A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE AND GRECO-ROMAN EVIDENCE ON THE LIVES OF EPHESIAN WOMEN

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPYRIGHT STATEMENT</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Place and Time</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Sources and Analytical Categories</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Early Christian Writings</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Analytical Categories</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Ephesian Greco-Roman Literary and Archaeological Evidence</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The “Women” in our Sources</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Method</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Terminology</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. The Location – Ephesus</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Locality Argument</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Subject - The Women</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Outline of the Chapters</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL HISTORY OF EPHESUS</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Ancient History of the City</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Principate</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Legal Situation in Ephesus</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Temple of Artemis and Imperial Cult Temples</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Domestic Life</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Conclusion</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: MARRIAGE</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Who makes up a household? ................................................................. 76
   What is in the sources? ........................................................................ 77
II. The Perception of Marriage in Ephesus ........................................... 78
   a. Inside the Home ............................................................................ 78
   b. Epigraphic Evidence .................................................................... 80
   c. Marriage in Greco-Roman Society .............................................. 85
      1) Age of Marriage ...................................................................... 85
      2) Education of Girls .................................................................... 86
      3) Dowry ....................................................................................... 87
      4) The Wedding ............................................................................. 87
      5) The Legal Part of Marriage ...................................................... 89
         (i) Marriage and Guardianship ............................................... 89
         (ii) Ius Triurum Liberorum ...................................................... 90
   d. A Brief Conclusion ........................................................................ 92
III. The Perception of Marriage in the Early Christian Ephesian Writings .... 93
   a. The Authorship Argument .......................................................... 94
   b. Christian, Greco-Roman, or Both? .............................................. 98
      1) Attitudes towards Christianization of Greco-Roman Customs .... 99
      2) Motivation behind Christianization of Greco-Roman Customs .. 101
      3) Should They Divorce the Unbelieving Spouse? ...................... 103
         a. Equal or Superior? ............................................................... 105
         b. Bishops’ Opinions on Wives ............................................ 110
IV. Conclusion ......................................................................................... 113

CHAPTER FIVE: WIDOWS and OTHER SINGLE WOMEN .................................... 116
I. Why Widows, Virgins and Divorcees? ................................................. 116
II. Ephesian Widows, Virgins and Divorcees .......................................... 117
   a. Epigraphic Evidence .................................................................... 117
      1) Widows and Divorcees ............................................................ 117
      2) Virgins ................................................................................... 120
b. Reputation of Widows

1) Petronius’ ‘Widow of Ephesus’
2) Melite of Ephesus

c. Widows in Greco-Roman Society

1) The Issue of Remarriage
2) In Old Age

d. A Brief Conclusion

III. Widows and Other Single Women in the Early Christian Ephesian Writings

a. The Issue of Remarriage
b. ‘Real Widows’ and ‘So-called Widows’
c. Bishops’ Opinions on Widows

IV. Conclusion

CHAPTER SIX: WOMEN in SOCIAL LIFE

I. The limits of Social Life

II. Women in Social Life in Ephesus

a. The Appearance of Women in Ephesus

1) Women’s Head Coverings
2) Men's Head Coverings
3) Women’s Apparel

b. The Roles of the Women in Society in Ephesus

c. A Brief Conclusion

III. The Social Life of Women in Early Christian Ephesian Writings

a. Named Women Connected with Asia Minor

Prisca & Aquila / Aquila & Priscilla

b. Head Coverings in Early Christianity

c. Women’s Apparel in Early Christianity

IV. Conclusion

CHAPTER SEVEN: TEACHERS

I. Why Teachers?
II. Teachers in Greco-Roman Society ................................................................. 174
    A Brief Conclusion .......................................................................................... 176
III. 'Teaching' in the Early Christian Ephesian Writings ..................................... 177
IV. Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 182

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION .......................................................................... 184
BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................................................................... 191

WORD COUNT: 78,073
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Map of Ephesus</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plan of Terrace House 2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Funerary relief of a sitting woman from Selçuk Museum</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Funerary relief a reclining woman from Selçuk Museum</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Funerary relief with an inscription from Selçuk Museum</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female statue in front of the Celsus Library in Ephesus</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female statue in front of the Celsus Library in Ephesus</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female statue in front of the Celsus Library in Ephesus</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female statue in front of the Celsus Library in Ephesus</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Relief of Marcus Aurelius, Hadrian, young Lucius Verus and Antionius Pius from Ephesos Museum in Vienna</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Relief of a sacrificial offering from Ephesos Museum in Vienna</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that Greco-Roman literary and archaeological evidence from Ephesus, in light of Greco-Roman evidence from the wider Asia Minor region, directly affects how we interpret early Christian writings related to Ephesus. We suggest that the early Christian authors employed Greco-Roman cultural elements in their texts in order to build social guidelines for the early Christian community. We will focus on the representation of women in Greco-Roman evidence and early Christian texts and compare the approaches of two sets of evidence. Our aim is to identify the differences and similarities in how these sources present women.

The majority of existing scholarship on the subject has been reluctant to employ local archaeological, and to a degree literary Greco-Roman evidence in order to construct a background for the early Christian texts and subsequently interpret them. Either the comments on an early Christian text are based purely on information from directly within the text itself, or a random selection of literary and/or archaeological Greco-Roman evidence is used, with no regard for locality. Moreover, scholarship which does take comparative non-Christian evidence into account has utilised mostly Roman sources, meaning there is a need for a greater consideration of specifically Ephesian evidence in order to better understand the early Christian community there.

The aim of this thesis is firstly to argue that local Greco-Roman archaeological and literary evidence provide a contextual basis from which we can properly interpret early Christian texts, and secondly to investigate different aspects of the lives of Greco-Roman Ephesian women. We discuss that the context of an early Christian writing is of vital importance, and, therefore, the evidence which helps to rebuild that context should derive from the text’s immediate locale. We will argue that a comparison of the early Christian writings to their Greco-Roman context will reveal a significant similarity between the writings and their surrounding culture, contrary to common scholarly opinion. Proper construction of a text’s background can bring fresh interpretations of how early Christian writings portray women. In this respect we will challenge many scholars on their views about subjects raised in the early Christian writings, such as the relationship between the married couple, the status and reputation of widows, the social standing of women, and women’s roles as teachers. We will see that employment of Ephesian Greco-Roman evidence for interpretation of the Ephesian early Christian writings will provide perspectives on the texts which have not previously been recognised.
DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"The Lex Julia granted exemption from its penalties to women for a year after the death of their husbands, and for six months after a divorce had taken place; the Lex Papia granted them two years from the death of their husbands, and a year and six months after a divorce".

*Rules of Ulpian*, 14.¹

"To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion".

*1 Corinthians*, 7:8-9.²

The above passages both refer to marriage. However, they each approach the topic with different concerns. The *Rules of Ulpian*, a collection of Roman laws, simply explains how widows will be treated by the law in particular circumstances. *1 Corinthians* 7:8-9, a Christian letter from the New Testament, offers tailored advice to its audience that is dependent on their marital status. The two passages come from completely different genres of literature, and have very different authorial intents, social contexts, and intended recipients.

The intention of this thesis is to research the different roles of women in Greco-Roman evidence and early Christian³ literature, and to discuss the representations and changing perceptions of women in the two groups of sources. Using the city of Ephesus as a case study, and nuancing the approaches that have been taken by scholarship so far, we will consider the similarities and/or differences in the way Greco-Roman sources and early Christian writings present Ephesian women. Although the abovementioned law is a Roman one, we will see that first-century Ephesus was not straightforwardly Roman, and possessed its own indigenous culture that was neither entirely Roman nor Greek. Greco-Roman culture surrounded the Ephesian people, and it will be argued that this was a native culture with its own characteristics. For this reason, sources with Roman origin will not always apply to the city. When we do employ evidence of Roman origin, however, we will see that there was a significant

¹ Translated by Samuel Parsons Scott (Cincinnati: Central Trust Co., 1932).
² English translations of the New Testament will be cited from the NRSV throughout, unless otherwise stated.
³ A detailed analysis of this term will be offered later on in the introduction.
presence of Roman citizens in Ephesus which justifies our use of Roman laws. The hybrid nature of the city will require careful consideration. The argument presented in this thesis will emphasize the importance of local archaeological and literary evidence from Ephesus, which is required to construct an accurate background for the early Christian texts under consideration. We will also employ Greco-Roman evidence to comment upon these texts. We will challenge the theories of some scholars related to the subjects of locality and hybridity, arguing that because of its hybrid and exclusive culture it is crucial to consider Greco-Roman evidence from Ephesus and its surrounding area.

The thesis will focus on the relationship between early Christian Ephesian writings and their Greco-Roman context in terms of how both set of sources evaluate the life of a woman. Even though the quotes presented at the beginning of this chapter seem to set Paul at odds with his context, careful analysis will show that contrary to the view of many scholars, the early Christian writings fit with their context in many of their discussions about women. We will see that the early Christian and Greco-Roman sources agree on many issues related to women, such as the relationship between the married couple, the status of widows, the social standing of women in society, and women’s roles as teachers. We will examine local evidence from Ephesus in light of that from Asia Minor and the Roman and Greco-Roman world more broadly, and will offer fresh insight into the ways that early Christian Ephesian texts represent women. Scholarship to date, we will argue, has not adequately considered localised evidence when researching the social context of early Christian Ephesus.

In this opening chapter we will begin by outlining the geographical area and time period that will be the focus of our investigation. We will then introduce our early Christian Ephesian writings and Greco-Roman Ephesian evidence, along with the women that they are witness to. Finally, we will clarify the methodology and terminology that we employ throughout the thesis.

I. Place and Time

Ephesus happens to be located only an hour away from where I grew up, in the city of İzmir (modern day Smyrna). It has been selected as the focus for this project, however, because the city was of great importance in early-Christian history. Ephesus is mentioned numerous times in the New Testament. Paul himself stayed there around

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4 The legal situation in Ephesus will be discussed on pp. 62-65.
AD 50; his mission is recounted in detail in Acts. It was from Ephesus, in fact, that Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians. There are several letters written to the Christians in Ephesus as well. In addition to Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, a short letter in Revelation is addressed to Ephesus as one of the seven churches of Asia, and the first and second letters to Timothy are addressed to the city as Timothy was located there. 1, 2, and 3 John are also associated with the city. Ephesus is mentioned and addressed not only in the New Testament, but also in other early Christian sources. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, for example, wrote one of his many letters to the congregation in Ephesus. In addition to its hundreds of years of deep-rooted history before the arrival of Christianity, Ephesus played a key role in the Christian mission. My personal fondness for the city has helped me to establish a closer relationship with it, and while it is not my home town, and everything relevant to the present study occurred nearly two-thousand years ago, spending more than a decade in the area has enabled me to become familiar with modern Mediterranean culture, which I believe carries traces of ancient culture, however small they may be. It would, of course, be incredibly absurd to suggest that one can understand everything about the ancient people of a city just because one has lived nearby; I simply consider myself sympathetic to the sea air.

Ephesus has played a significant role in the history of Christianity. However, this study will focus on the first and second centuries AD. This period, especially the first century, was a critical era for Christianity. As a student who studied Islam for many years, I was always fascinated by the history of the Christian religion; especially its early development. The early stages following the revelation of a new faith, its first message and followers, the new perceptions of identity that it creates, and the processes of transition involved in accepting a new faith, have always struck me as the most intriguing aspects of a new religion, both historically and sociologically. With the passion of a new faith, an individual can change everything and anything about him or herself. In order for scholars to realize how a new religion impacts upon its converts, it is essential to understand their prior social and religious customs. Prior customs may continue to be involved and become integrated into a person's new faith; over time customs both old and new become united as one.

The focus of this thesis is the earliest Christian believers. As far as possible, we will confine our investigation to the first and second centuries AD, in order to provide the clearest possible picture of the lives of the first Ephesian Christians. There are a number of reasons why we chose AD 200 as a border date. The earliest Christian sources that we have consulted are those from the New Testament. First of all we
refrain to set an earlier date with the intention of including early Christian texts other than the ones in the New Testament such as the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. We also have not gone beyond AD 212, when the edict of Caracalla was granted citizenship to all free men and women in the Roman Empire. Assuming a de facto citizenship for all the women of concern for this project would immensely simplify matters for us, however, citizenship issues are strongly related to a city’s cultural elements. As will be discussed later, the presence of local citizenship laws has had significant impact on our arguments.

The first two centuries AD were not straightforward for Ephesus. With the demise of the Roman Republic and subsequent settlement of the Roman Empire, the first century AD witnessed a great transitional process. In Ephesus, this transition was not only administrative, but also cultural. Because of its strategically important geographical position and important place among other cities in Asia Minor, the Romanization of Ephesus was significant. The city had survived this century on its own terms. It embraced Romanization in its own ways, and the result was a mixture of Roman and Greek culture. As we will see, the first century not only saw the advent of Christianity, but also Greco-Roman lifestyle. The people of Ephesus had a lot to digest - a new state, a new culture, and a new religion all appeared in the same century. For this reason it is no easy task to trace the history of the early Christians in Ephesus. We are dealing with a delicate period, and as such, need to treat it with sensitivity.

This study will not focus on the entire Christian congregation in Ephesus, but simply its women, who were key members of both society and the family. However, their roles are not always fully appreciated. Often, they are assumed to be of secondary importance, yet both in domestic and public circles they played significant roles. Many studies of early Christianity have not paid adequate attention to women. Moreover, studies which explicitly focus on women frequently attempt to cover too vast a geographical area, rather than focusing on particular localities. This study aims to remedy this by focusing specifically on the women of Ephesus.

II. Sources and Analytical Categories

This section offers an introduction to our Christian and Greco-Roman evidence. First of all we will analyse our Christian sources, which will provide us with criteria by which to select our comparative Greco-Roman evidence.
a. Early Christian Writings

Before we discuss our early Christian sources in terms of their geographical relationship to Ephesus, it is necessary to discuss the time span of our evidence in detail. The selection of sources covers a range of dates from the second century BC to the second century AD. The first and second centuries AD feature more prominently because of the contribution of the New Testament texts. Our goal is to examine sources concerning the lives of early Christian women, and to compare them with Greco-Roman sources. This is reflected, therefore, in our choice of Christian sources, and their dates of composition and circulation. As for the Greco-Roman evidence, our sources date as far back as the second century BC. However, because Christianity appeared much later than this, we will not be able to present any evidence for Christianity that is dated before the first century AD. Our Greco-Roman evidence, on the other hand, ranges from the second century BC to the second century AD. Greco-Roman sources which are dated after the second century AD are still taken into consideration, especially archaeological evidence, provided it does not have Christian characteristics. The Greco-Roman evidence, of course, does overlap with the Christian evidence later on.

We begin then, with the New Testament. All our sources from the Christian era are literary, and so the geographical relevance of these texts to Ephesus is based on the place of composition and/or the source’s intended audience essentially, we have consulted texts which are written from or to Ephesus, and those which mention the city in some way. Once these sources had been isolated, we distinguished the parts which mention women, either specifically by name or in general terms. In the New Testament, the literary evidence included the Acts of the Apostles, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, 1 Peter, and Revelation. Acts and Revelation are not letters in their literary forms, however, Revelation contains seven short letters addressed to the seven churches of Asia, one of which is the church of Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7). Acts is not addressed to anywhere specific, as it is not a letter, but it does mention Paul roughly around the time he stayed in Ephesus (Acts 18:19-19:41). The rest of the featured texts from the New Testament are letters. The New Testament epistles are the subject of debate on many issues, particularly their authorship. There are, for instance, numerous scholarly arguments relating to Paul’s ‘disputed’ and ‘undisputed’ letters. These arguments are not of concern to the present

More specific information regarding the sources will be given as and when they are used in the course of the thesis.
study, however, and so authorship will only be discussed insofar as it illuminates the attitudes represented in the texts.\(^6\)

Of the letters that we have selected, the first and second letters to Timothy and the letter to the Ephesians were written to Ephesus. The letters to Timothy were written to Timothy who was in Ephesus at the time. The authorship of 1 and 2 Timothy is disputed, even though the author identifies himself as Paul in 1 Timothy 1:1. The letter is generally considered as non-Pauline, and referred to as one of the Pastoral Epistles, along with 2 Timothy and Titus. Hence, we will hereafter refer to the author as Pastor. The author of the letter to the Ephesians also claims to be Paul (Ephesians 1:1). However, this letter is regarded as one of the 'disputed' Pauline letters. For simplicity, however, we will refer to the author as Paul.

One of Paul’s ‘undisputed’ letters, the first letter to the Corinthians, was written from Ephesus. Paul himself mentions that he is in Ephesus while he was writing the letter, and plans to stay there a bit longer (1 Corinthians 16:8). Even though the letter was not addressed to Ephesus and was written to deal with particular issues occurring in Corinth, I still believe that the letter may carry in it some clues relating to the environment in which it was composed.

There are several early Christian letters both from the New Testament (Colossians and 1 Peter) and from bishops, which were sent to the areas around Ephesus. The letter to the Colossians was written to a town called Colossae, approximately one-hundred miles east of Ephesus. There is also the possibility that this letter was written from Ephesus, as its compositional origin is something of an uncertainty. For this reason, it has been deemed appropriate to include the letter in this study, especially as its eventual destination was relatively close to Ephesus. The first letter of Peter, on the other hand, does not seem to have been written to a specific location. All that we know of its addressees is that the letter refers to them as “the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1). The letter was possibly intended for reading aloud to the congregations of (notable?) cities of the aforementioned provinces in Asia Minor. Since Ephesus was most likely one of these cities the letter has been included in our collection of sources.

The second set of letters taken into consideration is those written by bishops. These are from a later date, roughly the early-second century AD. However, they share some common ground with the New Testament letters discussed above in that they

\(^6\)A relatively detailed authorship argument is discussed on pp. 94-97.
were written to or from around Ephesus. Ignatius was the bishop of Antioch, and lived roughly between the late-first and early-second century AD. Ignatius sent several letters to different congregations in the cities of Asia Minor. Two of these, the Letter to the Smyrnaeans and the Letter to Polycarp, were addressed to Smyrna, a city located around forty-seven miles from Ephesus. Another epistle, The Letter to the Philippians, is sent from Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. While these letters might not be written directly from or addressed directly to Ephesus, they may well reflect similar issues as the sources associated more directly with the city. A similar argument can be made for the Acts of John and Acts of Paul. These Apocryphal writings are dated to around the late-second century AD, and cannot be traced back to any particular place. However, they do contain stories which take place in Ephesus, and present excellent examples of the perception of early Christian women.7

Thus far we have not mentioned any of the Johannine literature among our early Christian texts, even though they do fit within the requirements of time and place for our study. The Johannine letters (1, 2, and 3 John) and John’s Gospel are heavily associated with Ephesus, as they were composed in the city. The reason for the exclusion of these texts is that they do not really have much to say about women. Although these texts do provide insight into the Christian Ephesian community as a whole, the letters noticeably refrain from mentioning women. They do not include any reference to female members of the community, which makes them somewhat unhelpful for our thesis. The Gospel of John does mention women, but not in a manner which is helpful for the present study.8 We do not believe that the gospel was written for a specific community and the references to women in the gospel are not aimed directly at the early Christians in Ephesus.9 Indeed, Ephesus was not necessarily relevant to the composition of the gospel. The references to women appear in the form of stories about women who participated in events involving Jesus (John 2:1-5, 4:7-42, 11:1-44, 12:2-3, 18:16-17, 20:11-18). Although these stories could offer examples of

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7 There are other sources of course, which claim obvious links to Ephesus, and also fall into our time period, such as the letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians, the Martyrdom of Polycarp and the fragments of Polycrates (a second century AD bishop of Ephesus). The reason for not covering these works here in detail is either the absence of a reference to women, or the absence of a reference to women relevant to our discussion.

8 The types of references viewed as relevant to the present study will be discussed later on in this chapter.

the place of women in early Christian Ephesus, we cannot draw any firm conclusions from the gospel as to the situation of Ephesian women.

The time and place of composition of these sources are not the only characteristics that need to be taken into consideration. The fact that some of these sources were written by different authors is also of interest. Authorship arguments, as we have stated, are not our concern. Rather, what needs to be kept in mind when dealing with sources relating to Ephesus is that they are thoughts, requests, questions, answers, or warnings of different people. They are not the products of a single mind. Together, they still provide a picture of how women were perceived in the area, but we cannot treat them as if they are chapters of a book. Even though it seems that every source presents the opinion of its author about women, we should not forget that these views may be a response to an individual situation. When a source addresses women in general, it may be answering a particular concern from that particular congregation. When the author received a problem from the assembly, he likely used this chance to address women together, and to inform them. This generalization of the addressee may originate from the fact that the majority of our sources are letters that were written to the church assemblies. The genre of a source is an important factor in its evaluation. The authorial intent and reasoning behind the literary characteristics that were used can be deduced from the genre.

