

**THE MAKING(S) OF AN AVERAGE JOE:
JOSEPH OF NAZARETH, GENDER AND THE EVERYDAY
IN EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the quotidian making(s) of men in three, early blocks of (narrative) discourse about Joseph of Nazareth—from the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of Matthew, and the Protevangelium of James (PJ). Although Matthew’s ‘just man’ (δικαιος, Mt. 1.19), Joseph was also, after all, ‘just a man’—the ‘average Joe’—especially when compared with other ‘superior’, if also perhaps more volatile, exemplars of early Christian masculine comportment, such as, say, the hero martyr, the ‘manly eunuch’, or the male woman. Without denying the importance of analysis and critique of gender/ing in such highly visible, spectacular performances, I offer here an aligned study revealing deep instabilities inherent even (or especially) in seemingly ordinary or ‘everyday’ citations of ‘normative’ masculine subjectivities in ancient religious narratives. I read not merely for gender in ‘the everyday’ but for the gendering of the everyday; in other words, how was ‘everydayness’ shaped into gendered experience and how was this related to early Christian group identity formation? More specifically, I explore here the proposal that the (re)fashioning of the earliest stories and characterizations of Joseph represent various literary attempts at crafting what the ‘everyday man’ — the ‘average Joe’—should be: paradigmatic, though also unstable and at times competing, models of/ for quotidian, normative, ‘everyday’ masculine subjectivity.

PREFACE

A version of material from chapters 2, 3 and 4 has been published. Justin Glessner, “The Making(s) of an Average Joe: Joseph of Nazareth vs Empire, in Three Rounds,” in Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 189-227.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
PREFACE	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
DEDICATION	vii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Thematic Accents.....	2
1.1.1 <i>Joseph of Nazareth</i>	2
1.1.2 <i>...the Everyday</i>	5
1.1.3 <i>Gender and...</i>	9
1.1.4 <i>Early Christian Discourse</i>	26
1.1.5 <i>The Making(s)</i>	28
1.2 Methodology.....	34
2 JOSEPH OF NAZARETH IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW	41
2.1 Matthew's Average Joe and Other 'Fathers'.....	41
2.2 Matthew's Average Joe and Jesus: (Auto-)Generative and Adoptive Fathers (Matt 1.1-17)	47
2.3 Matthew's Average Joe, Mary, and 'The Other Man': Honor Contests, Self-Control, Presiding over Household, and Torah-Knowledge (Matt 1.18-20a).....	56
2.4 Matthew's Average Joe and the <i>GodFather</i> : Dreams, Plights, Fear and <i>Godhandling</i> (Matt 1.20b-24).....	67
2.5 Matthew's Average Joe and Empire: A Trickster's Tale of Cleverness, (Dis)Placement and Flight (Matt 2.1-23).....	88
2.6 Matthew's Audience and the Making(s) of an Average Joe.....	93

3	JOSEPH OF NAZARETH IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE	99
3.1	Luke's 'Everyday': The Events, Everything, Gender and Joseph.....	99
3.2	Luke's Average Joe: A Curiously 'Absent Father'	105
3.3	Luke's Average Joe and the <i>Domus</i> : Roman 'Family Values' - Marriage, Children, Inheritance.....	120
3.4	Luke's Average Joe and the <i>Cultus</i>	128
3.5	Luke's Average Joe and the <i>Forum</i> : Silence/ <i>Paideia</i> , Presiding over Household, Paying Taxes, and Biding One's Time.....	132
3.6	Luke's Audience and the Making(s) of an Average Joe.....	141
4	JOSEPH OF NAZARETH IN THE <i>PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES</i>	147
4.1	The <i>Protevangelium of James</i> : 'Something about Mary' and Joseph.....	147
4.2	PJ's Rodhandling Priests, their Dove, and the Making(s) of an Average Joe (PJ 8-9).....	152
4.3	PJ's Average Joe: the 'Same-old' Cuckold? (PJ 13-14).....	163
4.4	PJ's Average Joe: Manly <i>Sotah</i> or Virile Virgin? (PJ 15-16).....	181
4.5	PJ's Audience and the Making(s) of an Average Joe.....	198
5	CONCLUSION(S): THE MAKING(S) OF AN AVERAGE JOE IN EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE	208
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	218

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I am also grateful for two other scholars who provided significant assistance with this dissertation: Reidar Aasgaard, for initiating critical discussion of Joseph of Nazareth's characterizations in early Christian narratives and for providing comments on earlier versions of my project presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual International Meeting 2012 in Amsterdam, and Peter-Ben Smit, for offering valuable guidance in refining the content of earlier versions of material from chapters 2, 3 and 4.

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On a more personal level, I wish to thank my family for providing emotional, financial, and intellectual support during the seven years it took to complete my doctorate. Most importantly, I wish to thank my incredible wife, Dana, for encouraging me to begin my doctorate and for her 'everyday' and incomparable patience, tenderness, inspiration, farsightedness, and generosity that helped me complete it. I must acknowledge also the unique contributions made by my three beautiful children, Clayton, Josephine, and Silas, who have unwittingly lent vital complications to the reality of my own, lived 'everyday'. Finally, I would not be who I am, personally or professionally, without the support and care of my family: Ron and Gwen, Dan and Beth, Troy and Lynn, Dave and Heather, Kris and Aubrey. Thank you.

DEDICATION

μήτι ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐνεκεφαιώθη ἱστορία
To all those whose stories have been repeated in me

1 INTRODUCTION

It is the everyday that carries the greatest weight - Henri Lefebvre

This study explores the quotidian making(s) of men in three, early blocks of (narrative) discourse about Joseph of Nazareth—from the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of Matthew, and the *Protevangelium of James* (PJ).¹ Although Matthew’s ‘just man’ (δικαίος, Mt. 1.19), Joseph was also, after all, ‘just a man’—the ‘average Joe’—especially when compared with other ‘superior’, if also perhaps more volatile, exemplars of early Christian masculine comportment, such as, say, the hero martyr,² the ‘manly eunuch’,³ or the male woman.⁴ Without denying the importance of analysis and critique of gender/ing in such highly visible, spectacular performances, I offer here an aligned study revealing deep instabilities inherent even (or especially) in seemingly ordinary or ‘everyday’ citations of ‘normative’ masculine subjectivities in ancient religious narratives.⁵ I read not merely for gender *in* ‘the everyday’ but for the gendering *of* the everyday; in other words, how was ‘everydayness’ shaped into gendered experience and how was this related to early Christian group identity formation.⁶ More specifically, I explore here the hypothesis that the (re)fashioning of the earliest stories and

¹ Reidar Aasgaard initiated critical discussion of Joseph of Nazareth’s characterizations in early Christian narratives, though without specific recourse to the theories/tools of a gender-critical analytic; see Reidar Aasgaard, “Father and Child Reunion: The Story of Joseph,” paper presented at the Christian Apocrypha Section, SBL Annual Meeting, New Orleans (2009); cf. *The Childhood of Jesus: Decoding the Apocryphal Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books).

² See, e.g., Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); L. Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to be Men: Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

³ See, e.g., Matthew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁴ See, e.g., Kerstin Bjerre-Aspegren and René Kieffer, eds., *The Male Woman: A Feminine Ideal in the Early Church* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990); Elizabeth A. Castelli, “‘I Will Make Mary Male’: Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity,” in J. Epstein and K. Straub, eds., *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 29-49 (esp. 29-33); Kari Vogt, “‘Becoming Male’: A Gnostic and Early Christian Metaphor,” in Kari E. Børresen, ed., *The Image of God: Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Gillian Cloke, *This Female Man of God: Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, AD 350-450* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁵ See Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005): 3: “Everyday life is an arena of gender politics, not an escape from it. Gender terms are contested because the right to account for gender is claimed by conflicting discourses and systems of knowledge. We can see this in everyday situations as well as in high theory.”

⁶ Cf. Miriam Peskowitz, *Spinning Fantasies: Rabbis, Gender, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 23.

characterizations of Joseph of Nazareth represent various literary attempts at crafting what the ‘everyday man’—the ‘average Joe’—*should* be: paradigmatic, though also unstable and at times competing, models of/for quotidian, normative, ‘everyday’ masculine subjectivity. Each component of the title—*The Making(s) of an Average Joe: Joseph of Nazareth, Gender, and the Everyday in Early Christian Discourse*—encapsulates a key thematic accent that echoes throughout my investigation, as I now explain.

1.1 Thematic Accents

1.1.1 *Joseph of Nazareth*

To begin with, just as scholars of gender and religion have investigated the significance of the figure of Mary the mother of Jesus,⁷ no less of Jesus himself,⁸ so this study analyzes early characterizations of the third member of the Holy Family, the figure of *Joseph of Nazareth*. Joseph is mentioned only a handful of times in the New Testament,⁹ and not at all in the earliest Christian

⁷ A number of scholars have investigated the (gendered) significance of the figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus. See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Mary: The Feminine Face of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); Janice Capel Anderson, “Mary’s Difference: Gender and Patriarchy in the Birth narratives,” *The Journal of Religion* 67 (1987): 183-202; Els Maeckelberghe, *Desperately Seeking Mary: A Feminist Interpretation of a Traditional Religious Symbol* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991); Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Sarah Jane Boss, *Empress and Handmaid: Nature and Gender in the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000); Mary F. Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); and Deirdre Joy Good, *Mariam, the Magdalen, and the Mother* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

⁸ See David A. J. Clines, “Ecce Vir, or, Gendering the Son of Man,” in J. Cheryl Exum and Stephen D. Moore, eds., *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies: The Third Sheffield Colloquium*, JSOTSup 266, Gender, Culture, Theory 7 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Deirdre Joy Good, *Jesus the Meek King* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1998); Jerome Neyrey, “Jesus, Gender, and the Gospel of Matthew,” Tat-siong Benny Liew “Re-Mark-able Masculinities: Jesus, the Son of Man, and the (Sad) Sum of Manhood?,” and Maud Gleason, “By Whose Gender Standards (if Anybody’s) was Jesus a Real Man?,” all in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 43-66, 93-136, 325-327, respectively; Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in his Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006); Eric Thurman, “Novel Men: Masculinity and Empire in Mark’s Gospel and Xenophon’s *An Ephesian Tale*,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourse* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 185-230; Peter-Ben Smit, “Jesus and the Ladies: Constructing and Deconstructing Johannine Macho-Christology,” *The Bible and Critical Theory* 2, no. 3 (2006): 31.1–31.15; and Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁹ Matthew 1.16, 18-20; 1.24; 2.13; 2.19; 13.55 (implied); Luke 1.27; 2.4; 2.16; 2.22; 2.39; 3.23; 4.22; John 1.45; 6.42.

writings (Paul’s letters, the Gospels of Mark and Q), and this dearth of early reflection on Joseph is one of the things which made (and perhaps *makes*) him so productively malleable as a symbol. While Joseph was all but ignored in preaching, liturgical celebrations, martyrologies, and theological writings for the first millennium of Christian history,¹⁰ early scattered representations of Joseph *do* exist—and what is scattered can be gathered. Moreover, in *all* of his early representations, Joseph appears as a liminal character, in play and contested as he was, not least because of his complicated parental (father of ‘the Son’) and spousal (husband of ‘the Virgin’) relationships. The curious nature of a male character who is *almost and not quite* a father and/or husband is one of the things which makes Joseph so compelling as a focal point of inquiry. Yet, Joseph is certainly not the appropriator in the history of his representation; he is appropriated, a constructed figure, and later, and eventually, declared a saint. As Pierre Deloos aptly notes: “all saints are more or less *constructed* in that, being necessarily saints *for other people*, they are remodeled in the collective representation which is made of them.”¹¹ While we have a number of early “lives” of Joseph molded/modeled by literary representation, the “social logic” and “political unconscious” of such representations,¹² I posit, has less to do with the ‘real Joseph’, than with an elaboration of early Christian (male) writers’ reflections on troubling intellectual and theological problems, as well as their desires to buttress particular views of marriage, fatherhood, and continence (among other things): Joseph, too, is “good to think with.”¹³ My interest, then, is not in any ‘historical Joseph’ that might (or might not) have given rise

¹⁰ See, e.g., Joseph T. Lienhard, *St. Joseph in Early Christianity - Devotion and Theology. A Study and an Anthology of Patristic Texts* (Philadelphia: St. Joseph’s University Press, 1999), 5-6.

¹¹ Pierre Deloos, “Towards a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church,” in Stephen Wilson, ed., *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (trans Jane Hodgkin; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 189-216 (195), emphasis original.

¹² I find Gabrielle Spiegel’s notion of “the social logic of the text”—a logic that attends to both the text’s “site of articulation and its discursive character as articulated ‘logos’”—to be a stimulating mental tool for the study of early Joseph texts, and I also find provocative her encouragement to ferret out the “political unconscious” of the text; see her much-cited essay, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 65 (1990): 59–86, now excerpted in her *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1997), 3–28, and discussed at length and appropriated (as “social-theological logic”) by Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 162-165 and 178-181.

¹³ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 153, borrowing a phrase from Claude Lévi-Strauss.

to the representations, but in the way in which the figure of Joseph is characterized in ancient texts and in the rhetorical and ideological purposes which his characterizations serve in antiquity¹⁴ (and beyond).¹⁵ The perplexing, colorful, and disparate early portraits of Joseph are the impetus behind my project. Why *do* we have such a variety of Josephs? As I explore in this study, part of the answer to that question entails a critical engagement with and mappings of early Christian dealings with *Gender and the Everyday*.

¹⁴ My analysis arises from a conviction that the origins of the Christian tradition as a whole are diverse rather than singular and are characterized by competition among numerous rivals, each of which strove against the others for dominance. As such, I approach early Christian culture as a ‘discourse of heterodoxy’: no single deposit of orthodoxy existed in ancient Christianity. Although many of the opinions that would subsequently comprise later Christian orthodoxy admittedly existed from these earliest times, they often stood initially as merely one conviction among many. Only after their victorious emergence from the ideological conflicts of late antiquity did the later tradition invest them with the rarefied authority of ‘orthodoxy’.

¹⁵ Rosemary Drage Hale, for example, has explored Joseph’s portrayals in late medieval and early modern Europe, especially the literary, dramatic, and visual expressions of Joseph as father/mother (his role as *nutritor*), which were especially important as regards the medieval construction of Joseph to mirror and act as paradigmatic for lay male virtue, a reflection of and a model for non-clerical/non-monastic masculinity; see “Joseph as Mother: Adaptation and Appropriation in the Construction of Male Virtue,” in John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds., *Medieval Mothering* (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 101-16. See also David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 127.

Cf. other, more recent, *Josephs*: Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, entitled *Redemptoris Custos* (*Guardian of the Redeemer*), which positions Joseph as “breaking the old vice of paternal familial domination,” and asserts that Joseph is *the* model of a loving father; Theologian Leonard Boff’s presentation of Joseph as “the personification of the figure of God the Father” (*Saint Joseph: The Father of Jesus in a Fatherless Society*, [Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009], 12); Dave DiNuzzo’s (who blogs *TrueManhood.com*) contention that, aside from Jesus, Joseph is the “best model of authentic masculinity for a man to emulate”: “Wanna be a TrueMan?... be like St. Joseph; “St. Joseph: The Days After Christmas,” December 28, 2010 blog post on TrueManhood.com (available at: <http://www.truemanhood.com/st-joseph-the-days-after-christmas>); John Eldredge’s (a huge name associated with what has been called ‘muscular’ or ‘Fight-Club’ Christianity) comparison of Joseph to William Wallace (from the movie *Braveheart*) and Maximus (from the movie *Gladiator*): “What makes [them] so heroic is this: They are willing to die to set others free. This sort of heroism is what we see in the life of Joseph” (*Wild At Heart: Discovering the Passionate Soul of a Man* [Nashville: Nelson, 2001], 184); Mark Driscoll’s (of the (in)famous Mars Hill Church) use of Joseph as an exemplary model for “the best men” who care for, marry, and, ‘redeem the lives of single mothers (and their bastard children)’; “Jesus’ Birth Prophesied,” sermon given at Mars Hill Church October 04, 2009 (transcript available here: http://download.marshill.com/files/2009/10/04/20091004_jesus-birth-prophesied_en_transcript.pdf). Joseph has also been approached recently in social-scientific biblical interpretation by Matthew Marohl (see *Joseph’s Dilemma: “Honor Killing” in the Birth Narrative of Matthew* [Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008]), and also in historical Jesus studies, where a spate of scholarship has discussed the possibility that Jesus was labeled by his contemporaries as a *mamzer* (a person born of illicit union), a label which would have ‘mattered’ as much to Jesus as to Joseph; see Bruce Chilton, “Jesus, le mamzer (Mt 1.18),” *ATS* 46 (2000): 222-27; idem, *Rabbi Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 2000): 5-22; Andries van Aarde, “Jesus as Fatherless Child,” in Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina and Gerd Theissen, eds., *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 65-84; idem, *Fatherless in Galilee: Jesus as Child of God* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001); Scot McKnight, “Calling Jesus Mamzer,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 1 (2003): 73-103; James F. McGrath, “Was Jesus Illegitimate? The Evidence of his Social Interactions,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 5 (2007): 81-100. Will the ‘real’ Joseph please stand up?

1.1.2 ...*the Everyday*

The varying ways in which the ostensibly straightforward notion of ‘the everyday’ has been put to work in the social sciences illustrate shifting concerns between research paradigms involving very different theoretical and ideological frameworks.¹⁶ Generally, the study of ‘the everyday’, ‘daily life’, and/or ‘everydayness’ connotes a research *orientation* rather than a discrete field of inquiry: by exploring the hidden worlds of ostensibly uninteresting phenomena, routines, habits, and notions of ordinary or common people (against that of elites, patriarchs, intellectuals, or experts), which tend to be neglected because their ‘everydayness’ makes them invisible or self-evident, different and profitable insights into social or cultural issues may be produced. As one of the key theorists on ‘the everyday’, Henri Lefebvre, suggests: analyzing ‘the everyday’ may bring out the extraordinary in the ordinary.¹⁷ Furthermore, while everyday life may be familiar, this does not mean that it is understood —‘people do not know well how they live’¹⁸—or insignificant: “it is the everyday that carries the greatest weight. While Power occupies the space which it generates, the everyday is the very soil on which the great architectures of politics and society rise up.”¹⁹

While Lefebvre’s concept of ‘everyday life’ (*la vie quotidienne*) can be seen as an application of Marx’s notion of alienation to Lukács’ and Heidegger’s understanding of *Alltäglichkeit* (“everydayness”)—the banality and conformity of decidedly modern everyday life, colonized as it is

¹⁶ See, e.g., Alf Lüdtke, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); David Cuthbert, “The Everyday Life of Cultural Studies,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (1996): 393-403; Uwe Flick, “Everyday Knowledge in Social Psychology,” in Uwe Flick, ed., *The Psychology of the Social* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41-59; Brad S. Gregory, “Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life,” *History and Theory* 38 (1999): 100-110; Gregory J. Seigworth, “Banality for Cultural Studies,” *Cultural Studies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 227-268; Derek Schilling, “Everyday Life and the Challenge to History in Postwar France: Braudel, Lefebvre, Certeau,” *Diacritics* 33 (2003): 23-40.

¹⁷ Henri Lefebvre, “The everyday and everydayness,” in *Everyday Life: Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 7-11 (9).

¹⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *La somme et le reste I* (Paris: La Nef de Paris, 1959), 605.

¹⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *La survie du capitalisme: la re-production des rapports de production* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1973), 85; *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production* (trans. Frank Bryant; London: Allison & Busby, 1976), 88-89.

by capitalist forces, is such that present-day human persons are alienated²⁰—it should also be noted that Lefebvre himself suggested that the examination of the idea of everyday life in studies of different, premodern civilizations has often showed the absence of everyday life.²¹ My use of the concept of the everyday is not invariably linked to Lefebvre's Marxist critique of alienation/domination in contemporary everyday life. Rather I take 'the everyday' in a broader sense, associated with the ahistorical, pan-chronological concept of 'normality'/'everydayness' employed in ethnological sociology.²² One can thus speak about 'everydayness' equally in shamanistic societies and in Greco-Roman antiquity, as also in Lefebvre's contemporary, capitalist world of alienation.²³

Taking up the work of Henri Lefebvre, then, who shows how 'everyday life' is shaped by historically-situated, economic and political configurations, in this study I critique overlooked political aspects of early Christian discourse of *the Everyday*. While the study of 'the everyday' in antiquity is frequently employed as 'context' enabling a fuller reading, perhaps 'thick description', of ancient texts,²⁴ as the work of a number of cultural theorists makes particularly clear, and as I fancy

²⁰ See Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London/New York: Continuum, 2004), 112-13.

²¹ See Henri Lefebvre, *La vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), 60; idem, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (2nd rev. ed; trans. Sacha Rabinovitch; London/New York: Continuum, 2002), 29; cf. idem, *La fin de l'histoire* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1970), 155.

²² See, e.g., Marianne Gullestad, "The Transformation of the Norwegian Notion of Everyday Life," *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 3 (1991): 480-499; Peter Niedermüller, "Europäische Ethnologie: Deutungen, Optionen, Alternativen," in Konrad Köstlin, Peter Niedermüller, and Herbert Nikitsch, eds., *Die Wende als Wende? Orientierungen Europäischen Ethnologien nach 1989* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Ethnologie der Universität Wien 23; Vienna: Verlag des Instituts für Europäische Ethnologie, 2002) 27-62.

²³ See, e.g., implicit use of notions of 'the everyday' in some early Christian apologetics: Paul's epideictic rhetoric in 1 Cor 1.20-29, playing a paradoxical game with appearance and reality, converts charges of uncouth lack of refinement into valorization of simplicity and truth: "Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1 Cor 1.26); see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 111; Dale Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 147-49; L.L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (JSNTSup, 293; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005). Similarly, the astonishingly well-read third-century exegete Origen is happy to accept Celsus's criticism that Christians are "the *most uninstructed and bucolic yokels*...workers in wool in private houses, and to leather-cutters, and to fullers, and to the most rustic of humanity, who carefully incite young boys to wickedness, and women to forsake their fathers and teachers, and follow them," and then turn such notions to his advantage (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 3.55-56).

²⁴ See, e.g., Phillippe Ariès, Georges Duby, Paul Veyne, and Arthur Goldhammer, eds., *History of Private Life* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987-1991).

in this study, 'the everyday' is not simply a neutral label for a pre-existing, background reality, but is freighted down with layers of culturally-ambivalent meanings and associations. One of these associations is, of course, the contested category of *Gender*. As Rita Felski notes, "Long before the current interest in gender as performance, ethnographers such as Goffman were describing the performance of self in daily life and noting the socially constructed and conventional nature of our identities."²⁵ Such 'presentations' or 'performances' are for the most part automatic, conducted with a constant, but semi-conscious vigilance. Unless a specific problem emerges to demand our attention, we rarely pause to reflect upon the mundane (ritualized) practices around which much of our everyday life is organized. As Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann suggest, "our natural attitude of daily life is pervasively determined by a *pragmatic motive*."²⁶ Agnes Heller also insists on this point, claiming that it is impossible in principle to adopt a critical, self-reflexive attitude towards all aspects of everyday life: "we would simply not be able to survive in the multiplicity of everyday demands and everyday activities if all of them required inventive thinking...Disengagement is an indispensable precondition for...continued activity."²⁷ Phenomenological studies of 'everyday life' (such as Goffman's) are concerned with description rather than explanation and thus do not address questions of politics and power. On the other hand, and perhaps influenced by modernist ideals of innovation and irony, other contemporary critical theorists have tended to (perhaps) over-politicize the routines of 'everyday life' in presenting the 'natural attitude' as nothing more than a vehicle of ideology. At its most extreme, this results in a denunciation of any form of fixity in favor of permanent flux: habit becomes the enemy of an 'authentic' life; 'the everyday' is either excoriated for its routine, mundane qualities, or celebrated while pretending that such qualities do not exist. In my own work on 'the everyday' in antiquity, I'm interested in *both* description *and* explanation: in describing mundane

²⁵ Rita Felski, "The Invention of Everyday Life," *Cool Moves* 39 (1999): 15-31 (27); referring generally to Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1959).

²⁶ Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World I* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 6, emphasis original.

²⁷ Agnes Heller, *Everyday Life* (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 129.

practices and notions around which much of ancient everyday life is organized (some of which is similar to our ‘everyday’ practices and notions; some of which is *very* different), and also in attempting to explain how ‘natural attitude(s)’ or ‘the everyday’ function as vehicles of ideology, and, more specifically, gender ideology. *Gender* and *the Everyday*, in antiquity as in contemporary life, go together.

However, the conventional, nostalgic association of ‘the everyday’ with ‘woman’ or ‘femininity’²⁸—as also with the ‘natural’, ‘authentic’, ‘primitive’—certainly will not do, as it promotes, among other horrors, a heroic myth of masculine transcendence.²⁹ So in this study I quite deliberately accentuate the (fore)grounding of men (Josephs) as culturally configured bodies, embedded subjects who live, for the most part, repetitive, familiar, ordinary lives dictated by ‘regulative discourses’ which code and guide *everyday* possibilities not only of *Gender*³⁰ but also of other ‘mutually multiplicative vectors’ of subjectivity.³¹ But perhaps I get ahead of myself. In short: masculine identity and performance is not somehow ‘above’ or ‘beyond the reach of’ ... ‘the everyday’.

²⁸ Lefebvre’s Euro-centric ‘critique of everyday life’ in particular has remained largely undertheorized with respect to particular social relations (gender, sexuality, and race to name but a few); see Eugene J. McCann, “Race, Protest, and Public Space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the US City,” *Antipode* 31, no. 2 (1999): 163-184; Virginia Blum and Heidi Nast, “Where’s the Difference? The Heterosexualization of Alterity in Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Lacan,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (1996): 559-80.

²⁹ Not to mention that such a romantic association also promotes a long chain of gendered, ideological dichotomies, no less familiar to/in an ancient context (active/passive, subject/object, master/servant, culture/nature, society/community, public/private), which deny women’s contemporaneity, self-consciousness and agency; see Felski, “The Invention of Everyday Life.”

³⁰ Judith Butler, e.g., has shown how sedimented (‘everyday’) practices are the means by which repressive regime of gender do their work; see *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York; London: Routledge, 1990), 171-190; idem, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993), 95.

³¹ The term *intersectionality*, coined by the legal scholar Kimberlé W. Crenshaw (“Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6. [1991]: 1241–1299), entails “the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually multiplicative vectors of race, gender, class, sexuality, and imperialism,” and has emerged as a key theoretical lens in critical feminist and race studies for exploring the interactive complexity of the social and discursive relations of inequality within and across analytical categories and (ultimately) for subverting race/gender and other binaries of domination. See Sally Hasslanger, “Gender and Race: [What] Are They? [What] Do We Want Them To Be?” *Nous* 34 (2000): 31-55; Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality,” *Signs* 30, no. 3 (2005): 1771-1800; Marcia Texler Segal and Theresa A. Martinez, eds., *Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class: Readings for a Changing Landscape* (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2007); Jennifer C. Nash, “Rethinking Intersectionality,” *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1-15; and Bonnie Thornton Dill and Ruth E Zambrana, eds., *Emerging Intersections: Race, Class, and Gender in Theory, Policy, and Practice* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009). Recently, Laura Nasrallah and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, eds., *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), have suggested that intersectionality can provide a critical framework and lens for the critical explorations of race, gender, ethnicity, and empire in Early Christian studies.

1.1.3 *Gender and...*

My own approach to questions of gender in early Joseph texts, as much as the approaches employed by my scholarly predecessors, necessarily emerges from a particular sociocultural and intellectual context. Far from being exhaustive, the theorists that I discuss below represent, for me, exemplary models that also illustrate important elements of my own gender-critical approach.

In setting forth the historical and cultural genealogy of my particular approach within the larger framework of study in the humanities, then, I select Michel Foucault (1926-1984) as the place to start, in large part because of his emphasis on how knowledge is produced by and within specific social contexts. That is, for Foucault, ideas, while often taken as ‘givens’ or ‘natural’ in a particular society, are actually products of socio-historical processes.³² ‘Ideas’ can only be understood within the context of the social, cultural, and linguistic elements of the specific societies and historical

³² I take to heart Gary Gutting’s warning that any attempt to single out some comprehensive unity or definitive achievement that is thought to provide the key to Foucault’s work is “guaranteed to distort his thought,” because his thought is “at root ad hoc, fragmentary, and incomplete. Each of his books is determined by concerns and approaches specific to it and should not be understood as developing or deploying a theory or a method that is a general instrument of intellectual progress”; “Introduction. Michel Foucault: A User’s Manual,” in Gary Gutting, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-28 (1-2). Nevertheless, Foucault’s challenge to the presumed “naturalness” of concepts, such as madness and sexuality, has been of signal importance to the reconceptualization of history; see, e.g. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972 [1969]), 179, commenting on his book *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); see Jeffrey Weeks, “Uses and Abuses of Michel Foucault,” in Lisa Appignanesi, ed., *Ideas from France: The Legacy of French Theory* (London: Free Association Books, 1985), 22. Such ‘naturalized’ concepts he deemed “metaphysical,” and believed they could be categorized differently in other times, places, and practices. In Roger Chartier’s view, Foucault’s denaturalization of such objects may well be his revolutionary contribution to history; he taught historians to recognize that “behind the lazy convenience of vocabulary...are singular demarcations, specific distributions, and particular “positivities” produced by differentiated practices that construct figures (of knowledge or of power) irreducible to one another (Roger Chartier, “The Chimera of the Origin: Archaeology, Cultural History, and the French Revolution,” in *On the Edge of The Cliff: History, Language, and Practices*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins Press, 1997), 51-71 (69-70).

epochs (the epistemological field or *episteme*) with which knowledge is intrinsically interwoven.³³ While Foucault and those influenced by his work have been thoroughly critiqued by some feminist scholars, his analytical model remains foundational for contemporary studies of gender, sex, and sexuality.³⁴ With his three-volume *History of Sexuality*,³⁵ which elaborates on the modern understanding of sexuality by tracing out a “history of the present” or “genealogy” of the discourses that contributed to Western perceptions,³⁶ Foucault was one of the first to dislodge in a systematic manner the notion that sex and gender are fixed, natural categories. In my approach in this study, then, and in contrast to his major critics, I believe that Foucault is more helpful for his analytical

³³ Foucault prompted historians to explore the conditions of possibility for ways of thought that become dominant in an historical period: what are thinkers of a given era prohibited from saying, what is the “unspoken” that attends their writing? Especially in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1970 [1966]) (see, e.g., xxii), Foucault explored how an *episteme* develops: on what basis, he asked, do certain kinds of knowledge arise within various historical eras; see also idem, *Archaeology*, 191-192. See also Michel de Certeau, “The Black Sun of Language,” in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, *Theory and History of Literature* 17 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 171-184 (173). Hayden White reads Foucault’s *epistemes* as a theory of “tropes”; see Hayden White, “Foucault’s Discourse: The Historiography of Anti-Humanism” [1979], in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University, 1987), 116; and idem, “Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground,” in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) 32.

³⁴ Foucault’s conclusions about the way in which the sexual act was to be read in antiquity (as a function of social and economic relations rather than desire and/or passion) have been critiqued by a number of classicists who contend with his generalizations and male-centered constructions of the subject. Perhaps most significantly, feminist scholars have criticized the phallogocentric (the privileging of the *phallus* or male/masculine hegemony in constructing discourses and construing meanings) interpretation offered by Foucault. See Sandra Lee Bartky, “Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power,” in Lee Quinby and Irene Diamond, eds., *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 61-86; Simon Goldhill, *Foucault’s Virginité: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Lin Foxhall, “Pandora Unbound: A Feminist Critique of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*,” and Amy Richlin, “Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*: A Useful Theory for Women?” both in David H. J. Larmour, Paul Allen Miller, and Charles Platter, eds., *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 122-137 and 138-70, respectively.

³⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*; vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure*; and vol. 3, *The Care of the Self* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990; 1986; 1988).

³⁶ Foucault’s genealogical method can be understood in terms of his desire to write histories of the present. As Gary Gutting notes (“Foucault’s Genealogical Method,” in Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein, eds., *The Philosophy of the Human Sciences*, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 15 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 327-344), in one use of the term, Foucault simply identifies genealogy with history of the present, regarding it as any effort to question the necessity of dominant categories and procedures. More narrowly, with “genealogy,” a Nietzschean concept, Foucault aims to show the contingency of what history has given us, indicating that cultural and social ideas, practices, and institutions have long, often convoluted histories (genealogies); see, e.g., Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse” (Foucault’s Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France, December 2, 1970 [1971]), trans. in his *Archaeology*, 233-234; and idem, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” [1971], trans. in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139-164 (142). Foucault’s turn to “genealogy” also marked his turn to the body; see Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 148; and idem, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1979), 25.

model than for the accuracy of his specific historical and sociocultural observations and conclusions.³⁷ In particular, with his focus on the links between discourse, power and knowledge in relation to the categories of gender, sex, and sexuality, Foucault provides a useful theoretical framework for the analysis of early Christian texts.

Engaged with and impelled by insights garnered from some of Foucault's work, then, my study is founded on the conviction that gender and the related categories of sex and sexuality are deeply embedded and entangled in the symbolic systems and power structures of any culture and are therefore open to analysis, critique, and deconstruction. While there is a certain continuity to human experience, the meaning of that experience (and the articulation of it) is linguistically constructed and therefore contextually determined—the categories of gender, sex, and sexuality are not essential, natural, or normative but are given meaning in specific sociocultural and historical contexts.³⁸ Ancient Greeks,³⁹ Romans,⁴⁰ Jews,⁴¹ and Christians⁴² were no exception, and each of these (at times, overlapping) groups articulated what it meant to be male or female in relationship to other culturally and discursively constructed categories of difference, such as kinship, age cohort,

³⁷ See the "Introduction," in Golden and Toohey, *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 7-8, 10-11, for a summary of both the impact and the criticism of Foucault's observations on the ancient world, especially his failure to draw distinctions (Athens was not all of Greece; the classical period diverged from the archaic; vases and literary sources conflict; varying views prevailed in terrain which was contested; class counts; Rome was not Greece). See also David Cohen and Richard Saller, "Foucault on Sexuality in Greco-Roman Antiquity," in Jan Ellen Goldstein, ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA : Blackwell, 1994), 35-59.

³⁸ Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, eds., *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Judith Lorber and Susan A. Farrell, eds., *The Social Construction of Gender* (London: Sage, 1991); Sherry B. Ortner, *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon, 1996); and Myra Marx Ferree, Judith Lorber, and Beth B. Hess, *Revisioning Gender* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1999).

³⁹ See, e.g., Jill Dubish, *Gender and Power in Rural Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, trans. Cormac Ó Cuilleánáin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Karen Bassi, *Acting Like Men: Gender, Drama, and Nostalgia in Ancient Greece* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Francesca Santoro L'Hoir, *The Rhetoric of Gender Terms: "Man," "Woman," and the Portrayal of Character in Latin Prose* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Carlin Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); and Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and idem, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Michael Satlow, "'Try to Be a Man': The Rabbinic Construction of Masculinity," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996): 19-40.

⁴² See, e.g., Virginia Burrus, *'Begotten, Not Made': Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*; Jorunn Økland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space*, JSNTSup 269 (London: New York: T & T Clark, 2004).

sexual preference, socioeconomic status, and race or ethnicity. While early Joseph representations took shape within these broader cultural spheres, from which categories and language were drawn to formulate rhetorical strategies and bodily identities, these contexts are not easy to define and delimit. As Edward Said has demonstrated in his work on *Orientalism*, “cultures are not uniform, but rather complex entities, and gendered and sexed facets can only be teased out with the most sophisticated and nuanced of analytical tools.”⁴³ My analysis aims at appreciating more fully the ways in which such cultures form hybrid and porous entities and affirms that identities are shifting and morphing, always in the process of becoming rather than having an essentialist core. Thus, in this study, I explore and critique the correspondences and divergences among the gendered, sexed, and sexualized ideals that such overlapping ancient cultural groups constructed, looking at how these ideals manifest in early discursive representations of Joseph.

If Foucault’s work was fundamental for raising awareness of how knowledge is socially and historically constructed and produced, including emphasizing the decisive role that discourse performs in that operation, then in more recent scholarship it was the work of Judith Butler that served to advance and deepen numerous insights related to sex and gender that Foucault had initiated. While Foucault sought to explain how the idea of sex as a system of regulation and control arose, Butler is more concerned to dismantle it.⁴⁴ As a result, Butler’s work lends itself much more readily to scholars with an ideology-critical and political edge in their academic inquiry, particularly in terms of her work on deconstructing a binary system of thinking about gender, sex, and sexuality. Butler’s groundbreaking *Gender Trouble*, for example, builds on but also contests particular aspects of Foucault’s work to argue for a performative theory of gender.⁴⁵ From this perspective gender is something one *does* rather than something one *is*. In Butler’s now often-quoted words, “Gender

⁴³ Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner, *Contextualizing Gender in Early Christian Discourse: Thinking Beyond Thecla* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 31; discussing Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

⁴⁴ Even if Butler also seems to miss or ignore the concepts of *technology* and *strategy* which form a key part of Foucault’s thinking; see Kathleen Ennis, *Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: Troubling Butler’s Appropriation of Foucault’s Work* (Ph.D. diss: Warwick University, 2007).

⁴⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts.”⁴⁶ This insight has proved enormously useful in considering the ways that ‘gender is performance’ in various times and places, including the Roman imperial period, in which my study is located.⁴⁷ Moreover, such an approach has made possible an awareness of how “normative” gender performances function in a given culture with respect to other marginalized articulations of gender, as I explain in more detail below.

At a basic level, my study is also aligned with the recent reconfiguration of gender studies, which now takes the sociocultural and discursive construction and performance of *men’s* roles and *masculinity* to be no less important ideologically than that of *women’s* roles and *femininity*.⁴⁸ Whereas much feminist scholarship and women’s studies has tended to center on the analysis and recovery of women in the past and present, a more broadly-conceived gender studies has widened the scope to the larger sociocultural context and the political uses of “sex” and “gender,” emphasizing a more

⁴⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 140.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., the appropriation of Butler’s work on *performance* by Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton University Press, 1995); Erik Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); and in the collected volume Thorsten Fögen, Mireille M. Lee, eds., *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), esp. Thorsten Fögen, “Sermo corporis: Ancient Reflections on gestus, vultus and vox,” 15-44; Nancy Worman, “Bodies and Topographies in Ancient Stylistic Theory,” 45-62; and Charles Pazdernik, “Paying Attention to the Man Behind the Curtain: Disclosing and Withholding the Imperial Presence in Justinianic Constantinople,” 63-86.

⁴⁸ Across the humanities and social sciences, the literature on masculinity is vast. For example, Michael Flood, ed., *The Men’s Bibliography: A Comprehensive Bibliography of Writing on Men, Masculinities, Gender, and Sexualities*, 19th ed., <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net> (accessed August 1, 2011), lists about 22,400 books and articles, sorted into nearly forty subject areas. See also Michael Flood, Judith Kegan Gardiner, Bob Pease, & Keith Pringle, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2007); and Diederik F. Janssen, ed., *International Guide to Literature on Masculinity: A Bibliography* (Harriman, Tenn.: Men’s Studies Press, 2008). As with feminist studies, current publications with an interest in masculinity studies reach across multiple disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Some of the early works include Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men’s Studies* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987); David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994).

diverse range of gendered and sexed identities in the process.⁴⁹ As a result, masculinity has become included as an important component of gender-critical analysis.

Although many feminist scholars have been, and continue to be, suspicious of a move that seemingly puts men at the center,⁵⁰ and while “the extent to which the study of men or masculinity is rooted in the political-theoretical critique of feminism varies,” as Virginia Burrus notes, “the very awareness that manhood can, indeed *must*, be rendered an object of critical analysis derives from feminist insights and potentially (if by no means inevitably) profits feminist goals.”⁵¹ In fact, much of the work that falls under the scope of men’s or masculinity studies, including the present study as I conceive of it, invites further description as allied- or pro-feminist projects.⁵² Of course, there is an inherent risk to a project that suspiciously locates men/masculinity (back) at the center, as Rachel Adams and David Savran indicate: “Unlike many of the fields that are its models and precursors, masculinity studies analyzes a dominant and oppressive class that has, arguably, always been the primary focus of scholarly attention.”⁵³ Though, as Stephen Moore notes, “if this is the risk of

⁴⁹ Stephen Boyd, e.g. credits the emergence of men’s or masculinity studies to the massive impetus provided by women’s studies and feminist studies to construe and analyze human existence as fundamentally and ineluctably *gendered* existence; see his “Trajectories in Men’s Studies in Religion: Theories, Methodologies, and Issues,” *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 7 (1992): 265-268 (265).

⁵⁰ Cf. Stephen D. Moore, “‘O Man, Who Art Thou...?’ Masculinity Studies and New Testament Studies,” in *New Testament Masculinities*, 1-22 (esp. 3-4), who highlights reasons why the interface between feminist and masculinity studies is not a friction-free zone; citing and discussing Kay Leigh Hagan, ed., *Women Respond to the Men’s Movement: A Feminist Collection* (San Francisco: Pandora, 1992); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Gender Criticism,” in Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn, eds., *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992), 271-302 (272); and Judith Kegan Gardiner, ed., *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁵¹ Virginia Burrus, “Mapping as Metamorphosis: Initial Reflections on Gender and Ancient Religious Discourses,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourse* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1-10 (2).

⁵² In partial answer to Tanya Modleski’s crucial question regarding men’s/masculinity studies, “What’s in these new developments for feminism and for women?”; see *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a ‘Postfeminist’ Age* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 5. Critique of gender inequality and mechanisms of power are at the centre of the study of masculinity, as of gender-critical studies more generally; see Michael S. Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1. Along with Vander Stichele and Penner, I see no fundamental conflict between feminist and gender criticism, “in that the two work in tandem, both functioning as destabilizing forces, in the academy and beyond, in their opposition to exclusionary ideologies and practices on the basis of discourses related to gender, sex, and sexuality” (*Contextualizing Gender*, 7).

⁵³ Rachel Adams and David Savran, eds., *The Masculinity Studies Reader* (Malden : Blackwell, 2002), 7.

masculinity studies, it is also its rationale.”⁵⁴ To persist in (dis)regarding masculinity as invisible, natural, the norm (especially in ancient religious discourse), is to continue to grant impunity to it and to reify its presence, while some of the aims of my work, aligned with other scholars working in the area of masculinity studies, are to reveal the deep instability of and indeed to dismantle early Christian “dominant fantasies of masculine power and plenitude.”⁵⁵

Especially pertinent for my study is the shift revealed in the work of scholars who have been influenced by changes in the perception of the relationship of gender and power. Though there is continuity with the feminist critique of patriarchal structures, in the framework of men’s studies, masculinity is more than just patriarchy. Rather, “masculinity is viewed as a sustained system of domination that is enacted by and on diverse individuals in a society, male and female alike,” and, in this sense, articulations or patterns of *masculinity* are embedded within more general notions of *power*.⁵⁶ Illustrative of this approach is Raewyn Connell’s analysis of “hegemonic masculinity,” which examines (in the modern period) “how some men [and women] inhabit positions of power and

⁵⁴ Stephen D. Moore, “Final Reflections on Biblical Masculinities,” in Ovidiu Creangă, ed., *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 240-255 (244).

⁵⁵ Kent L. Brintnall, *Ecce Homo: The Male-Body-In-Pain as Redemptive Figure* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 36. As Brintnall suggests, “Dominant fantasies of masculine power and plenitude depend on the display of the male body to secure their claim to truth, but display of the male body also reveals the striving behind this ideological construction.” I would argue that such ‘display’ of the male body/subject is not solely limited to contemporary visual culture, but applies equally to all such narrative characterizations, portrayals, descriptions, representations of the male body/subject in *ancient* texts as well. As such, I take Brintnall’s subsequent comments as applying equally to my ancient focus texts: “The deep instability of such display [of the male body] means that virtually any representation—including the suffering male body, which primarily signifies vulnerability, or the strong male body, which primarily signifies invulnerability—is open to another reading, another deployment, another signification. This slipperiness can be source of great pessimism and despair: almost any image can be recuperated to serve the prevailing system. Or, it can be a source of optimism and hope: almost any image can be interpreted to expose the lie of the dominant fiction. What remains true across the analyses, however, is that no representation is pure, no image has a unitary meaning, no depiction has a single effect. Any depiction must be examined on its own terms and, insofar as possible, reinscribed in the service of the project of dismantling hegemonic masculinity” (36). My hope is that the present study, at the very least, regards no Joseph ‘representation’ as pure, unitary, or with a single effect, and productively contributes in a small way to this overall deconstructive project of “dismantling hegemonic masculinity.” See also Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell, *Men in Perspective: Practice, Power, and Identity* (London; New York: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995), 2-3; Stephen Whitehead and Frank J Barrett, eds., *The Masculinities Reader* (Cambridge, UK: Polity; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

⁵⁶ Vander Stichele and Penner, *Contextualizing Gender*, 25. However, the proposed ‘naturalized’ or ‘incontrovertible’ relation between men and masculinity and the implicit masculinization of power has been problematized; Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, offers an excellent critique of this ‘natural’ association between ‘men’, ‘masculinity’, and ‘power’.

wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance.”⁵⁷ Connell contends that in the present-day globalized world institutions and organizations tend to be structured along the lines of modern conceptions of human biology/reproduction, much to the advantage of the “male sex.” For Connell, what consolidates control in the “hands of [some] men” are the shared gender assumptions sustained and nurtured by Western culture.⁵⁸ Much of the recent literature by scholars of gender theory, in fact, emphasizes the universalized or hegemonic masculine ideal in male-dominated human cultures, where the paradigm for understanding the dichotomy between the ideal and the less than ideal is frequently gendered: the masculine construed as central, perfect, and complete (the ideal); the feminine, in contrast, marginal, imperfect, and incomplete (the less-than).⁵⁹ Monique Wittig goes so far as to suggest that “indeed there are not two genders. There is only one: the feminine, the ‘masculine’ not being a gender. For the masculine is not the masculine but the general.”⁶⁰ Similarly, Judith Butler writes, “the feminine is ‘always’ the outside, and the outside is ‘always’ the feminine.”⁶¹ However, as Connell and friends observe, the “culturally exalted form of masculinity, the hegemonic model,...may only correspond to the actual characters of a small number of men” of any given society.⁶² That is, when masculinity is credited with all of the positive attributes of culture, only “a small number of men” can

⁵⁷ This term is first used in the sociological study by Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and John Lee, “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,” in Brod, *The Making of Masculinities*, 86. See also Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); and idem, *Masculinities*.

⁵⁸ Connell, *Masculinities*, 45-66, makes clear that these categories are cultural and that any appearance of biological foundationalism, which presumes that sexual differences are grounded in human biology, is a creation (and a fiction) of the discourse itself. This observation does not imply that biological differences do not exist, but it does suggest that the way that the “male sex” is classified and valued is misdirected.

⁵⁹ Within the framework of sexual difference between male and female, it is claimed, a whole range of dichotomies of human thought can be (and have been placed): culture/nature, mind/body, subject/object, good/evil, and self/other. Feminist and critical theorists have shown how such gendering (male/female) binary seems to undergird Western culture's entire phallogocentric discursive system (and not just in antiquity). See Sherry Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” *Feminist Studies* 1 (1972): 5-31; Nancy Jay, “Gender and Dichotomy,” *Feminist Studies* 7 (1981): 38-56; Sheila Ruth, “Bodies and Souls/Sex, Sin and the Senses in Patriarchy: A Study in Applied Dualism,” *Hypatia* 2 (1987): 149-63; Monique Wittig, “Homo Sum,” *Feminist Issues* 10 (1990): 3-11; Phyllis Rooney, “Gendered Reason: Sex Metaphor and Conceptions of Reason,” *Hypatia* 6 (1991): 77-103; and Andy Crockett, “Gorgias's *Encomium* of Helen: Violent Rhetoric or Radical Feminism?” *Rhetoric Review* 13 (Autumn, 1994): 71-90.

⁶⁰ Monique Wittig, “The Point of View: Universal or Particular?,” *Feminist Issues* 3 (1983): 63-69 (64).

⁶¹ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 48.

⁶² Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and John Lee, “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,” 92.

truly live up to that ideal—the category “man” is too artificial and idealized a construct to correspond to the personal identities of most men. For men in male-dominated societies, then, a dissonance in sex and gender often exists between “an idealized rhetoric of masculinity, on the one hand, and the limitations and restrictions that prevent any given man from realizing the ideal, on the other.”⁶³ Moreover, though individual men never easily measure up to an impossible standard of pure masculinity, dominant masculinity nevertheless keeps reproducing itself: “very large numbers of men are complicit in sustaining the hegemonic model.”⁶⁴ Such considerations of gender and power have proven especially useful for study of the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean world, where “man” and “male” are frequently situated at the center/head/front of discourses, institutions, and societies.⁶⁵ Indeed, as Michael Satlow aptly notes: “For once, the fact that the vast bulk of the surviving literature from late antiquity was authored by elite men can help in answering these questions. Whether fictional, poetic, philosophical, religious, or moralistic, this literature, almost all written by elite males, often presumes assumptions of manhood.”⁶⁶ The majority of extant ancient texts replicate, albeit in differing ways, the gendered and sexed power structures of (ancient) societies.

⁶³ Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, 3-4.

⁶⁴ Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and John Lee, “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,” 92.

⁶⁵ Some of the most innovative (and contentious) work in Classical Studies in recent years has in fact centered on Greek and Roman visions of masculine self-definition. See, e.g., David Halperin, *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, edited with John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); idem, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and other essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990); John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Gleason, *Making Men*; Amy Richlin, “Gender and Rhetoric: Producing Manhood in the Schools,” in William J. Dominik, ed., *Roman Eloquence: Rhetoric in Society and Literature* (London: Routledge, 1997), 90-110; Jonathan Walters “Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought,” in Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 29-46; Holt N. Parker, “The Teratogenic Grid,” in *Roman Sexualities*, 47-65; Lin Foxhall and John Salmon, *When Men were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998); idem, *Thinking Men: Masculinity and its Self-Representation in the Classical Tradition* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998); Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*; Mark Golden and Peter Toohey, eds., *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003); Ralph M. Rosen & Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Andreia: Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); and Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and The Roman Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). All of these books attend carefully, although not exclusively, to the cultural construction and construal of masculinity in antiquity.

⁶⁶ Satlow, “‘Try to Be a Man,’” 20.

Two models, largely constructed from Greek and Roman sources, are especially noteworthy here for their use by scholars in analyzing conceptions/patterns of gender/ing in the ancient world, especially the rhetoric of idealized/hegemonic masculinity, and in differentiating this ancient context from “our” own (accompanied at times by overly broad generalizations about what “our own prejudices” in “the modern West” are). The first, the so-called “one-sex/body” model articulated by Thomas Laqueur,⁶⁷ attempts to show how rather than a binary of two fixed and polar “opposite” sexes/bodies, “pre-modern Westerners” ranked bodies on a dynamic and hierarchical spectrum or gradient of relative ‘masculinities’—the ideal sex/body was deemed male and actual bodies were gendered as more or less perfect versions of the ideal male body.⁶⁸ Thus, according to Laqueur, on the positively valorized end of the spectrum were ‘true men’, fully and physically masculine; on the negatively valorized end, ‘true women’, lacking masculinity. Clustered in between were “middling” androgynous bodies—those that possessed masculine and less-perfectly masculine (that is, feminine) physical attributes. Laqueur’s “one-sex/body” model helps explain broader social conditions in antiquity,⁶⁹ but it also makes sense of specific ideas and practices in the ancient world, including

⁶⁷ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁶⁸ Alice Domurat Dreger advances Laqueur’s argument by describing the role of hermaphroditism in the invention and cultural maintenance of the two-sex model; see *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁶⁹ For example, Diana Swancutt has argued that “our system of body-naming is irrelevant for understanding that of the Romans and that the cultural hegemony of the two-sex body model has unwittingly led scholars to interpret tribadism in light of modern, Western (medicalized) “truths” about sex: that phallicized-women or androgynes do not exist; that girls cannot grow penises; that there are but two sexes; and that that is one of the most basic facts of nature.” See Diana Swancutt, “Still Before Sexuality: “Greek” Androgyny, the Roman Imperial Politics of Masculinity and the Roman Invention of the Tribas,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourse*, 11-62.

some possible analogues in early Christianity, such as the reoccurring notion that women need to ‘become males’ in order to receive salvation.⁷⁰

The other model, the so-called “teratogenic grid,” was developed *in nuce* by Sir Kenneth Dover⁷¹ (followed by Foucault, though for/with different aims⁷²), and has received further elaboration in the work of classicists such as David Halperin, John J. Winkler, Jonathan Walters and Holt N. Parker.⁷³ This model considers gender performance to be an essential component of ancient conceptions of the body. More specifically, in Parker’s discussion of the grid system, which is based on the Roman division of sex differentiation, performance of a sexual act, *penetration*, was the main means of defining and performing gender (offering a highly phallogocentric system of classification).⁷⁴ That is, sexual actions were identified as “active” or “passive”—based on the orifice (vagina, anus, mouth) a person penetrated or in which they were penetrated—and the names given to sexual actors identified their gender status: the ideals of the active male (*vir*) and the passive female (*femina/puella*) being counterbalanced by their deficient “opposites,” the passive male (*cinaedus*)

⁷⁰ Texts of the late Hellenistic era, Marilyn Skinner reminds us (“Ego mulier. The Construction of Male Sexuality in Catullus,” in J.P. Hallett and M.B. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997], 129-50), “are notorious for the phenomenon of ‘gender dissonance’: in virtually every literary genre, boundaries between ‘male’ and ‘female’ as essential categories of psycho-sexual identity fluctuate wildly and eventually break down” (129). Cf. Sheila Murnaghan, “How a Woman Can Be More Like a Man: The Dialogue between Isomachus and His Wife in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*,” *Helios* 15 (1988): 9-22. Early Christians’ persistent use of the myth/image of the *androgynē* seems to reflect such “gender dissonance” and may have allowed sexual categories to function in unexpected ways in early Christian literature, as they did in other Hellenistic literatures. Consider, for example, the now notorious logion with which the *Gospel of Thomas* ends (114): in response to Simon Peter urging his fellow male disciples, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life,” Jesus defends her by declaring, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven”; *Gospel of Thomas* 114; trans. T. O. Lambdin, *Gospel of Thomas*, in J. M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988); see also Antti Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Marvin Meyer, “Gospel of Thomas Saying 114 Revisited,” in *Secret Gospels: Essays on Thomas and the Secret Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 96-108. Or, the climactic vision vouchsafed to the Christian martyr Perpetua, according to the “prison diary” contained in the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*, where, in the vision, Perpetua is led into the arena to confront her opponent, an Egyptian “of vicious appearance.” “My clothes were stripped off,” she reports, “and suddenly I was a man” (ἐγενήθην ἄρρην). Similar examples could be multiplied; see sources cited above, n. 4.

⁷¹ Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

⁷² Cf. Foucault, *History of Sexuality* III.26-36.

⁷³ See sources cited above, at n. 65.

⁷⁴ Roman “sexualities” are conventionally defined not by the biological sex of one’s partner but by “its method of assigning identity—upon discrete [sexual] practices.” Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 18; citing Parker, “Teratogenic Grid,” *Roman Sexualities*, 47-65.

pathicus) and the active female (*virago/tribas/moecha*). Much the same has also been suggested for ancient Greece: David Halperin's crucial insight was precisely that ancient Greek sex acts, "active" and "passive," were gendered "masculine" and "feminine," respectively.⁷⁵ Parker adds that in Roman sexual ideology "'active' is *by definition* male and 'passive' is *by definition* female."⁷⁶ Thus, *penetration* becomes the normative feature of the grid system—all else is defined in relationship to the centrality of the male/phallus (the metaphorical representation of hegemonic male power): since reception was by definition womanly, for a man to allow himself to be identified as receptive or penetrated, was to make himself, to varying degrees, a "not-man." A "real" man was to be an "impenetrable penetrator," an indomitable dominator.⁷⁷ Furthermore, because masculinity was a matter of perception (of self and others) rather than something innate, men were challenged with establishing their manliness and maintaining it in competition with other men, in order to avoid sliding down the scale of feminization. As Matthew Kuefler notes in his discussion of (the uncertainties inherent in) ancient conceptions of the performative and competitive nature of masculinity:

For one man to describe another as unmanly or effeminate, then, not only condemns the other man as inferior but also distances him from the one doing the describing. In the denunciation of unmanliness, the speaker in the same breath insists on his own manliness (not only to himself, but also to all of his listeners). To the careful listener, however, he reveals his own doubts about his own manliness, about his ability to live up to the impossible ideal set for him as a man, about his claim to exercise authority legitimately. Accordingly, he intensifies his denunciation of unmanliness in other men, comparing himself favorably to the men around him so as to preserve his own masculine "self" intact.⁷⁸

Manliness, then, was something that had to be established and constantly reaffirmed by *performance*—most crucially in the competitive fields of the gymnasium, the battlefield, and rhetorical education

⁷⁵ Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 15-16.

⁷⁶ Parker, "Teratogenic Grid," 48 (emphasis original).

⁷⁷ Walters, "Invading the Roman Body," 30, 32, 41.

⁷⁸ Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, 3-4.

and public allocution⁷⁹—and *self-monitoring*—“a self-monitoring often accomplished by monitoring others.”⁸⁰

While both of these models illuminate a variety of data, creating a framework for analyzing conceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality in the ancient (elite, Greek and Roman, male) world—especially the rhetoric of idealized/hegemonic masculinity—, and in differentiating this ancient context from “our” own, at the same time, one should interrogate their historical referentiality. While the two models are useful for forming a heuristic lens, I handle them cautiously in this study, not forcing them in one direction or another, employing them too rigidly, nor taking them as “factual” representations of the past.⁸¹ Moreover, as I have already noted, one has to bear in mind that these models are constructed primarily from Greek and Roman sources. The models thus tend to reify imperial patterns/conceptions and do not sufficiently take into account the fluidity of its margins (and its borders)—other conceptions (e.g. Judaeon, Parthian, Egyptian, etc.) related to

⁷⁹ See Gleason, *Making Men*; Rosen & Sluiter, *Andria*; McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*. Personal dignity, bodily integrity, and specific details of one's appearance were also factors in individual self-assessment and in men's (homosocial) evaluation of one another's masculinity.

⁸⁰ Patrick Hopkins, “Gender Treachery: Homophobia, Masculinity, and Threatened Identities,” in Larry May and Robert A. Strikwerda, eds., *Rethinking Masculinity: Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992), 123. See also Joseph Pleck, *The Myth of Masculinity*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984).

⁸¹ With respect to Laqueur's model, for instance, there are elements of a “two-sex” model even in the ancient world. As Meryl Altman & Keith Nightenhelser in a review of Laqueur's book (“Making Sex (Review),” *Postmodern Culture* 2, no. 3 [1992]) suggest that “in directing his attention so exclusively to the ‘scientific’ discourses of the ancient world—rather than to, say, the pre-scientific ideology reflected in Hesiod, Semonides of Amourgos, and Aeschylus, which did elaborate differences of kind between two sexes—Laqueur has been anachronistically motivated by the modern assumption that sex differences really do come ‘first,’ that sexuality is the key to identity.” Even more to the point, since Laqueur's results are largely drawn from observations based on literary sources (which do not intend to provide a “handbook” of knowledge), one might wonder whether there is a complexity to each historical epoch that eludes Laqueur's more general interpretive framework: just how widespread were such conceptions in the ancient world, to what degree are we looking at elite perspectives, and how widely were these shared among the general populace of the specific time periods in question? See, e.g., Helen King, *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 11; and Rebecca Fleming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women: Gender, Nature, and Authority from Celsus to Galen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 120–21. With respect to the teratogenic grid, too, one might question the extent to which the ideal type was prevalent across the empire or even across diverse social classes among the Romans. For example, Maud Gleason (*Making Men*, 7) has shown how an *effeminate* orator (Favorinus, who celebrated his own status as a “eunuch who was yet accused of adultery”; see Philostratus, *Lives* 489) could employ a culturally shameful performance to his advantage, winning the audience's approval, an act that runs contrary to the normative expectations of the grid system.

gender, sex, and sexuality certainly circulated in the ancient world.⁸² Thus, while we have models and I make use of them in my analysis, I also explore their suitability to the sociocultural particularities of (other parts of) the ancient world, paying careful attention to the intersection of rhetoric and ideology in the process. Although early Christian texts rarely address the topic explicitly, as the work of such scholars as Virginia Burrus, Matthew Kuefler, and Colleen Conway has shown, there are numerous places within this literature that reveal assumptions and concerns about masculinity which sometimes (but not always) overlap with elite Greek and Roman (imperial-tinged) discourses.⁸³ In my analysis of early Joseph representations, then, while I place a significant accent on the discourse of idealized or hegemonic masculinity, exploring the goodness of fit of the available analytical models, I also attempt to “reckon with the complex overlay of ancient cultures especially in the eastern Mediterranean, and how the Roman elite dominated but adapted itself to Hellenistic Greek cultural patterns, which had merged in turn with earlier local Egyptian or Syrian or Jewish cultures, each with its own traditions, including ones concerning masculinity.”⁸⁴

In addition, I make use of a central topic in recent theoretical and (ancient) historical studies of masculinity (in the Western world): the rhetoric of a “masculinity in crisis” juxtaposed with the reality of stable and continuous (hegemonic) masculine power.⁸⁵ As Conway notes, evidence of threatened or unstable masculinity in the ancient Roman world, such as that identified by Foucault⁸⁶

⁸² Økland, *Women in Their Place*, 39-57, for example, discusses three other emic gender aetiologies (in addition to the ‘one-sex’ model—‘Adam-Eve’, ‘woman as fertile field’, and ‘Pandora’—, all of which, granted, also privilege *maleness* as the center or key reference value.

⁸³ See Burrus, *Begotten, Not Made*; Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*; Conway, *Behold the Man*.

⁸⁴ Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, 9. My focus texts (Matt, Luke, and PJ), while produced in the early Roman imperial period, ought to be located in marginal, socio-political ‘centers’ outside of Rome, whether in North Africa, Asia Minor or Palestine.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Brian Taylor, *Responding to Men in Crisis: Masculinities, Distress and the Postmodern Political Landscape* (London: Routledge, 2006); Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁸⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* III.50, identified a “crisis of subjectivity” brought on by a change in marriage practices and political structures in the imperial period.

and others,⁸⁷ is all situated in the context of a highly successful imperial masculine rule.⁸⁸ One way to make sense of this apparent paradox is to see “threat,” “failure,” and “instability” as an inherent part of the symbolic world of hegemonic masculinity, one of the ideological tools necessary for its maintenance.⁸⁹ That is, discourse of ‘inferior’ masculinity, alongside contradictory or contested expressions of manliness and worries about feminization that pervade the literature of the Roman Empire, including our early Joseph texts, may in fact contribute to the *strength* of the dominant masculine posture, functioning to relieve its stress and keep it standing, stable and erect.⁹⁰ Yet, as Mary Rose D’Angelo notes, “Imperial masculinities of the [first and] second century were by no means monolithic.”⁹¹ So, too, early Christian discourse, including our early Joseph texts, is “likewise involved in complex negotiations over the meanings of masculinity, negotiations that are more complex in that the households they rule and provide for often lie at or outside the horizon of imperial family values. Early Christian patterns of masculinity, then, should be expected to offer not uniformity but variations on themes.”⁹² Such ‘variations on themes’, dealing in the currency of ‘threatened’ and/or ‘agonistic’ homosocial performance, and other issues of power, are central to my

⁸⁷ Other scholars have suggested that in the emerging Roman Empire, changes in larger social structures under the Principate initiated a crisis for elite Roman men. See Carlin A. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Brent D. Shaw, “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 269-312; Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*; and Swancutt, “Still Before Sexuality.”

⁸⁸ Bryce Traister, “Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies,” *American Quarterly* 52 (2000): 274-304, has made essentially the same point, employing, in particular, North American masculinity studies as influenced by Butler’s performative gender theory.

⁸⁹ So, e.g., T. Edwards (*Cultures of Masculinity*, 24) argues that there is little evidence “to endorse an overall masculinity in crisis thesis other than to say that masculinity is perhaps partially constituted *as* crisis.”

⁹⁰ In this way, apparent contradictions need not indicate weakness in a system, but instead may contribute to its strength; see, e.g. Martin, “Contradictions of Masculinity,” 83-96; similarly Catherine Gallagher suggests that “under certain historical circumstances, the display of ideological contradictions is completely consonant with the maintenance of oppressive social relations” (“Marxism and the New Historicism,” in H. Aram Veesser, ed., *The New Historicism* [New York: Routledge, 1989], 44).

⁹¹ Mary Rose D’Angelo, “‘Knowing How to Preside over His Own Household’: Imperial Masculinity and Christian Asceticism in the Pastorals, Hermas, and Luke-Acts,” in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 265-295 (270).

⁹² D’Angelo, “‘Knowing How to Preside,’” 271.

gender-critical investigation of early Christian sources, which naturally expands, as well, to the broader, ‘everyday’ notion of colonialism and imperial authority.⁹³

While I do not adopt an overall “postcolonial” approach here, I have been influenced by the work of scholars who have combined postcolonial theory with a focus on gender. At least two elements that have emerged in such studies are operative throughout my project. The first is the acknowledgment that neither gender nor sexual difference operates independently of other structurings of power and other formations of identity or subjectivity. As Vander Stichele and Penner suggest, “gender, sex, and sexuality are concepts that are inextricably linked with all other facets that constitute a society system of classification and hierarchy, and they are just a few of the components in and through which power exerts its influence.”⁹⁴ Accordingly, my study examines these concepts within the broader network of identity construction and representation in the ancient world by employing a critical *intersectional* analytic—that is, analyzing how conceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality present in early Joseph texts are linked with other sociocultural means of creating and sustaining identities and hierarchies such as ethnicity, race and class.⁹⁵ Second, gender, sex, and sexuality are concepts that function in complex, and sometimes even contradictory or ambivalent, ways depending on the diverse ideological ends that they serve (and the manifold intersections made with other sociocultural aspects) in particular contexts. For example, ancient imperial iconography aggressively asserted Roman dominance as a triumph of masculinity, representing conquered ‘races’ or ‘nations’ as women or effeminate/hyper-masculinized males, displayed in images (coins, sculpture)

⁹³ On the connections and distinctions between the concepts of ‘imperialism’, ‘colonialism’, and ‘neo-colonialism’, and the general applicability of postcolonial theory to the Roman imperial context of early Christian discourse see R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 24-28; cf. Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 15-19, 25-29. On the intersection of ‘the everyday’ and ‘resistance’ to imperial hegemony, see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), whose interests in the ‘weapons of the weak’ and ‘hidden scripts’ highlight the importance of mundane, informal, diffuse and often individualistic responses to dominant/hegemonic ideologies.

⁹⁴ Penner and Vander Stichele, *Contextualizing Gender*, 30-31.

⁹⁵ See sources cited above at n. 31.

that frequently carry overtones of erotic subjugation;⁹⁶ meanwhile, discourses of colonized Roman subjects, including early Christians, not only competed with and/or resisted imperial masculinized hegemony, sometimes exhibiting subversive or counter-hegemonic gender constructions,⁹⁷ but also (and often simultaneously) appropriated or ‘mimicked’ many of its claims and strategies.⁹⁸ Indeed, notions of gender and sex are shaped in a variety of ways in the crucible of power relations produced within a colonial/imperial situation; the result is a complex and often convoluted construction of gendered identity for both colonizer and colonized (and there is not always an easy separation between the two).⁹⁹ The texts in which Joseph of Nazareth appears engage the context of Roman imperial rule with markedly dissimilar literary politics, accompanied by a range of complex (and often ambivalent) everyday confrontations with hegemonic patterns of masculinity—and this, as I suggest in my investigation, is one significant reason why we have such a spectrum of ‘average Joes’.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Cf. Davina Lopez, “Before Your Very Eyes: Roman Imperial Ideology, Gender Constructs and Paul’s Inter-Nationalism,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, *Mapping Gender*, 115-162.

⁹⁷ Cf. Judith Perkins, “The Rhetoric of the Maternal Body in the *Passion of Perpetua*,” in *Mapping Gender*, 313-332.

⁹⁸ Cf. Virginia Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance,” *Arethusa* 38 (2005) 49–88; and Eric Thurman, “Novel Men,” Chris Frilingos, “Wearing It Well: Gender at Work in the Shadow of Empire,” and Jennifer Knust, “Enslaved to Demons: Sex, Violence and the Apologies of Justin Martyr,” all in Penner and Vander Stichele, *Mapping Gender*, 185-230, 333-350, and 431-456, respectively; and, all of which, in one way or another, draw on Homi Bhabha’s notion of “mimicry” (*The Location of Culture* [New York: Routledge, 1994]), a term that denotes that subjects of colonialism both reproduce colonial discourses but also, in the process, destabilize those same discourses because repetition does not produce the identical discourse, but a distorted and impure form of the original. See also Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

⁹⁹ See Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995); and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁰⁰ I therefore carry forward some of Reidar Aasgaard’s notions regarding mechanisms governing Joseph of Nazareth’s characterization within and across these particular narratives—“factors reflected in and contributing to” character changes/developments in the “trajectory of the Joseph figure” (“Father and Child Reunion,” 1, 7)—highlighting in particular how contemporary views on everyday men and masculinity were shaped in part by configuring the complex relationship to Roman imperial hegemony.

1.1.4 *Early Christian Discourse*

The ways in which we have come to think about sexuality and gender in history have substantially changed since Michel Foucault suggested that such an analysis must be undertaken from the viewpoint of a history of discourses,¹⁰¹ and, accordingly, my use of the term *Discourse* rather than “writings,” “literature,” or even “narratives,” is meant to signal that I intend to stress the link between the textual material in this study and the power structures in which they are situated and with which they intersect.¹⁰² The focus of this study, specifically, is *Early Christian* discourse. In gathering/analyzing references to Joseph from both the canonical writings of the New Testament (the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke) and also an important early ‘para-canonical’ text, the *Protevangelium of James* (PJ),¹⁰³ I seek to excise the traditional privilege granted to canonical sources, endeavoring to provide a fuller basis for mapping early Christian dealings with *Gender and the Everyday* beyond conventionally designated authoritative and hegemonic sources and eras.

Because I believe these focus-text selections (from Matthew, Luke, and PJ) are sufficient to demonstrate the plurality of Joseph’s characterizations and differing gendered motivations behind those characterizations—and perhaps also owing to the obligatory limits of time and space for completing this project—I have left to the side other fascinating early characterizations of Joseph found in ancient and late antique Christian texts, including the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*,¹⁰⁴ the juicy

¹⁰¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 1.86.

¹⁰² Foucault’s *oeuvre* indeed offers a wealth of theoretical suggestions, both for conceptualizing discourse and for analyzing it in conjunction with knowledge, power, and the historical rise of institutions; see Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). The conjunction between the various (usually separated) elements is important: discourse cannot be isolated from the rest of Foucault’s arguments on knowledge, power, and institutions, nor from the complex ways in which he situates his arguments on an axis of synchronicity and history. As Jan Blommaert notes (*Discourse: A Critical Introduction* [Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 100): “Foucault presses us to see actually occurring discourse *as firmly and inextricably embedded in dimensions of social being and social organisation* that are often separated from it, and he forces us to see occurrences of discourse as intrinsically historical, as events that are occasioned and enabled by histories of becoming” (my emphasis).

¹⁰³ Émile de Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1961).

¹⁰⁴ Tony Chartrand-Burke, *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas: The Text, its Origins, and its Transmission* (Ph.D. diss: University of Toronto, 2001).

'Palm traditions' found in the *Ethiopic Liber Requitei* (Book of Mary's Repose),¹⁰⁵ Ephrem's *Hymn on the Nativity*,¹⁰⁶ the Marian verse homilies of Jacob of Serugh,¹⁰⁷ a number of the Syrian 'dispute poems' (*soghyatha*),¹⁰⁸ and the *History of Joseph the Carpenter*.¹⁰⁹ At any rate, I should also state that I conceive of the present study as *only* the first step of an ongoing investigation of the relationship between gendering of the everyday and the portrayals of Joseph of Nazareth in early Christian discourse.

While Luke and Matthew have been profitably read as analogues of 'ancient novels',¹¹⁰ this study will treat PJ, too, as an important example of early Christian *novelistic* literature.¹¹¹ Though PJ is certainly shorter than other writings categorized as ancient novels,¹¹² it is nonetheless part of the same literary thrust that emerged out of the cultural and political dislocation produced by Roman

¹⁰⁵ Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. 142-167, and Appendix A, "The Ethiopic *Liber Requitei*," 290-350.

¹⁰⁶ See *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (ed. and trans. Kathleen E. McVey; New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 77-79, 105, 108, 337, 339-341, 343, 350, 353.

¹⁰⁷ See Jacob of Serugh, *On the Mother of God* (ed. and trans. Mary Hansbury; Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998).

¹⁰⁸ Sebastian P. Brock, ed. *Sogiyatha: Syriac Dialogue Hymns* (The Syrian Churches Series 11; Kottayam: J. Vellian, 1987).

¹⁰⁹ Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, eds., *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 158-196.

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., Dennis R. MacDonald, "The Breasts of Hecuba and Those of the Daughters of Jerusalem: Luke's Transvaluation of a Famous Iliadic Scene," and J.R.C. Cousland, "The Choral Crowds in the Tragedy according to St. Matthew," in Jo-Ann A. Brant, Charles W. Hedrick, and Chris Shea, eds., *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian And Jewish Narrative* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 239-54 and 255-74, respectively. As noted and discussed by Thurman ("Novel Men," 188, n.10), "Ancient literary theory has no single generic concept for the texts now recognized as 'ancient novels,' but the terms 'romance' and 'novel' are still preferable to others, even if somewhat anachronistic and occasionally imprecise"; see Glen W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10-19; Christine M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 94-97; 101-104.

¹¹¹ The depreciation of apocryphal infancy stories was a generally accepted fact in current Western culture until not long ago, and this was not an attitude specific only to traditional NT scholars; see discussion in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Dettwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), xv-xxv. My consideration of PJ alongside the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is aligned with developments in the general perception/reception of Christian apocrypha (and de-privileging canonical texts) in recent work. In addition to Clivaz, et. al. eds., *Infancy Gospels*, see Michel Berder, "L'enfance de Jésus dans les évangiles canoniques et dans les apocryphes," in François-Marie Humann, Jacques-Noël Pérès, and Michel Berder, eds., *Les Apocryphes chrétiens des premiers siècles. Mémoire et traditions* (Théologie à l'université 7; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2009), 211-244 (211, n.2.); Jeremy Corley, ed., *New Perspectives on the Nativity* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009); Jörg Frey and Jens Schröter, eds., *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Beiträge zu ausserkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen* (WUNT 254; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

¹¹² As far as length goes, PJ might more properly be categorized as an ancient novella or novelette: Luke (ca. 19,482 words), Matthew (ca. 18,345 words), and Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale* (ca. 18,096 words), compared to PJ (ca. 5,632 words).

hegemony.¹¹³ Each of the focus texts of this study (Luke, Matthew, and PJ), then, like much of the contemporary literature produced by colonized Roman subjects, embody creative forms of resistance,¹¹⁴ partly by telling tales that disrupt ‘the “truth” or stability of any encompassing monolithic version of “history”’,¹¹⁵ but also by crafting symbolic boundaries of group identity and social norms across unstable terrain. As I endeavor to demonstrate in my investigation, a constitutive part of the ‘unstable terrain’ traversing in these texts entails the discursive *Making(s)* of ‘everyday’ men.

1.1.5 *The Making(s)*

Finally, my work also follows the reflexive turn that has characterized so many recent studies of gender and religion in the ancient world, one that admits, perhaps regretfully, that in search of a usable past for women’s participation in religion, scholars may have conflated desires with the evidence and are thus, as Ross Kraemer notes of Elizabeth Clark’s observations about the

¹¹³ Tim Whitmarsh, *Narrative and Identity in the Ancient Greek Novel: Returning Romance* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6-12. For example, in David Konstan’s reading of the second-century Greek ‘romances’, their dependent, distraught, and complaining lovers provide a contrast to the virtues of the epic hero (*Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994], 15-26) and also, as D’Angelo notes, “to the self-control and authority expected of a *paterfamilias*” (D’Angelo, “Knowing How to Preside,” 270); see also Ann Ellis Hanson, “The Roman Family,” and Maud Gleason, “Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire,” in David S. Potter and D. J. Mattingly, eds., *Life, Death and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 19-66 (29) and 67-84 (69-73), respectively. As Perkins (*The Suffering Self*, 72-76) suggests, the Greek novels resolve this opposition primarily by their teleological drive toward a marriage that affirms the authority of family, city, and empire; see also Brigitte Egger, “Women and Marriage in the Greek Novels: The Boundaries of Romance,” in James Tatum, ed., *Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 260-80.

¹¹⁴ Many studies of gospel literature as ancient fiction typically address formal literary questions—see, e.g., Oliver Ehlen, *Leitbilder und romanhafte Züge in apokryphen Evangelientexten: Untersuchungen zur Motivid und Erzählstruktur* (anhand des Protevangelium Jacobi und der Acta Pilati Graec. B) (Alterumswissenschaftliches Kolloquium 9; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2009), who employs the categories of ‘point of view’ and ‘alternation technique’ used by Tomas Hägg, and ‘focalisation’ used by Gérard Genette, to show that the author of PJ methodically borrowed narration techniques developed by the ancient Greek novelists of Chariton and Achilleus Tatius. Cf. Ronald Hock, “The Greek Novel,” in David E. Aune, ed., *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 127-46; and Richard Pervo, “Early Christian Fiction,” in J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman, eds., *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 239-54. In my investigation, I am more interested in specific aspects of ambivalently constructed religious and cultural identities (in particular, the category of *gender*) that make a showing “across *our* texts and *theirs*” (Burrus, “Mapping as Metamorphosis,” 10, emphasis original)—that is, in ‘early Christian’ (*ours*) and Jewish, Greek, Roman, etc. (*theirs*) novelistic literature.

