their sacrality: the true man maintains his holiness or integrity by simultaneously protecting his own body and by utilizing the bodies of his inferiors as he pleased. On the other hand, the slave was a person reduced to being a mere body. Because of his or her experiences of degrading bodily treatment, the slave – and to some degree other low-status persons – was the antithesis of holy.

3. Pauline Sacralization of the Body

Against this cultural background, Paul’s description of his low-class hearers’ bodies as holy is a subversion of the dominant narrative. I have argued that Paul offers a reading of the body which clashes with the cultural reading. Whereas culturally the scars of whippings, sexual vulnerability and other bodily indicators of dishonor were construed as indicating servile status, Paul overlooks this way of reading identity from embodiment and constructs his hearers’ bodies in sacral terms. In keeping with the cultural preoccupation with bodily condition being foundational to identity, when Paul characterizes his hearers’ bodies as being holy he is supporting the high-status identity he confers on them.

I have attempted to develop my understanding of the identity Paul constructs for the Christ-followers under the rubric “cultic” or “latreic.” Paul identifies his hearers as those who offer *latreia*, cultic worship, to the God of Israel. Paul’s depictions of their identity in terms of their serving or worshiping God – being ‘*ebed Yahweh*’ – or being faithful, obedient and holy all contribute to their calling to maintain their agency in this cultus. With this emphasis on the cultic nature of their identity, I have argued that Paul, as a faithful Jew operating before the downfall of Jerusalem, maintained his reverence for the cultic symbols of Israel, viz., the temple, the sacrifices and the priesthood. For him, God had initiated the eschatological renewal of Israel and he anticipated the flow of Gentiles to worship at Jerusalem. Accordingly, I have argued against any notion of Christian supercessionism in Paul: to offer their bodies to God as “reasonable worship (*latreia*)” is not a spiritual worship that replaces the literal Jewish cultus. On the
contrary, embodied self-offering is the Gentiles’ contribution to the worshiping vocation of Israel. Paul anticipates the Gentiles’ full inclusion and recognition by Israel in the imminent future.

This stress on the literal sense in which Paul’s hearers are conferred a cultic identity continues the foregrounding of bodily identity. Being agents within the cult of Yahweh – having the honorific identity of being, for example, holy, faithful and obedient – locates the saints as being exclusively claimed by God. In particular, the ἅγιος-word group which so colors their identity marks them in their entire personhood – body and spirit – as belonging to the divine. The OT background of this terminology stresses the person’s qualification to enter the divine presence and participate in worshiping activities. Bodily purity was basic to holy identity. Paul’s characterization of his hearers as holy and as those who offer worship should be understood as establishing the sacrality of their entire beings, including their bodies. Rom 12:1, with its specifying of bodily sacrality, makes this high-status cultic identity explicit.

My analysis of two key passages in Romans – 1:18-32 and 12:1 – found that Paul views the body as an essential feature in humans offering latreia to God. I have thus referred to the “cultic” nature of the body: the use of the body is foundational to worshiping God. The body is therefore holy, claimed by God and reserved to embody the divine vision for human life. Persons are to concretely offer neighbor-love to others, which fulfills the divine will as codified in Torah (Rom 13:8-10). This self-giving imitates the sacrifice of Christ who bodily gave himself for the benefit of others (Rom 7:4; 15:1-3).

My exegesis of Rom 1:18-32 argued that Paul sees the body as fundamental to humans offering latreia to God. In his presentation of humans as having corrupted the worship of God by failing to glorify, to honor, to serve and to worship God (Rom 1:21, 25), he moves between these God-ward failures and the interpersonal harm that ensues. I argued that he views the dishonoring of the body as a basic feature of the social harm caused by idolatry. Key here was Rom 1:24, in which God hands humanity over to uncleanness, that is, to “the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves (τῶν ἄνθρωπων).” I read this in light of how persons of higher status dishonored or degraded the bodies of their inferiors. I then reasoned that the other elements of interpersonal violence – same-sex relations and the evils of the vice catalogue – condemned in the passage are similarly focused on persons attacking the body which
should be active in rendering worship to God. As I noted from Jewett, Paul’s castigation of the violence of first-century society must have helped “confirm the damnation of their exploiters and thus raise the status of the exploited above that of helpless victim with no prospect of retribution.”

In reading Rom 12:1, I discussed Paul’s sensitivity to the bodily suffering of the Christ-followers. He proclaims, “I exhort you (παρακαλέω ... ὑμᾶς) ... to offer your bodies.” I argued that paraklēsis can carry the nuance of offering encouragement or comfort in the face of bodily suffering. By describing their bodies as a “sacrifice (θυσία),” Paul also acknowledges their vulnerability to violence. However, Paul provides them with a new discourse in which bodily humiliation is no longer a testament to dishonorable identity but in fact signifies their solidarity with the divine.

4. The Sacralization of the Body as Culturally Subversive

Paul calls for his hearers’ bodies to be presented to God as “a sacrifice [which is] living, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable worship” (my trans.). I have argued that he is construing the saints’ bodies as a sacrifice which is holy, which exists to please God. Bodily consecration is the basis for “reasonable worship,” that is latreia, which signals the renewal of divine-human relations portrayed as corrupt in Rom 1:18-32. My key concern was to explore the social significance of making these low-status bodies sacral. By sacralizing these servile and low-status bodies, Paul ascribes them an identity and value which was antithetical to the cultural construal of their bodies.

The very bodies whose scars, sexual vulnerability, degrading occupations, appearance, clothing, and habitus would have been socially evaluated as shameful are portrayed as holy. Given the priority of embodiment to identity in the first-century, this ascription of high value to these bodies should be heard as a declaration of their high status. Whereas the cultural system stated that only those with religio-political and social agency possessed sacral bodies which were exempt from shameful treatment, Paul states that the Christ-followers’ bodies are holy, and that it is in fact they who stand in solidarity with the divine. I suggest, therefore, that Paul has a radically different reading of the low-

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status body than do the elite of Greco-Roman society. His sacralization of his hearers’ bodies and his ascription of worshiping identity to them should be seen as a subversion of the dominant system of valuing human worth.
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