At this point, it is crucial to explain how the sources can help us understand their social setting. First of all, we should state that the historical reliability of any early Christian text, such as the Acts of Paul or John is not at issue here, as the possibility of these sources reporting fictional events does not diminish their value as evidence for our thesis. If the events mentioned in the text are fabricated, this could prove that the author (and possibly a wider community) desired such incidents. This reveals the expectations of a certain group of people (i.e. the author and/or his community) regarding women, and concurs with the fact that our project heavily relies on the apprehension of early Christian writings around the subject of women.

Because the majority of our Christian sources are letters, their genre contributes greatly to our understanding of their contents. The letters from the New Testament are generally responding to particular issues in a congregation, or addressing a community to advise them on subjects which the author believes to be important. The first of these scenarios connects the content of the letter to actual events, while the second exhibits the author’s desire for an ideal community. In both cases, there is useful information to
be gleaned for the purposes of the present argument, as we are given insight into cultural norms and ideals.

Another common feature of our sources is that they were all written by men. Our sources arguably present the world of the early Christian Ephesians as male-dominated, and it is fairly clear that this was how the social world was perceived in the first century AD. If this perception is in accord with our Greco-Roman sources, then this attitude cannot be treated as an anomaly.

**b. Analytical Categories**

Thus far we have offered a sweeping picture of our main texts. The selection of our sources is based on their relationship with the city of Ephesus, in terms of their references, compositional and addressee location, and dating. Limiting our early Christian evidence to before the second century AD prevents us from employing certain other means of evidence, such as Christian epigraphy from Ephesus, which is dated much later than our time period. Our information about women from our chosen sources comes in the form of references, advice and warnings to women in general, greetings, addressees referred to by name or in general, and women mentioned in parables (Eve, Mary, Sarah, etc.). However, due to limitations of time and space, it is unfeasible to deal with all of the abovementioned references to women. We have focused, therefore only on the references which we believe to be directly related to life in Ephesus. Advice or warnings concerning the daily life of a woman indicate actual situations that authors saw necessary to advice upon. For example, when we find a letter telling a particular woman, a certain group of women, or women in general to behave in a certain way, we can look for evidence prior to that letter which might indicate the presence of actions which required such a warning. There likely exists a Greco-Roman equivalent for almost every incident we encounter in the Christian literature, often making direct comparison possible. Establishing a collection of Christian evidence first will provide a basis for us to determine our categories of interest, which will then be applied to the Greco-Roman sources. Comparisons can then be drawn between the two sets of material.

For clarity, it will be helpful to arrange our evidence under five categories. The first of these is the marriage. The focus of this chapter will be on the relationship between husband and wife, and their responsibilities towards each other. However, we will also mention other roles a woman took on in a household, such as a daughter and a mother. The second section is devoted to widows. The attention given to widows both
in the New Testament and in the early Christian writings is remarkable. They are specifically mentioned in many instances almost as a separate, independent group in society. The reasons for this will be explored in the relevant chapter, but it is fair to say that they were not ignored. In this section we will investigate the phenomenon of widows as a social group in the early Christian writings, as well as their reputation in the Ephesian congregation. The third section explores the social life of women in Ephesus. This part of the study comprises all the references relating to a woman’s public life, including anything from warnings about behaviour in public, to records of women acting as social figures (such as benefactors or officials). Our attention will mostly be directed towards the appearance of women. In particular, we will examine the issue of head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Our fourth section discusses female teachers. Teaching is an essential element in the early period of a religion, and even though there are not many references to women’s teaching activity in either the New Testament or in early Christian writings, the importance of the activity itself makes the few instances that we do have highly significant. Although Christian evidence only suggests women’s teaching activity in religious contexts, we will also discuss school teaching.

### c. Ephesian Greco-Roman Literary and Archaeological Evidence

It will be useful here to offer an explanation of how the term ‘Greco-Roman’ will be employed throughout this thesis, before examining this evidence in terms of its variety and date range.

In his article concerned with the situation of a Greek city in the Roman period, Fergus Millar eloquently describes the term ‘Greco-Roman’ as “a fusion or melange of languages and constitutions, types of public entertainment, architectural forms, and religious institutions”.10 ‘Greco-Romanness’ is essentially the interaction of ‘Greekness’ and ‘Romanness’.

Simon Goldhill states that “Greekness is constituted not by ethnicity or decent but by behavioural patterns, language and physical appearance”.11 Simon Swain adds that “the constitution of group identity in the ancient Greek world ... was rather a cultural-

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political idea and not a political act as such.”12 The notion of being free from political action possibly made the Greek identity more enduring as a cultural norm to the sudden changes in political life and ruling power. This durability may have enabled Greeks to be loyal to Greek culture despite being granted Roman citizenship. Therefore, the disruption to the cultural lives of Greeks during political overhaul was not necessarily drastic.

It could be argued that because the roots of Greek identity do not lie in ethnicity, Greekness can be perceived as a superficial characteristic vulnerable to external influences. As Roman rule spread through the Greek East, the influence of Roman culture became very apparent. Greeks seemed to welcome Roman culture into their lives on a political level, but did not embrace it to its core. Swain asserts that the interests of the ancient writers and historians from our period in their own past and present “contrast strikingly” with their non-existent concern about Rome’s past.13 It seems fair to conclude, therefore, that Greekness outweighed Romanness in “Greco-Roman” culture.

Throughout this thesis, “Greco-Roman” will be used to describe a social phenomenon. The merging of Greek and Roman culture had different effects in different cities, and we will demonstrate that Ephesus had its own kind of Greco-Roman culture. The indigenous culture of Ephesus, which might be classifiable as a subcategory of broader Greco-Roman culture will be examined in detail later on. What we would like to discuss here is the nature of Greco-Roman culture as hybrid, and the influence of this characteristic on early Christian writings. Seesengood argues that “hybrids are the product of colonization”.14 In fact, the term ‘hybrid’ is widely used in postcolonial criticism. Colonialization results in the colonized culture adapting aspects of that belonging to its colonizer. “Since the colonized’s mimicry creates a hybridized version of the apparently superior and pure colonial culture, the colonized do not become like the colonizer, but inhabit a third “in-between” space.”15 Therefore, in our case, the hybrid culture carries traces of both Roman and Greek culture, but creates its

13 Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, p. 78.
own distinct identity. For this reason, early Christian writings related to Ephesus should be understood as the products of a culture not quite Roman, but not quite Greek either.

The ‘resistance’ from the Greeks to become fully immersed into Roman culture was significant in forming what came to be known as Greco-Roman identity. With further examination we will see how certain elements of Greek culture remained more prominent in Greco-Roman culture than Roman elements. For example, on the subject of guardianship of a wife, we will see that the eastern Roman Empire, where Greco-Roman culture was influential, followed a different custom than wider Roman culture, and allowed the husband to be a wife's guardian should this be required. It will be argued that the reason behind this difference was the importance given to the family in the eastern part of the Empire. We will argue that Ephesus created its own version of Greco-Roman culture via a long integration process. In our examination of the city's history we will discuss the hybrid character of Ephesus and how this is reflected particularly in the city's domestic buildings. The remains of Terrace House 2, the only Ephesian housing complex which is well preserved, will enable us to argue that indigenous Ephesian Greco-Roman culture was based on a family-oriented society. This understanding will significantly affect how we view our early Christian evidence on women. It will be argued that when compared to Greco-Roman culture, early Christian writings present ‘conservative’ attitudes towards women, which are reflective of the hybrid nature of the culture in which they were composed.

Examining as much evidence as we can from as early a period as possible would definitely provide us with a broader and more diverse argument. However, restrictions on time and space mean that we must limit our evidence. Therefore, we will examine Greco-Roman evidence from the second century BC up to and including the second century AD, which allows us to cover evidence from four centuries in total. However, there will be instances where we need to employ sources outside of this time period, such as Roman laws. Even though the dates of some Roman laws fall outside of our time span, they still held authority in our period of interest, making them wholly relevant. In addition, the household chapter will also make use of some archaeological evidence of

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16 Please see pp. 89-90.
17 Please see pp. 71-75.
18 For a discussion of the importance of consulting local evidence in the interpretation of early Christian writings, please see pp. 42-43.
wool spinning tools that were found in Terrace House 2, which is dated to the third century AD.¹⁹

The most extensive selection of evidence that the ancient authors provide us with is related to the history of the Roman Empire in general, not the history of Ephesus in particular. Ancient writings not only inform us regarding history, but also record passages of Roman law, anecdotes, and information about daily life and customs. We will mostly employ the works of the ancient historians in our chapter concerned with the social history of Ephesus, where these writers will be introduced individually. The works of Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Plutarch, Valerius Maximus, Dio Chrysostom, and more, will help us to understand the bigger picture of social life in Ephesus, and Asia Minor more broadly. The works of these authors will enable us to comprehend, and more importantly, to reconstruct, the world to which Christianity was introduced. One thing we have to keep in mind when dealing with these primary sources is that most of them do not have a direct geographical relationship with Ephesus. With certain anecdotes, for instance, we may not always find a trace of Ephesus in the source, being presented instead with a generalized scenario, or even a situation related to somewhere completely different. Sources depicting more general laws or customs, however, can in many cases still provide an idea of life in Ephesus.

When looking for a window into ancient Ephesian society, non-literary sources, such as archaeological evidence, is invaluable. Since the early Christian writings often discuss general situations, and do not mention particular people, it is logical to compare such cases with equivalent evidence from an earlier time. What we have in the early Christian writings are replies to individual situations, but we can merely speculate as to the details. The advantage of archaeological evidence is its potential to offer more personalized information. On an inscription, a gravestone, or a dedication, one can see a signature or a name identifying the recording party. The remains of buildings can reveal so much history. The dating of these remains can tell us about the developmental phases of a city over a given period of time. These remains, depending on their state, will also reveal the intended purposes of the buildings, which will enlighten us as to how the social life of the city operated. Aside from public buildings, such as libraries, theatres, stadiums, public baths, municipal buildings and agora, the remains of domestic buildings provide us with much valuable information about the private lives of the population. Interpreting the ruins of Ephesus will help us to imagine the ancient city when it was alive and vibrant.

¹⁹ For further discussion please see pp. 79-80.
The ruins of buildings can tell us only a certain amount, however. In order to gain more detailed information we must look to inscriptions. Inscriptions of various genres, such as gravestones, dedications, building inscriptions, sarcophaguses, statues, and memorials have been found in the Ephesus. The Austrian Archaeological Institute’s Die Inschriften von Ephesos, published in ten volumes, was the main resource consulted for the inscriptive evidence examined in this thesis. As we are concerned with specific kinds of evidence related to the lives of women, we conducted a word search in the index of IvE in order to isolate the relevant inscriptions. Based on the key women’s roles discussed in the thesis, we searched for the following terms: woman, wife, mother, daughter, sister, husband, widow and teacher. For the chapter on social life, the search was widened to include not only signs of women’s public appearances, but also official titles of women. Riet Van Bremen’s The Limits of Participation was of great help in this regard, as her appendices list civic titles of women organized by area and city. She also includes a list of mothers and daughters of people who hold civic titles, which helped us with the identification stage of the inscription analysis. Translation of these key words was performed with the help of the Perseus Library Greek Word Study Tool, which enabled us to obtain the most accurate translation, supplemented with word frequency statistics. This latter feature indicates how often a word appears in the ancient sources, and thus helps us determine the contexts in which the word was used. The translations of the key Greek words were decided as follows: γυνή (wife and woman), μήτηρ (mother), θυγάτηρ (daughter), ἀδελφή (sister), ἄνήρ (husband and man), χήρα (widow) and διδάσκαλος (teacher).

The translations of the inscriptions are my own unless stated otherwise. The inscriptions provide an invaluable source for our research, as they record how people wanted to be remembered. The ancients knew the information carved into the stone would last for hundreds of years, and so the way they depict themselves in the inscriptions is the next best thing to them handing identification cards to us! Gravestones in particular, which are greater in number, are proof of not only how society viewed the deceased, but also how that person wanted to be commemorated, especially if they were commissioned while the individual was still alive.

20 Hereafter IvE.
23 IvE presents Latin inscriptions as well. However, these are too few to glean any significant information from, and several of these inscriptions also present a Greek translation of the text.
d. The “Women” in our Sources

Now that we have outlined both sets of our evidence, we should turn to the women that the evidence addresses. The Ephesian inscriptions as our main source of local evidence provide the most personal descriptive accounts of women. We are able to infer and interpret different aspects of an individual’s life from how they are referred to on an inscription. We will see that the inscriptions which contain our only male key term, ‘husband,’ are few in number compared to those which mention women. The women on these inscriptions are not specifically referred to as Christian, and as such will be regarded as non-Christian. Moreover, we do not assume that any of the women were Jewish. As we have stated already, our selection of sources works backwards in time; firstly, identification of our early Christian evidence has enabled us to establish our five categories for investigation. The only instance where we have consulted later evidence first is on the issue of the Jewish community in Ephesus.

The ancient historian Josephus states that there were Jewish people living in Ephesus. He records an edict excusing the Jewish people of Ephesus from military service in the Roman Empire24 as well as a decree allowing them to follow their own customs in particular situations.25 A passage in Acts also implies a sizable Jewish community in Ephesus (18:24-28). However, aside from one inscription (1677) describing the wife of a doctor who was apparently Jewish,26 we have yet to find any evidence in the Greco-Roman and Ephesian archaeological sources to prove that such an extensive community existed.27

We will discuss the various ways that inscriptions can reveal women’s marital statuses in later chapters. More crucial to understanding the identities of these women, however, is establishing their social class. Social class, which was generally determined by income in the Roman Empire, is an extensive subject. Various scholars have discussed the different models for social classification.28 Steven Friesen explains the issue by means of a ‘poverty scale’, which includes seven separate groups. Friesen

26 Trebilco comments on the inscription in Jewish Communities in Asia Minor, pp. 173-174.
27 Please see the discussion of G. H. R. Horsley’s article on p. 37.
focuses on the economic needs of each of these groups, but essentially, the first three groups (PS1-3) are best described as the upper/elite class, the next group (PS4) as the middle group and the bottom three (PS5-7) as the lower class. Despite its weaknesses, Friesen’s model does have operational value. If we were to base our analysis of Ephesian inscriptions on Friesen’s model we would begin by stating that our inscriptive evidence completely excludes the imperial elite (PS1). Seventeen imperial inscriptions that involve one or more of our keywords are not considered in our comparison.

Dedication inscriptions erected either to commemorate a person's personal characteristics and achievements or to document a financial contribution provide more information than gravestones about their occupation. Many of the dedicatory inscriptions record families that include members who hold provincial and municipal titles (PS2-3), such as *iasiarch, gymnasiarch, prytanis*, or priesthods of Artemis and Imperial cults. There are several freed persons mentioned both in dedications and gravestones. However, traders such as fisherman or wine makers are not represented significantly in commemorative inscriptions, making it difficult to observe similar patterns of representation in different social classes. Gravestones present very different information. Most gravestone inscriptions do not give occupations for any member of the deceased family. The occupations we are provided with vary from freedman to doctor, from baker to soldier, from gymnasiarch to actor, and from midwife to priestess (PS2-4). Here, we are able to observe how people with different economical means and dissimilar social standing are represented in their eternal images. There are two possible reasons why some inscriptions do not document occupations: 1) it was not common to state titles or professions on tombstones; 2) the owners of these particular gravestones did not feel that their jobs were particularly noteworthy. The first possibility does not seem likely due to the vast number of gravestones which do list professions. The second option, of course, would suggest individuals from the middle to lower social classes (PS4-5). Interestingly, the gravestone inscriptions from Ephesus do not greatly differ in their representation of individuals whether they record an occupation or not. While archaeological evidence

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represents all areas of society, then, it seems that customs for funerary records were similar across the social classes.

Another significant aspect of the identities of those mentioned in inscriptions is their citizenship. For most people, their name and occupation is all we have. Two-hundred inscriptions out of three-hundred and eighteen depict people with Roman names, while one-hundred and fifteen portray people with Greek names. Of course, this survey does not claim to indicate the percentage of citizens at any given time in Ephesus. However, the data shows that the women and their family members in Ephesian inscriptions vary in terms of their citizenship status.

While we were able to gather some particularly detailed evidence about women in our Ephesian Greco-Roman evidence, unfortunately, we lack extensive information about the Christian community in Ephesus. In terms of their marital status, women in early Christian writings are often addressed group by group. Early Christian authors almost always explicitly state if they are writing about married, single, or widowed women. There are several women mentioned by name, on the other hand, whose marital status is not always clear. Prisca/Priscilla, for example, is always mentioned with her husband Aquila, however, we do not know if Lydia (Acts 16:11-15) or Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11) were single, married, or widowed. Nevertheless, we can speculate that women like Chloe and Lydia were probably single, since they seem to be in control of some economical means, and are mentioned without a husband.

The economic status of women in early Christian congregations, and the community in general, is harder to comment on. Clues as to the congregation's social standing mostly lie in the occupations of the assembly members and perhaps the characterisation of the house churches. Steven Friesen applies his poverty scale to Pauline assemblies. The author places no one in the early Christian community among the “super-wealthy elite (PS1-2)”, and most “near the level of subsistence”. There are some criticisms of Friesen’s poverty scale, however, that must be raised here. Firstly, some have taken issue with his elaborate grouping of people with limited means. Oakes and Barclay both state that Friesen should be more cautious when classifying those near the subsistence level, as it is very difficult to determine the limits of this

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32 This issue will come into the argument about the legal situation in the city in chapter two.
33 Please see pp. 160-164.
category. I do not believe that the New Testament texts provide us with enough information about the economical means of congregation members, and, therefore, scholars should not label certain individuals as ‘destitute’ (PS5-7) when we know next to nothing about what separated those at the lower end of the poverty scale.

Secondly, Friesen states that there were members of the early Christian communities who belonged to his middle group (PS4). We have to consider, however, that cities greatly differed in terms of economy. Andrew Clarke discusses the possibility of upper-class citizens making up part of the Corinthian assembly. The Corinthian example may well be an exception among house churches in other cities, but it offers us a picture of a congregation whose members represent a wide selection of society.

We know that there were at least two house churches in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19-20), one of which was hosted by Aquila and Prisca. In terms of the Ephesian early Christian community, then, we know that at least one congregation gathered in a house owned by people with some economic means. There is, of course, the possibility that the congregation contained a wealthier member than the church’s host, but it is unlikely, as the community probably met at the largest house available. We are still safe to assume, however, that there were members of the assembly with similar economic means to the host. It is more difficult to estimate what percentage of an early Christian congregation were Roman citizens, as there is sparse evidence on the subject.

The women from both our early Christian and Greco-Roman are of similar standing in terms of marital status, and, therefore, we can assume they were of similar age also, as these two factors were strongly related. In spite of the fact that the two sets of women from our evidence differ in terms of social and economic standing, there are still comparable similarities between them. While women from Ephesian inscriptions portrayed a group consisted of members from upper to lower classes, decreasing towards the latter; the women from early Christian writings were involved in a group where the situation was quite opposite; there were more lower class members in this group. These women had one thing in common, however – Greco-Roman culture. We are aware that our two sets of women are different in many ways, but nonetheless we argue that there is enough social overlap to make the comparison worthwhile.

39 Trebilco, The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius, pp. 95-96.
40 Oakes, "Constructing Poverty Scales for Graeco-Roman Society," pp. 80, 84.
III. Method

The aim of this thesis is not simply a comparison of the representation of women in Greco-Roman and early Christian sources, but also a presentation of how both sets of women lived, the circumstances affecting their lives, and how they were viewed by others in society. The comparison will reveal what Christianity added, or took away from their lives. It will also show how effective religion in general can be in one's life. However, we must always keep in mind that our picture is largely dependent on sources with very specific ideological agendas. The inscriptions are the valuable exception to this rule, as they offer a more personalized history of women in Ephesus.

In each chapter we will first present our Greco-Roman evidence, followed by our Christian evidence. We will try to identify similar instances in both sets of evidence in order to compare the particular aspects of women's lives that we are concerned with. Since both groups of evidence are related to Ephesus, the Greco-Roman evidence will help to contextualise our Christian sources. Our examination will never seek to evaluate, however, whether changes to women's lives with the onset of Christianity were for better or worse. For example, in the household chapter we will first present evidence regarding a wife's place in the family in Greco-Roman culture; women's rights in marriage, roles in the household, and responsibilities towards their husbands and children will be analysed. We will also consider evidence where women have offered personal accounts of their experience. After the Greco-Roman material has been discussed, we will turn to the early Christian writings and assess the similarities and differences to the Greco-Roman sources in how wives were perceived. In some instances, of course, two comparative pieces of evidence will be of different types. For example, a Greco-Roman gravestone may be compared to a letter from one of the church fathers. In order to acquire credible data, every source has to be assessed in its own context. We will try to determine the place of a Christian Ephesian wife in both the family and society, and establish whether this is any different to the life of an Ephesian wife before Christianity. The brief outline above explains the approach that will be taken in each chapter of the thesis, as we examine ancient Ephesian women in their varied and numerous roles.