¹¹⁵ Virginia Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles,” in Fernando F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 133-155 (145).

construction of gender in the ancient world, much less sanguine about extracting any kind of “reliable” history of women’s religion from texts and even inscriptional evidence that are infused with a “history of ideas about gender” and the use of gender in the ancient rhetoric of power.¹¹⁶ The hope is that my work attends carefully to the degree to which the rhetorical uses of gender obscure our vision of the past. Any (feminist or other) reconstruction of ‘Mediterranean’ Greco-Roman religious activity for women or men, including that of Judaism or Christianity in their formative eras, needs to take into account the fact that any discourse about gender is a *constructed* (or indeed *Made*) discourse and does not enable us to derive a ‘historical’ picture of men and/or women.

Thus, my interest in examining the ways in which Joseph’s early characterizations achieve, critique and/or transform coeval cultural notions of masculinity also shares many of the concerns and assumptions of what Elizabeth Clark has described as a new “theoretically oriented intellectual history”¹¹⁷—a study of history framed in terms of the “linguistic turn,”¹¹⁸ owing to the insights of Dominic LaCapra, Michel de Certeau, Roger Chartier, and Michel Foucault, and emphasizing “discontinuity, ideology, and power”¹¹⁹:

¹¹⁶ Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Unreliable Witnesses: Religion, Gender, and History in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7. See also L. Stephanie Cobb, “Real Women or Objects of Discourse? The Search for Early Christian Women,” *Religion Compass* 3, no. 3 (2009): 379-94 who discusses, e.g., Virginia Burrus, “‘Equipped for Victory’: Ambrose and the Gendering of Orthodoxy,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4, no. 4 (1996): 461-76; Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Ross Kraemer and Shira Lander, “Perpetua and Felicitas,” in Philip Francis Esler, ed., *Early Christian World 2* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 1048–68.

¹¹⁷ As proposed in Dominick La Capra, *History and Criticism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); see also Martin Jay, “Should Intellectual History Take a Linguistic Turn? Reflections on the Habermas-Gadamer Debate,” in Dominick LaCapra and Seven L. Kaplan, eds., *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 86-110.

¹¹⁸ The impulses promoting the “linguistic turn”—a flight from “reality” to language as the constitutive agent of human consciousness and the social production of meaning—have come from several directions. Chief among them was the rise of structural linguistics (Ferdinand de Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959]) and continuing with the successive emergence of structuralism, semiotics, and poststructuralism, especially in its deconstructionist guise. See John E. Toews, “Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience,” *American Historical Review* 92 (1987): 879-907.

¹¹⁹ Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 6. Clark discusses at length (“The New Intellectual History,” Chapter 6 of *History, Theory, Text*, 106-129) the works of Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); idem, *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies*; idem, *The Mystic Fable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff*; and Michel Foucault, *Archaeology*; idem, *Dits et écrits, 1954-1988*, Daniel Defert and François Ewald, eds., 4 vols. (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1994); and idem, *The Order of Things*.

Such histories should acknowledge that, as intellectual constructions, they differ from “the past,” vanished and now available only through “traces,” and that no historical construction is “politically innocent” but is driven by the problems and questions set by the historian in the present. Learning from structuralism and poststructuralism, such studies look less to historical continuity (and hence to the nostalgia for the past that such histories often encourage) than to discontinuity, noting both breaks in the larger historical order and the gaps, absences, aporias, and contradictions in texts. They eschew “grand narratives” that often mask ideological presuppositions, as well as categories such as “experience” if understood as a foundational court of appeal. They implicitly or explicitly acknowledge that a correspondence theory of verification is untenable, and that their own representations are not to be confused with reference. They recognize that contexts are often multiple or unknown, and are variously constructed by different readers . . . [who] look to the site of the text’s production and to the text’s own productivity.¹²⁰

Critical for this stripe of (poststructural) history is the recognition that interposed between the “real” of past time and a historian’s study of it are two necessary and inescapable barriers. On the one hand, the “archive,” or all the stuff and matter that can be turned into “facts” and “evidence,” *represents* the past to us—our sources do not provide us with an objective description of “the past,” but contextualize raw data for us in a variety of ways (even as they have the semblance of presenting “reality,” “factuality,” and “actuality”).¹²¹ On the other hand, it is the historian’s *interventions* that impart coherent narrative or interpretive form to the “archive”—the historian’s interpretive framework narrativizes that stuff and matter and determines, at least in part, its meaning.¹²² While in employing a gender-critical approach I do not seek to erase *real* women and men from history, I

¹²⁰ Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 7-8.

¹²¹ Dominick LaCapra, e.g., questions how reading texts as if they were “simply sources of information” fails to recognize texts as “important events in their own right” and to ask the more “‘rhetorical’ question of how texts do what they do”; see Dominick LaCapra, “Rhetoric and History,” in *History and Criticism*, 19-20, 38. Thus, according to LaCapra, the argument sometimes advanced by social and economic historians that *they* work on “documents” giving access to “the real,” unlike “texts” of a more literary nature, should be rejected: *all* historians work on texts (Clark, *History, Theory, Text* 127). LaCapra’s basic objection is to a model of “reading” in which the historian takes context as decisive and relegates texts to subordinate status; see Dominick LaCapra, “History, Language, and Reading: Waiting for Crillon,” *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (1995): 799-828 (804, 807, 808). Against this model, LaCapra urges intellectual historians to abandon the notion of “context” as “a simple explanatory concept,” and rather to ask how texts and contexts come into relation with each other; LaCapra, “Introduction,” in his *Soundings* 7.

¹²² The key early influence here was Hayden White, whose *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), argued that all works of history, even when adhering single-mindedly to the rules of evidence, standards of objectivity, and a ‘scientific’ method, are constructed nonetheless around predictable narratological and rhetorical forms.

do emphasize the difficulty of making the move from representation(s)—*Making(s)*—to reality. As Geoff Eley writes,

Of course, the ‘real past’ is not a figment of our imagination. But that past is simply not reachable or self-evident as such: if the past has actually existed, it can never acquire meaning until the historian begins shaping it as history. In other words, we need to distinguish between the past traces of an earlier time (the past-as-history) and the labours of reconstruction which inscribe those traces with meaning (history-as-knowledge). The one is never attainable *except* by the mediation of the other, and consequently the knowledge historians deliver can only ever be partial, provisional, and decisively prefigured by the historian’s complex particularities of outlook.¹²³

We impart meaning to concepts from the ancient world, then, at least in part, by our articulation of that same entity in our own world and particular interpretive *place*.¹²⁴ “We thus tend to receive ancient images and concepts based on meanings we are familiar with, that is, in terms of what makes sense to us. In this way, not only do we tend to configure ancient meanings in light of our modern ones, but we also blend various concepts from the ancient world with our own, creating in the process a hybrid mixture of ancient and modern categories.”¹²⁵

Despite these acknowledged interpretive fetters, I nevertheless choose to emphasize (ancient) texts as socially and culturally constructed products and performances. Like other theoretically-oriented historians, even those committed in principle to a thoroughgoing poststructuralism, I embrace an “unavoidable double gesture,” social/intellectual approach to texts.¹²⁶ That is, I deliberately engage *both* ‘the site of the text’s production’, attempting to grasp the social conditions of possibility that gave rise to the characters, plots, and relationships encountered in early Joseph texts, *and* examine ‘the text’s own productivity’, analyzing how sociocultural materials serve to solidify the gendered, sexed, and sexualized ideologies of early Joseph texts and their distribution and

¹²³ Geoff Eley, “Peace in the Neighbourhood,” *Left History* 12 (2007): 111-125.

¹²⁴ See, for example, the two volume collection of essays that highlights the difference that social location makes for interpretation: Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., *Reading from this Place*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

¹²⁵ Penner and Vander Stichele, *Contextualizing Gender*, 184.

¹²⁶ Gabrielle Spiegel, “For a Postmodern Premodernity,” *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 244-251 (250). In this way, I see myself aligned in some way with Louis Montrose’s program for *New Historicism* as a practice that recognizes the “historicity of texts and the textuality of history”; see his “Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture,” in *The New Historicism*, 15-36 (20).

configuration of power structures through discourse.¹²⁷ Even if my sympathies are consistently drawn toward stronger versions of *textuality*—reading texts first as literary and rhetorical compositions before reading them as sources of social data—I still seek ways *back* and *out* from the text to its contexts of social production. In this way I align myself with Elizabeth Clark (and others), affirming that the literary productions of early Christians, who struggled to overcome the contradictions and fill in the gaps in biblical texts (among other things), “reveal problems and aporias that signal for modern readers the textual and extra-textual conflicts in which these writers were mired.”¹²⁸ Moreover, as a critical element of both the social and cultural knowledge of local contexts in antiquity, I see conceptions of gender playing a key role in these ‘textual and extra-textual conflicts’¹²⁹—gendered language and images, interwoven and interacting with multiple social locations, are employed throughout ancient Christian texts in both overt and more implicit ways to bolster rhetoric or argumentation and thereby contribute to and often become part of their larger ideological aims.

I therefore continue to value *historical* analysis in my gender-critical approach, but because my aim in this study is to examine the ways in which gender (and sex and sexuality) is used in early Christian *discursive* frameworks, at the same time I understand by “historical” the sociocultural contexts of the rhetoric and ideology of the text itself (rather than the people and places mentioned in the text). Moreover, rather than assuming that texts simply reflect historical reality, I follow literary critics in considering how texts take part in the construction of reality: both in the past and in the present, “texts participate in the construction of the cultural system rather than stand as fixed

¹²⁷ See Louis Montrose, “The Poetics and Politics of Culture,” 23-24: “Current practices emphasize both the relative autonomy of specific discourses and their capacity to impact upon the social formation, to make things happen by shaping the subjectivities of social beings. Thus, to speak of the social production of “literature” or of any particular text is to signify not only that it is socially produced but also that it is socially productive—that it is the product of work and that it performs work in the process of being written, enacted, or read.”

¹²⁸ Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, 179.

¹²⁹ Joan W. Scott has long insisted that gender must be understood as no more or less than a category of knowledge, “a way of organizing the world,” which is manifested equally in the factual and imaginative products of a period; see her *Gender and the Politics of History*, rev. edn. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 8-9.

and frozen products of it.”¹³⁰ Thus, I am not so much invested in reconstructing some reality that lies *behind* Joseph texts, but rather in addressing issues related to the socio-historical context of the texts that help us understand the facets evident *in* the texts.

While gaining a better understanding of the ‘mechanisms’ governing *the Making(s)* of Joseph of Nazareth’s characterization within and across particular narratives (from the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, and PJ), my study of the gendering of ‘the everyday’ also advances a more nuanced investigation of the contradictory forces that shaped early Christian group identities within the complex overlay of cultures in the ancient and late antique Near East and Mediterranean worlds. My gender-critical analysis of the various and colorful characterizations of this *Average Joe* allows me at once to: lay bare the *ingredients, the Makings*, that constitute one exemplar of the ‘everyday’ man in early Christian novelistic writings; expose the discursive processes and spectrum of competitive *construction(s), the Making(s)*, of this ‘common’ man; and, finally, highlight components that distinguish one average-Joe-making endeavor from another. Indeed, “the journey toward run-of-the-mill has never been so remarkable.”¹³¹

¹³⁰ John Zammito, "Are We Being Theoretical Yet? The New Historicism, the New Philosophy of History, and 'Practicing Historians,'" *Journal of Modern History* 65 (1993): 783-814 (795). That is, texts help to shape the context of which they are a part and function as participants in a larger cultural discourse wherein “text and culture are understood to be in a mutually productive relation to one another”; see Harold C. Washington, “Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Hebrew Bible: A New Historicist Approach,” *Biblical Interpretation* 5, no. 4 (1997): 324-363 (327).

¹³¹ Newsweek’s book review (Oct. 30, 2005) of the bestseller Kevin O’Keefe, *The Average American: The Extraordinary Search for the Nation’s Most Ordinary Citizen*, which chronicles a successfully completed nationwide search for the person (a middle-aged man) who was the most statistically average (in 140 categories) in the US during a multi-year span starting in 2000. This book (encapsulated by the quote), for me, highlights one of my basic assumptions here, that what is ‘typical’ is just as fluid (mythic) as what is ‘man’, in contemporary culture as much as in antiquity.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

My understanding of the relationship of power and discourse, and my prioritizing and contextualizing of rhetoric for determining meaning in texts, characterizes and shapes the methodology of my gender-critical approach in specific ways. I conceive of my project as a theoretically-oriented intellectual history, integrating a variety of methods to offer a thick discourse analysis of the relevant texts. More specifically, I explore how gender “works” in early Joseph texts by employing three basic analytical lenses, which are embedded throughout my arguments: historical/sociocultural, literary/rhetorical, and ideology-critical.¹³²

The first one is historical, in that I approach early Joseph texts as ‘historical’ documents to be situated within their ancient sociocultural contexts.¹³³ The above discussion should make clear the problems I perceive in traditional historical reconstructions—that there is no easy link to be made between the language of a text and the “real” historical circumstances that produced the text (or that the text itself points to), and that almost every text opens itself up to a diversity of interpretations given the multitude of sociocultural threads that flow out of a text into the broader historical world of which it was a part. Nevertheless, I do continue to affirm that texts embody multiple and diverse connections to their broader social, cultural, and political contexts. In thinking about how texts and contexts come into relation with each other, then, one approach that has been useful to me is that offered by *sociorhetorical criticism*, a specific form of discourse analysis that examines (among other things) “the complex ways in which texts utilize the imagery of various modes of life and thought in

¹³² Drawing on and aligning in part with Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework for conceiving of, and analyzing, discourse: *discourse-as-text*, *discourse-as-discursive-practice*, and *discourse-as-social-practice*; see *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992); and also corresponding in part to David L. Barr’s “three worlds” one deals with when reading a text: *the world behind*, *within*, and *in front of*, the text; see *New Testament Story: An Introduction* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1995).

¹³³ Aligning with Fairclough’s second dimension, *discourse-as-discursive-practice*, i.e. discourse as something which is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society: attention being given to *speech acts*, *coherence*, and *intertextuality*—three aspects that link a text to its wider social context. Fairclough distinguishes between ‘manifest intertextuality’ (i.e. overtly drawing upon other texts) and ‘constitutive intertextuality’ or ‘interdiscursivity’ (i.e. texts are made up of heterogeneous elements: generic conventions, discourse types, register, style). An important aspect of ‘manifest intertextuality’ would be discourse representation: how quoted utterances are selected, changed, contextualized.

the world to influence readers in and through textual argumentation.”¹³⁴ One key proponent of sociorhetorical criticism, Vernon K. Robbins, describes the approach as an attempt to nurture a broad-based, integrative interpretive analytics: “One of the most notable contributions of socio-rhetorical criticism is to bring literary criticism...social-scientific criticism...postmodern criticism...and theological criticism...together into an integrated approach to interpretation.”¹³⁵ As such it not only looks within the text for its rhetorical strategies but also searches outside the text for possible relationships—as Robbins states, “a text is always interacting somehow with phenomena outside itself.”¹³⁶ These phenomena include other texts, so intertextuality or interdiscursivity is an important area of interest in some of these studies.¹³⁷ But sociorhetorical critics also examine other aspects that link a text to its wider social context. So, for example, Robbins’s recent work on early Christian discourse, employing both conceptual integration/blending theory and critical spatiality theory in a sociorhetorical framework,¹³⁸ explores the creation of unique mental pictures, or “emergent blend structures,” via the dynamic blending of language, images, and forms of argumentation taken from six distinctive sociocultural dialects, or “rhetorolects” (wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, miracle, and priestly).¹³⁹ The importance of Robbins’s observations is that we can more readily assess both how early Christian discourses were indebted to ancient cultures and

¹³⁴ Vander Stichele and Penner, *Contextualizing Gender*, 35. See also Joseph B. Tyson, “From History to Rhetoric and Back: Assessing New Trends in Acts Studies,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 23–42.

¹³⁵ Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1996), 1–2. See also idem, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996) and idem, *The Invention of Christian Discourse* (Blanford Forum, U.K.: DEO Publishing, 2009).

¹³⁶ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 36.

¹³⁷ See, e.g., Dennis R. MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); idem, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); and idem., *Mimesis and Intertextuality* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001).

¹³⁸ See Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Seana Coulson, *Semantic Leaps: Frame-Shifting and Conceptual Blending in Meaning Construction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003 [1980]). See also Robert von Thaden, *The Wisdom of Fleeing Porneia: Conceptual Blending in 1 Corinthians 6: 12–7: 7* (Ph.D. diss: Emory University, 2007).

¹³⁹ See Vernon K. Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination,” in Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysiäinen & Risto Uro, eds., *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 161–198.

also how they developed their own unique characteristics (and accents) in the ancient world. In this (first) historical mode/gesture, then, I choose to employ sociorhetorical criticism as a framework for exploring the social conditions of possibility—in particular, the sociocultural facets of politics, ideology, economics, sexuality, etc.—that gave rise to the characters and plots of early Joseph narratives, because that is the “real” historical world of the texts.¹⁴⁰

It is also for this reason that my gender-critical approach employs a (second) literary/rhetorical analytical lens examining more squarely the characteristics and structures embedded in the text itself—assessing the storyline, plot developments, recurring tropes, intertextual connections, character representations, genre classifications, etc.—while also looking at how the underlying arguments of a text function—whether that text is narrative, expository, apologetic, or liturgical in genre.¹⁴¹ Paying close attention to the rhetorical construction of argumentation in our texts is not only required based on how language functions more generally as communication (persuasion)—rhetoric understood as the function of language to persuade in a variety of social situations¹⁴²—it is also demanded by virtue of early Christian texts having been written (often) overtly with rhetorical

¹⁴⁰ As Todd Penner argues when approaching Luke's speeches from a rhetorical perspective, “one is no longer interested primarily (or even at all) in the historicity of the material in Acts but rather in examining the only thing that Acts can really yield in the end: a window to Luke's sociocultural world.” See “Civilizing Discourse: Acts, Declamation, and the Rhetoric of the Polis,” in *Contextualizing Acts*, 84. See also idem, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic History*, Emory Studies in Early Christianity 10 (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

¹⁴¹ Aligning with Fairclough's first dimension, *discourse-as-text*: the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse, such as choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g. wording, metaphor), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. conjunction, schemata), and text structure (e.g. episode marking, turn-taking system).

¹⁴² Here I use “rhetoric” in a general sense—that is, I do not solely focus on the ancient forms and techniques of rhetoric, but, even more so, emphasize the broad pattern of rhetorical thinking and acting that was a constituent part of everyday life, ancient rhetoric as embedded in broader sociocultural communicative practice. George A. Kennedy's *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) was one of the first studies to open up this field of inquiry, demonstrating that one could move beyond strictly technical works of Quintilian and Cicero to analyze the impact of rhetoric more generally on early Christian writings.

tropes and patterns in view—adopting and reconfiguring, for example, the more ‘technical’ rhetoric of Greek and Latin *progymnasmata*.¹⁴³

In this (second) literary mode/gesture, then, I focus on the portraits of Joseph, the rhetoric of descriptive characterization, which, in my view, offers a substantive perspective on the gendered, sexed, and sexual ideologies in the texts. Despite Scholes and Kellogg’s famous dictum that the characters of ancient literature are “invariably ‘flat,’ ‘static,’ and quite ‘opaque,’”¹⁴⁴ interpreters have demonstrated the complexity of characterization in biblical and cognate texts.¹⁴⁵ As noted in recent studies drawing heavily on the reader-oriented theory of Wolfgang Iser and Meier Sternberg,¹⁴⁶ readers construct images of characters as they assimilate the various clues that narratives provide about them.¹⁴⁷ These textual clues function as “character indicators”—as data that readers bring together and assess in order to construct the impression of a character—and also offer an analytic tool for exploring the gendered, sexed, and sexual nature of Joseph’s portrayals. The character descriptions of Joseph form only a small part of the larger interest here, however, as actions and interactions between Joseph and other characters (frequently Mary) in the texts are coded as well, especially in terms of sociocultural expectations related to gender, sex, and sexuality. In particular, the

¹⁴³ On rhetorical education in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean, see especially Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and the introduction and compilation of texts in George A. Kennedy, ed., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

On early Christian use of more technical rhetorical tropes and patterns see Todd Penner, “Reconfiguring the Rhetorical Study of Acts: Reflections on the Method in and Learning of a Progymnastic Poetics,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 30 (2003): 425-39; Willi Braun, ed., *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianity* (Waterloo, ON, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005); Michael W. Martin, “Progymnastic Topic Lists: A Compositional Template for Luke and Other Bioi?,” *New Testament Studies* 54 (2008): 18-41; and Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “Rhetorical Practice and Performance in Early Christianity,” in Erik Gunderson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁴ Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 164.

¹⁴⁵ See, e.g., David B. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke and Acts* (New York: P. Lang, 1991); and Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

¹⁴⁶ Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Meier Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁷ John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992); David M. Rhoads and Kari Syreeni, *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

way in which Joseph is paired (and compared/contrasted) with other characters in texts is of major importance for understanding the gendered and sexed dynamics of the texts in question.¹⁴⁸ That is, it is frequently in and through such comparison—the identification of virtue and “true” character through the abjectifying of another—that the gendered, sexed, and sexual performance of Joseph comes into focus. Further along these lines, I also find it helpful to pay attention to the focalization in the text, in order to determine from whose perspective(s) a story is told.¹⁴⁹ The location of characters and the spaces they inhabit, too, are essential to my analysis of early Joseph texts, since both relate in specific ways to the gendered, sexed, and sexual nature of the ideology embodied in the texts.¹⁵⁰

Which brings me to the third and final analytical lens of my gender-critical approach, a critical approach to the language and thought of early Christians that brings ideology to the fore, analyzing in particular the rhetorical character and ideological texture of early Joseph texts and their interpretations, exploring how their gendered, sexed, and sexual paradigms promote, sustain, and/or resist certain ideologies and how they assume and imply other ideological elements in the process.¹⁵¹ As ideologies create worlds of thought and action that shape the way we think and act, and, as such, are situated at the junction of discourse and power, ideology (and its interrelations with rhetoric) plays a crucial role in terms of the ends gender, sex, and sexuality categories and concepts achieve. In an essay devoted to the formation of the patristic ideology on women, “Ideology, History, and the

¹⁴⁸ See, e.g., Mary Rose D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 441-461, who has persuasively demonstrated that the way in which male and female characters are paired and interact in Luke-Acts provides a foil for one character over against another.

¹⁴⁹ See further Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

¹⁵⁰ Consider, e.g. Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, which looks at spatial dimensions of the activities and words of the historical Jesus, frequently in terms of gender, ideology, or power.

¹⁵¹ Aligning with Fairclough’s third dimension, *discourse-as-social-practice*, i.e. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is seen to operate. Hegemony concerns power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and groups through consent, so that “the articulation and rearticulation of orders of discourse [i.e. the Foucaultian regimentation and disciplining of and through discourse] is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle” (93). Hegemonies change and this process can be witnessed in discursive change when the latter is viewed from the angle of intertextuality. The way in which discourse is being represented, re-spoken, or re-written sheds light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power.

Construction of 'Woman' in Late Ancient Christianity," Elizabeth Clark summarizes important considerations in this regard:

A central function of ideology is to "fix" representations of the self, to constitute "concrete individuals as subjects." ...Ideology naturalizes and universalizes its subjects, ignoring the "historical sedimentation" that undergirds the present state of affairs. Ideology thus functions to obscure the notion that ideas and beliefs are particular and local, situated in specific times, places, and groups; to the contrary, it encourages the view that our society's values have no history, but are eternal and "natural." Situations that have come about through human construction are thus rationalized and legitimated as conforming to timeless truth.¹⁵²

"Theorists of ideology," Clark adds, "challenge historians to uncover the conditions that prompted the production of such interpretations, that is, to 'denaturalize' and 're-historicize' the conditions that produced ideologies of gender."¹⁵³ In another essay, Clark clarifies how this project informs her own work. "I do not imagine that I am uncovering the "reality" of late ancient Christianity," she writes. "My task, as I conceive it, is to push and jab at these documents to make them yield up their ideological content, to make manifest the ways in which their authors seek to present their highly constructed arguments as 'natural' interpretations, obvious to all 'rational' people."¹⁵⁴ What follows in this study, and especially in this third analytical mode/gesture, is my own reply to Clark's challenge. While every text re-produces and promotes a series of values and ideologies, in addition, since texts are multifunctional, they can promote explicit ideologies (e.g. those related to specific ideas about Jesus, Mary, and Joseph), even while also implying (often unconsciously or unintentionally) other ideological elements in the process (gender roles, social hierarchies, etc.). In order to get to the heart of the gendered, sexed, and sexual nature of Joseph's early representations, then, I will examine the ways in which the texts operate in and through structures of power even as they appear not to be doing so. Because "the explicit intentions of an author cannot always control

¹⁵² Clark, "Ideology, History, and the Construction of 'Woman,'" 160.

¹⁵³ Clark, "Ideology, History, and the Construction of 'Woman,'" 178.

¹⁵⁴ Elizabeth A. Clark, "Antifamilial Tendencies in Ancient Christianity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 356-380 (380); see also idem, "Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric: En-gendering Early Christian Ethics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (1991): 221-45.

or limit the meanings that arise from the associative movements and configurations of his or her text's tropes and metaphors,"¹⁵⁵ my examination of ideology in text and context, with special attention paid to the gendered and sexed nature of the discourse, will require some 'pushing' and 'jabbing', following the metaphorical figurations of the texts in addition to explicit ideologies, and at times reading texts against what is the most obvious (to us) rendering of their meaning. In other words, I endeavor to be a "resistant" reader/interpreter, cultivating a "hermeneutics of suspicion," focusing on the *instrumentality* of argumentation in early Joseph texts, and seeking to identify the power relations that are hidden and that create a compliant and sympathetic reader/auditor through rhetorical techniques and invention. My method includes, then, an exploration of how images are constituted, how language persuades readers, how ideologies are operative in the construction and deployment of discourse, how readers/hearers are shaped by the representations of texts, and how readers/hearers might recognize and/or resist ideologies, dominant or otherwise.

¹⁵⁵ Patricia Cox Miller, "The Blazing Body: Ascetic Desire in Jerome's Letter to Eustochium," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 21-45: "Texts can articulate perspectives and bear significations that are quite different from the announced goals of the author." (23). For further and more recent discussions of these issues of authorial and textual intentionality, see Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in Josue V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141-60; Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142-48.

2 JOSEPH OF NAZARETH IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

2.1 Matthew's Average Joe (and Other 'Fathers')

Joseph of Nazareth, “a just man” (δικαιος, Matt 1.19), establishes Matthew's inaugural narrative perspective,¹ and perhaps for ‘good’ reason—as emblematic harbinger of the masculine-tinged, key virtue, “righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη),² Joseph sets the androcentric, homosocial tone for the whole of the gospel. Joseph gets the first word in Matthew, even without opening his mouth:³ spatially, readers accompany Joseph as he travels about (2.13-23); “inside view” disclosures of Joseph's thoughts, plans, and emotions (1.19, 20; 2.22) establish surface structure empathy influencing how Matthew's readers construct the meaning of narrated events, opening the way for their participatory affective responses;⁴ dramatic irony based on Joseph's ignorance of narrated information (2.1-12, 16-18) creates suspense involving readers more deeply in Joseph's tale;⁵ narrative pacing slows to highlight Joseph's dream spaces (1.20-23; 2.13, 19-22); repetition of a distinctive turn of phrase consistently foregrounds Joseph's perspective—his “rising up” (1.24; 2.13, 14; 2.20, 21), “taking” of

¹ Narrative perspective-taking is thought of as a relational concept between the producer and the recipient of narrative; see Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

² See Benno Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought* (SNTSMS 41; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980); Robert G. Olender, *Righteousness in Matthew With Implications for the Declaration of Joseph's Righteousness and the Matthean Exception Clauses* (PhD diss.: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008). Elsewhere in Matthew δικαιος is similarly inflected by gender (Matt 13.17, 43; 23.35; 27.19, 24), reciting the common Greco-Roman assumption of the association of manhood and moral excellence and the uncertainties inherent in the learned, performative and competitive nature of ancient masculinities. As Craig Williams (*Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* [Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999], 27) and others have noted, *virtus*, often translated as ‘virtue’, is etymologically equivalent to ‘manliness’ (*vir*: ‘man’). In Matthew Kuefler's words, “Virtue was so intimately linked to maleness in the Roman universe that it is impossible to separate Roman definitions of masculinity from more general notions of ideal human behavior” (*The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001], 19); cf. Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Similarly, “righteousness” or ethical virtue and male prestige in Jewish thought are also closely related concepts; see e.g., Halvor Moxnes, “Righteousness and Honor in Romans,” *JSNT* 10 (1988): 61-77.

³ Like Luke, Matthew presents a consistently *silent* Joseph. See discussion of Joseph's silence in Luke, in my chapter on Luke's Average Joe.

⁴ See Richard J. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

⁵ See Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51-52.

Mary and Jesus (1.24; 2.13, 14; 2.20, 21), and ‘going’ (2.13, 14, 20, 21, 22); and, finally, a number of evaluative judgments mark Joseph as an exemplary figure (especially his submission to the deity, 1.24-25; 2.14-15, 21-23, which, in each case, is accompanied by one of Matthew’s characteristic ‘fulfillment formulae/citations’).⁶

This ostensibly positive evaluation of Joseph in Matthew stands in remarkable tension with the prominence of Matthew’s much-cited anti-πατήρ/household traditions, preserved from Mark and Q,⁷ which promote both the dissolution of literal kinship ties—renouncing or at least relativizing the authority of and obligations to male blood progenitors⁸—and the formation of a new fictive kinship

⁶ Joseph’s perspective in Matthew, then, accords with each of the six point-of-view (narrative perspective) “planes” identified by Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), derived from Boris A. Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of Compositional Form* (trans. V. Zavarin and S. Wittig; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) and Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). On Matthew’s characteristic ‘fulfillment formulae/citations’, see n. 177, below.

⁷ The relevant Triple Tradition references include: The call of Simon and Andrew, and James and John (Matthew 4.18-22 || Luke 5.1-11 || Mark 1.16-20); The call of Levi (Matthew 9.9 || Luke 5.27-28 || Mark 2.14); Brother will betray brother (Matthew 10.21 || Luke 21.16 || Mark 13.12); Jesus’ true family (Matthew 12.46-50 || Luke 8.19-21 || Mark 3.31-35, also found in Gospel of Thomas 99, Gospel of the Ebionites, fragment 5, and 2 Clem 9.11); Jesus’ Nazareth kin (Matthew 13.55-57a || Luke 4.22 || Mark 6.3); A prophet is not without honor except in his own country (Matthew 13.57b || Luke 4.24 || Mark 6.4, also found in Gospel of Thomas 31); Ruling on divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19.3-9 || Mark 10.2-12); The rewards for abandoning family and possessions (Matthew 19.29 || Luke 18.29-30 || Mark 10.29-30); No marriage in the resurrection (Matthew 22.30 || Luke 20.34-36 || Mark 12.25).

The relevant Double Tradition references include: Ruling on divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5.32 || Luke 16.18 || Q 16.18); Incompatibility of service to God and service to home/family (“the ordinary business of making a living”) (Matthew 6.24 || Luke 16.13 || Q 16.13 || Gospel of Thomas 47); Discourse on anxiety (Matthew 6.25-33 || Luke 12.22-31 || Q 12.22b-31); The son of man has nowhere to lay his head (Matthew 8.19-20 || Luke 9.57-58 || Q 9.57b-58 || Gospel of Thomas 86); Leave the dead to bury their own dead (Matthew 8.21-22 || Luke 9.59-60 || Q 9.59-60a); [Permission to say farewell to family is denied (Luke 9.61-62)]; Command to adopt a mendicant lifestyle (Matthew 10.9-10a || Mark 6.8-9 || Luke 9.3; 10.4 || Q 10.4); Intergenerational family conflict is caused by Jesus (Matthew 10.34-36 || Luke 12.51-53 || Q 12.51-53 || Gospel of Thomas 10, 16); Admonition to hate (or love less) one’s family, bearing one’s cross (Matthew 10.37-38 || Luke 14.26-27 || Q 14.26-27 || Gospel of Thomas 55, 101).

⁸ See, e.g., Anthony Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 90-102; Carolyn Osiek, “Jesus and Cultural Values: Family Life as an Example,” *Hervormde Theologische Studies* 53 (1997): 800-811; Halvor Moxnes, ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), 52-55; A. D. Jacobson, “Jesus against the Family: The Dissolution of Family Ties in the Gospel Tradition,” in J. M. Asgeirsson, et al., *From Quest to Q, J. M. Robinson FS* (Leuven: Leuven University, 2000), 189-218; Julian Sheffield, “The Father in the Gospel of Matthew,” in Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and early Christian Writings* 1 (London: T&T Clark, 2001), 52-69; S. Scott Bartchy, “Who Should Be Called Father? Paul of Tarsus between the Jesus Tradition and *Patria Potestas*,” *BTB* 33 (2003): 135-147; and Marianne Blickenstaff, *While the Bridegroom is with them’: Marriage, Family, Gender and Violence in the Gospel of Matthew* (London; New York: Continuum, 2005), 110-147.

system consisting of disciples, sibling-children of the *Father* (in Matthew's parlance),⁹ or, the *GodFather*.¹⁰ Indeed, "Matthew almost unilaterally rejects the claims of relationship with earthly fathers."¹¹ For example, none of Matthew's leading men, Jesus and his disciples, is ever portrayed in Matthew as a *πατήρ*,¹² and, other than Zebedee, Matthew identifies only one other 'earthly' *πατήρ*: Herod, Archelaus's *πατήρ* (Matt 2.22), whose infamous treatment of the 'Innocents' hardly serves as a glowing endorsement. Julian Sheffield has shown how Matthew deploys the figures of James and John, "sons of Zebedee," to reflect communal approval or disapproval: when James and John are behaving as befits true members of the community—as true sons of Jesus' *Father*—they are identified by fraternal relationship ("James and his brother John," or "the two brothers"); when they are behaving in ways that locate them outside the heavenly Father's family, they are called "sons of Zebedee" (see Matt 4.21-22 || Mark 1.19-20; Matt 10.2 || Mark 3.17; Matt 17.1 || Mark 9.2 || Luke 9.28; Matt 20.20-28 || Mark 10.35-41; Matt 26.37 || Mark 14.33; Matt 27.56).¹³ Sheffield also

⁹ See Sheffield ("The Father," 52-53, 58), who notes that 44 of 63 occurrences of the word *πατήρ* refer to God, that "31 (71%) of Matthew's 44 uses of *πατήρ* for God are unique to Matthew" in comparison to the other Synoptics, and that all such references are found exclusively on the lips of Jesus, as he addressed his disciples, audiences composed of the disciples and "the crowds," or God himself. See also Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Promise of the Father: Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 105-114; Robert L. Mowery, "God, Lord and Father: The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew," *BR* 33 (1988): 24-36 (24-26); and Benedict Thomas Viviano, "God as Father in the Infancy Gospels (Matt 1 and 2, Luke 1 and 2)," in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Dettwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 390-398. Matthew's use of the metaphor of Father for God was widely used in the Hebrew Bible and in early Judaism; see Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Abba and 'Father': Imperial Theology and the Jesus Traditions," *JBL* 111 (1992): 611-30 (617-22); Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 35-55. Similarly, Zeus/Jupiter were also called 'Father', as could emperors who had the blessing of the gods or were seen as manifestations of a god: Augustus and other emperors had the title *pater patriae*; see D'Angelo, "Abba," 624-25; idem, "Theology in Mark and Q: Abba and 'Father' in Context," *HTR* 85 (1992): 149-74; and Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2001), 26-29, 63. Cf. David Tasker, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures about the Fatherhood of God* (Studies in Biblical Literature 69; New York: Peter Lang, 2004).

¹⁰ After the apt idiom of Tat-Siong Benny Liew, "Re-Mark-able Masculinities: Jesus, the Son of Man, and the (Sad) Sum of Manhood?," in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 93-136, who refers to Mark's portrayal of the deity as 'God-Father' and Jesus as 'godfather': "The Patriarch(y) is culpable, but he/it is often as elusive (or even invisible) as the well-known contemporary godfather Don Gotti or the "Teflon Don" (132).

¹¹ Sheffield, "The Father," 58.

¹² One exception may perhaps be Matt 19.29 which describes the disciples as "all those who have left behind...children" (*πᾶς ὅστις ἀφῆκεν...ἡ τέχνη*), among other household relationships: a 'true disciple' must be prepared to abandon their family (cf. 8.21-22; 10.21, 34-37; 19.10-12) for Christ's name (cf. 5.11; 10.22; 24.9). See Warren Carter, *Households and Discipleship: A Study of Matthew 19-20* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

¹³ Sheffield, "The Father," 60-63.

helpfully discusses another set of πατήρ-like figures in Matthew, the Pharisees, who are “condemned not only because they justify themselves by claiming one ‘father-ancestor’ [Abraham; 3.7-10] while disclaiming other ‘father-ancestors’ [those who murdered the prophets; 23.30], but also because they themselves act as criminally irresponsible ‘fathers’ [27.25].”¹⁴ As Sheffield aptly notes: “Matthew’s use of πατήρ...is carefully shaped both to emphasize the fatherhood of God and to displace the earthly father in favor of the father in heaven.”¹⁵ Especially significant is Matthew’s statement of the primacy of the GodFather over all earthly fathers in Matt 23.9: “call no man your father on earth, for you have one, the heavenly father” (καὶ πατέρα μὴ καλέσητε ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἷς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὑμῶν ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος).¹⁶ In Matthew’s terms, the hegemony of the GodFather challenges the dominant hegemonic masculinity of ordinary human fathers (as well as their imperial counterparts, whether gods or men), even as it also transfers male dominance from earth to heaven, reinscribing “the same masculinity by using the *familia* model writ large.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Sheffield, “The Father,” 58-59.

¹⁵ Sheffield, “The Father,” 52.

¹⁶ Though, as William D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988-1997), note, what is presumably in view here (Matt 23.9) is not “household authority” but “teaching authority” (*Matthew* 3.276-77); see also Stephen C. Barton, *Discipleship and Family Ties in Matthew and Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 130, 215 n. 294.

¹⁷ Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, “Matthew and Masculinity,” in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 67-92 (79). As Anderson and Moore discuss (“Matthew,” 78-79), the signature turn to the heavenly Father in the gospels is double. On the one hand, as Colleen Conway notes, “[f]rom a feminist perspective, the omission of fathers has often been viewed as an anti-hierarchical statement. That is to say, insofar as God is father of all and all are subject to him, then all humans are on the same footing” (*Behold the Man*, 98). So, e.g., Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), suggests that “[t]he ‘father’ God is invoked here [Matt 23.8-9], however, not to justify patriarchal structures and relationships in the community of disciples but precisely to reject all such claims, powers, and structures” (150). See similar readings of Matt 12.46-50 and 23.9 in Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History* (SBEC 14; Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1988), 254-55; of Matt 23.9 in S. Scott Bartchy, “Undermining Ancient Patriarchy: The Apostle Paul’s Vision of a Society of Siblings,” *BTB* 29 (1999): 68-78 (71); and of the Gospel of Mark’s omission of fathers (esp. Mark 3.31-35; 10.29-30) in Johanna Dewey, “The Gospel of Mark,” in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Shelly Matthews, and Ann Graham Brock, eds., *Searching the Scriptures 2, A Feminist Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1994). On the other hand, as D’Angelo suggests (“*Abba*,” 629), the rejection of patriarchal social organization is deployed “in the name of the absolute patriarchal claim of God... whose *potestas* exceeds and so affirms, limits, or challenges the power of every other *pater*”; see also Sheffield, “The Father,” 58; and Phyllis Trible’s review of Hamerton-Kelly, *God the Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus* (Overture to Biblical Theology 4; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) in *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 116-119 (118). I will be examining the representation of the GodFather’s masculinity in due course, as it is an integral part of Matthew’s narrative movements and of Joseph’s characterization in the infancy accounts.

While Matthew's treatment of the role of the 'earthly' πατήρ is generally pessimistic, there are a few noteworthy exceptions. For example, Matthew's Jesus gives high priority to: the indissolubility of the marriage bond (Matt 5.31-32; Matt 19.3-12 || Mark 10.2-12); the commandment to honor one's parents (Matt 15.3-6 || Mark 7.9-13);¹⁸ and children, more generally (Matt 18.2-5 || Mark 9.33-37 || Lk 9.46-48; Matt 19.13-15 || Mark 10.13-16 || Lk 18.15-17). Matthew also assumes that parents will provide only *good* things for their children (Matt 7.9-10)¹⁹ and includes a number of healing stories where Jesus "responds to the appeals of distraught parents on behalf of their children, thus in effect affirming the importance of the parental role and bond."²⁰ The most noteworthy exception to Matthew's pessimistic treatment of the 'earthly' πατήρ, however, is his handling of Joseph of Nazareth. Aside from the earthly fathers briefly portrayed in the healing accounts—"Jairus" (Matt 9.18, 23-26 || Mark 5.21-24, 35-43 || Lk 8.40-42, 49-56), a man from the "crowd" (Matt 17.14-21 || Mark 9.14-29 || Lk 9.37-43a), and, possibly, the "Centurion" (Matt 8.5-13)²¹—the Joseph character represents Matthew's only extended narrative foray into the androcentric world of the house-holding πατήρ, with many of its attendant assumptions and underlying gender scripts. How, then, might we read Matthew's positively evaluated representation of Joseph, especially considering Matthew's 'almost unilateral rejection of the claims of relationship with earthly fathers'? What 'on earth' is Matthew's 'just man' *doing*?

On the one hand it seems reasonable to assume that the Joseph character is simply part of a remembered (perhaps oral) and transmitted tradition which Matthew shapes in his proposed

¹⁸ Matt (and Mark and Luke) includes the same commandment in Jesus' reply to the rich young man (Matt 19.19 || Mark 10.17-31 || Lk 18.18-30).

¹⁹ As Sheffield ("The Father," 64) notes, "[t]he displacement of the earthly father does not, however, release him from the obligation to provide for the child."

²⁰ James Dunn, "A New Family (14.7)," in *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 592-599 (598). These healing stories all couch parental obligations within the context of following Jesus—the caring parents bring their children to Jesus. Moreover, as Sheffield notes, "[t]hese men, Matthew refuses to identify as father. This reflects more redactional displacing of the earthly father: Matthew has stripped both Markan and Lukan narratives of all reference to earthly father or family. Matthew's only expression of concern about kinship in these healings focuses on care for children, the little ones" (Sheffield, "The Father," 64).

²¹ Whether Matthew's centurion (Matt 8.5-13) is to be seen as a father depends on whether one understands ὁ παῖς (8.6, 8, 13) to mean "child" or "servant."

solution to the problem of the irregularities of Jesus' origins: Matthew preserves and perhaps responds to *customary* traditions about Joseph with Mary and Jesus.²² On the other hand, since chapters 1-2 are largely a creation of Matthew's,²³ and in view of their strategic importance to the rest of the book overall,²⁴ it is important to take a close(r) look at the literary elements that are unique to his infancy account, as these elements plausibly provide important clues for reconstructing Matthew's way of thinking and that of the environment he addressed. Especially considering the unique and prominent placement of Joseph-centric material, then, in the following analysis I pay close(r) attention to the gendered, ideological ground that Joseph's characterization lays for the rest of Matthew,²⁵ intersecting with ancient indices of masculine comportment: heir generation/adoption (2.2); self-mastery, household governance, and observance of laws/norms (2.3); homosocial (dis)honor, dreams, gestures of submission, and conjugal relations (2.4); and negotiations with hegemonic (imperial/colonial) authority (2.5). In contrast to that of Luke, Matthew's infancy

²² Joseph's presence in the birth accounts was perhaps taken over from prior (pre-Matthean) traditions or 'customs'; see Andrew Lincoln, "Behind the New Testament: Historical Explanation," in idem *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 125-167 (esp. 160-162). Such a tradition may also be the background to Luke's statement regarding the 'custom' of Joseph as Jesus' father (ὡν υἱός ὡς ἐνομιζέτο Ἰωσήφ 3.23; cf. Luke 4.22; John 1.45; 6.42; Matt 13.55). See also Andrew Lincoln, "Contested Paternity and Contested Readings: Jesus' Conception in Matthew 1.18-25," *JSNT* 34 (2012): 211-31.

²³ Obviously a literary creation on the base of reinterpreted and rewritten sources, see: Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*. I. Teil (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 1-62; Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 69-70, 177-188, 213-225; John Nolland, "The Sources of Matthew 2:1-12," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 283-300; Jacques Masson, *Jésus fils de David dans les généalogies de saint Matthieu et de saint Luc* (Paris: Téqui, 1982).

²⁴ See M. Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates its Meaning," *Poetics Today* 1 (1979-80): 35-64, who discusses "the primacy effect," whereby material located at the outset of a work functions to shape an audience's expectations and understandings of the subsequent narrative. In reference to the ancient (literary) milieu closer to Matthew's world, see also Sara Milstein, *Reworking Ancient Texts: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (PhD diss.: New York University, 2011), who highlights the important literary technique of "revision through introduction," whereby scribes might alter the reception of older works by adding new material to the front. Matthew is generally conservative in his preservation of prior, received material; however, the content of this older, received material is automatically reinterpreted through the new lens of Matthew's 'secondary' contribution of the infancy material, whose central character is Joseph.

²⁵ Anticipating in some ways the patterns of Matthew's masculine-tinged discipleship set out both in the Sermon on the Mount (5.21-6.34), and the discipleship discourse in chapters 19-20, as I discuss below. Hence, my analysis of Joseph's characterization in Matthew in some ways expands the suggestions of Dale Allison, "Divorce, Celibacy and Joseph (Matthew 1.18-25 and 19.1-12)," *JSNT* 49 (1993): 3-10, that the masculine comportment of Joseph has a tone-setting role to play with respect to the rest of Matthew's Gospel.

account is arguably Joseph's tale,²⁶ and, as suggested by James H. Liu and János László with regards to prototypical in-group characters in historical narratives,²⁷ Joseph's point-of-view characterization in Matthew feasibly plays a key role in mediating collective memory and putative group identity, concurrently bound up with the processes of 'everyday' male self-fashioning (2.6).²⁸

2.2 Matthew's Average Joe and Jesus: (Auto-)Generative and Adoptive Fathers (Matt 1.1-17)

Christological theorizing aside,²⁹ the first narrative movement in Matthew takes the measure of Joseph's ambiguous identity as *πατήρ* of Jesus. Matthew's particular formula of the genealogy (X *ἐγέννησεν* Y, Y *ἐγέννησεν* Z), while occurring only here in the writings of the New Testament, is used in several places in the LXX.³⁰ Matthew is apparently modeling his list on the one he finds in 1 Chronicles³¹ and thus takes over the LXX translation of the *hiphil* for *טָלַף* in Chronicles, which, as

²⁶ See Gérard Claudel, "Joseph, Figure du Lecteur Modèle du Premier Évangile," in D. Senior, ed. *The Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2011), 339-374, who suggests that Matthew's representation of Joseph may be a key component of a phatic speech act designed to establish and maintain contact between the gospel writer and his recipient community: Matthew intends Joseph to represent or model to his audience the 'ideal reader'; cf. Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), who also analyzes Matthew's narrative-perspective taking (point-of-view characterization) more generally.

²⁷ See James H. Liu and János László, "Narrative Theory of History and Identity: Social Identity, Social Representations, Society and the Individual," in Gail Moloney and Iain Walker, eds., *Social Representations and Identity: Content, Process, and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 85-108.

²⁸ See Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary on Matthew 1-7* (trans. James E. Crouch; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 98: "This main scope of the Matthean narrative does not exclude secondary perspectives. It has an ethical secondary scope: the figure of the righteous Joseph and his obedience. Secondary perspectives that were important to the evangelist even though they were not his central concern...show how such a story can contain many levels." My work in this chapter (and the others for that matter) is, in one sense, a large expansion of Luz's aside. I endeavor to unpack and disrupt the gendered 'levels' of implicit 'secondary perspectives' namely, Matthew's construction and deployment of "the figure of the righteous Joseph and his obedience," at this, the prologue/overture to his entire project.

²⁹ John Nolland, "No Son-of-God Christology in Matthew 1.18-25," *JSNNT* 18, no. 3 (1996): 3-12; cf. Lincoln, "Contested Paternity."

³⁰ Gen 4.18; 10.4; Ruth 4.19-22; 1 Chr 2.10-41; 4.2, 14; 5.30-40; 8.33, 36; 9.39, 42; Neh 12.10-11.

³¹ So Richard J. Erickson, "Joseph and the Birth of Isaac in Matthew 1," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.1 (2000): 35-51 (40, n. 12). How the sequence of other names in Matthew's list corresponds with that in Luke's list or how it is to be explained in terms of its presumed exemplar in 1 Chronicles 1-3 is an interesting and involved subject, though beyond the scope of this project. See Brown, *Birth*, 55-95, for discussion and proposed interpretations; see also Barbara Sivertsen, "New Testament Genealogies and the Families of Mary and Joseph," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 35 (2005): 43-50.

Roland Boer has recently shown, results in “an endless list of men producing men,” a queerly structured auto-generative formula which effaces the mother’s presence by attributing the verb for giving birth to the man.³² What does it mean “for men to ‘beget’ men without women?” asks Boer.³³ At least with Matthew’s genealogy, the trope of men generating other men in fact reproduces a standard Greco-Roman assumption that males discharge the determinative function in procreation: “to be male was to be capable of generation.”³⁴ Those who did not or could not impregnate bore the marks of a subordinate or marginalized masculine identity.³⁵

Matthew’s auto-generative male-producing-male formula, a standard that is destabilized by the four women in the list,³⁶ is entirely “shattered” in verse 16. That is, unlike the other 14 x 3 male blood (auto)progenitors (minus the four who *apparently* had some help), Joseph did not ἐγέννησεν (auto-generate) Jesus. Joseph in fact did not ἐγέννησεν anything. He is, decidedly, non-generative, seedless we might say: “By shattering the pattern, Matthew is apparently trying to prevent the conclusion that Joseph was the biological father of Jesus.”³⁷ While the question of Matthew’s representation of who *did* (if not Joseph) ἐγέννησεν Jesus is perhaps irresolvable by exegesis alone,³⁸

³² Roland Boer, “Of Fine Wine, Incense and Spices: The Unstable Masculine Hegemony of the Book of Chronicles,” in Ovidiu Creangă, ed., *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 20-33 (25-26).

³³ Boer, “Of Fine Wine,” 26.

³⁴ Anderson and Moore, “Matthew and Masculinity,” 72.

³⁵ See Dale Martin, “Contradictions of Masculinity: Ascetic Inseminators and Menstruating Men in Greco-Roman Culture,” in Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee, eds., *Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity through Early Modern Europe* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001), 81-108.

³⁶ The place of the four women (five counting Mary) in the Matthean genealogy has been much explored and is beyond the scope of this project. The central (although not exclusive) drive of most of the investigation has been to find a common denominator between the four women, and, if possible, one that can embrace Mary; see Peter-Ben Smit, “Something about Mary? Remarks about the Five Women in the Matthean Genealogy,” *NTS* 56, no. 2 (2010): 191-207, for summaries and a comprehensive discussion of the competing theories about Matthew’s deployment of these women.

³⁷ Jane Schaberg, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives* (exp. 20th anniversary ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield-Phoenix Press, 2006), 43.

³⁸ See extensive treatment of this topic in Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin?*, 68-98. Of course, the question of the interpretation of what the evangelist is attempting to convey about Jesus’ origin is different from the ‘historical’ question of whether or not Jesus was in fact conceived by both biological father and mother. Many contemporary scholars accept the historical view of a non-miraculous conception; see in particular the extended arguments offered by Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*; David Catchpole, *Jesus People: The Historical Jesus and the Beginnings of Community* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2006), 84-88; Gerd Lüdemann, *Virgin Birth? The Real Story of Mary and Her Son Jesus*, trans. J. Bowden (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998); and Robert J. Miller, *Born Divine: The Births of Jesus and Other Sons of God* (New York: Polebridge Press, 2003), esp. 7-100, 195-206.

what is certain is that “[t]he active male role conventionally inscribed in Greco-Roman representations of generation is strikingly absent” from Matthew’s representation of Joseph.³⁹

Joseph is presented rather, as husband of Mary (τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας), and *Mary* is the one whom Jesus is born from (ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς): *she* is the crucial and noteworthy constituent of this conception. In contrast to his productive forbears, Joseph is without seed, and, according to certain Greco-Roman hegemonic indices of masculinity, less of a man for it. Joseph’s penis, unlike those of the genealogical list, unlike those of most (ideal) men, is, in this narrative moment, decidedly non-generative. The question of what to do, then, with Matthew’s later mention of Jesus’ “brothers” and “sisters” (Matt 12.46-50; 13.55) and whether or not these siblings are intended by Matthew to be read as the result of Joseph’s later insemination of Mary is another discussion that seems irresolvable by exegesis alone, although there certainly have been attempts to do so.⁴⁰ The main point I emphasize here is simply Matthew’s citation of a conventional standard of ancient masculinity, Joseph’s failure to meet that standard, and the implicit comparison between the biologically generative (inseminating) men of the genealogy who *do*. In a queerly, no-future, anti-social sort of register, and perhaps anticipating his later narrative ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ (Matt 1.24; 2.13, 20-23), Joseph stands limp, nameless, and proud.⁴¹

³⁹ Anderson and Moore, “Matthew and Masculinity,” 73.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., John P. Meier, “The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus in Ecumenical Perspective,” *CBQ* 54 (1992): 1-28. At the very least, Matthew does not specify Joseph as the father of these ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’.

⁴¹ See Blickenstaff, *Bridegroom*, 133-34, who reads the Joseph character as prefiguring Jesus as celibate bridegroom and non-procreative, adoptive caretaker, similar to those “who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (19.12); cf. treatments of the socio-historical context of the eunuch logion in Carmen Bernabé, “Of Eunuchs and Predators: Matthew 19:1-12 in a Cultural Context,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 33 (2003): 128-134; Rick Franklin Talbott, “Imagining the Matthean Eunuch Community: Kyriarchy on the Chopping Block,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22 (2006): 21-43; Jennifer G. Pouya, “Making the Cut for the Kingdom: Matthew’s Self-Made Eunuchs as Model Disciples,” paper presented at the Annual SBL Meeting, Chicago, IL, 16-20 November 2012; and Susanna Asikainen, “Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven’: Matthew and Subordinated Masculinities,” in Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 156-188.

Nevertheless, according to Matthew, Jesus (the Christ) is son of David, son of Abraham (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ) *through Joseph*.⁴² How can this be? If Joseph did not ἐγέννησεν Jesus, how is it that Matthew can claim Jesus to be son of David, son of Abraham (υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ) *through Joseph*? The standard way to resolve this aporia, reading verse 16 in light of the following narrative (and, frequently by harmonization with other gospel passages), is to suggest that Matthew's Jesus *becomes* Joseph's son, and so inherits his Davidic (and Abrahamic) lineage, by means of *adoption*.⁴³ Yet, while other interpreters suggest that Matthew's genealogy embodies, finally, a "fictive" or "spiritual" kinship arrangement,⁴⁴ there is warrant to look more closely at the precedents for Matthew's implicit notion that Davidic royal (Messianic) status could even be imparted through something like adoption, and to explore further the gendered ideology that underlies ancient adoptive practices: what did it mean for a man to adopt a son?

Given the author's strong preference for citing Hebrew scripture,⁴⁵ it might be reasonable to suppose here that Matthew's implicit portrayal of Joseph's adoption of Jesus draws on biblical stories

⁴² Matthew is very interested in where Jesus came from, (the who/whence) of his *genesis* (γενέσεως; Matt 1.1); on the use of the same word (γένεσις) in Matt 1.1 and 1.18, see John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2005), 71; Brown, *Birth*, 58, 123; Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin?*, 69-70. On the importance of Jesus' Davidic ancestry in Matthew, see Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1-2 in the Setting of the Gospel* (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); and Donald J. Verseput, "The Role and Meaning of the 'Son of God' Title in Matthew's Gospel," *NTS* 33 (1987): 532-556.

⁴³ Either simply through the act of marrying Mary, naming Jesus, and raising Jesus as his own (Matt 1.24-25), circumcising him and presenting him in the Temple (Luke 2.21-24), protecting him from Herod (Matt 2.13-14), traveling with him for the festivals in the Temple (Luke 2.41-51), teaching him a vocation (Matt 13.55), or through some unspecified legal act; see e.g., Herman C. Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew," *JBL* 95 (1976): 205-30 (227); Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.219-20; Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 65, 72; Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin?*, 74.

⁴⁴ E.g., prompted by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz's reading of Matthew's genealogy as a 'spiritual' ancestry analogous to Abraham's adoption of all peoples (*God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1994], 233-35), Anderson and Moore ("Matthew and Masculinity," 73) ask: "What is the significance for masculinity of a patrilineal genealogy based not on a physical or literal form of descent but rather on a spiritual or fictive form of descent?"; cf. a similar reading by Blickenstaff, *Bridegroom*, 131-133.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Paul Foster, "Why did Matthew Get the Shema Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22.37," *JBL* 122 (2003): 309-33.

that suggest something like adoption⁴⁶ or other biblical traditions which employ the idea of adoption as a metaphor for the relationship between the deity and either Israel or her king.⁴⁷ As support for Matthew's implicit use of a *legal* form of adoption, however, most scholars invoke tangential and later rulings of Jewish law—apparently based on the premise that Matthew's gospel writer, ostensibly Jewish and writing at least in part to a Jewish audience, rooted his legal assumptions in contemporary Jewish law.⁴⁸ This seems more than reasonable; however, the problem is that Jewish law, both in the Hebrew Bible and in later *halakhah*, has no such formal legal institution.⁴⁹ As Jeffrey Tigay suggests, “if adoption played any role at all in Israelite family institutions, it was an insignificant one”; also “for the post-Exilic period...there is no reliable evidence for adoption at all.”⁵⁰ We could propose, then, that Matthew's Joseph simply “assumes the public role of the father of Jesus”⁵¹—somewhat analogous to the Egyptian papyrus contracts for “adoption” (ὑιοθεσία).⁵² In later

⁴⁶ See H. Donner, “Adoption oder Legitimation? Erwägungen zur Adoption im Alten Testament auf dem Hintergrund der altorientalischen Rechte,” *Oriens Antiquus* 8 (1969): 87-119; and the critique of Donner's thesis by James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ὑιοθεσία in the Pauline Corpus*, WUNT 48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 62-75.

⁴⁷ E.g., Ex 4.22-23; 2 Sam 7.12-14; Jer 31.8; Pss. 2.7; 89.26-27 (MT 27-28).

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Sherman E. Johnson, “The Davidic-Royal Motif in the Gospels,” *JBL* 87 (1968): 136-50 (185); Jack D. Kingsbury, “The Title ‘Son of God’ in Matthew's Gospel,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 591-602 (548); Brown, *Birth*, 139, 288; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 217; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.185, 220; Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin?*, 73-74. Most of these cite the Mishnah from *B. Bat.* 8.6: “If a man says ‘This is my son,’ he may be believed,” and discuss the ‘accepted’ biblical precedent of raising another's child as one's own (Esth 2.7, 15). Such statements may suggest that paternity (or maternity for that matter) is a matter of perception; however, they don't elucidate our primary concern here over the matter of the adoptive distribution or transmission of an ancestral name.

⁴⁹ Jewish *halakhah* in fact has no word to even express the concept of adoption; the term פדוּס, used in modern Hebrew, is a recent innovation; cf. Michael Gold, “Adoption: A New Problem for Jewish Law,” *Judaism* 36, no. 4 (1987): 443-50. See a thorough review of the evidence in Michael Luke Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 198-213; see also Yigal Levin, “Jesus, ‘Son of God’ and ‘Son of David’: The ‘Adoption’ of Jesus into the Davidic Line,” *JSNT* 28, no. 4 (2006): 415-442, who concludes that legal adoption was not known in either Palestinian or diaspora Judaism and that analogous practices cited from Scripture (e.g. Esth. 2.7, 15) were within the extended family and cannot be shown to have had legal consequences (423).

⁵⁰ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Adoption,” Jeffrey Howard Tigay, 2:298-301 (300).

⁵¹ So Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 58, 101; Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin?*, 74: “although this account depicts no legal ceremony, Joseph could now expect to be perceived by others, to all intents and purposes, as Jesus' father.”

⁵² The papyrological evidence for such ‘adoptions’ is presented in Marek Kurylowicz, “Adoption on the Evidence of the Papyri,” *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 19 (1983): 61-75; and Bernard Legras, “L'adoption en droit hellénistique, d'après les papyrus grecs d'Égypte,” in Alain Bresson et al., eds., *Parenté et société dans le monde grec de l'Antiquité à l'âge moderne* (Bordeaux: Ausonius; Paris: Bocard, 2006), 175-88. The adoption papyri, according to Christiane Kunst, *Römische Adoption: zur Strategie einer Familienorganisation* (Hennef: Marthe Clauss, 2005), do not have an obvious connection to Roman laws of adoption and should be considered rather as local manifestations of a “common law” form of adoption.

Jewish thought, legitimizing and/or fostering an orphan was considered exemplary;⁵³ however, such *de facto* adoptions did not grant the child any legal, inherited status, and we are still left with our question of the precedent for Matthew’s notion that a man’s ancestry/status could be transmitted via adoption. As Yigal Levin has recently suggested, our answer may be found by looking at “the primary legal system that was current in the Mediterranean world during the first century CE” and that the author and audience of Matthew “would have been most familiar with—that of the early Roman Empire.”⁵⁴ Recent studies have demonstrated the utility of exploring the knowledge of the Roman imperial world assumed of Matthew’s audience,⁵⁵ and, although Matthew does not explicitly employ one of the (two) forms of adoption in the Roman codes,⁵⁶ as I discuss below, there is something to be gained by comparing Roman legal practice and its underlying gender ideology with Matthew’s representation of Joseph’s presumed adoption of Jesus.

In contrast to modern practices, Roman adoption was not a fosterage or child welfare system (nor was it enacted to satisfy a nuclear couple’s desire to nurture), but rather a method of securing the continuity from father to son, of the family name, property, and religious rites (*nomen*, *pecunia*, and *sacra*).⁵⁷ Adoption was a process initiated by the *πατήρ* primarily for the benefit of the *πατήρ*, even if it also enhanced the status of the adopted son, considered to be no less than a real son who inherited

⁵³ As, e.g., discussed in later rabbinic texts: “whoever brings an orphan in his home is regarded as though the child had been born to him” (b. San 19b) and “he who brings up a child is to be called its father, not he who gave birth” (*Exod. Rab.* 46.5).

⁵⁴ Levin, “Adoption of Jesus,” 425. It is worth noting that Lincoln (*Born of a Virgin?*, 74 n.9), dismissively suggests that Levin’s argument—regarding Matthew’s assumption of Roman adoption practices—“scarcely seems likely” (74 n. 9). Lincoln does not here support why this is so. Perhaps it has something to do (again) with assumptions regarding Matthew’s primarily ‘Jewish’ context/audience which was ‘far removed’ from the Roman imperial world.

⁵⁵ Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2001); idem. “The Gospel of Matthew,” in Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, Bible and Postcolonialism 13 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 69-104; John K. Riches and David C. Sim, eds., *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context* (London; New York: Continuum, 2005).

⁵⁶ Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 5.19.1-16; see Mireille Corbier, “Constructing Kinship in Rome: Marriage, Divorce, Filiation, and Adoption,” in David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller, eds., *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 127-44; and “Divorce and Adoption as Roman Familial Strategies (Le divorce et l’adoption ‘en plus’),” in B. Rawson ed., *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome* (Canberra: Humanities Research Center; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 47-78; Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Hugh Lindsay, *Adoption in the Roman World* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷ So Cicero, *de Domo* 35.

the social position and status of his adoptive father.⁵⁸ Stated another way: “Roman adoption...was not enacted to stabilize the life of a child, but to stabilize the future of a father.”⁵⁹ Despite having almost unlimited power/freedom to define his own familial ties and loyalties,⁶⁰ not just any Roman *πατήρ* made use of the practice.⁶¹ Adoption was employed most often among male elites—those with the most property and honor to distribute—and between relatives⁶² as a strategy for regulating “the formation of alliances between families and between individuals” and providing “the definition of legitimacy in the context of political power,”⁶³ for example, in the early Empire most famously by the Julio-Claudian dynasty,⁶⁴ and during the reign of Nero by the senatorial aristocracy.⁶⁵

Of course, Joseph’s “adoption of a relative...would have been only natural to a Roman,”⁶⁶ but Matthew’s narrative also sustains the typical Roman perspective on the primacy of the father-son relationship,⁶⁷ and Matthew’s Joseph is depicted as a male household head (*paterfamilias*) with a “recognized right...to reshape his relationships.”⁶⁸ Infused with *patria potestas*, “paternal power” to manage his household relationships, “the most fundamental and most peculiarly Roman part of family law,”⁶⁹ Matthew’s Joseph determines kinship bonds and exercises authority to distribute goods of family name, honor, cult (*nomen*, *pecunia*, and *sacra*) to a designated (non-biological) successor.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Alan Watson, *The Law of the Ancient Romans* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1970), 39: “The adopted person not only entered the family of the adopter; he acquired the status in the community which he should have as a son of the adopter.” Cf. Kunst, *Römische Adoption*, 294; *Dig.* 1.7.35: “the rank of a person is not diminished by adoption, but is in fact increased.”

⁵⁹ Peppard, *Son of God*, 60.

⁶⁰ In theory, a Roman *paterfamilias* could do whatever he wanted to those under this power; cf. Gaius, *Inst.* 1.55.

⁶¹ For example, Keith Hopkins (*Death and Renewal*, Sociological Studies in Roman History 2 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983], 49) cites 4% of late republican consuls who are known to have been adopted.

⁶² Often an uncle adopting a nephew, sometimes a grandfather and grandson; see Corbier, “Divorce and Adoption,” 67-74.

⁶³ Corbier, “Divorce and Adoption,” 76-77.

⁶⁴ Corbier, “Constructing Kinship,” 143; cf. Beryl Rawson, “The Roman Family,” in Beryl Rawson, ed., *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 1-57 (12).

⁶⁵ Corbier, “Divorce and Adoption,” 75-76.

⁶⁶ Levin, “Adoption of Jesus,” 431.

⁶⁷ While the primacy of the father-son relationship is not something distinctly *Roman* per se, Roman discourse views such priorities as closely linked to Roman traditions and social practice: e.g., the two dominant and overlapping “social spheres” of Roman society, politics and kinship, were ostensibly governed by the connections and relationships between fathers and sons; see Halvor Moxnes, “What is Family,” in Halvor Moxnes, ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families* (London: Routledge, 1997), 13-41 (19); in the same volume, see also Eva Marie Lassen, “The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor,” 103-20.

⁶⁸ Corbier, “Divorce and Adoption,” 77.

⁶⁹ Watson, *Law of the Ancient Romans*, 37.

Matthew's Joseph, too, like most of the Roman rulers from Caesar (49 BCE) to Marcus Aurelius (180 CE), even passes on a *royal lineage* to his adopted son!⁷⁰ We might, then, read Matthew's portrayal of Joseph's adoption of Jesus as one moment of engagement with the colonizing presence of Roman domination: does Matthew intend to position Jesus the adopted King alongside the adopted rulers of the Roman empire, reproducing imperial power structures even while also contesting them?

⁷¹ While other parts of Matthew's infancy narrative potentially offer other and similar scripts of resistance, as Warren Carter has recently shown, at the very least, Matthew's representation of Joseph's presumed adoption of Jesus intersects with hegemonic patterns of masculinity that underlie Roman legal practice where the *πατήρ* reigns supreme.⁷²

This intersection with hegemonic patterns of masculinity, moreover, has a destabilizing effect on Matthew's articulation of Joseph's manly virtue as an adoptive *πατήρ*, owing to the specific ambivalence of colonial representation and gestures of mimicry.⁷³ Matthew's characterization of Joseph does cite a set of dominant, hegemonic values—those favoring the prerogative of male household heads to determine kinship and family ties—but with an “almost the same, but not quite” bearing. There is, of course, something queerly “not quite” about a lowly woodworker (*τέκτων*; Matt 13.55) bequeathing a royal lineage to the illegitimate son of his betrothed. Like many of the other

⁷⁰ In fact, of all of the Roman rulers from Caesar (49 BCE) to Marcus Aurelius (180 CE), only Claudius, Vespasian and Marcus Aurelius were survived by natural sons, and Claudius's son Britannicus was murdered by Nero, Claudius's adopted son; see W. K. Lacey, *Augustus and the Principate: The Evolution of the System* (ARCA 35; Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1996), 227.

⁷¹ Postcolonial theorist James C. Scott has argued (*Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990]) that the assumption and deployment by subjugated populations of “the ideological terms of reference” by which their oppressors legitimate their own rule is often best read as an indication of a resistance strategy or *script*: “The system may have most to fear from those subordinates among whom the institutions of hegemony have been most successful” (107).

⁷² Warren Carter, “Matthaeian Christology in Roman Imperial Key,” in John Riches and David C Sim, eds., *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context* (London; New York: Continuum, 2005), 143-165, suggests that Judean traditions of Abraham, David, the Christ, Jesus/Joshua, and the (new) creation evoked in relation to Jesus in Matt 1 all “collide with and contest Roman imperial claims” (165). See also my treatment of Matthew's ‘flight to Egypt’ account (Matt 2.1-23), below; cf. Justin Glessner, “The Making(s) of an Average Joe: Joseph of Nazareth vs Empire, in Three Rounds,” in Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 189-227.

⁷³ Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha understands “colonial mimicry” as the process of flawed imitation of the colonizer by the colonized: the colonial subject stands as “a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (*The Location of Culture* [London: Routledge, 1994], 86, emphasis original).

gendered discourses of colonized Roman subjects in this period, Matthew's characterization of Joseph is "marked by neither an (impossible) outright rejection nor a simple inversion but by an ambivalent imitation of masculine ideals."⁷⁴ Such colonial mimesis frequently results in the production of *complicit* patterns of masculinity—patterns of relations embodied by (men) who have some connection with the hegemonic project but who do not rigorously practice the hegemonic pattern in its entirety. As R. W. Connell suggests, complicit masculinities are parasitic, in the sense of passively reaping a "patriarchal dividend" from the domination of a particular type of masculinity and/or of men in general "without the tensions or risks of being the front-line troops of patriarchy."⁷⁵

This, I suggest, is the sort of destabilized pattern of masculinity constructed in the case Matthew's representation of Joseph's adoption of Jesus: accepting the privilege afforded by citation of a stock aspect of the most powerful *πατήρ* of the empire, although genuinely distanced from any direct display of hegemonic power. To summarize: the measure of Joseph's manly virtue as *πατήρ* is double—Matthew's Joseph stands ambivalently both at the foot of and also apart from the patrilineal genealogy of Jesus. On the one hand, Joseph bears the marks of subordinated masculinity: physiologically limp, decidedly impotent, in the biological generation of Jesus. On the other hand, Joseph "almost" meets the masculine standard of the model Roman *πατήρ* of the principate, in charge of his own lineage and familial ties. Joseph's impotence or seedlessness is juxtaposed with the display of his strength, his social power to distribute his name and honor to (even non-biological) designated next of kin. Matthew's representation of Joseph, then, wavers between undermining and endorsing "dominant fantasies of masculine power and plenitude." Matthew's Joseph is, in short, a hybrid of hegemonic and subordinate gender ideals, an "almost but not quite" (mimic) *πατήρ*, (in)complete with complicit masculinity; impotent, without seed, though nearly generative in another (decidedly imperial) way.

⁷⁴ Eric Thurman, "Looking for a Few Good Men: Mark and Masculinity," in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 137-62 (140).

⁷⁵ Connell, *Masculinities*, 79.

2.3 Matthew's Average Joe, Mary, and 'The Other Man':

Honor Contests, Self-Control, Presiding over Household, and Torah-Knowledge (Matt 1.18-20a)

Matthew's ambivalent citation of hegemonic indices of masculinity continues with an "enlarged footnote to the crucial point in the genealogy,"⁷⁶ elaborating on the curious circumstances of the origin (γένεσις) of Jesus: how is it that Mary's son both *is* and *isn't* Joseph's heir? We learn that Mary and Joseph are "betrothed" (μνηστευθείσης 1.17), the first of a two-step marriage process involving extended/extensive family relations, negotiations, parental arrangements and a civil contract.⁷⁷

Before the second of this two-step process, before Mary and Joseph "came together" (συνελθεῖν), Mary "was found to be with child" (εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα; Matt 1.18).⁷⁸ Now, even if Joseph was

⁷⁶ Krister Stendahl, "Quis et Unde? An Analysis of Matthew 1-2," in Graham N. Stanton, ed., *The Interpretation of Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 69-80. The narrative in 1.18-25 may indeed both point backwards to and contain a progression of thought beyond the genealogy; see also Brown, *Birth*, 53.

⁷⁷ According to Jewish practices in antiquity, marriages were initiated by a "betrothal" (אירוסין) and finalized by a "home-taking" (נישואין), in which the bride is taken to her husband's house. See Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Tal Ilan, "Premarital Cohabitation in Ancient Judea: The Evidence of the Babatha Archive and the Mishna (Ketubbot 1.4)," *HTR* 86 (1993) 247-64. As Lincoln notes, "[u]nlike the modern custom of engagement, betrothal was considered part of the marriage not a state prior to it, and here in 1.19 Joseph is called Mary's husband as well as her betrothed" (*Born of a Virgin?*, 71); so, too, Luz, *Matthew*, 94: "In view of the legal situation it is not surprising that Joseph is designated as Mary's ἀνὴρ and she as γυνή"; cf. *t. Ket.* 8.1. Roman marriage practices were generally similar in this respect except that it was easier to break off the engagement; see Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

⁷⁸ The passive verbal construction (εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα) subtly invokes the specter of public knowledge, reception, and discipline. See Miriam Peskowitz's discussion of how (fe)male gazes and reports ("gossip") became part of a series of rabbinic mechanisms for informal power and control over Jewish women, "(Wo)Men Policing Women," in *Spinning Fantasies: Rabbis, Gender, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 133-143: "The description of each transgression contains someone other than the woman herself; someone else sees, someone watches, someone listens, and someone hears. These people are just beyond the text's actual words, but they are implied... Other people's eyes and ears are fashioned into a community of watchers. Other Jews' senses form a society of impending visual and aural awareness of Jewish women's acts" (143). Similarly, for Matthew, the specter of the public gaze upon and evaluation of Joseph (and Mary's) situation lies "just beyond the text's actual words" of the entirety of his infancy tale; if not right away, others, too, would eventually "find" Mary to be with child and wonder about the circumstances of its conception. As such, Matthew's tale subtly invokes the presence of the public court of reputation where such circumstances (and related 'deeds') would not have gone unnoticed. Cf. Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 91: "If Joseph knew of Mary's pregnancy, he was probably not alone, and word could spread quickly in a small town like Nazareth or Bethlehem."

legitimately allowed to have sexual relations with Mary during this period,⁷⁹ according to Matthew he *had* not: what seems clear from the narrative logic is that Matthew's Joseph at least suspects that the conception was due to an illicit union and so resolves to act on this knowledge.⁸⁰ What was at stake for Matthew's Joseph, and what does this tell us about the ancient masculine ideals at play in the discourse of the passage?

I suggest here that Matthew's account in 1.18-25 cites a series of masculine honor contests that play out on Mary's body. While anthropological literature on the contemporary cultural value of honor in the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East has become a common part of studies of ancient (including biblical) texts, and I need not rehearse all of the details here,⁸¹ more recent analyses have rightly criticized earlier literature on "trans-Mediterranean honor" for its functionalist circularity, focus on normative aspects of the honor code in small-scale communities, for its overemphasis on sexual aspects (at the expense of values such as hospitality, honesty, and cooperation), for perpetuating "the myth of male dominance," and for ignoring the shifting reality of

⁷⁹ According to Shemuel Safrai ("Home and Family," in Shemuel Safrai, Menahem Stern, David Flusser and W. C. van Unnik, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* [2 vols.; vol. 1: Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974; vol. 2: Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976], 756-57), the exclusion of sexual relations in the interim between the agreement of contract and the couple's public cohabitation was maintained quite strenuously in Galilee but much more loosely in Judea; cf. Miller, *Born Divine*, 88. However, as Bruce Chilton has shown, the alleged difference in marital custom between Galilee and Judea is not supported by all the later rabbinic texts cited; see "Jesus, le mamzer (Mt 1.18)," *ATS* 46 (2000): 222-27; idem., *Rabbi Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 5-22.

⁸⁰ Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.32. A small minority of commentators *do* argue that Joseph did not suspect Mary of adultery; see, e.g., Angelo Tosato, "Joseph, Being a Just Man (Matt 1.19)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 547-51; Herman Hendrickx, *The Infancy Narratives* (London: Chapman, 1984), 31-32; Arthur B. Calkins, "The Justice of Joseph Revisited," in *Kecharitomene* (Paris: Desclée, 1990), 165-77.

⁸¹ See Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in Jean G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 19-78; Michael Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood: Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); David D. Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, American Anthropological Association Special Publication 22 (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1987).