IV. Terminology

Finally, a brief analysis of terminology is required. The focus of our thesis is early Christian Ephesian woman. The term 'Christian', however, might not be the most accurate for describing early believers, such as those addressed by Paul in Ephesus.
Rather, ‘Christian’ might better describe the members of the movement in its later stages. However, I will use the term in this study as I do not believe that it fails to identify the people we are concerned with. They did not call themselves Christians explicitly, but this was likely because the use of the word became common only later on, not because it was in any way objectionable. By ‘Ephesian women’, we simply mean women who were living in Ephesus during the period we are concerned with. They could, however, be native, foreign, Roman citizen, freeborn, slave, or freedwoman. These factors will be mentioned if and when they have a particular impact on our discussion. We use the term ‘Greco-Roman’ for the non-Christian evidence. The Greco-Roman world designates the regions which were under Greek rule for centuries before they were taken over by the Romans. Therefore, Greco-Roman culture carries traces of both the Greeks and the Romans. The Mediterranean provides a good example of the application of Greco-Roman culture. Ephesus had been a traditional Greek city for many years until Roman administration was introduced in the second century BC. It is debatable, however, how much of Ephesus was ‘Greco’ and how much was ‘Roman’. ‘Romanization’ can simply be explained as making something Roman. The term describes the application Roman rule into the institutions and practices of the Empire’s provinces, such as the military, administration, citizenship, law, urbanization, architecture, language, religion, and cult. We can see the stamp of Roman rule in any of these areas by examining the changes in their characteristics. In the course of our study we will investigate the traces of Romanization in Ephesus and try to reveal the effects of the process on the early Christian writings. The term ‘Greco-Roman’, as we have pointed out, is used to define a culture. When we identify our earlier evidence as Greco-Roman and our later evidence as Christian, this does not mean that they are antonyms; the two are intertwined. Our Christian evidence is also Greco-Roman, since it is a product of the same area. ‘Non-Christian’ would be another way to describe one section of our evidence; however, the term sounds rather judgmental. Greco-Roman seems more neutral, and simply indicates the evidence which is not Christian in nature.

At the end of the next chapter we will outline the agendas of each individual chapter of the thesis, and contrast our approach to current scholarship on the subject.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

The primary aim of this thesis is to investigate the lives of Ephesian women in socio-historical context through comparison of Greco-Roman and early Christian evidence. It is anticipated that this examination will enable us to reach new conclusions about early Christian Ephesian writings concerning women. Our only data for the lives of Christian women in Ephesus comes from early Christian texts, such as the New Testament, the church fathers, and provincial officials; our main task is to understand the contexts of these sources. The Greco-Roman evidence provides us with the most suitable context for interpreting the early Christian sources. This Greco-Roman evidence includes not only literary Roman and Greek history, but also archaeology.

The approach taken in this thesis incorporates several distinct but interrelated disciplines. Our central concern is establishing the social contexts of Ephesian women during the first two centuries of Christianity. In this chapter, we will discuss the existing scholarship on both our city of interest, Ephesus, and early Christian and Greco-Roman women. We will try to establish whether Ephesus itself, and more particularly, Ephesian women (or women from the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire), have received scholarly attention. In terms of New Testament scholarship, many commentators will be criticized for their attitude towards the primary evidence utilised in their work. We will argue that some scholars have failed to designate the relevant Greco-Roman sources for their analysis of New Testament texts, and as a result have reached insufficient and arguably inaccurate conclusions.

As previously stated, the method employed in this research project incorporates Greco-Roman history and archaeology into its exploration of early Christian texts. While most of the evidence from the first two fields predates Christianity, it is essential for illuminating the contrast between the lives of Ephesian women before and after Christianity. Part of our investigation, of course, will also involve exegeting certain Christian texts. In the case of Paul's letters, for instance, establishing his general theology and opinions on certain matters can help us to understand the wider context of the particular passages that we are interested in.

43 Please see pages 24 and 37 for information on the unavailability of Jewish evidence for this thesis.  
44 We use ‘Greco-Roman’ to refer to the overall culture in the Mediterranean world during the period we are discussing.
Let us now turn our attention to Christianity which did not manifest its own social context out of thin air, we ought to investigate the context which already existed when Christianity came to life.

I. The Location – Ephesus

Our main interest is the relationship between Greco-Roman culture in the city and early Christian culture. Ephesus has a long and fascinating history. Prior to our period of interest, the city saw the settlement of the temple of Artemis, and in much later centuries was subject to Ottoman rule. Relevant to the two centuries of interest here, however, is the significant amount of archaeological research undertaken in Ephesus, yielding masses of Greco-Roman material. The archaeological digs at the ruins of the city, initiated by John Turtle Wood in 1863, have been continued by Austrian archaeologists, who have carried out extensive work on the site.

It should be noted before we proceed that archaeology is not our central field of concern. However, it does present us with an incredible amount of local evidence, which literary evidence cannot provide. There is neither adequate space nor time to discuss every archaeological source available from the city, and the secondary scholarship related to the archaeological remains is only useful to us as long as it presents findings related to the social context of the city.

John Turtle Wood began excavations in Ephesus with the aim of locating the temple of Artemis. It took him several years to discover the exact location of the temple. In the course of excavation works many other discoveries were made, including buildings and inscriptions, such as those from the temple and the theatre. However, because a limited amount of remains had been discovered at the time, Wood’s book does not present large quantities of data. The book is constructed almost like a journal, with daily, weekly, or monthly reports of what happened on the site during excavation works. These reports include anything from the new discoveries on the site to the local weather conditions and communications with local authorities. Nevertheless, the work which Wood initiated led to many more discoveries, and an opportunity for Ephesus to become a centre for scholarly interest.

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45 John T. Wood compiled the results of the excavations in Ephesus in his Discoveries at Ephesus (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1877).
Archaeological research has been continued for more than a hundred years by the Austrian Archaeological Institute. Their work, some of which has been carried out in association with the Turkish authorities, has unearthed the remains of the temple of Artemis, the theatre, the stadium, the Celsus Library, Terrace Houses I and II, and many more significant buildings. The most notable publication from the Institute is the *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien* (ÖJh). The journal mostly contains the results of research in Ephesus, but includes that undertaken in other surrounding cities as well. Technical data, such as building measurements, dates, and materials can be interpreted in order to better understand the life of the city in question. Elisabeth Trinkl offers some spindles from Terrace House 2 as evidence of the domestic lives of married women in Ephesus. The symbolism of the distaff is used to demonstrate the obligations of the wife in the household, with the public aspect of the wife’s life presented as well as the domestic. This kind of socio-archaeological analysis is crucial for our understanding of the archaeological remains. The remains of Terrace House 2 in particular are an invaluable source of information for domestic culture in the city. Hilke Thür evaluates the ownership history of Terrace House 2, and shows how the layout of the housing complex informs us of the living arrangements and traditions of Ephesian domestic life. Thür’s approach to the Romanization of domestic life in Ephesus contributes to our understanding of the degree of Romanization in the city as a whole.

Inscriptions are extremely valuable in that they provide us with first person accounts. The most comprehensive source on the inscriptions from Ephesus is *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. The series presents the Greek inscriptions each with a short physical description, and sometimes with a translation of the inscription in German. Thanks to the index provided, we were able to carry out a key word search for the terms listed in the introduction. The Austrian Archaeological Institute has also published a volume entitled *100 Years of Austrian Research*, which gathers vast data

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46 Österreichisches Archäologisches Institutes (ÖAI).
48 Ibid, pp. 295-299.
49 Ibid, pp. 299-302.
51 Ibid, pp. 253-258.
52 Komission für die Archäologische Erforschung Kleinasiens bei der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. 
from the ruins as well as the digging reports of the archaeologists from 1895 to 1995.\textsuperscript{53} The chronologically organized reports provide not only a step by step history of the excavations, but also accurate dating of individual sites, which were determined as progress was made. \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos} is a more specialized work from the Austrians on one particular characteristic of the city.\textsuperscript{54} Although as an art form wall painting is not our primary interest, its examination helps us to understand the contexts in which these painting are exhibited. Moreover, because the wall paintings are primarily indoors, they can contribute specifically to our understanding of domestic life in the city. The section in the volume dedicated to Terrace House \textsuperscript{55} also presents an overall analysis of the history of construction and layout of the residential units in the house. The wall paintings presented in the volume come not only from domestic spaces, but also from the theatre, cemeteries and Christian sacred spaces as well. Even though the dating of most of the sites is uncertain, the authors believe that some tentative conclusions can still be drawn.\textsuperscript{56} Almost all the paintings are dated to after the third century AD, which remains outside our time span. However, the representations of Paul, Christ, and other individuals on one painting in particular are intriguing. A picture of Paul, Thecla, and her mother, Thecleia, in the Grotto of Paul\textsuperscript{57} is a unique example of an illustration of the two. Scattered flower motifs on the background of the picture can be dated back to the third century, but the Zimmermann and Ladstäätter argue that other characteristics of the painting date it to the late fifth century. This and other similar examples do not contribute directly to our argument, but they do reflect an active Christian movement in the city.

Archaeological sources produce fairly technical data most of the time; our intention is to focus more on sociological interpretation of this evidence. We will not discuss, therefore, the scientific data that the field produces.

Stephen Mitchell’s \textit{Anatolia} is a very comprehensive source on the history of Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{58} The two volume book does not attempt to study the provinces of the Roman Empire, but the history of the peninsula as a whole. However, because the Anatolian provinces happened to have spent a rather large amount of their life as Roman

\textsuperscript{53} Gilbert Wiplinger and Gudrun Wlach, \textit{Ephesus 100 Years of Austrian Research}, English trans. by Claudia Luxon (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1996).
\textsuperscript{54} Norbert Zimmermann and Sabine Ladstäätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine Period} (İstanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2011).
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, pp. 42-137.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, pp. 177-178.
provinces, the book dedicates considerable space to the effect of Roman rule in the area. Mitchell examines the region chronologically, and presents the developments accordingly. The book traces the changes to the Asia Minor provinces that came with Roman rule, and later on, with Christianity. Economic, cultural, political, and religious developments are illustrated in detail, and striking examples are given from all the relevant cities. A similar approach is taken in Alcock's *The Early Roman Empire in the East.*[^59] This book is one of the very few sources on the eastern Roman Empire, but is significantly flawed. The eastern Roman Empire occupied a vast area, and while Alcock does admit that there may be gaps in the coverage of the book, unfortunately no city is treated sufficiently. The book is not organised chronologically, regionally, or distinctly thematically, and cannot be said to contribute anything particularly new to the study of any of the cities it discusses.

More specific sources can be found on Ephesus. The interdisciplinary work edited by Helmut Koester, *Ephesos Metropolis of Asia,* containing thirteen essays in total, presents a detailed examination of the city from various perspectives.[^60] None of the essays, however, are exclusively about women. The existence of the temple of Artemis and Imperial Cult temples in the city make Ephesus a very important religious centre, even before Christianity, and most of the essays in Koester's volume deal with the former two. Peter Scherrer's essay presents an adequate opportunity for one to become acquainted with the city. The author visits the landmarks of the city chronologically, which serves to guide the reader through the archaeological remains. The author also studies the development of the city, which is especially helpful for understanding the Romanization of Ephesus.[^61]

Michael White's article focuses more on the social transformation of the city in Imperial times.[^62] White rightly argues that due to a variety of factors, the Romanization process is different for each region and city.[^63] In order to analyze Ephesus' Romanization, White breaks down these factors as follows: "local demographics, urban

[^63]: Ibid, pp. 32-33.
building programs and immigrants as motivating forces of urban development”.64 These factors contribute considerably to our understanding of the social context of the city. White does not, however, explicitly argue how these factors contributed to the Romanization of the city. This said, he does state that further archaeological work on the city will enable us to determine how Romanization worked within different social layers.65 Firstly, the author comments on the population of Ephesus during the second and third centuries AD. Considering the low birth rates and high death rates of the time, he concludes that a large number of immigrants explain the city’s population estimates. Some of these immigrants would bring their Roman culture with them and help the process of Romanization.66 Next, White provides a table showing the sources of finance for the building and renovation of the city’s notable buildings during the second and third centuries AD.67 In the first century emperors and provincial officials were mostly responsible for these building works, but in later centuries, with the encouragement of the emperors, citizens of Ephesus who have moved to the city from elsewhere began to donate their wealth to the upkeep of the city.68 White reinforces his argument about the presence of immigrants in the city with inscriptive evidence.69 The author proves the existence of a ‘foreign’ community, and, therefore, a ‘foreign’ culture in the city. It is clear that this community was comfortably integrated into Ephesus and the city embraced its culture. White does not examine any physical evidence of how Greek and Roman culture was incorporated in the life of the city. Examination of the domestic spaces would be extremely useful in this regard, and will form part of the following chapter.

Ephesus was home to various different religions. The Imperial Cult of the Roman emperor was one of these, and holds an important place in the city’s history, and is the focus of Friesen’s book Twice Neokoros.70 In relation to our study, the book is intriguing due its discussion of high priestesses. Women’s participation in religious life before Christianity may shed greater light on their place in the Christian congregation. The

64 Ibid, p. 40.
65 Ibid, p. 64.
66 Ibid, pp. 40-49.
67 Ibid, pp. 51-54.
68 Ibid, pp. 54-56.
69 Ibid, p. 57. White also provides an appendix with his inscriptive evidence grouped according to the categories he has organised.
acceptance of women into the priesthood of the cult\textsuperscript{71} is telling of their religious responsibilities and their wider social identity.

The main focus of Guy Rogers’s \textit{The Sacred Identity of Ephesos} is a foundation set up by a man named C. Vibius Salutaris, and is known to us by the honorary statues and inscriptions dedicated to his name.\textsuperscript{72} The appendices of Rogers’s work contain a Greek text and English translation of the very lengthy inscription along with useful information about the context of the inscription. Salutaris’ foundation may not be of direct relevance to us, but Rogers’s research is helpful in that it offers insight into a practice that was common in Ephesian society during our period of interest.

When looking for literary references to Ephesus in early Christian sources, the texts from the New Testament are the first which come to mind. The passage detailing the Riot of the Silversmiths (Acts 19:21-41) is probably the most famous Ephesus passage in the New Testament. The letter to Ephesus among the seven churches of Asia in Revelation (Revelation 2:1-7), or Paul’s letter to the Ephesians are of comparable fame. Engaging with material evidence in addition will illuminate the contents of writings such as those from the New Testament more clearly.

Helmut Koester’s\textsuperscript{73} discussion of the place of Christianity in Ephesus’ history takes a similar strategy to our own, i.e. looking for every text written from or to the city.\textsuperscript{74} His work is simply a collection of the texts which happen to be geographically related to Ephesus, and so is of minimal use to us.

The second volume of \textit{The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting} investigates the Greco-Roman setting of Acts.\textsuperscript{75} Whereas the first chapters of the book follow a verse by verse timeline of Paul’s journey through Acts, later chapters focus on more particular issues. In the “Asia” chapter Paul Trebilco concentrates on Ephesus as the host city to some important events in Acts.\textsuperscript{76} Much like our next chapter, Trebilco investigates the events from Acts that are associated with Ephesus,\textsuperscript{77} and proceeds to contextualise each of these with archaeological evidence. For instance, he examines the connection

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, pp. 81-85.
\textsuperscript{72} Guy M. Rogers, \textit{The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City} (London: Routledge, 1991).
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, pp. 302-311.
between the magicians who burnt their books in public in Acts 19:18-20 and the history of magical practice in Ephesus. Trebilco’s chapter proves to be the most comprehensive essay in the collection, and while the focus of the essay may not be on women, it does present a great example of the approach that we will adopt in this thesis.

G. H. R. Horsley’s article, “The Inscriptions of Ephesus and the New Testament,” shares our aim of encouraging the use of non-literary sources in New Testament scholarship. Horsley’s main sources of evidence are inscriptions from the cities of Asia Minor, especially Ephesus. As Horsley points out, however, while still a useful resource, Die Inschriften von Ephesos does not contain sufficient data on the stones, or dating for the inscriptions. Horsley draws attention to the Riot of the Silversmiths passage from Acts 19 in relation to particular inscriptions. He points out one particularly striking point – the rarity of Jewish material in the inscriptions. There is very little inscriptive evidence that can be classed as Jewish, and no synagogue has been found in the city. This issue makes it harder to comment on the Riot passage from Acts in relation to the size of the Jewish congregation in Ephesus. The riot passage from Acts suggests a considerably sized Jewish congregation; however, as Horsley indicates, “the striking point is the dearth of the material evidence for Judaism.” There are other possible connections between passages from the New Testament and the inscriptions from Ephesus. For example, there is a long inscription listing fishermen who built a fishery toll, and some of the names from this inscription also appear in the New Testament. Moreover, Horsley argues that the reason for Paul’s ship not stopping at Ephesus on the way to Jerusalem in Acts 20:13-16 may be the unsuitable condition of the harbour due to a build-up of silt. Horsley also refers to an inscription dated to between 350 and 300 BC, which states the condemning of some men from Sardis for disturbing a festival in Artemis’ honour, which he relates to the riot of Silversmiths in Acts. Horsley believes that it may depict those whom the rioters believe to have disrespected Artemis. Horsley’s method of approaching Greco-Roman evidence from the city and relevant early Christian texts captures the very essence of our project.

80 Ibid, pp. 118-119.
81 Ibid, pp. 121-122.
82 Ibid, p. 125.
83 Ibid, p. 132.
84 Ibid, p. 135.
85 Ibid, pp. 155-156.
Jerome Murphy-O’Connor’s *St. Paul’s Ephesus* studies both ancient texts which mention Ephesus and Paul’s time in Ephesus.86 The first part sees the author compile the passages of every text which mentions the city. For each passage Murphy-O’Connor gives a brief introduction and offers a discussion of its context. This first part is actually a very helpful resource for reading about ancient texts related to the city all in one place, with the added benefit of introductory information. The first part of Murphy-O’Connor’s study does not aim to undertake any deep scholarly examination. The second part of the book tracks the footsteps of Paul on his journey to Ephesus and during his time there. The archaeology which the book promises to engage with is disappointingly limited to what reads like a tourist guide of the buildings which were standing in Paul’s day. The author gives the reader a tour of the city as Paul might have experienced it. The following section tells the story of Paul’s days in Ephesus, again relying heavily on the early Christian writings. Presenting the archaeological or Greco-Roman literary evidence in isolation from the Christian evidence is not enough. Both types of evidence need to be compared in terms of their common characteristics so that any consistency between them can be revealed.

*Christ-Believers in Ephesus* is an example of a book which is too heavily invested in methodology, and lacks sufficient evidence.87 The author, Mikael Tellbe, focuses mainly on identity issues of the early Christian community in Ephesus. Solely focusing on early Christian writings, the author spends a long time addressing the different aspects of identification of the Christian community. All the Ephesus-related early Christian writings are cross referenced with one another in order to define the ‘Christians’ (a term he avoids) in the city. However, none of the evidence is placed into a context or supported with archaeological evidence. This is problematic, as what texts state about a certain group of people may simply not be enough to explain why they make such a statement. These texts belong to a certain culture, much like the people they were written to. Tellbe’s attempt to devote his entire book to methodology means that he fails to engage the texts and people with the culture they were born into.

The comprehensive work of Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*, stands out due to its attempt to present the Christian community in Ephesus within its context.88 Trebilco begins his work, which exhaustively analyzes the Ephesus-related early Christian writings, with a context chapter. The reader is

88 Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*.
introduced to the various aspects of the city of Ephesus, and is informed about its social world. Therefore, it becomes easier to digest the following chapters where he examines the letters of Paul, other texts from the New Testament, and the letters of Ignatius. The author makes a concerted effort to comment on the texts in terms of how they address their recipients. The early Christian writings he examines are interpreted partly with the help of other Christian writings of the time, and the author proceeds to investigate the relationship between the texts and their audience by understanding the cultural norms of their society. Chapter 11 of Trebilco’s book specifically focuses on the role of women among the audience of the Pastoral Epistles, the Johannine Letters and Revelation.99 Passages such as those from the first letter to Timothy about women’s teaching (1 Timothy 2:8-15)90 and the order to widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16)91 are prominent in his investigation. With regard to the latter issue, the author briefly mentions a Greco-Roman context for widows’ lives. However, his evidence is not enough to draw the reader into its original world. Even in his efforts to engage the text with its context, Trebilco only looks to the text itself to identify its context. His thorough reading of the texts helps with this identification, but it is obvious that local Greco-Roman evidence would be of assistance in order to understand not only the texts’ Christian contexts, but their Ephesian contexts as well. The absence of extant Greco-Roman evidence damages the operability of the argument, but does not completely destroy it, and Trebilco’s work stands closer than many works to the goal of accurately locating a text in its context.

The short letter to Ephesus in the second chapter of Revelation is analyzed by Colin Hemer, along with the six other cities mentioned in the chapter.92 As there are seven cities to investigate, the author only briefly introduces Ephesus.93 He attempts to relate the phrases from the letter to their Ephesian background. Hemer discovers Jewish elements in the letter, and stresses persistently that Ephesus had a considerable Jewish congregation, mostly presenting evidence from the ancient historian Josephus.94 The ‘tree of life’ metaphor in particular reinforces his argument. Hemer seems to insist particularly hard on a large Jewish community in Ephesus, despite having what is arguably an equal amount of Greco-Roman and Jewish evidence. The weight he places on such a minimal amount of evidence seems wholly unwarranted.

90 Ibid, p. 511.
91 Ibid, p. 523.
93 Ibid, pp. 35-36.
94 Ibid, pp. 36-41.
Bruce Malina and John Pilch make a very good effort to use the social world of Ephesus to examine a text.\textsuperscript{95} However, they include several cultural generalizations in their argument. Advocating that Paul is a Mediterranean, and, therefore, must have been “spontaneous”,\textsuperscript{96} and that Greeks in Ephesus were “Hellenized Jews”\textsuperscript{97} even though Acts verse 19:17 specifically expresses that a man with an evil spirit was known to both Jews and Greeks, proves that they are not engaged in contextual evidence, but reverting to inexact stereotypes. There is no data that such assertions can be grounded in. We cannot know what made Paul think in the way that he did, and, moreover, cannot link it to his Mediterranean background. We also cannot ignore the presence of “Greek” people in the city, particularly among Paul’s addressees. The authors’ aim to keep the community in Ephesus within the boundaries of Jewish tradition stretches to the reception of the temple of Artemis in the community detailed in 19:24-27. It has been suggested that the disturbance arose among the tradesmen who built silver Artemis shrines, because Paul’s presence and mission in the city were recognized “as a political act, a challenge to political religion (like the political religious temple and its activities in Israel)”.\textsuperscript{98} The temple of Artemis and its religion did not have a political character. The temple was surely one of the main features of the city, which would strengthen its political power in the area; however, the structure itself was not employed for political activities. After its highly honoured religious significance, the temple is mostly mentioned in relation to its financial means. The temple was entrusted with the money of the people of Ephesus, and even people from all over the world; it effectively acted as a bank.\textsuperscript{99} The temple and its land were considered sacred, and served as a place of asylum for those who sought to flee punishment. The expansion of these lands may have caused trouble for authorities in this regard,\textsuperscript{100} but this aside, politics was a concern for neither the temple nor the priests. Moreover, Demetrius in 19:24-27 clearly emphasizes that Paul is not good for their business. Even if the power

\textsuperscript{95} Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, \textit{Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p. 133. The authors think Paul would have accepted the invitation to stay longer in the synagogue in 19:20 if the offer had been insisted upon. According to the authors, since Mediterranean culture is inclined to follow spur of the moment decisions, Paul, as a member of the culture, must have embodied such characteristics.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, p. 137. The authors assert that the hearers of the incident included seven sons of a Jewish priest, Sceva (19:11-20), and included only Israelites, because the word “Greek” in verse 17 means “Greeks who were Hellenized and assimilated in various degrees to the customs of Hellenism.”
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, p. 140.
and authority of the temple caused some ripples in the political sphere of the city, this
does not mean that it was a political centre.

F. F. Bruce’s use of Greco-Roman evidence in his commentary on Acts is
tangential to the text’s interpretation. Bruce only mentions the history of Ephesus, the
Artemis cult and temple, and the theatre briefly, and does not provide any
social analysis that would enable this data to shed light on the commentary of the text.
He briefly mentions the office of Asiarchs, and states that Acts 19:31, wherein Asiarchs
urge Paul not to go into the theatre, indicates that Paul befriended some people of high
rank. Historical information without proper social analysis or limited social
background does not provide the required context for the examination of the texts.
Unfortunately we find less and less of the ‘real’ Ephesus in such commentaries. Ernst
Haenchen describes Ephesus with just one sentence in his commentary on Acts,
and does not pursue the great opportunity to use an inscription from the first century
AD, detailing a certain Demetrius, possibly because he could not find evidence for silver
shrines of Artemis in Ephesus. The reason for Haenchen not consulting Greco-Roman
evidence as much as one may hope may be his opinion about the historical reality of the
riot in the theatre. He finds the disappearance of Demetrius after Acts 19:28 odd, since
Demetrius is the one who organized the riot. Also the rapid and unified intervention of
the Asiarchs in Acts 19:31 does not seem plausible to the author. Still, to find a
situation odd is not a reason to avoid constructing a background for it, especially when
there is data provided about its whereabouts. In other texts from the New Testament
where Ephesus is mentioned, such as the first letter to Timothy, the tendency to utilize
Greco-Roman evidence unfortunately declines.

Scholarship offers a mixed bag in terms of our expectations when it comes to
Ephesus. The field of archaeology offers one of the most valuable banks of evidence we
have for local data from the city. The inscriptions offer great insight into the individual
voices which cannot be heard through anything else. Works on other kinds of material,

103 Ibid, pp. 373-374.
104 Ibid, p. 376.
107 Ibid, p. 543.
such as building ruins, mostly provide only technical interpretations. These works may not propose a deep social analysis in every case, but there are some opportunities available to obtain information about daily life. Scholarship on the history of the Roman Empire, on the other hand, fails to pay due attention to the eastern provinces of the Empire. The works repeat what ancient authors wrote on or about the cities, including Ephesus, and neglect to portray the blended character of the area's Greco-Roman culture. Ephesus' famous features are mentioned specifically of course, such as the temple of Artemis, or the Imperial Cult, but this is not sufficient to rebuild the social life of the city. The field historians seem to have chosen to mention the most apparent characteristics of the city, and associate other characteristics wrongly with Roman culture. The early Christian literary evidence focuses mostly around Paul and his journey to the city. His letters, along with other Christian writings related to the city, are examined in detail in order to establish the social context for their time, and identify their audiences. However, in order to establish this information, not much has been utilised other than what the texts have to say themselves. The archaeology of the city, and the existing culture of the community, are often missed in the course of argument, or not fully made use of.

**The Locality Argument**

What “local” means for our thesis cannot be answered as short as ‘Ephesus’. Yes, the city is indeed our focal point. The selection of early Christian writings utilised in this thesis have been generated from their relationship to the city of Ephesus. However, neither all our early Christian nor all our Greco-Roman evidence is completely and exclusively from Ephesus. While we have tried as far as possible to select sources originating as close as possible to the city, we have had to expand our scope to Asia Minor (and in some cases to other regions) more broadly on numerous occasions. This originates from the need of finding more evidence and the necessity of interpreting those evidence, because none of the literary or archaeological evidence can be explained without any context. Therefore, “local” is being understood here as including both Ephesus itself and its surrounding area.

What, then, is the reason for our insistence on restricting our study geographically? As we have emphasized already, the hybrid nature of Greco-Roman culture carries great importance for our argument. We will discuss several times in this thesis that Ephesus retained much of its Greek culture throughout its history, and eventually created an indigenous mixture of Greek and Roman cultures. We assert that this mixture influences greatly how we interpret our Ephesian early Christian writings.
Whether it is literary or archaeological, evidence provides the most accurate information possible when interpreted within the culture it was conceived in. Early Christian writings that are related to Ephesus, therefore, should be deciphered in light of Greco-Roman culture.

Bruce Winter is perhaps the best example of a scholar who takes this approach.\textsuperscript{111} The author has closely studied the ancient literary evidence, particularly Roman law, in order to better perceive Greco-/Roman women. His intention, however, is not only to investigate the lives of early Christian women, but also introduce a new phenomenon to scholarship. Winter asserts that women who were warned and criticized about their head coverings (1 Corinthians 11:2-16) or their elaborate hair and dress styles (1 Timothy 2:8-15) in the New Testament, are the ‘new women’ and ‘new wives’ who are the pioneers of a new movement, wishing to leave behind the old ways of living as a Roman woman.\textsuperscript{112} Winter believes that this group grew over time. Winters examination of the primary sources and close attention to the Pauline communities are admirable, however, we are not in total agreement with him. In particular, his attention to the veiling issue in the first letter to the Corinthians (11:2-16) is an accomplished instance of engaging a text with its context.\textsuperscript{113} Winter focuses on the meaning and usage of the veil in Roman society, and associates Paul’s statements with the evidence. However, his employment of too many western literary sources causes him to read the texts with a skewed perspective. Winter associates any kind of abnormal women’s behaviour in the early Christian writings with the influence of the new, more independent Roman woman movement. He mentions works of western origin such as those of Seneca, Cicero, Juvenal and Horace in his interpretation of early Christian writings related to Asia Minor. This approach dramatically underestimates the difference between Greek and Roman culture. When arguing in favour of Romanization, one must adequately consider the degree to which Roman culture actually impacted Greek society. In the next chapter we will suggest that Ephesus had not completely adapted to Roman customs in its domestic buildings, and, indeed, preserved a great deal of Greek traditions. While we appreciate Winter’s social reading of the early Christian texts, therefore, we do not find convincing his argument for a growing number of unscrupulous women in society in Asia Minor, and particularly in Ephesus.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, p. 78.
II. The Subject - The Women

As we have stated several times now, the history of Greco-Roman women and early Christian women in Ephesus will be our main concern. As our subject is not one which the field of archaeology can offer precise evidence for (other than the inscriptive evidence which offers individual case studies), in this section we will only pursue scholarship pertaining to the history of women in the Roman Empire and Christian history. We will mention of the most important of the many books on women in early Christian history, paying particular attention to those we will employ the most in our thesis.

Eve D’ambra’s *Roman Women* is one of the first introductory works which comes to mind. The chapters are focused on general issues affecting Roman women, such as marriage, legal status, public life, laws, daily occurrences, and cultural norms. One of these aspects in particular attracts our attention. D’ambra mentions a mummy portrait with the phrase “Hermione Grammatike”, written in Greek, from Roman Egypt. Obviously, Egypt is far from our place of interest, but still, this evidence is a valuable reference for our chapter on female teachers, which unfortunately suffers from a shortage of evidence. Although the book is about 'Roman' women, it does not solely concentrate on Rome or Italy, but includes various examples from all over the Empire. Archaeological evidence, such as reliefs, portraits and statues of women, as well as literary evidence, provide data from different cities. However, because the book is a very compact source, it does not provide detailed information about any particular province.

Judith Evans Grubbs’ *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire* is a comprehensive and systematic sourcebook on legal issues such as marriage, divorce, and widowhood. Evans Grubbs gathers data from literary evidence such as the *Rules of Ulpian* and *Justinian’s Digest*, and organizes it thematically. In addition to Roman law, non-legal sources provide information on certain aspects of marriage, which enable us to comment on issues such as the situation of non-citizens in the provinces of the Roman Empire. Similarly to the institution of guardianship in the western Roman Empire, where a woman needed a *tutela*, a guardian, for her legal and financial business, non-Roman female citizens (*peregrini*) in the eastern Roman Empire were under the protection of a *kyrios*. This *kyrios* would be her father if the woman was

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117 The form of guardianship varied according to different circumstances, Ibid, pp. 23-24.
unmarried and her husband if she was (unlike their western peers). If she was widowed it would be her son or closest male relative. In the western Empire, the husband was generally not his wife’s guardian, and in the case of his death, the guardian was not necessarily a relative. The non-citizens are also mentioned in Grubbs’ work in terms of what their rights are in marriage, but there are no specific sections on any particular province apart from Roman Egypt. Still, the absence of Ephesian legislation does not take away the value of the book, as it has great value as a sourcebook which contains legal texts about women.

As for our historical sources, we have aimed to stay close to Asia Minor as far as possible. Women’s History and Ancient History, edited by Sarah B. Pomeroy, covers a wide variety of topics including marriage in Athenian Law, the female body in classical Greek science, women in Spartan revolutions, and Hippocratic gynaecological therapy and theory. Cynthia B. Patterson’s article, “Marriage and the Married Woman in Athenian Law,” presents not only the legal aspect of marriage but also the moral and cultural perception of marriage as a unity. With these factors taken into account, more can be learnt about the characteristics of the society, as well as the expectations of the lawmakers. Athens is not particularly close to Ephesus, however, it was the centre of Greek culture, which contributed richly to Ephesian culture. Moreover, the author’s usage of ancient literary sources provides more local data and brings the work closer to the cities of Athens and Ephesus.

Another examination of an area close to Ephesus is provided by Mary Taliaferro Boatwright’s article “Plancia Magna of Perge: Women’s Roles and Status in Roman Asia Minor”. The essay is of great value, presenting inscriptional evidence of a city of Asia Minor. The work examines the official status, wealth, family relations, and personal relations of Plancia Magna, a member of a notable family of the city, and successfully reflects these elements upon her society. The abundant information about her provides the opportunity to learn more about the lives of elite women. As a Roman citizen, Plancia Magna was supposed to have a tutor, but as the author infers from the evidence, she was in charge of her own estate. This freedom may be a result of ius liberorum

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118 Ibid, pp. 34-35.
(right of children – a free woman who had three children had the right not to have a guardian). This case is extremely valuable because of the evidence of the freedom she had in her life.\textsuperscript{122} Plancia Magna provides a rare example of a powerful woman living a publicly visible life.

Representation of Ephesian women in secondary scholarship is not something we encounter very often. G. M. Rogers's article is a rare exception.\textsuperscript{123} As the author states, male benefactors are mostly responsible for the ‘building boost’ started at the beginning of the second century AD in Ephesus. However, Rogers focuses on the women who are named in building inscriptions. Women in Ephesus are depicted in several different forms in building inscriptions, where the identity of donors are stated. In addition to priestesses, the inscriptions list benefactors' wives, and daughters or wives of \textit{asiarchs}.\textsuperscript{124} The status of the wife of an \textit{asiarch}, or any other office title holder for that matter, is a broad subject, and will be dealt with in our social life chapter. Rogers believes that women took an active role in repairing and building structures, and are not simply awarded their husbands’ title. The foundation for this argument is the fact that the inscriptions do not state who donated what percentage of the gift (apart from in very rare cases).\textsuperscript{125} also in addition to the evidence available for women acting independently of any male.\textsuperscript{126} Details that Rogers does not discuss, such as the wives of office holders and the representation of women in joint dedications with their male relatives, will be discussed further in the chapters below.\textsuperscript{127}

Philip B. Payne analyzes almost every New Testament text about women.\textsuperscript{128} Archaeological evidence does not play a major role in Payne's work, although the author does refer to many secondary studies where archaeological evidence has been consulted. The literary evidence Payne consults is heavily concentrated on Jewish sources. Therefore, subjects such as women's head coverings are almost always examined in the light of the Septuagint.\textsuperscript{129} This approach leads to misleading conclusions about the early Christian writings. We argue that the author does not present a valid argument about equality in marriage, as men and women were not

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid, pp. 256-257.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid, pp. 216-217.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid, p. 218.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Ibid, pp. 221-222.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Please see pp. 155-159.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Philip B. Payne, \textit{Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid, pp. 117-137.
\end{footnotes}
perceived as equal in marriage by the early Christian authors.\textsuperscript{130} We will also challenge Payne's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 on the matter of head coverings. It will be discussed that both Paul's motivation for asking men and women to un/cover their heads, and the action he actually desires are not as Payne suggests.\textsuperscript{131} Payne's point of view on female teachers will also be discussed.\textsuperscript{132}

Osiek, MacDonald, and Tulloch’s \textit{A Woman’s Place} studies the sphere within which women operated the most in early Christian communities – house churches.\textsuperscript{133} Archaeological artefacts are presented in this work in order to investigate women’s lives not only as members or managers of the household, but also as functioning parts of the Christian community. However, the authors’ attempt to place the house church in its setting does not reach an accurate conclusion. Particularly when examining the dynamics of the household in Roman society, the book relies too heavily on legal sources.\textsuperscript{134} Daily observance of laws was dramatically varied in different communities due to the presence of local laws. Therefore, “Roman” laws are not sufficient to enlighten us on the Greco-Roman communities studied in the book. It is not possible to comment on the condition of a household simply by looking at the legal age of marriage for girls, for example, or women’s legal rights after divorce. The authors also mention that the letter to the Ephesians may not be to the people of Ephesus, as some of the main manuscripts lack the words “in Ephesus”.\textsuperscript{135} While we should bear this in mind, the likelihood of the letter being connected to the city cannot be underestimated, and should not be disregarded.

While examining the letter to the Ephesians, the authors comment on the employment of Greco-Roman customs in early Christian writings. Osiek, MacDonald and Tulloch argue that Christian elements in a letter from the New Testament limit how far they borrow from Greco-Roman characteristics in their writing. This limit also prevents the early Christian community becoming assimilated into Greco-Roman society.\textsuperscript{136} We will argue, however, that the Christian characteristics serve a different

\textsuperscript{130} Please see pp. 105-110.
\textsuperscript{131} Please see pp. 164-169.
\textsuperscript{132} Please see pp. 177-182.
\textsuperscript{133} Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald with Janet H. Tulloch, \textit{A Woman’s Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, pp. 20-25.
\textsuperscript{135} Margaret Y. MacDonald, \textit{Colossians and Ephesians} (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008).
\textsuperscript{136} Osiek, MacDonald and Tulloch, \textit{A Woman’s Place}, p. 126.
purpose in the texts, and that the authors misinterpret the process of Christianization.\footnote{137}{Please see pp. 99-100.}

In her *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion*\footnote{138}{Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion: The Power of The Hysterical Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).} Margaret Y. MacDonald focuses on the perspective of pagan society on early Christian women and how pagans interacted with the customs of early Christianity. MacDonald’s literary evidence, which is not exclusively representative of the western Roman Empire, is extensive, but we disagree with some of her conclusions about how the usage of Greco-Roman customs in the early Christian writings might have been perceived by society. The author proposes that Paul’s advice to place the decision to divorce into the hands of an unbelieving spouse would lead to troubled households with unwilling Christian spouses, and that Greco-Roman society would perceive the early Christian community as a nuisance.\footnote{139}{Ibid, p. 192.}

We argue that early Christian authors employed Greco-Roman customs in their writings because they regarded these customs to be appropriate for the nascent early Christian community. Therefore, it is our opinion that Paul’s plan for the unbelieving spouse to be in charge of deciding whether a divorce should take place was intended to be in harmony with Greco-Roman society. This is not solely based upon a desire to please society, however, but to participate in Greco-Roman culture in a peaceful way.

Lynn H. Cohick aims to tell the story of Roman, Jewish, and Christian women from various social statuses in Greco-Roman society in her *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*.\footnote{140}{Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009).} In her section on marriage she discusses the legal side of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and concubines, with examples from the western Roman Empire.\footnote{141}{Ibid, pp. 100-106.} The monopoly of examples from the western side of the Empire is only broken with a few examples of marriage and divorce documents from Roman Egypt.\footnote{142}{Ibid, pp. 106-110.} The author here is caught by the same tempting error, and consults more sources of western origin and comments on texts of eastern origin. This, once again, provides the reader with a limited perspective. The author presents examples of female benefactors such as Eumachia\footnote{143}{Ibid, p. 294.} and Mamia\footnote{144}{Ibid, p. 296.} from Pompeii, and Metrodora of Chios.\footnote{145}{Ibid, p. 297.} For comparison she considers Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2) and Julia Theodora from Corinth.
The two women are mentioned in similar contexts in terms of their attempts to help to their people. However, if the author were to consult more examples of female benefactors that are closer to one another geographically she would be able to perform a deeper analysis of the early Christian examples.

Maintaining her assumptions about the context of early Christian writings from her earlier work, Cohick discusses Ephesians in detail in her commentary on the letter.\footnote{Lynn H. Cohick, \textit{Ephesians: A New Covenant Commentary} (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2013).} Similarly to many other scholars, Cohick mainly consults Roman literary sources, neglecting somewhat those of Greco-Roman origin. Additionally, in her discussion of Ephesians 5:21-32, the passage where household relations are discussed, Cohick argues that the author of the letter does not mirror their surrounding culture, and treats man and woman more equally to what was the norm. She suggests that the author's intention here was to prevent assimilation of the early Christian community into Greco-Roman society.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 127-142.} On this issue, we fundamentally disagree with Cohick.\footnote{Please see p. 101.}

We argue that early Christian texts borrowed elements from their Greco-Roman environment, and regarded the married couple as socially unequal. It is not logical to assume that the early Christian authors prevented assimilation by deliberately avoiding behaviour which mirrored that of their surrounding culture.