For 'Honor' in Biblical Studies, see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981); Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts. Models for Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 97-124; and Zeba Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *JBL* 128, no. 3 (2009): 591-611.

people's experience as gendered beings.⁸² Nevertheless, like Kenneth Stone, I think there is something to be gained in our reading of a biblical androcentric text by employing as a heuristic lens contemporary anthropological discussions concerning the symbolic relations between masculine honor, male sexual competition, and female purity/chastity.⁸³

David Gilmore, for one, extrapolates the symbolic role given to female sexuality in local ideals and idioms, found in androcentric discourse of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies, which are expressed by and naturalize the privileges of socially dominant men:⁸⁴

the masculine experience of sexuality becomes broadened conceptually to encompass a triad involving two men—or groups of men—and a woman, who is reduced to an intermediating object. Sexual relations are experienced as a measure of comparative virtue, judged as 'performance' among men. Necessarily, female sexuality becomes...a contentious and arbitrating social index for masculine reputation.⁸⁵

In such androcentric discourse that reflects male struggles for personal and familial prestige, the importance accorded to the woman's sexuality *by the men* involved is inextricable from a consideration of its perceived impact upon male-male relations. Within and according to such discourse, women are perceived as serving as "a conduit of a relationship" of alliance and/or conflict between men: men "traffic in women,"⁸⁶ or as Kate Cooper puts it more generally, and in reference to the ancient (religious) milieu closer to Matthew's world, "wherever a woman is mentioned a man's

⁸² See, e.g., Unni Wikan, "Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair," *Man* 19, no. 4 (1984): 635-52; Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11-12; idem, "As in Your Own House: Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society," in Gilmore, *Honor and Shame*, 75-89; Nancy Lindisfarne, "Variant Masculinities, Variant Virginities: Rethinking 'Honour and Shame,'" in Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, eds., *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 82-96; idem, "Gender, Shame, and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective," in Paul Gilbert and Bernice Andrews, eds., *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology, and Culture* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 246-60. At times, such critiques risk overshooting the mark. I endorse the sensible reply by David Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 38-41, who argues that, despite many differences, there are typical patterns of gendering and social practice that characterize a wide range of Mediterranean communities, and which display a considerable similarity in the underlying normative structure or ethos.

⁸³ See Kenneth A. Stone, *Sex, Honor and Power in the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996): "a competitive notion of masculine sexuality" (42).

⁸⁴ See Alison Lever, "Honour as a Red Herring," *Critique of Anthropology* 6, no. 3 (1986): 83-106.

⁸⁵ David D. Gilmore, "Introduction: The Shame of Dishonour," in Gilmore, *Honor and Shame*, 4-5.

⁸⁶ A phrase taken from an influential essay by Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975) 157-210 (174), as aptly applied to biblical texts by Stone, *Sex, Honor and Power*, 46-48.

character is being judged—and along with it what he stands for.”⁸⁷ Accordingly, I am interested here in exploring the ways that Matthew’s representation of male status functions “by making its mark upon ‘others’.”⁸⁸ Matthew’s Mary is of course not only an object of androcentric discourse. Though, whatever else the (a)sexuality of Matthew’s Mary stands for,⁸⁹ I suggest Matthew employs it/her also a piece in a game of homosocial prestige: part of Joseph’s reputation is placed between Mary’s legs,⁹⁰ inscribed upon Mary’s body.

As discussed above, in ancient, androcentric, Greek and Roman discourse, masculinity or “manliness” (*ἀνδρεία/virtus*) was portrayed as an achieved state of perceived ideals,⁹¹ and, like honor itself, had to be established and constantly reaffirmed by *performance*⁹² and public evaluation of

⁸⁷ Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 19.

⁸⁸ With Mary Rose D’Angelo, “‘Knowing How To Preside Over His Own Household’: Imperial Masculinity and Christian Asceticism in the Pastorals, Hermas, and Luke-Acts,” in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 265-295: “Kate Cooper’s observation ‘that wherever a woman is mentioned a man’s character is being judged—and along with it what he stands for’ has proven itself in a sort of reverse. In an attempt to look directly at masculinity in the male worlds of these texts, it has been easiest to see and understand its workings on the persons of those who are other-than-men: women, children, and slaves” (295).

⁸⁹ See, e.g., Jane Schaberg, “Feminist Interpretations of the Infancy Narrative of Matthew,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 13, no. 1 (1997): 35-62, which offers a comprehensive summary of and response to the many and varied feminist interpretations of the representation of Mary in both Matthew and Luke’s infancy accounts. See also treatment of deployment of the ‘subversive memory’ of Mary by Andrea Taschl-Erber, “Subversive Erinnerung: Feministisch-kritische Lektüre von Mt 1-2 und Lk 1-2,” in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Dettwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 231-256.

⁹⁰ Cf. Fatima Mernissi, “Virginité and Patriarchy,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 5, no. 2(1982): 183-191 (183), speaking broadly about ‘Mediterranean men’: “The concepts of honour and virginity locate the prestige of a man between the legs of a woman. It is not by subjugating nature or by conquering mountains and rivers that a man secures his status, but by controlling the movements of women related to him by blood or by marriage, and by forbidding them any contact with male strangers.”

⁹¹ See, e.g., Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 59, 81.

⁹² See Halvor Moxnes, “Conventional Values in the Hellenistic World: Masculinity,” in P. Bilde, T. Engberg-Pedersen, L. Hannestad, J. Zahle, eds., *Conventional Values of the Hellenistic Greeks*, Studies in Hellenistic Civilization, 8 (Århus: Aarhus University Press, 1997), 263-84. Liew aptly relates “Gilmore’s emphasis on masculinity as an ‘achievement’ to Butler’s concept of ‘gender (as) performance’” (“Re-Mark-able Masculinities,” 96).

The far-flung ancient literary and philosophical ‘gender-dissonant’ topos of *female* performance of masculinity is beyond the scope of this project; though texts of the late Hellenistic era, Marilyn Skinner reminds us (“Ego mulier. The Construction of Male Sexuality in Catullus,” in Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997], 129-50), “are notorious for the phenomenon of ‘gender dissonance’: in virtually every literary genre, boundaries between ‘male’ and ‘female’ as essential categories of psycho-sexual identity fluctuate wildly and eventually break down” (129). Cf. Sheila Murnaghan, “How a Woman Can Be More Like a Man: The Dialogue between Isomachus and His Wife in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*,” *Helios* 15 (1988): 9-22; Kerstin Bjerre-Aspegren and René Kieffer, *The Male Woman: A Feminine Ideal in the Early Church* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990); and, in the modern period, Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

performance—most crucially in the competitive fields of the gymnasium, the battlefield, and rhetorical education and public allocution,⁹³ though also, not unimportantly, by public evaluation of how one presided over one's household, in ruling over, providing for, and protecting one's charges, especially with regards to the sexual propriety of one's women.⁹⁴ Even if Mary had been living in her father's house at the time, Joseph, as Mary's betrothed (husband), would have borne some of the weight of responsibility for her protection,⁹⁵ and, by allowing another man unauthorized access to Mary, would be at risk of suffering a loss of honor in the eyes of the "public court of reputation,"⁹⁶ a serious loss of male social identity. Because a wife's sexual impropriety implied the husband's inadequacy or his family's poor choice of a mate, it shamed the husband as well,⁹⁷ and the accompanying shame would be intense and deliberate.⁹⁸

Here, then, is the first of Matthew's androcentric "triads": Joseph vs. 'the other man', and Mary, an intermediating object whose sexuality (or, at least, capacity to bear children) embodies "a contentious and arbitrating social index for masculine reputation";⁹⁹ Mary, "a conduit of a relationship" of conflict between Joseph and 'the other man' who (presumably) deflowered and inseminated her. Joseph's masculine performance in seeking the requisite retribution *as a man should*, illustrates his own subjection to the self-destructive machinery of a patriarchal gender norm: "the inherent contradiction of male bonding and battling that was being required of 'real' men in the

⁹³ See Gleason, *Making Men*, esp. 159-67 on masculinity as a performance enacted by rhetoricians of the Second Sophistic. See also Joy Connolly, "Like the Labors of Heracles: Andreia and Paideia in Greek Culture Under Rome," in Ralph M. Rosen and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 287-318; Myles A. McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁹⁴ See D'Angelo, "Knowing How To Preside"; Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michele George, ed., *Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond* (Oxford; New York: Oxford, 2005).

⁹⁵ But see Samuel Tobias Lachs, "Studies in the Semitic Background to the Gospel of Matthew," *JQR* 67 (1977): 195-217 (196), who suggests that a man did *not* have responsibility for the support of the woman during this period, was not liable for funeral expenses should she die, and could not inherit from her.

⁹⁶ See Crook, "Honor, Shame," 593, 598-611.

⁹⁷ See, e.g., 2 Enoch 71.1-11; Longus, *Love Romances* 5.3; and Ps-Herodotus, *Life of Homer*, cited by M. Eugene Boring, Klaus Berger, and Carsten Colpe, eds., *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 40-41; Gilmore, "Introduction: The Shame of Dishonour," 4.

⁹⁸ See, e.g., Demosthenes, *Against Neaera* 86; Seneca, *Dialogues* 2.18.2; Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 2; *Moralia* 291; *b. Sor* 8b.

⁹⁹ After Gilmore, "Introduction: The Shame of Dishonour," 4.; see n. 85 above.

ancient Mediterranean...is particularly acute because...masculinity is something that men contest each other for, but also acknowledge in and give to each other...an alternative competition and confirmation among men.”¹⁰⁰ Matthew’s Joseph exposes his participation in the “delicate and volatile social dance” of contending for limited resources of homosocial honor,¹⁰¹ with all its “push-and-pull, back-and-forth dynamics among men”—he responds to the challenge put to him by another man’s contravention of the boundaries of his household, Mary’s body. What response to such a challenge, what course of action might we expect Joseph to follow? How might Joseph have reestablished his homosocial reputation in such a situation?

Perhaps, if he were another sort of man, Joseph may, in the face of such betrayal or scandal, have reclaimed his honor through vengeance of some stripe. Such honor claims based on the public recognition of violent reciprocity were conventionally masculine,¹⁰² related to the heroic masculinity of Achilles and Hercules.¹⁰³ Though, of course, domestic acts of revenge were not quite the same as slaying an enemy on a foreign battleground, and epic poetry was not quite the same as legal

¹⁰⁰ Liew, “Re-Mark-able Masculinities,” 132.

¹⁰¹ On the notion of “limited good,” see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 81-107.

¹⁰² See Gabriel Herman, “Honour, Revenge and the State in Fourth-Century Athens,” in Walter Eder, ed., *Die athenische Demokratie im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1995), 43–60. Consider, e.g., the single use of ἀνδρεία in Sophocles, where Electra virtually equates the word with an act of vengeance (*Electra* 983).

¹⁰³ The conventional model of manly, violent reciprocity is Achilles’ revenge against Hector for the death of Patroclus (*Iliad* XXII). Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Personal Good* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), suggests that the majority of Achilles’ actions in the *Iliad*, from fighting the Trojans and the Greeks to killing Hector, are “motivated by revenge” (183); cf. Hercules’ revenge against Lycus (e.g. Euripides, *Herakles* ll. 565-573). For deployment of the topic of revenge in Roman imperial strategy, see Susan Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1999), 171-94.

pragmatics.¹⁰⁴

But Matthew's Joseph in fact refrains from pursuing directly a violent course of reclaiming honor.¹⁰⁵ So too, Matthew's Joseph quashes any bulge of rage of betrayal, desire for revenge, "tyrannical passion of jealousy,"¹⁰⁶ any passion, really—and so Matthew here evokes implicitly another index of ancient masculinity, that of self-mastery.¹⁰⁷ While the trope of masculine self-mastery lingers around the edges of much of Matthew's gendered discourse, and deserves further attention,¹⁰⁸ Joseph's apparent restraint in the infancy account in fact fleshes out and anticipates Jesus' demands for his male addressees in the Sermon on the Mount (5.21-6.34) of absolute control

¹⁰⁴ Death was not the legal penalty for violations of Roman adultery laws and only under closely defined circumstances was a father or husband permitted to kill the adulterer and a husband was never permitted to kill his wife; see Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 264–75; and Eva Cantarella, "Homicides of Honor: The Development of Italian Adultery Law over Two Millennia," in David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller, eds., *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 229–44. Cf. Philo's rearticulation of biblical prohibitions and penalties from Exod 20.14; Lev 18.22; 20.13; Deut 5.18; Deut 22.23–29 in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica/Hypothetica* [8.]7.1. As Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Gender and Geopolitics in the Work of Philo of Alexandria: Jewish Piety and Imperial Family Values," in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63–88, suggests: "adultery and the associated family of 'crimes' have been made a 'hot topic' by the Julian law and the highly political prosecutions initiated by the emperors," and "by opening his discussion of the law with Jewish severity toward sexual crimes, [Philo] can present the Jewish polity as able to support and even excel beyond the Roman order," that although Philo "treats the severity of the law as unique to Moses, he also expects his audience to approve of it, recognizing this severity as evidence for the superiority of Judaism" (76–77).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Matthew Marohl, *Joseph's Dilemma: "Honor Killing" in the Birth Narrative of Matthew* (Eugene, Or.: Cascade Books, 2008).

¹⁰⁶ This is the phrase John Chrysostom uses to describe the foil to the presumed internal state of Matthew's Joseph; see *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew* 4.7.

¹⁰⁷ As Anderson and Moore ("Matthew and Masculinity") note, a man's "self-control/mastery" (ἐγκράτεια; LSJ 473), together with his "temperance," (σωφροσύνη; LSJ 1751) was in classical literature regularly cloaked in martial and athletic metaphors and held up as a supremely masculine virtue: "Mastery of others and/or of oneself emerges as definitive of masculinity in many surviving Greco-Roman texts, the emphasis arguably shifting increasingly to self-mastery during and after the Augustan epoch" (69), citing Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality* 3, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 84–86, 94–95; see also Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality* 2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 65–70, 72–74; Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *JBL* 117, no. 2 (1998): 249–273 (258–59).

¹⁰⁸ Matthew does not contain any explicit or extended reflection on reason as master of the passions, of the sort found in Philo or 4 Maccabees; see David Aune, "Mastery of the Passions: Philo, 4 Maccabees and Earliest Christianity," in Wendy E. Helleman, ed., *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 125–58; Anderson and Moore ("Matthew and Masculinity," 71) note the absence of terminology (esp. ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη) typically associated with masculine virtue. However, Matthew's Jesus does demonstrate consummate mastery of his own passions, particularly from his arrival in Gethsemane on the night of his arrest through to his ordeal on the cross; see Neyrey, *Honor and Shame*, 148–62.

of passions: anger, lust, desire for revenge, pride, avarice, and anxiety.¹⁰⁹ How, then, does Matthew's Joseph, ostensibly pacifist, restrained and/or self-mastered, resolve to recuperate his reputation? Betrothed wife violated, competitive sexuality questioned, honor at risk, and masculine identity on the line: Joseph enters the fray of the homosocial contest by, what—leafing through his Deuteronomic options and deciding on a legal course of action?¹¹⁰ Indeed, Matthew's *just man*, does just what we might expect a first-century, observant Jewish male to do: he employs Torah knowledge to work through the predicament.

Schaberg has admirably probed the legal options that Matthew's ideal audience, conversant with contemporary Jewish law, might expect Matthew's Joseph "to consider carefully—even agonizingly—as he reached his decision."¹¹¹ But listen: in lieu of an implement of vengeance, Matthew's Joseph enters the contest brandishing his resolute, *logocentric* phallus.¹¹² It is, notably, *Joseph's* righteous 'plan' (ἐβουλήθη),¹¹³ presumably based on his careful 'reflection' (ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος)¹¹⁴ on traditional texts and expositions, that constitutes the obligatory response to the challenge put to him by the other man's contravention of the boundaries of his house(hold) (Matt 1.19-20).

¹⁰⁹ See Hans-Ulrich Weidemann, "Being a Male Disciple of Jesus According to Matthew's Antitheses," in Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 107-155 (125-145); Luise Schottroff, *Lydias ungeduldige Schwestern. Feministische Sozialgeschichte des frühen Christentums* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), 170-179, suggests that the three model situations referred to in the fifth 'antithesis' of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5.38-41) stringently imply the role of men in society that required them to repay injustice and, if necessary, to defend themselves forcefully against assaults (172). Cf. Conway, *Behold the Man*, 119: "although the Matthew Jesus nowhere uses terms connoting self-control, he does encourage the practice of it. Brothers are not to get angry at each other or insult one another (5:21-22; see Sirach 10:18), nor are they to commit adultery or lust after a woman (5:27)."

¹¹⁰ Elsewhere in the ancient world, too, an appropriate 'manly' response to an honor challenge (insult/injury) might consist of pursuing legal action in lieu of violent reciprocity, though the manliness of such a 'passive' response needed to be proven rhetorically and is not merely assumed or taken for granted; see, e.g., Demosthenes' rhetorical 'response' to Meidias' physical assault in *Against Meidias*; David Cohen, "Demosthenes' *Against Meidias* and Athenian Litigation," in Michael Gagarin, ed., *Symposion 1990: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Köln: Böhlau, 1991), 155-64.

¹¹¹ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 42-62 (62). Joseph's predicament, as many critics have noted, are covered by the decidedly androcentric laws pertaining to intercourse with a betrothed woman in Deut 22.23-27.

¹¹² See Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and 'Sexuality' in The Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 31-51, 175-81; cf. Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 74: "men make themselves the authoritative interpreters of Scripture and its laws, as they have been its authoritative creators and transmitters."

¹¹³ βούλομαι; LSJ 325.

¹¹⁴ ἐνθυμέομαι; LSJ 567.

So Joseph enters the contest, logocentric phallus at the ready “and unwilling to publicly disgrace her” (καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι; Matt 1.19)? Was Matthew’s Joseph only concerned for *her* (αὐτὴν), that is Mary’s, public (dis)honor? Perhaps. More likely, though, Matthew employs a metonymic ‘her’ here—that is, whatever else she stands for in the discourse of the passage, Mary is also *standing in* for Joseph’s reputation: *her* potential exposure, public disgrace inscribed upon *her* body, was also *his* public defamation. That is, in the resolution to the problem as in the initial impropriety that constituted the problem, Matthew makes Mary’s body an ‘arbitrating social index for masculine reputation’, a ‘conduit of relationship’ between Joseph and other men, the locus of the ‘delicate and volatile social dance’ of homosocial competition and confirmation.

Among his several legal options, Matthew’s honor-loving Joseph forgoes a formal, public hearing to ascertain the circumstances behind Mary’s pregnancy.¹¹⁵ If Joseph had gone through with the hearing, the panoptic male gaze upon Mary’s pregnant body would presumably have led to an evaluation of Joseph’s incompetence to protect her, a confirmation of his erotic defeat, and grounds for the move to distribute dishonor to him, to downgrade his masculinity. Torah-bound and wanting to avoid his own public infamy, however, Joseph decides to dissolve the marriage (ἐβουλήθη...ἀπολύσαι αὐτὴν; Matt 1.19)—a decision in accord with the *halakhah* of Matthew’s Jesus that allowed, or perhaps required, divorce in cases of spousal sexual impropriety (πορνεία)¹¹⁶—and he decides to do so, “privately” (λάθρα) as opposed to “publicly”: a quiet dismissal, presumably delivering a writ of repudiation of the marriage contract before two witnesses.¹¹⁷

Now a number of commentators have extolled Joseph’s ‘quiet divorce’ decision, suggesting that it

¹¹⁵ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 58-59.

¹¹⁶ A number of commentators argue that Joseph’s situation illuminates Matthew’s addition of the so-called ‘exception clause’ (παρεκτός λόγου πορνείας, 5.32; μὴ ἐπὶ πορνεία, 19.9) to Jesus’ prohibitions of divorce; see e.g., Allison, “Divorce, Celibacy and Joseph”; and Jacobson, “Jesus against the Family.” See Martin Vahrenhorst, *Ihr sollt überhaupt nicht schwören: Matthäus im halachischen Diskurs* (WMANT 95; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002), 407-409, with reference to *m. Ned.* 11.12, *m. Sot.* 5.1 and *b. San.* 41a, as well as to Philo, *Abr.* 98 and others. Particularly illuminating is his reference to Matt 1.19-20: Joseph, the ‘just man’, is apparently afraid to marry his seemingly impure fiancé who must have been touched by another man.

¹¹⁷ Deut 24.1-4; *m. Git* 9.10; cf. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage*, 72, 324, 358.

models and announces the theme of the “greater” or “more perfect” righteousness espoused by Matthew’s Jesus in the remainder of the gospel.¹¹⁸ But we may well wonder if this quiet dismissal of Mary is, in fact, Joseph’s *merciful* face. Perhaps Matthew wants his audience to think so. “Trafficking in women”¹¹⁹ in cases of divorce is one of the sites of Matthew’s ideological struggle with other contemporary teachers of the law—the scribes and Pharisees, Matthew’s so-named doers of a “lesser righteousness”¹²⁰—and so, perhaps in the context of Matthew’s androcentric discourse, and compared to the divorce halakhah of other pious Jews contested by Matthew, Joseph’s plan *was* more merciful, clement. We ought to note,¹²¹ however, that acts of clemency in Greco-Roman tradition and its male-centric cult of virtues,¹²² rather than being unambiguous signs of generosity or benevolence, in the hands of certain folk, could also denote tyrannical pretensions: being “the stuff of absolute monarchy,”¹²³ “ruthless violence and tender mercy were two sides of the same princely face.”¹²⁴ Perhaps here, too, Matthew’s representation of Joseph’s merciful, private dismissal of Mary re-inscribes the gendered ideology underlying Roman imperial power structures. At the very least, it reflects, as Schaberg aptly notes, “the patriarchal social situation in which the power of such decision,

¹¹⁸ So, Luz, *Matthew*, 94: “Joseph interprets the law in the sense of the love commandment and thus joins the series of the righteous persons that reaches from Abel (23:35) and the OT righteous men (13:17) through Jesus (27:19, 24) to those whom the final judgment will show to be doers of the commandments of Jesus (13:43; 25:46)”; Keener, *Matthew*, 92: “Joseph models the principle of justice tempered by compassion.” See also Megan Warner, “Uncertain Women: Sexual Irregularity and the Greater Righteousness in Matthew 1,” *Pacifica* 18 (2005): 18-32; Olender, *Righteousness in Matthew*, 105-106; Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 163-72.

¹¹⁹ Rubin, “Traffic in Women,” 174; see n. 79, above.

¹²⁰ Hence another, auxiliary, homosocial competition is being played out on Mary’s body: while Matthew’s Joseph logocentrically contends with ‘the other man’ over the bodily integrity of his betrothed, the author of the Gospel, too, contends with other men over the content and the manner of application of Torah. Joseph’s tale thus concerns not only the upholding of the male-centered, legal process, but also concerns the manner in which that process should and should not be conducted.

¹²¹ With Conway, *Behold the Man*, 41, 43, 46, 82, 87, 94, 117, 165, 173, 178, 180.

¹²² See, e.g., Rufus J. Fears, “The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Theology,” *ANRW* 2.17.2 (1981): 825–948.

¹²³ Matthew Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 65.

¹²⁴ Clemency, a trait of the ideal masculine ruler, could be a device to humble opponents and shore up power; see Donald Earl, *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 60: “the arbitrary mercy, bound by no law, shown by a superior to an inferior who is entirely in his power”; Carlin Barton, *Roman Honor: Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 175, and 112: “It was hope (and so slavery) that the clemency of Julius Caesar offered to the Romans.” For a discussion of the full range of connotations *clementia* could carry in the ancient world, see David Konstan, “Clemency as a Virtue,” *Classical Philology* 100 (2005): 337–46. I simply highlight here that Joseph’s ‘secret dismissal’ of Mary is not as effortlessly altruistic as some scholars are led to believe.

with life-and-death consequences, resides in men.”¹²⁵

Now, the ‘delicate and volatile social dance’ of Matthew’s discursive triad (Joseph, ‘the other man’, Mary)—that contradictory ‘bonding and battling between men’—may, presumably, have drawn to a close with Joseph’s quiet dismissal of Mary. The challenge put to Joseph via Mary’s body has been answered in eyes of the public court of reputation: Joseph and Mary’s divorce will be public, even if the initial dismissal was enacted privately. This is not the end of the story, however. Joseph does what he is *supposed to do* as Matthew’s morally excellent, self-controlled, honor-loving male, waving his resolute and merciful, logocentric phallus around in private, and then he doesn’t; or, rather, what Joseph is *supposed to do* changes. Intriguingly, as elsewhere in biblical texts,¹²⁶ the principal source of ambiguity and ambivalence in Matthew’s gender discourse is none other than the deity, Matthew’s GodFather. As I discuss in the next part, Matthew portrays the primacy and *potestas* of Joseph’s honor bid as being *godhandled* in some intriguing ways. For, even as he wields his own ‘logocentric phallus’ (his prior Torah-knowledge), Joseph receives Torah knowledge by other, more directly, penetrative means.

¹²⁵ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 74. Joseph’s ‘merciful’ act makes a bid for reclaiming (individual/collective) honor, dissociates himself from the problem, avoids the hassle of a public trial, and dodges the stench of scandal; meanwhile, Mary is (chillingly) returned to her family, handed over to dishonored brothers and father who may pursue other means of ‘making right’ her ‘wrong’, an equally precarious and (potentially) fatal position for Mary.

¹²⁶ See, e.g., Stephen D. Moore, *God’s Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 1996); *God’s Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001). See discussion of God’s masculinity in Martti Nissinen, “Biblical Masculinities: Musings on Theory and Agenda,” in Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 271-285 (277-278).

2.4 Matthew's Average Joe and the *GodFather*: Dreams, Plights, Fear and *Godhandling* (Matt 1.20b-24)

Matthew ostensibly structures the narrative in these verses around a conventional biblical type-scene, the (epiphanic) *annunciation* (or, birth report);¹²⁷ however, it is as illuminating to note the unconventional aspects of Matthew's adaptation of this type-scene as it is to demonstrate how the Gospel writer conforms to a set pattern,¹²⁸ as such adaptations are underwritten by Matthew's gendered ideology.

To begin with, Matthew merges the annunciation type-scene with another common literary convention from antiquity, that of the dream narrative or dream-vision report¹²⁹—apparently one of Matthew's authorial idiosyncrasies, as Matthew's Joseph dreams four of the six dreams referred to in

¹²⁷ Raymond Brown lays out the pattern of such an announcement, referring to Gen 16.7-13 (to Hagar re: Ishmael); Gen 17.1-21 and 18.1-15 (to Abr[ah]am re: Isaac); Judg 13.3-23 (to Manoah's wife re: Samson); Luke 1.11-20 (to Zechariah re: John the Baptist); Luke 1.26-37 and Matt 1.20-21 (to Mary and Joseph re: Jesus). The five steps of this pattern are: (1) the appearance of the angel of the Lord (or appearance of the Lord); (2) fear or prostration of the visionary confronted by this supernatural presence; (3) the divine message: a. visionary is addressed by name, b. a qualifying phrase describing the visionary, c. visionary is told not to be afraid, d. a woman is with child or about to be with child, e. she will give birth to a (male) child, f. the name by which the child is to be called, g. an etymology interpreting the name, h. the future accomplishments of the child; (4) an objection by the visionary as to how this can be, or a request for a sign; (5) the giving of a sign to reassure the visionary; see *Birth*, 156ff. See also R. Neff, *The Annunciation in Old Testament Birth Stories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); Robert Alter, "How Convention Helps Us Read: the Case of the Bible's Annunciation Type-Scene," *Prooftexts* 3 (1983): 115-130; Athalya Brenner, "Female Social Behavior: Two Descriptive Patterns within the 'Birth of the Hero' Paradigm," *VT* 36 (1986): 257-273; and Timothy D. Finlay, *The Birth Report Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

¹²⁸ As is the case with much of comparative literary studies; so, e.g., Wendy Doniger is among the contemporary scholars of comparative religion who, in light of the postmodernist critique, devote considerable attention to the *differences* between comparable objects, what Doniger calls "the dog that doesn't bark": "Comparison makes it possible for us literally to *cross-examine* cultures, by using a myth from one culture to reveal to us what is *not* telling from another culture" (Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1998], 33, emphases original).

¹²⁹ Matthew's dream narratives have been analyzed primarily in terms of the biblical and midrashic traditions that Matthew utilized and appropriated for his purposes; see, e.g., Brown, *Birth*, 45-232; and Dominic M. Crossan, "Structure & Theology of Mt. 1.18- 2.23," *Cahiers de Joséphologie* 16 (1968): 1-17. In terms of the form of the dreams, most scholars argue that Matthew was influenced by the dreams found in Genesis; see Robert Gnuse, "Dream Genre in the Matthean Infancy Narratives," *NovT* 32 (1990): 97-120; and George Soares Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew: An Enquiry into the Tradition History of Mt. 1-2* (AnBib 63; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 223-225.

all of gospel literature.¹³⁰ As Derek Dodson notes, Matthew’s dream-annunciation to Joseph lines up with conventional features of Greco-Roman audio-visual dream narratives,¹³¹ comprised of: (1) *scene-setting*, including [a] the identification of the dreamer (Ἰωσήφ), [b] the time in which the dream occurs (ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοῦ...),¹³² and [c] a description of the mental state of the dreamer (ἐνθυμηθέντος...μὴ φοβηθῆς) (Matt 1.19-20);¹³³ (2) *dream vocabulary* (κατ’ ὄναρ) (Matt 1.20); (3) the *audio-visual dream proper*, including [a] the appearance and identification of a dream figure (ἄγγελος κυρίου...ἐφάνη αὐτῷ), [b] a report of what the dream figure says (...λέγων...) and [c] interpretive elements via a fulfillment quotation (τοῦτο δὲ ὄλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ

¹³⁰ Matthew's Gospel contains six references to dreams: five in the infancy narrative (by Joseph: 1.20; 2.13, 19, and 22; by the Magi: 2.12) and one in the passion narrative (by Pilate's wife: 27.19), while Luke's contains none at all (even though in Acts, Paul has four waking visions: 16.9, 18.9, 23.11, 27.23–26). See William V. Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2009): “Dreams have a minor and curious role in the Gospels, being concentrated, with a solitary exception, in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ birth. Since Matthew is so insistent, it seems likely that this inconsistency was a result of a difference of opinion about the value of dreams” (68); and “The Christian tradition prior to 250 had been ambivalent about dreams, in the sense that there were many views on the subject...The ambivalence seems to be very early, and it was already there in Jewish tradition” (218).

¹³¹ *Contra* Gnuse, the form of the dream narrative in Matthew may more closely correspond to the form of dream reports in Greco-Roman literature; see John S. Hanson, “Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity,” in Wolfgang Haase, ed., *ANRW* (New York: de Gruyter, 1980), 23.2:1395-1427, who refers to the form as a “dream-vision report” and comments that Matthew’s dreams “conform completely to formal expectations” when compared with the formal pattern of dreams in Greco-Roman literature (1421). See also Marco Frenschkowski, “Traum und Traumdeutung im Matthäusevangelium: Einige Beobachtungen,” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 41 (1998): 5-47; Derek S. Dodson, “Dreams, the Ancient Novels, and the Gospel of Matthew: An Intertextual Study,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 29 (2002): 39-52; and idem, *Reading Dreams: An Audience-Critical Approach to the Dreams in the Gospel of Matthew* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009).

Though, dream narratives seemed to have been diffused cross-culturally in antiquity, as Frances Flannery-Daily finds in her study of dreams in Ancient Near Eastern, Greek and Roman, and Hellenistic Jewish literature a “surprisingly standardized [pattern] across many cultures for millennia” (“Standing at the Head of Dreamers: A Study of Dreams in Antiquity” [Ph.D. diss., The University of Iowa, 2000], 1, see chs. 1-2); see also Hanson, “Dreams and Visions,” 1396: “Especially in formal, literary ways, the fundamental character of dream-vision reports does not significantly change from the Homeric poets to the end of late antiquity. Further, there are striking parallels between dream-vision materials of the Hellenistic and Roman periods and those of earlier cultures such as Assyria, Egypt, and Israel.”

¹³² The scene-setting feature in this dream narrative is similar to Chariton, *Callirhoe* 2.9.6. Just as Callirhoe considers the circumstances of her pregnancy (ταῦτα λογιζόμενη δι’ ἄλλης νυκτός), Joseph reflects upon the circumstances of Mary’s pregnancy (ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος).

¹³³ While the verbal aspect of the aorist participle ἐνθυμηθέντος points to the time in which the dream occurred (just after, nearly contemporaneous with...), the actual meaning of the verb ἐνθυμέομαι denotes a mental state of careful, deep, or emotive reflection/pondering (LSJ 567). The initial line of the angel’s message also hints at Joseph’s mental state: “do not be afraid to...” (μὴ φοβηθῆς), as I discuss in more detail below.

κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος...)¹³⁴ (Matt 1.20-22); and, finally, (4) a description of the *dreamer's reaction/response* (ἐγερθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου) (Matt 1.24-25).

That dreams serve as an index of ancient masculinity (at least in the Hebrew Bible), has been recently suggested by Andrew Todd.¹³⁵ Matthew's representation of Joseph, too, draws on this conventional aspect of biblical masculine experience.¹³⁶ Matthew constructs a Joseph, whose manly bearing among other men, not unlike that of his patriarchal namesake,¹³⁷ hinges on the deployment of knowledge gained in *dreams*. Granted, women are also depicted as receiving dream knowledge in

¹³⁴ As Dodson (*Reading Dreams*, 154, 171) suggests, the Isaiah 7.14 fulfillment quotation deployed by Matthew in the dream narrative is not as intrusive as Hanson ("Dreams and Visions") proposes, but it provides the dream narrative with an interpretive element and reflects a literary convention found in other dream narratives. See, e.g., the dream narrative in Chariton, *Callirhoe* 2.9.6, which includes a quote from the *Iliad* 23.66-67 and is used in the description of the dream figure; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 3.28.1 contains a Homeric echo from the *Odyssey* 9.353 in describing the dreamer's response/reaction, identified by Christopher Gill in his translation of Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe in Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (ed. B. P. Reardon; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 315, n.57; and the description of the dream figure in Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 5.22.1-2 is virtually a string of Homeric allusions and echoes (*Odyssey* 1.1; 10.261ff; 13.332, 398ff; 18.66ff; 19.392ff).

¹³⁵ See Andrew Todd, "Negotiating Daniel's Masculinity: The Appropriation of Daniel's Dreams by Actual (Rather than Ideal) Readers," in Ovidiu Creanga, ed., *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 212-233 (213-14): as part of the movement to attribute extraordinary insight to exceptional men, the spirit and wisdom of Israel's exceptional leaders, "Dreams would appear to contribute...to a number of narratives which set forth the character of some of Israel's heroic figures," setting out "the positive masculine role model..." of the dreaming leader.

¹³⁶ See, e.g., Genesis 28.12; 37.5-9; Daniel 2.19. Post-biblical Jewish literature amplified the frequency of such revelations: see *IQapGen* 19.14-23; Jubilees 27.1-3; 32.1; 41.24; Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.13-16, 63-73, 216-19; 6.38; 7.147; Ps-Philo 9.10; 42.3; 4 Ezra 10.59; *Testament of Abraham* 4 A; 4, 6 B; *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* 23.2. See Scott B. Noegel, *Nocturnal Ciphers: The Allusive Language of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2007), 113-123.

¹³⁷ See, e.g., Herman C. Waetjen, "The Origin of Jesus Christ: Matthew 1:1-25," *The Christian Century* (May 20-27 1998): 524-53, who compares Matthew's Joseph to the contemporary image of the patriarch Joseph presented in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, particularly the *Testament of Joseph*. Matthew's Joseph is like his Hebrew Bible counterpart in at least three respects: (1) he is chaste (see discussion of Matt 1.25, below); (2) he has dreams in which the future is revealed to him and (3) he rescues Jesus by adopting him and by carrying him to safety in Egypt (see discussion of Matt 2, below). While these are superficial similarities, secondary to the cardinal events of the patriarch Joseph's biblical career (slavery, imprisonment, and enthronement), nevertheless, it is specifically these three qualities which are eulogized in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, where he is acknowledged by the other patriarchs as a model of virtue (esp. chastity): "Now Joseph was a good man and had the Spirit of God in him" (*Test. of Sim.* 4.1); "...Joseph, my brother, the true and good man" (*Test. of Dan.* 5:1). Cf. Luz, *Matthew*, 120; Andries Gideon Van Aarde, "The Joseph Trajectory: The Joseph Theme in Biblical and Extrabiblical Material," in *Fatherless in Galilee: Jesus as Child of God* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2001).

ancient discourse;¹³⁸ though when men dream, especially in theophanic encounters, something else is also at stake. Likewise, while *annunciation* to a man is not altogether unconventional,¹³⁹ the annunciation type-scene is commonly associated with women, as R.H. Jarrell has cogently argued.¹⁴⁰ Matthew's reconfiguration of divine birth annunciation to a *man* should alert us to something special indeed. Theophanic encounters also utilize gender as a way of configuring the relationship between humans and the deity, and while "the possession and transmission of the Torah" is frequently depicted as 'a masculine trait',¹⁴¹ as Ovidiu Creanga and others have noted, "its acquisition in relation to *Yhwh* evokes feminization."¹⁴² Especially with regards to direct communicative, epiphanic or annunciation encounters, the deity is supremely, if also perhaps queerly, *on top*.¹⁴³

As Schaberg notes, Matthew also adapts the standard annunciation type-scene by using it in a situation that is unique to biblical traditions: as a response to the threat of what ostensibly is an

¹³⁸ So, e.g., Pilate's wife also receives knowledge by dream (27.19), though her dream knowledge is perhaps deployed by Matthew to shame the lack of knowledge by other prominent men of the narrative, namely Pilate and the Jewish leaders calling for Jesus' crucifixion; see discussion by Dodson, *Reading Dreams*, 163-169; cf. Patricia Cox Miller, "Perpetua and Her Diary of Dreams," in idem, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 148-183, who discusses the role of dreams in Perpetua's 'manly' transformation.

¹³⁹ On annunciation to Abraham regarding Isaac, see scenes analyzed by Brown (*Birth*, 156): Gen 17.1-21, 18.1-15. And, of course, Luke's application of the type-scene to the heavenly annunciation of John to Zechariah, shows that not just Matthew was deploying the convention across gender lines.

¹⁴⁰ R. H. Jarrell, "The Birth Narrative as Female Counterpart to Covenant," *JSOT* 97 (2002): 3-18.

¹⁴¹ See, e.g., Martin S. Jaffee, "Gender and Otherness in Rabbinic Oral Culture: On Gentiles, Undisciplined Jews, and Their Women," in Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley, eds., *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark* (Minneapolis, MN : Fortress, 2006), 21-43; *m. 'Avot* 3.7-8. At least in the hands of later rabbinic sages, manhood seemed to be inextricably tied to Oral Torah.

¹⁴² See Ovidiu Creanga, "Variations on the Theme of Masculinity: Joshua's Gender In/stability in the Conquest Narrative (Josh. 1-12)," in Creanga, ed., *Men and Masculinity*, 83-109 (98); Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus*, 17-46. See, e.g., Philo's discussion in *QG* 4.99 of divine impregnation; see also Richard Arthur Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 55-64. In the case of Matthew's Joseph, then, we might say that Joseph's body becomes the receptor of the deity's Annunciation words and rulings transmitted in dreams through angelic penetration (1.20), not unlike the later development in Christian tradition concerning the penetration of Mary's ear by the phallus of Gabriel's speech, the so-called *conceptio per aurem* (or parthenogenesis *ex auditu*); see, e.g., *Armenian Gospel of the Infancy* 5.9: "At that very moment when this word was spoken, as the holy Virgin consented, God the Word penetrated through her ear...And she became a holy and undefiled temple and a dwelling place for his divinity. And at the same time began the pregnancy of Mary." Translation by Abraham Terian, *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy with Three Early Versions of the Protoevangelium of James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25.

¹⁴³ See, e.g., Samuel Tongue, "Scripted Bodies: Reading the Spectacle of Jacob Wrestling the Angel," *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 6 (2012): 20-37.

illegitimate pregnancy.¹⁴⁴ That is, biblical annunciation scenes conventionally begin with a statement of the plight of the future mother of a hero, either her barrenness in general or her barrenness due to old age (or, in the case of Hagar, an endangered pregnancy), and the annunciation is a divine response to that plight.¹⁴⁵ Matthew's dream-annunciation, too, deals with a *plight*, though not with a woman's barrenness or her old age. Matthew's scene deals directly with *Joseph's* plight over what to do with his impregnated betrothed and her ostensibly illegitimate child—explicitly a *man's* predicament from Matthew's perspective¹⁴⁶—even if, on a more basic, fundamental level it also deals indirectly with Mary's plight.¹⁴⁷ In accord with the thoroughgoing androcentric emphases of this passage, Matthew's Annunciation is bestowed upon a man, given in response to a man's plight, and addresses a man's concerns, his fears.

In contrast to how the conventional trope of fear is deployed in other annunciation stories, too, the *fear* of Matthew's Joseph is not evoked by an ominous confrontation with a supernatural presence.¹⁴⁸ Rather its appearance in the delivery of the divine message is linked with the preceding

¹⁴⁴ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 102-103: "If the the annunciation pattern is expanded to include the conventional annunciation *setting*—the plight of a woman—then Luke (and Matthew and the framers of the Christian tradition before them) can be seen to innovate by employing the pattern in a situation—that of an illegitimate pregnancy—in which it had never been used before in the biblical tradition."

¹⁴⁵ In addition to scenes analyzed by Brown (*Birth*, 156ff), Alter ("How Convention Helps Us Read") adds Gen 25.19-25 (to Isaac re: Rebekah), 1 Sam 1 (to Hannah re: Samuel), and 2 Kings 4.8-17 (to the Shunammite woman re: her son), and derives a tripartite schema for the annunciation type-scene: 1) statement of the plight of barrenness of the future mother of the hero; 2) annunciation to the barren women, enabled to conceive through the promise or prediction of an oracle, a visiting man of God, or an angel; 3) conception and birth of the hero.

¹⁴⁶ On this point, one might also argue that in the biblical thought world a woman's barrenness would also have been perceived as a *man's* plight, considering that 'having a name', a man's honor, meant, specifically, having children (especially sons). Intrinsic to this conception of masculinity is an "ability to reproduce prolifically"; see Sandra Jacobs, "Divine Virility in Priestly Representation: Its Memory and Consummation in Rabbinic Midrash," in Creanga, ed., *Men and Masculinity*, 146-170 (125); cf. Mark K. George, "Masculinity and its Regimentation in Deuteronomy," in Creanga, ed., *Men and Masculinity*, 64-82 (73-77). So, e.g., Joshua's and Samson's masculinities are anomalous in that neither of them are said to have produced offspring; Creanga, ed., "Joshua's Gender In/stability," 97-98, 104; Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, "Samson: Masculinity Lost (and Regained?)," in Creanga, ed., *Men and Masculinity*, 171-188 (184).

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Schaberg's mirror-reading of the plight of Matthew's Mary: "[t]he plight that occasions the annunciation in Matt 1:20-21 is the pregnancy of Mary, which occasions the dilemma Joseph faces and the decision he makes to divorce her" (*Illegitimacy*, 100)—Mary's plight "is that she is betrothed and pregnant not by the one to whom she is betrothed. She is in danger of being put to shame (or worse), but Joseph is unwilling to choose this way of dealing with the dilemma" (101).

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *fear*/anxiety provoked by the epiphanic visions directly: Gen 16.13; 17.3; 18.2; Judg 13.22; Luke 1.12; Luke 1.29; Acts 18.9; Acts 27.24; Rev 1.17. The mention of Joseph's anxiety may have more to do with Matthew's narrative story line than with the convention of citing mental states when relating dreams; see Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.206; Plutarch, *Brut.* 36.4; Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.334; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 4.34.

narrative and is an indication of Joseph’s anguished state leading up to (and including) the time of the dream-vision, which plagued his logocentric (and now epiphanic) wrestling of how to respond to the homosocial ‘bonding and battling’ challenge discussed above. By redeploing the conventional annunciation motif of *fear*—traditionally intended to elicit awe of the messenger or the deity—Matthew continues to invoke and invite reflection upon the contest of Joseph’s homosocial honor being played out upon Mary’s body.

The GodFather too, has a stake in this contest, for, as the dream-annunciation continues, “the child generated in her is from a spirit which is holy” (τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου; Matt 1.20). While the most apparent meaning of this phrase (ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου) suggests that the child generated in Mary is “of/from a holy spirit,” rather than of/from an evil or impure one,¹⁴⁹ the phrase may also connote the *deity’s* agency, and so it has been taken in traditional glosses as “of/from the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵⁰ Juxtaposed with its occurrence in v 18 (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου), Matthew likely employs the phrase (ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου) here to signify the deity’s involvement in Mary’s pregnancy. This is a *divinely sponsored begetting*. While *divine begetting* here does not necessarily imply the deity’s sexual congress with Mary,¹⁵¹ nor indeed a conception

¹⁴⁹ Contrast, e.g., Matt 1.18 (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου) and 1.20 (τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου) with Genesis 38.24 LXX where Tamar is said to be ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχει ἐκ πορνείας (pregnant through fornication or, more generally, sexual impropriety); cf. Sir 23.23; Deut 23.2 LXX.

¹⁵⁰ The omission of the article with God’s πνεῦμα is found also in 1.18 and 3.16, though, as Davies and Allison suggest (*Matthew* 1.200) the absence of the article before a definite word preceded by ἐκ is well-attested; see, e.g., Matt 27.38; Luke 9.7; John 1.32; 6.58. However, no developed idea of a personal Spirit is present here, or indeed in the rest of Matthew’s Gospel; see A. M. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1955), 7; C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit in the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 17; Marie E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (London: Heythrop Monographs, 1976); Charles Thomas Davis, “Tradition and Redaction in Matthew 1:18-2:23,” *JBL* 90, no.4 (1971): 404-21 (413); Nolan, *Royal Son*, 32. It is perhaps a telling sign that John R. Levison also refrains from treating Matthew’s usage of πνεύματος ἁγίου here in either of his two recent books on the role of the spirit in early Jewish and Christian texts; see *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) and *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

¹⁵¹ So, e.g., Luz, *Matthew*, 95: “We are to think here of God’s creative intervention by the Spirit and not of the (Greek neuter, Hebrew feminine) Spirit as Mary’s sexual partner”; so, too, Brown, *Birth*, 124-125 and 137: “The Holy Spirit is the agency of God’s creative power, not a male partner in a marriage between a deity and a woman (*hieros gamos*)”; C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit in the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 8, 18. Cf. curiously, C. F. D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 55: “It seems to be intended, literally and exclusively, that it was from no man, but from the very Spirit of God that the semen came (Matt. 1.18, 20; Luke 1.35).”

without a human father,¹⁵² it is, nevertheless, *generative*—that is, in the continuation of Joseph’s angelic dream penetration, Matthew employs the same verb (γεννάω) as in his auto-generative male-producing-male formula from the genealogy (Matt 1.1-17), and therefore also subjects the GodFather to one of the standard indices of masculinity noted above: to be male was to be capable of being ‘virile’.¹⁵³ Whichever way one reads the theology behind the deity’s involvement in Mary’s pregnancy, I suggest on a more basic (or perhaps ‘secondary’¹⁵⁴) level the angel’s penetrating dream speech extends the playing field of the homosocial honor contest and also underlines the androcentric emphasis of the passage. This is the penetrating revelation of the dream-annunciation to Joseph, the climactic (A-ha!) moment: ‘the other man’ that Joseph had been wrestling with was not his main contender in the contest over Mary’s body; the deity, it turns out, is the One with whom Joseph must deal!¹⁵⁵

Joseph’s penetrating dream-annunciation, then, shifts the register (though not the playing field) of male homosocial competition (from the ‘horizontal’ to the ‘vertical’), and introduces the second (and more notable/primary) of Matthew’s androcentric “triads”: Joseph vs. the GodFather, with Mary’s body, again as “arbitrating social index for masculine reputation,” the “conduit of relationship” of first conflict (1.19-20) and then intimate cooperation (1.21-2.23) between Joseph and the deity. While the first homosocial honor contest (vs. ‘the other man’) might have ended

¹⁵² Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin?*: “There is, then, nothing to this point in Matthew’s account that suggests a supernatural or virginal conception” (73); “there is no reason to take ‘from the holy Spirit’ as having, from the standpoint of Jewish Scripture, an unprecedented meaning of miraculous activity that bypasses normal human procreation” (78); so, too, Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 65-69; Catchpole, *Jesus People*, 76-77.

¹⁵³ See discussion above at n. 32-41. See also Waetjen, “The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew,” who notes that the aorist passive particle γεννηθῆεν used as a substantive in 1.20 contrasts with the 39 repetitions of ἐγέννησεν in the genealogy; however, the Spirit still “*generates* Jesus by direct act of creation” (224, my emphasis). Similarly, Lincoln notes (*Born of a Virgin?*, 87), “the aorist passive form of the verb γεννάω [Matt 1.20] should be taken as a *passivum divinum* with God as the implied agent of the action of begetting.” Cf. Janice Capel Anderson, “Matthew: Gender and Reading,” in Mary Ann Tolbert, ed., *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics* (Semeia 28; Chico, CA: SBL, 1983), 3-27: “The text does not portray God or the Spirit as a male progenitor” (10).

¹⁵⁴ See discussion of Luz’s comment about ‘secondary perspectives’ at n. 28, above.

¹⁵⁵ In accord with the words of Matthew’s Jesus elsewhere, loss of honor/masculinity/life in the public court of reputation is not what Joseph ought to fear; the GodFather, rather, is the One to be ‘feared’ and submitted to, as Jesus himself later says, “Do not fear those who kill the body but fear...” (10.26–28); cf. Luke 12.4-5; Isa 8.12, 13; 51.12, 13; Jer 1.8; 1 Pet. 3.14.

favorably for Joseph, the second one (vs. the GodFather, the *other* ‘other man’) was decidedly more complex.¹⁵⁶

The dramatic incongruity is that Matthew’s penetrating dream-annunciation ostensibly *intensifies* rather than resolves Joseph’s plight (even as it may relieve Mary’s plight at the same time)¹⁵⁷—that is, unlike most other biblical and post-biblical theophanic encounters, this visitation provides little comfort to its recipient.¹⁵⁸ Besides learning that his principal homosocial competitor is none other than the deity (presumably not a comforting thought), Joseph discovers that his ‘logocentric phallus’ (prior Torah-knowledge) is impotent to deal with this particular situation. Prior to the annunciation Joseph had come up with a way out of his plight, reclaiming (individual/collective) honor, disassociating himself from the problem, and dodging the stench of public scandal. Now, however, all that is denied to Joseph as he is obligated, as Matthew’s Torah-bound *δίκαιος*, to endure the fallout of a series of the GodFather’s *unmanning* instructions. Joseph receives a new knowledge load from Matthew’s GodFather through an immediate, direct, and penetrative encounter—an encounter which would have drastically altered the future course of Joseph’s masculine pursuits. In the divine annunciation that Joseph receives and submits to, the Father *godhandles* Joseph’s

¹⁵⁶ Zeba Crook aptly suggests that “in every sphere...inter-status challenges and ripostes could occur,” and considers examples which illustrate that “humans could rebuke the gods, they could remind them of their honor, they could attempt to shame them into right action, and they could remind them how they relied on humans to honor them,” concluding that “Humans are the PCR that designates whether a god is a god or a figment of someone’s childish imagination” (“Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited,” 604).

¹⁵⁷ Mary’s “liberation” in Matthew consists of her being brought under Joseph’s protection from social ostracism by marriage; see Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 74-75.

¹⁵⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.208: “The quelling of human fear is a standard element in OT theophanies; it is also prevalent in intertestamental literature and the NT, where appearances of God are all but non-existent but appearances of angels common. The comforting appeal turns up in Luke’s infancy narrative (1.13, 30; 2.10) and otherwise frequently in accounts of angelic appearances.” See, e.g., Dan 10.12, 19; *1 En.* 15.1; *Apoc. Abr.* 9.3; *Jos. Asen.* 14.11; *2 En.* 1.8; Acts 27.24; Rev 1.17.

patriarchal power and the esteem invested in it, meets and rejects point for point each part of Joseph's bid to reclaim honor, even as it/He also exercises control over Mary's body.¹⁵⁹

Listen, the angel ejaculates: "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife" (μή φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκά σου). Joseph should—as he will in 1.24—"take" his betrothed Mary—that is, take her to his home and thereby turn betrothal into marriage.¹⁶⁰ *Afraid?* What would Matthew's Joseph have had to *fear* in home-'taking' a woman suspected of adultery or rape (a pregnant woman whom he did not impregnate)?¹⁶¹ Perhaps Joseph feared contravening *legal*

¹⁵⁹ Warren Carter's misgivings about his (and others') statement about the 'non patriarchal' (lack of male agency) motifs found in Matt 1 are powerfully suggestive here; *Matthew and the Margins*, 67 n. 34: "God's actions, which exercise complete control over Mary's womb without her knowledge or consent, raise disturbing questions. Note that she will need a male to 'rescue' her from her 'shame' and reincorporate her into patriarchal society. What sort of image of God does this scene present?" Answer: an image that seems to be consistent with the rest of Matthew's portrayal of the GodFather.

¹⁶⁰ Luz, *Matthew*, 95: "In substance, 'to take' (παραλαμβάνειν) refers to the wedding"; cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 4.155; Lucian, *Toxaris vel amicitia*, 24; Song of Solomon 8.2; Jos., *Ant.* 1.302; 17.9; *b. Ket.* 17a. In *PJ*, too, Joseph takes Mary from the temple and brings her into his own house (9.1, 3; 13.1; 15.2; 16.1, 3). In Matthew's infancy account, Mary, like her son, is a consistently *passive* character.

¹⁶¹ See also discussion at nn. 96-102, above.

injunctions¹⁶² or infringing on the real father's legal rights to the child¹⁶³—he is, after all, Matthew's Torah-bound δίκαιος.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps, too, Joseph feared the emasculating calumny that accompanied other men suspected of tolerating (or directly soliciting) their wife's sexual improprieties.¹⁶⁵ While home-'taking' a woman suspected or convicted of sexual impropriety (πορνεία) would have brought

¹⁶² Cf. Matt 19.9; 5.32. So Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 63: "Do not fear to take Mary your wife into your home' can be seen as equivalent to: There is no legal impediment here. Or perhaps: it is not necessary for you to follow the stricter halakah." Other early Christian sources, too, rule that a husband must divorce a wife if he knows her to be adulterous; if he does not, he shares her sin; see, e.g. Shepherd of Hermas, *Mandate* 4.1 (trans. and ed., Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999], 110-11); D'Angelo, "Knowing How To Preside," 282; Keener, *Matthew*, 31, 156. For a review of where Matthew stood with his position on divorce in relation to the non-monolithic *halakhah* of divorce practiced by diverse communities of a many-faceted Judaism, see M.N.A. Bockmuehl, "Matthew 5.32; 19.9 in the Light of Pre-rabbinic Halakah," *NTS* 35 (1989) 291-295; Philip Sigal, "The Matthean Jesus and the Halakah of Divorce," in *Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 105-144; Peter J. Tomson, "Divorce Halakha in Paul and the Jesus Tradition," in Reimund Bieringer, ed., *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 289-332 (323-326, 331). Cf. Thomas A. J. McGinn, "The Law of Roman Divorce in the Time of Christ," in Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr., and John Dominic Crossan, eds., *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 309-322.

Greek and Roman law, too, demanded that a man divorce his wife if she were guilty of adultery; see e.g., Justinian, *Digest* 48.5.1; Demosthenes, *Against Neaira* 87; Apuleius, *Metamorphosis* 9.27-29; Suetonius, *Dom.* 3.1, 7.3. Julian law prescribed that a husband who discovers his wife *in flagrante* must divorce and prosecute her; to do otherwise would leave the husband liable to a legal charge of pandering (*lenocinium*); see Tregiarri, *Roman Marriage*, 288-90; Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 89.

¹⁶³ So Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 26: "Since the child Mary was carrying was not his, he would not usurp the right of another by taking it. By divorcing Mary, Joseph offered the real father of Jesus the opportunity of retrieving his child by marrying the mother." So also A. M. Dubarle, "La Conception Virginal et la Citation d'Is., VII, 14 dans l'Évangile de Matthieu," *RB* 85 (1978): 362-67; noted by Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 52: "Joseph...might have thought that Mary had been previously betrothed (or 'potentially betrothed') to another by means of a rape or a seduction accompanied by a promise of marriage or a secret betrothal that 'respect for parental authority' prevented from being declared. This might have led Joseph to think Mary should be reserved for her first partner, and to wish to step aside by divorcing her so that she could marry the father of her child." Cf. later rabbinic notions of 'betrothal by penetration'; *m. Ket.* 4.4; *m. Qid.* 1.1; *m. Nid.* 5.4.

¹⁶⁴ All contemporary forms of Jewish divorce halakhah, even the most lenient, required that a man divorce his adulterous spouse; see Sigal, *Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 105-144.

¹⁶⁵ See, e.g., Philo's treatment of Deut 24.1-4 (*Spec.* 3.30-31), especially his discussion of the husband who tolerates his wife's adultery, or remarries her after the end of her subsequent marriage; such men are castigated for "softness and unmanliness" (μαλακίας και ἀνανδρίας); cf. *Pseudo-Phocylides* 177-178. As D'Angelo suggests ("Gender and Geopolitics," 77-78), Philo's discussion draws on the popular motif of the *lenomarius*—the husband who either actively solicits the attentions of other men upon his wife, or else chooses to ignore them. The *lenomarius* is first attested in Cicero but surfaces repeatedly thereafter in Latin literature; see Valerie A. Tracy, "The Leno-Maritus," *CJ* 72 (1976): 62-64, and sources cited therein. See, e.g., Plutarch, *Cato Minor* 52.3-4; Plutarch, *Amat.* 760A; Apuleius, *De Mag.* 75; and, esp. Ovid's tongue-in-cheek suggestion that only a *rusticus*, an unsophisticated country bumpkin out of touch with the ways of the city [i.e. a *Joseph*-type], would be hurt by an *adultera coniunx* (*Am.* 3.37-38), and that the *maritus* should be willing to barter his wife's love for the dinner invitations and presents that will come his way if he chooses to indulge her (*Am.* 3.4; cf. *Am.* 2.5, 19).

The complaisance of the *maritus* in his wife's affairs, particularly if he were profiting from them, was also regarded as a heinous form of *lenocinium* ('pandering'); see Amy Richlin, "Approaches to the Sources on Adultery at Rome," *Women's Studies* 8 (1981): 225-50 (227); Percy E. Corbett, *The Roman Law of Marriage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 142; Gardner, *Women in Roman Law*, 131-32.

“enduring reproach on his household” constituted by “embracing as his wife one who had betrayed him in the worst manner conceivable in his culture,”¹⁶⁶ a Torah-observant man such as Matthew’s Joseph, likely would *not* have completed a marriage to such a woman. So Joseph’s *not* divorcing the pregnant Mary would perhaps have removed the suspicion of her sexual impropriety, or, at least, Matthew wants his audience to think so.¹⁶⁷ Joseph’s home-taking of Mary, however, *would not* have removed public suspicion of either her rape by another man, or perhaps, if more lenient customs concerning betrothal were in effect in Judea at the time and Mary and Joseph had spent time alone together,¹⁶⁸ public suspicion of their ‘premarital intercourse’. Joseph also potentially *feared* being perceived either as settling for a marriage to ostensibly ‘damaged goods’ (with all of her attendant public stigma) and impotent to obtain a better arrangement,¹⁶⁹ or perhaps as being unable to control himself sexually within prescribed boundaries.¹⁷⁰ Thus begins the content of the series of the GodFather’s *unmanning* instructions. The GodFather commands Joseph to “fear not!” the dishonor that will undoubtedly accompany his very public ‘taking’ of the pregnant Mary. Matthew’s morally

¹⁶⁶ Keener, *Matthew*, 91-92. Matthew’s Joseph was part of a world that “viewed with contempt the weakness of a man who let his love for his wife outweigh his appropriate honor in repudiating her”; see, e.g., *Diodorus Siculus* 32.10.9; *Ps-Phocyl.* 177-78.

¹⁶⁷ As Angelo Tosato, “Joseph, Being a Just Man (Mt 1:19),” *CBQ* 41 (1979): 547-51, notes: “The angel, by removing the suspicion of adultery and of violence, makes Mary acceptable to her husband” (551); also noted by Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*: “The angelic command could be read to mean Mary had not committed *πορνεία*, had not been seduced or committed adultery” (63). While the meaning of *πορνεία*, is disputed (for a discussion of the interpretive possibilities see Sigal, *Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 117-124), whatever it means, Matthew’s infancy account does not ostensibly contradict Matthew’s later statements about marriage and divorce (Matt 5.32, 19.9)—that is, Matthew wants his readers to understand that the situation in chapter 1 is not an instance of *πορνεία*; so, too, Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 64.

¹⁶⁸ As noted above (n. 82), later rabbinic evidence suggests that couples in *Judea* were allowed to spend time together alone prior to the completion of the marriage, and so interim sexual relations (between the betrothal and home-taking) may have been *permitted*, though not ideal; see Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.74; *m. Ket.* 1.5; *m. Yeb.* 4.10; *t. Ket.* 1.4.; *b. Ket.* 9b, 12a; Safrai, “Home and Family,” 756-757. However, as Schaberg notes (*Illegitimacy*, 50): “It is risky to apply the difference between Judean and Galilean marriage customs to the situation of Mary and Joseph.”

¹⁶⁹ Based on texts such as Jubilees 33.7-9, 41.20; *1QapGen* 20.15; *11QTemple* 57.17-19; *CD* 4.12b-5.14a; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* Deut 22.26; *Testament of Reuben* 3.11-15; and Philo, *QG* 4.63, 66-67, Bockmuehl (“Matthew 5.32; 19.9 in the Light of Pre-rabbinic Halakah”) argues that there existed “a pre-Rabbinic exegetical tradition...to the effect that adultery (and rape) requires divorce.” See also Joseph Fitzmyer, “The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence,” *Theological Studies* 37 (1976): 197-226; J. R. Mueller, “The Temple Scroll and Gospel Divorce Texts,” *RevQ* 10 (1980-81): 247-256.

¹⁷⁰ On the delicate issue of ‘premarital’ sexual restraint, see, e.g., Sirach 9.8; 26.21; 41.20-21; *1QS* III.17-IV.13; *Joseph and Aseneth* 20.8; *Testament of Benjamin* 8.1-3; *Testament of Issachar* 4.4; *Testament of Asher* 2.8-10; *Testament of Reuben* 2; Philo, *Vita Mos.* 2.68-69; and Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* 64. A ‘just man’ such as Matthew’s Joseph likely would not have had sex with his fiancée before marriage.

excellent, self-controlled, honor-loving male, will become, in spite of Joseph's fears, at the behest of the GodFather, and in the estimation of the public court of reputation, the impotent cuckold, the shameless panderer, and/or the self-indulgent rake. Meanwhile, Mary continues to be "taken" along for this seemingly unending 'delicate and volatile social dance' of homosocial competition and confirmation.

The unmaning continues, as Joseph also learns, Mary "will give birth to a son" (τέξεται δὲ υἱόν). This particular disclosure reiterates for Joseph his relative impotence in the situation—*she*, not he, is the crucial and noteworthy constituent in this generation¹⁷¹—and, at the same time, evokes the index of masculinity (and Joseph's failure to conform to it) already discussed above, that having a name, having honor, meant having *sons* who carry on that name.¹⁷² Since the narrator has let the audience know the identity of the decidedly *male* child from the beginning (superior audience awareness), it is easy to gloss over the significance of this revelatory detail—learning that Mary will bear someone else's *son*, in particular, likely would have intensified the gravity of Joseph's situation, especially with respect to the performance/maintenance of his masculine identity.

The Father's *godhandling* of Joseph's masculine identity comes to a close as Matthew's Joseph is instructed "to name him," that is *Mary's* son, "Jesus" (καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν) (1.21). It is commonly suggested that through this act of naming Mary's child, Joseph exercises his right as a

¹⁷¹ Echoing what the narrator had already emphasized in the genealogy (Matt 1.16), that *Mary* is the one whom Jesus is born from (ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς).

¹⁷² On the connection between masculine identity and generative ability, see discussion of *Joseph's* plight at n. 149; parameters of masculine comportment often include sexual potency, testified by the ability to sire many, preferably male, children; see Anton Blok, "Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honor," *Man* 16 (1981): 427-40; reprinted in Eric Wolf, ed., *Religion, Power and Protest in Local Communities: The Northern Shore of the Mediterranean* (New York: Mouton, 1984), 51-70 (57-59); Gilmore, *Honor and Shame*, 96-97.

father and acknowledges Jesus as his own legal son, and therefore also a “son of David”¹⁷³—a scenario that may reflect Roman imperial masculinized ideology/practice of adoption, as I discussed above.¹⁷⁴ Matthew’s Joseph, then, should “take” Mary’s son too, confer a name upon him, and thereby transform ostensible illegitimacy into valid sonship, public ignominy into a vehicle for bequeathing royal heritage.

Such a legitimating act reflects Matthew’s focus on Joseph as the source of Jesus’ Davidic ancestry and, in the narrative world portrayed by Matthew, may represent a constitutive statement regarding Joseph’s masculine identity, establishing homosocial honor by exercising *patria potestas* to determine kinship bonds. At the very least, Matthew implicitly genders the act of naming a child in favor of the father,¹⁷⁵ where the question of the power or authority to name, at least in the Hebrew Bible and in later Jewish tradition, appears to be less straightforward.¹⁷⁶ Such gendering is implicitly

¹⁷³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.209; Brown, *Birth*, 139; Alexander Balmain Bruce, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” 1.61–340 in W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, 5 vols. (reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 66; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 14; John P. Meier, *Matthew* (New Testament Message 3; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980), 9; David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 21. See, e.g., biblical references to a ritual act carried out at the birth of a child by which the father acknowledged paternity, perhaps by accepting the child on his knees (Job 3:12; cf. Gen 30:3; 50:23); an analogous practice in ancient Babylonia was the simple pronouncement of the phrase “my child” (Laws of Hammurabi ¶¶170-1, in *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, trans. and ed., Martha T. Roth (2nd ed.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 113-114). Andries van Aarde (“Social Identity, Status, Envy and Jesus’ Abba,” *Pastoral Psychology* 45 [1997]: 451-472 [459]) notes that even a biological father ‘adopted’ his own children by deciding to include them in the household; presumably referring to the ancient ‘Roman’ practice of infant exposure, see W. V. Harris, “Child-Exposure in the Roman Empire,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 84. (1994): 1-22; Mark Golden, “Did the Ancients Care When Their Children Died?,” *Greece & Rome* 35, no. 2 (1988): 152-163. For the mother’s husband functioning as true father, see, e.g., Sandra Schwartz, “Callirhoe’s Choice: Biological vs Legal Paternity,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 40, no. 1 (1999): 23–52.

¹⁷⁴ See discussion at nn. 57-73, above.

¹⁷⁵ Joseph is the one who is given the divine command, “you are to name him Jesus” (καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν), and Joseph is the one who carries it out, “and he named him Jesus” (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν) (Matt 1.21, 25); cf. Luke 1.31, 2.21, where Mary is given the divine command, “you will name him Jesus” (καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν), and Jesus is passively given his name, “he was named Jesus” (ἐκλήθη τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦς).

¹⁷⁶ While the Hebrew Bible contains narratives which feature the naming of a child by either parent (Gen 16.11-16; 17.19; 21.3; 29.32-30.13; 1 Sam 1.20; 4.21; Isa 7.14), the Pentateuch contains no explicit commandment obligating (or authorizing) parents, let alone one of the parents (mother or father) to bestow a name upon their offspring, which is, as Omi Morgenstern Leissner, “Jewish Women’s Naming Rites and the Rights of Jewish Women,” *Nashim* 4 (2001): 140-177 (142), puts it, “somewhat surprising in light of the central place names and naming hold in the biblical narratives. It would appear, then, the notion that persons bear names is so taken for granted that the stipulation of a legal obligation/right to grant one was not considered necessary by the original Israelite lawmakers.”

supported by the first of Matthew’s fulfillment citations (“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet”):¹⁷⁷ his gloss of Isaiah 7.14, “and *they* shall name him Emmanuel” (καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ), not only pluralizes and thus elaborates on the import of naming in the LXX, “and *you* will call his name Emmanuel” (καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ), but also neuters the female ‘power to name’ implicit in the MT, “and *she* will call his name Emmanuel” (אֵלֶּיךָ יִקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם בְּנֵי עַמּוּדָא). In accord with the rest of Matthew’s infancy account which ‘quotes’ biblical prototypes with ‘preposterous’ effects,¹⁷⁸ Mary’s son is to be named after Joshua,¹⁷⁹ the historic deliverer of Israel from Egypt.¹⁸⁰ This name is also an indication of the socio-theological significance of the child’s future career and may have been received by Matthew’s Joseph as a further boost to his manly identity: this son, the one Matthew’s Joseph will raise and rear and call his own,¹⁸¹ will become a ‘real man’ like Joshua, a man who “will save his people from their sins” (σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν), in whatever way Matthew conceived that Jesus would accomplish such a noble task.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.212-213. On Matthew’s use of Isaiah and, more generally, Matthew’s so-called ‘fulfillment formulae/citations’ (1.22-23; 2.5-6, 15, 17-18, 23; 4.14-16; 8.17; 12.17-21; 13.35; 21.4-5; 26.54, 56; 27.9-10), see Warren Carter, “Evoking Isaiah: Matthean Soteriology and an Intertextual Reading of Isaiah 7-9 and Matthew 1:23 and 4:15-16,” *JBL* 119, no. 3 (2000): 503-520, and sources discussed therein.

¹⁷⁸ Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

¹⁷⁹ Ἰησοῦς (Ἰησῦς) Jeshua, the later form for יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Joshua; BDAG, 471), which which, by popular etymology was related to the Hebrew verb ‘to save’ and to the Hebrew noun ‘salvation’: “Yahweh is salvation.” The saving character of Jesus (cf. 8.25; 9.21-2; 14.30; 27.42) is aptly evoked by his name (cf. Ecclus. 46.1; *b Sot* 34b; *Num. Rab.* on 13.16). Philo (Mut. nom. 121) proves that the etymology of “Joshua” was recognized outside Palestine.

¹⁸⁰ See discussion of the extent to which Joshua meets and falls short of masculine ideals in Creanga, “Joshua’s Gender In/stability in the Conquest Narrative (Josh. 1-12).”

¹⁸¹ On a father’s obligation to instruct his sons in ancient Jewish households, see O. Larry Yarbrough, “Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity,” in Shaye J. D. Cohen, ed., *The Jewish Family in Antiquity*, Brown Judaic Studies 289 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 39–59, esp. 43–44 on Tob 4. See also Margaret Williams, “The Jewish Family in Judaea from Pompey to Hadrian—the Limits of Romanization,” in *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159–82, esp. 170–75 on education and marriage. Cf. the portrayal of Joseph as a failed father/teacher in *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 2.1-5.1; as cited and discussed by Chris Frilingos, “No Child Left Behind: Knowledge and Violence in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 27-54.

¹⁸² Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.210, aptly note that this verse is “not very illuminating with regard to *how* Jesus saves.” Jesus’ other acts of “salvation” point to his ultimate redemption of “his people,” which for Matthew likely still means *Israel* (e.g., 2.4, 6; 4.16, 23; 21.23; 27.64; cf. 10.6; 19.28); see also Luz, *Matthew*, 105.

However, the significance of Joseph naming the child, with implications for the immediate status of Joseph's family and for the future life of the child, is complicated by the fact that Joseph is *ordered* by the GodFather to take/name the child and, further, that it is the GodFather who actually supplies the child's name. Certainly, as Davies and Allison state, "[t]hose who received their names [and name *changes*] directly from God were no doubt considered to be particularly important and righteous people,"¹⁸³ and this is perhaps one of Matthew's overt purposes in framing the story the way he does: the GodFather himself is intimately interested in the very name, and therefore future career, of this child. At the same time, Matthew presents a situation where Joseph's *patria potestas* is categorically challenged by the deity: the GodFather dictates Joseph's would-be (non-biological) successor, the one to whom Joseph must distribute the goods of family name, honor, cult (*nomen, pecunia, and sacra*). Furthermore, the GodFather strips Joseph of his basic parental 'right' of conferring a name upon the child. Matthew's Joseph here is a passive vessel or proxy surrogate in the naming process: Joseph merely passes on, transmits, conducts the name chosen by the deity, the child's ultimate sire.¹⁸⁴ Thus, while Matthew's story bolsters the hegemonic fiction of a man's right to name his (at least, eldest) son, it also constructs the GodFather's right to intervene and overrule that right. Matthew's Joseph seemingly has no room to debate such matters.¹⁸⁵

Matthew's final departure from the conventional annunciation type-scene makes a crucial difference for the deployment of his gendered ideology, for, unlike all other annunciation recipients, Matthew's Joseph makes *no* objections to the penetrative, *godhandling*, emasculating content of his dream-annunciation; Matthew's Joseph *does not* request a sign of assurance/confirmation of this new

¹⁸³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.210. See, e.g., *Mek.* on Exod 13.2.

¹⁸⁴ Such *passivity* is also a feature of the portrayal of fathers in the biblical birth narratives (especially Abraham with Isaac in Gen 17.1-21, 18.1-15), who do not take offense at being told what to name their son. Matthew's alignment of Joseph within the stream of such 'submissive patriarch' traditions actually supports my reading here. For example, Susan Haddox, "Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities," in Creangă, ed., *Men and Masculinity*, 2-19, reads the 'subordinate masculinity' of Abraham (and also Isaac and Jacob) as an implicit critique of "hegemonic masculinity as the way to approach God" (15).

¹⁸⁵ The fact that Joseph's new Torah knowledge is conveyed by means of a decidedly *one-way* dream only reinforces the forceful, penetrative nature of its delivery. Can a person argue, dispute, or request a sign *in a dream*?

Torah knowledge.¹⁸⁶ Given the prickly nature of Joseph’s plight leading up to and including the dream-annunciation, we might have expected Joseph to say *something* in response, but Matthew’s Joseph says *nothing*—not even a *Maryesque* voluntary *fiat* of acceptance (cf. Luke 1.38)!¹⁸⁷ In fact, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, Matthew gives us a consistently *silent* Joseph throughout—a portrayal that is all the more striking when compared to the voluble speeches, plans, and predictions of the other men and (masculine) divine mouth-pieces in Matthew’s infancy tales: the magi (2.2: “Where is the child...”); the chief priests and scribes of the people (2.5: “In Bethlehem of Judea...”); Herod (2.8: “Go and search diligently...”); the angel of the Lord (2.13: “Get up, take the child...”; and 2.20 “Get up, take the child...”);¹⁸⁸ and the prophets (2.15: ““Out of Egypt...”; 2.18: “A voice was heard...”; and 2.23: “He will be called...”). So, Matthew’s Joseph says nothing as his godhandling dream, portending a new sort of life for him, comes to an end. Rather, “when Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him” (ἐγερθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου). In response, Joseph sheaths his logocentric phallus, and gets behind (or perhaps in front of) and accepts (the penetrative delivery of) this new Torah knowledge. Heavenly masculinity trumps earthly masculinity: “Emmanuel, God with us.”

Indeed!

This is where we see a *turn* in the portrayal of the relationship of Joseph and the deity. The initial homosocial tension and conflict between them (played out upon Mary’s body)¹⁸⁹ has been resolved.

¹⁸⁶ As Brown notes, the conventional annunciation elements of both “(4) an objection by the visionary as to how this can be or a request for a sign” and “(5) the giving of a sign to reassure the visionary” are *not* features of Matthew’s dream-annunciation scene (*Birth*, 157). However, Brown further suggests that Matthew’s ‘omissions’ are simply a result of either Matthew’s merging the annunciation type-scene with a dream-vision report or Matthew’s editorial alignments with Joseph’s other dreams (*Birth*, 157-158), and so overlooks the powerfully subtle maneuver of Matthew’s gendered discourse.

¹⁸⁷ While Mary’s *fiat* in Luke (1.38) has traditionally been interpreted in terms of patriarchy, subordination, humility, passivity, and an unlimited capacity for self-sacrifice, this is certainly not the only way to read Luke’s Annunciation scene; see discussion in Kilian McDonnell, “Feminist Mariologies: Heteronomy/Subordination and the Scandal of Christology,” *Theological Studies* 66 (2005): 527-567.

¹⁸⁸ Beyond the mere fact that ἄγγελος is a masculine noun, Matthew consistently portrays the Lord’s messengers in masculine ways: the GodFather’s male, dominating, dictating presence. Could it be any other way. Could Matthew’s decidedly male ‘GodFather’ have anything but a strong male representative? Cf. Luke 24.4; Rev 10.1.

¹⁸⁹ And the point of homosocial cooperation *continues to be* Mary’s body, as I discussed in the next part (Matt 2.1-23)

Joseph chooses to submit to an altered course of manly pursuits under the weight of his divine superior. In addition to being silent, we hear no more about Joseph *planning* (1.19: βούλομαι) or *resolving* (1.19: ἐνθυμέομαι) to do anything on his own (with one important ‘hypermasculine’ or perhaps ‘hypersubmissive’ exception, see below). For the remainder of Matthew’s narrative, Joseph’s actions are obedient, submissive responses to divine injunction—he is completely dependent upon the direction and dictates of the GodFather (1.24-25; 2.14-15, 21-23), which, in each subsequent case, becomes an event of prophecy fulfillment.

Joseph’s submission to the deity is undergirded by a string of equally anomalous masculine performances in Hebrew scripture. For example, Susan Haddox suggests that while “submission to anyone, even a deity, is not part of the standard construction of masculinity,” the patriarchs who are chosen in Genesis are explicitly the *less* masculine of the pair (e.g., Jacob vs. Esau, Isaac vs. Ishmael), the one more likely to submit to God’s will: they show themselves willing to worship and submit to God, at the cost of their masculine honor.¹⁹⁰ We might say, then, that the queered masculinity already implicit in the Genesis patriarchal narratives that Susan Haddox analyzes, fully flowers with Matthew’s representation of the ‘receptive’ Joseph, as it does also, for example, in later Jewish patterns of masculinity.¹⁹¹ Joseph’s masculinity in Matthew works within a grand, hierarchical scheme: Joseph as a ‘real’ (or ‘just’) man is master of his house; at the same time, he is required to allow himself to be mastered, to submit unconditionally to the will and law of the GodFather. Like the patriarchs in Genesis, and the later sages of rabbinic tradition, Matthew’s Joseph models a *proper* (hu)man’s relationship to the deity. Even as he is performing the most basic tasks of male power and

¹⁹⁰ Susan Haddox, “Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities,” 13. Haddox concludes that while the biblical text in many ways reflects and supports categories of hegemonic masculinity, in the realm of the relation with God, these norms are frequently subverted, because no human can assume the position of ultimate power. That position is left to the deity.

¹⁹¹ As Sandra Jacobs suggests: for the rabbinic sages, ideal masculinity resides in “being the chosen object of divine desire” (“Divine Virility in Priestly Representation,” 122), such desire, specifically, being for “the circumcised Jewish male” who is “the chosen human partner for the symbolic consummation of divine love” (137).

privilege (he *takes* a wife; he *names* a son), Matthew's Joseph willingly, laudably even,¹⁹² adopts a 'feminine' or 'servile' subject position in relation to the infatuated gaze of the most dominant male in the universe, the hegemonically, hypermasculine GodFather.¹⁹³

So Matthew's silent, receptive, and dependent Joseph, does what he is told to do: "Joseph arose and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (ἐγερθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου), namely: "he took her as his wife" (παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ) and "he named him Jesus" (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν) (Matt 1.24, 25b).¹⁹⁴ And yet, Joseph also does *more* (or actually *less*) than what he is told to do: "[Joseph] had no conjugal relations with her until she had borne a son" (καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκεν υἱόν) (Matt 1.25a). Despite *taking* Mary as his wife and (likely) sharing a bed with her,¹⁹⁵ Matthew's

¹⁹² See, e.g., Rom 13.1-7; 1 Pet 2.13-17. See also Eric Thurman, "Novel Men: Masculinity and Empire in Mark's Gospel and Xenophon's An Ephesian Tale," in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 185-229, who notes: "While submission to one's social superiors was accounted laudable conduct for all subjects in the Roman world, such routine obedience, especially to the gods, also naturalized the dominant political order of the empire" (203). Within this colonial context, then, the yielding of Joseph to the GodFather's command "can perhaps be understood to represent an allegory for the position of all male subjects under the imperial order" (203), not unlike Mark's representation of Jesus and Xenophon's representation of Habrocomes. On the imperially mobilized rhetoric of submission, see Conway, *Behold the Man*, 99-100, citing Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 3.55; and Seneca, *Ep.* 90.5. Cf. 'masculine' submission and passivity in Philo, *Spec.* 1.325, 3.37-42; *Somn.* 1.126; *Contempl.* 60; *Her.* 274; Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*, 57-58, n. 6.; and Conway, *Behold the Man*, 53.

¹⁹³ Matthew's portrayal of the hegemonic GodFather, then, recapitulates much of the (post-)biblical portrayals of the God of Israel (see, e.g., Stephen Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor and Other Queer Spaces In and Around the Bible* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001]: 29-39), as it also corresponds to other early Christian portrayals of the deity (*ibid.*, 198-199). As Moore suggests (*Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006], 120): "to construct God or Christ, together with their putatively salvific activities, from the raw materials of imperial ideology is not to shatter the cycle of empire but merely to transfer it to a transcendental plane, thereby reinscribing and reifying it." Yet, as Roland Boer reminds us (*The Earthy Nature of the Bible: Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012]), hegemony is "inherently uncertain and shaky" (72), and so even the ultimate 'hegemonic masculinity' of the GodFather can be expected to exhibit fractures and fissures if examined closely enough—inevitable internal contradictions and incoherencies which are those of Greco-Roman masculinity writ large.

¹⁹⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.218: "The biblical tradition has a habit of observing that visionaries arise or stand up after a divine encounter"; see, e.g., Ezek 2.1-2; Dan 8.27; Lk 1.39; 4 *Ezra* 10.30; *Apoc. Abr.* 11.1. Here in 1.24-25 (cf. 21.6), Matthew employs a biblical-styled "fulfillment formula" to emphasize Joseph's obedience (Luz, *Matthew*, 97): the content of Joseph's penetrative dream (1.20-3) determines Joseph's response (1.24-5); see, e.g. Exod 7.10; Rudolf Pesch, "Eine alttestamentliche Ausführungsformel im Matthäus-Evangelium: Redaktionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Beobachtungen," *BZ NF* 10 (1966): 220-45; *NF* 11 (1967) 79-95.

¹⁹⁵ This was the conventional behavior of married couples, whether or not we assume that Joseph/Mary were 'poor' (cf. Lk 2.24; Lev 1.8); cf. Tob 7:16. See also Stephen C. Carlson, "The Accommodations of Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem: Κατάλυμα in Luke 2.7," *NTS* 56 (2010): 326-42; John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 83-84. For more endowed homes, see Safrai, "Home and Family," 736.

Joseph did not *take her* (consummately) according to ancient marriage customs,¹⁹⁶ at least not until after the birth of her child.¹⁹⁷ The question of course is: *why?* On the surface, Matthew’s portrayal of Joseph’s celibacy during Mary’s pregnancy certainly recapitulates the notion that Joseph was not the child’s blood progenitor.¹⁹⁸ Matthew also may have been displaying Joseph’s “obedience to Scripture”—that Joseph wished to fulfill literally Isaiah’s promise that a virgin would both conceive and *bear* (1.22–23). Apart from this theological veneer, however, Matthew’s celibate Joseph is (again!) double. On the one hand, the celibate Joseph displays a strong, invulnerable male body. Given that Joseph’s celibacy is buttressed by wide-spread, ‘procreation-alone’ discourse,¹⁹⁹ resembling a ‘typical’ form of early Jewish (religious) sexual restraint,²⁰⁰ a number of scholars celebrate Matthew’s celibate Joseph as a display of “exemplary behavior”: Matthew’s Joseph *knows* that *knowing* his wife during

¹⁹⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.218. Cf. *Ach. Tat.* 5.20.5; 21.1.

¹⁹⁷ While the grammar does not require that ἔως οὖν entails later ‘resumption of sexual relations’ (see, e.g., Chrysostom, *Hom. on Matt.* 5.5), Matthew likely would not have chosen such an expression if he had thought Mary ‘ever virgin’. Luz contends (*Matthew*, 124-25) that the grammar cannot disprove Mary’s perpetual virginity here, but that the concept is alien to Matthew’s community and would therefore have had to have been expressed explicitly if Matthew wished to communicate it; see also Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.219: “This retrospective observation does not necessarily imply that there were marital relations later on, for ἔως following a negative need not contain the ideal of a limit which terminates the preceding action or state (cf. Gen 49.10 LXX; Matt 10.23; Mk 9.1). At the same time, had Matthew held to Mary’s perpetual virginity (as did the 2nd century author of Prot. Jas. 19.3-20.2), he would almost certainly have chosen a less ambiguous expression—just as Luke would have avoided ‘first-born son’ (2.7).”

¹⁹⁸ So Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 39, n. 15—essentially recapitulating the import of vv. 1.16, 18-20, regarding the relationship of Joseph to Jesus’ generation, as discussed above.

¹⁹⁹ Dale Allison has aptly shown that “both before and after Matthew’s day, there were many, including many Jews, who would have considered intercourse during pregnancy inappropriate behavior” (“Divorce,” 8). Jewish references include: *Tob.* 8.7; *Pseudo-Phocylides* 186; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.2, 9, 20; *T. Iss.* 2.3; *T. Benj.* 8.2; Josephus, *Apion* 2.202. Early Christian references include: Justin, *I Apol.* 29; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 33; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.83, 91, 93, 95, 97; *Sent. Sextus* 231-32; Origen, *C. Cels.* 5.42; *Didascalia* 6.28; Ambrose, *Exp. Lucam* 1.43-45; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 4.25; Augustine, *Coniug. et concup.* 1.5.4; 1.15.17. Other ancient authorities include: Plutarch, *Mor.* 144B; Musonius Rufus, frag. 12 (in Stobaeus, *Anth.* 4.22.90); Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 7.11.42; Clitarcus, *Sent.* 70; Lucan, *De bello civ.* 2; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 7.133-37; Maximus of Tyre, *Disc.* 36; Hierocles, *On Marriage* 4.22.

²⁰⁰ Allison, “Divorce,” 10. See also idem, “Jesus as a Millenarian Ascetic,” in *Jesus of Nazareth Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 172-216; Harvey McArthur, “Celibacy in Judaism at the Time of Christian Beginnings,” *AUSS* 25 (1987): 163-81; Géza Vermès, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973), 99-102. Much was made of Moses’ instruction in Exod. 19.15 (“Be ready by the third day; do not go near a woman”), and later tradition inferred that Moses must have determined to remain in a state of constant purity and therefore continence (celibacy) in order to be ever ready to receive revelation; see Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.68-69; the Targumim on Num. 12.1-2; *Sifre Num.* 99-100; *b. Sab.* 87a; *Deut. Rab.* 11.10; *Exod. Rab.* 46.3; *Cant. Rab.* 4.4; and Louis Ginzburg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1942), II.316; III.107, 258; and VI.90 (with additional references). Cf. I Sam. 21.1-6. See also, David Biale, *From Intercourse to Discourse* (Center for Hermeneutical Studies Colloquy 62; San Anselmo: Center for Hermeneutical Studies, 1990), who argues on the basis of a close reading of rabbinic texts (esp. those cited above), that the rabbinic attitude towards (men’s) sexuality, in keeping with other mainstream impulses in late antique religion and society, was more radically negative than has been generally supposed.

her pregnancy is normatively “inappropriate,” and/or Matthew’s Joseph parades honorable, praiseworthy self-control.²⁰¹ As discussed above, appropriate householder comportment and self-mastery are certainly elements of (homosocial) masculine identity/subjectivity, and so Matthew may in part put a Joseph on display whose homosocial honor and masculine identity (again), not unlike that of his patriarchal namesake,²⁰² hinges on his triumph over potential sexual improprieties.

In line with Matthew’s other re-inscriptions of male householder power and privilege (child-naming and wife-taking/dismissing, among other things), Matthew’s celibate Joseph also bolsters the hegemonic fiction of a man’s right to *take* and *not take* his wife as he pleases, for whatever sacred and/or stoically-charged reason. While certain groups in antiquity emphasized purity, integrity, and separateness and transferred these meanings to female subjectivity via a woman’s virginity and/or continence,²⁰³ Matthew’s discourse presumes that both regular, recurring conjugal relations and (temporary) cessation of conjugal relations fall primarily within the domain of a man/husband’s knowledge and prerogative: “but [Joseph] had no marital relations with her until...” (καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως...).

At the same time, Matthew’s celibate Joseph also displays a non-generative, receptive, and vulnerable male body. Matthew’s celibate Joseph ostensibly introduces a prototypical paradigm

²⁰¹ So, Keener, *Matthew*, 472; see, e.g., *m. ‘Abod. Zar.* 2.1; *b. Git.* 57a. Cf. Carol Delaney’s commentary on the contemporary, conventional Middle Eastern assumption that “if a man and woman are alone together for more than twenty minutes they have had intercourse” (“Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame,” in Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, 35-48 (41)).

²⁰² Jewish tradition before and after this period especially celebrated the sexual example of the patriarch Joseph (*Jub.* 39.5-8; *Gen. Rab.* 87.6, 8; *Lev. Rab.* 23:10; *Song Rab.* 4:12, §1; *Joseph and Aseneth*; Godelieve Teugels, “De kuisse Jozef. De receptie van een bijbels model,” *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 45 (1991): 193-203. See also n. 140 above.

²⁰³ The most extreme examples are the *Therapeutae* and early Christians. The former, known only from Philo’s description, was a closed community dedicated to serving the will of God that emphasized complete female celibacy. Philo, *Vit. Cont.* 68 describes the women as “mostly old virgins,” and explicitly compares them to priests (82). See Ross S. Kraemer, “Monastic Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Egypt: Philo Judaeus on the *Therapeutrides*,” *Signs* 14 (1989): 342-70; Michael Satlow, “Philo on Human Perfection,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 59, pt. 2 (2008): 500-19. As for early Christians, Paul testifies to a value that at least some of the first Christians were placing on virginity, and he himself suggests that it would be best if all were virgins (1 Cor 7.1, 8-9). A number of early Christian (women) followers of such celibate practice, would soon take Paul’s words to heart; see Susanna Elm, *“Virgins of God”: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). I would also note here Tal Ilan’s recent illuminating study of evidence which leads her to claim that women were in fact full-fledged members of the Pharisee sect; see chapter 3, “Women Pharisees,” in *Silencing the Queen: The Literary Histories of Shelamzion and Other Jewish Women* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 73-110.

(Jesus) of non-reproductive masculinity: a self-made (at least temporarily) “eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt 19.12),²⁰⁴ who models an ethic of kinship that works against hegemonic male plenitude.²⁰⁵ The celibate Joseph is also an extension of Matthew’s characterization of a duly silent, submissive, and dependent man who knows his place with respect to his (naturalized) superiors. With Mary’s body again playing the role of the ‘conduit of relationship’ between Joseph and the deity, Joseph’s celibacy may be read as a type of ‘bros before hoes’ fastidious act of (hyper-)submission, in deference to the agency of his buddy GodFather: Matthew’s Joseph counted marital faithfulness (‘normal’ conjugal relations) in this instance as unfaithfulness to his *other* partner. He does what he is told, without question (1.24), and, just to make sure he didn’t mess things up with his buddy GodFather who generated and is now protecting this child, Joseph avoids any sexual contact with the mother (1.25).

Matthew’s Joseph does what other men do: takes a wife, names a child, initiates conjugal relations/separation. These indicators are all gathered together along with one other quintessential quality of Matthew’s ideal, just man: this one submits himself unconditionally to the deity. As we will see in the next section, the question of Joseph’s relationship to hegemonic authority is further complicated in subsequent narrative movements. For while Matthew’s Joseph submits to the will and authority of the GodFather, his relationship to the powers of the Roman imperial state take a more shifty turn.

²⁰⁴ See discussion and sources cited at n. 44, above.

²⁰⁵ Matthew’s Joseph, then, may fit within one stream of early Christian thinking about kinship that anticipates, in part, contemporary critiques of reproductive futurism by the likes of Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) and Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). Cf. Brandy Daniels, “Is Kinship Always Already Reproductive? Ecclesiology, Ethics, and the Antisocial Thesis,” (echoing Judith Butler, “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?,” in *Undoing Gender*) paper presented at the Annual AAR Meeting, Chicago, IL, 16-20 November 2012, who argues that a Christian account of kinship (through the sacrament of baptism) can offer critical leverage to Lee Edelman and Leo Bersani’s critique of reproductive futurism (the antisocial thesis)—of the sociopolitical and theoretical implications of fusing politics with sex and of vesting hope in the future through a politic upheld by the figure of the Child—by enabling a shift in one’s political vision from a reproductive to an ecclesiological register, thus reframing kinship and dispossessing it from its fantasmatic investment in the future.

2.5 Matthew's Average Joe and Empire:

A Trickster's Tale of Slaughter, Cleverness, (Dis)Placement, and Flight (Matt 2.1-23)

Matthew's uneven citation of conventional indices of masculinity continues in the final narrative movement of his infancy account, where, with the aid of the GodFather, Joseph rescues his betrothed and her son from the despotic reach of empire, embodied in the infancy account by Herod/Archelaus (Matt 2.1-23).²⁰⁶ This is not a heroic rescue. This is, rather, a case of ambivalently gendered, colonial chicanery. Matthew's final Joseph-centric narrative movement is a *con*-text.

Despite Herod's totalizing power of command—summoning (2.4, 7), sending (2.8, 16), executing (2.16)²⁰⁷—he is outmaneuvered, 'tricked' (ἐνεπαίχθη, 2.16), by the GodFather and (by association) Joseph, who together foil Herod's efforts to 'seek the child's life' (2.20) at the ghastly expenditure of the 'Innocents' (2.16-18). While it may be difficult to whitewash the GodFather's infanticide involvement,²⁰⁸ it is even harder to dispense with Matthew's parallel, unflattering image of the GodFather as a trickster, who carries the salvific promise of 'the Child' (1.21) through to its incipient fulfillment by means of lithe concealment and misdirection.²⁰⁹ As with the rest of

²⁰⁶ While much of Matthew's narrative situates its protagonists (principally Jesus) in 'intramural' interaction with the Jewish community, it is 'extramural' interaction with Roman imperial powers both sets the stage for Matthew's narrative (Matt 2.1–23) and drives it inexorably toward its conclusion (Matt 27.1–2, 11–37).

²⁰⁷ Herod, too, is portrayed as 'secretly' (λάθρᾳ) plotting (Matt 2.7), though Herod's primary characterization is one of overt domination, utilizing his command of power.

²⁰⁸ See the summary and critique of prior dealings with the issue of *theodicy* in Matthew's narrative infanticide by Blickenstaff, *Bridegroom*, 148-153, and sources cited therein. Blickenstaff's understatement says it well: "In the end, there is no satisfactory explanation for the deaths of these children" (150). Though, for my part, it is hard to shake Matthew's theological implication that the 'Innocents' slaughter was part of a divine trickster's master plan (Matthew's Jeremiah prophesied as much), resembling perhaps the 'anti-predator avoidance' strategies, which, in the natural sciences, are termed *autotomy*, self-amputation/evisceration, the shedding of a non-vital body part/fluid. But I digress.

²⁰⁹ While beyond the scope of this project, it is perhaps worth noting the inchoate connection between the GodFather's preservation of 'the Child' in Matthew's nativity tale and the preservation of 'the Child' perpetuated by univocal discourses of reproductive futurity; see Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*.

Matthew's infancy account which 'quotes' biblical prototypes, notably Moses,²¹⁰ with 'preposterous' effects,²¹¹ Matthew's divine trickster too is inevitably engaged with and intervenes to create a revised image of portraits of the deity from the Hebrew Bible (and beyond), who secures the ancestral promise (Gen 12.1-3; 26.4-5; 28.13-15) and defends a chosen people through equally troubling measures, including, yes, deception (2 Sam 17.14; 1 Kings 22.19-23; 2 Kings 6.15-20; 7.6-7), along with the deaths of firstborn sons (Exod 12.29), utter destruction of enemy nations (Deut 7.1-2; 20.16-18; Josh 10.40), and other sundries.²¹² Similarly, the tricky collusion of Joseph and the GodFather, who maintain intimate contact throughout their tortuous plan,²¹³ recites Jacob and Yahweh's collaboration in the Jacob Cycle (Gen 27.7, 20, 28; 29.15-30.24; 30.37-31.16).²¹⁴ Matthew's Joseph, like Matthew's GodFather, is a trickster, as is perhaps already registered by Joseph's inclination to 'secretly' (λάθρᾳ) dodge his earlier problem (1.19). Here lies not only an opportunity to excise "today's warm, omnibenevolent deity" from the pages of the Second Testament,²¹⁵ but also the prospect of unpacking the 'tragicomic' performance of an everyday man's duplicitous empire

²¹⁰ Matthew models Jesus' nativity on that of Moses, a savior whose own saving also 'requires' the deaths of many children (Exod. 1.22-2.5; 11.1-10; 12.29-32); see Richard T. France, "Herod and the Children of Bethlehem," *NovT* 21 (1979): 98-120; idem, "The Massacre of the Innocents—Fact or Fiction?," in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Biblica* 1978 (JSNTSup 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic), 83-94; Richard J. Erickson, "Divine Injustice? Matthew's Narrative Strategy and the Slaughter of the Innocents (Matthew 2.13-23)," *JSNT* 64 (1996): 5-27; and John Dominic Crossan, "Virgin Mother or Bastard Child?," *HTS* 59, no. 3 (2003): 663-691. On the presence and function of intertextuality in Matt 1-2, see Moisés Mayordomo, "Matthew 1-2 and the Problem of Intertextuality," in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Dettwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 257-279.

²¹¹ Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*.

²¹² See Dean Andrew Nicholas, *Trickster Revisited: Deception as a Motif in the Pentateuch* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), who suggests (16-25) how the deity in the Hebrew Bible (Yahweh) sits comfortably among the panoply of other ancient, divine tricksters: Ea/Enki, Inanna, Re, Isis, Horus, Seth, Inaras, Athena, Prometheus, Zeus, and Hermes, to name a few.

²¹³ As I discuss below, Matthew's 'tortuous' plan of deliverance of the holy family implies no less than: assassination attempts, lack of steady household income, two dessert-crossings on foot with an infant, exile in a foreign country, and anxious waiting on last-minute divine guidance and provision.

²¹⁴ Victor H. Matthews, "Jacob the Trickster and Heir of the Covenant: A Literary Interpretation," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 12 (1985): 185-195.

²¹⁵ See James A. Metzger, "Where Has Yahweh Gone? Reclaiming Unsavory Images of God in New Testament Studies," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 31 (2009): 51-76 (56).

negotiation. For Joseph's 'taking' of wife/mother and child (1.24; 2.13, 14, 20, 21) certainly recites conventional patterns of masculinity,²¹⁶ but "the cunning of a trickster is a different matter."²¹⁷

Trickster characters are inexorably contingent upon the cultures that shape and are shaped by them, making "any universal statements about the function, and even the definition of this character impossible."²¹⁸ Nevertheless, "the structural position of the trickster hero" has been routinely harnessed in colonial contexts, as James C. Scott suggests: "nothing illustrates the veiled cultural resistance of subordinate groups better than what have been termed trickster tales."²¹⁹ Conventionally, Scott notes, the trickster hero charts a successful course through oppressive, dominating landscapes

not by his strength but by his wit and cunning. The trickster is unable, in principle, to win any direct confrontation as he is smaller and weaker than his antagonists. Only by knowing the habits of his enemies, by deceiving them, by taking advantage of their greed, size, gullibility, or haste does he manage to escape their clutches and win victories.²²⁰

While here regrettably reciting Western comparative theoretical biases which mark the trickster as male²²¹—eclipsing both the complex *topos* of female tricksters²²² and the trickster's more basic,

²¹⁶ Cf. Luz, *Matthew* 121. "The focus is on the child and his mother; Joseph appears as the agent guided by God but not as the father. He is, as is intimated by the literal repetition of the angel's command in vv. 14-15 (and 21), the obedient one." Granted; though I might add that the 'obedience' of Matthew's 'obedient one' consists of patently 'paternal' movements: if 'not as the father', then what? 'Guide/agent' seems a bit understated. The point is, whether or not we call Joseph the 'father' of this trio of characters, Matthew positions him as the responsible male household head (*pater familias*), protector of Mary and her child, agent of their liberation; Mary/child are taken along for the ride, the foil for Joseph's household control and manly performance.

²¹⁷ Haddox, "Favoured Sons and Subordinate Masculinities," 11.

²¹⁸ Naomi Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters, Their Analogues and Cross-Cultural Study," in J. Cheryl Exum and Johanna W.H. Van Wijk-Bos, eds., *Reasoning with the Foxes: Female Wit in a World of Male Power* (Semeia 42; Atlanta: SBL, 1988), 1-13 (4).

²¹⁹ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 162-63.

²²⁰ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 162.

²²¹ See Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken, 1972); Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, "A Tolerated Margin of Mess': The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered," *Journal of Folklore Institute* 11 (1975): 147-186; Margaret A. Mills, "The Gender of the Trick: Female Tricksters and Male Narrators," *Asian Folklore Studies* 60 (2001): 237-258.

²²² Fruitfully explored, for example, in the context of the Hebrew Bible; see Susan Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); Exum and Van Wijk-Bos, eds., *Reasoning with the Foxes*; Melissa Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible: A Subversive Collaboration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41-66.

gender-shifting ambiguity²²³—Scott also suitably captures the trickster hero’s characteristic marginality and subversive potential.

Matthew’s Joseph, like the vast majority of trickster characters, subsists at the margins of his society and transgresses borderlines,²²⁴ marked principally by his signature turn of phrase—ambivalently coupling, in three separate cases, a phallic ‘rise’ with a flaccid retreat²²⁵—but also, quite literally, by his liminal crossing over to Egypt.²²⁶ In the face of seemingly insurmountable forces of opposition, Joseph gets up to get down. He rises up(!)...and flees, hides away in exile, and returns fearfully, only to flee once again and finally conceal himself in ‘Nazareth’ of all places.²²⁷ Joseph overcomes, not by direct confrontation or ‘manly’ displays of strength, but by unevenly coded means of flight, concealment, guile—by crossing over and thus transgressing boundaries. He is the craven hero, the recessive redeemer, the sinful savior, and his liminality is, moreover, the source of his

²²³ Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 54; cf. Marilyn Jurich, “The Female Trickster—Known as Trickstar—as Exemplified by Two American Legendary Women, ‘Billy’ Tipton and Mother Jones,” *Journal of American Culture* 22 (1999): 69-75 (70).

²²⁴ See, e.g., Cristian Grottanelli, “Tricksters, Scapegoats, Champions, Saviors,” *History of Religion* 23 (1983): 117-13: “Tricksters are breakers of rules” (120); cf. Kathleen M. Ashley, “Interrogating Biblical Deception and Trickster Theories: Narratives of Patriarchy or Possibility?,” and Mieke Bal, “Tricky Thematics,” both in Exum and Van Wijk-Bos, eds., *Reasoning with the Foxes*, 103-116 (105) and 133-155 (136), respectively.

²²⁵ Joseph ‘rose up’ and: (1) ‘had no marital relations with her’ (1.24); (2) fled ‘to Egypt’ (2.13); (3) returned after ‘those who were seeking the child’s life’ were dead, though again, hid away in ‘the district of Galilee’ (2.20-23).

²²⁶ As noted by a number of commentators, a geographical motif runs through ch. 2, so that birth in Bethlehem, flight to Egypt, and journey back to Nazareth constitute a divinely guided itinerary. For example, Krister Stendahl, “Quis et Unde? An Analysis of Matthew 1–2 (1960),” in Graham Stanton, ed., *The Interpretation of Matthew* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 69-80, argues that Matt 2 focuses on geography (‘Unde’) in order to draw theological implications, such as Jesus’ Davidic connections (born in Bethlehem); Brown, *Birth*, 50-54, adapting and expanding Stendahl’s work, also focuses on the geographic motif in Matt 2 (not only ‘Unde’ but also ‘Ubi’). Less attention is given to the significance of Joseph/Mary’s crossing over into the ‘liminal’ space of Egyptian refuge; see George M. Soares-Prabhu, “Jesus in Egypt: A Reflection on Matt 2:13–15, 19–21 in the Light of the Old Testament,” *EstBib* 50 (1992) 225-49; Garrett Galvin, *Egypt as a Place of Refuge* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 173-179.

²²⁷ Matthew’s ‘midrashic’ acrobatics employed to recuperate the ostensible ignominy of ‘Nazareth’ underlines the marginality of Joseph’s final resting status; see Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1.274.

Matthew’s Joseph *con-text*, then, essentially corresponds to Niditch’s cross-cultural, five-step structural morphology of trickster tales (*Underdogs and Tricksters*, 44-45): (1) the hero [Joseph] has low status [under Herod’s dominion], so (2) enacts a deception [flight, concealment] to improve her/his status. (3) The successful trick leads to improved status for the hero [released from Herod’s reach]. (4) However, eventually the deception is revealed [Joseph returns], and (5) while surviving, the hero is returned to marginal/outsider/reduced status [settles in Nazareth].

subversive potential.²²⁸ Joseph's marginal status and "situation-inverting"²²⁹ resourcefulness—abetted of course by the divine Trickster—disrupts the established social and political order, subverts power structures, and undermines the status quo.²³⁰

All of this is accompanied in Matthew's *con*-text by not a little bit of comedy,²³¹ emerging in the first place from Joseph's lowly status and ambivalently gendered, craven retreat, but also by the ironic besting of the trickster's necessary, and necessarily unstable, Other, the fool, played by Herod. "Seemingly in power, seemingly advantaged" (2.1-8),²³² seemingly a 'real man',²³³ Matthew's Herod is at once unmasked as the fool and unmanned by his "excessive" (*λίαν*), rage-filled, and ridiculously disproportionate martial campaign against the 'Innocents' (2.16).²³⁴ Here subversive comedy occurs in close proximity to tragic violence—feasibly mirroring 'real-world' misfortunes of least some of Matthew's implied readership.²³⁵ Yet in another ironic narrative reversal, rather than the child who he sought to "destroy" (2.13), the unmanned Herod himself dies, dies, and dies again (2.19, 20, 22). By employing such "deeply humorous negative examples" that expose social inequalities and injustices,²³⁶ Matthew's boundary-crossing trickster creates "imaginative breathing space in which the

²²⁸ Grottanelli, "Tricksters," 139: the "power of breaking boundaries, of getting away with it, and of achieving salvation through sin."

²²⁹ See William J. Hynes, "Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters," in William J. Hynes and William G. Doty, eds., *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 33-45 (37-41).

²³⁰ Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters*, 49: the trickster tale possesses "an antiestablishment quality at the very source of its being."

²³¹ Grottanelli, "Tricksters," 120; Steinberg, "Israelite Tricksters," 2; Jurich, "The Female Trickster," 70.

²³² Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 47.

²³³ See discussion of 'manly' "self-control/mastery" (*ἐγκράτεια*; LSJ 473) at nn. 110-112, above.

²³⁴ Matthew's characterization of Herod is thus consistent with his other ancient, critical portraits, especially Josephus, *War*, 1.437, 443-44, 550-51, 655-56, 659-60, 664-65; and *Ant.* 16.394; 17.167-69, 174-79, 187, 191; see Peter Richardson, *Herod, King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

²³⁵ See, e.g., Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, "The Cultural Structure of the Infancy Narrative in the Gospel of Matthew," in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Detwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 94-115, who, looking primarily at evidence gleaned from Matthew's infancy narrative (Mt 1-2), suggest that the gospel as a whole is "the expression of a persecuted minority group" with a clandestine, resistance strategy of 'flight', "but one that never ceases to proclaim the future defeat of those in power: it is a fugitive and antagonistic minority" (115); cf. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*.

²³⁶ See William J. Hynes, "Inconclusive Conclusions: Tricksters—Metaplayers and Revealers," in William J. Hynes and William G. Doty, eds., *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 202-217 (207).

normal categories of order and hierarchy are less than completely inevitable,²³⁷ and possibilities that resist those officially sanctioned become thinkable.²³⁸ Matthew's Joseph, then, as symbol of marginalization and colonial oppression, feasibly offered much to at least some of Matthew's implied readers—sharing in their lowly status and colonial misfortunes, demonstrating how to transform weakness into strength, and offering a promise that a measure of success in resistance is possible and that, at the very least, survival is probable.²³⁹

2.6 Matthew's Audience and the Making(s) of an Average Joe

In the preceding pages I examined how the average Joe fashioned at the center of Matthew's infancy tale *does* what other men *do*: exercises authority to distribute his name and honor to (even non-biological) designated next of kin (1.1-17); demonstrates self-mastery and mercy, responds to homosocial prestige threats, and observes laws/norms (1.18-20); deploys knowledge gained in dreams (1.20-25); takes a wife, names a child, and initiates conjugal relations/separation (1.24-25); and protects his household/family (2.1-23). Matthew's Joseph also assumes a more ambiguously gendered posture that wavers, like his relationship to hegemonic authority itself, in the betwixt and between, interstitial spaces, belying both dominant cultural codes of 'masculine' action and aggression, as well as 'feminine' passivity and submission:²⁴⁰ physiologically limp in the biological generation of Jesus (1.1-17); godhandled by a penetrating dream annunciation (1.20-23); submissively silent (1.24); obediently servile in relation to his GodFather (1.24-25); a self-made (at

²³⁷ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 168.

²³⁸ Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 45 (emphasis original): "Tricksters, in exposing the deficiencies of what *is*, offer an opportunity to see what *might be*"; cf. Jurich, "The Female Trickster," 69.

²³⁹ Cf. Destro and Pesce, "The Cultural Structure of the Infancy Narrative," 16-17: "flight...is the saving mechanism of the weak, of those who cannot fight on equal terms with those who wield power. Flight, however, is also a means of neutralising the power of those who rule. It is the powerful, but non-aggressive weapon of the weak."

²⁴⁰ Other Jewish males from later times, too, invoked a similar gendered ambivalence, resistant to dominant cultural modes of masculinity, epitomized by the 'feminized' scholarly rabbi; see Daniel Boyarin, "Masada or Yavneh? Gender and the Arts of Jewish Resistance," in Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, eds., *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 306-329; idem, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Contraversions 8; Berkeley: University of California Press); idem, "Virgins in Brothels: Gender and Religious Ecotification," *Estudos de Literatura Oral* 5 (1999): 195-217.

least temporarily) “eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt 19.12), modeling a kinship ethic that works against hegemonic male plenitude (1.25); and cravenly resistant by means of flight, concealment and misdirection (2.1-23). In the following concluding thoughts, I take up the question of the mechanisms behind and in front of such *makings* of Matthew’s Average Joe, explaining how Matthew’s characterization of Joseph foregrounds the structuring of gendered power relations in his audience(s).

The question of the character of Joseph’s gendered rhetorical function in Matthew has received some good answers already, many of which come from feminist scholarship. Janice Capel Anderson, in one of the earliest articulations of feminist biblical hermeneutics, suggests a partial answer: “the patrilineal genealogy and the birth’s story’s concentration on Joseph can be seen in part as attempts to come to terms with female difference” and “incorporate Jesus back into the male sphere, the ordinary scheme of things. They place him within an androcentric perspective.”²⁴¹ Similarly, Jane Schaberg reads Matthew’s focus on Joseph as reflecting ‘the male sphere’: “the patriarchal social situation in which...men make themselves the authoritative interpreters of Scripture and its laws, as they have been its authoritative creators and transmitters...Assuming awareness of the legal options open to Joseph and their human consequences, Matthew encourages the reader to identify with Joseph’s dilemma, with his confusion and perhaps his suspicions.”²⁴² Elaine Wainwright highlights how such androcentric interpretations have essentially mirrored Matthew’s focus on “the male sphere,”²⁴³ while Marianne Blickenstaff sees Joseph as a model of the non-procreative father who incorporates new members to his family by adoption, “a celibate bridegroom...who prefigures the ideal for non-reproductive masculinity in Matthew.”²⁴⁴ My own work here builds on these and other insights, further exposing the conditions that produced such gendered ideologies, a process of

²⁴¹ Anderson, “Matthew: Gender and Reading,” 10.

²⁴² Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 74.

²⁴³ Elaine Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 73-74.

²⁴⁴ Blickenstaff, *Bridegroom*, 134.

“denaturalizing” and “re-historicizing”: “pushing and jabbing” at the particularity of constructions and performances of masculine identities.²⁴⁵

Gérard Claudel has recently offered the intriguing suggestion that Matthew’s characterization of Joseph may be a key component of a phatic speech act designed to establish and maintain contact between the gospel writer and his recipient community: Matthew intends Joseph to represent or model to his audience the “ideal reader” of his Gospel.²⁴⁶ Considering the prominent placement of Joseph-centric material, I think Claudel is on to something. As I suggested above, Joseph ostensibly models the proper submissive posture a disciple ought to have in relation to the penetrative revelation of new Torah knowledge. Joseph’s salutary ‘receptive’ responses to his dreams prefigures both the ideal response of a disciple to Jesus’ authorized teachings (7.28-29; 28.20) and also the response of an ideal reading group to Matthew’s gospel itself: in Joseph’s case new Torah knowledge is revealed through *dreams*; in the case of the disciples, through a dramatic oral, *didactic encounter* with Jesus himself; and, finally, in the case of Matthew’s ‘disciple’ community, through the medium of Matthew’s *literary* project.²⁴⁷ However, while Claudel focuses primarily on the theological motifs presented by Matthew’s characterization of Joseph, I suggest here that Joseph’s point-of-view characterization in Matthew also feasibly plays a key role in mediating Matthew’s putative ‘in-group’ identity, concurrently bound up with the processes of everyday male self-fashioning. In a word, Matthew’s Joseph puts a face, a name, and a story to the house-holding members of one of the five

²⁴⁵ See Elizabeth Clark, “Ideology, History, and the Construction of ‘Woman’ in Late Ancient Christianity,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1994): 155-184 (178); and idem, “Antifamilial Tendencies in Ancient Christianity,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 356-380 (380).

²⁴⁶ Gérard Claudel, “Joseph, Figure du Lecteur Modèle du Premier Évangile,” in D. Senior, ed. *The Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2011), 339-374.

²⁴⁷ I am envisioning here some kind of intersection or nesting of Matthew’s narrative planes, with Joseph’s relationship to the deity as the inaugural, if also the principal, example of a manly, submissive ‘reading’ paradigm:

(Matthew’s Community {**Disciples** [Joseph <> GodFather] **Jesus**} Matthew’s Gospel)

major character groups²⁴⁸ in the gospel of Matthew: the in-group of Jesus', decidedly *male*, disciples (οἱ μαθηταί).²⁴⁹

Like Jesus' other male disciples, Matthew makes Joseph's manly "good works" (τὰ καλὰ ἔργα) "shine before people" (ἐμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων; 5.16)²⁵⁰—a good majority of Joseph's characterization fleshes out the *public* comportment commended by Jesus' later discourses: for example, keeping his passions under control (1.18-19; 5.21-22) and not divorcing his wife (1.24; 5.31-32; 19.4-9). To some extent, Joseph's voluntary celibacy (1.25) also anticipates Jesus' affirmative but enigmatic saying about eunuchs (19.12) signaling the visible (!) "costly" commitment to Matthew's disciple community itself, even at the price of "readiness to mutilate or castrate oneself," as explored recently by Susanna Asikainen.²⁵¹ Perhaps most strikingly, Matthew's characterization of Joseph heralds the creative and provocative forms of 'resistance' advocated by Jesus' demands for his male disciple's restraint in cases of public challenges (Matt 5.38-41), in order to overcome "the spiral

²⁴⁸ As Anderson ("Matthew: Gender and Reading," 10) and others have suggested, "there are five major character groups in the gospel of Matthew: the Jewish leaders, the disciples (οἱ μαθηταί), the crowds (οἱ ὄχλοι), the supplicants, and the Gentiles," and "each group is primarily characterized in terms of its relationship to Jesus, the protagonist. Their interactions with Jesus are compared and contrasted. They serve as foils for one another. To the extent that characters change in the course of the narrative they do so primarily in terms of their acceptance and/or understanding of Jesus and his mission." See also Sief Van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 1-7; Mark Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship in Matthew and Luke," *BTB* 3 (1973) 235-55; Ulrich Luz, "Die Jünger im Mattheusevangelium," *ZNW* 62 (1971): 141-71; Paul S. Minear, "The Disciples and the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew," *ATRSup* 3 (1974): 28-44; Jack D. Kingsbury, "The Title Son of David in Matthew's Gospel," *JBL* 95 (1976): 599-600; and, more recently, J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

²⁴⁹ None of the members of Matthew's disciple group is ever explicitly described as a house-holding πατήρ; however, a number of Jesus' instructions assume that this is the case. Presumably at least some of Matthew's Jesus' disciples had wives (Matt 5.31-32; 8.14; 19.4-9), homes (6.6; 8.14), and mammon (6.24), and while Matthew's Jesus comforts "everyone who has left behind..." (πᾶς ὅστις ἀφῆκεν) property and a number of household relationships "on account of my name" (ἐνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου) with the promise of eternal reward (19.29), this is not a general prescription for "everyone" who follows Jesus to leave 'everything' behind—when, for example, did Peter leave his wife and house behind (Matt 8.14; 19.27)? On the prominence of the motif of discipleship and the role of the disciples in Matthew, see Barton, *Discipleship and Family Ties*; Carter, *Households and Discipleship*. On the gendering of Matthew's Jesus' disciples, see Weidemann, "Being a Male Disciple of Jesus," who explores how "most (!) situations provided in the Sermon on the Mount are distinctly inter-*male* situations and that its demands are primarily addressed to men" (108; emphasis and punctuation (!) are original).

²⁵⁰ If one considers 5.16 the "theme of the Sermon on the Mount," as Christoph Burchard argues ("Versuch, das Thema der Bergpredigt zu finden," in *Sudien zur Theologie, Sprache und Umwelt des Neuen Testaments* [WUNT 107; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988], 38), then everything which follows merely illustrates concretely how the disciples must behave if their visible and public "good works" are to incite "people" to "glorify your heavenly Father"; so too, Luz, *Matthew* 295.

²⁵¹ Asikainen, "'Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven,'" 180.

of violence by provoking their opponents nonviolently” and to “provocatively proclaim their nonresistance,” as explored recently by Hans-Ulrich Weidemann.²⁵² That is, Joseph’s ‘flight’ resistance—his transgressive, tricksterish ‘non-aggressive weapon’ (2.1-23)—anticipates the face-slap response that Jesus commends to his disciples in 5.39: not a sign of weakness, but of moral strength, “a provocative invitation to receive a second strike...The gesture exposes the act of the offender as what it is: morally repulsive and improper. In addition, it doubles the renunciation of violence by the person insulted; and finally, it challenges the striker to react with comparable generosity.”²⁵³

Precisely by means of such deviating behavior in public and inter-male situations, Joseph, no less than Jesus’ other male disciples, renders decisive contents of Jesus’ authorized teaching (7.28-29) *visible*. That is, Joseph’s story foregrounds the means by which a man may perform *publicly* as a disciple of Jesus, observing “everything I have commanded you” (28.20) without becoming unmanly in some way. Joseph’s characterization in Matthew both reveals an ideal masculine identity for in-group members of a minority and persecuted group that competes with that of other Jewish groups,²⁵⁴ and also offers a ‘missionizing’ invitation for all who witness his ‘good works’: at the ‘sight’ (ὄπωψ ἰδῶσιν; 5.16) of Joseph’s ‘just’ (1.18) behaviors, which flesh out the picture of Jesus’ ideal male disciple—‘snakely shrewd and dovelly innocent’ (10.16)—“the people” (τῶν ἀνθρώπων)

²⁵² Weidemann, “Being a Male Disciple of Jesus,” 142 and 149, respectively. See also Martin Ebner, *Jesus von Nazaret in seiner Zeit. Sozialgeschichtliche Zugänge* (SBS 196; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003), 171-74. As noted in the response by Björn Krondorfer, “Biblical Masculinity Matters,” in Ovidiu Creanga and Peter-Ben Smit, eds., *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 286-296: “the new and radical demands placed upon men in the Matthean community” look ostensibly different in the readings of Weidemann and Asikainen. That is, while Asikainen focuses on male self-mutilation, Weidemann spotlights male non-violence—“and this is not the same thing, especially when considering the ethical implications for men” (292-293).

²⁵³ Hans-Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 209. See also Klaus Wengst, *Das Regierungsprogramm des Himmelreichs. Eine Auslegung der Bergpredigt in ihrem jüdischen Kontext* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 122.

²⁵⁴ Matthew appears to belong to a minority and persecuted group within the Jewish communities of Syria, and yet nonetheless assumes the task of announcing the coming of Jewish politico-religious world domination, whose future fulfillment he awaits. See Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*; idem, *Matthew and Empire*; idem, *Households and Discipleship*; idem, “Matthew’s Gospel: Jewish Christianity, Christian Judaism, or Neither?,” in Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, ed., *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered. Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 155-179; Craig A. Evans, “The Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition,” in Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 242-244.

come to realize that this “son” (5.9, 16, 45) who is also a *πατήρ* in a very real sense, is revealing the consummate masculine identity of the GodFather.

As masculinity theorists have shown, features chosen to represent the masculine ideal are arbitrarily selected to perpetuate hegemonic gains and (re)produce central social and material institutions (like kinship structures).²⁵⁵ In the characterization of Joseph, Matthew shapes traditional Greco-Roman *πατήρ* and master-of-the-house gender norms in particular ways that conform to the beliefs, practices and postures of Matthew’s putative in-group identity. Matthew’s Joseph is, chiefly, Matthew’s *man*, a ‘just man’ who articulates and upholds key Matthean masculine attributes: non-generative (or, perhaps, *alt-generative*), self-mastered, Torah-bound, honor-loving, and, yes, submissive—to the right male(s), namely the GodFather and his royal Son. Matthew presents Joseph of Nazareth as prototypical of a consummate, and in some ways deviant, masculine identity in the midst of diversity of and conflict within the Jesus movements in the last decades of the first century CE. Matthew’s extended narrative foray with Joseph, guides the quotidian *πατήρ* among Matthew’s (male) disciple group (for he was were surely there), to identify with and emulate Joseph, and so place himself under the authority of the GodFather, and, not insignificantly, also under the provision of the GodFather’s chosen leaders.

²⁵⁵ See, e.g., Cornwall and Lindisfarne, *Dislocating Masculinities*, 11-47; Edwin Segal, “Variations in Masculinity from a Cross-Cultural Perspective,” *AGR* 10 (2006): 25-43.

3 JOSEPH OF NAZARETH IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

3.1 Luke's 'Everyday':

The Events, Everything, Gender and Joseph

While Luke-Acts, perhaps more than almost any other New Testament writing, is highly attuned to the political complexity and universalizing ambitions of the Roman Empire, mapping its author's final political stance in relation to the forces of imperialism and colonialism is still a matter of some debate: Luke-Acts has been read "with passionate persuasiveness both as radically subversive and as skillfully accommodationist,"¹ or as something else in between.² Related to Luke-Act's political acuity, though somewhat less contentious, is the matter of its author's characteristic wide-

¹ Virginia Burrus, "The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles," in Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T&T Clark, 2009): 133-155 (133). On the long-standing consensus of reading Luke-Acts as accommodationist, see Steve Walton, "Acts: Many Questions, Many Answers," in Scot McKnight and Grant R Osborne, eds., *The Face of New Testament Studies. A Survey of Recent Research* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 229-250 (248). The accommodationist consensus has been challenged by a variety of alternative positions, the most conspicuous being the suggestion that, rather than an *apologia pro ecclesia* (directed at Roman officials), the author had the reverse in mind, an *apologia pro imperio* (addressed to Jesus-followers); see Paul W. Walaskay, *"And So We Came to Rome": The Political Perspective of St Luke*, SNTSMS, vol. 49 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

On reading Luke-Acts as 'radically subversive', see survey and discussion of key works in Judy Diehl, "Anti-Imperial Rhetoric in the New Testament," *Currents in Biblical Research* 10 (2011): 9-52 (34-41), including Richard J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978); Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008); C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Kazuhiko Yamazaki-Ransom, *The Roman Empire in Luke's Narrative* (LNTS, 404; New York: T&T International, 2010); and Craig A. Evans, "King Jesus and his Ambassadors: Empire and Luke-Acts," in Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, eds., *Empire in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 120-139. Cf. Gary Gilbert, "Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity in the Worldview of Luke-Acts," in Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (SBLSymS, 20; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 233-256.

² Other Luke-Acts reading options are discussed by Steve Walton, "The State They Were in: Luke's View of the Roman Empire," in Peter Oakes, ed., *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (Carlisle; Grand Rapids: Paternoster; Baker Academic, 2002), 1-41 (2-12): Luke-Acts provides legitimation for the church's identity; Luke-Acts equips the churches to live in the Roman Empire; and/or, Luke-Acts was not interested in politics at all; cf. Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 95. Virginia Burrus ("The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles"), for one, highlights the "haunting ambiguity of Luke's political stance" (133), offering a thought-provoking reading of Luke-Acts "as an instance of postcolonial literature precisely on the basis of its frequently perplexing ambiguities and ambivalences" noting that "ambivalence toward the cultural authority of the colonizer is not only characteristic of the 'postcolonial condition' but also the source of much of its critical—and critically transforming—power" (134); cf. Ho Sung Kim, *Collusion and Subversion: Luke's representation of the Roman Empire* (PhD diss: Drew University, 2009).

ranging, editorial purview, which is both explicitly transcultural and distinctly universalizing.³ Singularly Lukan enlargements of the gospel narrative (and beyond) re-work local Judaeian settings with quasi-historical references to the broader Roman socio-political context (Luke 2.1–2; 3.1–2), re-present nascent Christianity as a social movement that “crosses ethnic boundaries, indeed is a universal religion, inclusive of all ethnic groups”⁴ (2.31–32; 3.6, 38; 9.6; 24.47), and re-view the emergence of transnational acceptance of the ‘Christian message’ within first-century, empire-wide ‘universal’ events involving the “whole inhabited world” (οἰκουμένη)⁵ (Acts 1.6–8; 2.5–13, 39; 10.34–35, 42–43; 11.28; 13.46–47; 15.7–11; 17.6; 24.5; 28.28). Similarly, Luke’s ‘sensitive’ narrative handling of “women, children, and all the neglected, as well as his perspectives on poverty and

³ As François Bovon, “Studies in Luke-Acts: Retrospect and Prospect,” *HTR* 85, no. 2 (1992): 175–196, notes: “The ideological defense of the universalism that is visible throughout the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles appears to me to be the religious counterpart of Roman imperial ambitions” (189); cf. idem, “Israel, die Kirche und die Völker im lukanischen Doppelwerk,” *ThLZ* 108 (1983): 403–14; and idem, *Lukas in neuer Sicht: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (trans. E. Hartmann, A. Frey, and P. Strauss; Biblisch-theologische Studien 8; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 121–127. Bovon, among others, perhaps too uncritically accepts the notion that of all the Gospel writers it is Luke, above all, who is the universalist. Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: S.P.C.K., 1958) was the first to challenge the notion, though with a certain amount of moderation. N.Q. King, “Universalism in the Third Gospel,” *TU* 73 (1959): 199–205, has spoken of “partial *krypsis* of his universalism while he is writing his Gospel,” and in the course of proving this he has reinterpreted almost every universalist reference in Luke in a non-universalist manner. Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), suggests that while Luke faithfully relates traditional material regarding Jesus’ ‘universal’ attitude (Luke 7.1–10; 10.13–16; 11.29–33; 13.18–21, 28) and Markan developments of this theme (20.9–19), Luke’s additions to the gospel narrative (especially 2.10, 30–32; 3.6, 4.25–27, 14.16–24, and 24.47) encourage the notion of Luke as a universalist: while King is “right in speaking of a partial *krypsis*,” this is not “a result of a deliberate damping down by Luke of the universalism which he found in Mark” (52). See also, Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX): Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Anchor Bible 28; Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 94; Ferdinand Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009, 1965).

⁴ Ben Witherington III, “Finding Its Niche: The Historical and Rhetorical Species of Acts,” SBL Seminar Papers 1996 (SBLSP 35; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 67–97 (81). While Witherington tacitly assumes that Luke as ‘historian’ delivers historical accuracy and veracity in presentation, I am more interested here in assessing how the author’s ‘universalizing’ or ‘transcultural’ editorial purview produces, as Todd Penner suggests, *historia* both that is “*paideia*, a pedagogical strategy for inculcating the life of the city in its citizens,” and that embodies the “idealized, mythologized, and immortalized” *polis* itself, “with its constructed politics and values as the basis of civic identity and life”; see “Civilizing Discourse: Acts, Declamation, and the Rhetoric of the Polis,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 65–104 (78). See also David P. Moessner, “The Lukan Prologues in the Light of Ancient Narrative Hermeneutics: *παρηκολουθηκότι* and the Credentialed Author,” in J. Verheyden, ed., *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 399–417; and idem, “Dionysius’s Narrative: ‘Arrangement’ (οἰκονομία) as the Hermeneutical Key to Luke’s Re-Vision of the ‘Many,’” in A. Christophersen, et al., eds., *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J.M. Wedderburn* (JSNTSUP 217; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 149–64.

⁵ That the author hardly ever refers to the world with the term ὁ κόσμος (cf. Luke 9.25; 11.50; 12.30; Acts 17.24), but prefers the use of this word, ἡ οἰκουμένη, “the [inhabited] world” (cf. Luke 2.1; 4.5; 21.26; Acts 11.28; 17.6, 31; 19.27; 24.5), is perhaps reflective of a ‘universalistic’ perspective—‘universal’, meaning the whole “civilized” world, the lands within the borders of the Roman Empire.

weakness,⁶ reveals his efforts to traverse socio-economic boundaries as well, even while it also demonstrates the author's literary skill of "writing in character" (*fictio personae*) and, by implication, his own social standing.⁷ That is, Luke's 'sensitivity' to everyday neglected corners of the Roman οἰκουμένη is dictated less by the kindly notion that 'small is beautiful'⁸ than by the universalizing ambitions of the dominant ideology that Luke ostensibly reproduces.

Attention to a 'universal' everyday is an essential, if also implicit, part of Luke's overall literary program as signaled in the dedicatory preface that opens his two-volume work, the much-studied, carefully-crafted prologue.⁹ Here Luke situates his writing within a common or popular

⁶ François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1.1–9.50* (trans. C.M. Thomas; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) suggests that the author's focus on such 'neglected' characters like 'women' "manifest a startlingly novel outlook in the world at that time" (10). Other approaches to the author's handling of women have assessed the historical importance of the role of women in Luke-Acts (see I. Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective*, trans. L.M. Maloney [Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1995]), put the spotlight on their apologetic function in Luke's missionary apologetic (see Shelly Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity* [Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001]), or critiqued the disjunction between women's projected ideal and their narrative representation, which undermines their actual historical role as leaders and missionaries in the church (see Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, [New York, Crossroad, 1983], 167; cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Was Celsus Right? The Role of Women in the Expansion of Early Christianity," in David L. Balch & Carolyn Osiek, eds., *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 157-184; and S. John Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor: Character Types in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

⁷ See, e.g., Clare K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe; 175 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). On the author's rhetorical training in declamation exercises, see Todd C. Penner, "Civilizing Discourse: Acts, Declamation, and the Rhetoric of the Polis," in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 65-104. Roman rhetorical education advanced *fictio personae* as a master trope; see W. Martin Bloomer, "Schooling in Persona: Imagination and Subordination in Roman Education," *Classical Antiquity* 16 (1997): 57-78; Robert A. Kaster, "Controlling Reason: Declamation in Rhetorical Education at Rome," in Yun Lee Too, ed., *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Colleen Conway suggests that the author's use of this literary technique reveals "the extent to which he was acculturated" as an elite male, and, moreover, that the author's training "in speaking in character would also help explain the author's altruistic attention to the poor that occurs throughout the narrative"; see *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 129, and 212 n.8, respectively.

⁸ Cf. Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, who emphasizes the "feminine" character of some of the Lukan scenes (263-264), stresses the "delicacy of sympathy" that such texts reveal "in the author" (264), and suggests that, "even though Luke cannot be classed as the champion of the oppressed, his gospel contains a cheerfulness and kindness that won him from Dante the title *scriba mansuetudinis Christi*" (265).

⁹ Cf. Eduard Norden's comments that Luke 1.1–4 represents the best-constructed sentence in the NT; *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (1913; reprinted Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1956] 316 n.1). See also Loveday Alexander, "Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing," *NovT* 28 (1986) 48–74; idem, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Vernon K. Robbins, "The Claims of the Prologues and Greco-Roman Rhetoric: The Prefaces to Luke and Acts in Light of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Strategies," in David P. Moessner, ed., *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 63-83.

trend of literary practices: “because *many*...I, too” (Ἐπειδήπερ πολλοὶ...κάμοι).¹⁰ Like the *many* retellings (διήγησιν) before him, Luke’s focal subject “concerning” (περὶ)¹¹ a corpus of raw, unconditioned historical material, “matters, fortunes, circumstances, affairs, events” (τῶν πραγμάτων),¹² has contemporary relevance for his readers—for, such events, “the ones that have been fully accomplished” (τῶν πεπληροφορημένων), have transpired “among us” (ἐν ἡμῖν), writes Luke (1.1-2). Luke intimately connects ‘the stuff that happened’ (τῶν πεπληροφορημένων πραγμάτων) to the everyday lives of his readers, not unlike other historiographers in antiquity.¹³ In other words, (speaking for Luke): “Our’ identity, even our existence is conditioned by ‘the events that happened’.”¹⁴ The raw stuff of the past, says Luke, has to do with ‘our contemporary present’. Luke embraces the content of the earlier, many works and of his own project, contending that the raw stuff of the past calls for *mediation*. Some critics focus on Luke’s “discreet and reticent” claims of superiority of *his* particular mediation of historical events:¹⁵ Luke starts at the beginning (ἄνωθεν) and embraces the entirety (πᾶσιν) of events, works with precision (ἀκριβῶς), and pays attention to

¹⁰ Cf. Josephus’s preface to *War* (BJ 1.6): “Seeing that many Jews before me have accurately recorded the history of our ancestors...” (Ἐπειδήπερ καὶ Ἰουδαίων πολλοὶ πρὸ ἔμους τὰ τῶν προγόνων συνετάξαντο μετ’ ἀκριβείας...); see also David P. Moessner, “‘Eyewitnesses,’ ‘Informed Contemporaries,’ and ‘Unknowing Inquirers’: Josephus’ Criteria for Authentic Historiography and the Meaning of παρακολουθέω,” *NovT* 38 (1996): 105-122.

¹¹ *περὶ* (“about, on”) is the technical preposition for an ancient literary work’s title and contents: e.g., Origen’s treatise *Περὶ ἀρχῶν* (De Principiis, “On the first things”).

¹² While the meaning of *πράγμα* is broad, extending from “deed” and “thing,” to “story” and “events,” and may in fact be the Greek equivalent of the more strongly Semitic *דְּבָרִים* (“things,” Acts 5.32), Bovon suggests that in Luke’s hands, the word may connote “salvation-historical” *events* in which “God collaborates with humans through his word and the mediation of his messengers” (*Luke*, 20). Such a connotation would likely have been lost on an uninitiated reader/audience unfamiliar with the story Luke is about to relate. The term likely also encompasses a *historical* connotation, which a non-initiated reader would grasp in all of its universal, unmediated broadness.

¹³ In the same way that Luke interrelates “chronological distance and personal proximity,” (Bovon, *Luke*, 20), Livy also makes the founding of Rome seem nearer to the reader by stating that a single nation is the bearer of the story (Preface, *Ab urbe condita*).

¹⁴ Bovon, *Luke*, 20.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Bovon: “If Luke had been somewhat satisfied with the work of his predecessors, he would surely not have gone to the trouble of composing a new work...The faults he finds can only be determined from the analysis of his own performance” (*Luke*, 19).

matters of order and composition (καθεξῆς) (1.3).¹⁶ Luke's metatextual consciousness about the very essence of his project ought not to be overlooked, however. With Luke's mediations of 'the stuff that happened', Luke has "pursued *everything* carefully" (παρηκολουθηκότι...πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς).¹⁷ This shamefully-self-promoting *recherché* confession (the author spared no expense!) is another indication of Luke's universal(izing), editorial scope, swinging wide his literary embrace of 'the whole world', everyone and everything.

For example, Luke's presentation in the infancy account (and elsewhere) of the shepherds and their 'countryside' environs,¹⁸ while consistent both with the Hebrew Bible's association of the Davidic king with pastoralism and Bethlehem and with the privileged place that shepherds occupy in various wondrous births and theophanies in Greek and Roman mythologies,¹⁹ glosses over their marginal, even dangerous, social status and the hardships and rigors of their vocation in the ancient world.²⁰ "Everything" (πᾶσιν; 1.3) it seems, even the seemingly insignificant details of the lives of everyday individuals (shepherds, fishermen, etc.) are subject to the evaluating scrutiny of the author/

¹⁶ See David P. Moessner, "The Appeal and Power of Poetics (Luke 1:1-4): Luke's Superior Credentials (παρηκολουθηκότι), Narrative Sequence (καθεξῆς), and Firmness of Understanding (ἡ ἀσφάλεια) for the Reader," in David P. Moessner, ed., *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 84-123.

¹⁷ See Moessner, "Eyewitnesses"; the meaning of παρακολουθέω in this passage has been fiercely debated, because one can understand this verb either literally or metaphorically: to "follow along," and "accompany"; or to "pursue" intellectually, to "investigate" a topic.

¹⁸ See Douglas E. Oakman, "The Countryside in Luke-Acts," in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 151-179. Oakman argues that despite Luke's numerous references to the 'countryside' and to persons of low status, his perspective is that of one of the educated sub-elites; Luke has an idealized view of the countryside.

¹⁹ See in general, P. de Robert, *Le berger d' Israël: essai sur le thème pastoral dans l'Ancien Testament* (CahT 57; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1968). Shepherds play important roles in various Greek and Roman myths: for example, the birth and rearing of Alope; the rescue of Oedipus from exposure by a shepherd; Paris' early life as a shepherd; the birth of Cyrus; and the rearing of Romulus and Remus. Both Endymion and Attis were handsome shepherds, and Pan is the god of the shepherds.

²⁰ As John S. Kloppenborg and Callie Callon, "The Parable of the Shepherd and the Transformation of Pastoral Discourse," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010), 218-260, esp. 247-256 ("Luke and the Shepherd of Pastoral Poetry"), suggest, Luke's romanticized picture of everyday shepherds and the pastoral life puts Luke near the idealizations found in the bucolic and pastoral poets, such as Virgil (*Ecl.* 10.6-21) and Horace (*Carm.* 3.29.21 - 28): "For Luke the shepherd has a charmed life: he belongs near enough to 'civilization' not to be a threat; he is a recipient of divine messages, infallible when it comes to recovering lost sheep, and a generous and willing host; and as an idealized rustic the shepherd serves as an image of the vigorous, simple and noble life that is a counterpoint to the complex and sometimes squalid nature of the town or city" (255-256).

editor. The everyday comes along for the ride, swept up into the host of characterizations that flesh out Luke's universalizing ideology.

As Elizabeth Clark writes, "Ideology naturalizes and universalizes its subjects, ignoring the 'historical sedimentation' that undergirds the present state of affairs. Ideology thus functions to obscure the notion that ideas and beliefs are particular and local, situated in specific times, places, and groups; to the contrary, it encourages the view that our society's values have no history, but are eternal and 'natural.'"²¹ With his universalizing strategies of argumentation, especially in his narrative characterizations, the author of Luke-Acts may not just describe the 'historical' or 'actual' attitudes and behaviors of marginal, everyday men and women, but also shape them, consciously or unconsciously, thereby communicating a particular 'natural'/'universal' perception of how 'all' women and men ought to present themselves. Whatever Luke is doing, he is doing it all over: even the most common or vulgar of details can be made to carry Luke's ideological gender baggage. Part of our task, then, is 'denaturalize' and 're-historicize' the conditions that produced such ideologies of gender, to 'push and jab' at Luke's characterizations to make them yield up their ideological content.

Luke's Joseph of Nazareth is certainly less heroic or idealized than Luke's shepherds or his characterizations of other everyday folk. However, as I demonstrate below, his characterization is a significant, if also mostly an implicit or invisible, element of Luke's masculinized 'social-theological

²¹ Clark's comments on 'ideology' concern the formation of the patristic ideology on women; see "Ideology, History, and the Construction of 'Woman' in Late Ancient Christianity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1994): 155-184 (160), where she unpack insights on the nature of 'ideology', citing and referring to such works as Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in idem, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-188 (171); Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. R. Miller (New York: Hill and Wang/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 40; John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Theory in the Era of Mass Communication* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 60; Gayatri Spivak, "The Politics of Interpretation," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *The Politics of Interpretation* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 347; Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London/New York: Verso, 1991), 59; and Michel Pêcheux, *Language, Semantics and Ideology*, trans. Harbans Nagpal (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982; French original, 1975), 115-16, 121. "Theorists of ideology," Clark adds, "challenge historians to (uncover the conditions that prompted the production of such interpretations that is, to) 'denaturalize' and 're-historicize' the conditions that produced ideologies of gender" ("Ideology," 178). In another essay, "Antifamilial Tendencies in Ancient Christianity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 356-380, Clark clarifies how this project informs her own work: "I do not imagine that I am uncovering the 'reality' of late ancient Christianity," she writes. "My task, as I conceive it, is to push and jab at these documents to make them yield up their ideological content, to make manifest the ways in which their authors seek to present their highly constructed arguments as 'natural' interpretations" (380).

logic'.²² Joseph is notably conspicuous in Luke's infancy account (Lk. 1.5-2.52) both by his near absence and by his ostensibly 'flat' characterization. Both have a part to play in the discourse of the infancy account, I suggest, intersecting with Luke's gender(ed) ideology in fascinating and previously overlooked modes. After dealing with the thorny issue of Jesus' 'two fathers' (3.2), this chapter will demonstrate the ways that Luke's characterization of Joseph as a flat, nearly absent, 'everyday' man intersects with central aspects of imperial-tinged structures of *domus*, *cultus*, and *forum* (3.3-3.5). Because I am concerned not only with how Luke constructs (everyday) masculinity in and through Joseph's characterization, I also tackle the question of how the (everyday) masculinities Luke constructs structure power relations in his audience(s) (3.6). In other words, I am concerned not just with description of the *makings* (the everyday ingredients) of Luke's Average Joe, but I also attempt to explain and deconstruct the various mechanisms behind and in front of the *making* (discursive construction of the everyday) of Luke's Average Joe.

3.2 Luke's Average Joe: A Curiously 'Absent Father'

The question I address in this section is why, for most of Luke's bucolic infancy account, the father of Jesus "barely appears in the narrative,"²³ and how the answer to this question might be related overall to Luke's discourse with its ostensibly masculine focus and 'imperial-esque' structuring of power relations.

²² I find Gabrielle Spiegel's notion of 'the social logic of the text'—a logic that attends to both the text's 'site of articulation and its discursive character as articulated 'logos'—to be a stimulating mental tool for the study of early Joseph narratives, and I also find provocative her encouragement to ferret out the 'political unconscious' of the text; see Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 59–86, and discussed at length and appropriated (as 'social-theological logic') by Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2004): 162-165, 178-181.

²³ Janice Capel Anderson, "Mary's Difference: Gender and Patriarchy in the Birth Narratives," *The Journal of Religion* 67, no 2 (1987): 183-202 (198).

Extending Luke's well-known 'step-parallelism' literary device²⁴ to a *syncretis* of Joseph and Zechariah, also 'apt foils for one another' as the two fathers in the infancy accounts,²⁵ offers some indication of Luke's ostensibly deliberate elision of the Joseph character. In contrast to the decidedly active and fully narrated involvement of Zechariah in John's birth rituals (1.60-63), Joseph is uninvolved in the domestic birth rituals of Jesus—swaddling, circumcising, naming (2.6-7a, 21)²⁶—even when he is presumably present (2.16). Also unlike Zechariah (cf. 1.23), Luke's Joseph generally keeps away from his home and his virgin, or indeed any other woman—Joseph is not present with Mary at the annunciation (1.26-38), nor does he accompany her or call on her when she is away from Nazareth for three months (1.56).²⁷ Distance between Joseph and the implied reader is not reduced by sympathetic inside views (as we have, for example with Mary: 1.29; 2.19; 2.51) or explicit, evaluative judgments. None of the other characters interact with Joseph in ways that invariably suggest either disapprobation (as we have with Zechariah in 1.18-20) or admiration, possessing God's favor (as we have, again, with Mary and the angel in 1.28, 30 and Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit in 1.42-45). While Luke sings the praise of the *parents* of John ('Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord' [1.6]), only the *mother* of Jesus finds "favor with God" (1.30), is a "servant of

²⁴ See, e.g., Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (rev. edn; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 248–53; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 335-36; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 84.

²⁵ Cf. Anderson "Mary's Difference," 191-92, who explores contrasts produced by Luke's step-parallel juxtaposition of the figures of *Mary* and Zechariah.

²⁶ Note the passive verbal constructions of Luke 2.21; cf. Bovon, *Luke*, 86: "As in 2:6–7a and 1:26–38, Joseph fades into the background in v. 21."

²⁷ As Andrew Lincoln, "Luke and Jesus' Conception: A Case of Double Paternity?," *JBL* 132, no. 3 (2013): 639–658 suggests, "One function of 1.39–56, with its mention of Mary's speedy departure from Nazareth, her three-month stay with Elizabeth in the Judean hill country, and then her return to her own house seems to be to underline her absence and independence from Joseph during much of the period before she gives birth and thus the virginal nature of the conception" (645); cf. Mark Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative Christology in Luke 1–2* (JSNTSup 88; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 96. This (non-)feature of Joseph's characterization also accords with the conventional binary logic of common patterns of masculinity in antiquity: to be a man is to avoid unnecessary identification or association with women and women's spaces. See discussion of such binary tropes, the "gender-divided world of antiquity," in Jerome H. Neyrey, "Jesus, Gender, and the Gospel of Matthew," in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 43-66, esp. 44-53 and sources cited therein.

the Lord” (1.38), and is “blessed among women” (1.42). Luke’s infancy account is decidedly *not* Joseph’s tale.

While most commentators focus on the question, ‘why Mary?’, here I am concerned with precisely the obverse, ‘why not Joseph?’²⁸ With rhetorical skill comparable to other contemporaneous biographers,²⁹ Luke ostensibly structures his Gospel around a standard set of progymnastic topics.³⁰ Yet, while most of Luke’s treatment of individual topics conforms closely to progymnastic instruction,³¹ Luke’s treatment of the topic of Jesus’ origins is notably more complex. Aside from a few brief cues, Jesus’ father, Joseph, is elided from Lukan narratives of the birth of Jesus. Tellingly perhaps, God’s (Holy) Spirit has more *to do* in Luke’s narrative.³² Luke’s conspicuous ‘neglect’ of Jesus’ father in tales describing the circumstances of his *origins* is worth a closer look. In what follows I propose that Joseph’s palpable distance and downplaying is a corollary to Luke’s ‘social-theological

²⁸ Jörg Frey has recently explored a similar question with respect to the entire *lack* of infancy narration in the Gospels of Mark and John; see “How could Mark and John Do without Infancy Stories?,” in Claire Clivaz, et al., eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 189-215.

²⁹ In the wake of Richard Burridge’s *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), the thesis that the Gospels are ancient Mediterranean *bioi* has arguably become the majority view in NT scholarship; see also Charles Talbert’s *What Is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); cf. idem, “Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propoganda in Mediterranean Antiquity,” *ANRW* 16.2:1619-51; idem, “Once Again: Gospel Genre,” *Semeia* 43 (1988): 53-73. Michael W. Martin, “Progymnastic Topic Lists: A Compositional Template for Luke and Other Bioi?,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 18-41, finds the author’s rhetorical skill on-par with two Greco-Roman authors (Plutarch and Philostratus) and two Jewish authors (Philo and Josephus).

³⁰ On the question of whether encomiastic topic lists like those described by Quintillian, Theon, and Ps. Hermogenes have shaped the topical content of Luke’s Gospel and other ‘encomium biographies’, see Mikeal C. Parsons, “Luke and the *Progymnasmata*: A Preliminary Investigation into the Preliminary Exercises,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 43-63; Philip L. Shuler, “The Synoptic Gospels and the Problem of Genre” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1975), 259-98; revised for publication as *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); idem, “The Genre(s) of the Gospels,” in D. L. Dungan, ed., *The Interrelations of the Gospels* (Leuven: Leuven University, 1990), 459-83 (474-79). A cursory comparison of the *Progymnasmata* reveals there is general agreement about the kinds of topics to be considered, but a divergence of opinion regarding the method of their arrangement. While Theon (1st-2nd cent. CE) attests an arrangement according to the three traditional goods—external goods (which are arranged sequentially from birth to death), bodily goods, and goods of the mind (or virtues)—, by contrast, Ps. Hermogenes (2nd cent. CE), Aphthonius (4th cent. CE), and Nicolaus (5th cent. CE) attest a sequential arrangement, wherein topics are dealt with in an order that follows the contours of a life chronologically, from origins to death and beyond. See the summary of progymnastic topics lists by Martin, “Progymnastic Topic Lists,” 21-22; and discussion of respective dates by George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

³¹ Prooemion (1.1-4), origins (1.26-38; 3.23-38), marvelous occurrences at birth (2.1-39; 3.21-22), nurture and training (2.41-52; 4.1-13), pursuits and deeds (4.14-22.46), manner of death (22.47-23.46), and events after death (23.47-24.53). Cf. Shuler, “The Synoptic Gospels,” 259-98; idem, “The Genre(s) of the Gospels,” 474-79.

³² Compare the activity of Luke’s *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* (Luke 1.15, 35, 41, 67; 2.25, 26, 27) to Joseph’s ‘activities’ (1.27; 2.4).

logic', his overall 'playing up' of Jesus' highly masculinized, imperialesque *divine* sonship: Luke's Joseph had to be obscured to make room for Jesus' *other* 'Father' (2.40).

As Andrew Lincoln suggests, Luke(-Acts) 'accommodates' (at least) *two* different perspectives concerning Jesus' conception/paternity.³³ Luke's articulation of early Christian preaching in Acts appropriates the 'Jewish Christian' credo and the position of Paul that the Davidic line of physical descent continued down to Jesus from the 'fruit of the loins' (*καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος*, Acts 2.30)³⁴ and the 'seed' (*σπέρματος*: Acts 13.23, 32-37; Rom 1.3, 4) of his father Joseph,³⁵ and elsewhere Luke straightforwardly refers to Joseph as Jesus' 'natural' parent or father (Luke 2.27, 33, 41, 43, 48; 4.22). Luke also preserves a 'divinely-orchestrated' conception tradition, most notably in the annunciation scene (1.26-38) which signals the deity's involvement in the generation of Mary's child (1.35).

Lincoln helpfully suggests that Luke's (re-)presentations of Jesus' 'natural' (by Joseph) and 'miraculous' (divinely-orchestrated) conception traditions *are not* 'incompatible', in accordance with

³³ See Lincoln, "Luke and Jesus' Conception"; and idem, *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 99-124. A third tradition concerning Jesus' 'illegitimacy' is also conceivably behind Luke's 'ambiguous' account, as Jane Schaberg has suggested; see *The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives* (exp. 20th anniversary ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield-Phoenix Press, 2006), 78-129. See also Geoffrey Parrinder, *Son of Joseph: The Parentage of Jesus* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 31, 35, who argues that later references to Joseph as Jesus' father are evidence against the interpretation of the annunciation in terms of a supernatural conception; and Edwin D. Freed, *The Stories of Jesus' Birth: A Critical Introduction* (Biblical Seminar 74; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 11, 65, who holds that Luke believed that Joseph was Jesus' father and that "Fitzmyer's original view is still the correct one" (65); cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament," *TS* 34 (1973): 566-72.

³⁴ Cf. LXX Ps 131.11. The loins are, of course, the place of the reproductive organs, the center of the male's procreative powers, and their fruit, the children produced, are in this case the biological descendants of David.

³⁵ Cf. 2 Kgdms 7.12. The position that Luke adopts, then, ostensibly reinscribes the ancient androcentric assumption that males discharge the determinative function in procreation, that male "seed" is the *ἀρχὴ δραστική*, the "active principle," "efficient origin," or "principal force or cause"; see Galen, *On Semen*, ed., trans., and comm. Phillip de Lacy (Berlin: Akademie, 1992) 1.7.5; cf. idem, *On the Natural Faculties* 2.3, ed. Arthur J. Brock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). Aristotle assigns semen solely to men, going against what was apparently the majority opinion, among philosophers and scientists as well as (probably) popular opinion, that both men and women produce semen; see Aristotle, *Historia animalium* 9.7.581b29-582a5; *History of Animals*, vol. III, Books 7-10, ed., trans. D. M. Balme (LCL 439; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). See also Galen's discussion, and refutations, of Aristotle's 'single seed' view, *On Semen* 1.3-4, 1.5.9, 1.9.15, 2.1, 2.4.5, and discussion in Dale Martin, "Contradictions of Masculinity: Ascetic Inseminators and Menstruating Men in Greco-Roman Culture," in Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee, eds., *Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity through Early Modern Europe* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2001), 81-108.

the literary conventions of both biblical/post-biblical texts³⁶ and Greco-Roman biographies³⁷ which also reference ‘ordinary’ and ‘miraculous’ conceptions of key (male) figures side by side. However, wishing to avoid the same marginalizing reinterpretation of Luke as occurred in its later reception,³⁸ Lincoln does not discuss precisely *how*, in Luke’s narrative discourse, the disparate conception/paternity traditions *are* compatible. That is, Lincoln downplays Luke’s ostensibly deliberate, discursive arrangement and prioritizing of such ‘juxtaposed’, ‘coexisting’ traditions. Lincoln asserts rather that Luke ‘expects’ his readers to ‘accommodate’ Jesus’ disparate conception/paternity traditions in a manner similar to how Lincoln would have his own contemporary audience accommodate them: “to be quite comfortable holding both notions,” or “to keep the two perspectives in dialogue.”³⁹ But is it the case that Luke simply “leave[s] readers to sort out the connection or to decide for themselves which to accept what about the other cases”?⁴⁰ What else might the ‘dialogue’ of Jesus’ disparate conception/paternity traditions in Luke consist of? Is there evidence that Luke *also* signals along the way how his readers ought to negotiate that ‘dialogue’?⁴¹ In passages where the two perspectives are in dialogue, Luke seems as intent upon delineating their relationship as he is in showing that they ‘coexist’—there are a number of points in Luke’s narrative where the two conception/‘dual paternity’ traditions do more than sit amicably ‘side by side’.

³⁶ See, e.g., Gen 4.1; 30.1, 2, 22, 23; Judges 13; Isa 7.14; 44.2, 24; 49.1-6; Jer 1.5; Job 31.15; 10.8–12; Ps 139.16; Philo, *Cher.* 40-50; *Leg.* 2.47; 3.218-19; *Det.* 59-60, 124; Gwynn Kessler, *Conceiving Israel: The Fetus in Rabbinic Narratives* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

³⁷ See, e.g., Plutarch’s accounts of the ‘double’ origins of Romulus (*Rom.* 2-4), Theseus (*Thes.* 2, 3, 36) and Alexander (*Alex.* 2-3); Suetonius’s accounts of the ‘double’ origins of Augustus (*Aug.* 2, 4, 94); Dio Cassius’s accounts of Augustus (*Hist. Rom.* 45.1); Diogenes Laertius’s accounts of Plato (*Vit. Plat.* 1, 3); and Philostratus’s accounts of Apollonius of Tyana (*Vit. Apoll.* 1.4, 6).