Minna Shkul is another author who has embarked upon the mission to explore the letter to the Ephesians and the community behind the letter.\footnote{Minna Shkul, \textit{Reading Ephesians} (London: T&T Clark International, 2009).} The author dedicates two chapters to "constructing" and "legitimating" the identity of the Ephesian Christians. Her attempt to interpret the social ideology of the letter lacks engaging practical evidence, however, Shkul aims to operate within a theoretical framework.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 51-85.} We will question in the course of the thesis Shkul’s assertion about the motives of early Christian authors to implement different cultural norms to those of their surrounding Greco-Roman culture.\footnote{Please see pp. 101-102.} Shkul argues that by providing better social standards for wives Christianity gave the women "something to feel good about".\footnote{Shkul, \textit{Reading Ephesians}, p. 209.} While we argue that early Christian authors were employing Greco-Roman customs in their writings, we will also argue this would undermine the efforts of early Christian authors to build a distinct early Christian community.
The New Testament passages about women constitute a considerable amount of text. However, some of them have been the focus of discussion more than others, such as the head covering instructions in the first letter to the Corinthians (11:2-16). Anthony Thiselton’s commentary\(^\text{153}\) seems to appreciate the intensity of the subject. The author primarily focuses on the different usage and meaning of the word κεφαλή\(^\text{154}\). Thiselton bases every step of his argument on this term, and concludes that its multiple meanings lie behind proper interpretation of the passage. Thiselton considers the usage and removal of the veil by women, as well as the shaving of all of one’s hair in Greco-Roman culture. He examines the symbolism of these actions and treats the Corinthian passages accordingly. Another passage about women from the New Testament, the first letter to Timothy 2:8-15, which focuses particularly on women’s adorning, and the prohibition of women’s teaching, has been examined by Philip H. Towner. Towner attributes the concerns of the author about women’s adornments to the inappropriate dressing of the ‘new’ Roman women,\(^\text{155}\) apparently mimicking Bruce Winter’s argument. The ‘new Roman woman’ is Winter’s assignation, and while Towner refers to Winter’s examination of the primary sources, he does not examine them himself. The same happens with the case of the prohibition of women’s teaching. Similarly, Towner attributes the prohibition of women’s teaching to the behaviour of promiscuous ‘new’ Roman women who have become more publicly visible, and perhaps more outspoken. The author of 1 Timothy thought that it was necessary to stop the situation before women wanted to teach (and, therefore, have authority over) men.\(^\text{156}\)

Scholarship has approached the topic of early Christian women in Ephesus from many different perspectives. Archaeological sources present technical and occasionally social interpretations of the ruins of the city. Such archaeological investigation has provided the majority of local data from Ephesus. Archaeological remains constitute more native, more familiar, and perhaps more ‘real’ evidence. Studies of the history of the Roman Empire have significantly benefited from the fact that there are many archaeological remains in Ephesus, which constitute excellent primary evidence. Even though scholarship has generally concentrated on the religious elements of the city, and has referred largely to the different temples in Ephesus, there are individual efforts at more specific research. In studies of Christian history, the city has been approached


\(^{154}\) Ibid, pp. 812-823.

\(^{155}\) Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, pp. 208-209.

\(^{156}\) Ibid, p. 220.
mostly from studies of early Christian writings. Unfortunately, not enough effort has been made to engage this early Christian material with the local evidence from the city in order to analyze the social context of these writings.

In terms of women’s history in Greco-Roman society, there are various source books all richly supplied with literary evidence. From our point of view, these volumes are simply missing more localised data. This is also the case for scholarship on the history of Christian women.

III. Outline of the Chapters

We have seen that all of the scholarly works discussed above present some useful sources for both aspects of our research. However, most of them suffer from the absence of more local data focused on a particular city. In this respect, we believe our research will fill a significant gap in scholarship. Firstly, we aim to demonstrate that with more local evidence, early Christian texts and their social contexts can be interpreted much more clearly. Moreover, our research will provide more data on a city which holds a significant place in the history of early Christianity and Greco-Roman culture; a city which we believe has been distinctly neglected in scholarship on these subjects. We argue that the process of Romanization created an indigenous Greco-Roman culture in Ephesus, and that the hybrid nature of this culture should be considered when interpreting early Christian writings. We suggest that the Greco-Roman culture that is native to Ephesus will provide us with a different and clearer perspective than current scholarship has acquired thus far on the authorial intentions of the early Christian writings. In light of the Greco-Roman evidence native to Ephesus and the wider Asia Minor region, we will be able to trace common features and discrepancies between the Greco-Roman evidence and early Christian writings, and suggest that early Christian authors employed Greco-Roman cultural elements in their writings in order to build a nascent community.

In the third chapter of the thesis we will attempt to demonstrate a social history of Ephesus. From the ancient times to the settlement of the Roman Empire, the city’s past will help us to construct a background for our sources and it will reveal that the different aspects of Ephesus’ history (including the domestic, public, ancient, and imperial) will present evidence to support the idea of a native Greco-Roman culture in Ephesus. This chapter will also discuss the legal situation of the city, including the use of legal sources and the history of the temples of Ephesus.
Chapter four will treat the marital relationship between a man and woman and the respective places of the wife and husband in a Greco-Roman and early Christian marriage. The custom of marriage in Greco-Roman society will be examined not simply with evidence from wider Greco-Roman culture, but also with archaeological evidence from Ephesus. The local evidence will enable us to establish a firm stance on the subject of Christianization of Greco-Roman customs and the question of equality of husband and wife in early Christian marriage. We will argue against many scholars that early Christian authors employed elements from the Greco-Roman culture consciously and did not attempt to implement absolute equality between the married couple, as it was not the societal custom.

The fifth chapter on widows, virgins, and other single women focuses on their place in society in relation to their marital status. Our main concerns will be the notion of a distinct group in references to widows, the issues concerning their remarriage, and their reputation in early Christian writings. We will investigate literary and archaeological evidence from Ephesus on these women and will argue that Greco-Roman culture had a significant effect on early Christian authors referring to widows as a group. Moreover, we will consider why these authors were keen on widows or divorced women remarrying, and why especially younger widows gained such a bad reputation.

Women's social life will be studied from many different perspectives in chapter six. The appearance of women in public will comprise a major part of the chapter, as early Christian authors paid great attention to how a wife/woman should dress herself. The issue of head coverings in particular will be examined in detail in the light of archaeological and literary Greco-Roman sources. We will assert that the intended purposes of head covering for men and women in Greco-Roman society urged Paul to give different instructions to males and females in his first letter to the Corinthians. We will also argue against Winter's concept of 'new Roman women'. It will be suggested that improper selection of Greco-Roman/Roman evidence that is not linked to a specific location can lead to inaccurate conclusions about early Christian writings.

The activity of women's teaching will be analyzed in chapter seven. Actual reference to women's teaching is rare in the New Testament, and only concerns banning such action. However, we will also refer to other texts which we think relevant to the subject. Even though the references to teaching in early Christian writings concern public and religious gatherings, we will first investigate the act of women's
teaching in other contexts within Greco-Roman society. We will then argue that early Christian authors were more interested in a wife’s behaviour towards her husband in public than the actual act of teaching itself.
CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL HISTORY OF EPHESUS

Modern day Ephesus, consists only of ruins and ghosts of the past, its glory reliant solely on attracting visitors. However, in order to analyse the archaeological and literary data relevant for our project, we must visualize the times when Ephesus was a living, vibrant city. Our data dates from the second century BC to the second century AD. To analyse any kind of data properly, the initial step is to establish its context. In this section, we will try to present Ephesus as it was during the centuries from which our evidence comes. The ancient history of the city will help us reveal the hybrid nature of Ephesian culture. We will discuss the history of the city after Asia had become a Roman province and present our position on the complicated legal situation of the city. We will dedicate a section of this chapter to Ephesus' temples and explore their past, before examining of the city’s well preserved domestic buildings. Terrace House 2 in particular will provide us with a good example of the unique hybrid Greco-Roman culture of Ephesus.

Ephesus, Efes in Turkish, is close to a small town called Selçuk, part of İzmir (ancient Smyrna). The ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus lie between the slopes of Panayırdağ and Bülbüldağ, 3.6 km away from Selçuk and 6.5 km away from the sea.

In this chapter we will gather texts from different ancient sources that have information relevant to Ephesus and its history. Our intention is to establish a chronological order for the events presented to us by the ancient historians in order to better comprehend the history of the city.

I. Ancient History of the City

In our investigation of the ancient sources we will also be able to trace the behavioural patterns exhibited by the people of Ephesus over the years. The behavioural patterns we will reveal will complement the archaeological evidence to illuminate the blended Greco-Roman culture of Ephesus. Ultimately, we will assert that Ephesus developed its own interpretation of Greco-Roman culture.

Accessing Ephesus through the primary sources is not a straightforward task. No single source documents the entire history of the town during the period that we are interested in. Therefore, one ought to take into consideration the scattered evidence while reading through this section. What is important about all of the sources we will employ, such as Strabo's (61/63 BC-AD 24) Geography, and the writings of Plutarch...
(AD 46-120), Appian (AD 95-165), and Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79), is their period. These authors captured the history of Ephesus in the first century AD while living in the first or early second century AD. There is a danger when dealing with ancient sources that the reader will interpret them according to modern norms. We must also bear in mind that our sources are all roughly from before the time of Augustus, meaning that we are limited in terms of the time period for which we have literary evidence. Of course, utilising later sources is an option, but this approach would provide us with less accurate evidence. For this reason, archaeological evidence dated to our period of interest will be preferred over literary evidence in instances where the latter fails to satisfy.

Strabo’s Geography is one of the richest sources on the history of Ephesus. Strabo moves from place to place and discusses the history of various sites. The accounts are written in the first person, suggesting that he most probably travelled to the areas that he describes. His descriptions of the sites are extremely detailed, and we cannot rule out the possibility that he utilised another source. The work is a geographical encyclopaedia and consists of seventeen volumes. Strabo talks about many different parts of the world. Ionia is mentioned in the fourteenth book. The identity of the city’s founders remains a debated issue, but one theory suggests that it was the Amazons.

The Amazons were the female warriors believed to have lived in Anatolia (the name for the Asian part of modern Turkey). They were believed to have been the daughters of the god Ares (the god of war) and Harmonia. Strabo describes the Amazons as the earliest inhabitants of the city. He claims that “the Ephesians were fellow-inhabitants of the Smyrnaeans in ancient times, when Ephesus was also called Smyrna.” Therefore, before Ephesus was a major city, it was taken over by Smyrnaeans. “Smyrna was an Amazon who took possession of Ephesus; and hence the names both of the inhabitants and of the city, just as certain of the Ephesians were called Sisyrbitae after Sisyrbe.” Plutarch also writes that the Amazons had inhabited the city. In book four of his famous fourteen book work Moralia, Plutarch tries to explain Greek and Roman customs by posing and answering questions in the sections appropriately named Roman Questions and Greek Questions. In Greek Questions he says that “the Amazons sailed from the

157 Even though their founding of the city is not mentioned explicitly in the sources, it is generally assumed because the foundation of the Temple of Artemis is ascribed to them. For more information please see the section on the Temple of Artemis in this chapter.
158 Strabo, Geography, 14.1.4.
159 Ibid, 14.1.4
country of the Ephesians across to Samos when they were endeavouring to escape from Dionysus (the god of the grape harvest, winemaking and wine).”

The story of the foundation of the city by the Amazons relies partly on myths and very little literary evidence; there is no other material evidence that they were the actual founders of the city. Strabo reports from Pherecydes that Ephesus was occupied by Carians long before Androclus, the legitimate son of Codrus, king of Athens founded the city. Codrus was also the leader of the Ionian colonization, hence the Ionian royal seat was in Ephesus.

The city of Ephesus was inhabited both by Carians and by Leleges, but Androclus drove them out and settled the most of those who had come with him round the Athenaeum and the Hypelaeus, though he also included a part of the country situated on the slopes of Mt. Coressus.

We do not know what happened to those who were driven out of the city. Our knowledge, limited as it may be, only comes from literary evidence, as archaeology remains silent about this first city which Androclus founded. According to Strabo, when Androclus arrived in the city, there was a temple present there – the Temple of Artemis. Until the time of Croesus, the people remained the same as the ones who came with Androclus, until people from the mountain villages began to relocate to the area surrounding the temple. This situation continued until Alexander defeated Croesus and the administration of the city was conveyed by the Persians. A general of Alexander, Lysimachus (360-281 BC), decided to move the city away from the temple. He ordered the construction of a new city with walls and “named the city after his wife Arsinoe; the old name, however, prevailed.” There could have been several reasons why he wanted to relocate Ephesus away from the Artemision. The bay that the city was settled around was probably causing problems. The Cayster River was flowing into the sea, meaning that the change in the water level and the constant flow of clay that the river brought was a risk both for the temple and for public health. It should also not be ignored that as a new king, Lysimachus would have been aware of the love for Artemis deeply rooted in people’s hearts, making it no surprise that he wished to decentralise

163 Scherrer, “The City of Ephesos from the Roman Period to Late Antiquity,” p. 3.
the temple.\textsuperscript{165} However, the people of Ephesus did not share his enthusiasm for moving their city and certainly did not want to become the people of Arsinoe. Lysimachus prepared a plan and waited until heavy rains fell. One night when it was raining he ordered the blockage of all the sewer systems in the city; the next day the whole city was flooded. The Ephesians had no other choice than to move. After the death of Lysimachus the city was renamed Ephesus.\textsuperscript{166} By the time of the early second century BC, the Romans had attempted to take the city several times without success.

When the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Scipio defeated the Seleucid king, Antiochos III, Ephesus submitted to the reign of the king of Eumenes II, who sided with the Romans during the battle.\textsuperscript{167} From then on, Ephesus was under the control of the kings of Pergamon. The situation changed when the last king of Pergamon, Attalos III died in 133 BC without a legitimate heir. He left his personal wealth and his kingdom as an inheritance to the Roman people.\textsuperscript{168} After the death of Attalos III, Aristonichus, the illegitimate son of Eumenes, revolted against the Romans. However, the Ephesians supported the Romans during the conflict, meaning Aristonichus could not find support, and subsequently was imprisoned. He died while incarcerated. A certain Manius Aquilius came to the region as a consul and formed the boundaries of the Roman province of Asia in 129 BC.\textsuperscript{169} Under Roman administration the economic condition of the city developed considerably.\textsuperscript{170}

The city's geographical advantages provided opportunities to merchants. Its connection to the sea became more productive with the resources brought by the new management. The economic boom was not the only thing that arrived with the Romans, however, tax collectors, or publicani, were also part of the package. Their arbitrary demands and high rates of tax were extremely unpopular with the people. The publicani utilized the sacred lakes located at the mouth of the Caystros River and originally allocated to the temple, for their personal needs. The Ephesians responded by choosing an ambassador to send to Rome in order to find a solution to their

\textsuperscript{165} Zimmermann and Ladstätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos}, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{166} Strabo, \textit{Geography}, 14.1.21.
\textsuperscript{167} Zimmermann and Ladstätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos}, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{168} Strabo, \textit{Geography}, 13.4.2.
\textsuperscript{169} Ephesus had been a free city since coming under Pergamene rule and had retained this status with the formation of the Roman province of Asia. For more information please see Rogers, \textit{The Sacred Identity of Ephesos}, p. 3, fn. 9.
\textsuperscript{170} Strabo, \textit{Geography}, 14.1.38.
situation. They sent the famous geographer Artemidorus to the Senate, and he “got the lakes back for the goddess”, prohibiting the publicani from profiting from them.171

However, the people's impatience with the ruthless taxes continued. Because of this, the Ephesians offered no resistance when King Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontos took over control of the city. On the contrary, he was welcomed by the frustrated people suffering under unmerciful Roman rule. The Ephesians welcomed this new leader and did not hesitate to show their hatred for their former ruler.172

As Appian tells us, the Ephesians, encouraged by Mithridates, began to massacre the Romans living among them. In 88 BC anyone with Italian blood, be they man, woman, child, slave, or free was killed on sight. Mithridates was ruthless against his enemies, as were the Ephesians, even though their “enemies” once were their fellow citizens. Among his many books about war history, Appian (AD 95-165) allocates Mithridates an entire book. He says that Mithridates issued secret orders to the cities and towns that he was at war with, including Ephesus;173 “The Ephesians tore away the fugitives, who had taken refuge in the temple of Artemis, and were clasping the images of the goddess, and slew them.”174 The temple priests agreed to cooperate with Mithridates and shoot arrows to kill people from the roof of the temple. They were promised that all the land as far as the arrows fell would be designated as sacred.175 This excessive attitude of the Ephesians was treated harshly. After Mithridates left the city the Ephesians wanted to side with the Romans again, and killed an officer of Mithridates. However, this action did not suffice to prove that they had actually submitted to Mithridates out of fear. Sulla, a general from Rome, did not believe their excuses, and drove Mithridates out of Asia. Not only was Ephesus ordered to pay five years’ worth of taxes at once in addition to the cost of the war, but the city also lost its freedom in 84 BC.176

The politically and socially unstable situation was settled when Publius Servilius Isauricus gave Ephesus back its status and freedom (46-44 BC). At the time, the city was experiencing other problems as well as losing its freedom; sea trade was interrupted because of pirates. The economy was highly affected because the tradesmen were not able to use the most fruitful trade routes.

173 Ibid, 4.22.
174 Ibid, 4.23.
175 Strabo, Geography, 14.1.23.
176 Appian, Roman History; Mithridatic Wars, 9.61-62.
Figure 1. Map of Ephesus (adapted from Zimmermann and Ladstätter, *Wall Painting in Ephesos, 2011*)
This was resolved when Pompey defeated the pirates in 67 BC. The city was now at peace. The critical event of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey in 49 BC luckily did not have any negative effect on Ephesus. After his victory over Pompey, Caesar visited Ephesus in 48 BC. During his visit, Caesar introduced some changes to the tax system. He reduced the amount of tax the city was paying and completely changed the collection system. His new system would eliminate the publicani; instead, the tax would be collected by the community itself and would be submitted to the officer in the region. Caesar was honoured by a statue in Ephesus for saving people from the hands of the unmerciful tax collectors.\textsuperscript{177} The atmosphere became unstable again, however, after the assassination of Caesar (44 BC). His murderers, Brutus and Cassius, took advantage of the chaos surrounding Rome and fled to Greece to gather an army. They battled against Antony, a general of Caesar who now wished to control the Republic, and Octavian, Caesar's adoptive heir, in Philippi. The assassins were defeated here. After this victory, Antony came to Ephesus. The Ephesians, who supported Brutus and Cassius when they were massing an army welcomed Antony very warmly. Plutarch captures the enthusiasm of the citizens very closely in his \textit{Life of Anthony} and reports that “women arrayed like Bacchus and men and boys like Satyrs and Pans, led the way before him, and the city was full of ivy and thyrsus-wands and harps and pipes and flutes.”\textsuperscript{178}

In his \textit{Parallel Lives}, Plutarch not only writes about an influential person, he also pairs this person with someone from his time and makes a comparison afterwards, hence the name. He dramatizes the influence of Anthony over the city of Ephesus. The Ephesians were once again welcoming another man into their city, hoping that he would be a just and merciful leader and that he would tolerate their former support for his enemies. However, their hopes were in vain. Antony, who came to Ephesus to establish a base for his opposition against Octavian, did not condone the city's actions. He made them pay nine years of tax in two years.\textsuperscript{179} Antony also doubled the sacred refugee area of the temple of Artemis which had formerly reached just beyond the stadium, thanks to the arrows of Mithridates. The new area included a section of the city where freed criminals could act as they liked, without having to seek asylum around the temple. This left a section of the city defenceless to criminals which

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{179} Appian, \textit{Roman History; Civil Wars}, 5.4-5.
inevitably brought more turmoil.\textsuperscript{180} Antony spent the winter of 33/32 BC in Ephesus with Cleopatra, who had previously been Caesar's lover. They were joined there by "eight hundred ships of war with merchant vessels. Of which Cleopatra furnished two hundred."\textsuperscript{181} However, in spite of their extensive preparations Octavian won the battle of Actium in 31 BC. Octavian "proceeded to punish the city-states, levying money from them and depriving them of the limited authority over their citizens which had hitherto rested with their assemblies."\textsuperscript{182} Even though the work of Cassius Dio (AD 150-235) is extensive, he does not neglect details in his eighty books of \textit{Roman History}. However, although he mentions some cities which remained safe, he does not cite Ephesus. According to Rogers the city recovered unharmed from the battle of Actium and allegedly remained free. Rogers uses inscriptions as evidence, however, he does not provide a text. It is possible that Cassius Dio was unaware of the situation in Ephesus or was misinformed. The inscriptions would provide us with more accurate information.

In 21 BC Octavian (now Augustus) revitalized the Republic to form the Empire, and Asia was a \textit{provincia populi Romani} again.\textsuperscript{183}

\section*{II. The Principate}

The time of Augustus (27 BC - AD 14) was a time of economic growth in Ephesus. By becoming the capital of the province, Ephesus became one of the most important cities in the region. Becoming the centre of provincial administration made the city more appealing to tradesmen. The design of the city also reveals the process of Romanisation. Some of the most important buildings in the city were constructed in the Augustan-Tiberian period, such as the Upper/State Agora\textsuperscript{184} and the Terrace Houses.\textsuperscript{185} The look of the city has also changed due to natural catastrophes. During the time of Tiberius (AD 14-37) a severe earthquake hit the city.\textsuperscript{186} Nevertheless, the development which started with Augustus reached a peak during the time of the Flavian Dynasty (AD 69-96). Many luxurious building constructions or renovations were completed during

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\textsuperscript{180} Strabo, \textit{Geography}, 14.1.23.
\textsuperscript{181} Plutarch, \textit{Life of Antony}, 56.1.
\textsuperscript{183} Rogers, \textit{The Sacred Identity of Ephesos}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{184} Zimmermann and Ladstätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{185} Terrace House I is dated back to the first century BC (Wiplinger and Wlach, \textit{Ephesus 100 Years of Austrian Research}, p. 89) and Terrace House II is dated back to the first century BC - first century AD (Zimmermann and Ladstätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos}, p. 46).
\textsuperscript{186} Ephesus is not listed among the earthquake affected cities which Tacitus mentions (\textit{Annals}, trans. by John Jackson (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England, 1998), 2.47) but Zimmermann and Ladstätter think that the disaster is responsible for the destruction in the city (Zimmermann and Ladstätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos}, p. 36).
\end{flushleft}
this reign, such as the Harbour Baths, the Halls of Verulanus and the marble paving of Curetes Street. In the second century AD the city became more prosperous and enjoyed more power in the province. However, after the second half of the second century there was a considerable decline in the construction of private and public buildings. In around AD 230 the city suffered a series of earthquakes, which caused substantial damage. Later, in the third quarter of the third century, the city witnessed even larger earthquakes, which almost destroyed the city completely. Ephesus continued to be inhabited for many years under the Byzantine Empire. Under the reign of Seljuks, the centre of Selçuk became more prominent. Once the Ottoman Empire ruled the area Ephesus lost all its former glory and became completely uninhabited.

The history of Ephesus from its foundation by the Amazons in 1500 BC to the Augustan political settlement at Roma in 27 BC saw numerous power struggles and wars. We have seen the city change hands over the course of time and observed how the citizens changed sides purely because they wanted to live in their city in peace. While our knowledge of Ephesus’ general history is mostly complete, the public/private side remains in the dark. Literary evidence does not give many clues as to the social and private lives of the Ephesian people. Archaeological evidence, on the other hand, provides us with great insight into the city’s social life. However, the ruins of the city remain silent in this regard, offering very scant evidence for life in Ephesus before the Roman Empire. By the end of the first century AD, however, most of the significant buildings in the city were in existence; therefore we are able to extract information from their ruins about our period of focus. Among these buildings are the Artemision and Imperial cult temples, which reflect many different aspects of the city. Both the Imperial and Artemis cults represented religious, social, economic, and political identities of the city.

**The Legal Situation in Ephesus**

Ephesus had free city status under Roman rule. While it is fairly simple to explain what this means in legal terms, the reality of application is more complicated. The discussion of how Roman law was applied in the provinces is relevant to our thesis in two ways. The first of these is the relationship between Roman law and the local law of the cities. The second is the actual situation in Ephesus as we can infer from our evidence.

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188 For a detailed examination of the excavation and dating of the sites please see Wiplinger and Wlach, *Ephesus: 100 Years of Austrian Research*. 
Roman civil law essentially formed the main body of legal regulations in the Empire, but it only applied to Roman citizens. There were specified regulations concerning non-citizens (peregrini). As the number of peregrini was larger than that of Roman citizens in provinces further away from Italy, the situation of non-citizens could have created a legal nightmare for the imperial officials in the provinces. The stance of the Empire on this particular situation was both a solution for official activities and an embracing welcome for the inhabitants of the farthest provinces. As far as local laws were concerned, Roman law recognized their existence and allowed their application as far as possible. Until AD 212, when Emperor Caracalla granted Roman citizenship to all the free inhabitants of the Empire, consequently eliminating the need for local laws, the dual application of legal operations continued.

The relationship between Roman law and the local laws of the cities under Roman rule is a mysterious matter mostly due to a lack of evidence. Unfortunately, we do not have legal material from all the provinces which might help us determine not only the application of local laws but also the attitude of Roman authorities towards these local regulations. The Roman province of Egypt offers a good case study here. While not focused on Ephesus, Jacobine G. Oudshoorn’s *The Relationship between Roman and Local Law in the Babatha and Salome Komaise Archives* offers a useful consideration of the interaction of local and Roman law. Oudshoorn’s work is an extensive study on local law in the Babatha and Salome Komaise archives from Israel during the first and second centuries AD. Oudshoorn argues that in the Roman province of Arabia, Roman courts utilised local laws to deal with the peregrini. The first thing to consider is that this case study exclusive uses archives from Arabia. Secondly, even though we know that Roman administration was tolerant towards local law, the degree to which Romans would allow local laws requires information from each province. In a review of Oudshoorn’s the book Jackson and Piattelli argue that the attitude of Roman administration towards local laws differed from province to province and

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190 The dry climate in Egypt and a limited number of other places means that a wealth of papyrological evidence has survived.
192 Ibid, pp. 59-205. In particular, see pp. 204-205 for the author’s conclusion on the relationship between Roman law and local law.
depended on many variables, such as the “circumstances of the conquest”. However, the authors also state that this did not mean that the Romans would not interfere with local law applications and that “the Romans retained a residual right (or power) to intervene where their interests were otherwise involved.” However, because there was no regular system for the application of local law, in some cases Roman administration operated differently, such as in relation to marriage laws in Roman Egypt.

Brother-sister marriage was a common custom in Egypt. It formed around 20% of marriages before the edict of Caracalla. Roman law, on the other hand, considered close kin unions illegal and morally unacceptable. Even though Romans regarded incest as repugnant, it seems they failed to interfere with its practice in Roman Egypt. These unions were not between Roman citizens, however, it seems that even in situations where the two legal codes took completely opposite approaches Roman administration did not or could not prevent the application of certain customs. Therefore, we cannot be absolutely sure to what extent Roman rule allowed local laws to be applied. In terms of the situation in Ephesus we still do not have enough evidence to make a definite comment on the subject.

As a free city Ephesus had its own local law for its own citizens. We will discuss this in relation to a key issue in chapter four. When we refer to legal applications of the Roman law, especially concerning marriage and remarriage, we will always consider the fact that it is not applicable to all of the residents of Ephesus. Richard Duncan-Jones comments on the inscription known as 951, and states that there were 40,000 male citizens in Ephesus in the second and third centuries AD. He estimates the population of the city to be at least 180,000 at the time. While interpretation of the inscription is hugely debated and it claims Ephesus’ population to consist of 1,040 male citizens rather than 40,000, approximate calculations for the total population vary between 200,000 and 250,000. The ratio of Roman citizens to peregrini would

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194 Ibid, pp. 89-90.
199 Please see p. 87.
be a helpful statistic for determining the extent of Roman and Ephesian laws, however, we are limited by the number of inscriptions at our disposal. We will never assert that the data available on the Ephesian inscriptions reflects the prevalent situation in Ephesus at any given time. However, we believe that we are able to infer some aspects of the actual situation of the Ephesians with the available data.

We realize that names by themselves can be deceptive in terms of deciding upon an individual’s citizenship; nevertheless, we conducted a name analysis on our inscriptions and out of the 318 inscriptions we have employed in our search 200 of them depict at least one member of the family with a Roman name. This is a considerably high percentage. We will see below that several different owners of the dwelling units in Terrace House 2 held Roman citizenship as well. Roman law was only applied to Roman citizens and our archaeological evidence shows that there was a sizable number of Roman citizens in Ephesus. We also have argued that not all of them were upper-class elite citizens. This does not downplay the number of Ephesian citizens among the total number; however, it will provide justification for reference to Roman legislation for marriage, for instance.

Until further evidence is unearthed from Ephesus we must operate under the assumptions that we have discussed above. As for the women of Ephesus, we will consider Roman law as applicable to Roman citizens, and local law (with the possible interference from Roman law) as applicable to peregrini. However, the local Ephesian laws which are at our disposal are very limited; there is one article from Ephesian legislation we can refer to which involves women. For this reason, even though we often refer to Roman laws when trying to construct a context for Ephesian early Christian writings, we will be aware that local legislation applied to some of the women in the community. Cultural perceptions do not constitute legal regulations, however, we will sometimes seek their assistance in order to compensate for the lack of local legal evidence.


202 Please see pp. 24-27.
III. The Temple of Artemis and Imperial Cult Temples

The temple of Artemis had without doubt once been the most important centre of religion in Ephesus. We will see that the temples were not only one of the focal points of the city but also provided an important arena for women to be publicly present. The priestesses played a vital role in the running of the temples. Women were even responsible for the formation of the Temple of Artemis. Callimachus has attributed the first ever foundation of the temple to the Amazons.

It was you that Proitos built a pair of temples – one the Girl's Shrine, because you gathered his girls to him from wandering the mountains of Azenia, the other in Lousa, the Gentle One's, for it was you that freed his children of the fierceness in their hearts. Even the Amazons, lovers of violence, once reared a wooden image in your honour, under an oak by the sea in Ephesos, and Hippo performed the sacrifice, and then they danced, Lady Oupis, a war dance around it, first in armour, holding their shields then fanning out in wide choral rings, and music played, to keep the songs bursting from their throats in unison, ...

This extract is from one of Callimachus' (310/305 BC-240 BC) surviving hymns, the Hymn to Artemis. It does not seem plausible that Callimachus knew the rites in so much detail. There may have been an ancient source or myth upon which he was relying, or his work could have been nourished by his imagination. The details are not found in other sources, and it is impossible to disprove them. However, the assertion

203 Their contribution to the social events of the city will be acknowledged in the chapter dedicated to social life.
that the Amazons founded the Temple of Artemis is what concerns us. This version of the temple, however, is said to have been destroyed by a flood in the seventh century BC.205 Strabo says that “its first architect was Chersiphron; and then another man made it larger.”206 Chersiphron is probably the first recorded architect of the second version of the temple. As Strabo also mentions that the Amazons were very early, and possibly the first inhabitants of the city,207 his view does not contradict that of Callimachus. The two authors are nearly two centuries apart, and it is likely that they benefited from different sources. However, it is even more likely that they were talking about two separate temples. The temple which Chersipheron planned is described in detail in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*. In this work, being one of the largest libraries intact from the Roman world, Pliny intends to write about life. Across thirty-seven books he discusses various topics, from geography to pharmacology, and zoology to precious stones. Pliny saves a small chapter for the Temple of Artemis in book thirty-six where he discusses marbles and stones. He says that,

The most wonderful monument of Graecian magnificence, and one that merits our genuine admiration, is the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, which took one-hundred and twenty years in building, a work in which all Asia joined.208

Pliny also mentions that the temple was 420 ft (128 m) by 225 ft (68.50 m). There were 127 columns, 60 ft (18 m) in height. It sounds like Pliny spent some time in Ephesus around the time of the construction or visited it afterwards; however, neither of these was possible, as the temple burnt down long before Pliny’s time. This accuracy must have come from a source that he cited. One night, a certain Herostratus set the temple on fire.209 The consequences were thoroughly destructive as the roof beams of the temple were made out of wood, as was the statue of Artemis. Pliny mentions that the roof had always been made out of wood the six times the temple had been rebuilt before the fire, and one time after it.210 Herostratus simply wanted to be as famous as the temple itself – he wanted everyone to know his name. In his work *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, Valerius Maximus records historical anecdotes such as Herostratus’

207 Please see p. 55.
210 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 16.79.
intentions for setting the temple on fire; "A man was found to plan the burning of the temple of Ephesian Diana so that through the destruction of this most beautiful building his name might be spread through the whole world."211 The people of Ephesus could not save their temple. According to ancient traditions Artemis was occupied elsewhere, meaning that she could not be there to prevent the fire. Pliny says she was busy delivering Alexander into the world. He dates the fire, therefore, to Alexander’s birthday; 20/21 July, 356 BC.212

The Ephesians worked very hard to rebuild their temple, and they managed to build a better one. All the people of Ephesus contributed to the construction; women donated their jewellery and men their personal belongings. The pillars of the old temple were also sold. This incident falls during the reign of Alexander in Ephesus. Strabo reports that a Timaeus of Tauromenium asserts that the construction of the new temple was completed thanks to the treasures the Persian left to the care of the Ephesians. Strabo appears very offended at such an allegation; the Ephesians would likely have been too. He says there was no treasure left in the care of the Ephesians, and even if there had been, it would have been destroyed in the fire, because the temple is where they would keep such treasure. In addition, when Alexander offered to pay expenses for the restoration the Ephesians did not accept his proposition. They believed that it was improper for a god to make offerings to the gods.213 The Ephesians not only declined Alexander’s offer without offending him, but also left a foreigner out of the sacred role of preserving their temple. However, they were not completely successful in keeping the construction exclusive to Ephesians. Even though they paid the full cost of the construction, the architect was a Macedonian named Deinocrates. The altar was filled with works of famous artists. Strabo also records some information about the clergy of the temple. There were eunuch priests called Megabyzi (a name derived from Persian). It was a great honour to have this status, and only those who deserved it would be accepted. The candidates were always searched for in other places. One wonders if this was because there were no candidates who were worthy enough in Ephesus. However, it should be noted that the conditions of access might have been a little intimidating, and not attractive to the male citizens. The clergy was not made up only of male priests; female priestesses, who served and assisted the male

213 Strabo, Geography, 14.1.22.
priests, were mandatory members of the clergy.\textsuperscript{214} Even though the criteria for selection of the priestesses are not known, inscriptional evidence shows us that they were members of esteemed families. Ephesians would honour their deity not only with sacrificial offerings and pilgrimage, but also by celebrating festivals in her name.\textsuperscript{215}

The temple functioned as more than a place of worship. It was a sacred centre for pilgrims. Visitors to the temple contributed considerably to the local economy. The advantage of being at the centre of a trade route was also a factor. This was not the only way that the temple helped the economy grow. When Augustus made Ephesus the capital of the province of Asia, Artemis' already well-known name spread even farther. The fact that the temple owned large areas of fertile land as part of its sacred asylum territory was another aspect of its contribution to the local trade. Moreover, fishing activities on the sea coast fell under the jurisdiction of priests. Trade was only one side of the temple's involvement in the market; it also had a major role in agriculture and hunting.\textsuperscript{216} However, none of these was the primary role of the temple in the financial activities of the city. The fact that it was used as a bank made the temple more valuable than anything else that it functioned as in the financial activities. Citizens deposited their money in the temple, and kings entrusted their treasures to it. Dio Chrysostom (AD 40 – 120) claims that not just Ephesians, but people from all over the world trusted their money and valuables to the temple. It was a safe place to keep them; no one would dare to violate the sacred space to steal them. Like any other bank, the temple recorded every input and output.\textsuperscript{217} The temple not only held religious significance, therefore, but unified the people of the city in a variety of ways.

The temple of Artemis was not the only temple in the city with different functions. The Imperial Cult temples also held great significance due to their political and religious reflections on the people of Ephesus. Material history of the Imperial Cult in the city is a seldom debated topic. Imperial cults were established to demonstrate gratitude for the emperors. The first Imperial Cult was set up for Caesar after his conquest of Asia Minor and his alteration of the taxing system during his visit to the city. A small temple for the Imperial Cult of Augustus had already been built at the State Agora while Augustus was alive.\textsuperscript{218} The first grand Imperial temple was erected during the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96). While only Domitian was revered before his death in

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid, 14.1.23.
\textsuperscript{215} For further information on the festivals of Artemis and Imperial cults see Irene R. Arnold, "Festivals of Ephesus," \textit{American Journal of Archaeology} 76 (1972), pp. 17-22.
\textsuperscript{216} Gill and Gempf, eds., \textit{The Book of Acts in Its Greco-Roman Setting}, p. 325.
\textsuperscript{217} Dio Chrysostom, \textit{Orations}, 31.54-55.
\textsuperscript{218} Zimmermann and Ladstätter, \textit{Wall Painting in Ephesos}, p. 36.
the temple, after his death the cult broadened to the whole Flavian Dynasty. The city received its second Imperial temple during the reign of Hadrian (AD 117-138).

Today’s Ephesus provides a spectrum of ruins of buildings dating to different centuries. Even before the second century AD Ephesus experienced a building spree. Major social attractions such as the theatre and the stadium were in use. Archaeological work shows that the theatre was remodelled in the first century AD, and the ruins of the stadium carry signs of either construction or renovation at the time of Nero.219 One other major cultural building, the library of Celsus, was built in the early second century AD by Aquila, the son of Proconsul Tiberius Julius Celsus. Aquila built the construction, which served both as a library and a monumental grave for his father, in around AD 114. He died before it was completed in roughly AD 117. Social centres were not limited to cultural buildings; the city also contained two big agoras. Even though the name agora means “market” in Greek, the Upper/State Agora had served as the centre of municipal administration for the city since late Hellenistic times. The Lower/Tetragonos Agora was the trade centre.220 While the outline of the State Agora dates to Hellenistic times, a dedication inscription dates the basilica in the agora to AD 11. Just like the State Agora, the Tetragonos Agora dates back to very early times. Houses were discovered, dating to as early as the eighth and seventh centuries BC.221 In ancient times there was another type of social building in which people spent time with their friends and socialized – the public baths. As peculiar as it sounds, public baths were vastly common in Greek and Roman culture. The Harbour Baths (Harbour Gymnasium) are the oldest baths (and gymnasium) in Ephesus. They were built at the end of the first century/beginning of the second century AD. Another important thermal building is the Varius Baths, or the Baths of Scholasticia. These baths were already present at around AD 100, later renamed as the Baths of Scholasticia when a Christian woman named Scholasticia financed their restoration around the fourth century AD.222 When the Romans arrived at Ephesus the city was already very much alive, and continued to grow for many years. At the time of the early Christians Ephesus was a socially vibrant city.

219 Wiplinger and Wlach, Ephesus: 100 Years of Austrian Research, pp. 26, 159.
221 Wiplinger and Wlach, Ephesus: 100 Years of Austrian Research, pp. 112, 140.
222 Ibid, pp. 18, 62.
IV. Domestic Life

Terrace House 2 is the housing complex which lies on the north slope of Bülbüldağ. The house is preserved in a very good state, which allows us to interpret the daily life of Roman Ephesus. In particular, the greatly preserved furnishings and floorings provide us with immense insight. Terrace House 2 is a housing complex comprising of seven dwelling units. It was built during the Augustan-Tiberian period (27 BC-AD 37) and inhabited until the third century AD. There were restorations completed over time in different parts of the house. The houses were built in the style of a Greek home.

As we pass in, there is the Great Hall in which the ladies sit with the spinning women. Right and left of the recess are the bedchambers, of which one is called the thalamus, the other the amphithalamus. Round the colonnades are the ordinary dining-rooms, the bedrooms and servants' rooms. This part of the building is called the women's quarter, gynaeconitis.

This paragraph sees Vitruvius describe how a Greek house is organised. A Greek house would not have an atrium like a Roman house, but rather a peristyle courtyard. It had quarters for males (andron) and females (gynaeconitis). The first part of the house, the female quarters and bedrooms, were the centre of domestic activity. The second part of the house was the male quarters, which consisted of a dining room and reception room – the centre of public activity. According to Vitruvius the distinction between public and private was applicable for the genders as well: male parts of the house were public, but female parts of the house were private. As far as domestic life was concerned, the females of the house would not be in the public eye. Greek houses were quite the opposite of Roman houses. How, then, did the houses of Ephesus fit this stereotype presented by Vitruvius?