³⁸ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 658.

³⁹ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 656, 658, respectively.

⁴⁰ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 654-55.

⁴¹ For example, why *did* Luke ‘choose’ the divinely-orchestrated conception tradition ‘to begin’ his account of Jesus’ origins? Lincoln leaves unanswered the question that he proposes initially in part II—that, (1) “If Luke knows and incorporates into his two volumes the tradition that Jesus was David’s seed through his father, Joseph, but has also chosen to begin his account of Jesus’ life with a virginal conception, how might this be explained?” (647). This is not quite the same question Lincoln ends up proficiently answering in part III: namely, (2) “Is there an explanation that does justice to this juxtaposition within the documents Luke finally produced and that might suggest why the coexistence of the two perspectives might not have been perceived as an uncomfortable one?” (651). While the second question is concerned with situating Luke’s appropriation of Jesus’ dual paternity within the realms of normative, ancient literary conventions, the first question, one left unexplored by Lincoln, concerns Luke’s deliberately discursive arrangement and prioritizing of Jesus’ conception traditions.

First, as Lincoln himself suggests, “double paternity can be seen even within the annunciation story.”⁴² Luke begins his account of Jesus’ origins by giving narrative shape to the tradition of Jesus’ ‘natural’ conception, as is signaled both in the introduction to the scene, where Joseph’s Davidic ancestry is foregrounded (1.27), and in the first part of Gabriel’s two-fold pronouncement (1.32-33), where Jesus is described as an heir of the Davidic royals who themselves were begotten-adopted “sons of the Most High” (υἱὸς ὑψίστου). This title, evoking conventional father-son imagery of “every religiously colored ideology of rulership”⁴³ from the ancient Near East, belongs to the biblical tradition of the Davidic Messiah-king, where the same imagery is employed to describe the *adoptive* divine provision extended to David’s progeny.⁴⁴

Alongside this citation of Jesus’ “human genealogy”⁴⁵ in the Annunciation scene, which substantiates Jesus’ *dynastic divine heritage*, Luke also represents the deity as directly orchestrating the proximate circumstances of Jesus’ begetting, as signaled in the second part of Gabriel’s two-fold pronouncement: “*Holy spirit* (πνεῦμα ἅγιον) will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore *the child being generated* (τὸ γεννώμενον)⁴⁶ will be called holy, *Son of God* (θεοῦ υἱός)”(1.35). God’s “holy spirit” in (post-)biblical tradition was understood to be the generator

⁴² Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 656.

⁴³ Bovon, *Luke*, 51; cf. Bovon’s discussion of Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels to Luke’s use υἱὸς ὑψίστου in idem, “Excursus: The Virgin Birth and the History of Religions,” in *Luke*, 43-47.

⁴⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 67. See 2 Sam 7, esp. v. 14; Pss. 2.7; 88.26; 89.19-37; *4QFlor.* 1.10. Cf. use of the phrase ‘son(s) of the Most High’ in Est. 16.16 LXX; Ps. 82.6 (81.6); Dn. 3.93 LXX (παῖδες); Sir. 4.10; and the singular form ‘son of the Most High’ in *4Q 243 (4Q ps Dan Aa)* 2.1.

⁴⁵ Bovon, *Luke*, 51: “Here Jesus is described in terms of his human genealogy: David is his ‘ancestor.’”

⁴⁶ LSJ 344: “causal of γίγνομαι (cf. γείνομαι), mostly of the father, *beget*.” Especially because of its juxtaposition to θεοῦ υἱός (“son of God”), then, Luke’s likely employs τὸ γεννώμενον as another euphemism, a ‘divine passive’ verbal construction connoting the (more) common masculinized usage, “the begotten child,” rather than “the child to be born.” As Bovon himself suggests: “Τὸ γεννώμενον (“the child to be born,” 1.35) is the child developing in the mother’s womb, not the child at birth, because, in contrast to Matt 1.20 (τὸ γεννηθέν), the participle is in the present tense” (*Luke*, 52); see also Antonio Vicent, “La presunta sustantivación τὸ γεννώμενον en Lc 1.35b,” *EstBib* 33 (1974): 265–73.

of human life,⁴⁷ and other ancient texts also attribute human conceptions to the spirit of a god.⁴⁸ While in Luke, the deity's involvement in Mary's pregnancy is *generative* (γεννώω)—thereby invoking one of the standard, everyday indices of ancient masculinity⁴⁹—it may be read with a number of different connotations, including: the deity's power as “the ultimate source of all human life and generation”;⁵⁰ the deity's equipping of certain folk for exceptional destinies;⁵¹ an interpenetration of divine and human begetting;⁵² or, in the traditional, confessional sense, a miraculous, virginal conception.⁵³ As many commentators note, the deity's involvement does not necessarily imply

⁴⁷ See Zion Shyiren Lin, *Divine Seeding: Reinterpreting Luke 1:35 in Light of Ancient Procreation Theories and Christological Developments* (PhD diss: Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008), 146-73; cf. God's role in generating human life in biblical passages such as Gen 6.3; Job 27.3, 33.4; Ps 33.6, 15; Isa 32.15; Ezek 37.9-10, 14; Judg 16.14; *Jub.* 5.8; Philo, *Op. Mund.* 29-30; cf. Jn 3.5-6, 6.63; 2 Cor 3.6; Rev 11.11.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Aeschylus, *Supp.* 1.17-18, 45-48, 315; Plutarch, *Num.* 4.4. Many commentators, like Raymond Brown, regard these stories as implying sexual intercourse, a type of *hieros gamos*, and therefore as fundamentally different from Gospel accounts of Jesus' divine origins; as noted by Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 192 n. 204, see Raymond Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), 61-63; idem, *Birth*, 522-23; and idem, *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 93, 121, 291. Cf. G. H. Box, “The Gospel Narratives of the Nativity and the Alleged Influence of Heathen Ideas,” *ZNW* 6 (1905): 80-101; idem, *The Virgin Birth of Jesus* (London: Pitman, 1916); Thomas David Boslooper, *The Virgin Birth* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 135-86; and Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 130-31. However, based on ancient procreation theories which take the spirit (πνεῦμα) as a procreative substance, Lin argues that is more appropriate to characterize such accounts as “non-sexual impregnation or seeding...Interpreters who label this as a sexual impregnation often fail to realize that spirit or breath was seen by the ancients as a kind of substance or generative matter that was analogous or substitutive to a germinal seed” (*Divine Seeding*, 168).

⁴⁹ See Martin, “Contradictions of Masculinity,” 83-96; cf. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, “Matthew and Masculinity,” in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 67-92, who discuss the standard Greco-Roman assumption that males discharge the determinative function in procreation: “to be male was to be capable of generation” (72).

⁵⁰ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 68. In other words, God ‘acts’ through normal human conception, that “danger-fraught, divinely supervised venture”; Robert Alter, “How Convention Helps Us Read: The Case of the Bible's Annunciation Type-Scene,” *Prooftexts* (1983): 115-130 (121) cf. Philo, *De Dec.* 22.107, 23.120; *b. Qidd.* 30b; *b. Nid.* 31a; *Gen. Rab.* 809; *b. Sot.* 17a.

⁵¹ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 68: “God sometimes communicates a spiritual/psychosocial dimension of life to humans, over and above ordinary human existence,” which has “nothing to do with normal human conception/begetting”; in this sense, Israel is ‘begotten’ by God (Deut 32.18; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.50.279) and other individuals are ‘elected’ and given unique obligations/promises (Ps 2.7, 110.3; Jer 1.5; Isa 49.1, 5; 1QapGen 5.27; 1QSa 2.11-12); cf. the frequent NT reference to Jesus-followers being ‘begotten’ by the Spirit or by God (Gal 4.29; John 3.3-8; John 1.12-13; 1 John 2.29; 3.9; 4.7; 5.1-4, 18).

⁵² See, e.g. H. Gese, “*Natus ex virgine*,” in Gerhard von Rad and Hans Walter Wolff, eds., *Probleme biblischer Theologie* (München: Kaiser, 1971), 73-89, who speaks of a peculiar interpenetration (*Ineinander*) of divine and human fatherhood for the enthroned Davidic king (80); cf. Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 68: “Sexual and divine begetting are integrated...a creative act of God that does not replace human paternity.”

⁵³ Brown, *Birth*, 307: “It is meant...to tell the reader how the child was conceived.”

sexual congress,⁵⁴ but neither does it mutually exclude the possibility of a ‘natural’, biological conception of the child.⁵⁵ That has to be read from the ‘narrative logic’ of the Annunciation scene (if read at all), from Mary’s question, and the juxtaposition of the motifs of Mary’s virginity, God’s fatherhood and the angel’s promise.⁵⁶ The patent point of the second part of Gabriel’s two-fold pronouncement (1.35), behind the opacity of specific theological details, is that the conception of Mary’s child is *divinely orchestrated*: the deity is represented as being responsible in *some* (ultimate, equipping, interpenetrating, or parthenogenetically miraculous) way for Mary’s impregnation and for the life of this child. Hence, according to Luke, Jesus also is (will be called) θεοῦ υἱός (“Son of God,” 1.35).

Following Lincoln’s suggestion that the traditions of Jesus’ ‘natural’ and ‘divinely orchestrated’ conception are “by no means in tension or incompatible”⁵⁷ in the Annunciation scene, against those scholars who have attempted to resolve their apparent discrepancy using either a ‘Joseph as legal-father’ solution⁵⁸ or tradition-historical analyses,⁵⁹ we see here that Luke adduces side-by-side two different, though compatible and mutually legitimating, sources of Jesus’ divine sonship. In the same scene, Luke both foregrounds Jesus’ proximate *divine begetting* (1.35), and also depicts Jesus’ *dynastic divine heritage* passed on by Joseph (1.27, 32). For Luke, the mixed images of Jesus’ natural and miraculous conception traditions are ‘not incompatible’ because they *both* substantiate Jesus’ divine sonship and, as I discuss in more detail below, his ‘imperial’ authorization.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit in the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 8, 18; C. F. D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 55; and Brown, *Birth*, 137.

⁵⁵ The authors of *Mary in the NT* grant that there is no biblical precedent for the Gospel writers to conclude that since Jesus was God’s son, he had no human father (93).

⁵⁶ See David T. Landry, “Narrative Logic in the Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26–38),” *JBL* 114 (1995): 65–79.

⁵⁷ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 656.

⁵⁸ See John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 217; Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology* (JSNTSup 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 126–29; Marshall, *Luke*, 157; and Bovon, *Luke*, 136.

⁵⁹ See Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 294–295; Vincent Taylor, *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1920), 22–47; Alfred Robert Clare Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1958), 20–27; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 310–11, 436, 443; Brown, *Birth*, 240–41, 480, 689–90 n. 285.

Luke's discursive aim to delineate the relationship between disparate traditions of Jesus' origins is also given narrative shape in the temple anecdote (2.41-52) which closes the infancy narrative. This 'primitive', paradigmatic tale,⁶⁰ demonstrating Jesus' childhood wisdom and understanding (2.40),⁶¹ "qualities that will make him extraordinary in later life,"⁶² places Jesus alongside other prominent male cultural authority figures of the time⁶³ and links Luke's imperialistic pretensions with his distinctive interest in the Temple.⁶⁴ Here, as elsewhere, Luke gives us an altogether silent Joseph—Mary does the talking for the both of them: "Child, why have you treated

⁶⁰ It is likely that Luke 2.41–52 originally circulated as a story about the boyhood of Jesus and formed part of a wider body of oral tradition, some of which later came to be represented in the Infancy Gospels. The anecdote is further developed, though form-critically and substantively comparable to Luke's version, in the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (6, 14); cf. *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* 31.1–2; 38.1; *Arabic Infancy Gospel* 48–49; *Armenian Infancy Gospel* 20.1–7. See Günther Schmah, "Lk 2, 41–52 und die Kindheitserzählung des Thomas 19, 1–5: Ein Vergleich," *BibLeb* 15 (1974) 249–58.

⁶¹ René Laurentin, *Structure et théologie de Luc I-II*, (Paris, Gabalda, 1957), 135–141; Felix Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1970), 61.

⁶² Green, *Luke*, 154; see also Charles H. Talbert, "Prophecies of Future Greatness: Contributions of Greco-Roman Biographies to an Understanding of Luke 1:5–4:1," in idem, *Reading Luke-Acts in Its Mediterranean Milieu* (NovTSup 107; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 65–77.

⁶³ The attribution of extraordinary deeds or knowledge to important men at or around the age of 12, often in contexts whereby others of superior age and social position are left astonished, is a 'standard motif' in contemporary Greco-Roman biography and historiography; see Henk J. de Jonge, "Sonship, Wisdom, Infancy: Luke II.41–51a," *NTS* 24 (1977): 317–354 (340); cf. Nils Krückemeier, "Der zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel (Lk 2.40–52) und die biografische Literatur der hellenistischen Antike," *NTS* 50 (2004): 307–319. Bradley S. Billings, "At the Age of 12': The Boy Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52), The Emperor Augustus, and the Social Setting of the Third Gospel," *JTS* 60 (2009): 70–89, discusses comparable traditions surrounding the still revered figure of Caesar Augustus, extraordinary childhood occurrences described by Suetonius (*Aug.* 94), including delivering the funeral oration for his grandmother Julia at the age of 12 (*Aug.* 8). Cf. comparable boyhood deeds of Apollonius (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7); Alexander (Plutarch, *Alex.* 5); Cicero (Plutarch, *Cic.* 2.2); Cyrus (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.3.1); Solon (Plutarch, *Sol.* 2); Themistocles (Plutarch, *Them.* 2.1); and Theseus (Plutarch, *Thes.* 6.4).

The literature of Hellenistic Judaism, too, seems to have adopted the convention and applied it to the heroes of the Jewish faith: e.g. Moses is attributed with superior understanding as a child (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.230; Philo, *Vit. Mosis* 1.21); Samuel is said to have commenced prophesying at age 12 (Josephus, *Ant.* 5.348). Josephus says of himself that at age 14 he had acquired a knowledge of the law superior to that of the high priests and other 'principal men of the city' (*Vita* 9); cf. *Jub.* 11.18–24 (of Abraham) and *Sus.* 45–50 (of Daniel).

⁶⁴ Luke uses the general term for temple (τὸ ἱερόν) more than the other three Gospels combined, uses a greater variety of terms for the Jerusalem Temple than any of the other Gospels, and transpositions the settings of key episodes to the Temple (e.g., Luke transpositions the eschatological discourse from the Mount of Olives [Mark 13; cf. Matt 24] to the temple in Luke 21). While most of the debate over Luke's distinctive Temple 'interest' has focused on Luke's relationship to Judaism—see, e.g., Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 131–63; J. Bradley Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988), 166–205. Peter M. Head, "The Temple in Luke's Gospel," in T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole, eds., *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 101–119—Colleen Conway suggests that Luke's Temple 'interest' is best understood in terms of a more general association with imperial power (*Behold the Man*, 135–141). Cf. Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 45; Boston: Brill, 1999), who suggests that Luke deployed the Jerusalem Temple as a countercultural response to imperial cult practice.

us like this? Look, *your father* (ὁ πατήρ σου) and I have been searching for you in great anxiety” (2.48). The focus on Mary certainly coheres with Luke’s overall “Marianic perspective,”⁶⁵ but the silence of Joseph is telling.⁶⁶ In what should have been an ideal ‘teachable moment’, Joseph is not portrayed as rebuking or disciplining his son: Joseph does not fulfill his paternal duties.⁶⁷ Joseph seemingly has nothing to do with the child ‘growing’, ‘becoming strong’, or gaining ‘wisdom’ (2.40): Jesus ‘learns’ the important lesson of filial “subordination” (2.51: “he was obedient to them,” ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος αὐτοῖς) without any apparent intervention from his father, Joseph.

Also telling is Luke’s play on the term πατήρ and shift in personal pronoun from Mary’s rebuke, ὁ πατήρ σου (*your father*, 2.48), to Jesus’ retort, τοῦ πατρός μου (...of *my father*, 2.49). Luke’s adolescent Jesus knows a higher-ranking filial demand than the one his parents are concerned with: “I must (δεῖ εἶναί με)⁶⁸ be ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου?” (2.49), that is, “in my Father’s domain,” or “about my Father’s business.”⁶⁹ Here Jesus’ ‘dual paternity’ traditions are quite literally ‘in dialogue’. As Lincoln suggests, there is no indication that Jesus’ commensurate ‘filial’ obedience to his heavenly Father precludes his having a physical, earthly father; however, Luke also does not “leave readers...to

⁶⁵ Bovon’s suggestion that “The mother, not the father, speaks, because of the Marianic perspective of the Lukan birth narrative” (*Luke*, 113), dismisses the question of Joseph’s silence, and Bovon’s further suggestion that “women, above all, can identify with Mary’s question” (*Luke*, 113), seems unnecessarily gender *uncritical*. Cf. “Mary in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Mary in the New Testament*, 105-177.

⁶⁶ Marshall notes that “It may be significant that it is Mary and not Joseph who asks the question” (*Luke*, 128), but refrains from suggesting what that ‘significance’ might entail. Cf. Bovon’s anachronistic suggestion here, that “As often in generational conflicts, the parents do not understand their children at the close of the argument, and, as often in such cases, the father remains silent” (113), downplays the significance of Joseph’s silence.

⁶⁷ Cf. the portrayal of Joseph as another sort of failed father/teacher in *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 2.1-5.1; as cited and discussed by Chris Frilingos, “No Child Left Behind: Knowledge and Violence in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 27-54. On moral instruction in ancient Jewish households, see O. Larry Yarbrough, “Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity,” in Shaye J. D. Cohen, ed., *The Jewish Family in Antiquity*, Brown Judaic Studies 289 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 39-59, esp. 43-44 on Tob 4. See also Margaret Williams, “The Jewish Family in Judaea from Pompey to Hadrian—the Limits of Romanization,” in *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 159-82, esp. 170-75 on education and marriage.

⁶⁸ The concept of ‘necessity’ is a distinctive Lukan formulation (18x; Acts, 22x; Matt 8x; Mark 6x), connoting a sense of divine compulsion, and often depicted as “obedience to a scriptural command or prophecy, or the conformity of events to God’s will” (Marshall, *Luke*, 129); cf. W. Grundmann, *TDNT* II.21-25.

⁶⁹ On the various meanings of the phrase ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με, see René Laurentin, *Jésus au Temple, Mystère de Paques et foi de Marie, en Luc 2, 48-50* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1966), 68-72; idem, *The Truth of Christmas Beyond the Myths: The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ* (Petersham: St. Bede’s Publications, 1986), 212-13. Cf. the LXX: Job 18.19; Esth 7.9.

decide for themselves” how to negotiate that ‘dialogue’.⁷⁰ Rather, and plausibly based on the anecdote’s form-critical *Sitz-im-Leben* of catechetical instruction,⁷¹ Luke prioritizes Jesus’ filial obligations in a way that directs his readers as to how they ought to ‘sort out’ the relationship between the disparate paternity traditions.⁷² The primacy of one is stressed over against the other: Luke marks a clear contrast between Jesus’ silently subdued, earthly father, who requires nothing of his son, and his other Father, who requires (and facilitates the necessity for) Jesus to be ‘about his business’ or ‘in his domain’.⁷³ While not necessarily responding to “Jewish aspersions about Jesus’ miserable origins,”⁷⁴ Luke’s appropriation of the anecdote and placement of it at the conclusion to his entire infancy narrative, *does* emphasize Luke’s concern to substantiate another source of Jesus’ divine legitimation, to lay claim to an additional way of expressing the complex, challenging and imperially charged notion of Jesus’ identity and status as “son of God”: his *divine filial allegiance*.⁷⁵

The editorial comment that introduces Luke’s full elaboration of Jesus’ human genealogy (Luke 3.23-28), “[Jesus] was the son, ὡς ἐνομιζέτο, of Joseph” (3.23b), also signals Luke’s discursive aim to delineate the relationship between disparate traditions of Jesus’ origins. The two interrelated

⁷⁰ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 641, 655. While Lincoln suggests that “the play on the term *πατήρ* indicates that Jesus has an allegiance that cuts across family ties” (641), he does not discuss how the narrative discourse in this anecdote effects the ‘dialogue’ between the disparate paternity traditions preserved by Luke.

⁷¹ So Laurentin, *Jésus au Temple*, 84, 143, 158-59.

⁷² Luke’s handling of this episode ostensibly heralds the prominence of other anti-family/*πατήρ* Gospel traditions, preserved from Mark and/or Q, which, among other things, renounce/relativize the authority of and obligations to male blood progenitors; see Carolyn Osiek, “Jesus and Cultural Values: Family Life as an Example,” *Hervormde Theologische Studies* 53 (1997): 800-811; A. D. Jacobson, “Jesus against the Family: The Dissolution of Family Ties in the Gospel Tradition,” in J. M. Asgeirsson, et al., *From Quest to Q: J. M. Robinson FS* (Leuven: Leuven University, 2000), 189-218. For the relevant Triple Tradition references, see chapter 1, n. 7.

⁷³ Cf. Bastiaan Martinus Franciscus Van Iersel, “The Finding of Jesus in the Temple: Some Observations on the Original Form of Luke 2, 41–51a,” *NovT* 4 (1960) 161–73: “Of one thing, however, we may be sure, viz. that the real issue of the story is the opposition between Jesus’ putative father (Luke iii 23) and his real Father, as is clear from the formal opposition in vv. 48-49, where the boy Jesus dissociates himself clearly from Joseph and declares that he must be in ‘the affairs’ or ‘the house’ of his real Father” (173).

⁷⁴ Bovon’s suggestion, that “The function of the anecdote is...to defuse the criticism of Jesus’ human origin through his relationship to the heavenly Father...an apologetic response of the Christians to Jewish aspersions about Jesus’ miserable origins” (*Luke*, 110), seems overstated.

⁷⁵ Marshall suggests that “[t]he effect of the saying [2.49] is to show that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, thus confirming 1:32, 35” (*Luke*, 129). As discussed above, Luke makes *multiple*, mutually legitimating, claims regarding Jesus’ divine sonship in the annunciation episode (1.32, 35). My suggestion is that here, in the temple anecdote, Luke offers a *different*, though also mutually legitimating, source of Jesus’ divine sonship: *divine filial allegiance*. This is, as Fitzmyer asserts, a ‘retrospective’ Christology (*Luke*, 437).

meanings of the verb employed here, νομίζω,⁷⁶ suggest that the genealogy that Luke has appropriated is rooted in collective consciousness, and further that such commonly held genealogical beliefs are set apart in some way from Luke’s earlier depictions of Jesus’ origins (in chapters 1 and 2). While Bovon offers two different interpretations of the phrase—“(1) ‘He *was considered to be* Joseph’s biological son’ (but I, Luke, know this is not true); (2) ‘He *was rightfully declared to be* Joseph’s son’ (and I, Luke, agree with this)” —he fittingly rejects the first interpretation because, otherwise, “the genealogy would tend to lose its significance.”⁷⁷ Indeed, as Lincoln suggests, the context does not require “passing a negative judgment on the tradition of Joseph as Jesus’ father.”⁷⁸ However, Bovon’s second interpretation overstates any of the basic meanings of νομίζω and is colored by his Joseph-as-adoptive/legal-father solution to the apparent discrepancy between Jesus’ different conception traditions.⁷⁹ Lincoln’s suggestion, too, that the “presence” of the clause, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, “supports the reading of Luke 1 in terms of a virginal conception,” is also overstated.⁸⁰ More self-referential, editorial admission than christological assertion, Luke’s comment in 3.23b, I suggest, might be glossed more suitably (following Bovon’s pattern) as: “[Jesus] was, *according to the customary view*, son of Joseph (even though I, Luke, have until now recounted something more unconventional).” In light of its close juxtaposition with the baptism account (Luke 3.21-22), where Jesus’ *adoptive/elected*

⁷⁶ LSJ 1179: the verb νομίζω can mean “according to custom, to be customary, in common use,” or “to think, believe, hold, consider, suppose,” or, as the case may be here with Luke’s usage, both meanings at the same time, because “that which is perceived in common with others is reflected in common tradition and practice” (BDAG 675).

⁷⁷ Bovon, *Luke*, 136, emphasis added. See also Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973), who suggests that if the supposition was erroneous, “why did Luke, and the tradition responsible for the genealogical table before him, waste their time compiling a sequence of irrelevant ancestors?” (215).

⁷⁸ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 647.

⁷⁹ Bovon, *Luke*, 136-137: Luke “still believes that the genealogy, which places Jesus among the descendants of David through Joseph, is correct; it is so as a consequence of chaps. 1–2, on the basis of an adoption, which, then as now, granted the same rights as sonship. This legal relationship (ἐνομίζετο, “to be considered”) [3.23] holds only for the relationship between Joseph and Jesus.”

⁸⁰ Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 646.

divine sonship is foregrounded,⁸¹ the comment also signals the content of Luke's 'unconventional recounting': while Jesus was, according to the customary view, υἱός Ἰωσήφ (son of Joseph, 3.23), Jesus was also, according to Luke, θεοῦ υἱός (son of God, 1.35). The genealogy itself points in the same direction, continuing to ground Jesus' divine sonship status in multiple claims. While through Joseph (3.23) Jesus receives his *dynastic divine heritage* as a "son of David" (3.31; recapitulating the dynastic divine sonship featured in 1.27, 32), Jesus' distant, primordial origins also spring from Adam, the *created-made* "son of God" (Ἀδὰμ τοῦ θεοῦ, Luke 3.38; Gen 1.26-27). In Luke's capable hands, then, the genealogy, as with the citation of Davidic heritage through Joseph (1.27, 32) and divine begetting (1.35) in the Annunciation, and the discursive force of the temple anecdote (2.49), becomes another expression substantiating and legitimating Jesus' complex identity as a divine son.

Michael Luke Peppard has recently explored how the challenging concept of divine sonship in the Roman world was expressed in diverse ways.⁸² Not unlike the legitimating efforts of

⁸¹ See A. Feuillet, "Le baptême de Jésus," *RB* 71 (1964): 321-52; R. F. Collins, "Luke 3:21-22: Baptism or Anointing," *TBT* 84 (1976) 821-31; Charles G. Dennison, "How Is Jesus the Son of God? Luke's Baptism Narrative and Christology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (1982): 6-25; and Malcolm Wren, "Sonship in Luke: The Advantage of a Literary Approach," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984): 301-11. Cf. Michael Luke Peppard, "The Eagle and the Dove: Roman Imperial Sonship and the Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1.9-11)," *NTS* 56 (2010): 431-51. On the Lucan variant in the manuscript tradition (citing Psalm 2), see the excellent analysis in Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 62-67. On the Lucan variant in early liturgical traditions, see Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 85-100.

⁸² Michael Luke Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. 32-49. Peppard focuses on Mark's use of Roman imperial notions of adoption, carefully elucidating what he means by this: "Mark's Christology can be interpreted as 'adoptionist,' if by that term one means that Mark narratively characterizes Jesus in comparison with the adopted Roman emperor, the most powerful man-god in the universe." (94).

supporters of Roman divine sons in the Julio-Claudian era,⁸³ as Michael Luke Peppard suggests, Luke lays claim to a number of different sources of Jesus' divine legitimation "to reach the widest possible audience," a measure of Luke's universalizing "concern for, and masterful skill with, presenting the history of nascent Christianity to a broad audience with diverse social practices and cultural ideologies."⁸⁴ For Luke, like many other Christians of the first and second centuries, the mixed metaphors for divine sonship were mutually legitimating rather than mutually exclusive. That is, before the philosophically-rooted ('platonic') notion of begotten divine sonship became a matter of creedal convention,⁸⁵ Jesus' status as "son of God" was grounded in multiple claims: there were dynastic considerations in depicting Jesus' as the heir of David, who himself was a adopted royal son of God (Luke 1.27, 32; 2.4; 3.23, 31; Acts 2.30, 13.23, 32-3); Jesus' infancy and childhood narratives suggest his divine begottenness from birth (Luke 1.35) and his special divine filial allegiance (Luke 2.49); and Jesus' baptismal experience as with his resurrection suggests an adult divine election or adoption (Luke 3.21-22; Acts 2.36; 13.32-33). In these diverse ways of characterizing Jesus as a divine son, as I have suggested above, Luke employs masculinized discourse conventionally reserved for the Roman emperor: for the majority of people living in the early-middle

⁸³ Augustus was both a "son of God" (*divi filius*) by Caesar's adoption (see Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life* 8, 11, 13, 17-18, 29-30; Livy, *Periochae* 116.5; Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.11-14; Suetonius, *Jul.* 83.2; *Aug.* 7.2, 94.11) and a "son of Apollo" by divine begetting (see Suetonius, *Aug.* 94.4; Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 45.2.). Olivier Hekster, "Descendants of Gods: Legendary Genealogies in the Roman Empire," in Lukas de Blois, Peter Funke, and Johannes Hahn, eds., *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual, and Religious Life in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Fifth International Network, Münster, June 30–July 4, 2004* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 24-35, has persuasively argued that the Augustan preference for imperial (adoptive) sonship, rather than a distant divine ancestry, continued and intensified for subsequent emperors. He concludes, "The impact of Empire, through the centrality and divinity of the Roman emperor, had made emphasis on divine genealogies a practice of the remote past" (35); cf. idem, "Honouring Ancestors: The Dynamic of Deification," in Olivier Hekster, Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner, and Christian Witschel, eds., *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Eighth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire* (Heidelberg, July 5-7, 2007) (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 95-110.

⁸⁴ Michael Luke Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship," *CBQ* 73 (2011): 92-110 (94): "The more sources of legitimacy that Luke could articulate for Jesus, the better." Luke's rhetorical skill in this sense has been aptly called "apologetic historiography"; see Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

⁸⁵ Cf. Peppard, *Son of God*, 162-170: "By the end of the pivotal fourth century, it had become completely normal for Christian theologians to segregate begotten sonship from adopted. Among the many great post-Nicene defenders of orthodoxy, Augustine stands out as eloquent and precise" (167); see, e.g., Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (comment on Ps 89[88].6), *PL* 37.1124; *Sermon 183* (on 1 John 4.2), *PL* 38.990.

Roman imperial period, to be θεοῦ υἱός meant primarily to be the son of the emperor.⁸⁶ As I discuss in more detail below, Luke(-Acts) is in fact rife with allusions to the myriad images and rhetoric surrounding imperial rule, and the infancy account in particular resonates with Caesar Augustus's birth stories and the manner in which his childhood and subsequent reign was perceived and understood.⁸⁷

Returning now to the primary question which launched this discussion, I suggest here that Luke's seemingly deliberate withholding of the Joseph character accomplishes a similar, though obverse, discursive function to that discussed in the above three juxtapositions of Jesus' two fathers (from the Annunciation, Temple, and genealogy pericopes). While Luke explicitly employs the Joseph character as a vehicle of Jesus' divine dynastic heritage (1.27, 32; 2.4; 3.23, 31), Luke's palpable distancing and downplaying of the character of Joseph is also discursive in that it corroborates Luke's 'social-theological logic', his overall 'playing up' of Jesus' highly masculinized, imperialesque divine sonship: Luke obscures the characterization of Jesus' humble, earthly father in order to accentuate the primacy of his depiction of Jesus' *other* divine, authorizing, imperial Father (2.40). Articulating a number of disparate sources of Jesus' respectable origins 'side by side', Luke lifts up divine sonship with all its metaphorical complexities and imperial underpinnings, as the most

⁸⁶ Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), perceptively concludes that Augustus sought to "come as close to divine status as possible:" during his own lifetime, without actually claiming it for himself, in a "typically Augustan exercise in carefully nuanced suggestiveness" (312). Unlike in Rome, there was little restraint in the East regarding the use and application of divine language and honors for the emperor, even during his lifetime; see, e.g. the catalogue of the numismatic evidence for the apotheosis of Augustus in the East during his own lifetime in Michael Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas: A Historical Study of AES Coinage in the Roman Empire 49 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 359-61. Cf. Brian Bosworth, "Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic Theories of Apotheosis," *JRS* 89 (1999): 1-18. David Braund, *Augustus to Nero: A Sourcebook on Roman history, 31 BC-AD 68* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1985), provides English translations of numerous inscriptions describing Augustus as son of a deity (§§2, 6, 10, 11, 13 et passim), progenitor of his country and/or the world (§§19-21, 28, 44, et al.), bringer of peace and savior of the world (§§10, 36, 38, 44, 123 et al.), and even referring to him as divine (§§75, 94) See also Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1987-2005); S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power*. Inevitably, Augustus's apotheosis was completed upon his death in 14 CE, whereupon he was officially deified in Rome as he had already been in the provinces (Suetonius, *Aug.* 100.4; Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 56.46.2) See further Galinsky's discussion of Augustus' "Road to Divinity" (*Augustan Culture*, 312-31), and Aleš Chalupa, "How Did Roman Emperors Become Gods? Various Concepts of Imperial Apotheosis," *Anodos. Studies of the Ancient World* 6-7 (2006-07): 201-207.

⁸⁷ Cf. Billings, "At the Age of 12'," 86-87, *Table 1: The Birth of Jesus Compared with the Birth of Augustus*.

important aspect of the introduction to his life of Jesus.⁸⁸ Thus, the mute characterization (dare I say ‘character assassination’?) of Joseph becomes another of Luke’s legitimating vehicles for expressing “the mystery of how God might have human children.”⁸⁹ Luke’s exclusion of Joseph plausibly directs Luke’s readers how to negotiate the ‘dialogue’ between the disparate, ‘dual paternity’ traditions preserved by Luke.

So Joseph’s obscured characterization is a corollary to (or casualty of) Luke’s imperialesque divine sonship discourse. In spite of a few, sparse character cues, Luke’s Joseph remains aloof, disembodied. Again, this is not Joseph’s tale—his point-of-view is missing from Luke’s narrative. What, then, are we to make of such an elided, ghostly silent, ‘everyday’ man? As I discuss in detail below, the character of Joseph is also a significant, if mostly implicit, part of Luke’s gendered discourse, for, when Joseph does emerge from/at the shadowy margins of his obscurity, he consistently holds out the center, embracing conventionally masculine traits and behaviors attendant on ‘rightful’, naturalized social roles.

3.3 Luke’s Average Joe and the *Domus*:

Roman ‘Family Values’ - Marriage, Children, Inheritance

Luke’s flat characterization of Joseph certainly lingers around stock indices of everyday masculinities, especially where his relation to the *domus* is in view. To begin with, Joseph is a

⁸⁸ Is it any wonder, then, that “in the reception of Luke’s writings, any dialogue between the two notions soon became a monologue, in which the virginal conception tradition was privileged to such an extent that the other tradition was marginalized and reinterpreted in light of the former” (Lincoln, “Luke and Jesus’ Conception,” 658)? Luke’s juxtaposition (‘dialogue’) of ‘dual paternity’ traditions seemingly aims at a discursive prioritizing and ordering of such traditions, not merely in presenting them ‘side by side’. That Luke’s intended rhetorical push was followed in the reception of his writings is perhaps a measure of Luke’s rhetorical success.

⁸⁹ Peppard, *Son of God*, 134.

“man” (ἀνὴρ, 1.27),⁹⁰ and, as a man living in the ancient Roman world, he will be properly married—Mary is “sought in marriage” (ἐμνηστευμένην) by Joseph (1.27; cf. 2.5). Whether or not Luke takes this domestic arrangement as legally binding, an *inchoate* marriage (likely not),⁹¹ Joseph is portrayed without fanfare as a participant in the idealized, patriarchal institution that made wives out of daughters, even as it made men into respectable husbands,⁹² shuttling young women from one *domus* to the next (or not).⁹³ Furthermore, Luke’s Joseph seeks to wed a παρθένος (1.27 2x), a character cue which presumably, in view of Mary’s later admission (1.34), connotes something about

⁹⁰ Part of what I acknowledge here and put to critical reflection in this study is that the construction of the ‘everyday’ in antiquity, at a basic level, occurred within regulative discourses in which the problematic inscription of masculinity to maleness, as if it were a natural or essential quality, was one ingredient for the production of gender itself; see Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, “Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology,” in idem, eds., *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), 11-47 (esp. 19-22); Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York/London: Routledge, 2004): 9-11. Luke uses ἀνὴρ (“man/male/husband”) much more frequently than the other Gospel writers (27x; Acts, 100x; Mt., 8x; Mk., 4x; Jn., 8x), who make greater use of ἄνθρωπος (“human”) (Lk., 95x; Acts, 46x; Mt., 112x; Mk., 56x; Jn., 60x). Mary Rose D’Angelo was the first to call attention to the author’s use of ἀνὴρ; Mary Rose D’Angelo, “The ἀνὴρ Question in Luke-Acts: Imperial Masculinity and the Deployment of Women in the Early Second Century,” in Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Luke* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 44-69. Conway suggests that the frequent public addresses to a male audience in Luke-Acts, often in apposition with another vocative (such as “brothers,” Judeans, Israelites, or Athenians; e.g., Acts 1.16; 2.14, 22; 3.12; 7.2; 13.16; 17.22), “set the emergence of Christianity in a civic forum before a male audience” (*Behold the Man*, 127). Such apposite juxtaposition also conveys the gendered contours behind the author’s ‘transcultural’ ideology.

⁹¹ Michael Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 72. Ἐμνηστευμένη and ἐμνηστευμένη are two variants of the perfect passive participle of μνηστεύω (“to court; to seek in marriage,” LSJ 1140; BDF §68) and can designate “fiancée” or, exceptionally, “wife.” See Pierre Benoit, “L’annonciation,” *AsSeign* 6 (1965): 40–57. Cf. the various types of rape of engaged girls and virgins in earlier biblical tradition (Deut 22.23-29).

⁹² Michael Satlow in his investigation of Jewish marriage, suggests that “Jewish writers during the Second Temple period had entirely conventional assumptions about the purpose of marriage, assumptions that they shared with much of the Greek and later Roman intelligentsia. The purpose of marriage was to create an *oikos*, through which (1) its members gained identity; (2) a man achieved respectability and ‘manhood’; and (3) new members of the state and household were reproduced and raised. Marriage was by no means an end in itself, but carried social expectations, obligations, and privileges” (*Jewish Marriage*, 20). The similarities are extensive, as Satlow observes, “Socially Hellenistic Jews, for the most part, did not choose marriage as a ‘boundary marker’: when Philo and Josephus try to delineate what is distinctive about Jews, they rarely raise the issue of marriage” (201). Cf. Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), observes with respect to rabbinic Judaism that it, too, “so strongly approved the married life, including the life of the sexual body, that there was virtually no escape from marriage within that culture—either for men or women” (168).

⁹³ In Rome, marriage conventionally took two possible forms: a woman passed from the control (*manus*) of her family head (*paterfamilias*) into the power (*manus*) of her husband or, alternatively, she remained under the previous *manus* giving her great independence in marriage, the dominant form of marriage in the first century CE. See Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 202; Susan Treggiari, “Marriage and Family in Roman Society,” in Ken M. Campbell, ed., *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 132-82 (136-137); and Christiane Kunst, “Eheallianzen und Ehealtag in Rom,” in Thomas Späth and Beate Wagner-Hasel, eds., *Frauenwelten in der Antike: Geschlechterordnung und weibliche Lebenspraxis* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), 32-52 (34-35).

her sexual status:⁹⁴ she is “presented on the model of a young Jewish *virgin*,”⁹⁵ appropriated by Luke for his imperial context. While discussions of the significance of Joseph’s maiden almost invariably focus on her contributions to Luke’s christological interests,⁹⁶ Mary Foskett, for one, has helpfully discussed other questions we might ask about Luke’s key depiction of Mary as *παρθένος*: “What does virginity add to the portrayal of Mary? How does it shape the images with which she is associated? How does Mary’s sexual status inform her own characterization?”⁹⁷ As an extension of Foskett’s line of questioning, and foregrounding androcentric discourse from the ancient everyday, I suggest that Mary’s virginity also contributes to Luke’s portrayal of the one seeking her in marriage. The fact that Luke cites the virgin’s courting identity, her *marriageability*, before her own name is telling in this regard: Luke’s virgin is first mentioned in relation to the name and lineage of the one seeking her in marriage, “a man named Joseph from the house of David” (ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωσήφ ἐξ οἴκου Δαυίδ, 1.27a), and only then, secondarily, is her own name disclosed: “and the virgin’s name was Mary” (καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς παρθένου Μαρίας, 1.27b). Mary’s virginity, in addition to how it informs her own characterization here and elsewhere,⁹⁸ and quite apart from how it may (or may not) signal the

⁹⁴ See Gerhard Dellling, “*παρθένος*,” *TDNT* 5.826–37; and Aline Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*, trans. F. Pheasant (Oxford/New York: Blackwell, 1988), who elucidates the relevant reservations of ancient medicine regarding a maiden’s sexuality.

⁹⁵ Mary F. Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 17, my emphasis. In the idealized, androcentric world of biblical and post-biblical literary texts (the degree to which they reflect actual practice is unclear), it is expected that a woman would marry as a virgin; see, e.g., Deut. 22.13–21; 4Q271 3 10-15; 4Q159; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.244; Philo, *Spec leg.* 3.51, 65-71, 1.10509; *m Ket* 1.1-2, 6; 5.2.; and also the texts cited by Satlow, *Jewish Marriage*, 315, n.141. Female virginity was akin to beauty (see Ben Sira 26.15), and, like beauty, was widely trafficked throughout the Mediterranean and Near East; see Rousselle, *Porneia*, 63-77.

⁹⁶ Comparatively little attention has been given to the significance of Mary’s virginity apart from its contributions to Lucan christology. See Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 17-18, n. 75; Brown’s comments here are indicative of the conventional approach to Luke’s direct description of Mary as *παρθένος*: “the virginal conception of Jesus is affirmed, but it is set forth in order to explain something about him, not primarily about Mary” (*Birth*, 467 n. 68).

⁹⁷ Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 18. Cf. Bovon, *Luke*, 49: “the text is nevertheless interested not only in the miracle of the divine begetting, but also in Mary’s status as virgin.”

⁹⁸ See Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, passim, esp. 9-19, 113-40.

remarkable nature of Jesus' conception,⁹⁹ also serves to buttress Joseph's characterization as one respectable *ἀνὴρ* among the many of Luke's "whole inhabited world" (*οἰκουμένη*; 2.1). Luke employs it/her also as a piece in a game of homosocial, male prestige: part of the reputation of Luke's Joseph is located between the legs of Mary,¹⁰⁰ inscribed upon Mary's body. According to ascendant myths of Roman male privilege and plenitude, a new bride's virginity was prized because it was a necessary precondition for the very purpose of Roman marriage, the production of legitimate heirs,¹⁰¹ and because it heralded her subsequent chaste behavior in marriage:¹⁰² real men (those who trouble over the paternity of heirs) take their maidens chaste. Here, in the interstitial spaces of Luke's

⁹⁹See discussion above, n. 34. Not all readers of the infancy account read Luke's emphasis on Mary's virginity as denoting a miraculous/parthenogenetic conception. E.g., initially Fitzmyer, "Virginal Conception," argued that the Lucan annunciation was incompatible with the notion of a virginal conception of Jesus and suggested that the angel's promise, rendered in the future tense ("you shall conceive"), not only failed to preclude a natural conception but implied a natural and legitimate pregnancy that was to commence after Joseph and Mary's wedding. In a later work, idem, *Luke I–IX*, 338, Fitzmyer had become persuaded by Brown ("Luke's Description of the Virginal Conception," *TS* 35 [1974]: 360–62) that the step-parallelism in Luke's story suggested a more extraordinary conception for Jesus than for John the Baptist, namely, a virginal one. Cf. Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 78–129; Catchpole, *Jesus People*, 86; Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 218–22; and idem, *The Nativity: History and Legend* (London: Penguin, 2006), 78–81.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Fatima Mernissi, "Virginity and Patriarchy," 183, and discussion in chapter 1, n. 90, above.

¹⁰¹ Roman society in particular highly valued virginity; see Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 105–7. On the symbolic value of virginity in the Roman world see Mary Beard, "The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins," *JRS* 70 (1980): 12–27; Ariadne Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins: Sex and Category in Roman Religion* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998); and Holt N. Parker, "Why Were the Vestals Virgins? Or the Chastity of Women and the Safety of the Roman State," in Bonnie MacLachlan and Judith Fletcher, eds. *Virginity Revisited: Configurations of the Unpossessed Body* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), 66–99. Roman society also highly valued an ideal of marriage to one person for life. See, e.g., inscriptions referring to women married to one man, referred to as *univira*; discussed in Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 232–235. The ideals of a virgin bride and marriage to one person for life were, of course, later appropriated by Christian writers to create an ideal of monogamy and sexual experience with a single partner; see Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 97–104.

¹⁰² See S. M. Baugh, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Greek Society," in Ken M. Campbell, ed., *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 103–31 (111). Roman men also ostensibly found the post-pubescent young male or female the most attractive objects of sexual desire; see the discussion of male sexuality in Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press 1999; repr. 2010). Treggiari suggests that Roman men thought that young virgins had a precocious sexuality but went through a pretense of masking this with a veil of innocence—at their first marriage Roman men expected their young bride to be a virgin and found this in itself to be an object of sexual excitement (*Roman Marriage*, 106–107).

androcentric discourse, without special pleading, the familial *pietas*¹⁰³ of Luke's Joseph, signaled by his choice of mate, conforms to and upholds the ideal, legislated course of life for an elite Roman male: marriage and the generation of legitimate heirs.¹⁰⁴ While Augustan marriage legislation "made a political statement stressing the emperor's dedication to 'family values' and his right to regulate the most private aspects of his people's lives,"¹⁰⁵ by the time that Luke was writing in the late first century, such imperial procreative coercion had found a way into a broad range of cultural poetics, infiltrating the writings of Stoic philosophers, such as Epictetus who was "adamant regarding

¹⁰³ *Pietas*, the virtue that comprises familial duty and devotion and duty and devotion to the gods, loosely but awkwardly translated as "sense of duty," "dutiful respect," or "devotion to family" was frequently deployed to characterize the relations of the empire and the emperor; see Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 105–14. E.g., *pietas* was among the foremost of imperial virtues foregrounded in Augustus's self-promotion; see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. A. Shapiro; Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 102–10; and Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 86–90. Augustus advertised his own *pietas* toward the gods and the nation (*patria*), laid claim to *virtus* (manliness, virtue) by his reform of Roman mores, and deployed the imperial title *pater patriae* to present himself as the guardian of Roman virtue and therefore also the guardian of the Roman right to rule the world; see Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), *passim*, but esp. 33–61; as well as Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Ευσεβεία: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of 4 Maccabees and the Pastorals," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 139–65. Similarly, Pliny (*Panegyric*) characterizes both Nerva and Trajan as *parens* and *pietas* (3.2), and much is made of the title *pater patriae* (21; 56.3); Capitoline Jupiter is said to have chosen Trajan (94.1–4), and an analogy is drawn between the emperor and the divine father of all (88.8); Trajan's distributions of largesse (25–28) and grain (29) are characterized as the product of the emperor's parental care.

¹⁰⁴ In 18 BCE Augustus enacted the *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* ("Julian law on the marrying of the social orders"), mandating marriage and child-bearing for men between the ages of 25 and 60 and women between 20 and 50. Those who were not married could not receive inheritances or legacies except from relatives within six degrees of kinship. Married couples who did not have children were not allowed to leave more than ten percent of their property to each other by will; see Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce, and Widowhood* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 83–7; Tim G. Parkin, "On Becoming a Parent in Later Life: From Augustus to Antonio Agustin via Saint Augustine," in Susan Dixon, ed., *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 221–34.; Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 60–80. Not surprisingly, there were protests from the elite (Suetonius, *Aug.* 34; Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 54.16.1–2). These laws applied to all Roman citizens, but were primarily directed at the senatorial and equestrian elite, who were most likely to give and receive legacies from non-kin; see Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 235–47; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Family and Inheritance in the Augustan Marriage Laws," *PCPS* 207 (1981): 58–80. Another law, also probably enacted in 18 BCE, the *lex Julia de adulteriis* ("Julian law on adulteries") made adultery (defined as extramarital sexual relations by or with a married woman) a public crime, punishable by relegation and loss of property.

¹⁰⁵ Judith Evans Grubbs, "The Family," in David S. Potter, *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 312–326 (316).

marriage and raising children as a social duty”¹⁰⁶ as well as the writings of other early Christians.¹⁰⁷ Luke’s passing characterization of the virgin-seeking Joseph (paired with the attendantly passive, unexperienced, and fertile, Mary) is but one of several instances in Luke(-Acts) which accords with the carefully nurtured Roman “family values” policies that played such a substantial role in imperial consolidations of power.¹⁰⁸ Appealing to the imperial ideology in which childbearing is a sign not only of good fortune but also of pious duty, the virgin Joseph seeks in marriage ‘will conceive...and bring forth’ (Luke 1.31) a legitimate heir, a son, ostensibly both *with* and *without* Joseph’s ‘help’, according to Luke’s complicated and discursive appropriation of the “dual paternity” traditions discussed above in section 3.2.

Luke’s narrative also supports the typical Roman perspective on the primacy of the father-son relationship,¹⁰⁹ and Luke’s Joseph is implicitly depicted as a male household head (*paterfamilias*), infused with *patria potestas*, “paternal power” to manage his household relationships, “the most

¹⁰⁶ James A. Francis, *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, Pa. : Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995; repr. 2008), 18; see, e.g., Epict. *Diss.* 3.7.19-23, 26. On Stoic hypermasculine ethics of marriage and procreative sexual activity see Diana M. Swancutt, “‘The Disease of Effemination’: The Charge of Effeminacy and the Verdict of God (Romans 1.18-2.16),” in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 193-234: “Stoic teaching on this matter influenced Roman politics, strengthening already-tough Roman standards for manliness and giving Roman politicians means to criticize others for effeminacy” (204); cf. Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 7.133-136, 149, 151-152; Seneca *Vit. beat.* 7.3; 13.2-3; *Clem.* 4.2, 13; *Ben.* 4.2.1). On the coupling of Stoicism and Roman ideology under the Republic and early Empire, see also Diana Swancutt, *Pax Christi: Romans As Protrepsis to Live As Kings* (Ph.D. diss.: Duke University, 2001), 193-253.

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., 1 Tim 2.14-15; 5.6, 9, 11-12, 14; 2 Tim 3.5-6. According to Gordon Fee, the Pastorals require that, “Above all, they [elders and other officeholders] must be exemplary family men,” defining an exemplary family man minimally, as a “husband of one wife” (Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, with Further Reflections on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents,” *JETS* 28 (1985): 141-51 (148). More critically, as Mary Rose D’Angelo suggests, the Pastorals “offer not only bursts of perfervid misogyny but also noteworthy citations of the Augustan marriage laws” (see n. 105 above) (“‘Knowing How to Preside over His Own Household’: Imperial Masculinity and Christian Asceticism in the Pastorals, Hermas, and Luke-Acts,” in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* [Atlanta: SBL, 2003], 265-295 [275]; see also D’Angelo, “Ευσεβεια,” 158-62.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Mary Rose D’Angelo, “Gender and Geopolitics in the Work of Philo of Alexandria: Jewish Piety and Imperial Family Values,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63-88, who discusses how Philo of Alexandria’s apologetic is also constructed in response to imperial “family values” campaigns.

¹⁰⁹ While the primacy of the father-son relationship is not something distinctly *Roman per se*, Roman discourse views such priorities as closely linked to Roman traditions and social practice: e.g., the two dominant and overlapping “social spheres” of Roman society, politics and kinship, were ostensibly governed by the connections and relationships between fathers and sons; see Halvor Moxnes, “What is Family,” in Halvor Moxnes, ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families* (London: Routledge, 1997), 13-41 (19); in the same volume, see also Eva Marie Lassen, “The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor,” 103-20.

fundamental and most peculiarly Roman part of family law.”¹¹⁰ As the typical Roman *πατήρ* is wont to do, Luke’s Joseph determines kinship bonds and exercises authority to distribute goods of family name, property, cult (*nomen, pecunia, and sacra*)¹¹¹ to a designated, legitimate heir. Although the subdued citation of Joseph’s *pecunia* (propertied in ‘Nazareth’, 1.26-27, 2.4, 39, and/or in ‘Bethlehem’, 2.4)¹¹² and *sacra* (2.22-24, 41-42) contribute to the shape of this everyday, virgin-marrying, *πατήρ*, Luke parades Joseph’s *nomen*, his sacred scriptural, royal patronym (1.27, 32-33, 69; 2.4; and 3.23–38),¹¹³ as this first and foremost promotes Luke’s imperialistic social-theologic agenda.¹¹⁴

While conventional exegesis has treated Luke’s deployment of Jesus’ and Joseph’s Davidic scriptural heritage (and his use of the Hebrew Bible more generally) as “a deeply theological practice, one which is formative in the construction of Luke’s own theological agenda,”¹¹⁵ more recent work has suggested a nuanced approach to Luke’s use of a sacred, script(ur)ed past. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, for example, locate Luke’s appropriations of Jewish epic myth within broader cultural poetics and politics emerging in the first century: “[t]he impulse to re-present the

¹¹⁰ Alan Watson, *The Law of the Ancient Romans* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1970), 37.

¹¹¹ So Cicero, *de Domo* 35, discussing Roman adoption as a method of securing the continuity from father to son of the principal markers of status of the adoptive father.

¹¹² Marshall, *Luke*, 104–105; Bovon, *Luke*, 84.

¹¹³ The Davidic credentials of Jesus are noted in Luke 1, where Joseph is identified as being “of the house of David” (1.27; also see the genealogy in Luke 3.23–38). This is “confirmed” by Gabriel, who tells Mary that “the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David” (1.32), and by Zechariah, who prophesies that God has “raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David” (1.69). In 2.4 Joseph goes to Bethlehem, identified as the city of David, “because he was descended from the house and family of David.”

¹¹⁴ See Richard A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas: The Infancy Narratives in Social Context* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 32-3; Brown, *Birth*, 415; Green, *Luke*, 123; C. Kavin Rowe, “Luke–Acts and the Imperial Cult: A Way through the Conundrum?,” *JSNT* 27 (2005): 279-300 (285-6); and discussion at nn. 1-2.

¹¹⁵ Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender in Acts: The Past and Present Power of Imperium,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 231-266 (252 n. 58). The scholarship on the theological import of the Hebrew Bible for Luke is immense, but see the following sample of studies: Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSup 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology* (JSNTSup 110; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002); Bart J. Koet, “Isaiah in Luke-Acts,” in Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, eds., *Isaiah in the New Testament* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 79-100; and Kenneth Duncan Litwack, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God’s People Intertextually* (JSNTSup 282; New York: T&T Clark International, 2005).

past for a contemporary agenda and, conversely, to reify that present program through an appropriation, rendition and reconfiguration of what ‘came before,’ provided a strong impetus for a variety of different cultural and political (re)constructive projects spanning the empire, from the Roman West to the Greek East.”¹¹⁶ Luke’s handling of Hebrew scripture, like other ‘contemporary renderings of former mythologies’ from the center¹¹⁷ to the periphery,¹¹⁸ (re)presented “the *transmuted* (and *transvalued*) authority” of the sacred past as a critically important element in shaping and scripting social and cultural identities in the present, and in displaying ‘proper’ masculine comportment.¹¹⁹

In particular, Luke’s positioning of Jesus’/Joseph’s scriptural Davidic legacy in the infancy account carries the most immediate cultural resonance and power, and, along with it, male privilege. As suggested in section 3.2 above, ideologically, Luke employs imagery from the biblical tradition of the Davidic Messiah-king, the foundation of which is 2 Samuel 7.14, which describes the royal ancestry as begotten-adopted sons of God.¹²⁰ Luke parades the bequeathing of Joseph’s *nomen*, then—his sacred, scriptural patronym—because it imbues the infancy account with imperial, masculinized, divine worth and sanction. As Marianne Palmer Bonz suggests, Luke sought to “recast his community’s sacred traditions in a style and manner that would make the Christian claim a powerful and appealing alternative to the ubiquitous and potentially seductive salvation claims of imperial Rome.”¹²¹ While indeed Luke fashions his infancy accounts after Hebrew Bible precedents,

¹¹⁶ Penner and Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender,” 233.

¹¹⁷ See Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 110-36 (on Livy); and David L. Balch, “METABOAH ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΩΝ. Jesus as Founder of the Church in Luke-Acts: Form and Function,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 139-88, esp. 154-83 (on Dionysius and Plutarch); Craig B. Champion, *Cultural Politics in Polybius’ Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 173-203.

¹¹⁸ See Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 65-100; E. L. Bowie, “Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic,” *Past and Present* 46 (1970): 3-41; Jas Elsner, “Structuring ‘Greece’: Pausanias’s *Periegesis* as a Literary Construct,” in Susan E. Alcock, John F. Cherry and Jas Elsner, eds., *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-20; Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹¹⁹ See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Penner and Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender,” 257.

¹²⁰ Par. 1 Chr 17.13; cf. Ps 2.7; Ps 89.19-37. See discussion above at nn. 45-46.

¹²¹ Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 86.

and in particular the Davidic legacy, “the *imperium* provides the backdrop against which these events take place.”¹²²

Luke’s emphasis on the respectability of Jesus’ parents certainly contributes in the long run to the characterization of Jesus, specifically adding “to the picture of Jesus as fulfilling the masculine ideal,”¹²³ while it also carries with it a more proximate agenda. Luke’s appropriation of key parts of Roman ‘family values’ moral propaganda, deals implicitly with local, everyday gendered politics: even (or especially) non-elite men, like Joseph, ought to fulfill dutifully their obligations to marry (a virgin) and beget (legitimate) children (sons), both in the service of the state and for the perpetuation of family lines and properties.

3.4 Luke’s Average Joe and the *Cultus*

Returning to our ‘step-parallelism’ comparison of Joseph and Zechariah both highlights the mundanity of our focus subject and reinforces a conventional aspect of everyday manly comportment. Joseph, we learn, is not a priest (cf. Luke 1.5), even of the undistinguished Judean hill-dwelling stock ‘of Abijah’ (1.5, 39-40)¹²⁴—mirroring Mary’s (un)sung ‘lowly’ (ταπεινός, 1.48, 52-53) social position. Nor is Joseph exceptionally ‘righteous’ (δίκαιοι) or ‘blameless’ (ἄμεμπτοι) as Zechariah is (cf. 1.6). However, similar to Luke’s presentation of Zechariah’s cultic observance

¹²² Paul W. Walaskay, *And So We Came to Rome: The Political Perspective of St. Luke* (SNTSMS 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; repr. 2005), 25.

¹²³ Conway, *Behold the Man*, 139. On recounting one’s origins (including ancestry and immediate family) in progymnastic exercises, which ostensibly shaped the topical content of Luke’s Gospel and other ‘encomium biographies’, see the discussion at nn. 30-31.

¹²⁴ Esa Autero, “Social Status in Luke’s Infancy Narrative: Zechariah the Priest,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 41 (2011): 36-45. Though not stated explicitly, Joseph belongs rather to either the humble masses of land-working peasants or else to the even lower-ranking artisan class; see Gerhard Lenski *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 270-75; 78-79. However, in the handling of Mark’s material (Mk. 6.3), only Luke (4.22) refuses to call Jesus a τέκτων or the son of a τέκτων, as Matthew does (Mt. 13.55).

(1.8-9), Joseph (along with Mary) *does* piously fulfill ‘all’ of his prescribed (according to Luke) cultic obligations surrounding childbirth (2.22-24), as well as other requirements (2.41).¹²⁵

Preferring “narrative quality over legal exactness,” Luke abbreviates and conflates a number of cultic activities: “They are either the purpose of the actions (vv. 22, 23, 24, 27) or the duty fulfilled (v. 39), but never the content of the account.”¹²⁶ In Luke’s account, what is more significant than detailed descriptions of parturition rituals is that each regulation is piously fulfilled, true to the Law, as is reiterated five times in this short passage: “according to the law of Moses” (2.22), “as it is written in the law of the Lord” (23), “according to what is stated in the law of the Lord” (24), “what was customary under the law” (27), “everything required by the law of the Lord” (πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὸν νόμον κυρίου, 2.39).

Luke mentions Jesus’ circumcision without further comment, in keeping with Luke’s overall direction towards ritual ambivalence and/or denial.¹²⁷ The emphasis of this short anecdote, rather, is on the naming of the child. In Luke’s androcentric, symbolic economy, the primacy of the father’s right to name a child/son attested elsewhere (1.59-63) is contrasted here to a decidedly passive (and enigmatic) verbal construction: “he was called by the name Jesus” (καὶ ἐκλήθη τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦς, 2.21). Unlike Zechariah, Luke’s Joseph is narrated out of the naming event altogether (even if, presumably, he *had* to be involved).¹²⁸ The deity wants the child to be named Jesus, the name pronounced by the angel before Jesus’ conception (cf. 1.31), and the child simply receives this name. Here, again, we see deliberate downplaying of the role of Jesus’ earthly father and a highlighting of

¹²⁵ On the Passover Pilgrimage, see m. Hag. 1.1. See de Jonge, “Sonship” 317-24. The everyday character of the events involving the passover visitation is strongly emphasized at the beginning (κατ’ ἔτος, “every year,” v. 41; κατὰ τὸ ἔθος, “according to the custom,” v. 42). Joseph (with Mary) is behaving as *usual* in vv. 41–42, like an observant Jew.

¹²⁶ Bovon, *Luke*, 99.

¹²⁷ As a non-Jewish follower of Jesus, Luke ostensibly deemed that circumcision was no longer necessary for inclusion into the people of God; Luke’s interest is directed toward the future of the people of God through Jesus, in a time in which baptism will replace circumcision; cf. Acts 15. Though even baptismal ritual activity is downplayed and complicated by Luke; see Richard E. DeMaris, “Backing away from Baptism: Early Christian Ambivalence about its Ritual,” *Journal of Ritual Studies* 27.1 (2013): 11-19.

¹²⁸ Lucien Legrand, “On l’appela du nom de Jésus (Luc II,21),” *RB* 89 (1982) 481-91; Marion L. Soards, “Luke 2:22–40,” *Int* 44 (1990): 400–405.

the role of Jesus' heavenly Father, while, at the same time, the Law is carefully, piously observed: "after eight days had passed, it was time" (Καὶ ὅτε ἐπλήσθησαν ἡμέραι ὀκτῶ).

Jesus' circumcision and naming on the eighth day are followed by another set of imprecisely¹²⁹ conveyed cultic regulations that are, however, carefully carried out by the unnamed Joseph (and Mary) at the Jerusalem temple. Luke conflates scriptural regulations related to the mother's performance of the childbirth purification offering (2.24; cf. Leviticus 12.2–8) and the redemption offering of the firstborn (vv. 22b–23; cf. Exodus 13.2, 12)—together these two observances achieve "their," Mary and the child's, purification (2.22).¹³⁰ Here again we see Luke's transvalued appropriation of the Jewish past for his contemporary agenda. Luke narrates Jesus' 'temple presentation' in relation to both the recent, revered past of the Jerusalem temple cult (2.22, 27)¹³¹ and the more distant sacred past of Hebrew scripture, the time of "law of Moses" (τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως, 2.22). Similar to other 'contemporary renderings of former mythologies',¹³² Luke's deployment here of "numinous displays of power"¹³³ in a marginal (and now defunct) religious center promotes a resistant "mode of self-identifying performance that locates authority and power within the colonial subject and outside of the traditional loci of control."¹³⁴ Meanwhile Luke's

¹²⁹ See Seth Ward, "The Presentation of Jesus: Jewish Perspectives on Luke 2:22-24," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 21, no. 2 (2003): 21-39; Frederick Strickert, "The Presentation of Jesus: The Gospel of Inclusion: Luke 2:22–40," *CurTM* 22 (1995) 33-37. Bovon (*Luke*, 99) summarizes Luke's legal 'imprecisions': "purification" (καθαρισμός, 2.22) is an inexact description both for the mother's purification (Lev 12) and for the son's redemption (Exod 13); the citation in 2.23 is based on Ex. 13.2, 12, 15, but is not an exact quotation; the child's presence was not necessary for the mother's purification; and the redemption of the firstborn was not connected to the temple.

¹³⁰ The use of αὐτῶν is strange, since only the mother was, after giving birth, 'unclean', and it is not clear whether Joseph or Jesus is included along with her. See discussion of the wide-ranging textual variants in Marshall, *Luke*, 116; cf. Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1955), 75; Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium I*, Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1-9,50 (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum NT; Freiburg: Herder 1969), 121. Mention of the "law of Moses" (2.39; Acts 22.12; 23.3; 24.14) underlines the thought of pious obedience which is present throughout the narrative (2.23, 24, 27; cf. 2.1-5).

¹³¹ As has been widely commented on, Jesus' temple presentation also echoes Samuel's temple presentation (1 Samuel 2.1–10). The scholarly consensus is that Luke likely writes post-70 CE, after the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.

¹³² See discussion and sources cited above at nn. 117-119.

¹³³ Note the three occurrences of the divine/holy spirit (πνεῦμα): (resting) upon (ἐπί, 2.25), warning (χρηματίζω, 2.26), and indwelling (ἐν, 2.27) Simeon.

¹³⁴ Penner and Vander Stichele, "Script(ur)ing Gender," 254. See further Todd Penner, "Res Gestae Divi Christi: Miracles, Early Christian Heroes, and the Discourse of Power in Acts," in Duane F. Watson, ed., *Miracle Discourse in the New Testament* (SBLSymS; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 125-174.

subdued characterization of the ritually-responsible Joseph, steeped in pious observance of sacred scriptural regulations at the heart of that marginal cultic center, also rehearses everyday scripts of masculine comportment in the present. As Colleen Conway suggests, Luke’s deployment of (Joseph’s) cultic observance in the Jerusalem Temple, quite apart from its Jewish moorings,¹³⁵ “carried more general associations with piety, imperial power, literacy, and status—all things that were central to elite male identity in the imperial world.”¹³⁶ Cultic piety, with its “long history in Hellenistic political ideology,”¹³⁷ was a primary element of the representation of the Roman emperor as priest,¹³⁸ and, as one of Rome’s most vaunted masculine virtues, other men *complicit* in the hegemonic project received a “patriarchal dividend” for following the emperor’s model piety.¹³⁹ Luke’s five-fold emphasis on the piety of Jesus’ parents certainly contributes, again, in the long run “to the picture of Jesus as fulfilling the masculine ideal,”¹⁴⁰ while it also carries with it a more proximate discursive weight. In the infancy account, it is Luke’s Joseph, not Luke’s Jesus, who accepts the status afforded by citation of a stock aspect of the most powerful man in the empire, that of cultic piety, although Joseph is genuinely distanced from any direct display of hegemonic power. Imbuing the infancy account with imperial, divine worth and sanction, then, Luke’s creative deployment of observance of (past) cultic regulations also deals implicitly with more local, everyday

¹³⁵ Brent, *The Imperial Cult*, suggests that “[i]t is arguable that the Imperial Cult represents the real pagan backcloth for this seemingly Jewish backcloth, if Luke is written after a.d. 70 when the Jewish Temple rites have been abolished” (90); cf. idem, “Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor,” *JTS* 48 (1997): 111–38.

¹³⁶ Conway, *Behold the Man*, 137.

¹³⁷ Conway, *Behold the Man*, 137. See Rufus J. Fears, “The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Theology,” *ANRW* 2.17.2 (1981): 825-948.

¹³⁸ See, e.g., the promotion of Augustus’ enrollment in the priestly colleges and priesthoods (*Res ges. divi Aug. 7*) and the depiction of Augustus’s cultic observances displayed on altar reliefs, statues, and coins; S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Mary Beard, John North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1998), 186; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 126-128.

¹³⁹ As R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), suggests, *complicit* masculinities are parasitic, in the sense of passively reaping a “patriarchal dividend” from the domination of a particular type of masculinity and/or of men in general “without the tensions or risks of being the front-line troops of patriarchy” (79).

¹⁴⁰ Conway, *Behold the Man*, 139. On recounting one’s origins (including ancestry and immediate family) in progymnastic exercises, which ostensibly shaped the topical content of Luke’s Gospel and other ‘encomium biographies’, see discussion at nn. 30-31.

gendered politics: even (or especially) non-elite men, like Joseph, ought to fulfill dutifully ‘all’ their cultic obligations, *whatever those particular rituals might be*.

3.5 Luke’s Average Joe and the *Forum*:

Silence/*Paideia*, Governing Household, Paying Taxes, and Biding One’s Time

Again, invoking our ‘step-parallel’ comparison of Joseph and Zechariah: Joseph also does not sing or prophesy like Zechariah does (cf. Luke 1.67-79). Luke in fact gives us a consistently wordless Joseph throughout—a portrayal that is all the more striking when considering Luke’s “pervasive, and distinctly dialogic or hybridizing, practice of citing direct speech.”¹⁴¹ The voluble speeches, songs, prophecies, and whispers of virtually *every* other figure in the infancy account—Gabriel (1.13-17), Zechariah (1.67-79), Elizabeth (1.42-44, 60), Mary (1.26-55), Elizabeth’s neighbors and relatives (1.61), the entire Judean-hillside community (1.66), angels (2.10-14), shepherds (2.15), Simeon (2.29-35), and even Anna (whose speech is reported indirectly, 2.38)—make Joseph’s silence palpable.

In ancient, androcentric, Greek and Roman discourse, masculinity or “manliness” (*ἀνδρεία/virtus*) was portrayed as an achieved state of perceived ideals¹⁴² that had to be established and constantly reaffirmed by *performance*¹⁴³ and public evaluation of that performance—most crucially in the competitive fields of the gymnasium or the battlefield, though also, not unimportantly, in demonstrations of one’s education and public allocution skills.¹⁴⁴ “Public speaking, even more than

¹⁴¹ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke,” 148.

¹⁴² See, e.g., Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 59, 81.

¹⁴³ See Moxnes, “Conventional Values in the Hellenistic World: Masculinity,” and sources cited in chapter 1, n. 92 above.

¹⁴⁴ See Gleason, *Making Men*, esp. 159-67 on masculinity as a performance enacted by rhetoricians of the Second Sophistic. See also Joy Connolly, “Like the Labors of Heracles: *Andreia* and *Paideia* in Greek Culture Under Rome,” in Ralph M Rosen and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 287-318; Myles A. McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

literary writing, was the hallmark of the socially privileged male.”¹⁴⁵ As already noted above, Luke’s own extensive use of the technique of *fictio personae* in the infancy accounts, as elsewhere, suggests his rhetorical training in declamation exercises and, further, “the extent to which he was acculturated” as an elite male.¹⁴⁶ Throughout his writings, Luke also manages to cast all of his leading men in a similar light—even Peter and John, despite their being ‘unlettered commoners’ (ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοί εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται), achieve a measure of manly prestige by their bold ‘outspokenness’ (παρρησία) in the public *forum* (Acts 4.13). Luke’s Joseph, however, displays neither training nor status: he is silent, speech-less, implicitly illiterate, and certainly not one of Luke’s leading men. Yet Joseph’s characterization still plays a constitutive role in the construction of Luke’s narrative world and in the representation of social identity of its recipients. Whilst the silence of Joseph does not issue ‘from elsewhere’, as indeed Zechariah’s silence does (Luke 1.20), Joseph nevertheless lends it to the vibrant “other-tongued (heteroglossal)” linguistic ambivalence that characterizes Luke and other novelistic hybrids of the time.¹⁴⁷ Joseph’s silence gives voice to the masses of already-disempowered (male) subjects performing their everyday iteration of a regulatory norm¹⁴⁸—the silence of Joseph is the muted, multitude bass line in the symphony of voices ringing out from Luke’s infancy tale.

Aside from keeping his mouth wide shut, Joseph’s only other (nearly)¹⁴⁹ autonomous act in Luke positions Joseph as the responsible male household head (*pater familias*) who has his domestic affairs in order. Going out of his way, literally, Luke’s “Joseph *also* went (up)...to register

¹⁴⁵ Gleason, *Making Men*, 67.

¹⁴⁶ Conway, *Behold the Man*, 128-29; see discussion above at n. 7.

¹⁴⁷ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke,” 148; citing Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981): “The novelistic hybrid is an artistically organized system for bringing different languages in contact with one another, a system having as its goal the illumination of one language by means of another, the carving out of a living image of another language” (361, emphasis in the original).

¹⁴⁸ See Cheryl Glenn, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁹ While the verb Ἀνέβη (“he went up”; Luke 2.4) is the only active verb attributed solely to Joseph (every other verbal construction in Luke depicts Joseph and Mary acting jointly), Joseph was not alone in his movement; he was, rather, as I discuss below, σὺν Μαρίας (“with Mary”; 2.5)

himself” (Ἀνέβη δὲ καὶ Ἰωσήφ...ἀπογράψασθαι; 2.4-5) in a census issued by Caesar Augustus himself with the Roman governor of neighboring Syria standing by. Responding to the imperial edict just like everyone else (πᾶσαν) in the “world” (οἰκουμένη),¹⁵⁰ Luke’s Joseph travels from the comparatively low-lying countryside of Galilee up to the hill-country of Judaea and declares himself as liable to taxation.¹⁵¹

Luke’s characterization of Joseph as a law-abiding, house-holding male also places Joseph on another public stage in the ancient *forum* of everyday masculine performance in the Roman world. Rather than being isolated from broader spheres of homosocial evaluation, proper comportment in and governance of one’s ‘private life’ in the *domus* reflected on one’s manly character in the civic arena, signaling initially one’s own self-control and, by extension, one’s suitability for public service.¹⁵² The well-known conversation between Socrates and Critobulus (Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*), for example, reflects this intricate link between male performance in the *domus* and the *forum*,¹⁵³ as do other contemporary,¹⁵⁴ including early Christian, writings.¹⁵⁵ The imperial census

¹⁵⁰ See discussion above at nn. 5-8 on Luke’s ‘universalist’ elaborations and use of the word οἰκουμένη; Bovon, *Luke*, 83.

¹⁵¹ Here in Luke 2.4 δῖκος and πατρία (cf. Acts 3:25; Eph 3.15) are probably synonymous (but see G. Schrenk, *TDNT* V. 1016). Thus, Joseph’s Davidic lineage is noted redundantly, “because he was descended from the house and family of David,” and doubly reinforces Joseph’s role as household head, the one who will distribute familial goods, including his sacred scriptural patronym.

¹⁵² See Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michele George, ed., *Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond* (Oxford; New York: Oxford, 2005); D’Angelo, “Knowing How to Preside’.”

¹⁵³ As cited and discussed by Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner, “All the World’s a Stage’: The Rhetoric of Gender in Acts,” in R. Bieringer, Gilbert van Belle, and Jozef Verheyden, eds., *Luke and His Readers: Festschrift Adelbert Denaux* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 2005), 373-96, according to Xenophon, the duty of the elite male householder is to maintain ‘self-control’ (σωφρόνων) (7,15), and the good ‘order’ (τάξις) of the household (8,3) and ‘precise’ (ἀκριβῶς) placement of household goods (8,10) delineate fundamental aspects of the ‘partnership’ of husband and wife in the management of the household (7,30); Xenophon, *Economics*, Xenophon in Seven Volumes, vol. 4 (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

¹⁵⁴ See Loveday Alexander’s portrait of the ideal philosopher as one who displays proper comportment and control in both private and public forums; “Foolishness to the Greeks’: Jews and Christians in the Public Life of the Empire,” in Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak, eds., *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), 229-249. See, e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquities* 1.3.5; *Sentences of Sextus* 246: “Dismissing his wife, a man confesses not to be able to rule a woman.”

¹⁵⁵ See 1 Tim 3.1, 4-5; as discussed by D’Angelo, “Knowing How to Preside’,” 265, 273: “the Pastorals...construct masculinity by a careful distinction of male from female roles: men from women, elder men from elder women, younger men from younger women. Central to these distinctions is the order of the household.” See, e.g., also 1 Tim 1.4; 2.8-15; 3.12; Titus 1.5-7; 3.8, 14; *Vis.* 1.31.1; 1.4.2; 2.2.2-4. Cf. Stephen Young, “Being a Man: The Pursuit of Manliness in the Shepherd of Hermas,” *J ECS* 2 (1994) 237-55.

is issued and Joseph, maintaining the good order and appropriate placement of his household goods, performs his duty as any man invested in the hegemonic project of contending for limited resources of male prestige *should*.¹⁵⁶

Moreover, Luke's Joseph was not alone, but *σὺν Μαρίας* ('with Mary', 2.5). The figure of the pregnant, marriage-sought Mary (no longer described as *παρθένος*) accompanying Joseph as he fulfills his manly obligations is curious, "shocking" even,¹⁵⁷ since her presence was not required for the census; the head of the family would register all of his household.¹⁵⁸ While Mary's presence on the journey certainly serves Luke's theological designs, ushering Mary and child "from the historical Nazareth over to the messianic Bethlehem,"¹⁵⁹ it is also a critical component of Luke's discursive portrayal of Joseph as responsible household head.¹⁶⁰ In ancient androcentric discourse that presents male struggles for personal and familial prestige, the importance accorded to the management of subordinate household members (women, children, and slaves) by men is inextricable from a consideration of its perceived impact upon male homosocial relations in the civic arena. Within and according to such discourse, women are perceived as serving as "a conduit of a relationship" between men:¹⁶¹ men were conventionally evaluated by other men in terms that depended on their

¹⁵⁶ On the notion of "limited good," see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 81-107.

¹⁵⁷ Discussing the instability of the textual tradition of Luke 2.5, Bovon suggests that "The shocking character of the pregnant bride-to-be who travels with her fiancé should not be smoothed over; it is provoked by Luke" (*Luke*, 85).

¹⁵⁸ See Pierre Benoit, "Quirinius (Recensement de)," *DBSup* 9 (1977): 693-720 (700).

¹⁵⁹ Bovon, *Luke*, 84. While in the Hebrew Bible, the "city of David" is the hill of Zion in Jerusalem (2 Sam 5.7, 9), in the New Testament the description is applied to Bethlehem (Luke 2.11; cf. Jn 7.42); the significance lies in its being the place where David was brought up and where, according to Mic 5.2 the Messiah would be born.

¹⁶⁰ See Stephen C. Carlson, "The Accommodations of Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem: *Κατάλυμα* in Luke 2.7," *NTS* 56 (2010): 326-42, who concludes, "in accordance with the patrilocal marital customs of the day," that Bethlehem "must also have been the place where [Joseph and Mary] finalized their matrimonial arrangements by bringing [Mary] into [Joseph's] home" (342).

¹⁶¹ A phrase taken from an influential essay by Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157-210 (174).

relationship to the women of their household.¹⁶² As Kate Cooper puts it in reference to the ancient milieu close to the narrative world of Luke's Gospel, "wherever a woman is mentioned a man's character is being judged—and along with it what he stands for."¹⁶³ Perhaps, Luke's characterization of Joseph, then, as of his other men, forestalls outsider condemnations of early Christians as inferior males incapable of managing their 'hysterical' women.¹⁶⁴

Mary is, of course, not only an object of Luke's androcentric discourse.¹⁶⁵ Mary's "life is not at Joseph's disposal as his property, nor does she obey him. She is evaluated in terms of her relationship not with him, but with God. Joseph is not depicted as her protector or the agent of her

¹⁶² Vander Stichele and Penner, "All the World's a Stage," discuss how far-flung such androcentric discourse was in the ancient world, "From Tacitus' portrayal of Claudius' wife Messalina as a woman 'out of control'" to the public portraits depicting the relationship of the deified emperor to his household (392-393). See also sources cited therein, including Sandra R. Joshell, "Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus' Messalina," in Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 221-54 (239); Catharine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 42-47; Susan Fischler, "Imperial Cult: Engendering the Cosmos," in Lin Foxhall and John B. Salmon, eds., *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power & Identity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 165-183; and Ana Olga Koloski-Ostrow, "Violent Stages in Two Pompeian Houses: Imperial Taste, Aristocratic Response, and Messages of Male Control," in Ana Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons, eds., *Naked Truth: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (New York, Routledge, 1997), 243-66.

¹⁶³ Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 19.

¹⁶⁴ See, e.g., Lucian of Samosata, *Passing of Peregrinus*, as cited and discussed by Vander Stichele and Penner, "All the World's a Stage," 394-95; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion: The Power of the Hysterical Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. pp. 49-126, who examines the evidence for Greco-Roman evaluations of Christianity with respect to the role of women. Cf. Celsus's account of Christian missionary activity, which focuses on the influence of unlettered men who, "whenever they get hold of children in private and some stupid women with them, let out with some astounding statements as, for example, that they must not pay any attention to their father and school-teachers" (Origen, *Cels.* 3.55); translated in Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 165; text in *Origène: Contre Celse* (Sources chrétiennes 136; trans. M. Borret; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968).

¹⁶⁵ As Andrew Jacobs, "Writing Demetrias: Ascetic Logic in Ancient Christianity," *Church History* 69, no. 4 (2000): 719-48, suggests, it is certainly crucial to distinguish between the views of and about women in such (especially ancient) discourse, on the one hand, and the actual views of real women, on the other hand, which may or may not cohere; even though, the question of the relationship of (actual, real) ancient historical women to the texts that discuss them is fraught with a number of difficulties—chief among them, a lack of sources by women and our inability to "peel back layers of male rhetoric and find the 'real' woman concealed underneath" (720). I certainly applaud the salutary efforts of Jacobs, who, attempting to delineate "the space in which women could 'logically' operate in the early Christian world" (722), reminds us that male-authored texts were not the products of a female-free world and that they mirror as well as create social realities; cf. Shelly Matthews, "Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17, no. 2 (2001), 39-55. Leaving aside the question of 'real/actual' women, I am interested here in how Luke's androcentric representation of his women, or one woman rather (Mary), functions with respect to his ideological construction of the reputation of his men (Joseph). See also L. Stephanie Cobb, "Real Women or Objects of Discourse? The Search for Early Christian Women," *Religion Compass* 3, no. 3 (2009): 379-394.

liberation.”¹⁶⁶ However, whatever else Luke’s Mary stands for,¹⁶⁷ I suggest Luke employs her also in the ‘prophetic’ journey to Bethlehem¹⁶⁸ as an element of homosocial, male prestige: part of the reputation of Luke’s average Joe is located in the compliance of his betrothed—inscribed upon Mary’s pregnant, ‘donkey-riding’ body.¹⁶⁹ Mary is taken along for the ride, as much the foil for Joseph’s household control and manly performance,¹⁷⁰ as the token bearer of nativist prophecy fulfillment.

Luke’s characterization of the dutiful, house-holding Joseph also seemingly naturalizes the dominant economic and political order of the Roman empire. Luke’s ‘passing’ references to both Augustus’s pet census—an economically oppressive, yet patently invisible, component of the imperial regime¹⁷¹—and Quirinius’s military presence at the borders of Judea, are not the only instances of Luke’s reproduction of Rome’s shadow. In the infancy account alone, Luke cites other local and centralized power in the forms of Herod, king of Judea (1.5), and Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (3.1-2). As discussed above, Luke(-Acts) is in fact more ‘politically attuned’, and equivocal, than

¹⁶⁶ Schaberg, *Illegitimacy*, 128, comparing especially Matthew’s Mary with Luke’s Mary.

¹⁶⁷ See, e.g., Anderson, “Mary’s Difference”; Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 9-19, 113-40; Jane Schaberg, “Feminist Interpretations of the Infancy Narrative of Matthew,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 13, no. 1 (1997): 35-62, who offers a comprehensive summary of and response to the many and varied interpretations of the representation of Mary in both Matthew and Luke’s infancy accounts.

¹⁶⁸ In fictive prophetic fulfillment of Mic 5.2. Others have found in the census a messianic fulfillment of Ps 87.6: “The Lord records, as he registers the peoples, ‘This one was born there’”; cf. Origen’s *Quinta* Ps 87.6; Eusebius *Psalms* 87; as discussed by Brown, *Birth*, 417-18; and dismissed by Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 76. See also discussion in J. Duncan M. Derrett, “Further Light on the Narratives of the Nativity,” *NovT* 17 (1975) 81-108 (85-87).

¹⁶⁹ See Marshall, *Luke*: “The fact that Mary journeyed with Joseph at what was ostensibly an advanced state of pregnancy has been a problem to some commentators, so much so that some have explained her safe journey as miraculous” (106); see, e.g., H. K. Luce, *The Gospel According to S. Luke: With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 98.

¹⁷⁰ Derrett, “Further Light on the Narratives of the Nativity,” 93-94, suggests that “[i]n order to establish his own pedigree and his own citizenship rights in the paternal line (cf. Lk. iii 23-31) Joseph could well have needed to be there”; however “Mary’s presence there was not in order to be enrolled...for that could easily have been done on her behalf by the head of the household where they lodged, but because the child, if born there, and legitimately descended from a citizen...would qualify as a citizen by birth...To get the child born there his mother must necessarily travel with her husband.” While Derrett overstates the evidence, his suggestions do serve to highlight Joseph’s role as responsible household head.

¹⁷¹ See Horst R. Moehring, “The Census in Luke as an Apologetic Device,” in David Edward Aune, ed., *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 144-160; Bovon, *Luke*, 83-84.

most other Second Testament writings,¹⁷² and Joseph's act of yielding to the imperial pat down for military and financial service, too, wavers between (laudable) convention¹⁷³ and (abject) betrayal.¹⁷⁴

However, the census scene (2.1-5) is further complicated, both by its highly constructed syntax—where, like the elegant, legitimating style of the prologue (1.1-4), Luke's excellent Greek shines “like a good deed in a naughty world”¹⁷⁵ and signals, especially to those among Luke's implied readers ‘with ears to hear’, the pivotal importance of this particular narrative moment—and by another set of (un)easy juxtapositions: more than an attempt at historiographical acuity, Luke fixates on the political context of first century Judea so as to place the Emperor at the foot of Jesus' manger.¹⁷⁶ In the capable hands of the implied author, Augustus' imperial posturing becomes a bowing to nativist prophecy fulfillment, and Jesus becomes an unassuming mimic-σωτήρ (‘savior’) and κύριος (“lord”), heir to the “world peace” (γῆς εἰρήνη, 2.14) that also made Rome great/terrifying. That is, the “events” (τῶν πραγμάτων) as they unfold in Luke and in which the Romans have their part to play, are ultimately under supreme divine control.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Gary Gilbert, “Luke-Acts and Negotiation of Authority and Identity in the Roman World,” in Christine Helmer with Charlene T. Higbe, eds., *The Multivalence of Biblical Texts and Theological Meanings (Symposium 37)*; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 83-104 (84-85); Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke,” 153; and sources cited above at nn. 1-2.

¹⁷³ See Bruce W. Winter, “The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors: Romans 13.3-4 and 1 Peter 2.14-15,” *JSNT* 34 (1988): 87-103. The Pastorals, too, have a widely noted concern with the views of outsiders (1 Tim 2.1-2; 3.7; 5.14; Titus 3.1), and ostensibly enforce rather than subvert “deference and hierarchy” while seeking a place in the Roman imperial order; see D'Angelo, “Knowing How to Preside,” 273; cf. Jouette M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 31-33; MacDonald, *Early Christian Women*, 154-78. On imperially mobilized rhetoric of ‘submission’ more generally, see Conway, *Behold the Man*, 99-100.

¹⁷⁴ Green, *Luke*, 121: “many would have found in the census a disturbing reminder of the alien rule of Rome, and in the ensuing demand of tribute a sign of loyalty to the emperor that compromised fidelity to Yahweh.” Cf. Bovon, *Luke*, 83: “Objection to any census in Israel had gained force, though, the minds of people had become agitated and drifted apart over this question.” Such statements are primarily based on reactions to other Roman censuses as described by Josephus, *Ant.* 15.365; 16.64; 17.355; 18.1-2.

¹⁷⁵ Wilfred L. Knox, *Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity* (London: H. Milford, 1944): for, just following 2.1-5, with verse 6 the narrative immediately lapses back into a “riot of parataxis and semitic pronouns” (9).

¹⁷⁶ Brent, *The Imperial Cult*: “In associating what was probably a regional or provincial census with a decree of Caesar himself, the author of Luke-Acts clearly wished to associate the birth of Jesus with Augustus” (83); cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 400.

¹⁷⁷ Indeed, as Walaskay notes (“‘And so we came to Rome,’” 27): “Augustus had a part to play in God's plan for salvation. His edict set the plan in motion, Jesus the Messiah was born appropriately in Bethlehem, and the angels sang the doxology that the pax Augusta was completed (complemented) by the pax Christi.” See also above discussion at n. 12. Similarly, Billings, “At the Age of 12,” suggests that “Luke seeks to present Jesus as a significant figure in history in accordance with the conventions of contemporary Greco-Roman biography, and to transmit through his infancy narrative those traditions about Jesus which assist in presenting him as the ultimate superior and successor to the deified Augustus” (70).

Meanwhile Joseph, caught between “the totalizing claims of one empire—the Roman—[and] the totalizing claims of another—God’s Kingdom,”¹⁷⁸ becomes an emblem of Luke’s “postcolonial condition,” the everyday, split subject embodying “a highly unstable anti-imperial colonial imperialism.”¹⁷⁹ Not unlike Luke’s Jesus’ own creative resistance to Roman taxation (20.25), Joseph’s fiscal pragmatism “remains strategically veiled in ambiguity”—rendering both unto Caesar’ (his census enrollment) and also, though unwittingly, ‘unto God’ (the Messiah, the son of David, in the city of David).¹⁸⁰

What seems to me the most prudent literary¹⁸¹ reading of the census passage (2.1-5), then, given its highly constructed syntax and colonial funambulism, is *not* to simply resolve Luke’s empire wrestling via Joseph into a univocal position supporting Zealot-dissociation (an *apologia pro*

¹⁷⁸ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke,” 139.

¹⁷⁹ Fernando F. Segovia, “The Gospel of John,” in Fernando F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 156-193 (192).

¹⁸⁰ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke,” suggests that Jesus’ quip to “Return to Caesar, Caesar’s stuff, and to God, God’s stuff” (20.25) either promotes “a covert, yet thoroughgoing, denunciation of the imposed Roman monetary economy on which imperial exploitation is based,” or, at the very least, carves out space for the salvo “that the rightful demands of God’s kingdom might conflict with those of Caesar’s” (141); see also, and cited by Burrus, R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 89-90; Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: the Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 99. See also Penner and Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender in Acts,” 265-66: “images of potent male powerbrokers dotting (and darting across) the Lukan landscape, being marked also as resistant colonial subjects who proffer a new royal ideology, both challenge the current configurations of power but in that same moment also reify those same structures by valuing the dynamics and aspiring to the aims of *imperium* itself.”

¹⁸¹ Details of Luke’s census account are problematic from an historical point of view, summarized well by Emil Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964), 519-43. See also Erich Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1929), 32ff; Paul W. Barnett, “ἀπογραφή and ἀπογράφειν in Luke 2.1-5,” *Expository Times* 85 (1974): 377-80; John Nolland, *Luke 1-9.20* (WBC 35a; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 99-102; Wayne Brindle, “The Census and Quirinius: Luke 2:2,” *JETS* 27 (1984): 43-52; T. P. Wiseman, “‘There Went Out a Decree From Caesar Augustus,’” *NTS* 33 (1987): 479-80; Marshall, *Luke*, 99-104; Brown, *Birth*, 547-56; Green, *Luke*, 122. The summary of the debate over the ‘historicity’ of Luke’s census account by Henry J. Cadbury, “Roman Law and the Trial of Paul,” in F. J. Floakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity* V (London: Macmillan, 1932), is still valid: “Luke’s accuracy about the census in Luke 2.1 does not seem to have been vindicated yet in spite of many attempts” (318, n.4).

ecclesia),¹⁸² empire-legitimation (an *apologia pro imperio*),¹⁸³ or ruler-cult supersession.¹⁸⁴ Rather, Joseph's 'obedience' seems to stand as its own constitutive form of empire negotiation,¹⁸⁵ further suggesting that, for Luke, 'resistance' comes in unassuming packages, veiled in 'the ideological terms of reference' or 'public transcript' by which Rome legitimated its own rule, and embodying the most threatening of critiques. As James C. Scott suggests: "The system may have most to fear from those subordinates among whom the institutions of hegemony have been most successful."¹⁸⁶ With Joseph, I suggest, Luke soft-pedals an outwardly compliant, time-biding, menace of 'everyday' resistance—a form of empire negotiation that feasibly had the most cultural and political purchase with the better-to-dos of Luke's implied audience, those among the hordes of colonial subjects who *could* conceivably afford to 'wait-and-see'.

¹⁸² See, e.g., Moehring, "The Census in Luke as an Apologetic Device": "This is speculation, but the conscious dissociation of the Christians from the nationalist Jewish movement as illustrated *inter alia* at the point of origin of both movements can be accepted as the real intent of the *weltgeschichtliche Passus* in Luke" (159); cf. Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1966): "Joseph's journey to Bethlehem is a decision against the Zealot way. It is an act of obedience toward Rome" (79); Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas, Das Neue Testament Deutsch*, Bd. 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 38: "Joseph, however, honors God's will also in Caesar's command. The imperial decree which ordered the census later led to severe disturbances among the Jews and contributed significantly to the founding of the anti-Roman Zealot movement. By obeying the imperial command as a matter of course, Joseph remained aloof from all of this."

¹⁸³ See, e.g., Walaskay, "And so we came to Rome," 64-67; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 205-219; Billings, "At the Age of 12," 88.

¹⁸⁴ Bovon, *Luke*, 83: "the 'political theology' of Augustus, supported particularly in the East by the religious worship of the ruler, is unmasked and invalidated by the christological claim"; cf. Brown, who contrasts the advent of the *pax Augusta* with the *pax Christi* (*Birth*, 415)

¹⁸⁵ See Stanley E. Porter, "The Reasons for the Lukan Census," in Alexander J.M. Wedderburn, ed., *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 165-188; Gilbert, "Luke-Acts and Negotiation of Authority"; Burrus, "The Gospel of Luke."

¹⁸⁶ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 106-107.

3.6 Luke's Audience and the Making(s) of an Average Joe

In the preceding pages I examined how Luke constructs (everyday) masculinity in and through Joseph's characterization, a description of the makings (the everyday ingredients) of Luke's Average Joe. In what follows, I take up the question of the mechanisms behind and in front of the making (discursive construction of the everyday) of Luke's Average Joe, and attempt to explain how Luke's representations of (everyday) masculinities structure power relations in his audience(s). Here the complex issue of Luke's implied audience most explicitly comes to the fore. Who is Luke's audience(s), and how does Joseph's characterization fit within Luke's gendering of power relations of/ in that audience?

Luke-Acts is set into a metatextual frame created by the much-studied prologue (Luke 1.1–4; cf. Acts 1.1), an opening dedication which renders this two-volume work as a literary exchange between elite men (whether real or imagined).¹⁸⁷ As Conway and D'Angelo have both suggested, elite masculinity is inscribed in the prologues in terms of both its *literariness* or *textuality* and its invocation of the standards of Roman social *stratification*.¹⁸⁸ Theophilus's elite status is intimated by the epithet *κράτιστε*, "Most Excellent," which denotes either his official high-ranking position¹⁸⁹ or

¹⁸⁷ See Heinz Schürmann, "Evangelienchrift und kirchliche Unterweisung: Die repräsentative Funktion der Schrift nach Lk 1, 1–4," in idem, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien*, 251–71. One should perhaps agree with Eduard Norden that Luke 1.1–4 represents the best-constructed sentence in the NT (*Agnostos Theos*, 316 n.1). See J.B. Tyson's analysis of the implied reader (and author) of Luke-Acts: *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 19–41; and idem, "Jews and Judaism in Luke-Acts: Reading as a Godfearer," *NTS* 41 (1995) 19–38. A number of critics compare Luke's "inscribed author" to Josephus, who also presents the events of his narrative to an "inscribed reader with a Roman name" (Epaphroditos); see Vernon K. Robbins, "The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts," in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 304–32 (314). See also D'Angelo, "'Knowing How to Preside,'" 285: "Although some interpreters have suggested that this author was a woman, the masculine participle in 1:3 (*παρηκολουθηκότι*, Luke 1:3) establishes a masculine persona for the narrator"; Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View," *JBL* 109 (1990): 441–61 (443).

¹⁸⁸ Conway, *Behold the Man*, 128–29; and D'Angelo, "'Knowing How to Preside,'" 284–86.

¹⁸⁹ As the Greek equivalent of the Latin epithet, *Egregius*, the title *κράτιστος* occurs in the New Testament always in the vocative and only here and in the correspondence between Luke's Paul and the Roman procurators Felix (Acts 23.26; 24.3) and Festus (26.25), governors of minor provinces from the equestrian rank. Papyri and official documents illustrate this usage copiously; see Henry J. Cadbury, "Commentary on the Preface of Luke," in F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity* 1 (London: Macmillan, 1920), 505–7; cf. D'Angelo, "'Knowing How to Preside,'" 285; C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, 13–15.

his eminence as a sponsor of literature.¹⁹⁰ In turn, Luke procures status as a client providing a professional, ‘scientific’ service to his elite patron.¹⁹¹ In passing the accounts of “eyewitnesses” (αὐτόπται) and subsequent “guardians of the message” (ὕπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου) through the grid of his extensive (ἄνωθεν; πᾶσιν) and meticulous (ἀκριβῶς) research (Luke 1.1–2), Luke assures his ‘most excellent’ benefactor that the difference between his orderly account (καθεξῆς) and existing narratives (διήγησιν) is one that will grant “surety” (τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, 1.4; cf. Acts 21.34; 22.30; 25.26).¹⁹² Luke justifies his writing of a fresh book alongside existing works on the same topic by invoking his training—his gift to Theophilus is the surety gained from inscribing his literary project with the contours of trustworthy, reliable Greco-Roman *paideia*. The figure of *Theophilus*, then, is the author’s key to winning the goodwill of a broader audience of similar stature: urban individuals with some means and influence residing somewhere in the Hellenistic east of the Roman empire.¹⁹³ As implied exemplar or official reader, *Theophilus* accentuates aspects of the

¹⁹⁰ As the Greek equivalent of the Latin epithet, *Optimus*, the title κράτιστος (“most excellent”) “does not constrain one to assume that Theophilus was a high-ranking official” (Bovon, *Luke*, 23). The term also appears in the dedications of literary works, the dedicatees of which did not necessarily occupy an official, high-ranking position: e.g., *Optimus* was the epithet awarded to Trajan by the senate and connected by Pliny to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* (“best and greatest”; Pliny, *Pan.* 2.7; 88.4–8; *Letters* 10.1.2). See also Julian Bennett, *Trajan, Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times* (2d ed.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 105–6.

¹⁹¹ See Halvor Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts,” in Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 241–68 (267); Loveday Alexander, “Luke’s Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing,” *NovT* 28 (1986): 48–74; and idem, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), passim, esp. 172–76, 190–91. Cf. Vernon K. Robbins, “Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography and Luke-Acts,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 6 (1979) 94–108; Sean A. Adams, “Luke’s Preface and Its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander,” *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 177–91.

¹⁹² LSJ 266; BDAG 147. As Bovon (*Luke*, 23) suggests (following Cadbury, “Commentary,” 509): “the word ‘reliability’ (ἀσφάλεια) is placed at the end of the sentence with intentional emphasis,” and, “in works of history, in legal usage, and in the arena of political power,” the term is used to express “the reliability of information, or of a source, document, or report, sometimes connected with ἐπιγινώσκω (‘to discern’) or γράφω (‘to write.’)”

¹⁹³ So Marshall, *Luke*, 33. Cf. David L. Balch (“Rich and Poor, Proud and Humble in Luke-Acts,” in L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough, eds., *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995], 223), who suggests “urban Christians located in some significant city in the eastern Mediterranean”; see also Harold Riley, *Preface to Luke* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), 131; P. Lampe, *Ephesus, Die Lokalisation der Lukas-Leser* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992). Esler, *Community and Gospel*, proposes Antioch and further suggests that a number of features in Luke-Acts signal that some members of the intended audience were wealthy and influential, possibly even decurions or magistrates (at the very top of the local social, economic and political hierarchy): high literary style (Lk. 1.1–4; 2.1–5; Acts 27); focus upon converts of elevated status, economic position and political power (Lk. 7.1–10; 8.1–3; 23.47; Acts 8.26–39; Acts 13.1, 7; 10.1ff; 17.12; 19.31); focus (especially in the *Sondergut* tradition) on warnings to the ‘rich’ (3.10–14; 12.13–21; 13.33; 14.12–14; 16.9; 16.19–31; 18.18–30) (164–200).

broader audience's ('elite male') competence, that which made them highly suited to appreciate Luke's orderly, meticulous, and reliable work.¹⁹⁴

While the prologue's deployment of an elite Christian masculinity grants the author's project a hearing among the imperial *literati*, Luke may at the same time communicate with more than just males of the equestrian rank, equipped with the means of sponsoring literary activity.¹⁹⁵ Luke-Acts likely would also have been accessible to more than just those individuals who had received "prior instruction" (*κατήχησις*; cf. Luke 1.4).¹⁹⁶ While the author directs no *explicit* attention to Other readers and hearers, according to Brigitte Kahl, "Lk. 1.24-56 and Acts 16.13-15,40 permit the assumption that around Luke, next to the 'Theophilus' type of reader, there was also the highly different 'Lydia' type and a context of counterculture and opposition."¹⁹⁷ The author's communicating with Others in different voices certainly leaves open the possibility of a countercultural or oppositional reading of Luke-Acts.¹⁹⁸ Yet, when analyzing early Christian discourse, we ought not overlook its conscious reliance on rhetoric and representation.¹⁹⁹ Instead we would do well to locate Luke's universalizing narratives "in the same stream of Christian rhetoric that permitted...the astonishingly well-read third-century exegete Origen happily to accept Celsus'

¹⁹⁴ Thus, *Theophilus* acts as a kind of narrativized *captatio benevolentiae*; so D'Angelo, "Knowing How to Preside," 285. On the importance of establishing goodwill of one's audience, see comments of Quintilian in his lengthy discussion of the composition of the *exordium* in forensic speeches (iv.1.16, 26). Cf. Bruce Winter, "The Importance of the *Captatio Benevolentiae* in the Speeches of Tertullus and Paul in Acts 24:1-21," *Journal of Theological Studies* 42, no. 2 (1991): 505-531.

¹⁹⁵ E.g., the emphasis Berenike's during Paul's speech to Agrippa (Acts 26.2, 19; cf. 25.23; 26.30) and, more generally, the author's unique inclusion of stories about women; see Constance F. Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 139-46 (138-41); D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts," 447-48.

¹⁹⁶ See, e.g., D'Angelo, "Knowing How to Preside," 286: "Of all the early Christian texts, Luke-Acts seems most accessible to exoteric readers. Even though as an example he is both exotic and elite, the portrait of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 gives evidence that the author is quite conscious of the potential interest of uninitiated readers."

¹⁹⁷ Brigitte Kahl, "Reading Luke Against Luke: Non-Uniformity of Text, Hermeneutics of Conspiracy and the 'Scriptural Principle' in Luke 1," in Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Luke* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 70-88 (85).

¹⁹⁸ But see Vander Stichele and Penner ("All the World's a Stage," 380) who contest Kahl's reading: "It is one thing to suggest that such a reading of [Luke-Acts] is possible and another to claim that it was Luke's intention that it be read in this way. Moreover, the question remains whether there are any other indications apart from the Lydia episode to substantiate the claim of an intended subversive reader."

¹⁹⁹ See the useful remarks of Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 36-39.

criticism that Christians are ‘the most illiterate and bucolic yokels,’ and turn it to his advantage (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 3.55-60).²⁰⁰ For, not only does Luke make Jesus the mimic-emperor, σωτήρ (‘savior’) and κύριος (‘lord’), heir to the ‘world peace’ (γῆς εἰρήνη, 2.14) that also made Rome great/terrifying; but the host of Luke’s other merry men (ἀνὴρ)—both his heroic leading men and, perhaps most tellingly, his everyday *non*-heroes—also strive actively to acquire and maintain their own manly prestige within the many arenas in which ideal masculinities held symbolic power in the Roman Empire. Luke’s universalizing narrative mediation of ‘the stuff that happened’ puts forth a broad range of actors, including the figure of the everyday, uneducated, silent, Galilean *man* (Luke 1.27) Joseph. How, then, might Luke have turned his characterization of this ‘most illiterate and bucolic yokel’ Joseph to his advantage? How does Joseph’s characterization refract Luke’s concerns to place his tale of the emerging Jesus movement(s) on the elite male, world stage of imperial Rome? Mary D’Angelo has helpfully introduced other questions we might ask about Luke’s Other readers: “What of the woman reader or hearer in the conversation of Luke-Acts?”²⁰¹ As an extension of D’Angelo’s line of questioning, we might also inquire: “What of the non-elite man reader or hearer in the conversation of Luke-Acts?” What sort of ‘surety’ would Luke’s characterization of Joseph communicate to such an individual? A rustic (peasant) man such as Joseph hearing or reading Luke-Acts would surely find himself included in the narrative. His proper place in relation to men of status would be confirmed (Luke 2.1-5, 22-24), but he would not miss the realization that though Joseph is ghostly silent and fiscally ‘obedient’, he also plays an active role in bringing nativist prophecy to fulfillment. Similarly, Joseph’s oblique narrative presence would offer the peasant everyday man a

²⁰⁰ Andrew S. Jacobs, “A Family Affair: Marriage, Class, and Ethics in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” *J ECS* 7 (1999): 105-138 (137); reprinted as “‘Her Own Proper Kinship’: Marriage, Class, and Women in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” in Amy-Jill Levine, Maria Mayo Robbins, eds., *A Feminist Companion to the New Testament Apocrypha* (London: T & T Clark, 2006). See Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.55–60 (SC 136: 128–40); trans. in Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 165. On other such rhetorical uses of the ‘everyday’, see also Cameron, *Christianity and Rhetoric*, 111: “The Pauline claim to truth—in contrast to the ‘wisdom of the world’—could be turned to good effect, converting charges of uncouth lack of refinement into claims of simplicity and truth”; see also Dale Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 147-49.

²⁰¹ D’Angelo, “‘Knowing How to Preside,’” 293.

place alongside the noble *Theophilus*. As D'Angelo suggests, the masses of Luke's Other readers and hearers, including the Joseph-type reader, find themselves aligned with the honorable man to whom the books are officially dedicated, "take up a position at his side, among the elevated ranks from which imperial governors are drawn. Like Theophilus, they investigate with the privileged knowledge of Christian instruction."²⁰² With his subdued characterization of Joseph, then, Luke may not just register an everyday man's roles, but also shape them, consciously or unconsciously, thereby communicating implicitly and in passing a particular 'natural' perception of how 'all' (including Joseph-type) men ought to behave.

An early Christian narrative like Luke-Acts is in this sense very much a tool of social identity formation,²⁰³ establishing broad gender patterns for its reading communities while exalting the order maintained in its early Christian paradigm and the resolute masculine *virtus* of even its non-heroes. For in Luke's narrative world, even silent, unlettered men like Joseph (ought to) possess virtues that derive from hegemonic cultural knowledge, shared norms, *ethoi*, and ideologies. Virtues are for the most part not listed or praised but performed in the narrative and communicated through example. Masculine virtue is constructed by the display of men, who: negotiate with the imperial governmental structure and the power and status it represented [the tax-paying Joseph]; "know how to preside over (the) household" and of well-regulated households; perform their obligations to temple and cult practice that linked imperial masculinity to the gods; and demonstrate their education and the training in masculinity it provided. Joseph as an everyday shadow of Luke's ideal man thus plays a significant, if also mostly an implicit, invisibly 'universal', role in Luke's overall masculinized 'social-theological logic'. Joseph haunts the background and his timely emergence from shadowy margins reinforces select indices of conventional masculine comportment and assignment, effortlessly holding power as if he were naturally entitled to it. Luke's Joseph, mimicking his elite

²⁰² D'Angelo, "Knowing How to Preside," 285-86.

²⁰³ See the extended discussion of this phenomenon in relation to Acts in M. Moreland, "The Jerusalem Community in Acts: Mythmaking and the Socio-rhetorical Functions of a Lukan Setting," in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 285-310.

male counterparts, will marry a virgin (1.27), sire legitimate children (1.31), distribute familial goods (1.32), fulfill cultic obligations (2.22-24, 41), properly govern his household (2.4-5), and pay his taxes (2.1-4). The sparseness, remoteness of Joseph's characterization in Luke, I suggest, is precisely what made (and makes) him productively malleable as a symbol. Non point-of-view characters just as easily carry an author's (more implicit) ideological baggage. Unfettered by specificity, distance affords non point-of-view characters with universal, masked appeal and applicability. With Luke's Joseph, then, less is more—'less Joseph' yields a high intensity of meanings and a kind of ubiquity that lends itself to repeatability in multiple, unrelated contexts. Paratactic characterization, whereby the maximum possible meaning is encompassed in the minimum number of character cues, of Luke's most basic, baseline man allows the social reproduction of naturalized gender patterns to be rendered nearly invisible.²⁰⁴ Luke's Average Joe: cipher of Luke's imperceptible, perhaps unconscious, recitational labors; obscured herald of ascendant myths of everyday male privilege and plenitude.

²⁰⁴ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley; New York: Vintage, 1980), 86: "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms."

4 JOSEPH OF NAZARETH IN THE *PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES*

4.1 The *Protevangelium of James*: ‘Something about Mary’ and Joseph

The *Protevangelium of James* (PJ) is obsessed with Mary’s purity. Its core narrative is, in particular, an encomiastic ‘Life of Mary’¹—as evidenced by its oldest extant title, *γενεσις Μαρίας αποκαλυψις Ιακωβ*.² This account of Mary’s *genesis* also exalts her virginity, perhaps in apologetic³ response to an emergent or continuing ‘illegitimacy tradition’ surrounding the irregularities of Jesus’

¹ See Émile De Strycker, “Le Protévangile de Jacques: Problèmes Critiques et Exégétiques,” in F. L. Cross, ed., *Studia Evangelica* III (TU 88; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), 339-359, who, in his argument for PJ’s original unity, stresses that the account of the “Nativity in the cave” is a logical continuation of this hagiographical “Life of Mary” (351-2), and he also makes it clear that he believes that the author of PJ is primarily interested in Mary, not in Jesus (354), or Joseph for that matter. Ronald Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas: with Introduction, Notes, and Original Text Featuring the New Scholars Version Translation* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 1995), classifies PJ as having an encomiastic purpose. The term *encomium* (ἐγκώμιον) refers to an oral or written form that is intended to convey praise of its subject. Hock states, “The most important part of an ἐγκώμιον, however, is the presentation of the person’s virtuous deeds, and the importance of Mary’s virtues is shown narratively by the amount of space devoted to documenting her virtue, especially her σωφροσύνη, or self-control” (19).

² This is the title of the oldest surviving Greek manuscript of PJ, which occupies the first forty-nine pages of a fifty-six page papyrus codex, *P. Bodm. V*, dated to the third century by Martin Testuz, the editor of the *editio princeps*; *Nativité de Marie: Papyrus Bodmer V* (Cologny-Genève, Switzerland: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1958). The title *Protevangelium* was given in the mid-sixteenth century by the French humanist scholar, Guillaume Postel, who ‘rediscovered’ a Greek manuscript of the text while on a visit to the East and then translated the text into Latin under this title. James K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), contends that Postel’s title implies that he deemed that “the contents of PJ were older than those in the canonical Gospels” (49). Concerning Postel’s ‘(re)discovery,’ see W. J. Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi: The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 16. In Orthodox circles PJ has retained its traditional title *Birth of Mary* (γενεσις Μαρίας) often with the appended description *Revelation of James* (αποκαλυψις Ιακωβ). For more discussion on the title and manuscript variations see William S. Vorster, “James, Protevangelium of,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* III (New York: Doubleday), 631.

³ As Andrew Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), remarks in passing: “There is no explicit attempt to depict Mary as a model for others to follow and the most likely motive for this presentation is an apologetic one” (193-194). On PJ as ‘apologetic’ literature, see E. Cothenet, “Le Protévangile de Jacques: origine, genre et signification d’ un premier midrash chrétien sur la Nativité de Marie,” *ANRW* 2.25.6 (1988): 4252-69 (esp. 4263, 4268, and 4254); de Strycker, “Le Protévangile de Jacques,” 354; P. Van Stempvoort, “The *Protevangelium Jacobi*, the Sources of Its Theme and Style and Their Bearing on Its Date,” in F. L. Cross, ed., *Studia Evangelica* III (TU 88; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964), 410-26 (esp. 410-11, 413-15); H. R. Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi: A Commentary* (trans. Gertrude E. van Baaren-Pape; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965), 15-17; Oscar Cullmann, “The Protevangelium of James,” in E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* I (rev. ed.; Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1991), 421-39 (424-25).

origins.⁴ More-so than even in the *Ascension of Isaiah*,⁵ PJ's depiction of Mary offers explicit evidence for the early belief that Mary's miraculous virginity was not only *ante partum* (before giving birth) but also *in partu* (in giving birth). With its obsessive focus on Mary and her purity/virginity, indeed "a reader who knew only the *Protevangelium* might reasonably conclude that Mary is the holy figure and that Jesus' holiness derives from her."⁶ Scholarship on the *Protevangelium of James*, too, it seems, is (lopsidedly) obsessed with Mary's purity: many scholars fixate on questions related to PJ's fixation⁷

⁴ Particularly the allegation cited by Celsus, an eclectic Platonist of the 2nd century CE, that Mary the so-called 'virgin' (ἡ παρθένος) had actually been divorced by her husband who suspected her of adultery, and that Jesus was born as the result of her illicit affair with a Roman soldier, called Πανθηρα (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.32; ANF 4.410). While the common legionary name, Πανθηρα, could have arisen from its satirical connection to the Greek word παρθένος, according to thoroughgoing analysis of the alleged patronymics of Jesus, namely *Pandera* and *Stada*, in later rabbinic sources in Edward Lipiński, "Pandera & Stada and Jehoshua bar Perahya," *Estetyka i Krytyka* 27, no. 3 (2012): 51-66, the story heard by Celsus from his Jewish informant echoes the *correct* meaning of *paṭṭīrā* since Mary has supposedly been *divorced* by her husband: "the Targumic and Talmudic connotation of *ptr* in the juridical sense of 'divorcing,' for instance *ptr wtryk*, 'he dismissed and sent away.' The 'writ of divorce' was called *gt ptwryn* or 'grt ptwryn'" (53). See also Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 15-24.

⁵ See George T. Zervos, "Seeking the Source of the Marian Myth: Have We Found the Missing Link?," in F. Stanley Jones, ed., *Which Mary? The Marys of Early Christian Tradition* (Atlanta: SBL, 2002).

⁶ Beverly R. Gaventa, *Mary: Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 119.

⁷ Aside from extensive text critical analysis of PJ and analysis of redaction history (and provenance, date, etc.) and literary context of the work, most (all?) recent individual studies have tended to reify PJ's obsession with Mary, as principally (if also *merely*) the source of all later Marian reflection; see John L. Allen, "The Protoevangelium of James as an Historia: The Insufficiency of the 'Infancy Gospel' Category," in Eugene Lovering, ed., *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 508-17 (515-17); Georg Kretschmar, "'Natus Ex Maria Virgine': Zur Konzeption und Theologie des Protevangelium Jacobi," in Cilliers Breytenbach, ed., *Anfänge der Christologie: Festschrift für Ferdinand Hahn zum 65* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); Jane Schaberg, "The Infancy of Mary of Nazareth," in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Shelly Matthews and Ann Graham Brock, eds., *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction 2* (New York: Crossroads, 1994), 708-27; Gaventa, *Mary*, 101-145; Mary F. Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002), 141-64; Jean Longère, et al, eds., *Marie dans les récits apocryphes chrétiens 1* (Paris: Médiaspaul, 2004); Pieter W. Van der Horst, "Sex, Birth, Purity and Asceticism in the *Protevangelium Jacobi*," and George Themelis Zervos, "Christmas with Salome," in Amy-Jill Levine and Maria Mayo Robbins, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Mariology* (London & New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 56-66 and 77-97, respectively; Bettina Eltrop and Claudia Janssen, "Protevangelium of James: God's Story Goes On," in Luise Schottroff, Marie-Theres Wacker, and Martin Rumscheidt, eds., *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature* (trans. Lisa Dahill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 990-996. Similarly, as noted above (n. 3), most (all?) of PJ's commentators fixate on PJ's apologetic fixation, see Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 14-19; Wilhelm Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 223; Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 49-50. Perhaps emblematic of the current *asymmetrical* trend in treating PJ's gendered concerns is the recent volume by Lily C. Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). In all of her 264 excellent and illuminating pages, Vuong restricts her analysis of 'Gender' to "the place and function of ritual, menstrual, and sexual purity in the portrayal and characterization of Mary" in PJ—that is, Vuong's study of 'Gender' per se is notably *inconspicuous*, especially given its paucity of critical reflection on contemporaneous constructions of men and masculinities (among other things), which, as I suggest below, is a significant (if also somewhat implicit) part of PJ's narrative world.

—fetishizing PJ’s fetish, as it were. Not dismissing the importance of such analyses of PJ’s Mary (and constructions of her purity, virginity, etc.), here I am concerned with allied questions related to some of PJ’s ‘secondary’⁸ or more implicit gendered concerns. Joseph makes a substantial and significant appearance in this work as well, and, as has rarely been acknowledged or put to critical reflection, Joseph is never far from the narrative center (even when he is).⁹ Similar to his showing in Matthew (1-2), *every single one* of PJ’s tales that feature Joseph (chapters 9-19) are narrated from *his* (not Mary’s) ‘point of view’: spatially, readers accompany Joseph as he is summoned from his building projects (PJ 9.1), takes Mary into his house (9.12), returns from his building projects (13.1), is summoned to court (15.9), departs for the Bethlehem census (17.5-6), and wanders (but does not wander) to find a midwife for Mary (18.1-3); “inside view” disclosures of Joseph’s thoughts, plans, and emotions (9.8, 11-12; 15.15-16.2; 17.7), including three especially striking, intimate soliloquies (13.2-5; 14.1-4; 17.2-4), establish surface structure empathy influencing how PJ’s readers construct the meaning of narrated events, opening the way for their participatory affective responses;¹⁰ dramatic irony based on Joseph’s (and, apparently also Mary’s)¹¹ ignorance of narrated information (13.1-10; cf. 12.6) creates suspense involving readers more deeply in Joseph’s tale;¹² narrative pacing slows to inhabit Joseph’s dream and vision spaces (14.5-6; 18.3-11); repetition of key words and phrases consistently foregrounds Joseph’s perspective—namely, his house(-building) (9.10, 12; 13.1, 4; 16.8), no less than his ‘taking’ (9.7, 11, 12; 13.3; 16.1, 8; 17.11) and ‘safe-keeping, guarding’ (9.7,

⁸ Recapitulating one of the comments about Matthew’s ‘secondary perspectives’ cited in my chapter on Matthew’s Joe; see Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary on Matthew 1-7* (trans. James E. Crouch; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 98: “This main scope of the Matthean narrative does not exclude secondary perspectives. It has an ethical secondary scope: the figure of the righteous Joseph and his obedience. Secondary perspectives that were important to the evangelist even though they were not his central concern...show how such a story can contain many levels.” My work in this chapter (and the others for that matter) is, in one sense, a large expansion of Luz’s aside, applying his basic assumption now in the context of another early Christian narrative, PJ. Here, I endeavor to unpack and disrupt the gendered ‘levels’ of implicit ‘secondary perspectives’ namely, PJ’s characterization and deployment of Joseph.

⁹ See discussion of Joseph’s ‘absent presence’ in PJ 10-11 below at nn. 49-54.

¹⁰ See Richard J. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

¹¹ See discussion of Mary’s ‘surprising’ ignorance of her Annunciation at nn. 85-87, below.

¹² See discussion of ‘audience awareness’ in Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51-52.

11; 13.3; 14.8) of his ‘wife’ (8.8; 17.3; 19.7, 8, 9), ‘this child’ (14.2, 5, 8; 17.2; 19.9); and, finally, a number of evaluative judgments mark Joseph as an exemplary figure (9.11; 13.5-6; 14.2-4; 14.7-8; 16.8; 17.4; 19.9).¹³ How, then, might we read PJ’s complex characterization of Joseph?

On the one hand it seems reasonable to assume that the Joseph character is simply part of the stock of canonical gospel traditions which the author of PJ employs in his narrative apology of Mary’s purity/virginity: the author of PJ preserves and shapes Matthaean and Lukan traditions about Joseph with Mary and Jesus. On the other hand, many of the episodes in which Joseph appears are largely a product of the ‘creative imagination’ of the author of PJ¹⁴ and plausibly provide important clues for reconstructing the author of PJ’s ways of thinking and those of the environment/audience addressed.¹⁵ Especially considering the prominent placement of this unique Joseph-centric

¹³ Joseph’s perspective in PJ, then, accords with each of the six point-of-view (narrative perspective) “planes” identified by Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), derived from Boris A. Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of Compositional Form* (trans. V. Zavarin and S. Wittig; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) and Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

¹⁴ Even PJ’s stories that employ material from Matthew and Luke do not so much ‘fill in the gaps’ as build competing versions onto the canonical scaffolding, citing a number of key LXX and post-biblical literary precursors, as I indicate in my ongoing discussion below. For a short summary of PJ’s literary borrowings, see Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 21-27. On PJ as ‘midrash’, see Edouard Cothenet, “Le Protévangile de Jacques: origine, genre et signification d’un premier midrash chrétien sur la nativité de Marie,” *ANRW* II.25.6 (1988), 4252-69. On PJ’s conspicuous intertextuality, see William S. Vorster, “The Protevangelium of James and Intertextuality,” in J. Petzer and P. Hartin, eds., *A South African Perspective on the New Testament: Essays by South African New Testament Scholars Presented to Bruce Manning Metzger During His Visit to South Africa in 1985* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 33-53.

Many of PJ’s innovations can also be productively compared to cultural/social conventions found in the Greek romances; see Oliver Ehlen, *Leitbilder und romanhafte Züge in apokryphen Evangelientexten. Untersuchungen zur Motivik und Erzählungsstruktur anhand des Protevangelium Jacobi und der Acta Pilati Graec. B* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004). On the romances and their significance for early Christian literature more generally, see Ronald Hock, “The Greek Novel,” in David E. Aune, ed., *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 127-46; and Richard Pervo, “Early Christian Fiction,” in J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman, eds., *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 239-54.

¹⁵ Paul Foster suggests, for example, that some of the mundane or problematic or embarrassing features of the infancy accounts of Matthew and Luke (e.g. the names Joseph and Mary, and the association with Nazareth) are “unlikely to have been created *de novo*, since they serve no theological purpose”; however, “when one turns to the Protevangelium there is very little that does not have a strong theological motivation”; “The Protevangelium of James,” *The Expository Times* 118, no. 12 (2007): 573-582 (581). Foster rightly highlights the ‘theological’ agenda of PJ’s literary project “which radically asserts the purity of Mary (not only sexual purity) and steadfastly preserves her virginity even after the birth of her son” (582). As I explore here, the author of PJ’s ‘agenda’ is not limited to ‘theological’ aims, but in the process of shaping ‘his’ narrative world rather deploys other ideological and gendered discourses as well. Perhaps tellingly, Foster neglects to treat any of PJ’s *Joseph-centric* innovations and their possible ‘motivations’.

material,¹⁶ then, we ought to pay close(r) attention to the gendered, ideological ground that Joseph's characterization provides for the author/community of PJ. In contrast to that of Luke and similar to that of Matthew, PJ's infancy account is arguably *Joseph's* tale (at least in the episodes in which he appears), and, as suggested by James H. Liu and János László with regards to prototypical in-group characters in 'historical' narratives,¹⁷ Joseph's point-of-view characterization in PJ feasibly plays a key role in mediating collective memory and putative in-group identity, concurrently bound up with the processes of 'everyday' male self-fashioning.

This chapter will explore how PJ's Joseph-centric tales engage with the processes of average-Joe making, revealing the world of everyday men in times of trial and hardship and a number of concerns that intersect with ancient indices of masculine comportment. While PJ's gendered representation of Joseph of Nazareth took shape within such broader cultural spheres and operated in reference to specific indices of gender behavior and sexual identity familiar to and promoted by ancient Mediterranean people preoccupied with masculinity, what we might call hegemonic articulations or patterns of masculinity,¹⁸ as I also demonstrate in this chapter, PJ's citation of these indices in his Joe-making is destabilized by vacillating reference to key masculine attributes, by partial affinity with imperial forms of masculinized authority, and through the construction of an

¹⁶ Joseph plays *as* a significant a narrative role as Mary herself does within two of her three 'life-cycle' stages depicted in PJ, which, as rightly observed by Tim Horner, correspond significantly to the three distinct stages of a female's life outlined in the Mishnah (*m. Nid.* 4.5; 5.4, 7-8; *m. Ket.* 1.2-3): (1) from conception to age three, (2) from three to twelve (when she is 'transferred' to Joseph), and (3) from twelve until the birth of Jesus (when she is 'protected' by Joseph). See "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," *J ECS* 12, no. 3 (2004): 313-335.

¹⁷ See James H. Liu and János László, "Narrative Theory of History and Identity: Social Identity, Social Representations, Society and the Individual," in Gail Moloney and Iain Walker, eds., *Social Representations and Identity: Content, Process, and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 85-108.

¹⁸ The term "hegemonic masculinity," first used in a study by Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell, and John Lee ("Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," in Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* [Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987]; see also R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1987]; and idem, *Masculinities* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995]), refers to culturally-contingent, privileged forms of masculinity, which "masquerade as being unitary" and "determine the standards against which other masculinities ['subordinate variants'] are defined" (Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, eds., *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* [London; New York: Routledge, 1994], 19). Although there is continuity here with the feminist critique of patriarchal structures, the concept of hegemonic masculinity/ies rouses a broader consideration of "how relations of power and powerlessness are gendered, and how, in any particular setting, attributions of masculinity are assumed or imposed" (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, *Dislocating Masculinity*, 20).

ambivalent manly comportment in relationship to the deity. Finally, because I am concerned not only with how PJ constructs (everyday) masculinity in and through Joseph's characterization, I also tackle the question of how the (everyday) masculinities PJ constructs structure power relations in his audience(s). In other words, I am concerned not just with description of the makings (the everyday ingredients) of PJ's Average Joe, but I also attempt to expose and destabilize the various mechanisms behind and in front of the making (discursive construction of the everyday) of PJ's Average Joe.

4.2 PJ's Rodhandling Priests, their Dove, and the Making(s) of an Average Joe (PJ 8-9)

The first of PJ's Joseph-centric episodes is the tale which recounts the rhabdomantic (s)election of Joseph as Mary's 'keeper' (PJ 8-9).¹⁹ So the story goes, naturalizing the hegemonic fiction of 'everyday' male privilege: Mary was brought up, 'fed like a dove' (ὡσεὶ περιστέρα νεμομένη; 8.2),²⁰ in the Jerusalem Temple,²¹ and when she came of age and ostensibly posed a threat to cultic

¹⁹ Chapter/verse divisions are based on those articulated in Hock, *The Infancy Gospels*.

²⁰ Greek text taken from Michel Testuz, *Nativité de Marie: Papyrus Bodmer V* (Cologny-Genève, Switzerland: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1958). Unless otherwise noted, Greek quotations of PJ will follow this text and English translations are my own.

²¹ Mary's presence as a virgin in the Jerusalem Temple quite arguably is not 'everyday'; see Horner, "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," 323: "As mentioned in the introduction, there are many things in Prot. Jas. that cannot be attached to anything even remotely a part of the world of Judaism as we understand it. What would a Jew think of the idea of a virgin being raised in the temple? There is no biblical precedent for such a practice." However, see Megan Nutzman, "Mary in the Protevangelium of James: A Jewish Woman in the Temple?," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): 551-578, who suggests Mary's temple associations are arguably less strange than previously acknowledged. What is more patently 'everyday', however, is PJ's underlying assumption of male privilege to manage the virgin minor daughter; see e.g., Mary Rose D'Angelo, "'Knowing How to Preside over His Own Household': Imperial Masculinity and Christian Asceticism in the Pastorals, Hermas, and Luke-Acts," in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 265-96.

purity, the Temple ‘priests’ (ἱερείς; 8.3) sought divine guidance to decide how best to discharge her (8.4-8).²²

Alluding to the election of Aaron in Numbers 17, an angel commanded that all the widowers should be gathered together with their “rods” (ράβδου) and Mary “will be the wife of the one to whom the Lord God shows a sign” (ὧ̄ ἐὰν ἐπιδείξῃ κύριος ὁ θεὸς σημεῖον τούτῳ ἔσται γυνή; 8.7-8). But whereas the ‘sign’ (σημεῖον) of divine favor in Numbers 17 was the budding/flowering of the rod, here the sign is somewhat different:

Ἰωσήφ δὲ ρίψας τὸ σκέπαρνον ἐξῆλθεν αὐτὸς εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῶν καὶ συναχθέντες ὁμοῦ ἀπῆλθαν πρὸς τὸν ἱερέα λαβόντες τὰς ράβδους δεξάμενος δὲ ὁ ἱερεὺς τὰς ράβδους ἀπ’ αὐτῶν εἰσῆλθεν τὸ ἱερόν καὶ ἠύξατο τελέσας δὲ εὐχὴν ἔλαβεν τὰς ράβδους καὶ ἐξῆλθεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ σημεῖον οὐκ ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς τὴν δὲ ἐσχάτην ράβδον ἔλαβε ὁ Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἰδοὺ περιστερὰ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ τῆς ράβδου καὶ ἐπεστάθη ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ

Throwing down his ax, Joseph went out to their meeting. When they had gathered as a group, they took the rods and went to the priest. After receiving everyone’s rod, the priest went into the temple and prayed. When he was finished with the prayer, he took the rods and went out and distributed them, and there was no sign among them. Then Joseph grasped his rod and, behold (!), a dove came out from the rod and stood on Joseph’s head. (PJ 9.1-6)

The dynamic phallocentrism of the scene’s central imagery is hard to miss—imagery that both recites the common conceptual metaphor in the Hebrew Bible (and beyond), where “rod” or “staff” signals a naturalized extension of presumed phallic dominance and discipline,²³ and mirrors homosocial power shifts prominently featured throughout the remainder of the scene, as we will see. What, then,

²² Although not stated explicitly, the priests appear to be concerned about Levitical ‘blood’ stipulations restricting woman from the sanctuary (Lev. 12.1–6; 18.19); see Charlotte E. Fonrobert, *Menstrual Purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000). Lily Vuong aptly suggests that PJ’s “echoing of Levitical and Rabbinic teachings becomes especially relevant in the text’s presentation of menstrual purity brought about by the description of Mary leaving the Temple precinct at the age of twelve at the suggestion of the priests who fear that she may pollute it”; see “‘Let Us Bring Her Up to the Temple of the Lord’: Exploring the Boundaries of Jewish and Christian Relations through the Presentation of Mary in the Protevangelium of James,” in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Dettwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 418-432 (429); reprinted as part of her *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

²³ Cf. Aaron’s rod (Num. 17.8; cf. Heb. 9.4), no less than the apostle Paul’s ‘stick’ (1 Cor. 4.21; cf. 4.14-15), or even God’s rod, the Spirit (Prov. 13.24; 23.13-14).

of the dove—which “behold (!)” (ἰδοὺ), suddenly issues forth from Joseph’s *rod*, landing on his head.²⁴ Surely the dove signals some sort of sticky divine (s)election, standing in for the budding-rod sign from Numbers 17,²⁵ and perhaps echoing synoptic Gospel traditions about the appearance and authorizing sign of the dove at Jesus’ baptism (Lk. 3.22 || Mt. 3.17 || Mk. 1.11).²⁶ The somewhat analogous dove omen from Jesus’ baptism is positioned by Michael Luke Peppard (at least in Mark’s handling) as a colonial counter-symbol to the Roman eagle, part of his reading of this event as a divine adoption, the beginning of Jesus’ accession as a “counter-emperor” who “will rule not in the spirit of the bellicose eagle, but in the spirit of the pure, gentle, peaceful, and even sacrificial dove.”²⁷ Might it be plausible to read PJ’s dove scene as carrying a similar ‘counter-imperial’ message? The answer it seems is: *not quite*. PJ’s dove scene hardly disrupts the authority or methods of imperial power. PJ’s dove alights not upon Jesus, but upon Joseph—a figure with considerably less subversive

²⁴ Salacious imagery is not foreign to PJ; see, e.g., Salome’s graphic post-partum ‘inspection’ of Mary (PJ 20). Cf. Jennifer A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 81, who says it well: PJ, as “a work obsessed with Mary’s purity, supplies the vivid image of Salome’s finger, singed as she probes Mary’s postpartum vagina.”

²⁵ See Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 71. Cf. William D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988-1997), who note that “εὐδοκέω is the language of election and this nicely fits the theme of choice” (1.332); cf. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.29, which recounts the dove-sealed accession of Fabian to the episcopal seat of Rome (236 CE) in connection to the baptism of Jesus.

²⁶ Dove imagery employed at Jesus’ baptism is notoriously ambiguous—e.g., Davies and Allison, Matthew 1.331-334, discuss sixteen (!) ways of interpreting the dove imagery. Cf. Stephen Gero, “The Spirit as a Dove at the Baptism of Jesus,” *NovT* 18 (1976): 17-35.

²⁷ See Michael Luke Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 123. Peppard, too, offers a brief reading of the rod/dove scene in PJ and suggests that “the dove here marks a critical moment in the sonship of Jesus. Whereas the dove in Mark’s baptism account signifies the adoption of Jesus by his divine father, the dove in the PJ signifies the earthly (non-biological) father of Jesus—an earthly succession of human sonship” (123). To be clear, Peppard never suggests that PJ’s dove might also function similarly as an imperial counter-symbol.

promise, at least according to PJ's rendering²⁸—heralding not a revolutionary, divine adoption, a “rise to power” of “a different son of God,” but the decidedly more mundane, and, for Joseph, demeaning (see below, 9.8), matter of who is conscripted to *keep* the temple's dove (PJ 8.2). The temple's dove, Mary, and the dove's roost, Joseph, are in fact both bound by the naturalized authority of one important group of mediating ‘brokers’ of imperial dominion: that of the Judean priestly elite who controlled the Jerusalem temple cult and maintained some level of independence in local matters, though who also necessarily collaborated (however ambivalently) with figures representing direct Roman power in the region—governors and military tribunes, centurions and soldiers, and ambiguously ‘Jewish’ tetrarchs dependent on Roman support, who do not play a major role in the core of PJ's narrative.²⁹ At its most basic level, the dove/rod scene establishes the (high) priest as the one to whom a man must bring his rod.

While PJ does not explicitly connect its dove omen with the autonomous ‘embodiment’ (σωματικῶς εἶδει) of the Spirit from the Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism (Lk. 3.22 || Mt. 3.17 || Mk. 1.11), it is however, another sort of (rigid) extension of God's power/authority, not alighting or *coming down* upon, but rather, “standing upon” (ἐπεστάθη ἐπὶ), erect and true, Joseph's head (τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ; PJ 9.6). The dove also signals the substantiation of the high priest's oracular inquiry, summoned by the high priest's temple prayer. Following the ‘dovely’ eruption of

²⁸ As I discussed in my chapter on Matthew's Average Joe, Matthew's Joseph has considerably more ‘subversive promise’. Note also that in PJ Joseph is not once referred to as ‘Son of David’, perhaps the strongest element of Joseph's ‘counter-imperial’ characterization in the Gospels. In PJ, Mary is David's descendent (PJ 10.2-4). As Vuong (*Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 142, n. 105) notes, other second-century Christian thinkers similarly assert Mary's Davidic ancestry, “especially in light of the fact that Joseph does not really pass on his lineage to Jesus except in the indirect sense of an adopted father.” In light of my readings of the Josephs of Matthew and Luke, I would add that the divine kingship legitimacy, implied by Joseph's ‘royal adoption’ of Jesus, had perhaps lost its original significance. Cf. Ignatius, *Eph.* 18.2; Justin, *Dial.* 43, 45, 100, 120. PJ perhaps reflects early rabbinic discussions of the primacy of the matrilineal principle; see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 263-308, 308-40.

²⁹ Though one such character, Herod [the Great], does make a showing in the later chapters (see PJ 21-24), and, similar to Matthew's depiction (Matt 2.1-23), it is the priests who deliver the necessary information, depicted as collaborating with the local embodiment of the imperial regime.

Joseph's rod, we hear not the sound of a disembodied, adoptive heavenly voice, but the sounding of a priestly gavel swung by the local arm of imperial authority:

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς Ἰωσήφ Ἰωσήφ σὺ κεκλήρωσαι τὴν παρθένον κυρίου παραλάβαι εἰς τήρησιν αὐτῶ

And the high priest said, “Joseph! Joseph! You have been chosen by lot to take the virgin of the Lord into your keeping.” (9.7)

While the the angelic messenger initially declares to the high priest that Mary will become one widower's (mishnaic-perfect) dream “wife” (γυνή; 8.8)—a twelve-year-old, ritually-pure-as-possible virgin new lease on life³⁰—here (9.7) the high priest transmits an entirely *different* message: Joseph must simply “take” (παραλάβαι) Mary into his “keeping” (τήρησιν).³¹ Thus, PJ here cuts against the grain of the gospel accounts,³² and such a move may be read as owing to overall encomiastic “virgin of the Lord” trajectory: the reader is consistently invited to register doubts about the *real* husband of Mary, though ambiguities concerning that topic, especially from Joseph's perspective, play a dramatic role in the remainder of episodes and in the construction of Joseph's masculinity, as I discuss in detail

³⁰ Cf. rabbinic preoccupations with concerns about the virgin minor daughter's sexual propriety, including procedures for how girls are transferred from their fathers to their husbands, how levirate marriage (when a widowed woman is married to her late husband's brother) is conducted, and how virginity is tested/assured: m. Nid. 3.8, 4.5, 5.4, 5.7; m. Ket. 1.1-3; m. Qid. 1.1; y. Ket. 1.1, 1a; y. Ket. 1.1, 24d; b. Ket 8b-9a; b. Ket. 10b. See also Shulamit Valler, *Women and Womanhood in the Talmud*, trans. Betty Sigler Rozen (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 37-50; Tal Ilan, *Mine and Yours are Hers: Retrieving Women's History from Rabbinic Literature* (Kinderhook, NY: Brill, 1997), 191-99; Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 99; Michael Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 176-77; and the texts cited by Menahem Kasher, *Torah Shelema*, 43 vols (Jerusalem: M. Kasher; Monsey, N.Y.: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1938-), 33.27-32; as cited by Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, 315, n.141. With respect to prospect of Mary as “wife,” Horner (“Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James,” 326), remarks: “Since [Joseph] had been chosen by divine fiat, one would think that he would welcome this girl into his household. She was as ritually pure as possible and a virgin; the ‘perfect’ wife. There would be nothing out of the ordinary for an older man, widowed, to take a young wife, even a twelve-year-old.” Indeed, PJ seems to suggest the ‘ideal’ nature of the situation by portraying ‘all the men’ as ‘suddenly rushing in’ (ἰδοὺ ἔδραμον ἅπαντες) at the ‘sounding of the Lord's horn’ (ἤχησεν σάλπιγξ κυρίου), to throw their rods into the mix, hoping to claim their prize and get a crack at...(PJ 8.9)

³¹ LSJ 1789. The double significance of τήρησις is perhaps relevant here, for Joseph's ‘keeping’ of the virgin will involve his ‘safe-keeping’ or guarding, custody (house-arrest?), and also his ‘keeping’ or observing the divine/priestly decree. Cf. Wisdom of Solomon 6.18 (LXX); 1 Cor 7.19.

³² Where Mary and Joseph are eventually married: Matt 1.25 and Luke 2.41.

below.³³ A number of subtle shifts in the rod/dove scene, however, hint at parallel discourses engaged in the uneven process of the making(s) of ‘everyday’ masculinities. First, in opposition to the messenger of the Lord God (8.8), the high priest *alters* what the dove ought to portend for Joseph and Mary.³⁴ The narrative invests the high priest with such outright authority so as to even legitimate his contorting of the significance of divine mandates! As the high priest wields power to summon the oracular sign, so too does he exert force to determine the *interpretation* of that sign. He handles men’s rods. He dominates the dove. Mary will be, the high priest declares, not a wife but a ward. Not unlike Aaron’s budding-rod in Numbers 17, then, PJ’s dove functions as much to naturalize, establish and confirm, ‘priestly’ hegemony as it does to symbolize divine (s)election.³⁵

Here, too, PJ employs Mary as a medium of homosocial, male (dis)honor. Joseph’s immediate challenge to the high priest’s handling of his rod is telling:

³³ Vuong’s conflicted reading of Mary and Joseph’s relationship is telling, indeed. On the one hand, Vuong states, “The nature of Mary’s marriage is made clear in *Prot. Jas.* 9:7. Upon receiving Mary, Joseph is instructed by the high priest to take her in as a guardian under his ‘care’ (τήρησις)” (*Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 137). On the other hand, Vuong also states, “Efforts are made to make the marital relationship between the couple ambiguous” (137). So, which is it: ‘clear’ or ‘ambiguous’? As I make ‘clear’ in my discussion below, much of the dramatic tension in most of the subsequent episodes revolves around Joseph’s ‘ambiguous’ marital relationship to Mary; see, e.g., Joseph’s dream-annunciation (PJ 14.4-6); the trial/ordeal scenes (15-16); at the census (17.3); and at the birth ‘inspection’ (19.5-11). Vuong herself indicates the crisis of signification involved with Joseph/Mary’s ‘not quite’ marriage: “the text thereafter refrains from depicting Mary as Joseph’s wife in the normal sense of the term” (*Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 137).

³⁴ The significance of this shift has been relatively glossed over: e.g., Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, notes the shift, but is more captivated by authorial intervention: “The high priest is here interpreting the command of the angel (8,3). So *gunè* from 8,3 is here given the meaning: *parthenos kuriou*. In this way the author of PJ, without encroaching upon Mt. I,20, manages to present his own opinion as the official interpretation of the priest!” (72). Hock obscures the shift with ambiguously passive terms: “It becomes an interpretation of the heavenly messenger’s order, which referred to Mary as someone’s “wife” (8:8)” (*The Infancy Gospels*, 49). Foster similarly harmonizes the disparity: “With divine direction a plan is formulated to give Mary in matrimony to one of the widowers of Israel. The choice of a widower is intended to connote a man who can act as a guardian, but will presumably have no sexual feelings towards Mary” (“Protevangelium of James,” 577). Horner simply states that PJ is “confused about Mary and Joseph’s exact relationship” (“Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James,” 326).

³⁵ It is perhaps not insignificant to note that the Jerusalem temple cult included a thriving system of dove aviculture and sacrifice (e.g. Mark 11.15). Vuong offers the intriguing discussion of how Mary is “symbolically being represented as a temple sacrifice to the Lord” (103); see “Mary as a Temple Sacrifice,” in Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 88-102. Vuong also notes the connection between Mary-as-dove and Joseph’s dove-rod, suggesting that “Inasmuch as the dove evokes innocence and purity, the symbol here serves not only to underscore Mary’s virginity, but also to allude to the sexual purity of the relationship between her and Joseph, particularly important for Mary’s coming role as the Temple of the messiah” (135).

καὶ ἀντιεῖπεν ὁ Ἰωσήφ λέγων υἱοὺς ἔχω καὶ πρεσβύτης εἰμί αὕτη νεᾶνις μήπως ἔσομαι περιγελος τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ

But Joseph objected: “I (already) have sons, and I am a mature man while she is a young woman. Lest in any way I become a laughingstock among the sons of Israel!” (9.8)³⁶

Joseph’s concerns about his domestic sentence—namely, his prior sons³⁷ and the discrepancy between his and Mary’s age³⁸—specify again a patently different character than the one depicted in either Matthew or Luke, an innovation that is commonly read as promoting an explicit, dogmatic ideology

³⁶ Joseph’s objections here seem to entirely miss the significance of the priest’s interpretation of the rod/dove sign. While the priest declares that Joseph must simply “take” (παραλάβαι) Mary into his “keeping” (τήρησιν), here Joseph’s objections assume that she is being given to him for the ‘typical’ reasons: heir generation. As I have already suggested, Joseph’s ‘ambiguous’ marital relationship to Mary provides much dramatic tension that moves the narrative forward.

³⁷ On the notion of Joseph’s ‘prior sons’, Foster (“The Protevangelium of James,” 577) aptly notes that “the *Protevangelium* can be seen to support *in nuce* what became known as the Epiphanian solution to the problem of the siblings of Jesus. In the New Testament (Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55–56) there are instances where the text speaks in an unequivocal and unqualified manner about the brothers and sisters of Jesus. For those who affirm the perpetual virginity of Mary this creates an obvious problem. Although the ‘solution’ of calling these siblings stepbrothers and stepsisters is associated with Epiphanius, the fourth-century Bishop of Salamis on Cyprus, as the *Protevangelium* shows, the idea was in circulation much earlier. Ultimately the ploy of casting the siblings as children of Joseph by an earlier marriage was rejected as incorrect,” at least in the West. This particular narrative detail likely led to PJ’s rejection in the West by the Gelasian Decree (c. 500 CE) where it is listed as an apocryphal writing that is not to be received as authoritative.

More interesting for the present study is Joseph’s objection to receiving Mary because he ‘(already) has sons’, which ostensibly invokes an extremely wide-spread, ‘procreation-alone’ sort of discourse; as Smid notes, this is “evidence that Iosèph is dikaios (Mt.1,19) cf. 1,3” (*Protevangelium Jacobi*, 73). Jewish references include: *Tob.* 8.7; *Pseudo-Phocylides* 186; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 3.2, 9, 20; *T. Iss.* 2.3; *T. Benj.* 8.2; Josephus, *Apion* 2.202. Early Christian references include: Justin, *I Apol.* 29; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 33; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.83, 91, 93, 95, 97; *Sent. Sextus* 231-32; Origen, *C. Cels.* 5.42; *Didascalica* 6.28; Ambrose, *Exp. Lucam* 1.43-45; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 4.25; Augustine, *Coniug. et concup.* 1.5.4; 1.15.17. Other ancient authorities include: Plutarch, *Mor.* 144B; Musonius Rufus, frag. 12 (in Stobaeus, *Anth.* 4.22.90); Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 7.11.42; Clitarcus, *Sent.* 70; Lucan, *De bello civ.* 2; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 7.133-37; Maximus of Tyre, *Disc.* 36; Hierocles, *On Marriage* 4.22. Moreover, Joseph’s objection also echoes the androcentric (and distinctively Roman) convention that marriage is inseparable from its ‘ultimate’ goal: the production of viable/legitimate heirs; see Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 105-14; Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), passim, but esp. 33–61; and Mary Rose D’Angelo, “Ευσεβεία: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of 4 Maccabees and the Pastorals,” *BibInt* 11 (2003): 139-65.

³⁸ See πρεσβύτης, BDAG 863; LSJ 1462. This title, one of several included in lists invoking the Hippocratean division of the stages of life, does not mean what some commentators would have it mean: feeble, asexual geriatric. According to Philo, e.g., πρεσβύτης is the sixth of seven stages of life, an ‘older man’ of 50-56 years, rather than an ‘old man’ (or perhaps ‘oldest’ man) (Philo, *On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, §105). Vuong’s comments about Joseph’s age are typical: “The old and sexually unthreatening Joseph is specifically chosen by the Lord to be Mary’s ‘husband’” (*Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 137); as are Hock’s: “Here [Joseph] is so old as to be embarrassed by the association with a young women” (*Infancy Gospels*, 49, emphasis original). I suggest that Joseph’s objections here go together, namely that Joseph is in a stage of life beyond heir-producing years, and therefore considers the match with the ‘virgin’ superfluous and liable to homosocial derision. Thus, my gloss of πρεσβύτης, “mature man,” is deliberate.

that preserves Mary's virginity and/or purity.³⁹ Joseph's objections also continue to naturalize the myth of 'everyday' male privilege to 'traffic in women'.⁴⁰ In androcentric discourse such as we find in PJ, the significance accorded to a woman's presence by men involved in struggles for personal and/or familial prestige is inextricable from a consideration of her perceived impact upon male-male relations. Within and according to such naturalizing discourse, women are perceived as serving as 'a conduit of a relationship' of alliance and/or conflict between men, or as Kate Cooper puts it, in reference to the ancient (religious) milieu closer to PJ's narrative world, "wherever a woman is mentioned a man's character is being judged—and along with it what he stands for."⁴¹ Mary is of course not solely an object of androcentric discourse.⁴² Though, whatever else she stands for,⁴³ PJ

³⁹ See, e.g., Hock, *The Infancy Gospels*: "changes in Joseph's characterization are necessitated by the author's emphasis on Mary's purity" (25); "Joseph will be characterized quite differently throughout this gospel from what is said about him in Matthew and Luke. The changes are due to the author's stress on the purity of Mary" (49); so, too, Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 14-19.

⁴⁰ A phrase taken from an influential essay by Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Rayna Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review, 1975), 157-210 (174), who employs Levi-Strauss as a heuristic for understanding the symbolic logic of many societies in which women are subordinate to men.

⁴¹ Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 19.

⁴² It is certainly crucial to distinguish between the views of and about women in such ancient androcentric discourse, on the one hand, and the actual views of real women, on the other hand, which may or may not cohere; even though, the question of the relationship of (actual, real) ancient historical women to the texts that discuss them is fraught with a number of difficulties—chief among them, a lack of sources by women and our inability to "peel back layers of male rhetoric and find the 'real' woman concealed underneath"; Andrew S. Jacobs, "Writing Demetrias: Ascetic Logic in Ancient Christianity," *Church History* 69, no. 4 (2000): 719-48 (720). While it is not my project, I certainly applaud the important efforts of those, such as Andrew Jacobs, who, attempting to "delineating the space in which women could 'logically' operate in the early Christian world," remind us that male-authored texts were not the products of a female-free world and that they mirror as well as create social realities (722). See also Shelly Matthews, "Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17, no. 2 (2001): 39-55; Stephanie L. Cobb, "Real Women or Objects of Discourse? The Search for Early Christian Women," *Religion Compass* 3, no. 3 (2009): 379-394.

⁴³ Zervos ("Christmas with Salome," 97-98) has some poignant suggestions: "The [Greek Orthodox patriarchal] system that robbed women of their lives was—and in many places still is—so deeply ingrained in society that it is not easily overturned. The image of Mary as the archetypal self-sacrificing woman functioned within this system partially as a mechanism of control over women. For it was this image, worshiped and emulated by women throughout their lives, that also taught them to be submissive: 'Let it be done to me according to thy word' (Lk. 1.38). But one might also argue that this image of Mary served women well as a model of dignified acquiescence in the face of the overwhelming power wielded by the patriarchal religions." See also Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 148-149; and Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, passim and esp. 240-46.

also constructs Mary as a different sort of *mediatrix*: part of the homosocial (dis)honor of Joseph is conveyed by her body, if also not quite (or yet)⁴⁴ located between her legs.⁴⁵

Joseph's objections to his domestic sentence also register a moment of constitutive resistance to the priestly hegemony, as seen by the high priest's riposte citing a précis of the tale of Levite uprising (יִמְרִי) from Num. 16:

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς Ἰωσήφ φοβήθητι κύριον τὸν θεόν σου καὶ μνήσθητι ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς Δαθὰν καὶ Ἀβιρῶν καὶ Κορέ πῶς ἐδιχιάσθη ἡ γῆ καὶ κατεπόθησαν ἅπαντες διὰ τὴν ἀντιλογίαν αὐτῶν καὶ νῦν φοβήθητι Ἰωσήφ μήπως ἔσται ταῦτα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου

And the priest responded, "Joseph, fear the Lord your God and remember what God did to Dathan, Abiron, and Kore, how the earth split open and they were all swallowed up because of their rebellion. Now beware, Joseph, lest in any way these things happen in your house!" (9.9-10)

Without considering the details of the relationship of PJ to the cited precursor text, we might greet the high priest's reply as a 'reminder' of "where this order is coming from"⁴⁶ or simply as "a warning example"⁴⁷ for Joseph, and leave it at that. However, the exceptionally fluid afterlives of the Levite uprising tale should give us pause for considering its particular function here in PJ.⁴⁸ While the rendering of "what God did to Dathan, Abiron, and Kore" (9.9) as it originally appears in Num 16 involves, in the words of Ernest Bloch, a "premature palace revolution" within the priestly upper

⁴⁴ Cf. PJ 13-16.

⁴⁵ See Fatima Mernissi, "Virginité and Patriarchy," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5.2 (1982): 183-191, speaking broadly about "Mediterranean men": "The concepts of honour and virginity locate the prestige of a man between the legs of a woman. It is not by subjugating nature or by conquering mountains and rivers that a man secures his status, but by controlling the movements of women related to him by blood or by marriage, and by forbidding them any contact with male strangers" (183, my emphasis).

⁴⁶ Horner, "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," 326.

⁴⁷ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 74.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., the colorful spectrum of ancient receptions of the Levite uprising tale (Num. 16): cited as one of the 'historical' events demonstrating the greatness of God that all Israel is enjoined to acknowledge, with no specific action censured (Deut. 11.1-7); censured as an act of jealousy of (MT) or anger with (LXX) God's chosen leaders (Ps. 106.16-18); offered as supporting evidence of Moses' self-mastery (4 Macc 2.15-17); depicted as a case of differing opinions about priestly vestment (*Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 16.1); traced to Korah's jealousy/envy of the privilege afforded to Moses/Aaron in their positions—not an 'insurrection' or 'rebellion' per se, but a 'raising of a clamor' (κατεβόα δεινὸν) (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.2.2 §14-15); described as an example of what happens to 'those who 'defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones' (Jude 11); and deployed as a warning for those who do not confess to their insidious plots of sedition (*1 Clem* 51).

class,⁴⁹ ostensibly motivated by the Levites' cooperative impulse "not to usurp Moses but to assert that no one is superior, that all are holy before Yahweh...an assertion of a collective against an elevated ruler with some divine right,"⁵⁰ this is an altogether different setting than what we find in PJ. The implied reader recalling the anterior text and drawn into the process of assigning intertextual meaning, would appreciate the differences: Joseph is not a member of the priestly upper class, he upriser alone, and his 'backtalk' (*ἀντιλογία*) pertains to domestic affairs, even if more *public* homosocial prestige is also at stake. The similarities, though, would also be clear enough: Joseph, like Dathan/Abiron/Kore, backtalks an established, naturalized order (signaled by the authority of the deity and his appointed man/men), which swiftly 'reacts' to preserve or assert its power. So, too, Joseph's resistance, as constitutive exception, is denied a viable space in the narrative and yet it also generates the very prospect for political and ideological *status quo* maintenance. The high priest, co-opting Joseph's phrase of imaginable, worrisome fates—

Joseph: *lest, in any way* I become... (*μήπως ἔσομαι περίγελος τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ*) (9.8)

High Priest: *lest, in any way* such things happen in your house... (*μήπως ἔσται ταῦτα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου*) (9.10)

—appropriates for himself and his deity the forces of calamity, 'reacts' by (re)establishing who/why it is that Joseph *ought to* fear. As a male subject, then, and not unlike Matthew's Average Joe in response to his penetrative dream annunciation (Matt 1.18-22), PJ's Joseph is unmanned by his emotion, succumbing to the force of fearful desire that splits his will between opposition to and compliance with the dictates of the established order:⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ernest Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity: The Religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 80; cited in Roland Boer, *Political Myth: On the Use and Abuse of Biblical Themes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 81-82, who, elsewhere, helpfully 'disinters' Bloch's work as integral to dialectical, postcolonial critiques of biblical texts; see Boer, "Marx, Postcolonialism, and the Bible," in Fernando Segovia and Stephen Moore, eds., *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London/New York: Continuum, 2007), 166-183 (178).