Shelly Hales argues that during the second century AD, the public buildings in Ephesus gradually started to become more “Roman”. Even though there were buildings that remained “Greek”, such as the Greek theatre, library or agora, in some cases the layout became “Roman”, like the gymnasion and baths. However, it is not possible to

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223 For further information see Zimmermann and Ladstätter, Wall Painting in Ephesos, pp. 46-49.
225 Shelly Hales, The Roman House and Social Identity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 219. Hales states that by the second century the gymnasion imitates “the symmetrical and vaulted layout of a Roman thermae.” The Vedius gymnasion is an example of this.
clearly classify Terrace House 2 as either purely Greek or Roman. The elements of the two traditions were intertwined in the residential units.

Terrace House 2 was occupied by upper-class citizens. The area was popular and elite, and the houses were luxuriously furnished throughout. In fact, there are records of two of the house owners. The owner of dwelling unit 6 was C. Flavius Furius Aptus in the first half of the second century AD. He held a high level municipal office and priesthood in the cult of Dionysos. The owner of dwelling unit 2 was C. Vibius Salutaris.
in the time of Trajan. He was a prominent Italian who established a very significant foundation in Ephesus.\textsuperscript{226}

The houses were constructed around peristyle courtyards on several terraces. They all contained a richly furnished courtyard with columns. The rooms around one side of the courtyard were equipped more luxuriously than others. These rooms were probably reception rooms for guests. Dining rooms can be recognized from their furnishings; however, there were other rooms which were multifunctional according to the time of year or particular occasion. It is possible to classify the rooms into two main groups: richly furnished main rooms and simpler multifunctional side rooms. All houses had connections to a proper water flow system. All the units had toilets, but only dwelling units 1, 6, and 7 had private bathrooms. All the houses had at least one upper level and the findings show that those levels were furnished as richly as the ground floors. It is possible those floors also contained reception rooms. Almost every house had elements of religious cults in their furnishings. These small places of worship and commemoration are associated with Greek and/or Greco-Egyptian gods like Athena, Sarapis, Isis and Dionysus. There are also traces of Imperial worship in the houses; for example, the busts of Tiberius and his mother Livia were found in dwelling unit 7. The general descriptions\textsuperscript{227} of the houses give an idea of a regular Greek house; luxurious and elaborate courtyards, reception and dining rooms in the immediate entrance of the house (male quarters?), and simpler, multifunctional side rooms in more private parts of the house (female quarters?).

The houses lack some of the main characteristics of Roman housing like an atrium or a garden. Hilke Thür argues that the fact that the houses do not have an atrium for the salutatio (ceremonial visit) to take place, even though the owners were high ranking elites, is unusual. Most likely, the spacious peristyle courtyards were used for this ceremony. According to Thür, because there is an absence of this crucial element, Roman features such as expensive marble instalments on the walls or floors is not sufficient to prove that the Ephesian housing system was properly Romanized.\textsuperscript{228} However, Shelley Hales suggests that even though the layout of the house is not Roman, the usage definitely was.\textsuperscript{229} Hales believes that the large peristyle courtroom, the room used for family gatherings, was used as a reception room open to public display.

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid, pp. 253-258.
\textsuperscript{229} Hales, The Roman House and Social Identity, p. 227.
Therefore, there was not a gender-based distinction between the rooms; it was about public and private usage. Our interpretation of the usage is not based on the layout of the house. In our view, blurring the distinction between a Roman house and a Greek house is not the way to explain the mixed usage of different areas in Ephesian houses. Rather, this can be explained by the people of Ephesus employing some of the Roman customs of housing, if not all, and applying these customs to their existing traditions.\textsuperscript{230}

The fact that the owners of dwelling units 2 and 6 were Roman citizens actually explains the multicultural layout of the houses.

As Roman citizens, these people chose to live in a ‘Greco-Roman’ house which would blend into the surrounding culture. Ephesian houses did not change in terms of their layout, but in terms of their usage. The ‘public’ rooms of the house may have become larger, and the ‘family’ sections smaller. However, this does not mean that the people did not continue to have private rooms for their families; they did, but simply smaller ones. In fact, these rooms are found as side rooms in the houses, less elaborately furnished, and designed as bedrooms or resting rooms.\textsuperscript{231} These spaces were not intended as reception rooms and were not as numerous or big as guest rooms.

There was an involvement of the family in the social sphere, such as in dedications to official buildings, or the funding of the construction of public buildings by a husband and wife.\textsuperscript{232} Existing as a family unit in public was a way of acquiring an esteemed place in ancient Greek society. However, this did not necessarily require a public display of domestic life. Families may have preferred a domesticated public life, but not necessarily a publicised domestic life for the very reason that domestic life was much more private, exclusive to family members. Public and private spaces in the house were not necessarily attached to a particular gender. In other words, we do not suggest that because more public space became available with the effects of Romanization that men’s quarters grew larger and women had to be content with a smaller space. Even if the layout of a Greek house worked as Vitruvius stated in the first century BC, from Augustus’ time the gender-based classification of the domestic and public space in the house had started to relinquish. The association of private space of the houses with the female family members had started to fade, and left in its place a balance between private and public features of the house. In our view, Ephesian

\textsuperscript{230} Michele George also points to a multicultural layout of Terrace House 2 in "Domestic Architecture and Household Relations: Pompeii and Roman Ephesus," \textit{JSNT} 27.1 (2004), pp. 7-25, pp. 22-23.

\textsuperscript{231} Sabine Ladstätter, \textit{Ephesos Yamaç Ev 2} (Ege Yayınları: İstanbul, 2012), pp. 94-95.

\textsuperscript{232} Such as C. Sextius Pollio and his wife Ofilia Bassa funding the basilica in the Upper/State Agora.
families were an example of how to exist in the public sphere while not opening the entire house to the public.

V. Conclusion

As a city, Ephesus has undergone a long and rich history. From the Amazons to the Roman Emperors the city has attracted numerous people from different parts of the world. The city remained unified while cooperating with rulers, either naively welcoming a new one or being punished by the one who came afterwards. The citizens built their temple by themselves and rebuilt it when it was burnt down. We argue that the complicated process in the development of the housing system in Ephesus shows the persistent spirit of the Ephesian people for preserving what was their own. The city was loyal to its traditions, but was not closed off to customs which came with foreigners. After all, the people called the Artemision priests by a Persian name, enjoyed Roman baths, and lived in Greek-style houses. They had no difficulty adapting to new traditions, but never abandoned their own identity. The result was a beautifully established example of a Greco-Roman society. The culture of the city had become a well-proportioned hybrid of Greekness and Romanness. Their behavioural pattern follows a non-radical nationalism. They displayed this pattern in their survival of wars and catastrophes and in their use of their houses in a specific way. Ephesian history, especially after the Empire, is well represented in Hilke Thür’s words as “an important example of ‘Becoming Roman, staying Greek’”.233

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CHAPTER FOUR: MARRIAGE

The relationship between husband and wife is the focus of several early Christian texts. The responsibilities husband and wife have towards each other and their standing in the marriage has been explicitly mentioned by early Christian authors. In this chapter we will demonstrate how marriage was perceived in Greco-Roman society. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence from Ephesus will be presented to illustrate the role a wife played in the house and how she was identified in society. Evidence from wider Greco-Roman and Roman culture will enable us to interpret the information from the Ephesian sources more clearly. In light of Ephesian and Greco-Roman evidence we will argue that a wife was mostly expected to be submissive to her husband and devoted to her family. When early Christian writings are examined alongside the Greco-Roman evidence we will see that early Christian authors employed characteristics from Greco-Roman culture in order to construct the social norms of a nascent community of early Christians. We will discuss how and why the authors Christianized Greco-Roman customs. This will lead us to a discussion of whether early Christian authors treated the individuals within a married couple as equals. We argue that they consciously mirrored elements from Greco-Roman culture in their writings, and, therefore, it will be argued that the husband and wife were not regarded as being equals in early Christian writings. We will also argue against the common scholarly view that the early Christian writings differed sharply from each other in terms of the relationship between the married couple.

I. Who makes up a household?

In contrast to the common nuclear family structure of today, which is limited to father, mother, and children, the household (οἶκος in Greek and domus in Latin) consisted of more than this immediate family, and would include blood relatives such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, or cousins, and non-relatives such as freedmen, freedwomen, and slaves. In a sense, the household formed a miniaturised version of society. Among the many issues which are addressed in the early Christian writings, marriage is the most significant in terms of household relations. No other members of the household receive as much attention as the husband and wife, most likely because they were understood as forming the core of the family. The family as a whole, however, should act as an example of how society should function; therefore, children are addressed as well (Ephesians 6:1-2, Colossians 3:20-21).
What is in the sources?

In addition to the legal and social aspects of marriage in the Greco-Roman world we will aim to illuminate the local perception of marriage in Ephesus. The inscriptions are our main resource for this local data. As stated in the introduction, we subjected the inscription series IvE to a key word search to identify relevant material. One group of inscriptions appear on gravestones, which mention the names of the deceased (or the owner, as the gravestones were mostly erected when the person or persons were still alive). The names occasionally appear with some words of endearment to the dedicatee by the dedicator. The order in which the names appear is intriguing, as the name that comes first is considered to be the dedicator. Interesting for our purposes is the fact that women sometimes come before men in the inscriptions. Another set of inscriptions are those from buildings, dedications, and statue reliefs on which are mentioned the name and the title of the benefactor/donor/honoured person, the reason for the erection of the monument, and often the person’s family. This second group of inscriptions are slightly more problematic. Almost exclusively, women are mentioned in this second group in relation to their respective men and their titles. While the marital relationship is frequently mentioned in these inscriptions, we also see provincial or religious office titles. In this instance the inscription becomes a representation of the family’s social status, rather than an expression of familial relationships. The focus of both this chapter and many of our early Christian writings is the familial relationships indicated on these inscriptions. For this reason, if the appearance of a woman on an inscription is more about her titles and her relation to other members of the family who hold titles, it will not be treated here as thoroughly as it will be in more relevant chapter. Here, our particular focus will be the personal relationship between the couples that appear on these inscriptions. In addition to the inscriptions, the archaeological evidence from the city provides another perspective on the lives of these people. In contrast to the inscriptions, which focuses on the representation of the individuals at the time of their death, our other archaeological evidence allows us to see glimpses of when they were alive.

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235 The discussion of whether women held offices solely because they were married to men with official titles is left to chapter six: Women in Social Life.
II. The Perception of Marriage in Ephesus

a. Inside the Home

Terrace House 2 is the richest source of information about domestic life in Ephesus. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Terrace House 2 informs us not only about household relationships, but also about the cultural development of the city. Just as the family represented a mini version of society, the house represented the cultural norms of a city on a smaller scale. Ephesus’ particular approach to the employment of Romanization emerges in the family’s private life as well. Household dynamics will help us to analyze the spousal relationship.

Cornelius Nepos discusses how household relations worked in Roman and Greco-Roman societies:

For instance, what Roman would blush to take his wife to a dinner-party? What matron does not frequent the front rooms of her dwelling and show herself in the public? But it is very different in Greece; for there a woman is not admitted to a dinner party, unless relatives only are present, and she keeps to the more retired part of the house called ‘the women’s apartment’ to which no man has access who is not near of kin.236

If this was the norm in Greco-Roman society from around the first century BC, it would be fair to say that especially with the influence of the Romanization process, the dynamics of the household had changed in the following centuries. Our supporting evidence for this argument comes from the inside of a house.

The terrace houses in Ephesus are the only set of buildings with domestic character that survive until now. Terrace House 2 in particular has great potential for examination of domestic life in the city. Thanks to Terrace House 2, we are able to learn about the living conditions of those who made up a household, and more importantly, about the relationship between public and private space. Archaeologists have established four different construction stages for Terrace House 2.237 Thanks to these phases, we are able to identify not just the various tendencies towards decoration, but also the connection between the furnishing choices and the house owner’s personal preferences. For example, as Sabine Ladstätter argues, the increase in marble surfacing

237 Ladstätter, Yamaç Ev 2, pp. 60-81.
in the houses around the fourth construction stage could be identified with the lavish
taste of decorating representation spaces in the third century AD, or with a possible
common trend of the time. As well as decorative elements of the houses or
inscriptions, other archaeological findings can provide us with insight regarding
domestic life in Ephesus. In the previous chapter we examined Terrace House 2 and the
implications of how the layout and furnishing of the house affected our understanding
of Ephesian Greco-Roman culture. The mixed characteristics of the house’s
construction and furnishings, along with its use of particular rooms display how
Ephesus had created its own hybrid culture.

Elisabeth Trinkl examines spindles from Terrace House 2 dating to around the
third century AD. Spinning wool was one of the traditional responsibilities of the Greco-
Roman wife. Besides taking part in the production processes themselves, in well-off
households the wife’s duty was to supervise textile manufacturing. However, these
particular spindles differ in a couple of ways from those which would have been used
for textile purposes. Firstly their context is unusual; among the ten samples Trinkl
refers to, none of them was found among a set of instruments in which they should
have belonged. Moreover, they were found either in peristyle courtyards or in
sarcophaguses with other burial objects. Spindles would typically be found in the
work spaces of the house. Secondly, their shape is strange; with their elaborately
decorated ends the distaffs would be highly unsuitable for spinning wool, as it would
tangle around the shaped ends making it impossible to operate. What can be inferred
is that these practically useless and decoratively shaped tools were not used for labour,
but for display in the reception rooms. So what did spindles symbolize which meant
that women wanted to exhibit them and take them to the grave? As Plutarch mentions,
brides would bring their spindles with them as their dowry.

238 Ibid, pp. 127-128.
239 Trinkl, “Zum Wirkungskreis einer Kleinasiatischen Matrona anhand Ausgewählter Funde aus
dem Hanghaus 2 in Ephesus,” p. 293.
240 Ibid, p. 301.
241 Plutarch, *Moralia; Roman Questions*, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, Massachusetts;
sung at the marriage ceremony? Is it derived from talasia (spinning)? For they call the wool-
basket (talaros) talasus. When they lead in the bride, they spread a fleece beneath her; she
herself brings with her a distaff and her spindle, and wreaths her husband’s door with wool.”
this role that spindles were displayed like trophies and taken to the grave as a representation of the virtues of the deceased.\textsuperscript{243}

We have seen that the public areas of houses expanded into the private sections, leading to the presence of women in reception quarters along with the private rooms. This expansion reveals itself in the elaborate elements of what used to be the inner rooms of the houses, such as marble flooring and tiling from around the third century AD.\textsuperscript{244} In time, more and more rooms came to be public spaces, and this also involved more people in public activities within the house. The private sections of the house continued to exist, but started to occupy less and less of the space. However, the public visibility of women does not necessarily challenge their submission to their husbands. For this reason, although they appeared in social circles more than they used to in their houses, they chose to do this with a symbol of their honoured status as a wife. This view not only exhibits that the norm of women’s presence in reception rooms of the house had changed since the times of Nepos, but also that the Romanization process had occurred exactly as Hilke Thür describes.\textsuperscript{245} Therefore, we can say that Terrace House 2 presents responsible, proud, loyal, and publicly visible Greco-Roman wives running their households.

b. Epigraphic Evidence

Inscriptions represent a broader view of how relationships worked between family members. We will argue that how wives and other women are represented in the epigraphic evidence from Ephesus will help us to establish the social perspective of women in Greco-Roman society.

While examining the inscribed evidence we should keep in mind the socio-economic situation of the women in question. We have discussed that Greco-Roman Ephesian evidence encapsulates more upper-class members of society, whereas the early Christian texts describe the lower/middle group.\textsuperscript{246} However, it is also noteworthy that inscriptions do not show any differences between gravestones which belonged to an upper-class family member and gravestones which do not provide any information about their dedicators or dedicatees. This demonstrates that class differences in Greco-Roman culture did not completely effect how a wife was perceived. The same principle is valid for their citizenship. We have also mentioned that an

\textsuperscript{244} Ladstätter, \textit{Yamaç Ev} 2, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{245} For the discussion please see pp. 71-75.
\textsuperscript{246} Please see pp. 24-27.
analysis of the names on the inscriptions have revealed that around two thirds of the stones involved one or more people who held Roman citizenship.247 The style in which the names were recorded, and any additional information given about the dedicatees are not directly relevant to the citizenship status of the deceased. Therefore, in Greco-Roman society cultural perceptions surpassed the economic and political identification of a person.

Unlike the building inscriptions (which include any kind of buildings, such as bridges or conduits) and dedication inscriptions (which include those documenting any kind of contribution to the city, the council, a festival, etc.), gravestones, memorials, or shrine inscriptions involved a lot of emotion in their making. The way people were represented on the inscription was in the hands of the dedicator. Many gravestones were put up by the owners during their lifetime, so they had the chance to represent themselves however they wanted people to remember them. For this reason it is possible to doubt the accuracy of the information provided by the inscriptions – the monument could have depicted an imaginary, ideal version of the real person.

Unlike other archaeological evidence, inscriptions are helpful in that they reveal more clearly the intentions of those who erected them. For the Ephesian inscriptions, we have been able to establish a common pattern for the statements upon gravestones. The order of information is as follows: the name of the person who put up the inscription, the wife or husband of the person mentioned, their children, and a statement to clarify if they were alive at the time of inscription. Other variances include grandchildren, freedmen, the individual’s mother, and a statement advising whether someone else is allowed to use the grave afterwards and the consequences if this is done without permission. The majority of the gravestones begin with the name of the husband and do not necessarily record the wife’s name. Exceptions to this pattern are rare. Gravestones do not generally present intimate information, and endearing words appear only seldom.

Out of 318 inscriptions there are 397 references248 to women in total. In only 16 instances a family member is praised: κράτιστος (strongest/best) (3081) and γλυκύς (sweet/dear) (3713) daughter; σεμνός (respected/revered) (3083), κράτιστος

247 Please see p. 65.
248 Some of the inscriptions contain more than one key word. Additionally, they almost never contain two instances of the same keyword. These factors should be considered when the number of inscriptions is calculated. Also, any numbers in the text and/or in the footnotes associated with the inscriptions represent the reference numbers of the inscriptions from IvE.
(strongest/best) (3274), φιλάτατος (dearest) (3287a), κόσμιος (moderate/respectful) (3461), γλυκύς (sweet/dear) (3754), ἴερ (holy) (3853), σεμνός (respected/revered) (4357) wife; κόσμιος (moderate/respectful) Decidine (617), ἴερ (holy) Julia (661), κράτιστος (strongest/best) Tiberia (635b), carus (dearest) Claudia Magna (1636), and ἀγαθός (good) Claudia Nereis (2546b); γλυκύς (sweet/dear) (3225) and ἀγαθός (good) (3423) husband. Consequently, out of the ordinary cases like those above are trusted along with the rest of the inscriptions, because there is no general tendency to exaggerate one's moral characteristics. The custom for inscribing loving words about the deceased, however, is rare. However, the rarity of these salutations cannot be interpreted as the absence of husbands' affection for their wives. If we were to argue that all the couples who are mentioned without any word of endearment in hundreds and hundreds of grave stones from Ephesus had a relationship without respect and love, we would undertake an impossible task to achieve because as you can appreciate, such a situation would not be possible.

The word γυνή appears the most frequently, 209 times to be precise.\textsuperscript{249} This, of course, is related to the common pattern we mentioned above; a considerable amount of wives are mentioned in gravestones, immediately after their husbands and before their children, and often without their name. The first name on the inscription is considered to be the one who dedicated the inscription. In the case of gravestones, the dedicator can also be one of the dedicatees, as the memorials were often set up in their lifetime. Whereas most of the dedicators are husbands who had prepared a resting place for their wife or entire family, in 23 inscriptions women play the role of dedicator and erect monuments for their husbands or other family members. Apart from the inscriptions dedicated by the city of Ephesus (δῆμος) and the council (βουλή), however,\textsuperscript{250} there is a distinct male dominance in the setting up of gravestones. Are there any other factors involved in becoming a dedicator, then, other than one's gender? Our 23 exceptional inscriptions might be able to help us answer this question. There are 7 inscriptions which present an apparent reason for males appearing only in the background – the absence of a husband.\textsuperscript{251} Despite the fact that women seem to be acting without a husband, all but one of these inscriptions (in which Eppia Quarta makes a grave for herself and possibly her husband – some lines of the inscription are illegible; 2252), depict dedicatees with one or more children. Therefore, these women

\textsuperscript{249} The word μήτηρ occurs 40 times, θυγάτερος 103 (παρθένος 2), ἀδελφή 16 and ἀνήρ 28.\textsuperscript{250} These inscriptions are going to be further analyzed in the chapter concerning social life.\textsuperscript{251} 635b, 2252, 2277e, 2556, 3255, 3260, 3467.
must have had a spouse at some point in their life. The most plausible options are that they were widows or divorcees. The women could have opted, therefore, to leave out the name of their ex-husbands. If any of these women were in fact widows, the lack of a reference to a husband could also mean that the women were not able to erect a gravestone which includes their husband’s name as at the time they were not in control of their wealth. Moreover, since there was no other man, such as a father or brother, acting on their behalf, it would be safe to assert that these women were in charge of their own, probably sizable wealth. We have seen that even though the majority of the inscriptions present men as the prominent members of the family, marital status, i.e. being a divorcee or a widow, could also affect the arrangement of the information on inscriptions.