⁵⁰ Boer, *Political Myth*, 81.

⁵¹ Cf. the similar, comparative treatment of fearful emotions and split subjectivities of Habrocomes (in Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale*) and Jesus (in the Gospel of Mark) by Eric Thurman, "Novel Men: Masculinity and Empire in Mark's Gospel and Xenophon's An Ephesian Tale," in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Biblical Interpretation Series 84; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 185-230 (202-203).

καὶ ἐφοβήθητι Ἰωσήφ παρέλαβεν αὐτὴν εἰς τήρησιν αὐτῶ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Μαρία παρέλαβόν σε ἐκ ναοῦ κυρίου καὶ νῦν καταλείπω σε ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου ἀπέρχομαι γὰρ οἰκοδομῆσαι τὰς οἰκοδομὰς καὶ ἔξω πρὸς σέ κύριός σε διαφυλάξει

So, fearfully, Joseph took her into his keeping. And he said to her, “Mary, I have taken you from the temple of the Lord and now I am leaving you in my house. While I am going out to house-build houses, I will come back to you. The Lord will protect you.” (9.11-12)

Joseph’s backtalk is braced by noble soliloquy as he chooses to submit to an altered course of manly pursuits under the weight of his (now more than ever) naturalized social superiors. At the same time, Joseph alters his status from rod-handled subject to dutiful god-fearer, further naturalizing the established order while also procuring traction to presume upon the interests of the interested party: Joseph is chosen to “take” (παραλάβαι) Mary into his “keeping” (τήρησιν), but it is the Lord, Joseph says, who is *really* obligated to ‘protect’ (διαφυλάξει) her. Actively striving to submit passively, Joseph shifts the scene from one of browbeaten to intentional submission as he employs his (yet undermined) will to distance himself from excessive association with the virgin girl, and so promotes the ambivalent ‘not quite’ marriage relationship to Mary that, along with his sturdy, public work ethic (9.1, 12; 13.1), conveys his manliness in PJ.

Without denying impact of Roman imperial discourse on the construction of totalizing priestly hegemony in PJ, then, I suggest, like other contemporaneous novelistic literature, PJ is more preoccupied with the uneven processes of male self-fashioning under the weight of paternalistic, colonial rule. Rather than offering ‘counter-imperial’, eagle-damning resistance, PJ deals in more home(l)y gendered politics from the margins. Temple Priests are naturalized as being ‘on-top’ and their scope of hegemonic influence ranges beyond the sphere of the temple cult proper, a queer pastiche of cultic correctness and imperial-toady ‘manly’ obligations that resist conventional generalization. Joseph, too, emerges from the rod/dove scene exemplifying a split subjectivity that ruptures conventions, especially the neat, polarized separation of ‘manly’ activity and ‘feminine’ passivity. As I explore below, PJ supplies this rod-handled, dove-shot, nobly submissive, ‘everyday’

man with a number of other arenas upon which to play out such an uneven masculinity, including episodes which position him as the ‘same-old’ cuckold (PJ 13-14) and a ‘manly Sotah’ (PJ 15-16), to which I now turn.

4.3 PJ’s Average Joe: the ‘Same-old’ Cuckold? (PJ 13-14)

PJ’s ambivalent handling of Joseph’s masculinity continues after the narrative arena shifts from temple to household. Mary is transferred from the priest’s ‘house’ (ναοῦ κυρίου) to Joseph’s ‘house’ (τῷ οἴκῳ μου) and then Joseph leaves Mary to pursue his business interests, his ‘house-building houses’ (οἰκοδομῆσαι τὰς οἰκοδομάς; 9.12) abroad. However, Joseph’s parting words, “I will come back to you” (ἔξω πρὸς σέ; 9.12), set up the narrative expectation of his imminent return, and, even when he is generally absent from the scenes depicted in chapters 10-11, his presence is palpable, indicated by repeated references to Mary’s “house” (τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς; 10.8; 11.4; 12.8), which is also, principally, Joseph’s “house” (τῷ οἴκῳ μου; 9.12; 13.4).

Mary keeps busy spinning thread⁵² in Joseph’s house while he is away—but not too far and coming back (soon)—and, in chapter 11, for the first time in the narrative, there is a direct parallel to events contained in the canonical infancy accounts. Building on the account of Mary’s theophanic visitation in Luke (1.26-38), an angel of the Lord ‘announces’ the details of the forthcoming conception:

καὶ ἔλαβεν τὴν κάλπιν καὶ ἐξῆλθεν γεμίσει ὕδωρ καὶ ἰδοὺ αὐτῇ φωνὴ λέγουσα χαῖρε
χαριτωμένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν καὶ περιέβλεπεν τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ τὰ ἀριστερὰ Μαρία πόθεν
αὕτη εἶη ἡ φωνὴ καὶ ἔντρομος γενομένη εἰσῆει εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς καὶ ἀναπαύσασα
τὴν κάλπιν ἔλαβεν τὴν πορφύραν καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ τῷ θρονῷ καὶ ἤλκεν τὴν
πορφύραν καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔστη ἄγγελος ἐνώπιον λέγων μὴ φοβοῦ Μαρία εὖρες γὰρ χάριν
ἐνώπιον τοῦ πάντων δεσπότης συνλήμψῃ ἐκ λόγου αὐτοῦ

And she took the pitcher and went out to fill it with water. Suddenly, a voice was saying to her, “Rejoice! You are favored among women.” And Mary looked around to

⁵² See discussion of ‘virgin weavers’ in Nutzman, “Mary in the Protevangelium of James,” 563-570.

the right and the left to see where this voice might have come from. Full of trembling, she went into her house. After setting down the pitcher, she took the purple (thread) and sat down on the (royal) seat/throne and spun the purple (thread). Suddenly, an angel stood before her saying, “Do not be afraid Mary. For, having found favor before the Master of all things, you will conceive by his word.” (PJ 11.1-5)

Among other things, Smid reads PJ’s innovations here as a kind of exegetical elaboration “inquiring into the kind of conception,” ostensibly answering Mary’s question of ‘*How?*’: “‘ek logou autou’ is to be regarded as a first attempt at exegesis of Lk. 1,31, afterwards commented on anew and become the source of the idea of ‘conception par l’oreille’.”⁵³ Mary’s ear, her one bodily orifice penetrated—if only by the divine message—carries a heavy symbolic load in most of its later literary and artistic

⁵³ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 84. Smid here essentially follows the commentary of Johann K. Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Leipzig: F.C.G. Vogel, 1832), who takes the voice of the angel (11.9) as indicating the *medium intrandi*, the substance of God’s *logos*, and the moment of conception as quite definite: the conversation of the angel with Mary; “The idea of conception through the ear is a point of general religious belief and may well have been known to the author of PJ...It may very well be that by speaking of ‘ek logou autou’ the author is here considering the *logos* as *sperma*” (Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 84).

The notion of Mary’s conception through her ear (the *conceptio per aurem*) is common in late antique and medieval sources, whether Syriac, Greek, or Latin. Cf. *Armenian Gospel of the Infancy* 5.9: “At that very moment when this word was spoken, as the holy Virgin consented, God the Word penetrated through her ear...And she became a holy and undefiled temple and a dwelling place for his divinity. And at the same time began the pregnancy of Mary.” Translation by Abraham Terian, *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy with Three Early Versions of the Protoevangelium of James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25. See also Frederick C. Conybeare, “*Protevangelium Iacobi* [From an Armenian Manuscript in the Library of the Mechitarists in Venice],” *American Journal of Theology* 1 (1897): 424-42; and Robert Murray, “Mary, the Second Eve in the Early Syriac Fathers,” *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1971): 372-84. A substantial part of Ephrem the Syrian’s “Panegyric Recited on the Birth of Christ”—which survives in Armenian translation only; *Srboyn Ep'remi Matenagrut'iwnk'* (*The Works of Saint Ephrem*), 4 vols. (Venice: S. Ghazar, 1836), iv.9-34—like some of Ephrem’s “Hymns on the Nativity,” follows the rubrics of the *Armenian Infancy Gospel*, including the notion that the conception of Mary was through her ear, as of the moment she consented to the divine will (19). Conybeare dwells on the notion of the *conceptio per aurem* in Ephrem’s panegyric homily as evidence of the Syriac origin of the *Armenian Infancy Gospel*. The *conceptio per aurem* motif was known also among the Greek Fathers: Conybeare refers to two instances in Pseudo-Athanasius (*Quaestiones Aliae* (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 28, cols. 789 and 969D)) and one in Theodotus of Ancyra (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 77, col. 1392). For a fuller documentation of Patristic sources on the theme and its typological connection with ‘the seduction of Eve by the words of the serpent’ (Gen 2.2-7), see Nicholas Constatas, “‘The Ear of the Virginal Body’: The Poetics of Sound in the School of Proclus,” in idem, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Supplements to Vigilliae Christianae 66; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 273-312.

receptions.⁵⁴ However, just as poignant is the textual detail of *where* this aural penetrative encounter takes place. While Smid suggests that this “must then be ascribed to the fact that this is not a public event...it is a *mustèrion*, which cannot take place in the open air by a spring,”⁵⁵ I suggest, on a more basic level, the setting of the scene heightens the sense of Joseph’s *absence* and highlights his failure to perform well his domestic obligation to manage his household: this ‘private’ and penetrative “mystery” (μυστηρίον; 12.6, 9) was perpetrated *inside* Joseph’s house while he was charged with Mary’s ‘keeping’ (τήρησις; 9.7) and ‘protection’ (φυλάσσω; 13.3; 14.8)! No wonder, then, that later, when Mary is visiting her cousin Elizabeth, we learn that “she was afraid to go to her”—that is, Joseph’s—“house” (φοβηθεῖσα ἡ Μαρία ἦλθεν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτῆς; 12.8), because her womb was already “swelling” (ὄγκοῦτο) with the results of ‘these *mysterious* things [that] happened to her’ (ταῦτα τὰ μυστήρια ἐγέντο αὐτῆς; 12.9), and, consequently, “she hid herself from the sons of Israel” (ἔχρυβεν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ; 12.8). If we set aside the theologically motivated veneer⁵⁶ of the narrative we are left with some (by now) very familiar, gendered assumptions concerning the symbolic relations between masculine (homosocial) honor, household governance, and female sexual propriety—assumptions that continue to guide the narrative as Joseph returns from his ‘house-building houses’ (οἰκοδομηῆσαι τὰς οἰκοδομάς; 9.12), at least six months and as much

⁵⁴ See Jaroslav Pelikan, “The Handmaid of the Lord and the Woman of Valor,” in *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 81-96. In medieval and Renaissance paintings of the Annunciation, for example, Mary is usually shown as having been occupied by reading, putting a book aside to receive a more fertile verbal message. The anxiety or unease she communicates is a response to an act of verbal rape: the phallus of Gabriel’s speech passes across the empty space to penetrate her ear and her mind. Perhaps owing to the foundational Annunciation tradition, aural *jouissance* has been conventionally associated with the feminine in the history of Christian tradition and culture.

⁵⁵ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 83.

⁵⁶ For good reason, most commentators read Joseph’s *absence* in chapters 10-11 as being ‘theologically’ motivated, that is, in order to firmly establish that Joseph is not the father of Mary’s child. See, e.g., Horner, “Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James,” 327: “As soon as Mary is transferred to Joseph he exits the picture. This is clearly a detail intended to assure the reader that no matter what happened Joseph was out of town when Jesus was conceived.” While I certainly don’t dispute this sort of straightforward reading, I suggest that the narrative drama of this scene also *works* because of basic gendered notions about a man’s conflicting ‘public’ and ‘private’ (*politeia* and *oikonomia*) obligations, embodied by Joseph’s ‘house-building’ and his ‘house’, the focus of my critical analysis here.

as four years later;⁵⁷ when he “went into the house and found her swelling” (εἰσῆλθεν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ καὶ εὔρεν αὐτὴν ὄγκωμένην; 13.1).

Let’s draw close, now, and listen to the sound of a man generally unraveled by his investment in the hegemonic project of contending for limited resources of male prestige on multiple fronts, the first of Joseph’s three intimate soliloquies:⁵⁸

καὶ ἔτυψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔρριψεν αὐτὸν χαμαὶ ἐπὶ τὸν σάκκον καὶ ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶν λέγων ποίῳ προσώπῳ ἀτενίσω πρὸς κύριον τὸν θεόν τί ἄρα εὔξωμαι περὶ αὐτῆς ὅτι παρθένον παρέλαβον ἐκ ναοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐφύλαξα αὐτὴν τίς ὁ θηρεύσας με τίς τὸ πονηρὸν τοῦτο ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου [τίς ἤχμαλώτευσε τὴν παρθένον ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ] καὶ ἐμίανεν αὐτήν

Then he struck his face, threw himself on the ground in sackcloth, and wept bitterly, saying, “With what sort of face might I look to the Lord God? What will I pray on her behalf since I took her as a virgin from the temple of the Lord God and I did not protect her?! Who has set this trap for me?! Who committed this evil in my house?! [Who *stole* the virgin from me]⁵⁹ and defiled her?!” (13.2-4)

⁵⁷ Following the narrative chronology of one established manuscript tradition: Mary is twelve when she given to Joseph and Joseph departs (PJ 8.3); Mary is sixteen and six months pregnant when Joseph returns (PJ 12.9-13.1). There is, however, a good deal of manuscript variance as to the age of Mary at the point of conception: twelve, fourteen, fifteen, and seventeen are also textual possibilities. See de Strycker, “Le Protévangile de Jacques,” who suggests that twelve would be the logical age and goes so far as to suggest that the author “forgot” what he had said about Mary’s age in ch. 8 (339-359); and Smid, who states that the “author is not interested in the exact historical sequence: the individual scenes are loosely connected, the author is not writing a chronicle.” Such textual variance, however, can hardly be attributed to scribal ‘forgetfulness’ (de Strycker) or ‘laziness’ (Smid). While Horner is probably correct that Mary’s “status as a twelve-year-old girl on the cusp of womanhood is much more in line with the trajectory of Prot. Jas.” (“Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James,” 324-328 (327)), the divergence in the mss. itself is also a significant piece of data. In what is otherwise a generally stable manuscript tradition, such textual cacophony suggests to me that later generations *also* wrestled with Joseph’s absent presence. That is, Mary’s age at conception (and scribal disputes over this ‘fact’) was primarily a function of *how long* Joseph was away ‘house-building houses’ (οἰκοδομῆσαι τὰς οἰκοδομάς; 9.12).

⁵⁸ On the notion of “limited good,” see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 81-107.

⁵⁹ This phrase, “Who stole the virgin from me...” (τίς ἤχμαλώτευσε τὴν παρθένον ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ), appears in a limited number of mss.; see Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 95; see “αἰχμαλωτεύω” and “μιαίνω,” BDAG 31, 650, respectively. On the association of sexual impropriety and ‘theft’, see, e.g., Michael Satlow (*Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995]), who notes how rabbinic discussion of non-marital sex is preoccupied with the control of female sexuality: “Adultery represents more to the rabbis than a breach of God’s command; it is also the ‘theft’ of a woman’s reproductive potential from her husband. Similarly premarital sex reflects poorly on the father, who is expected by the rabbis and his society to control his daughter’s sexuality” 119). Jacob Neusner also emphasizes how the Mishnah’s “system of women” focuses on the proper control of woman as she is transferred from the jurisdiction of one man to another (“From Scripture to Mishna: The Origins of Mishnah’s Division of Women,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 [1979]: 138-53). Judith Romney Wegner’s work (*Chattel or Person?: The Status of Women in the Mishnah* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988]), too, pivots on the distinctive status of the ‘virgin’ minor daughter in the Mishnah. She finds that when a female’s biological function falls within the responsibility of a particular man (e.g., the minor daughter’s reproductive function falls under the jurisdiction of her father) and when a situation arises that threatens his control, the female is regarded not as a person endowed with rights, but as chattel (see, e.g., vi, 8, 14-15, 19, 178).

Proceeding to reinscribe fantasies of male power and privilege, here, too, Mary is made to carry Joseph's homosocial (dis)honor: an intermediating object whose sexuality (or, at least, procreative capacity) incarnates "a contentious and arbitrating social index for masculine reputation."⁶⁰ Meanwhile Joseph's masculinity is rendered markedly ambivalent both by his *excessive* emotional display, embodied by three, increasingly anguished postures,⁶¹ and his distinctly *passive* victim-playing, manifested by three, increasingly desperate queries: "Who... Who... Who!" (τίς; 3x in 13.4).⁶² Joseph continues the soliloquy by construing his situation in terms of analogous post-biblical traditions about the 'first couple':

μήτι ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐνεκεφαλαιώθη ἱστορία ὡσπερ γὰρ Ἀδὰμ ἦν ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς δοξολογίας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἦλθεν ὁ ὄφις καὶ εὔρεν τὴν Εὐάν μόνην καὶ ἐξηπάτησεν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐμίανεν αὐτὴν οὕτως κάμοι συνέβη

Perhaps the story has been recapitulated in my case? For just as Adam was in the hour of his prayer when the serpent came and found Eve alone and deceived her and defiled her, so it has also happened with me. (13.5)

This episode is striking, not only because it builds a competing version onto the canonical scaffolding (cf. Matt 1.18),⁶³ but also because of the way it deploys what is, decidedly, a widely distributed

⁶⁰ After David D. Gilmore, "Introduction: The Shame of Dishonour," in David D. Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, American Anthropological Association Special Publication 22 (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 4. Such androcentric lamentations follow a broad biblical precedent; see, e.g., Gen 27.33; Ps 58.4; Sir 27.19; Lam 3.52; Luke 11.54. As Hock (*Infancy Gospels*, 26) notes, "Joseph's very language in his lament over Mary's pregnancy" also closely "matches the language of Clitophon's lament in Achilles Taitius' Leucippe and Clitophon (5.11.3)." Contra de Stryker, who suggests that here Joseph wonders whether he should pray for mercy or divine punishment for Mary; *La Forme la plus ancienne du Protevangile de Jacques* (Buxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1961), 123: "ne sachant pas ce qui s'est passé, Joseph se demande s'il doit appeler sur Marie la miséricorde ou le chatiment divin."

⁶¹ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 94: "Every time the emotions are intensified: *etupsen, erripsen, eklausen*." On the notion of (un)manly tears in antiquity, see Charles Segal, "Euripides' *Alcestis*. Female Death and Male Tears," *Classical Antiquity* 11 (1992): 142-158; Hans van Wees, "A Brief History of Tears: Gender Differentiation in Archaic Greece," in Lin Foxhall and J. B. Salmon, eds., *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (New York; London: Routledge, 1998), 10-53; Thorsten Fögen, ed., *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World* (Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 2009), esp. Ann Suter, "Tragic Tears and Gender," 59-84, and Darja Sterbenc Erker, "Women's Tears in Ancient Roman Ritual," 135-160.

⁶² See De Stryker, *La Forme la plus*, 125: "il y a une gradation dans les trois interrogations, qui deviennent de plus en plus longues, précises, tragiques."

⁶³ Perhaps even answering the implicit question (from the Matthew's account) of precisely *who* it was that 'found' (εὐρέθη) Mary 'with child' (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα) (Matt 1.18).

ethnographic myth.⁶⁴ “the story” (of Adam/Eve) has been rhetorically “summed-up” (as the text so tells us: ἐνεκεφαλαιώθη ἡ ἱστορία)⁶⁵ in the present literary moment for reasons I now discuss.

Commentators have frequently passed over or misread PJ’s highly-charged juxtaposition of the characters of Joseph/Adam and Mary/Eve,⁶⁶ which ostensibly goes beyond simple “literary borrowing” of precursor texts.⁶⁷ In this respect, Johannes Tromp’s resolution to the problem of the relationship of Paul’s writings to apocryphal Eve/Adam literature proves extremely useful: “the Life of Adam and Eve, which in all its forms and redactions primarily deals with questions of *everyday* life, reflects a living oral narrative tradition shared by Jews and Christians.”⁶⁸ Tromp, in fact, discusses PJ’s Joseph/Adam and Mary/Eve juxtaposition as one of his primary supporting illustrations:

In the *Protevangelium*, Joseph is made to refer to a single motif in the narrative traditions concerning Adam and Eve. The story consists of two brief sentences only, but it is complete and illustrates the dangers of leaving women, presumably young

⁶⁴ Post-biblical Eve/Adam traditions are widely distributed, found in a plethora of ancient Jewish and early Christian (inter)texts. To name but a few specific examples: Sirach 25.24; 4Q184; Jub 3.1-34; Philo, *Legum allegoriae* II.38-39, 71-73; *Legum allegoriae* III.61-64, 67-68; *De opificio mundi* 151-152, 165; *De Cherubim* 57; *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* 52-53; 4 Ezra 3.10-13, 7.116-118; Ps. Philo, *LibAnt* 13.8, 26.6, 37.3; 4 Macc 18.6-8; *ApAb* 23.1-13; *GLAE* 9.2, 11.1-3, 14.2, 29.12-13; 2 Cor 11.2-4, 12-15; Rom 7.7-13; 1 Tim 2.14-15, 5.14-15. Anniewies van den Hoek, “Endowed with Reason or Glued to the Senses: Philo’s Thoughts on Adam and Eve,” in G. P. Luttikhuisen, ed., *The Creation of Man and Woman* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁶⁵ See “ἀνακεφαλαιόω,” BDAG 65: used of literary or rhetorical summation sum up, recapitulate (cf. Rom 13.9; Eph 1.10)

⁶⁶ Most scholars seem either to pass over or misread the moment: (a) disregarded (note, e.g. the omission in Marina Warner, *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976], 25-33, and the omission in the discussion of PJ by Cleo McNelly Kearns, *The Virgin Mary, Monotheism and Sacrifice* [Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 231-57); (b) mentioned in passing without further discussion (so Gail Paterson Corrington, *Her Image of Salvation: Female Saviors and Formative Christianity* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992], 181: “a variant of the Eve/Mary typology”; and Gaventa, *Mary*, 116: “the use of the Adam and Eve story to interpret Mary’s story is significant”; (c) simply cited as one of the many examples of PJ’s “literary borrowings” (so Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 21, 55: “the incident summarized here comes, of course, from Gen 3.1-20.”); and, perhaps most grievously, (d) anachronistically interpreted through the lens of later doctrinal considerations, reading patristic authors’ consistent identification of Eve and Mary back into the text of PJ (see, e.g., van der Horst, “Sex, Birth, Purity and Asceticism,” 65-66; Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001], 90-93; and Kretschmar, “‘Natus Ex Maria Virgine,’” 417-28).

⁶⁷ Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 21, 55.

⁶⁸ Johannes Tromp, “The Story of our Lives: The qz-Text of the Life of Adam and Eve, the Apostle Paul, and the Jewish-Christian Oral Tradition concerning Adam and Eve,” *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 205-23 (205; my emphasis): “In the case of the *Life of Adam and Eve*...we possess a writing in which people from antiquity have documented their *everyday* anxieties and beliefs by telling a story that concerns humankind as a whole as well as every individual human being” (216; my emphasis).

women, on their own. The suggestion I should like to make here is that the Life of Adam and Eve, from the perspective of its composition, is a compilation of stories and mini-stories which may have had their original context in *everyday* discourse, serving as exempla of moral truths, or as explanations for the facts of life, exactly as illustrated by the passage from the *Protevangelium of James*. The Life of Adam and Eve can then be seen as an early attempt to compile a number of these originally independent stories and arrange them to form a coherent whole.⁶⁹

Tromp's reading here allows us to plausibly view Adam/Eve's deployment in PJ also within the stream of an "everyday discourse"—"everyday" both in the sense that reception of such primal "mini-stories" reflect a "living oral narrative tradition" (not necessarily tied to specific literary precursors) and in the sense that they potentially served as, as Tromp notes, "exempla of moral truths, or as explanations for the facts of life." I would only add that there is more to the 'everyday discourse'⁷⁰ of PJ 13 than Tromp's brief reading would lend itself to. That is, the creative re-use of (some version of) an Adam/Eve "mini-story" in PJ does much more than simply 'illustrate' the 'fact of life' of the dangers involved in leaving young women to fend for themselves, but rather actively participates in shaping gendered assumptions about symbolic relations between masculine (homosocial) honor, household governance, and female sexual propriety.

PJ's deliberate juxtaposition of Joseph/Adam and Mary/Eve arguably takes the form of a particular rhetorical and compositional technique known as *synchrisis* (σύγκρισις), side-by-side

⁶⁹ Tromp, "The Story of our Lives," 218; my emphasis.

⁷⁰ As forms one basic assumption in the whole of this project and as I discussed in my introduction, the "everyday" is a cultural product in its own right and also a site for the construction of regional, religious, gender and sexual difference(s) and similarities; Henri Lefebvre, "The Everyday and Everydayness," *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 7-11 (9): "the everyday is a product...the most universal, and the most unique condition, the most social and the most individuated, the most obvious and the best hidden." See also Miriam Peskowitz, *Spinning Fantasies: Rabbis, Gender, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), who explores rabbinic attempts at gendering of the everyday/ordinary (principally labor) as a process entangled in making gender everyday/ordinary.

judgment or comparison⁷¹—a common literary form also employed by a range of other formative Christian texts: the gospels,⁷² the epistle to the Hebrews,⁷³ and Paul's letters.⁷⁴ In what is perhaps their *only* rhetorical duet,⁷⁵ PJ couples Joseph and Adam—a move which not only complicates the paradigmatic masculinity of Jesus (as 'second Adam') employed in other formative Christian discourses,⁷⁶ but also naturalizes Joseph's prototypical role as PJ's everyday *Everyman*. Essentializing

⁷¹ That *σύγκρισις* forms part of the literary store of PJ's tales should cause no undue surprise given its widespread use. Friedrich Focke, "Synkrisis," *Hermes* 58 (1923): 327-68. *Synkrisis* was in fact an invaluable tool for ancient literary critics, biographers and historiographers, and, as is to be expected, the technique is not uncommon in formative Jewish and Christian texts. See, for example, *Wisdom of Solomon* 10-19; Friedrich Focke, *Die Entstehung der Weisheit Salomos. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des jüdischen Hellenismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 12-20; Isaak Heinemann, "Synkrisis oder äussere Analogie in der 'Weisheit Salomos'," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 4 (1948): 241-51; James M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences* (AnBib 41; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 98; Lester L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 35-43. Philo also used the technique and wrote about it; see *De ebrietate* 186-87; for theory, see *De Abrahamo* 36; *De vita Moysis* I.83; II.194; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 14; *De gigantibus* 40-41; Michael W. Martin, "Philo's Use of *Synkrisis*: An Examination of Philonic Composition in the Light of the Progymnasmata," *Perspectives on Religious Studies* 30 (2003): 271-97. Similarly, Josephus introduces himself and Justus toward the end of his *Vita* (336-367), employing two topics prescribed by the theorists in the *σύγκρισις* exercises: pursuits and deeds; see Jerome H. Neyrey, "Josephus' *Vita* and the Encomium: A Native Model of Personality," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 25 (1994): 177-206. *Synkrisis* has been linked with the rabbinic hermeneutical/exegetical rule of *gezerah shavah* (גזירה שווה); see Saul Lieberman, "Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture," in *Greek in Jewish Palestine/Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: New York Theological Seminary, 1994; 1962), 47-82; Burton L. Visotzky, "Midrash, Christian Exegesis, and Hellenistic Hermeneutics," in Carol Bakhtos, ed., *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 111-32 (esp. 122-24). On the use of *σύγκρισις* generally in Hellenistic midrash see E. Stein, "Ein jüdisch-hellenistischer Midrasch über den Auszug aus Ägypten," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 78 (1934): 558-75.

⁷² See, e.g., Fearghus Ó Fearghail, *The Introduction to Luke-Acts: A Study of the Role of Lk 1,1-4,44 in the Composition of Luke's Two-Volume Work* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991), who suggests that the whole of Luke 1.5-4.44 was composed in the form of a *σύγκρισις*.

⁷³ Tim Seid, "Synkrisis in Hebrews 7: The Rhetorical Structure and Strategy," in Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, eds., *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 322-47.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., the hardship/tribulation catalogue of 1 Cor 4.9-13; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 220, n.181. See also the beginning of the self-laudatory *peristasis* catalogue in 2 Cor 11.22-23; John Thomas Fitzgerald, "The Catalogue in Ancient Greek Literature," in Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, eds., *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 275-93. And the Adam/Christ typologies and two types of humanity in Romans 5-8; Jean-Noël Aletti, "The Rhetoric of Romans 5-8," in Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, eds., *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 294-308.

⁷⁵ To my knowledge, PJ's juxtaposition of Joseph and Adam is unique.

⁷⁶ See, e.g., Rom 5.12-21; 1 Cor 15.21-23, 42-49; Benjamin Dunning, "Sexual Difference and Paul's Adam-Christ Typology," in *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference in Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 1-30; and Ryan S. Schellenberg, "Does Paul Call Adam a 'Type' of Christ? An Exegetical Note on Romans 5,14," *ZNW* 105(2014): 54-63.

the ancient, gendered-division of space and labor;⁷⁷ Joseph, like Adam, meets demands that absent him from the domestic sphere: Joseph's public 'house-building houses' (οἰκοδομῆσαι τὰς οἰκοδομάς; 9.12) is undergirded 'ontologically' by the first man's 'official prayer' (τῆ ὥρᾳ τῆς δοξολογίας αὐτοῦ; 13.5).⁷⁸ However, Joseph also has (literarily) fallen prey to a 'trap' (θηρεύσας) as old as the oldest trick in the book: by performing well his public 'house-building' obligations, he has, at the same time and just like Adam, unwittingly failed to perform well his household 'protection' (ἐφύλαξα) duties,⁷⁹ ostensibly allowing 'evil to be done in his house'/Mary (τὸ πονηρὸν τοῦτο ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου) (13.4). Here, Tromp's 'story of our lives' so deployed naturalizes gendered clichés concerning a man's conflicting performances in civic and private life: by letting public duties outweigh domestic concerns, Joseph has become, at least for the present moment, the 'same old' cuckold—"Who stole the virgin from me and defiled her" (τίς ἡχμαλώτευσε τὴν παρθένον ἀπ' ἐμοῦ καὶ ἐμίανεν αὐτήν)?

⁷⁷ See, e.g., the gendered distinctions between a man's responsibilities concerning *politeia* and *oikonomia* articulated by Aristotle and resumed by Arius Didymus; D. Brendan Nagle, "Aristotle and Arius Didymus on Household and POLIS," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 145 (2002): 198–223; David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 33–49. Cf. Xenophon's gendered division of household management into outdoor/indoor tasks (*Oec.* 7.22–31); Philo's gendered assignment of space and labor (QG 1.26; Spec. 3.169–171), discussed at length by Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Gender and Geopolitics in the Work of Philo of Alexandria: Jewish Piety and Imperial Family Values," in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63–88 (esp. "Roman Sexual Politics and Philo's Philosophical Interpretation of the Creation," 81–87); as well as long-established rabbinic identifications of a 'woman/wife' with 'house' (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 18.1–3), discussed by Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, *Menstrual Purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 40–67; and Cynthia M. Baker, *Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jewish Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). See also discussion of the "gender-divided world of antiquity," in Jerome H. Neyrey, "Jesus, Gender, and the Gospel of Matthew," in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 43–66, esp. 44–53 and sources cited therein.

⁷⁸ See, e.g., Emile Amann, *Le Protévangile de Jacques et ses ramaniements latins* (Paris: Letouzey, 1910): "l'idée que l'homme seul doit louer Dieu, à certaines heures, est bien juive; la femme n'a pas droit de prendre part à la prière officielle."

⁷⁹ As discussed in my introductory chapter and in my case studies of Joseph in Matthew and Luke, public evaluation of how one presided over one's household, in ruling over, providing for, and protecting one's charges, especially with regards to the sexual propriety of one's women, was a crucial element of male self-fashioning in antiquity; see Mary Rose D'Angelo, "'Knowing How to Preside over His Own Household': Imperial Masculinity and Christian Asceticism in the Pastorals, Hermas, and Luke-Acts," in *New Testament Masculinities*, 265–96; Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michele George, ed., *Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond* (Oxford; New York: Oxford, 2005). An important anthropological overview is offered by David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Conceptions of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); cf. Halvor Moxnes, "Conventional Values in the Hellenistic World: Masculinity," in P. Bilde, T. Engberg-Pedersen, L. Hannestad, J. Zahle, eds., *Conventional Values of the Hellenistic Greeks*, *Studies in Hellenistic Civilization*, 8 (Århus: Aarhus University Press, 1997), 263–84.

Besides this, in what is perhaps one of their *earliest* rhetorical duets,⁸⁰ PJ also juxtaposes Mary and Eve, who, as virgins, are equally figured both as passive bodily presence (unprotected, deceived, defiled) *and* responsible moral agent, fraught with unresolved tension between “the power over women established to control them and the power of women to subvert the relations through which they are controlled.”⁸¹ As Joseph rises from the ashes of his ambivalent, victimized and emotional display, he turns his ire on Mary, signaling her (and also Eve’s) culpability via a direct citation of the original, biblical ‘mini-story’:

Gen 3.13 (LXX): ...and the Lord God said to the woman, “*How could you have done this?*” (καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῇ γυναικί Τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας).

PJ 13.6: ...and [Joseph] said to her: “After having been cared for by God, *how could you have done this?*” (...καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ μημελημένη θεῷ τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας)

⁸⁰ New Testament writings do not consider Eve and Mary together. Similarly, PJ, apart from 13.1 where Eve is deployed as a rhetorical foil, does not consider Eve and Mary as general types; cf. Maximilla in the *Passion/Acts of Andrew* who is also portrayed in comparison and contrast to the figure of Eve (37). While the characters of Eve and Mary in Christian discourse end up following parallel paths—indeed, with respect to some later patristic articulations, “interpreting the figure of the ‘first woman,’ Eve, without recourse to the ‘last woman,’ Mary, will be a grave error” (Gary Anderson, *Genesis of Perfection*, 85)—this was by no means the case for all of early Christian discourse, and the patristic sources themselves militate against a monolithic form/function of Eve-Mary typologies or a normative application of this principle to second-century (and earlier) texts. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 100; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.22.4; Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 17. The assumed intention of PJ’s author leads Pieter van der Horst to the problematic assertion that, for the author of PJ, the typology of Mary as ‘second Eve’ “was constantly in his mind” with respect to his perception of Mary as “an angelic and paradisiacal being”; Van der Horst, “Sex, Birth, Purity and Asceticism,” 66. Gary F. Anderson makes a similar problematic claim about the author of PJ’s original intent, anachronistically (mis)reading some patristic authors’ consistent theological identification of Eve and Mary back into the text of PJ: “the treatment of Eve was nearly always correlated to that of Mary. The *Protevangelium* does not disappoint on this score”; Anderson, *Genesis of Perfection*, 90.

⁸¹ Victoria Goddard, “Honor and Shame: The Control of Women’s Sexuality and Group Identity in Naples,” in Pat Caplan, ed., *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality* (London & New York: Tavistock, 1987), 166-93 (190). With respect to the cultural values of the first- and second-century Mediterranean world: “...the virgin is a figure infused with moral significance” (Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 59). Because the virgin’s sexual status, in this world, functions as both a means to and a sign of her moral, spiritual, and social disposition, she stands continually poised on the brink of moral excellence and moral decay. Just as virginity can signify honor and purity, so can its demise or betrayal degenerate into dishonor and impurity; see discussion of “Virginity as Honor,” in Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 61-63. Such ambivalent, androcentric perceptions of women (especially virgins) and with respect to sexual status is highly significant and in fact forms one of the bases for the recent anthropological reanalysis of ‘honor and shame’ discourse and construction of gendered identity in antiquity; see, for example, Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Nancy Lindisfarne, “Variant Masculinities, Variant Virginites: Rethinking ‘Honour and Shame,’” in Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, eds., *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 82-96; idem, “Gender, Shame, and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective,” in Paul Gilbert and Bernice Andrews, eds., *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology, and Culture* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 246-60.

Yet, in contrast to PJ's Eve, the prototypical virgin who allowed herself to be 'deceived' (ἐξηπάτησεν) and 'defiled' (ἐμίλανεν) by a seducer,⁸² Mary is portrayed by the subsequent narrative (PJ 13.6-16.8) as having *actively* guarded her virginity (despite the fact that she is six months pregnant), ultimately emerging as a morally superior exemplar⁸³ of a conventionally "masculine" virtue: self-control.⁸⁴ The importance of this aspect of Mary's virtue is shown narratively by the amount of space devoted to documenting it. Thus, although she is pregnant, Mary resolves to defend herself, and, after weeping bitterly, at last speaks and asserts her innocence (καθαρά εἰμι ἐγώ; 13.8). In the face of mounting disbelief, first from Joseph ("How could you have done this?"; ...τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας; 13.6) and then, later, from the high priest (2x: "How could you have done this?"; ...τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας; 15.10, 12),

⁸² Similar Eve associations are made across a number of ancient texts; see, e.g., *GLAE* 9.2, 11.1-3, 14.2, 29.12-13; 2 Cor 11.2-4, 12-15; *ApAb* 23.1-13. Thus, Joseph's lament in PJ does recite the ancient notion that virgins lived in constant threat of rape and seduction, perhaps akin to the warning of the mother of the seven martyr sons (4 Macc 18.6-8); see "Rape/Seduction of the Virgin Body," in Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 50-55.

⁸³ Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 155: "The juxtaposition of Mary and Eve in PJ 13 advances the portrayal of Mary as a moral subject by subjecting even her to the suspicions and concerns that surround *parthenoi*...By using Eve as a potential mirror image of Mary, the narrative deftly underscores Mary's difference...the text needs Eve to reveal Mary as the *parthenos tou kyriou*." With respect to the 'deeds' of Mary and Eve in PJ, then, this *syncretis* presents an antithetical comparison of absolute positions, one being positive and the other negative, and the ostensible function of such *syncretis* corresponds to that found in the ἐγκώμιον where a person or subject is introduced in order to show the greatness and superiority of the person or subject under direct discussion; see, Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 17-19, and his discussion of PJ's use of common encomiastic topic, including Mary's lineage in terms of race (γένος), details about her parents (πατέρες) and ancestry (πρόγονοι), illustrations of her upbringing (ἀνατροφή) adult pursuits, skills, and habits (ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ τέχνη καὶ νόμοι), and virtuous 'deeds'. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.9.38-39; Ps.-Aristotle, *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1441a27-28; Isocrates, *Busiris* 4; Cicero, *Brutus* 47; See also Vinzenz Buchheit, *Untersuchungen zu Theorie des genos epideiktikon von Gorgias bis Aristoteles* (München: M. Huber, 1960), 15, 25.

⁸⁴ Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 19: "The importance of Mary's virtues is shown narratively by the amount of space devoted to documenting her virtue, especially her σωφροσύνη, or self-control." The agonistic aspect of self-control/mastery—commonly expressed by ἐγκράτεια and/or σωφροσύνη—frequently received a distinctly masculine inflection in antiquity: "it was a manly virtue, a virile virtue"; Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *JBL* 117, no. 2 (1998): 249-273 (258). See also Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality* 2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985), 65-70, 72-74: "Enkrateia, with its opposite, *akrasia*, is located on the axis of struggle, resistance, and combat," notes Foucault; "it is self-control, tension, 'continence'," the repression of the passions. In general, it refers "to the dynamics of a domination of oneself by oneself and to the effort that this demands" (65); cf. Foucault, *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality* 3, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 84-86, 94-95. External control exercised over others did not make a man, but only internal control exercised over oneself; in fact, in order to be deemed worthy of dominating others, one first had to be able to dominate oneself. Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, for example, states that to rule over "willing subjects" is "a gift of the gods...bestowed on those who have been initiated into self-discipline [σωφροσύνη]"; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 21.12. Foucault lists and discusses many similar examples (*Use of Pleasure*, 75-77, 82-83). John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 49, writes of this peculiarly brittle concept of masculinity: "The enemy was also within."

Mary insists that she ‘did not know a man’ (καὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω, 13.8; cf. 15.13) and so confirms the intrinsic relationship between her παρθενία and her virtue. Indeed, we might even read Joseph’s (and, later, the priest’s) question, ‘How could Mary have done this?’, not only as a rhetorically shaming question (Mary, how *could* you?!), but also as a heartfelt request for details (Mary, *how* was this even possible?!). Mary’s insistence on having *actively* guarded her virginity is upheld by divine confirmation (14.5; 16.7), and, when she is finally vindicated, Mary’s preserved παρθενία functions as evidence not only of bodily purity or ascribed honor but of publicly ‘tested’ and ‘approved’ virtue: “Mary has, in short, exercised self-control ever since leaving the Temple.”⁸⁵

Scholars regularly fixate on PJ’s fixation with Mary’s performance of ‘manly’ self-control, even without engaging in the disruption that such significations suggest. However, Joseph, too, undergoes a series of tests of his manly virtue, managing in the first place to overcome his presumed humiliation as the ‘same old’ cuckold: everything is *not* as it seems initially to Joseph. Yet, while Joseph has ‘found’ Mary to be with child, he has not found an answer to his more primary and basic question, “Where then did this thing in your womb come from?” (πόθεν οὖν τοῦτο ἔστιν ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ σου; 13.9), because, as Mary so swears, even while she betrays her ignorance: “As surely as the Lord my God lives, I do not know where this thing in me came from” (ὣν κύριος ὁ θεός μου καθότι οὐ γινώσκω πόθεν ἔστιν ἐν ἐμοί; 13.10). Foster aptly notes that, similar to her prior conversation with Elizabeth, Mary “unhelpfully...had forgotten the conversation with Gabriel (PJ 12:6). No explanation is given as to how she could have failed to remember this memorable event. This lack of

⁸⁵ Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 19. The Eve-Mary *syncretis* initiated in 13.5 thus forms one of the primary references for the rest of the ‘virginity testing’ section (PJ 13.6-16.8). That PJ’s Eve-Mary *syncretis* is carried through not in the more ‘rhetorical’ manner of immediate comparisons in successive chapters, as in the case of Plutarch’s *syncretis*, for example, but in blocks of material, section by section, is no militating factor. This method corresponds to the advice of Aphthonius (31.19) and to the use of the *syncretis* in Appian, *Civil War* II.21.149-54; see also the *syncretis* of poverty and wealth in Teles 33H-48H.

recollection does serve to heighten the tension that develops in the story.”⁸⁶ More than this, Mary’s ignorance also seems a literary necessity, not only in setting up the synoptic harmony,⁸⁷ but also in maintaining a Joseph-centric focus: if Mary *had* ‘helpfully’ remembered and recounted her (Lukan) angelic penetrative encounter to Joseph, then presumably the subsequent (Matthean) scene, focused on Joseph’s anxious wrestling with how best to deal with his predicament, would have been superfluous. Attempting to overcome his presumed homosocial humiliation as the ‘same old’ cuckold, Joseph shares the second of his tortured, ‘inside-view’ soliloquies:

καὶ ἐφοβήθη ὁ Ἰωσήφ σφόδρα καὶ ἠρέμησεν ἐξ αὐτῆς διαλογιζόμενος αὐτὴν τί ποιήσει καὶ εἶπεν Ἰωσήφ ἐὰν αὐτῆς κρύψω τὸ ἁμάρτημα εὐρεθήσομαι μαχόμενος τῷ νόμῳ κυρίου καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὴν φανερώσω τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ φοβοῦμαι μήπως ἀγγελικὸν ἐν ἑαυτῇ καὶ εὐρεθῆσομαι παραδιδούς ἄθόον αἷμα εἰς κρίματος θανάτου τί οὖν αὐτῇ ποίησω λάθρα αὐτὴν ἀπολύσω ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ καὶ κατέλαβεν αὐτὸν νύξ

Then Joseph was extremely frightened and let her be. Pondering what he should do with her, Joseph said to himself, “If I hide her sin [from the sons of Israel], I will be rebelling against the law of the Lord. And if I expose her to the sons of Israel...well, I am afraid that the child in her might be angelic and I will be betraying innocent blood to a judgment of death. What then should I do with her? I will send her away from me secretly.” And night overtook him. (14.1-5a)

The horns of Joseph’s fearful dilemma put *flesh* on his canonical ‘pondering’ (ἐνθυμηθέντος) and ‘righteous...plan’ (δίκαιος ὦν...ἐβουλήθη) (Matt 1.19-20):⁸⁸ because Mary doesn’t know what has *happened* to her flesh (‘where this thing in her womb came from’; 13.10), Joseph doesn’t know what he should *do* with her flesh. Naturalizing Mary’s condition as a matter to be manhandled, Joseph can neither “conceal” (κρύψω) Mary’s pregnant body from, nor “reveal” (φανερώσω) it to, the male-viewing public, “the sons of Israel” (τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ; 14.2-3): her flesh is the object of his fear/dilemma. The first alternative—which, by the way, is how Mary has handled her swollen womb up

⁸⁶ See also Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 97: Mary’s “attitude is the same both to Elisabeth and to Joseph...she does not disclose her secret to either of them.” Smid also maintains that Mary’s professed ignorance underscores her anomalous relationship to Joseph, that Mary also does not ‘know’ Joseph (sexually), further underscoring the crisis of signification involved with describing what Mary is to Joseph: “In this the author shows us at the same time that the marriage is not a true marriage, Joseph’s function is only that of guardian” (99).

⁸⁷ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 99: “For the author this is a chapter [PJ 13] of harmonisation. He wants to harmonise the stories of the birth in Lk. 1 and 2 with Mt. 1 and 2.”

⁸⁸ So, too, Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 99: “an elaboration of Mt. 1.19.”

till now, she “concealed herself from the sons of Israel” (ἔκρυβεν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ; 12.8) —is impracticable because Joseph, presumably as a ‘righteous man’ (δίκαιος; Matt 1.19), cannot ‘quarrel with’ the dictates of the established order (μαχόμενος τῷ νόμῳ κυρίου): her flesh, if indeed it is guilty of being ‘deceived’ and/or ‘defiled’ (13.5), must be properly/publicly ‘chastised’ (κρίσματος; 14.3).⁸⁹ Besides this, Joseph is ‘extremely frightened’ (ἐφοβήθη...σφόδρα; 14.1) about the repercussions of such quarreling, just like earlier, he ‘feared’ the consequences of ‘backtalking’ (ἀντιλογία) the Lord’s priests (9.9). The second alternative is equally nonviable for Joseph: Joseph also fears that “handing over” (παραδιδούς) Mary’s pregnant body to the male-viewing public will result in the shedding of “innocent blood” (ἀθῶον αἷμα) (14.3). This is because ‘what is in her womb’ might be the inevitable (‘innocent?’) result of some ‘angelic’ (μήπως ἀγγελικόν) or ‘metaphysically’-forced encounter:⁹⁰ Mary’s flesh was perhaps taken *from* her, as presumably was the case with the Eve/serpent ‘mini-story’ cited by Joseph in his first soliloquy. Just as the dark “night” (νύξ) of uncertainty overtakes him, Joseph resolves to dodge the horns of his dilemma, overcoming his presumed humiliation as the ‘same old’ cuckold: avoiding a ‘quarrel with the law of the Lord’ (μαχόμενος τῷ νόμῳ κυρίου), Joseph “will send her away” (αὐτὴν ἀπολύσω), and yet also not ‘betraying innocent blood to a judgment of death’ (παραδιδούς ἀθῶον αἷμα εἰς κρίσματος θανάτου), he will send her away “secretly” (λάθρᾳ) (14.4-5).

While Joseph’s similar ‘quiet dismissal’ of Mary in Matthew is a function of his ‘righteous/just’ (δίκαιος) clemency—he “did not want to publicly expose her” (μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι;

⁸⁹ Smid, 99: the content is based upon the marriage laws of Deut. 22.13-29 (esp. vv. 23, 24). Cf. Matthew Marohl, *Joseph’s Dilemma: "Honor Killing" in the Birth Narrative of Matthew* (Eugene, Or. : Cascade Books, 2008), 56-61.

⁹⁰ See Ehlen, *Leitbilder und romanhafte Züge*, 144-46, who compares this scene (PJ 14) to *Chariton* 3.3.4-7, not in order to establish some sort of literary connection, but simply to note ‘similar thoughts within a similar narrative structure’: Chaereas assumes a similar substantive involvement (his ‘erotic adversary’) at the divine/metaphysical level when Callirhoe is ‘stollen’ from her tomb, citing as a precedent the ‘mini-stories’ of Ariadne with Dionysus and Semele with Zeus. The idea that supernatural beings have commerce with (unguarded) women is fairly common, even in (post-)biblical and early Jewish writings; see, e.g., Gen 6.1-4; *1 Enoch* 106.6; *Jubilees* 5.1-12; *1QGenAp* 2.4.5; *Test. Reub.* 5; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3,4; 1 Cor 11.10; Ireneaus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.8.2. See also Karl Kerényi, *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1927), 256, n. 134.

Matt 1.19)—here in PJ, Joseph’s resolution is based on doubts about Mary’s culpability, a direct function, from Joseph’s perspective, of the identity of his erotic adversary, the dastardly “*Who!*” (τίς; 13.4) of his prior interrogations. Nevertheless, just as Joseph decides on ‘what he is supposed to do’ to overcome his presumed humiliation, not unlike in Matthew’s tale, what PJ’s Joseph ‘is supposed to do’ *changes*, according to the dictates delivered through a theophanic dream encounter. Joseph slips into an uneasy sleep.

Reproducing many of the same conventions that characterize Matthew’s dream-annunciation scene, PJ, too, deals directly with *Joseph’s* plight over what to do with his unguarded, swollen ward—explicitly a *man’s* predicament from PJ’s perspective⁹¹—even if, on a more basic, fundamental level it also deals indirectly with Mary’s plight.⁹² In accord with the thoroughgoing androcentric emphases of this passage, PJ’s (second) Annunciation is bestowed upon a man, given in response to a man’s plight, and addresses a man’s concerns, his fears. Moreover, in contrast to how the conventional trope of fear is deployed in other annunciation stories—compare, for example Mary’s fear in PJ 11.4—the *fear* of PJ’s Joseph is not evoked by an ominous confrontation with a supernatural presence.⁹³ Rather its appearance in the delivery of the divine message is linked with the preceding narrative and is an indication of Joseph’s ‘extremely frightened’ (ἐφοβήθη...σφόδρα; 14.1) emotional state leading up to (and including) the time of the dream-vision, which plagued his wrestling with how to respond

⁹¹ See, e.g., D’Angelo, “Knowing How to Preside over His Own Household”; the androcentric, ideological link between homosocial honor and masculinity is evidenced in the fact that men who are dishonored, either through an erotic defeat, or “an equivalent social submission” (Gilmore, *Honour and Shame*, 6) can be considered as being ‘deficient in manliness’, undergoing “sexual reversal,” “feminization” (11), or as being “castrated, tame” (Anton Blok, “Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honor,” *Man* 16 [1981]: 427-40; reprinted in Eric Wolf, ed., *Religion, Power and Protest in Local Communities: The Northern Shore of the Mediterranean* [New York: Mouton, 1984], 51-70 [57-58]). A dishonored male “in a sense...surrenders his own masculine identity...So male dishonour implies more than loss of social prestige; it also implies loss of male social identity, of masculinity” (Gilmore, *Honour and Shame*, 11).

⁹² Cf. Jane Schaberg’s mirror-reading of the plight of Matthew’s Mary, which resembles the plight of PJ’s Mary: “[t]he plight that occasions the annunciation in Matt 1:20-21 is the pregnancy of Mary, which occasions the dilemma Joseph faces and the decision he makes to divorce her” (*The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives* [exp. 20th anniversary ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield-Phoenix Press, 2006], 100)—Mary’s plight “is that she is betrothed and pregnant not by the one to whom she is betrothed. She is in danger of being put to shame (or worse), but Joseph is unwilling to choose this way of dealing with the dilemma” (101).

⁹³ Cf. fear/anxiety provoked by epiphanic visions directly: Gen 16.13; 17.3; 18.2; Judg 13.22; Luke 1.12; Luke 1.29; Acts 18.9; Acts 27.24; Rev 1.17; Plutarch, *Brut.* 36.4; Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.334; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 4.34.

to the homosocial ‘same old’ cuckold challenge discussed above. However, the *object* of Joseph’s dream-fear in PJ is handled a bit differently:

Matt 1.20: ...and suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Do not fear *to take Mary as your wife...*” (μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκά σου)

PJ 14.5: ...and suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Do not fear *this child...*” (μὴ φοβηθῆς τὴν παῖδα ταύτην)

Smid suggests that the author of PJ “omits *paralabein* as he detests everything which faintly resembles Joseph being Mary’s real husband. P.J. purposely alters the tenor of Mt.1,20: a theological correction!” However, in PJ’s earlier recounting, Joseph had *already* (if also ambivalently) ‘taken’ Mary as a ‘wife’ (8.8) or ‘ward’ (9.7), and this is in fact the typical way the author of PJ describes Joseph’s ‘relationship’ to Mary: Joseph ‘takes’ her (*παραλαμβάνω*: 9.7, 11, 12; 13.2)! More curious, I suggest, is the author’s use of *παῖδα* (“child”) to refer to this post-pubescent (even sixteen-year-old) maiden, which certainly stretches the conventional semantic range of this word.⁹⁴ Besides this, the author’s use of *παῖδα* both deviates from the typical way Mary is referred to after being ‘taken’ by Joseph, “virgin” (*παρθένος*: 9.7; 13.3, 4; 15.6, 8; 16.1), and recalls the way Mary is typically referred to when she is under the protection of her parents and the temple priests prior to chapter 9 (*παῖδα*: 5.10; 6.1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14; 7.1, 4, 5; 8.1). Why would the author of PJ so contort the semantic range of *παῖδα* while also not capitalizing on the opportunity to grant divine sanction to Mary’s virginity in a work obsessed with that topic? Significantly, the author of PJ replaces “your wife” (τὴν γυναῖκά σου) with “this child” (τὴν παῖδα ταύτην), not simply because the author, as Smid suggests, “detests everything which faintly resembles Joseph being Mary’s real husband,”⁹⁵ but rather because

⁹⁴ See “*παῖδα*,” LSJ 1287; BDAG, 749: while *παῖδα* typically denotes a child below the age of puberty, it can also refer to one who is open to instruction, or “one who is treasured in the way a parent treasures a child” (see, e.g., 1 John 2.18, 3.7).

⁹⁵ So, too, Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 142: “Despite her marriage to Joseph, however, Mary is referred to as a ‘child’ (*παιδίσκη*) by the priests in *Prot. Jas.* 10:4. As with the description of the unusual circumstances surrounding her marriage in *Prot. Jas.* 9:11, this detail seems designed to deny her status as Joseph’s wife in any traditional sense of the term.” Again, note the crisis of signification in Vuong’s description, ‘wife in any traditional sense of the term,’ indeed.

the author seeks again to highlight the ambiguous spousal situation that has characterized Joseph's relationship to Mary from the very beginning of his 'home-taking' of her (9.11-12): Mary is neither 'his wife' (τὴν γυναῖκά σου) nor 'his child' (τὴν παῖδα σου). The author of PJ employs παῖδα figuratively here to denote "one who is treasured in the way a parent treasures a child": Joseph has been charged with the 'keeping' (τήρησις; 9.7) and 'protection' (φυλάσσω; 13.3; 14.8) of "this child" just as any male householder would be—the angel reminds Joseph that the flesh of "this child" is in his hands. At any rate, by redeploing the conventional annunciation motif of *fear*—traditionally intended to elicit awe of the messenger or the deity—PJ continues to invoke and invite reflection upon the contest of Joseph's homosocial honor being played out upon the body of "this child."

As had already been directly disclosed (to Mary; PJ 11), the Lord God, too, has a stake in this contest, for, as Joseph's dream-annunciation continues, reciting Matthew's version nearly verbatim, "that which is in her is of/from a spirit which is holy" (τὸ γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῇ ὧν ἐκ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἁγίου; PJ 14.5; cf. Matt 1.20: τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἁγίου). The most apparent meaning of this phrase (ἐκ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἁγίου) suggests that what is in Mary is "of/from a holy spirit," rather than of/from an evil or impure one;⁹⁶ however, the phrase may also connote the *deity's* agency, and so it has been taken in traditional glosses as "of/from the Holy Spirit."⁹⁷ Here we see a striking divergence from PJ's first Annunciation episode: while the Annunciation to Mary (based on

⁹⁶ Contrast, e.g., the similar phrases in Matt 1.18 (ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου) and 1.20 (τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἁγίου) with Genesis 38.24 LXX where Tamar is said to be ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχει ἐκ πορνείας (pregnant through fornication or, more generally, sexual impropriety); cf. Sir 23.23; Deut 23.2 LXX.

⁹⁷ Notably, Smid (*Proteuangelium Jacobi*, 103) does not even discuss the omission of the article with God's πνεῦμα, presumably because the author of PJ here simply reproduces the phrase as found also in Matt 1.18 and 3.16. However, as with Matthew, no developed idea of a personal Spirit is present here; though perhaps by the time of PJ's composition, "the Holy Spirit" was the accepted way of reading Matt 1.20; see A. M. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1955), 7; C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit in the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 17; Marie E Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (London: Heythrop Monographs, 1976); Charles Thomas Davis, "Tradition and Redaction in Matthew 1:18-2:23," *JBL* 90, no.4 (1971): 404-21 (413); Nolan, *Royal Son*, 32. It is perhaps a telling sign that John R. Levison also refrains from treating Matthew's usage of πνεύματος ἁγίου here in either of his two recent books on the role of the spirit in early Jewish and Christian texts; see *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) and *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

Luke 1.30-35) makes no reference to the Holy Spirit—rather Mary is advised, συνλήμψη ἐκ λόγου αὐτοῦ (“you will conceive by his Word”; PJ 11.5)—in the Annunciation to Joseph (based on Matt 1.20-21), Mary’s conception is specified as being ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου (“from the Holy Spirit”), as is also the case with the later editorial insertion of Joseph’s admission to the midwife (PJ 19.9). In the absence of “some underlying theological reason,” George Zervos suggests that the discrepancies between PJ’s two Annunciation episodes, that Mary’s conception by the Holy Spirit is both ‘suppressed’ (in PJ 11) and ‘promoted’ (in PJ 14), might be the result of the author’s bumbled harmonizing of disparate source materials (from Luke 1.30-35 and Matt 1.20-21)—“it is not uncharacteristic for our editor to overlook such inconsistencies and redundancies”—or perhaps “one could speculate about the possibility of multiple editors.”⁹⁸ More simply, I suggest, PJ’s Annunciation scenes differ because they answer *different* questions: while the first of PJ’s Annunciations (11.5-8) answers Mary’s question of *How?* this conception will take place, *by his word* (ἐκ λόγου αὐτοῦ; PJ 11.5), the second Annunciation answers the question that has plagued Joseph ever since he discovered Mary’s swollen form, namely *Who?* is responsible. Joseph receives his answer: following Matthew’s usage, PJ likely employs the phrase (ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου) here to signify the deity’s involvement in Mary’s pregnancy. Mary’s is a *divinely sponsored* ‘swelling’ (ὀγκωμένην).⁹⁹ In accord with the thoroughgoing androcentric perspective of the passage, from an ancient everyday man’s perspective, the question/answer of *Who?* is more significant than *How?* The penetrating revelation of the dream-annunciation to Joseph shifts the register (though not the playing field) of male homosocial competition: neither of the two *Who?* options that Joseph had come up with (another man, an angel?) were his contenders in the contest over the flesh of “this child”; the deity, it turns out, is the One with whom Joseph must deal!

⁹⁸ Zervos, “Christmas with Salome,” 86 n.18.

⁹⁹ According to L. M. Peretto, “La Vergine Maria nel pensiero di uno scrittore del secondo secolo (La Mariologia del Protevangelo di Giacomo),” *Marianum* 16 (1954): 228-265 (262), γεννηθὲν was avoided (by some mss., including P75) as a possibly ‘docetic’ element.

When Joseph wakes up, he glorifies God for giving him grace: Joseph has been reassured that he is not the ‘same old’ cuckold, as he had initially assumed. Joseph is, rather, an entirely new sort of, dare I say noble, *divinely-sponsored* cuckold, and he rejoices and responds to the dictates of his theophanic encounter. And yet, not only does Joseph ‘not fear this child’ (μὴ φοβηθῆς τὴν παῖδα ταύτην) anymore, but he also rectifies his earlier failed guardian performance (13.3) by choosing to ‘protect’ (ἐρύλασσε) her (14.8). Joseph has now bound up his own fate with the fate of “the child” (τὴν παῖδα).¹⁰⁰ And, not a moment too soon, for Joseph (with Mary) is immediately faced with a second, and much more intensely *public*, homosocial honor challenge before “the sons of Israel” (τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ).

4.4 PJ’s Average Joe: Manly *Sotah* or Virile Virgin? (PJ 15-16)

So Joseph is reassured by his dream-annunciation that he has nothing to ‘fear’ with the *Who?* of Mary’s pregnancy. The established order, however, sees a ‘flagrant offense committed’ (ἠνόμησεν σφόδρα; 15.4) against them and the community they preside over: Annas the scribe,¹⁰¹ extending the surveillant arm of priestly hegemony, calls about Joseph’s absence from their “assembly/meeting” (συνόδῳ or συναγωγῇ),¹⁰² seizes within his gaze Mary’s swollen form, and “runs

¹⁰⁰ Here again, Smid (*Protevangelium Jacobi*, 103) notes the omission of a phrase from Matthew (παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ; 1.24), suggesting that it “does not suit the author’s design! According to P.J. Joseph is not the husband, but the keeper, the guardian of Mary: any kind of conjugal relation is avoided!” I would only refer to my discussion above, which highlights how Joseph has ambivalently ‘taken’ Mary throughout PJ (as he has implicitly ‘taken’ her here, in this episode; they are in the house together!) and, furthermore, the author’s use of *παῖδα* here instead of *παρθένος*, is at least as significant as the omission of *γυναῖκα*.

¹⁰¹ On the name “Annas” as prototypical opponent, see Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 104: “Is the name used in connection with these texts to show that the disposition of the later high priest was inimical from the beginning?” Cf. Luke 3.2; John 18.13; *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 3.1.

¹⁰² Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 104-105: “Annas does not mention why Joseph ought to have appeared. Probably the author himself did not know either what kind of meeting that would have been. For him it is a motive to bring Mary and Joseph into contact with the outside world, so that their secret becomes known...We can imagine no reason why Joseph should need to appear in any particular meeting.” The *mss.* hesitate between *συνόδῳ* and *συναγωγῇ* (C, F). This small detail may also be part of PJ’s drawing on established, Jewish traditions, invoking a proto-rabbinic setting for the movement of its plots. That Joseph, an ‘everyday’ laborer, was expected to gather together in a community meeting, presumably with the other ‘sons of Israel’, also provides a peek into the context of the social production of PJ, as I discuss in the conclusion of this chapter.

swiftly” (ἀπῆει δραμαῖος) to inform the (high) priest that Joseph “has defiled the virgin he received from the temple of the Lord” (τὴν παρθένον ἣν Ἰωσήφ παρέλαβεν ἐκ ναοῦ κυρίου ἐμίανεν αὐτήν) and “stolen her nuptials while not revealing this to the sons of Israel” (ἔκλειψεν τοὺς γάμους αὐτῆς καὶ οὐκ ἐφάνέρωσεν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ) (15.6). Annas’ accusations set the tone for the following scenes, serving to emphasize that the primary question, still under consideration, is ‘Who?’ rather than ‘How?’—Joseph is now accused of ‘defiling’ (ἐμίανεν; 15.6) the virgin, in the same way that he accused the unknown ‘Who?’ earlier in his first soliloquy (13.4, 5). More than this, though, Joseph is now also accused of having secretly, without public recognition from “the sons of Israel” (τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ), consummated his relationship to Mary: Joseph has made Mary his wife without a proper marriage ceremony.¹⁰³ Foster suggests that, “If there had been any doubt that the marriage was intended as an asexual union” this set of accusations “makes it clear that he was not expected to exercise any conjugal rites,” at least not without first disclosing this to the “sons of Israel.”¹⁰⁴ Yet, Joseph’s offense is both *public*, against the “sons of Israel” (τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ), and *personal*, against the priest who “vouched for” (μαρτυρεῖς; 15.4) Joseph, presumably the same priest that, earlier in the story, handled Joseph’s rod (PJ 9). Again, as with the rods/dove episode, the established order swiftly reacts to preserve or assert power, and, in a scene invoking one of the more common narrative elements found in ancient novels, Mary and Joseph are summoned to the “place of judgment” (τὸ

¹⁰³ Tellingly perhaps, this phrase (ἔκλειψεν τοὺς γάμους αὐτῆς) *undoes* Smid’s smooth gloss of PJ’s very uneven, ambiguous portrayal of Joseph’s relationship to Mary. While Smid vehemently (!) argues throughout his commentary that the author of PJ “detests everything which faintly resembles Joseph being Mary’s real husband,” in commenting (?) on this passage he is not so sure. He backtracks (*Protevangelium Jacobi*, 110, my emphasis): “The meaning must be: to contract a marriage in secret. There are difficulties here: in 8,3 the angel of the Lord commands Zacharias to give Mary in marriage: toutooi estai gunè. In 9,1 the priest interprets this as ‘paralabein tèn parthenon kuriou eis tètèsin autooi’. Thus Joseph is now accused of an unlawful action, while the priest ends with the words ‘hopoos euloèthèi to sperma sou’, which sound as if there would have been no objection to a ‘legal, public’ marriage. Here the priest speaks as if the secret marriage were Joseph’s great sin, while in 16,1 he says: apodos tèn parthenon ktl. *The author was unable to set up a logical context in this perplexity. Sometimes he bases his story on one element, sometimes on the other.*” Hock, too, is *perplexed* (*Infancy Gospels*, 59): “Implicit in this accusation is the assumption that Joseph could have treated Mary as his wife, if only he had notified the people of Israel. Such an assumption is strange.” As I discuss in my conclusion to this part, ‘this perplexity’ is precisely what the author of PJ seems to be valorizing, a particular ‘moral position’ which promotes the ‘not quite’ marriage of Joseph and Mary.

¹⁰⁴ Foster, “The Protevangelium of James,” 578.

κριτήριον; 15.9) for a priestly trial and truth contest that pivots on the manipulation of their flesh.

Listen:

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς Μαρία τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας τί ἐταπείνωσας τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἐπελάθου κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου ἢ ἀνατραφεῖσα εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων καὶ λαβοῦσα τροφήν ἐκ χειρὸς ἀγγέλων σὺ ἢ ἀκούσασα τὸν ὕμνον αὐτῶν καὶ χορεύσασα ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας ἢ δὲ ἔκλαυσε πικρῶς λέγουσα ζῆ κύριος ὁ θεὸς καθότι καθαρὰ εἰμι ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς Ἰωσήφ ὅτι τοῦτο ἐποίησας εἶπεν δὲ Ἰωσήφ ζῆ κύριος καθότι καθαρὸς εἰμι ἐγὼ ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς μὴ ψευδομαρτύρει λέγε τὰ ἀληθῆ ἔκλειψας τοὺς γάμους σου καὶ οὐκ ἐφάνέρωσας τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ οὐκ ἔκλινας τὴν κεφαλὴν σου ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖραν ὅπως εὐλογηθῆ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ Ἰωσήφ ἐσίγησεν

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἀπόδος τὴν παρθένον ἂν παρέλαβες ἐκ ναοῦ κυρίου καὶ περιδάκρυτος γενόμενος ὁ Ἰωσήφ καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ποτίσω ὑμᾶς τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς ἐλέγξεως κυρίου καὶ φανερώσει τὸ ἁμάρτημα ὑμῶν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ λαβῶν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐπότισεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἔπεμψεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον καὶ ἦλθεν ὀλόκληρος καὶ ἐπότισεν καὶ τὴν παῖδα καὶ ἔπεμψεν αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν καὶ κατέβη ὀλόκληρος καὶ ἐθαύμασεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὅτι οὐκ ἐφάνεν ἁμαρτίαν αὐτῶν καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰ κύριος ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐφάνέρωσεν τὸ ἁμάρτημα ὑμῶν οὐδὲ ἐγὼ κρίνω ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀπέλυσεν αὐτούς καὶ παρέλαβεν Ἰωσήφ τὴν Μαριάμμην καὶ ἀπήει ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ καίρων καὶ δοξάζων τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραὴλ

“Mary, how could you have done this?” the high priest asked her. “Why have you humiliated yourself and forgotten the Lord your God—you, who were reared in the Holy of the Holies, who received nourishment by the hand of angels and heard their hymns and danced for them—how could you have done this?” And she wept bitterly, saying, “As the Lord God lives, I am pure before him and I have not known a man.”

And the high priest said, “Joseph, how could you have done this?” And Joseph said, “As the Lord lives, I am pure concerning her.” And the high priest said, “Don’t perjure yourself, but tell the truth: you have stolen your nuptials while not revealing this to the sons of Israel, and you did not bow your head under the mighty hand, so that your seed might be blessed!” But Joseph was silent.

So, the high priest said, “Return the virgin you took from the temple of the Lord!” Then, as Joseph began to weep bitterly, the high priest said, “I will give you both to drink the water of the Lord’s wrath, and it will reveal your sin in your eyes.” Taking it, the priest made Joseph drink and sent him into the wilderness, but he returned whole. Then he also made the girl drink and sent her into the wilderness. She, too, came back whole. All the people marveled that their sins had not been revealed. So, the high priest said, “If the Lord God has not revealed your sin, neither do I condemn you,” and he released them. Then Joseph took Mary and returned to his house, rejoicing and praising the God of Israel. (15.10-16.8)

Maud Gleason has recently examined novelistic scenes that resemble our trial/ordeal episode.¹⁰⁵ Shot through with reversal, such narratives share three elements. First, there is a “truth contest” to resolve a conflict. Second, bodies serve as witnesses, miraculously testifying for or against a character under scrutiny. Third, the ordeal unfolds before a “lay” public audience, rather than a tribunal or magistrate, which is prepared to accept the testimony of the erstwhile bodies. Saundra Schwartz identifies thirteen such scenes in the five, extant, complete Greek novels: each of the novels features a least one trial, and all except Xenophon’s *Ephesian Tale* give speeches in the trials.¹⁰⁶ PJ’s trial/ordeal episode seems to fit, at least in skeletal form, Schwartz’s definition of the trial scene: *a verbal dispute between two parties* [Annas and Joseph], *occasioned by an alleged or actual misdeed* [non-disclosure of a conjugal union], *judged by a third party who functions in an official capacity* [the high priest], *witnessed by an audience* [the ubiquitous “sons of Israel”], *and entailing punishment or reward* [Mary and Joseph’s vindication].¹⁰⁷ PJ’s trial/ordeal scene also conveys, albeit in a truncated manner, each of the *topoi* identified by Schwartz as common parts of the trial scene: crime, arrest, accusation, the convening of the court, a pair of speeches, the spectators’ reactions, a surprising twist, and, the verdict.¹⁰⁸ Schwartz aptly notes that such novelistic trial scenes ought not be read as glimpses of legal history—they are usually very contrived cases that would not have been settled within the courtroom. However, their frequency in Greek and Latin fiction both “reflects the importance of rhetoric in the literary culture of the Roman Empire” and shows how the rules of ancient rhetoric

¹⁰⁵ Maud Gleason, “Truth Contests and Talking Corpses,” in James I. Porter, ed. *Constructions of the Classical Body: The Body, in Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 287-313. This set of scenes brings PJ suggestively close to a large sample of second- and third-century literature, which “join together flesh and truth in playful ways”; Chris Frillingos, “No Child Left Behind: Knowledge and Violence in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas,” *J ECS* 17 (2009): 27-54 (44). Scenes like PJ’s trial/ordeal episodes, as Gleason has shown, “intersected with the forensic brutality of the Roman era and, especially, the customary torture of witnesses. All of these fictional truth contests pivot on the manipulation of bodies. This motif was consistent with the elite assumption that truth had to be cruelly extracted from the passive flesh of slaves and other marginal persons” (Frillingos, “No Child Left Behind,” 45).

¹⁰⁶ For the most detailed study of such trial scenes, see Saundra C. Schwartz, *Courtroom Scenes in the Ancient Greek Novels* (Ph.D. diss.: Columbia University, 1998); see also idem, “The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 105-37 (esp. 115-16).

¹⁰⁷ Schwartz, “The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” 111.

¹⁰⁸ Schwartz, “The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” 112-17.

might be used within a narrative framework.¹⁰⁹ As Graham Anderson remarks, “No extant ancient novel is without some form of court-room case where school rhetoric can be practised with a vengeance.”¹¹⁰ The point of our (somewhat forced) comparison is this, stated aptly by Schwartz:

The courtroom scene is a particularly apt formula for the dramatization of ideology. At the center of the drama is a contest, an *agon*, between two opponents representing opposed moral positions, with the expectation that, at a predetermined endpoint (the verdict), one contestant will win. The trial scene, therefore, is a formula not only for the exposition of competing ideas but also for the valorization of the moral position implicitly supported by the text’s ideology.¹¹¹

So, what sort of moral position is valorized by PJ’s trial/ordeal scenes; and, what (gendered) ideology supports this position?

One clue to the answer to that question lies in the culmination of the ordeal scene, with its “surprising twist”: a physical test by “water of the Lord’s wrath” (ὕδωρ τῆς ἐλέγξεως κυρίου)—ostensibly invoking the ‘bitter water’ ordeal forced upon a woman suspected of adultery, dubbed the *Sotah* (סוטה) in rabbinic literature, as initially described and prescribed in Numbers (Numbers 5.11-31).¹¹² In a hegemonic display unmatched in any of the other colorful literary afterlives of this

¹⁰⁹ Schwartz, “The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” 110.

¹¹⁰ Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (New York; London: Routledge, 2005), 65.

¹¹¹ Schwartz, “The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” 110.

¹¹² Numbers 5:11–31 describes the ordeal, which permits any man to submit his wife to the process “if a spirit of jealousy comes on him” (Num 5.14), in detail: the accused woman and her husband go to the temple, bringing with them a grain offering for jealousy and repentance. Upon their arrival, the priest prepares for the ordeal by mixing holy water with dust from the floor of the sanctuary. He then places the grain offering in the wife’s hands, dishevels her hair, and administers an oath (Num 5:19–22). The process concludes with a curse that would expose an adulteress if her oath was false; the priest writes down this curse and washes it into the bitter water, and the truth of the woman’s fidelity is discovered after she drinks it. If a miscarriage ensues, the woman is revealed as an adulteress; if she suffers no ill effects, she is absolved of the accusation and judged innocent. It was assumed that a vindicated wife would be able to conceive children, even if she had previously been barren (Num 5.28). See recent discussions by Eve Levavi Feinstein, “The ‘Bitter Waters’ of Numbers 5:11-31,” *VT* 62 (2012): 300-306; and Brian Britt, “Male Jealousy and the Suspected Sotah: Toward a Counter-Reading of Numbers 5:11–31,” *The Bible and Critical Theory* 3, no. 1 (2007): 5.1-5.19, who points to several similarities between the suspected adulteress in Num 5 and the Nazirite in Num 6, including the role of individual choice, sacrifice, hair, and drinking.

biblical ritual,¹¹³ here PJ's high priest extracts truth from the passive flesh of *both* Mary and Joseph.¹¹⁴ The high priest's cross-gendered application of a traditionally gynocentric ordeal is curious indeed.¹¹⁵ Along with Mary, and again at the hands of the priestly elite, Joseph is clothed as a different sort of *Sotah* ("Joseph drinks first"¹¹⁶), though too he emerges, at the end of PJ's trial/ordeal scenes, a different sort of *virgin*. The apparent symmetry between what Mary and Joseph undergo reveals "problems and aporias that signal for modern readers the textual and extratextual conflicts in which these writers were mired,"¹¹⁷—problems, I suggest, where gendered processes are in full swing. While PJ's trial/ordeal scenes certainly fit within an encomiastic trajectory, perhaps constructing an

¹¹³ Cf. Philo of Alexandria, *De Spec. Leg.* 3.52–62; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.270–273; and the Damascus Document (4Q270 frag. 4); and treated extensively in *Sotah*, the tractate of the Mishnah devoted to these procedures. As Megan Nutzman aptly suggests ("Mary in the Protevangelium of James," 560–61): "Disagreements between these texts suggest that the Hebrew Bible traditions about the drink test did not remain static, and that they had undergone significant change by the time that PJ was composed. Whereas the mishnaic procedures expose the accused woman to greater shame in their application, they also allow for more compassion by preventing a man from subjecting his wife to the procedure on a whim." The Mishnah: *adds* that the clothing on the woman's upper body may also be stripped away, her clothes torn, her jewelry removed, a rope tied around her body, under the watchful gaze of invited witnesses (*m. Sot.* 1.5–6); *requires* the 'jealous husband' to first warn his wife to stay away from a particular man and then prove that the wife disobeyed him (*m. Sot.* 1:1); and *asserts* that a woman's merits may postpone her punishment even for many years ("pending merit," *m. Sot.* 3.4). See discussion in Bonna Devora Haberman, "The Suspected Adulteress: A Study of Textual Embodiment," *Prooftexts* 20 (2000) 22–23.

¹¹⁴ PJ's drink test certainly does not function to reveal (or abort) an illicit pregnancy—as it does in the biblical iteration of the ritual (Num 5.27)—since Mary was already six months pregnant; however, neither does the test merely function as a 'veritaserum' to reveal the 'truth' about the relationship between (fidelity of) Mary and Joseph; so, Horner, "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," 329. Rather, it aims at extracting the 'truth' from the passive flesh of Joseph and Mary: the test will, as the high priest so declares, "reveal their sins" (φανερῶσει τὸ ἀμάρτημα ὑμῶν) by taking a chunk out of their flesh—by making them *un*"whole" (δλόκληρος; 16.4, 5), so to speak.

¹¹⁵ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 112–113: "striking difference with the prescripts of Num. 5,11–31: there only the woman must drink the bitter water (vs. 24)...in P.J. Joseph and Mary both undergo the ordeal, in the rest only the woman"; Hock, *The Infancy Gospels*, 61: "the procedures here, however, are rather different, in particular the application of the test to the man"; Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 155: "Readers familiar with ancient narrative may rightly puzzle over the significance of Joseph's testing"; and Foster, "The Protevangelium of James," 578: an unexplained "variant." While this 'puzzling' 'variant' has been used to demonstrate the author of PJ's ignorance of Judaism (so, e.g., Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 49), Horner ("Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," 329) and Nutzman ("Mary in the Protevangelium of James," 562–63) have both recently considered another intriguing explanation: PJ's cross-gendered deployment of the ritual aligns it "more closely to the account in the Mishnah than to the one in the Pentateuch" (Nutzman, "Mary in the Protevangelium of James," 562)—which states "just as the water probes her [the alleged adulteress], it probes him [the adulterer] as well" (*m. Sot.* 5.1)—and so should rather be taken as evidence that PJ "contains elements that may have been more readily understood by readers who were familiar with contemporary Jewish teaching, perhaps even Jews" (Horner "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," 329). While I basically agree with such readings, here I am also interested in the further question of how such parity (*conceptual* in the case of the Mishnah, and *physical* in the case of PJ) *functions* with respect to (PJ's) gendered ideology and structuring of power.

¹¹⁶ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 114.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 171.

apologetic (even Jewish-inflected) front for Mary's public image,¹¹⁸ they are also steeped in the politics of male self-fashioning, implicitly valorizing a moral position (and supported by an ideology) that produces a particular sort of man, while also, at the same time, mimicking "the irreversible 'judicial savagery'" and "'natural' affiliation of knowledge and violence" that elite power-brokers persistently wielded under the hegemony of the Roman Empire.¹¹⁹

In order to further illuminate the gendered dynamics of PJ's trial/ordeal scenes, I juxtapose here, with Virginia Burrus and Simon Goldhill as fitting guides, a roughly contemporaneous tale where male and female sexual propriety is also ambiguously mirrored: Achilles Tatius's *Kleitophon and Leukippe*.¹²⁰ In Tatius's novel, too, virginity, as a "precariously de-centered, hybridized field of culture," is (and seemingly *must be*) put to the test.¹²¹ In one scene, Leukippe catalogues (via a letter) all that she has suffered for Kleitophon's sake (pirates, slavery, etc.) announcing her own faithfulness, signified by a virginity preserved against all odds: "But while I have struggled through one disaster after another, here are you, unsold, unlashd, now married," she accuses her apparently unfaithful lover (5.18). Kleitophon responds via return post, begging not to be condemned "without a trial," protesting: "I have imitated your virginity—if that word has any meaning for men as it does for women" (5.20). "A fascinating remark," as Simon Goldhill notes, in light of the fact that Kleitophon

¹¹⁸ See, e.g., Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 113, suggests that intertextual differences here are "connected with the fact that PJ is not concerned to know exactly how the matter took place...but sees an opportunity in this drinking of the bitter water to obtain an official declaration of innocence for Joseph and Mary. Mt.1,18-25 is not sufficient for him (any more?). The epiphany of an angel no longer suffices; he comes with more convincing proofs." For readings of PJ's trial/ordeal scenes as response to *Jewish* criticism, in particular, see Horner, "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James," 328-329; Nutzman, "Mary in the Protevangelium of James," 559-563; and Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 45-47.

¹¹⁹ Frillingos, "No Child Left Behind," 45, 46.

¹²⁰ Translations taken from John J. Winkler, "Leucippe and Clitophon," in Bryan P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). See Virginia Burrus, "Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance," *Arethusa* 38 (2005): 49-88, who reads together the *Acts of Paul and Thekla* and Achilles Tatius's *Kleitophon and Leukippe*, on the one hand, and Heliodorus's *Ethiopian Story* and *Joseph and Aseneth*: "Reading for resistance, I will also, as it happens, be reading for virginity, which functions, I suggest, as a site of articulated cultural ambivalence in each of these romances, Christian and pagan, pagan and Jewish, respectively" (53). See also Simon Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 66-111. Cf. Ehlen, *Leitbilder und romanhafte Züge*, 153-57, who also compares PJ's trial/ordeal scene with the chastity testing scenes in *Kleitophon and Leukippe*.

¹²¹ Burrus, "Mimicking Virgins," 65.

has earlier referred to his experience with prostitutes (2.37).¹²² Later, when narrating his adventures publicly, Kleitophon repeats, in further qualified form, his already ambiguous claim to ‘virginity’: “If one can speak of such a thing as male virginity, this is my relationship to Leukippe up to now” (8.5) (He has not, in other words, had sex with *Leukippe*). With reference to Kleitophon’s ambiguous claims, Virginia Burrus rightly asks:

Is a man indeed capable of imitating virginity, or does such cross-gendered mimesis inevitably become a mockery?...Kleitophon’s slippery rhetoric here seems to reinstate, with a knowing wink, a traditional sexual double standard, thereby insinuating that the notion of male virginity is indeed no more than a joke. Yet the operation of repetition, evoking his prior, seemingly more ‘sincere’ protest to Leukippe, also holds open another interpretive possibility, namely, that the discursive performance of male virginity is an ambivalent act of mimicry that effects a crisis of signification—‘*if the word has any meaning*’...‘*if one can speak of such a thing*’.¹²³

In other words, the apparent symmetry of Kleitophon’s discursive performance of ‘male virginity’ is fundamentally, disruptively, *asymmetrical*.

Can we ascertain similar ‘symmetrical’, nonequivalent dynamics in Joseph’s donning the transregalia of the *Sotah* in our trial/ordeal scene? Certain elements of the scene apply ‘equally’ to Mary and Joseph: both are brought to court (15.9), interrogated (15.10-12, 14, 16-17), offer a defense/oath of innocence (15.13, 15), and undergo the same physical ordeal (16.3-5). Despite the apparent symmetry in formal structure, however, PJ’s trial/ordeal scene also features a number of nonequivalent, disruptive shifts within and between Mary and Joseph’s subjectivities. Mary is charged with ‘humiliating herself’ (ἐταπεινώσας τὴν ψυχὴν σου; 15.10, using the same words as Joseph did in his interrogation of her, 13.6), while Joseph is accused of transgressing the borders of the priestly designation of his relationship to Mary: Joseph, “you have stolen your nuptials while not revealing this to the sons of Israel” (ἔκλεψας τοὺς γάμους σου καὶ οὐκ ἐφάνέρωσας τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ)

¹²² Simon Goldhill, *Foucault’s Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 95.

¹²³ Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins,” 62.

(15.16).¹²⁴ Mary vows that she is “pure” (καθαρός), and further, that she has “not known any man” (ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω; 15.13), while Joseph vows that he is “pure...concerning her” (καθαρός...ἔξ αὐτῆς; 15.15) (He has not, in other words, had sex with *Mary*). Mary undergoes public humiliation to prove she has not humiliated herself; Joseph submits to the ordeal to prove his ‘head-bowing’ (ἔκλινας τὴν κεφαλὴν) submission to high priestly dictates “under the mighty hand” (ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα) of God (15.17): he *did not have (sexual) relations with that woman!* As David Hunter so aptly puts it, the author of PJ “wants it to be clearly understood that Mary and Joseph have entered into a pact of perpetual virginity and that such an agreement was publicly known, especially by the temple priests.”¹²⁵ Mary’s exoneration depends upon her virginity. Joseph’s vindication, however, rests upon a derivative performance of male virginity, “an unnatural—and thus a radically denaturalizing—act,” as Burrus notes, “because it is inevitably to imitate the woman (already marked as a mimic-man) and equally inevitably to fail in the attempt.”¹²⁶ Mary’s opposition to the established order, in which spectacular passivity combines with unexpected strength of resistance, complicates her femininity; Joseph’s distinctly *unheroic* silence, emotional display, and seemingly shaky domestic commitments, likewise render his masculinity markedly ambivalent. Joseph’s manly reputation is, after all, being tested while wearing the *Sotah*’s clothes. The transvestite,

¹²⁴ Annas’ initial accusation against Joseph, that he has “stolen her nuptials” (ἔκλεψε τὸς γάμους αὐτῆς) is here modified by the priest: Joseph, you have “stolen your nuptials” (ἔκλεψε τὸς γάμους σου), though there is some mss. variance. What this strange modification suggests to me is, again, the crisis of signification effected by Joseph’s ‘not quite’ marriage to Mary: how could a man *steal* from *himself*? Presumably, Joseph (the ‘paramour’) is accused of stealing the ‘nuptials’ of Joseph (the ‘husband’). See also discussion at n. 102, above.

¹²⁵ David Hunter, “Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth-Century Rome,” *J ECS* 1 (1993): 47-71 (64, n. 67).

¹²⁶ Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins,” 65. See also Burrus’ critiques of male appropriation of female virginity within Christian texts of the late Roman empire, “Reading Agnes: The Rhetoric of Gender in Ambrose and Prudentius,” *J ECS* 3, no. 1 (1995): 25-46; and “*Begotten, not Made*: *Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 112–22, 131–33, 135–52, 179–83; for a comparative treatment of the male appropriation of female virginity in rabbinic texts, see Daniel Boyarin, “Masada or Yavneh? Gender and the Arts of Jewish Resistance,” in Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, eds., *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 306-329; idem, “Virgins in Brothels: Gender and Religious Ecotypification,” *Estudos de Literatura Oral* 5 (1999): 195-217; and idem, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 67-92.

as Marjorie Garber observes, is “the figure that disrupts.”¹²⁷ Yet, the result of such disruption is not a deliberate leveling of sexual difference, as David Konstan argues, proposing that “the equivalence of the male and female amatory roles...is specific to the [Greek] novel” and that “the passivity of the hero is best understood as a function or condition of this equivalence.”¹²⁸ “Symmetry,” as Goldhill notes, “is not equivalence (and certainly not equality).”¹²⁹ “Symmetry,” Burrus roguishly adds, “*if the word has any meaning* for the ancient romance, is the erotic effect of tightly linked but fundamentally nonequivalent shifts within and between sexed subjectivities.”¹³⁰ In PJ’s cross-dressed, asymmetrical rendering, too, just as Mary has become disruptively ‘male’ with respect to her tested and approved ‘self-control’, Joseph has become ‘female’. In other words, Joseph, “deconstructed within the complex play of power and resistance conducted on a precariously de-centered, hybridized field of culture,” that of ‘virginity’, “has become a pseudo-man. He is also a mimic-woman.”¹³¹ Joseph’s ‘male virginity’, however, literally falters—his prior sons are evidence not just of his ‘righteousness’ (PJ. 1.6-7).¹³²

So, what sort of moral position is valorized by PJ’s disruptive, asymmetrical vindication of Mary and Joseph, their cooperative vow of ‘marital purity’? One of my basic assumptions in this study is that every text re-produces and promotes a *series* of values and ideologies, *some* of which are explicit—e.g. those related to specific ideas about Mary, her child, and Joseph. The exoneration of Mary in our trial scene certainly (if also explicitly) affirms a ‘theological’ or position regarding the “virgin birth,” preserving Mary’s purity. This is the basic ‘moral position’ also frequently (lopsidedly) ‘valorized’ in reading PJ as a whole: so, for example, Mary Foskett suggests that Joseph’s inclusion in

¹²⁷ Marjorie B. Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York; London: Routledge, 1992), 70. See also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York; London: Routledge, 1990), 137-38; as cited by Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins,” 64, n. 19.

¹²⁸ David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 26; as cited and discussed in Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins,” 64.

¹²⁹ Goldhill, *Foucault’s Virginity*, 160.

¹³⁰ Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins,” 64.

¹³¹ Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins,” 64.

¹³² As Smid (*Protevangelium Jacobi*, 73) notes, the fact that Joseph has prior sons is “evidence that Iosèph is dikaios (Mt. 1,19),” as PJ so states with regards to Joachim’s sentiments in PJ 1.6-7: “And he searched and found that all the righteous people had raised children in Israel.”

the trial/ordeal scenes simply points to and confirms Mary's purity.¹³³ In addition, since texts are multifunctional, they also imply (at times unconsciously or unintentionally) *other* ideological elements in the process. For example, Lily Vuong suggests that PJ's trial/ordeal episode, like the episode of the 'handling' of Mary's cultic impurity (8.3-4), among other things, 'legitimizes priestly authority':

While...the high priest's demand that Joseph and Mary take the bitter water test [16.3] may be interpreted as a negative portrayal of Jewish leadership, a closer examination...reveals a positive reflection of the continued power and importance of the Temple and its priesthood...the high priest's interrogation of Mary and Joseph, while seemingly harsh, results in positive outcomes: Mary is deemed pure and Joseph's innocence is maintained, reinforcing the priesthood and its role in helping Mary and her son bring salvation to the world...In this way, the *Prot. Jas.* presents the way to salvation not as a choice between the Temple and the priesthood on the one hand, and Mary's role as the mother of the messiah on the other, but as a coherent and consistent incorporation of both.¹³⁴

While Vuong's reading the path 'of salvation' as being 'paved with Temple/priesthood intentions' seems overstated, I agree with her more basic suggestion that PJ's temple/ordeal scenes (as is the case with other scenes featuring the priests, including the rod/dove scene analyzed above) naturalizes a particular hierarchical social organization. Of course! It is, after all, the (high) priestly authority which makes possible the *public* approval of Joseph and Mary. Smid straightforwardly reads the conclusion of PJ's trial/ordeal episode as more (of the same!) evidence of the author's "apologetic tendency": "Does P.J. suppose that the whole of Jerusalem witnessed the ceremony?...There are very many witnesses that Mary and Joseph are shown to be innocent."¹³⁵ However Smid (and Vuong for that matter) overlooks the public's *initial* response: "all people were amazed that their sins had not been revealed" (ἐθαύμασεν πᾶς ὁ λαός ὅτι οὐκ ἐφάνεν ἁμαρτίαν αὐτῶν; PJ 16.6) In other words, 'all people' did not know what to make of the 'surprising' non-event of the final results of the spectacle:

¹³³ Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived*, 156: "Given the significance of Mary's defense of her virginity, the importance of Joseph's claim of sexual innocence becomes clear."

¹³⁴ Vuong, "Presentation of Mary in the Protevangelium of James," 425-426.

¹³⁵ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 115: "Openly before all the people and under the eyes of the authorities God has taken the side of the accused and demonstrated their innocence."

presumably they assumed (as the priest himself so initially assumed) that “the water of the Lord’s wrath” would “reveal their sins” (φανερῶσει τὸ ἀμάρτημα ὑμῶν; 16.3) by taking a chunk out of their flesh—by making Joseph and Mary *un*“whole” (ὀλόκληρος; 16.4, 5), so to speak. If the scene *had* ended here, presumably ‘all people’ would have been left with ‘perplexing’ evidence of Joseph and Mary’s ‘innocence’, and perhaps ‘some people’ may still have wondered about ‘their sins’. However, here PJ’s high priest steps in to interpret the ‘perplexing’ evidence: “‘If the Lord God has not revealed your sins, then neither do I condemn you.’ And he released them” (εἰ κύριος ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐφάνέρωσεν τὸ ἀμάρτημα ὑμῶν οὐδὲ ἐγὼ κρίνω ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀπέλυσεν αὐτούς; 15.7). As the high priest wields power to administer the test of “the water of the Lord’s wrath,” so too does he exert force to determine the *interpretation* of the results of that test. While the priest is mistaken with his initial assumption (“it will reveal your sins in your eyes”; 15.3), he is yet firmly in control of the situation at the close of the scene: despite apparent evidence, he will not ‘condemn’ Joseph and Mary. Not unlike the earlier rod/dove scene, then, PJ’s water ordeal functions as much to naturalize, establish and confirm, ‘priestly’ hegemony as it does to symbolize Joseph and Mary’s divine exoneration. Without the high priest, there would presumably have been no *public* (!) vindication.

Taking an altogether different angle, Megan Nutzman provocatively suggests that PJ’s trial/ordeal episode, along with scenes that portray Mary as a ‘virgin weaver’ (PJ 10-11) and ‘female Nazirite’ (PJ 4-7), “reinforced the special connection that Mary had to the temple”:

As an accused adulteress, she would have belonged to one of two groups of women given special dispensation to wave their own offering in the temple (*m. Qidd.* 1:8, *m. Sotah* 3:1). Besides accused adulteresses, the only other women permitted to do this were female Nazirites...The ritual act of waving one’s sacrifice was reserved almost exclusively for men, and this concession to accused adulteresses and female Nazirites set them apart in the temple cult. By introducing the bitter water ordeal, the author of Prot. Jas. used a familiar Jewish institution not only to establish Mary’s purity, but also to align her with a group that was allowed greater participation in the temple cult than most women of her time.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Nutzman, “Mary in the Protevangelium of James,” 563.

While Nutzman’s reading of Mary’s testing as one of the ways PJ discursively aligns her with ‘exceptional temple women’ is salutary, her analysis of the “most peculiar component” of PJ’s trial/ordeal scenes, “the administration of the bitter water to Joseph,” stops short of a solid explanation. Nutzman notes that “the administration of the drink test to Joseph identifies him not as the jealous husband, but as the suspected, illegitimate father of Mary’s child...[and] is more compatible with the mishnaic tradition”—suggestions already made as early as Smid’s commentary.¹³⁷ Such a reading of Joseph’s testing also overlooks the (more implicit) gendered processes at play in the scene. Nutzman’s cogent arguments certainly show how the author of PJ demonstrates knowledge of ideas found in late Second Temple and early rabbinic texts, especially ideas about ‘exceptional’ “women’s participation in the temple cult”¹³⁸; however, in the end, her analysis leads to some familiar conclusions: “By incorporating these motifs, particularly in the account of Mary in the Jerusalem temple, and by tempering them with Christian themes, the author produced a work intended both to edify Christians and to refute Jewish critics of Mary.”¹³⁹

PJ’s disruptive, asymmetrical vindication of Mary and Joseph, I suggest, does even more than this. How, in particular, might we read our cross-dressing, morally-preserved, ‘virgin’ average Joe and his ‘relationship’ to Mary? The final, largely overlooked, element of PJ’s trial/ordeal scenes, I think, provides a huge clue in this regard. The perplexity of Joseph’s ‘relationship’ to Mary throughout the trial/ordeal is reinforced by the haunting ambiguity of its conclusion: for, is it not a curious thing that Joseph, after passing his second, much more intensely *public*, homosocial honor challenge, simply “took Mary and went away to his house” (παρέλαβεν Ἰωσήφ τὴν Μαριάμμην καὶ ἀπήει ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ; PJ 16.8)? Wait, what?! Isn’t ‘Joseph and Mary, together, in the same house’ precisely the sort of suspicious scenario the author of PJ has painstakingly avoided for well nigh eight chapters?!

¹³⁷ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 114: “we may think of Sotah 5,1: at the water puts her to the proof, so does it put the paramour to the proof...”; cf. Horner, “Jewish Aspects of the Protevangelium of James,” 328-329.

¹³⁸ Nutzman, “Mary in the Protevangelium of James,” 578.

¹³⁹ Nutzman, “Mary in the Protevangelium of James,” 578.

Smid here notes in passing that, “The original relationship between Joseph and Mary is restored”¹⁴⁰—a somewhat ‘thoughtless’ afterthought, especially considering Smid’s acknowledged ‘difficulties’ with PJ’s handling of the ‘perplexity’ involved with Joseph and Mary’s relationship.¹⁴¹ Which “original relationship” might Smid be referring to, exactly: the one where the angel of the Lord commands the priesthood to give Mary as a “wife” (8.8), or the priest’s reinterpretation of that command, making Mary Joseph’s ward (9.7)? Or perhaps Smid has unwittingly hit upon the crux of the matter: PJ’s characterization of Joseph with Mary does indeed promote an ‘original relationship’, a highly unstable, queer union between a ‘child’ (παῖδα: 5.10; 6.1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14; 7.1, 4, 5; 8.1; 14.5, 8; 16.5), or a ‘young woman’ (νεᾶνις; 9.8), and an ‘elder’ (πρεσβύτης; 9.8) that is *almost* and *not quite* a marriage! In the conclusion to PJ’s trial/ordeal scene, the ambiguous tension concerning Joseph’s ‘not quite’ marriage to Mary reaches its erotically displaced climax. With Joseph and Mary now plainly cohabiting, we might well inquire how the author of PJ envisioned them avoiding other and similar ‘misdeeds’ (‘humiliating’ oneself, ‘defiling the virgin’, ‘stealing nuptials’, etc.) going forward. Joseph, the tested and publicly approved, manly ‘virgin’, finally *takes* (παρέλαβεν) Mary into *his home* (ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ) and thereby ostensibly completes the second part of the conventional two-stage marriage process¹⁴²—and yet he *doesn’t*! The unstated assumption that recapitulates PJ’s disruptive, asymmetrical vindication of Mary and Joseph—concluding with Joseph’s *non*-consummate home-taking of Mary—is this: ‘as surely as the Lord God lives’, Joseph not only *did not* but also *would not* (ever?) *have (sexual) relations with that woman!*

¹⁴⁰ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 114.

¹⁴¹ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 110; see discussion at n. 102, above.

¹⁴² According to Jewish practices in antiquity, marriages were initiated by a “betrothal” (אירוסין) and finalized by a “home-taking” (נישואין), in which the bride is taken to her husband’s house. See Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Tal Ilan, “Premarital Cohabitation in Ancient Judea: The Evidence of the Babatha Archive and the Mishna (Ketubbot 1.4),” *HTR* 86 (1993) 247-64. As Lincoln notes, “[u]nlike the modern custom of engagement, betrothal was considered part of the marriage not a state prior to it, and here in 1.19 Joseph is called Mary’s husband as well as her betrothed” (*Born of a Virgin?*, 71); so, too, Luz, *Matthew*, 94: “In view of the legal situation it is not surprising that Joseph is designated as Mary’s ἀνὴρ and she as γυνή”; cf. *t. Ket.* 8.1. Roman marriage practices were generally similar in this respect except that it was easier to break off the engagement; see Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

Foster suggests that “The Protevangelium has no concern to defend the notion of the perpetual virginity of Joseph, which was a theological novelty of the fourth century. However, at every possible point it reiterates and affirms the purity and virginity of Mary prior to conceiving Jesus, at his birth and afterwards. This is without doubt one of the most important theological concerns of the text.”¹⁴³ Perhaps. Though perhaps, as I have suggested throughout my discussion, this ‘most important theological concern’ has here eclipsed in Foster’s reading, as it has with most prior readings of PJ, other ‘important’ (secondary) concerns of the text. If we follow the logic of the consensus (represented by Foster’s) reading of PJ as ‘reiterating’ and ‘affirming’ Mary’s purity/virginity “at every possible point,” we are necessarily left with the question of what PJ promotes with regards to *Joseph’s* characterization, especially here after taking Mary into his home. How on earth would PJ promote the purity/virginity of Mary while she was cohabiting with Joseph without also implying something about Joseph’s purity/‘virginity’. This is perhaps not an affirmation of Joseph’s ‘perpetual virginity’, at least not explicitly so, but it *is* something. Its not nothing; its not “no concern,” as Foster states. As with the conclusion to the prior episode, Joseph’s fate here is bound up with the fate of “the child” (τὴν παῖδα; 14.8): Joseph vows ‘as surely as the Lord God lives’, he *is* as he *was* as he *will ever be*, “pure...where she is concerned” (καθαρός...ἐξ αὐτῆς; 15.15).¹⁴⁴

Joseph himself explicitly describes his ‘not quite’ marriage to Mary in his third and final soliloquy, where he wrestles with how he will publicly enroll Mary in Emperor Augustus’ census, now a localized Bethlehem registry:

καὶ εἶπεν Ἰωσήφ ἐγὼ ἀπογράψομαι τοὺς υἱοὺς μου ταύτην δὲ παῖδα τί ποιήσω πῶς αὐτὴν ἀπογράψομαι γυναῖκα ἐμὴν ἐπαισχύνομαι ἀλλὰ θυγατέρα οἶδαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν θυγάτηρ μου αὕτη ἢ ἡμέρα κυρίου ποιήσει ὡς βούλεται

¹⁴³ Foster, “The Protevangelium of James,” 577.

¹⁴⁴ With regards to Mary’s earlier vowed double-assertion of her purity, “I am pure” (καθαρά εἰμι ἐγὼ; 9.7, 10), Smid remarks in passing: “Is this a repeated vow of virginity?” We might pose the same question for Mary’s later assertion of the same vow to the high priest, “I am pure” (καθαρά εἰμι; 15.13), as too with Joseph, who vows the same: “I am pure” (καθαρός εἰμι ἐγὼ; 15.15). PJ’s trial/ordeal scenes also give Mary and Joseph a chance to *publicly* vow their mutual ‘purity’ towards one another: indeed, ‘is this a repeated vow of virginity?’!

And Joseph said, “I will register my sons; but what should I do about this child? How will I register her? As my wife—I am ashamed (to do that)—or as a daughter? The sons of Israel know that she is not my daughter. On the day of the Lord, the Lord will do as he wishes.” (17.2-4)

Smid suggests that “here P.J. sets out to answer the imaginary question which might be suggested by Lk.2,1: how did Joseph register Mary? The point is Joseph’s state of mind, for a solution is not offered. For Joseph Mary remains, even pregnant: *pais*.”¹⁴⁵ Smid is correct to see behind the artifice of the scene, suggesting that Joseph’s queries here point to something larger than the immediate, presenting problem of what to do with his/her census enrollment. However, if there is a ‘point’ to this scene, it is not simply, as Smid suggests, “Joseph’s state of mind,” but rather the *content* of what was wrecking havoc on Joseph’s ‘state of mind’. Joseph’s queries point to the broader situation of how he ought to behold his *entire* relationship to Mary. Again, the author promotes their ambivalent spousal situation and accompanying disorientation that has characterized Joseph’s relationship to Mary from the very beginning of his ‘home-taking’ of her (9.11-12)—“this child” (ταύτην...παῖδα) is neither quite his ‘wife’ (γυναῖκά), nor quite his ‘daughter’ (θυγατέρα) (17.2-3). Moreover, a solution to Joseph’s troubles *is* in fact offered (contra Smid)—a ‘solution’ which actually reifies, rather than resolves, the palpable tension of Joseph’s ‘not quite’ marriage to Mary: “On the day of the Lord, the Lord will do as he wishes” (αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου ποιήσει ὡς βούλεται; 17.4). Hock glosses this curious phrase, “How this is to be decided depends upon the Lord,” and so understates its ostensible ‘apocalyptic’ (or, at least, ‘eschatological’) outlook.¹⁴⁶ While, in the absence of other information, it is difficult to unpack what the author of PJ might have meant by “the day of the Lord” (ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου), what seems to be in view is a kind of perpetual, lasting divine sanction for this curious ‘not

¹⁴⁵ Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 118.

¹⁴⁶ Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 63. The eschatological tenor of the phrase is similarly obscured by Smid, *Protevangelium Jacobi*, 119: “It is not clear which *hēmera kuriou* Joseph is referring to, any more than what he understands by *hēmera kuriou*.” Following de Stryker, Smid concludes that Joseph’s “train of thought” in 17.4 “is indeed of the same kind” as Jesus’ advice in Matt 6.34: “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” Thus Hock, as well Smid (following de Stryker), reduce Joseph’s statement here to mere shoulder-shrugging and so, I suggest, miss the take-home point of the scene.

quite' marriage. The palpable tension of Joseph's 'not quite' marriage to Mary will not be ultimately resolved until "the day of the Lord" (ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου). Joseph's earlier vow of purity here takes on cosmological significance.

"Come and see" (19.11)! Finally, Joseph resolute comfort with his divinely reified, less-than-comfortable situation is announced in his closing appearance in PJ, where he (in first person narration no-less) plainly explains to a Hebrew midwife his curious 'not quite' marriage to Mary.

"Come and see":

καὶ εἶπέν μοι τίς ἐστὶν ἡ γεννήσασα ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ
καὶ εἶπον ἐγὼ ἡ μεμνηστευμένη μοι
καὶ εἶπέν μοι οὐκ ἔστι σου γυνή
καὶ εἶπον αὐτῇ Μαριάμ ἐστὶν καὶ ἐκληρωσάμην αὐτὴν εἰς γυναῖκα ἣτις καὶ ἀνετράφη
εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οὐκ ἔστι μου γυνή ἀλλὰ σύλληψιν ἔχει ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου
καὶ εἶπεν εἰπέ μοι τὸ ἀληθές
καὶ εἶπον αὐτῇ ἔλθε καὶ ἴδε

Then, she said to me, "And who is giving birth in the cave?"

I said, "The one who has been pledged to marry me."

She said to me, "She is not your wife?!"

I said to her, "She is Mary, the one who was raised in the Holy of Holies, and I received her by lot as a wife. She is not yet my wife, but she has conceived from the Holy Spirit."

She said, "Tell me the truth!"

So I said to her, "Come and see!" (19.5-11)

Joseph invites the midwife to "come and see" (ἔλθε καὶ ἴδε) the one who is "not yet" or perhaps *not quite* 'his wife' (οὐκ ἔστι μου γυνή), a privilege that PJ's readers have already been granted extensively! We the readers have 'seen' quite a bit of Joseph's 'not quite wife' (οὐκ ἔστι...γυνή), actually. So, even as the curtain comes down and Joseph makes his final appearance in PJ, his

relationship to Mary is yet stuck, suspended in time, ‘they are married and yet not married’:¹⁴⁷ while Joseph cohabits with Mary, they are restrained from progressing beyond the ‘betrothal’ (μεμνηστευμένη; 19.6) stage of the marriage process, presumably until “the day of the Lord” (ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου; 17.4).

What sort of implicitly valorized moral position is this—this vowed, ‘time-suspended’ (dare I say cataleptic) ‘not-quite’ marriage? I turn now to some concluding thoughts, where, among other things, I take up a discussion of the topic of the ‘not-quite’ marriage of Joseph/Mary, in an effort to elucidate the mechanisms behind and in front of such *makings* of PJ’s Average Joe, explaining how PJ’s characterization of Joseph foregrounds the structuring of gendered power relations in his audience(s).

4.5 PJ’s Audience and the Making(s) of an Average Joe

In her highly persuasive (if also somewhat lopsided)¹⁴⁸ treatment of Mary in PJ, Lily Vuong suggests that “the ideas concerning purity in the *Protevangelium of James*...are concerns consistent with the kind of religious activity occurring in and around Syria.”¹⁴⁹ While Syrian asceticism has

¹⁴⁷ The ‘marriage and yet not quite marriage’ of Joseph and Mary is conceptually parodied by (the later editorial insertion of) the subsequent first-person account told by Joseph of the suspension of the movement of time (18.3–11), apparently coinciding with the moment when Jesus was brought into the world, where Joseph “wandered, but he did not wander” and workers, while lunching, were “chewing, they were not chewing. And picking food up, they were not picking it up. And putting food in their mouths, they were not putting it in their mouths.” As Foster (“The Protevangelium of James,” 579) notes: “The striking thing about this particular episode is not the events themselves, although they are amazing, but the fact that the narrator does not explain their significance. Such a cataleptis of the natural realm, visible to Joseph alone, reflects the cosmological significance of the events that are transpiring in the cave.” However, as François Bovon suggests, the very term ‘cosmic’ is “a pretentious word for the little scene that is shown us (only in the beginning and at the end does the vocabulary in our text take on a philosophical hue)”; see François Bovon, “The Suspension of Time in the Protevangelium Jacobi,” in B. A. Pearson, *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 403. While Bovon argues that the temporary nature of eschatological immobility (in 18.3–11) reveals that salvation history has not yet reached completion, but that this is nonetheless a decisive moment in its unfolding, I suggest this moment also reveals in the ‘eschatological’ import of ‘everyday’ activities, echoing the divinely sponsored, until “the day of the Lord” (ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου; 17.4), ambiguous ‘everyday’ relationship that is Mary and Joseph’s ‘not quite’ marriage.

¹⁴⁸ See discussion above at n. 7.

¹⁴⁹ See Vuong, “Provenance Revisited,” in *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 193–239 (192).

often been described as reaching its apex in the fourth and fifth centuries and as a movement that owed many of its ideas and inspiration to ascetic and monastic life found in Egypt, Sebastian Brock claims that these Syrian ascetics were actually the heirs of a “remarkable ascetic tradition that went back to the very beginnings of Christianity.”¹⁵⁰ Certainly, as Vuong states,

In terms of abstinence from sexual intercourse, drinking of wine, and eating of flesh, the portrayal of Mary in the *Protevangelium of James* is aligned with the extreme form of asceticism being practiced in Syria as demonstrated by the restrictions placed on her diet and her interactions by her mother, as well as her self-disciplined attitudes towards her sexual purity, i.e., maintaining her virginity...Mary’s participation in such activities is presented as a sign of her extreme purity and thus her direct connection to holiness.¹⁵¹

Indeed, PJ’s vivid portrayal of Mary’s purity very likely employs the special kind of purity/holiness to which Brock, as well as Arthur Vööbus refer concerning Syrian ascetic traditions.¹⁵² However, Vuong goes on to describe “the undeniable and striking differences” between PJ’s handling of Mary’s purity and other Syrian ‘extreme’ ascetic traditions:

First, Mary is married to Joseph in the narrative. Although the relationship between Mary and Joseph is clearly depicted as parental rather than conjugal, the text does not present marriage in any negative light and even promotes it. While Mary’s parents are, of course, married and childbirth in their marital context is portrayed as positive and even as a reward for being pious and loyal to God.¹⁵³

According to my readings above, and contrary to Vuong’s reading: PJ’s handling of Joseph/Mary’s marriage is far from ‘clear’! Rather, at every point the narrative revels in the *not-quit*ness of their relationship, its *time-suspendedness*, its *stuckness* precisely between something parental and conjugal! Certainly Joseph’s relationship to Mary is not ‘presented in any negative light’ and ‘even promoted’;

¹⁵⁰ Sebastian Brock, “Early Syrian Asceticism,” *Numen* 20 (1973): 1-19 (3), citing the beatitudes (Matt 5.1-12 || Luke 6.20-26), among other canonized ‘ascetic’ trains of thought; on the popularity of the Beatitudes in encratite ‘Jewish-Christian’ circles, see Gilles Quispel, “L’Évangile selon Thomas et les origines de l’ascèse chrétienne,” in *Aspects du Judéo-Christianisme: Colloque de Strasbourg 23-25 avril 1964* (Bibliothèque des Centres d’Études supérieures spécialisés; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 35-51 (41). See also Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush, eds., *Asceticism and the New Testament* (New York; London: Routledge, 1999)

¹⁵¹ Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 192.

¹⁵² See Brock, “Early Syrian Asceticism”; Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East* (3 vols.; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1958-1988).

¹⁵³ Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 225

but, what sort of ‘marriage’ is PJ promoting through its characterization of Mary and Joseph? Certainly not the same sort of marriage that Joachim and Anna have, as Vuong seems to assume.

Vuong also suggests another ‘undeniable and striking difference’ between PJ’s handling of Mary’s purity and other Syrian ‘extreme’ ascetic traditions, namely

the extreme ascetic practices observed by Mary are simply that—practiced solely by Mary. Although Mary’s parents are portrayed as pious Jews, they are never described as participating in the same kinds of restrictions placed on their daughter, nor are any other characters in the text portrayed in this manner. Indeed, Mary’s purity is described as so exceptional that replication of such acts in order to achieve the same level of purity would be impossible—it would be difficult, for instance, to find an angel to monitor one’s eating habits or to be granted housing in the holy temple (Prot. Jas. 8:2). Such extraordinary events deliberately convey the precise purpose of the narrative—to show that Mary is, in fact, a unique child.¹⁵⁴

Again, according to my readings above, and contrary to Vuong’s reading: Mary is not the only one who PJ portrays as engaging in ‘restrictive practices’. Joseph, too, at least after he takes Mary home with him, is also (if only implicitly) committed to a perpetual vow of purity. Mary and Joseph’s cooperative marital celibacy, while seemingly curious, is far from an ‘extraordinary event’. In fact, ‘replication of such acts in order to achieve the same level of purity’ were not only *possible*, but were also actively *promoted* in some Syrian ascetical traditions. Rather than representing an ‘undeniable and striking difference’, what other sort of ‘precise purpose’ might be behind a narrative that promotes Mary and Joseph’s ascetic ‘not quite’ marriage?

David Hunter, too, has suggested that many features of PJ may best be accounted for by a profoundly ascetic, possibly Syrian Encratite, context of social production. Hunter, however, suggests that not only PJ’s intense focus on Mary’s perpetual virginity, but also the image of the celibate cohabitation of Joseph and Mary, correspond “precisely with the ideal of ‘spiritual marriage’ cherished in Syrian ascetical circles.”¹⁵⁵ a peculiar domestic/religious institution which some scholars have argued is rooted in Paul’s enigmatic instructions about a man and “his virgin” in 1 Cor

¹⁵⁴ Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, 225.

¹⁵⁵ Hunter, “Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginité of Mary,” 64.

7.36-38.¹⁵⁶ While it is only in the Syrian church, in Saint Ephraem's commentary on Paul from the mid-fourth century (extant in Armenian), that 1 Cor 7.36-38 is interpreted in light of spiritual marriages,¹⁵⁷ there is some evidence that suggests that the practice of “spiritual marriage,” more commonly referred to later as *virgines subintroductae*,¹⁵⁸ had some supporters in the second¹⁵⁹ and

¹⁵⁶ See the illuminating discussion by Will Deming (“Spiritual Marriages,” in *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* [Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 35-44), who, among other things, refutes Hans Achelis's solution to the enigmatic 1 Cor 7.36-38, that the relationship between a man and “his virgin” which Paul describes was a “spiritual marriage,” an arrangement in which a couple lived together, sharing all the responsibilities and benefits of a normal marriage, with the important exception of the sexual relationship: the man's “virgin” in 7.36-38, according to Achelis, was thus one of the *virgines subintroductae* spoken of by later church fathers; Hans Achills, *Virgines Subintroductae: Ein Beitrag zum VII. Kapitel des I. Korintherbriefs* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902); preceded by Carl Weizsäcker, “Die Anfänge christlicher Sitte,” *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie* 21 (1876): 33, cf. Weizsäcker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter der christlichen Kirche*, 1st ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Mohr, 1886), 675-76; and Eduard Grafe, “Geistliche Verlöbniße bei Paulus,” *Theologische Arbeiten aus dem rheinischen wissenschaftlichen Predigerverein*, n.s., 3 (1899): 57-69. Achelis's solution to the 1 Cor 7 passage is questionable on multiple grounds as Deming rightly shows. Deming also inquires “whether it is meaningful to call an asceticism based on the Montanists' apocalyptic expectations, one inspired by Tatian's encratic theology, a third inspired by Hermas's rigorism, and still others motivated by Marcion's or Valentinus's dualism, all forms of the same practice. Has Achelis, in other words, given sufficient consideration to the vast theological differences that separate his various cases of spiritual marriage?” (42). Perhaps. I would only add, however, that ‘vast theological differences’ in motivation can and *do* lead sometimes to very similar ritual subjectivities; compare, e.g., common ascetic practices observed by Hindu Sanyasis, Muslim Sufis, and Christian Franciscans for ‘vastly different theological’ reasons.

¹⁵⁷ See discussion of the practice of ‘spiritual marriage’ in the Syrian church, in Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, 78-83.

¹⁵⁸ The first evidence for the Latin *subintroductae* is from Atticus of Constantinople in 419 CE, in his Latin translation of the proceedings of the Council of Nicea—cited by Pierre de Labriolle, “Le ‘mariage spirituel’ dans l'antiquité chrétienne,” *Revue Historique* 137 (1921): 214 n. 4.

¹⁵⁹ Achelis (*Virgines Subintroductae*, 7-20, 34-59, 63, 69) was the first to research a full history of spiritual marriage, citing diverse (if also at times obscure) evidence for this practice in the second and third century CE (see following note, n. 157). For the second century CE, see, for example, Achelis's discussion of the *Shepherd of Hermas* (ca. 150 CE), where the seer encounters twelve virgins with whom he spends the night, but “as a brother, and not as a husband” (ὡς ἀδελφός καὶ οὐκ ὡς ἀνὴρ; *Similitudes* 9.10.6-11.8). See also Achelis's counter-reading of: Marcion's (mid 2nd cent. CE) cohabitation with his disciple Apelles, a woman called Philumene, and another woman who is not named (decried in Tertullian, *De prescription haereticorum* 30.5-6); several followers of Tatian (mid 2nd cent. CE) who led some women astray, travelled with them, lived with them as companions, and let themselves be served by them (condemned in Ephiphanius, *Haereses* 47.3.1); the followers of Valentinus (mid 2nd cent. CE) proposed ascetic cohabitation with women as a ruse, in order to lure them away from their husbands (denounced by Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.3); and the ‘cavorting’ (συνεστιάω τινί) of the Montanist Alexander (late 2nd cent. CE) with a prophetess (censured by Eusebius, *Church History* 5.18.6). *Didache* 11.11 (ca. 150 CE) might also be reasonably connected with spiritual marriages, as is suggested by the exegesis of certain fathers in the Syrian church; see Herbert Priestster, *Chrstentum und Ehe in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten: Eine Studie zur Kulturgeschichte der alten Welt* (Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche 23; Berlin: Trowitzsch und Sohn, 1927; reprint, Aalen: Scientia, 1979), 158-60; Alfred Adam, “Erwägungen zur Herkunft der Didache,” *ZKG* 68 (1957): 20-37; and Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 136 n. 45.

third¹⁶⁰ centuries CE. PJ's ever-virgin Mary betrothed to the 'virile virgin' Joseph until 'the day of the Lord', would certainly be a powerful endorsement of this ideal of spiritual, 'not quite' marriage. In light of my discussion above, in the conclusion to PJ's trial/ordeal scenes, Joseph's male virginity passes muster, implicitly signifying his adherence to an ascetic ideal of a 'not quite' marriage. In its meditation on the outwardly perplexing circumstances of Joseph's union with Mary, PJ constructs its 'ideal' asexual union between an 'elder' (πρεσβύτης) and a 'young woman' (νεᾶνις; 9.8) or perhaps a 'child' (παῖδα: 5.10; 6.1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14; 7.1, 4, 5; 8.1; 14.5, 8; 16.5), who is also an "undefiled" (ἀμίαντος; 10.4) "virgin" (παρθένος: 9.7; 13.3, 4; 15.6, 8; 16.1, etc.), a rehearsing and promoting of a particular ascetic 'spiritual marriage' model, cooperative vows of perpetual, marital purity made public before a chorus of male onlookers and the 'priestly' elite that managed them. On my reading, then, Joseph and Mary have become veritable 'poster-children' for a peculiar sort of conjugal union, one based on a mutual, cooperative vow of celibate cohabitation, and overseen by a communal head, the Jerusalem Temple 'priests' (ιερεῖς; 8.3)

Now, the complex question of PJ's representation of the (Jerusalem Temple) *priests* is also at the center of recent reevaluations of PJ's provenance/authorship. Because this topic is also bound up with the processes of 'everyday' male self-fashioning in PJ, I take time to consider it briefly here. While PJ's questionable descriptions of Jewish practice and Palestinian geography have been frequently catalogued to argue that the author's acquaintance with Judaism was limited to the

¹⁶⁰ The evidence for the practice is more clear when we get to the third century CE. See, e.g., Tertullian's proposal (ca. 210 CE) that those who wished to marry after the death of their first wife take a "spiritual wife," by which he meant an aged widow who could offer a man chaste companionship and housekeeping (Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis* 12; *De monogamia* 16); Origen's stay with the virgin Juliana (235-37 CE; as reported in Palladius, *Lausiac History* 147); Cyprian (ca. 249 CE) concern about several Christian men known to him (one being a deacon) who were cohabiting with virgins vowed to chastity (Cyprian, *Epistle* 4, *To Pomponius*); and Eusebius's account of Paul of Samosata, a bishop of Antioch (deposed in 268 CE), who, it seems, along with the presbyters and deacons, lived in chastity with women the people of Antioch had nicknamed *συνείσαχτοι*, the Greek equivalent of the later *subintroductae* (Eusebius, *Church History* 7.30.12).

Septuagint,¹⁶¹ a number of recent commentators have highlighted PJ's positive representation of Jewish traditions, especially concerning Jewish leadership,¹⁶² to explore how PJ might be (un)comfortably situated within the multiform religio-cultural system(s) of ancient/early 'Jewish-Christianity'.¹⁶³ William Vorster, for one, suggests that PJ's 'surprisingly favorable portrayals' of

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., Emile Amann, *La Protévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements latins* (Paris 1910) 209; Smid, *Protevangeliium Jacobi*, 9-12; Cothenet, "Le Protévangile de Jacques," 4252-69; Cullman, "The Protevangeliium of James," 423-424; Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 49-50; Michael Mach, "Are there Jewish Elements in the 'Protevangeliium Jacobi'?" in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies I* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1985) 215-222, although Mach concedes that there are two instances when PJ comes close to betraying a knowledge of Jewish traditions—namely in the traditions about Adam (13.5) and Zechariah (23-24). He attributes both, however, to later redactional activity (220).

¹⁶² See Malcolm Lowe, "Who were the 'Ιουδαῖοι'?" *NT* 18 (1976): 101-131; idem, "'Ιουδαῖοι of the Apocrypha: A Fresh Approach to the Gospels of James, Pseudo-Thomas, Peter and Nicodemus," *NT* 23 (1981): 56-90 (56-57, 70); Horner, "Jewish Aspects of the Protevangeliium of James"; Megan Nutzman, "Mary in the Protevangeliium of James: A Jewish Woman in the Temple?," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): 551-578; and Lily Vuong, "Let Us Bring Her Up to the Temple of the Lord': Exploring the Boundaries of Jewish and Christian Relations through the Presentation of Mary in the Protevangeliium of James," in Claire Clivaz, Andreas Dettwiler, Luc Devillers, and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Infancy Gospels: Stories and Identities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 418-432; reprinted as part of her *Gender and Purity in the Protevangeliium of James* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). While focusing on different aspects of PJ, Lowe, Horner, Nutzman, and Vuong uniformly challenge the prior scholarly consensus regarding its provenance/authorship, all suggesting in some way that PJ's author employed concepts and motifs that were in dialogue with contemporary Jewish traditions.

¹⁶³ See, e.g., Daniel Boyarin's cheeky application of the term 'Judaeo-Christianity': "the original cauldron of contentious, dissonant, sometimes friendly, more frequently hostile, and fecund religious productivity out of which ultimately precipitated two institutions at the end of late antiquity, orthodox Christianity and rabbinic Judaism"; *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 44. For an overview of recent scholarship on the categories of 'Jewish' and 'Christian', and particularly on the problem of the ambiguous scholarly construct of "Jewish-Christianity" and its continued usefulness for helping us understand the relationship between the not yet fully formed or bounded traditions of 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' in antiquity, see Daniel Boyarin, "Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category," *JQR* 99 (2009) 7-36. See also J. E. Taylor, "The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity: Reality or Scholarly Invention?," *VC* 44 (1990): 313-334; D. Frankfurter, "Beyond 'Jewish Christianity': Continuing Religious and Sub-Cultures of the Second and Third Centuries and Their Documents," in A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed, eds., *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (TSAJ 95; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 131-144; A. Runesson, "Inventing Early Christian Identity: Paul, Ignatius, and Theodosius I," in B. Holmberg, ed., *Exploring Early Christian Identity* (WUNT 226; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 59-92; S. Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457-512; and M. Jackson-McCabe, ed., *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); S. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); S. Freyne, "Behind the Names: Samaritans; Ioudaioi, Galileans," in S. G. Wilson and M. Desjardins, eds., *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 389-401.

priests,¹⁶⁴ who “perform religious rites (cf. 6.2, 8.2, 3, 24.1 et al.), bless (17.3 et al.), pray (8.3 et al.), take care of the temple and determine the norms (cf. 10.1, 15.3 et al.)... They seek the will of God in prayer and reveal it (8.3ff),”¹⁶⁵ indicate that the story was written with Jewish interests in mind: “the child [Jesus] is born *from Israel for Israel*.”¹⁶⁶ Lily Vuong similarly suggests that PJ’s positive portrayal of the Temple priests “opens the way for a more nuanced approach to the question of the *Prot. Jas.*’s relationship to Judaism,” and that such portrayals essentially express “the continued power and importance of the Temple and its priesthood.”¹⁶⁷

But, why *did* the author of PJ go to such lengths to portray Jewish priestly aristocracy in such a favorable light—especially since, at the time of its composition there was no Jerusalem temple cult to speak of?¹⁶⁸ While a number of answers to this question have focused on the author of PJ’s relationship to Judaism, here I suggest another angle. Perhaps the author of PJ was interested not

¹⁶⁴ PJ’s positive view of Jewish priests (as well as the scribes and elders) stands in sharp contrast with the negative portrayal of Jewish leaders in the NT Gospels. See, e.g., Sief van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Michael J. Cook, *Mark’s Treatment of the Jewish Leaders* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989); Donald A. Carson, “The Jewish Leaders in Matthew’s Gospel: A Reappraisal,” *JETS* 25, no. 2 (1982): 161-74; Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Developing Conflict Between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew’s Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 57-73; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “The Jewish Leaders in the Gospel of Mark: A Literary Study of Marcan Characterization,” *JBL* 108, no. 2 (1989): 259-81.

¹⁶⁵ William S. Vorster, “The Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus in the Protevangelium of James,” in J. Petzer and P. Hartin, eds., *A South African Perspective on the New Testament: Essays by South African New Testament Scholars Presented to Bruce Manning Metzger during His Visit to South Africa in 1985* (Leiden: Brill, 1986) 33-53 (41).

¹⁶⁶ Vorster, “Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus,” 41.

¹⁶⁷ Vuong, “Presentation of Mary in the Protevangelium of James,” 425. To take a primary example, Vuong suggests that PJ’s depiction of the Temple priests’ handling of Mary’s (menstrual) impurity just noted (PJ 8.3) is “better interpreted not as a critique of the priesthood...but rather as a demonstration of...the ways in which the Temple priests act appropriately, reinforcing their legitimacy in the narrative and their power vis-à-vis the other characters” (430). In other words, Vuong rather straightforwardly reads “Mary’s acceptance of the priests’ decision for her to leave the Temple” as reflecting “the continued legitimacy of their [priestly] authority and the efficacy of the Temple, even in a narrative determined to praise and establish Mary, Jesus’ mother” (431).

¹⁶⁸ There is good evidence that suggests Justin Martyr (100-165 CE) knew of at least some of the traditions in PJ; possible concordances include: PJ 11.2-3 and *First Apology* 33.5-6; PJ 12.2 and *Dialogue* 100.5; PJ 18.1 and *Dialogue* 78.5. See Jose de Aldama, “El Protevangelio de Santiago y sus problemas,” *Ephemerides mariologicae* 12 (1962): 126-129; and de Strycker, “Le Protévangile de Jacques,” 353: “un certain nombre de concordances entre le Protévangile et le chapitre 33 de la Ie Apologie de Justin s’expliquent au mieux par une dépendance littéraire du Pseudo-Jacques à l’égard de Justin.” Evidence cited by de Aldama and de Strycker is taken by both of these scholars as indicating that the author of PJ had the writings of Justin Martyr (JM) before him as he was composing his narrative. George Zervos, however, has argued convincingly that JM knew PJ, consulted it as one of *his* sources and possibly considered it to be one of his “apostolic memorabilia” (ἀπομνημόνευματα τῶν ἀποστόλων); see George T. Zervos, “Dating the Protevangelium of James: The Justin Martyr Connection,” *SBL Seminar Papers* 1994 (SBLSP 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 415-34. Cf. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 49.

only in the *Jewish* priestly aristocracy (the priests as the central functionaries of the Jewish cult) but also the Jewish *priestly aristocracy* (that is, the priests as symbols of status and authority). In other words, in addition to their importance to Judaism, PJ's priests, like other (and even non-Jewish) priests of the empire, "carried more general associations with piety, imperial power, literacy, and status—all things that were central to elite male identity in the imperial world."¹⁶⁹ Certainly the priests' scope of hegemonic influence in PJ ranges well beyond the sphere of the temple cult proper, a queer pastiche of cultic correctness and imperial-toady 'manly' obligations that also resist conventional generalization: attending dinner parties (6.6, 15); christening neonates (6.7, 9); attending to dependent virgins (7.7; 8.2); monitoring menarche (8.3-4); making oracular inquiries (8.5; 10.7); mustering men (8.9); yes, rod-handling (9.3-4); overseeing spinning and weaving projects (10.1, 6-7); voyeuristic surveillance (15.1-8); conducting legal proceedings (15.9-16.2); pronouncing guilt and innocence (15.16-17; 16.7); exacting physical ordeals, punishments (16.3-6); and delivering scholarly expertise for the benefit of imperial interests (21.4-6).

So, who might PJ's priests possibly *represent* if not the 'actual' Jewish priestly aristocracy of yesteryear. According to my readings above, PJ's priests do *as much* ideological work in naturalizing a particular hierarchical social organization (bound up with the processes of male self-fashioning) as they do in perpetuating 'the continued legitimacy' of Jewish 'priestly authority and the efficacy of the Temple'. We ought to perhaps situate PJ's appropriations of established forms of Jewish authority within the broader cultural poetics and politics emerging in the first and second centuries: "[t]he impulse to re-present the past for a contemporary agenda and, conversely, to reify that present program through an appropriation, rendition and reconfiguration of what 'came before,' provided a strong impetus for a variety of different cultural and political (re)constructive projects spanning the

¹⁶⁹ See Colleen Conway, "Excursus: The Hellenistic Temple in Jerusalem," in *Behold the Man*, 139-141, who discusses how "[i]n the Jewish context, the roles of magistrate and priest were even more closely connected. The temple priests, especially the high priests, were understood to be the ruling authority for the community." The point of Conway's excursus is "to set aside the 'Jewishness' of the temple to argue for Luke's more general interest in showing Jesus and his apostles as models of piety who again meet or surpass the standards of the imperial masculine ideal" (139). I'm arguing something similar here with respect to PJ's handling of its 'Jewish' priests.

empire, from the Roman West to the Greek East.”¹⁷⁰ PJ’s handling of established forms of authority, then, like other ‘contemporary renderings of former mythologies’ from the center¹⁷¹ to the periphery,¹⁷² (re)presented “the *transmuted* (and *transvalued*) authority” of the sacred past as a critically important element in shaping and scripting social and cultural identities in the present, and in displaying ‘proper’ masculine comportment.¹⁷³ PJ’s representation of its rodhandling, virgin-testing priests is part of a gendered claim for authority: according to my readings above the dove/rod and trial/ordeal scenes (PJ 9 and 15-16, respectively), at their most basic level, establish the (high) priestly elite as the ones to whom a man must bring his rod, his virgin, and his vow. Who are PJ’s priests, really? Perhaps their array of responsibilities and social obligations brings PJ’s ‘priests’ closer

¹⁷⁰ Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender in Acts: The Past and Present Power of Imperium,” in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 231-266 (233).

¹⁷¹ See Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 110-36 (on Livy); and David L. Balch, “*METABOLH POLITEUVN*. Jesus as Founder of the Church in Luke-Acts: Form and Function,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 139-88, esp. 154-83 (on Dionysius and Plutarch); Craig B. Champion, *Cultural Politics in Polybius’s Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 173-203.

¹⁷² See Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 65-100; E. L. Bowie, “Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic,” *Past and Present* 46 (1970): 3-41; Jas Elsner, “Structuring ‘Greece’: Pausanias’s Periegesis as a Literary Construct,” in Susan E. Alcock, John F. Cherry and Jas Elsner, eds., *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-20; Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*.

¹⁷³ See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); Penner and Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender,” 257.

to the ‘universally wise’ sages of contemporary rabbinic enterprises;¹⁷⁴ or, perhaps, the prototypical forerunners of the abbatial office of cenobitic monastic communities.¹⁷⁵ “Come and See.”

¹⁷⁴ The construction of communal authority in PJ may invoke rabbinic/proto-rabbinic ideas. Specifically, Shaye Cohen notes that although the rabbis claimed judicial authority over various areas of life, they were most often consulted about the laws of purity, tithing, marriage, and divorce. In certain situations, the Jews took the rabbis' opinion to be authoritative, but in other matters there was no use for them. For women in particular, Cohen writes that the rabbis were often consulted and deemed authoritative over marriage contracts, menstruation, and purity laws; Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Rabbis in Second-Century Jewish Society,” in William Horbury, W. D. Davies, and John Sturdy, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism: The Early Roman Period* (vol. 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 922-90, 946-47 and 976.

¹⁷⁵ See Armand Veilleux, “The Abbatial Office in Cenobitic Life,” *Monastic Studies* 6 (1968): 3-45, who shows how the once-conventional systematization of the developments of early Christian monasticism are much too reductive: “At one time scholars tended to simplistically trace the evolution of monasticism in a direct line from the eremitic to the cenobitic form. According to this view the first hermits retired to the Egyptian desert after the peace settlement of Constantine in order to flee from the ‘established’ Church. Then, gradually drawing together around charismatic spiritual fathers, they formed the first semi-eremitic groups. Pakhomius then organized them into an embryonic form of cenobitism which was finally perfected by Basil” (3-4); for one example of such reductive ‘systematization’ see Wilhem Bousset, “Das Mönchtum der sketischen Wüste,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 42 (1923): 1-41. As Veilleux aptly shows, the ‘historical’ situation is decidedly more complex, if also more obscure: “various forms monasticism arose almost simultaneously on all sides out of the vitality of each local church” (Veilleux, “The Abbatial Office,” 5) (cf. J. Gribomont, “Le monachisme au sein de l’Église en Syrie et en Cappadoce,” *Studia Monastica* 7 [1965]: 7-24), and “contrary to the idea which is so deeply rooted in many minds, it was rather the eremitical life which in many places arose from the cenobitic, and not the reverse” (Veilleux, “The Abbatial Office,” 5).

5 CONCLUSION(S): THE MAKING(S) OF AN AVERAGE JOE IN EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE

Taking up the work of Henri Lefebvre—who shows how ‘everyday life’ is shaped by historically-situated, economic and political configurations—I have endeavored in this study to critique overlooked political aspects of the different ways ‘the everyday’ is gendered in early Christian (narrative) discourse using the stories and characterizations of Joseph of Nazareth as test cases. Without denying the important critique of gender/ing in highly visible, spectacular performances of early Christian subjectivities, I have suggested here that a perspective critical of the gendering *of* ‘the everyday’—one that engages in a kind of ‘politics of discomfort’¹—allows for a more nuanced investigation of the contradictory forces that shaped early Christian group identities within the complex overlay of cultures in the ancient and late antique Near East and Mediterranean worlds. How did early Christian groups construct discourses that employ conceptions of ‘the everyday’ in preserving or asserting power and in furthering social identities? How did they construct their legitimacy in relation to ‘the everyday’? How did various early Christian narratives craft ‘everydayness’ into gendered experience?

In pursuing answers to these and other questions, I have offered here fresh readings of Joseph’s characterizations in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, and the *Protevangelium of James*. While gaining a better understanding of the ‘mechanisms’ governing Joseph of Nazareth’s characterizations within and across these particular narratives, I have also explored the hypothesis that the (re)fashioning of Joseph’s stories signify various literary attempts at crafting what the ‘everyday man’—the ‘average Joe’—*should* be: paradigmatic, though also unstable and at times

¹ See Gary A. Olson and Lynn Worsham, “Changing the Subject: Judith Butler’s Politics of Radical Resignification,” *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory* 20, no. 4 (2000): 727-65, citing an interview with Judith Butler: “For me, there’s more hope in the world when we can question what is taken for granted, especially about what it is to be a human... What qualifies as a human, as a human subject, as human speech, as human desire? How do we circumscribe human speech or desire? At what cost? And at what cost to whom? These are questions that I think are important and that function within *everyday* grammar, *everyday* language, as *taken-for-granted* notions. We feel that we know the answers...” (764-65, my emphasis).

competing, models of/for quotidian, normative, 'everyday' masculine subjectivity forged within multiple cultural 'contact zones'. Reading Joseph of Nazareth as prototypical 'average Joe' has allowed me at once to: lay bare the ingredients, *the makings*, that constitute one exemplar of the 'everyday' man in early Christian novelistic writings; expose the discursive processes and spectrum of competitive construction(s), *the making(s)*, of this common man; and highlight components that distinguish one average-Joe-making endeavor from another.

In **chapter 2**, I explored the characterization of Joseph of Nazareth in the Gospel of Matthew. As emblematic harbinger of the masculine-tinged, key virtue, "righteousness" (*δικαιοσύνη*), Matthew's average Joe, "a just man" (*δίκαιος*, Matt 1.19), sets the androcentric, homosocial tone for the whole of the gospel. The average Joe fashioned at the center of Matthew's infancy tale *does* what other men *do*: exercises authority to distribute his name and honor to (even non-biological) designated next of kin (Matt 1.1-17); demonstrates self-mastery and mercy, responds to homosocial prestige threats, and observes laws/norms (1.18-20); deploys knowledge gained in dreams (1.20-25); takes a wife, names a child, and initiates conjugal relations/separation (1.24-25); and protects his household/family (2.1-23). Matthew's Joseph also assumes a more ambiguously gendered posture that wavers, like his relationship to hegemonic authority itself, in the betwixt and between, interstitial spaces, belying both dominant cultural codes of 'masculine' action and aggression, as well as 'feminine' passivity and submission: physiologically limp in the biological generation of Jesus (1.1-17); godhandled by a penetrating dream annunciation (1.20-23); submissively silent (1.24); obediently servile in relation to his GodFather (1.24-25); a self-made (at least temporarily) "eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt 19.12), modeling a kinship ethic that works against hegemonic male plenitude (1.25); and cravenly resistant by means of flight, concealment and misdirection (2.1-23).

According to my readings, Matthew's Joseph ostensibly models the proper submissive posture a disciple ought to have in relation to the penetrative revelation of new Torah knowledge. Joseph's

salutary ‘receptive’ responses to his dreams prefigures both the ideal response of a disciple to Jesus’ authorized teachings (Matt 7.28-29; 28.20) and also the response of an ideal reading group to Matthew’s gospel itself: in Joseph’s case new Torah knowledge is revealed through *dreams*; in the case of the disciples, through a dramatic oral, *didactic encounter* with Jesus himself; and, finally, in the case of Matthew’s ‘disciple’ community, through the medium of Matthew’s *literary* project. Joseph’s point-of-view characterization in Matthew feasibly plays a key role in mediating Matthew’s putative ‘in-group’ identity, concurrently bound up with the processes of everyday male self-fashioning. In a word, Matthew’s Joseph puts a face, a name, and a story to the house-holding members of one of the five major character groups in the gospel of Matthew: the in-group of Jesus’, decidedly *male*, disciples (οἱ μαθηταί).

Like Jesus’ other male disciples, Matthew makes Joseph’s manly “good works” (τὰ καλὰ ἔργα) “shine before people” (ἐμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων; 5.16)—a good majority of Joseph’s characterization fleshes out the *public* comportment commended by Jesus’ later discourses: for example, keeping his passions under control (1.18-19; 5.21-22) and not divorcing his wife (1.24; 5.31-32; 19.4-9). Joseph’s voluntary celibacy (1.25) also anticipates Jesus’ affirmative but enigmatic saying about eunuchs (19.12) signaling the visible (!) “costly” commitment to Matthew’s disciple community itself. Perhaps most strikingly, Matthew’s characterization of Joseph heralds the creative and provocative forms of ‘resistance’ advocated by Jesus’ demands for his male disciple’s restraint in cases of public challenges (Matt 5.38-41). That is, Joseph’s ‘flight’ resistance—his transgressive, tricksterish ‘non-aggressive weapon’ (2.1-23)—anticipates the face-slap response that Jesus commends to his disciples in 5.39: not a sign of weakness, but of moral strength. Precisely by means of such deviating behavior in public and inter-male situations, Joseph, no less than Jesus’ other male disciples, renders decisive contents of Jesus’ authorized teaching (7.28-29) *visible*. That is, Joseph’s story foregrounds the means by which a man may perform *publicly* as a disciple of Jesus, observing “everything I have commanded you” (28.20) without becoming unmanly in some way. Joseph’s characterization in

Matthew both reveals an ideal masculine identity for in-group members of a minority and persecuted group that competes with that of other Jewish groups, and also offers a ‘missionizing’ invitation for all who witness his ‘good works’: at the ‘sight’ (ὄπωψ ἰδῶσιν; 5.16) of Joseph’s ‘just’ (1.18) behaviors, which flesh out the picture of Jesus’ ideal male disciple—‘snakely shrewd and dovelly innocent’ (10.16)—“the people” (τῶν ἀνθρώπων) come to realize that this “son” (5.9, 16, 45) who is also a πατήρ in a very real sense, is revealing the consummate masculine identity of the GodFather. In the characterization of Joseph, Matthew shapes traditional Greco-Roman πατήρ and master-of-the-house gender norms in particular ways that conform to the beliefs, practices and postures of Matthew’s putative in-group identity. Matthew’s Joseph is, chiefly, Matthew’s man, a ‘just man’ who articulates and upholds key Matthean masculine attributes: non-generative (or, perhaps, *alt-generative*), self-mastered, Torah-bound, honor-loving, and, yes, submissive—to the right male(s), namely the GodFather, his royal Son, and, not insignificantly, also the GodFather’s chosen leaders.

In **chapter 3**, I explored the characterization of Joseph of Nazareth in the Gospel of Luke. Luke’s characterization of Joseph is a significant, if also mostly an implicit or invisible, element of Luke’s masculinized ‘social-theological logic’. Joseph is notably conspicuous in Luke’s infancy account (Luke 1.5-2.52) both by his near absence and by his ostensibly ‘flat’ characterization. While Luke explicitly employs the Joseph character as a vehicle of Jesus’ divine dynastic heritage (1.27, 32; 2.4; 3.23, 31), Luke’s palpable distancing and downplaying of the character of Joseph is also discursive in that it corroborates Luke’s overall ‘playing up’ of Jesus’ highly masculinized, imperialesque divine sonship: Luke obscures the characterization of Jesus’ humble, earthly father in order to accentuate the primacy of his depiction of Jesus’ *other* divine, authorizing, imperial Father (2.40). Articulating a number of disparate sources of Jesus’ respectable origins ‘side by side’, Luke lifts up divine sonship with all its metaphorical complexities and imperial underpinnings, as the most important aspect of the introduction to his life of Jesus. Luke’s mute characterization of Joseph

plausibly directs Luke's readers how to negotiate the 'dialogue' between the disparate, 'dual paternity' traditions preserved by Luke.

The character of Joseph is also a significant, if mostly implicit, part of Luke's gendered discourse, for, when Joseph does emerge from/at the shadowy margins of his obscurity, he consistently holds out the center, embracing conventionally masculine traits and behaviors attendant on 'rightful', naturalized social roles. Luke's appropriation of key parts of Roman 'family values' moral propaganda, deals implicitly with local, everyday gendered politics: even (or especially) non-elite men, like Joseph, ought to fulfill dutifully their obligations to marry (a virgin) and beget (legitimate) children (sons), both in the service of the state and for the perpetuation of family lines and properties. Luke's creative deployment of observance of (past) cultic regulations also deals implicitly with everyday gendered politics: even (or especially) non-elite men, like Joseph, ought to fulfill dutifully 'all' their cultic obligations. Luke's characterization of Joseph as a law-abiding, householding male both places Joseph on the public stage in the ancient forum of everyday masculine performance in the Roman world, and also seemingly naturalizes the dominant economic and political order of the Roman empire. Yet, not unlike Luke's Jesus' own creative resistance to Roman taxation (20.25), Joseph's fiscal pragmatism "remains strategically veiled in ambiguity"—rendering both unto Caesar' (his census enrollment) and also, though unwittingly, 'unto God' (the Messiah, the son of David, in the city of David): Joseph's 'obedience' seems to stand as its own constitutive form of empire negotiation. With Joseph, I suggest, Luke soft-pedals an outwardly compliant, time-biding, menace of 'everyday' resistance—a form of empire negotiation that feasibly had the most cultural and political purchase with the better-to-dos of Luke's implied audience, those among the hordes of colonial subjects who could conceivably afford to 'wait-and-see'.

Luke's universalizing narrative mediation of 'the stuff that happened' puts forth a broad range of actors, including the figure of the everyday, uneducated, silent, Galilean man (Luke 1.27) Joseph. With his subdued characterization of Joseph, Luke may not just register an everyday man's roles, but

also shape them, consciously or unconsciously, thereby communicating implicitly and in passing a particular ‘natural’ perception of how ‘all’ (including Joseph-type) men ought to behave. In Luke’s narrative world, even silent, unlettered men like Joseph (ought to) possess virtues that derive from hegemonic cultural knowledge, shared norms, *ethoi*, and ideologies. Joseph as an everyday shadow of Luke’s ideal man thus plays a significant, if also mostly an implicit, invisibly ‘universal’, role in Luke’s overall masculinized ‘social-theological logic’. Joseph haunts the background and his timely emergence from shadowy margins reinforces select indices of conventional masculine comportment and assignment, effortlessly holding power as if he were naturally entitled to it. Luke’s Joseph, mimicking his elite male counterparts, will marry a virgin (1.27), sire legitimate children (1.31), distribute familial goods (1.32), fulfill cultic obligations (2.22-24, 41), properly govern his household (2.4-5), and pay his taxes (2.1-4). The sparseness, remoteness of Joseph’s characterization in Luke, I suggest, is precisely what made (and makes) him productively malleable as a symbol. With Luke’s Joseph, then, less is more—‘less Joseph’ yields a high intensity of meanings and a kind of ubiquity that lends itself to repeatability in multiple, unrelated contexts. Paratactic characterization, whereby the maximum possible meaning is encompassed in the minimum number of character cues, of Luke’s most basic, baseline man allows the social reproduction of naturalized gender patterns to be rendered nearly invisible. Luke’s Average Joe: cipher of Luke’s imperceptible, perhaps unconscious, recitational labors; obscured herald of ascendant myths of everyday male privilege and plenitude.

Finally, in **chapter 4**, I explored the characterization of Joseph of Nazareth in the *Protevangelium of James* (PJ). PJ is obsessed with Mary’s purity, and scholarship on PJ, too, is obsessed with Mary’s purity: many scholars fixate on questions related to PJ’s fixation—fetishizing PJ’s fetish, as it were. Not dismissing the importance of analyses of PJ’s Mary (and constructions of her purity, virginity, etc.), I considered here allied questions related to some of PJ’s ‘secondary’ or more implicit gendered concerns. Joseph makes a substantial and significant appearance in this work

as well, and, as has rarely been acknowledged or put to critical reflection, Joseph is never far from the narrative center (even when he is). In contrast to that of Luke and similar to that of Matthew, PJ's infancy account is arguably *Joseph's* tale (at least in the episodes in which he appears). Joseph's point-of-view characterization in PJ feasibly plays a key role in mediating collective memory and putative in-group identity, concurrently bound up with the processes of 'everyday' male self-fashioning.

Like other contemporaneous novelistic literature, PJ is preoccupied with the uneven processes of male self-fashioning under the weight of paternalistic, colonial rule. Rather than offering 'counter-imperial' resistance, however, PJ deals in more home(l)y gendered politics from the margins. Temple Priests are naturalized as being 'on-top' and their scope of hegemonic influence ranges beyond the sphere of the temple cult proper, a queer pastiche of cultic correctness and imperial-toady 'manly' obligations that resist conventional generalization. Joseph, too, emerges from the rod/dove scene (PJ 8-9), exemplifying a split subjectivity that ruptures conventions, especially the neat, polarized separation of 'manly' activity and 'feminine' passivity. PJ's Joseph undergoes a series of tests of his manly virtue, managing in the first place to overcome his presumed humiliation as the 'same old' cuckold (PJ 13-14).

PJ's Joseph (with Mary) also faces a second, and much more intensely public, homosocial honor challenge before "the sons of Israel" (PJ 15-16): a priestly trial and truth contest that pivots on the manipulation of their flesh. In a hegemonic display unmatched in any of the other colorful literary afterlives of the 'bitter water' (*Sotah*) ordeal (initially described and prescribed in Numbers 5.11-31), PJ's high priest extracts truth from the passive flesh of both Mary and Joseph. Along with Mary, and again at the hands of the priestly elite, Joseph is clothed as a different sort of *Sotah* ("Joseph drinks first"), though too he emerges, at the end of PJ's trial/ordeal scenes, a different sort of virgin. The apparent symmetry between what Mary and Joseph undergo reveals "problems and aporias that signal for modern readers the textual and extratextual conflicts in which these writers were mired,"—problems, I suggest, where gendered processes are in full swing. While PJ's trial/ordeal

scenes certainly fit within an encomiastic trajectory, perhaps constructing an apologetic (even Jewish-inflected) front for Mary's public image, they are also steeped in the politics of male self-fashioning, implicitly valorizing a moral position (and supported by an ideology) that produces a particular sort of man, while also, at the same time, mimicking the "natural" affiliation of knowledge and violence" that elite power-brokers persistently wielded under the hegemony of the Roman Empire. In its meditation on the outwardly perplexing circumstances of Joseph's union with Mary, PJ constructs its 'ideal' asexual union between an 'elder' (πρεσβύτης) and a 'young woman' (νεᾶνις; 9.8) or perhaps a 'child' (παῖδα: 5.10; 6.1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14; 7.1, 4, 5; 8.1; 14.5, 8; 16.5), who is also an "undefiled" (ἀμίαντος; 10.4) "virgin" (παρθένος; 9.7; 13.3, 4; 15.6, 8; 16.1, etc.), a rehearsing and promoting of a particular ascetic 'spiritual marriage' model, cooperative vows of perpetual, marital purity made public before a chorus of male onlookers and the 'priestly' elite that managed them. On my reading, then, PJ's Joseph and Mary have become veritable 'poster-children' for a peculiar sort of conjugal union, one based on a mutual, cooperative vow of celibate cohabitation, and overseen by a communal head, the Jerusalem Temple 'priests' (ἱερεῖς; 8.3).

My project reveals deep instabilities inherent even (or especially) in seemingly 'everyday' citation/performance of normative, gendered subjectivities, a finding that has important ramifications beyond the study of ancient Christianity. Clearly, some of my findings are common across the Greco-Roman world. For example, it seems that the male command to exercise rationality and self-control is widely held in among writers in the first few centuries of the Common Era. We see evidence of this in all of the focus texts, which, in various ways pointedly emphasize the manly nature of self-discipline and reason. However, on other occasions we found that the 'normative' views of manliness are complicated. This was notably true in the cases of Joseph's craven retreat from Herod in Matthew and Joseph's 'vow' of celibate cohabitation with Mary in PJ.

The variation evident in these texts suggests several things. First, it reinforces the basic premise of this study, that gender is not innate, but is instead a cultural product. If gender were truly

essential, it seems that no such variation would appear in the focus texts. More specifically to this project, it also likely indicates that ideologies of masculinity, were varied even within early Christian communities. That is, even communities which shared commonalities of religion and (relative) location still created distinct versions of masculinity. Furthermore, perceived similarities in construction (for example, sexual propriety), when viewed more closely, betrayed nuances of meaning which imply that more widespread rhetorics of masculinity might be adapted to circumstance or outright subverted by an author. Finally, variation among the constructions likely says something about the author/audience of each as well. Particularly, I think it indicates that the author played an active role in creating gender constructions: the *making(s)* of Joseph's characterizations in these texts, indicate that the authors were lively participants in the conversation, and its subsequent constructions/performances, rather than mere mimics of prevailing views.

While studies of masculinity in ancient religious traditions are still emerging, many texts exist which would benefit from this type of study, looking in particular for gendering of 'the everyday'. Thus, one possibility for further study is to continue the work done here with other (similar) texts, whether by biblical or post-biblical narrative authors, and this includes, of course, other texts featuring fascinating early average Joe characterizations: the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, the juicy 'Palm traditions' found in the Ethiopic *Liber Requiei* (Book of Mary's Repose), Ephrem's *Hymn on the Nativity*, the Marian verse homilies of Jacob of Serugh, a number of the Syrian 'dispute poems' (*soghyatha*), and the *History of Joseph the Carpenter*.

The study of masculine gender ideologies is just one piece in a larger project of explicating the profound and thorough-going construction and performance of maleness and femaleness across cultures and groups. Early Christian communities of the first and second centuries are by no means exempt from such study; nor do they exhaust it. That is, while the work done here is primarily intended as a contribution to studies of gender constructions among early Christian authors, revealing the deep instability of early Christian 'dominant fantasies of masculine power and

plenitude', it is also valuable as just one of many reminders that some of the concepts we take for granted in a culture, especially gender, are not universal givens. Instead, masculinities and femininities adapt to, and are adapted by, the cultures that hold them, even when these cultures consider their constructions to be 'given', 'natural', or 'everyday'. When reminded of the variety of masculinities in the first and second centuries, then, it is my hope that, at the very least, we will be made aware of the possibility that divergent masculinities and femininities exist in our own cultures as well.

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