28 inscriptions mention the word ‘husband’. In general, the person bearing the first name on an inscription is alive, has a close relationship to the dedicatees, and is the one who culturally and socially has a higher status than the rest of the people mentioned. Even though every single inscription does not comply with one particular pattern, 16 inscriptions almost exclusively present us with wives, without any indication of high social status, dedicating gravestones to their husbands. Unlike the seven possible ‘widows’ from above, these women seemed to have had some financial means at the time of their husbands’ demise. This could explain why they were able to commemorate their husbands and others could not.

If wealth is indeed another relevant factor in terms of the order in which names are presented on gravestones, how can we determine if a woman comes from a prominent family? We see from the inscriptions that as a general tendency, families of a higher status do not break their bond with their daughters even after their marriage. 10 wives are mentioned as someone’s daughter, before they are referred to as wives. For example, in terms of her social identity, Myrton was apparently a daughter to Aristo before she was wife to Menecrates (3702a). Although it was not applicable to all the residents of Ephesus, we will see shortly that there were different types of marriage in Roman law. Sine manu marriages (marriage without manus, in which the wife would be under the legal control of her father) had started to become more common in the Empire, and, therefore, legally, more and more women were still tightly linked to their

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252 The status of widows, divorcees, and virgins/singles are going to be discussed in the chapter on widows because they are always referred to together in the Ephesian Christian writings.

253 1643, 1648, 1655, 2233a, 2250, 2299c, 2306e, 2426, 2547, 3031, 3225, 3237, 3312, 3332, 3831, 4234.

254 2306e hints at women’s prominent families.

255 1547, 1562, 1635, 3092, 3233, 3702a, 3713, 3826, 4107, 4360.
father after marriage. However, the displaying of an inscription was a social event, regardless of the nature of the monument. It was about the reputation of not only the nuclear household, but also the extended household. Therefore, *sine manu* marriages cannot be the sole reason for this kind of inscription. Furthermore, the rarity of these monuments contradicts the frequency of such marriages.

On the other hand, daughters who are presented on the inscriptions without a husband, and so lead us to believe that they were unmarried, are well represented. There are 93 mentions (excluding the 10 which are mentioned above) of the daughters of families. This number (in total 103) is more than double the number of occurrences of ‘mother’ (40) and seven times more than the number of occurrences of ‘sister’ (15). We realize that the number of inscriptions in total does not reflect the whole population of Ephesus at a certain time, nor do they comprise a de facto opinion for the city. However, in terms of the roles men and women undertook in the household, these statistics do represent some tendencies of Ephesian society. Considering that men are mostly responsible for the formation of the monuments, ‘brothers’ and ‘sons’ were not as much of a concern as the ‘fathers’ of the women mentioned. This, of course, does not indicate the male children’s indifference, but denotes the dominating role of the father as *pater familias*.

The examination of the inscriptions has shown us firstly that the inscribed information is not exaggeration imagination. The number of gravestones which record words to specifically praise the people mentioned is very low. The rest of the gravestones follow a very similar pattern, which does not attempt to portray anyone in an excessive manner. Therefore, we are able to deduce that these descriptions depict real-life. The other and perhaps most important result of our analysis is that the number of women who were prominent enough in their families to dedicate inscriptions to other family members and not to their husbands was low. In other words, it was not the custom in Greco-Roman society for a woman to by-pass her husband and act as the head of the household. Only well-endowed widows were free from a man’s shadow over their name. A few daughters of the upper-class families, on the other hand, could have outshone their husbands who most probably were from a family with a lesser reputation, only to be seconded by another man – their father.

Public opinion in Greco-Roman Ephesus on women’s place in the family was to acknowledge them not as the leader of the household, but as a close and loyal follower of their husband.
c. Marriage in Greco-Roman Society

Unlike today, marriage was not a simple legal contract between two parties in Greco-Roman society. Legal aspects, traditional customs, and social perceptions of married life were intertwined. The expectations of wives and husbands originated from different sources. Cultural expectations of the moral character of the wife might have more strongly influenced the actualisation of one’s role than the legal sanctions. Each of these dynamics will help us to construct a representation of the relationship between husband and wife.

1) Age of Marriage

"Members of the female gender were valued according to age, status group and moral character. Girls of leading families were kept close to home under constant supervision until they were handed over to husbands, usually mature or older men, selected by their elders."\(^{256}\) This quotation provides a short summary of the life of a Roman woman, at least an elite Roman woman. The family carried much importance in Roman culture, and a legitimate wife was the only person who could bear legitimate children – there was really no other way to keep the family name alive. With the role carrying such great responsibility, it seems that Roman women did not have a ‘life’ outside this role. Scholars such as Gillian Clark and Keith Hopkins argue that this was in fact the situation. For such women, life would begin when they got married, and because they got married at a very young age – extremely young according to our modern perspective of the age of marriage – they did not enjoy a ‘single’ life as we understand it. They did not have a long time to live with their families as a maiden. Hopkins argues\(^ {257}\) that the average age of marriage for a Roman girl was quite young. Hopkins states that the ancient doctors mention age thirteen and over as an appropriate marriage age, however, he also states that it is possible that these doctors would only have documented cases involving women from the upper-classes, and so our picture is incomplete\(^ {258}\).

Soranus, a Greek physician from Ephesus who also worked in Rome, is one of the ancient doctors whom Hopkins refers to. His work *Gynecology*, as can be understood from its name, covers the biological aspects of a woman’s life and how these impact on one’s social life in Greco-Roman society. In his ninth chapter which discusses conception, he states that “One must judge that the majority from the ages of 15 to 40

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\(^{256}\) D’ambra, *Roman Women*, p. 10.  
\(^{258}\) Ibid, p. 312.
to be fit for conception, if they are not mannish, compact, and oversturdy, or too flabby and very moist." In his opinion women often married to have children, but not for pure pleasure. Therefore, the main factor in determining the age of marriage was conception. In addition, he reveals that it would be medically critical for both the mother and the baby for a woman to give birth before the first menstruation, which commonly happened around the age of 14. Soranus seems to believe, then, that age 14 to 15 is appropriate to get married and have children.

Gillian Clark mirrors Soranus, and states that "fourteen was evidently a proper age of marriage." D’ambra also mentions that "aristocratic daughters were betrothed as early as twelve or thirteen." So, it is possible to visualize upper-class girls getting married at very young ages. However, a class difference arises here; elite girls were more likely to get married young, whereas girls from lower classes, with low incomes, would get married rather late in comparison. Girls legally could be betrothed as young as age seven, however, the marriage was not considered legal before the age of 12. As for men, there was no legal age for marriage. We understand that girls started in their new life quite young. There were rules, regulations, and perhaps social norms that shaped the forming of a marriage, and what is striking here is that even from a very early stage, the arrangements were made around one particular factor; the ability to have a child. This makes it clear that a wife’s responsibility was towards her family, husband, and children. It was her responsibility to produce a family.

2) Education of Girls

Expectations were high from young girls, but what were the opportunities they received before they left their father’s home? In the Roman Empire, education was not accessible to everyone; most girls in their younger years did not receive an education from formal school or from a private teacher. Evidence from the Egyptian province has shown that girls of the upper-class had an obvious advantage; they were more likely to be given even just a basic level of education. Girls were educated more frequently

260 Ibid, 1.9.34.
265 Ibid, 23.2.4.
(but not by much) in the upper-class; they had “a chance of picking some education from parents, brothers, even a sympathetic husband” and also they “may have gone to school, at least for primary schooling.” Some girls were educated to a certain level, but according to some scholars this was not solely for their benefit. D’ambra argues that “girls were educated in some elite families because they were expected to be informed companions of their husbands in the higher echelons of political service.”

Equality between the couple was probably sought after in many aspects of marriage. The children of families from the same social class were seen as an ideal match not only for economic reasons, but also to achieve character compatibility between the couple. A further discussion of some of these issues will take place in our social life chapter.

3) Dowry

Apart from opportunities such as receiving an education, which may or may not have been provided, depending on the family’s economic means and traditional inclination, as a girl preparing for marriage, dowry was offered as a contribution to her married life. Evans Grubbs presents us with many examples of the provision of a dowry or its recovery after marriage, from Roman law and other ancient works. A short reference from *IvE* on an inscription dealing with the law on debt, *IvE* no.4, A, lines 55-64, however, provides us with some local perspective. According to Ephesian laws, a dowry which had not been paid was legally considered as debt. A father, brother, or a guardian – either assigned by the father in his will or elected by the city – was held responsible for paying the dowry and the agreed interest in the event of a divorce, in order to compensate the “suffered loss” (a phrase from the inscription, line 62). In particular, the guardian is encouraged to pay the amount in any circumstance, even if it requires borrowing/taking money from another household in which he is a guardian (lines 63-64). In this way, the rights of a bride would be legally protected. Although the husband had limited control over the dowry during the marriage, the preferred verb for the payment, ἀποδίδωμι (to pay back), emphasizes that the dowry was considered an incontestable right of the woman.

4) The Wedding

The emphasis on the portrayal of the wife’s desired moral character, and perhaps her responsibilities, surfaces not only in practical issues, such as the physical ability to bear children; a wife was also expected to embody loyalty and chastity. This

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268 Clark, “Roman Women,” p. 199.
270 Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, pp. 91-98.
expectation would be made clear at the wedding ceremony. Even though we do not have any direct evidence from Ephesus, we know how Greek and Roman weddings proceeded.

In Greek marriage, the union of two people started with an engagement, *enguê*. This was the foundation of the couple’s marriage, as it acted as a promise for the woman to be a mother to the man’s legitimate children.\(^2^7^2\) The wedding, *gamos*, was made up of many different aspects, one of which was the ‘unveiling’ of the bride, the *anakaluptēria*.\(^2^7^3\) Gloria Ferrari says that there is “literary and visual evidence to the effect that the bride was well-covered during and after the banquet.”\(^2^7^4\) The author explains that as part of the wedding celebration there would be an ‘unveiling’ of the bride’s face to the groom, simultaneously covering it from the rest of the men present.\(^2^7^5\) Therefore, a bride’s veil became the symbol of her commitment to her groom and also to her role as a devoted wife and mother.

Karen Hersch explains Roman weddings in detail\(^2^7^6\) and gives detailed descriptions of the hairstyle and the veil of the bride. She argues that “It may be that Romans thought that if a bride was worthy of wearing the hairstyle of a Vestal and the veil of the Flaminica, her virginity and wifely chastity would be as unquestionable as those of the priestesses.”\(^2^7^7\) The Vestals and the Flaminicas (wives of the Flamen Dialis priests) were known for their good characteristics. What Hersch suggests here is that the same was expected from any bride.\(^2^7^8\) This notion was not irrelevant to the concept of marriage as a whole; on the contrary, what Hersch assumes was indeed another stage of the process of creating the physically and characteristically proper wife.

A girl who had been raised to be a suitable wife was married off to her husband when she became able to be a mother, in a ceremony where she was dressed to

\(^2^7^2\) Patterson, “Marriage and the Married Woman in Athenian Law,” pp. 51-52.
\(^2^7^3\) Gloria Ferrari, “What Kind of Rite of Passage was the Ancient Greek Wedding?,” in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives*, ed. by David B. Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 27-42, pp. 32-35.
\(^2^7^4\) Ibid, p. 32.
\(^2^7^5\) Ibid, p. 35.
\(^2^7^7\) Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 11.
\(^2^7^8\) The symbolism of the veil is not limited to its usage by the brides. There is much to be discussed on how it was also a symbol for the character of Greco-Roman wives as a dedicated wife and mother in Greco-Roman society, and how hair models and accessories were understood in the same manner in early Christian writings. However, although this symbolism originated from a wife’s life at home, it is related to how she was represented outside the household. Therefore, the subject will be dealt with in our chapter on social life.
symbolize her loyalty to the household. The anticipation was that she would live the rest of her life in the same manner.

5) The Legal Part of Marriage

(i) Marriage and Guardianship

Both in the Western and Eastern parts of the Roman Empire guardianship was a significant issue for women. We will examine how the system worked for both Roman and Greek women. Manus, which literally means ‘hand’ in Latin, was used to represent the legal control of the husband over his wife in early Roman law. Cum manu (marriage with hand) referred to a marriage where the wife would be under the legal control of her husband. However, by the time of Augustus this kind of marriage had almost disappeared, and instead, sine manu marriage was widely preferred. In sine manu marriage (marriage without hand) the wife would not leave her father’s legal authority when she got married. She would still be considered a member of her father’s household, and as a result he would control her legal and business affairs, in addition to her property.279 If the woman was not in charge of her own property, her father was not alive, and she was not in a cum manu marriage, she would need to have a tutor, a guardian. This generally would be a male relative from the father’s side of the family, as he was required to protect the economic means of the wife’s father’s family, and also of the potential heirs from this family who would inherit her property.280 However, we should keep in mind that Roman law only applied to Roman citizens. As we have mentioned before, even though there were separate regulations for non-Roman citizens (the peregrini), the extent to which Roman law was employed in the provinces is a complex and ambiguous matter. Although there were Roman citizens present in Asia Minor, we need to take into consideration variations for the peregrini. Some elements of a guardian operated differently in the Roman East. Firstly, a guardian was called kyrios (lord) in the Eastern Roman Empire. Secondly, and perhaps most intriguingly, unlike the custom in the Western Roman Empire, it was a possibility for a husband to become their wife’s guardian during marriage.281 This was one of the main differences between tutor and kyrios, and perhaps what Gaius refers to:

Among foreigners, women are not in guardianship in the same way as with us, yet they are for the most part in a sort of guardianship; see, for example, the statute of the Bithynians which orders that if a woman

279 Evans Grubbs, Women and the Law in the Roman Empire, p. 21.
280 For more information on the tutela in Roman law, ibid, pp. 23-37.
281 Ibid, p. 34.
enters into a contract her husband or her adult son must give authorisation.\textsuperscript{282}

As Evans Grubbs argues, the nature of the responsibilities was similar for tutor and kyrios; only the people who could undertake the position were different.\textsuperscript{283} If the wards were allowed the same degree of freedom by their tutor or kyrios, what was the intention behind the different custom in the Western Empire? It is not possible to know for certain, but in our opinion this preference is consistent with the family-oriented structure of Greco-Roman society. As we will investigate further throughout the thesis, the family was highly valued in Greco-Roman culture. The husband’s ability to be a guardian to his wife provided the chance to keep this kind of business in the family, without any strangers becoming involved. The degree of involvement of a guardian in his ward’s life is another subject,\textsuperscript{284} however, among the inscriptions which we have studied there is no mention of a woman acting with the consent of her kyrios. On the other hand, it is possible to find information about women who legally do not need a kyrios.

\textbf{(ii) Ius Trium Liberorum}

The \textit{ius trium liberorum} was an honourable title as well as a guarantor of legal freedom. Therefore, women would want to distinguish themselves by claiming this prestige. We must not forget that the Roman law was only applicable to Roman citizens. Although we do not know if there was a similar implementation in local law, it is still possible to find evidence from Roman citizens in Ephesus. We have a letter dated to AD 204 on a sarcophagus by Claudia Antonia Tatiane to her brother, allowing him to bury his wife in her heroon, which is outside of the Magnesian Gate in Ephesus. She mentions that she possesses \textit{τέκνων δίκαιον (ius trium liberorum)}.\textsuperscript{285}

To Aemilius Aristeides, equestrian, Cl(audia) Antonia Tatiane greetings,
I concede to you, my brother, the [… burial place in my heroon] which is located outside the [Magnesian] Gate at Ephesos, in which you may bury your wife. I had this letter written through my slave Dionysios and have signed it myself, (dating), and [you are to have the liberty to keep it] or deposit it in whichever archive you please, (which you may do) even if I am not present. Cla(udia) Antonia Tatiane, possessing \textit{ἐξουσία τέκνων}

\textsuperscript{282} Gaius, \textit{Institutes}, I.193.
\textsuperscript{283} Evans Grubbs, \textit{Women and the Law in the Roman Empire}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{284} van Bremen, \textit{Limits of Participation}, pp. 217-225.
\textsuperscript{285} 2121. The translation is that of van Bremen, \textit{Limits of Participation}, p. 227.
δίκαιον (the *ius liberorum*) ordered [...? this to happen? ... precisely] as is written here, and I wish that you may be in good health, Sir. And it was deposited in the archive on (date follows).

It would not be accurate to assume that every single female Roman citizen in Ephesus who had three or more children had *ius trium liberorum*, however, there may be evidence of other women who are granted this right. We learn from a gravestone that "Septicia Cognita, daughter of Quintus, married M. Quinctius Laetus and bore him three children." This statement is different from the common pattern of representation of children. Apart from the inscriptions which were dedicated specifically to a son or daughter children are often referred to by their name or simply as 'children in order to indicate one's family. Daughters are often depicted as 'daughter of x' as a means of description, regardless of the context of the inscription (i.e. honorary, commemoration, donation, foundation etc.). Gravestones abide by the same pattern, and the name of the dedicator and his/her partner's name is followed by 'their children'. Briefly, Septicia provides us with a unique example, to emphasize that she did have three children. As a Roman citizen, she probably was aware of the privilege she could receive, and even though *ius trium liberorum* is not referred to on the inscription, the intent behind inscribing the sentence in such a fashion is proof of her awareness of it. Another inscription provides us with a different kind of example. On the inscription honouring the *neopoio* it says that Sallubia Flavia, wife of Aurelius Salluvius Timotheus, has three sons. However, they are all mentioned by name, and so not in a manner which appears to be particularly specifying that the mother has three children. It is not possible to speculate as to whether the mother had *ius trium liberorum*, however, the names of the family members call our attention to the probability that they were not Roman citizens from birth, but were granted it later. We do not know if the rule applied only to children who were born after the mother became a citizen, but there are a few more inscriptions documenting families with Roman names.

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286 2307c.
287 Greek cult officials who were responsible for the administration of the finances of the temple and its property. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, pp. 22-24.
288 3263.
290 There are 3 inscriptions in our body of evidence in which mothers are mentioned to have three or more children. The children are mentioned by name in all of them. An unnamed mother
As Gaius informs us, according to *Lex Papia Poppaea*, which was introduced in Augustus’ time, “Free-born women are released from guardianship by the privilege of three children. Freedwomen, however, need four if they are in the statutory guardianship of a patron or his children.”

From the very beginning of the preparation of a woman’s marriage it is clear to see that the goal is to have legitimate children. A Greco-Roman wife was praised not just for her moral characteristics as a wife, but also her responsibilities as a mother. We see that not only traditional tendencies, such as the common age for marriage, but also legal authorities encouraged women to have children – at least three in number. The reward for producing three children was the privilege of freedom from a formal guardian, and a right of inheritance.

As we have seen, marriage was built around both traditional and legal procedures. Both cultural and legal expectations centred on women being proper wives and mothers, and producing legitimate children. This does not mean that women had no other responsibilities, or that they were considered only as well-behaved wet nurses. Our intention here is to establish the accepted social and legal norms, and to try and examine the degree to which they were practised. The evidence available does not enable us to construct a detailed model for those who lived in the first and second centuries AD. It would be fair to say, however, that there was a man contributing to the organisation of the life of virtually every woman, either legally or otherwise. Whether it was her father, husband, son, or another relative acting as a guardian, a woman’s opinions needed to be seconded by a man.

d. A Brief Conclusion

The inscriptions from Ephesus provide us with insight into common practices, with some exceptions. The information which such archaeological evidence provides about family relations is in accordance with what we know about women’s roles in the Greco-Roman family.

A superficial reading of the evidence for the married life of a Greco-Roman woman, such as legal enforcements or traditional applications, might provide us with an “unpleasant” image. However, our aim is not to evaluate the lives of these women according to our modern social standards. Rather we aim to see how much this Greco-Roman picture is compatible with early Christian evidence on the issue.

has two sons and a daughter (1590a), another unnamed mother has four sons (3033) and Mindius Xariborus has two sons and a daughter (3229).


It would be fair to say that the life of a Greco-Roman woman revolved around the institution of marriage. Being a wife brought the honourable job of being a mother of legitimate children. The legal age for marriage was related to the physical ability to bear children. Women were valued not just as physical bearers of children, however, but because they were supposed to fulfil a respected role as a wife. Just because the respected wife was the optimum role for women, it does not mean that they were simply servants to their husbands and wet nurses to their children. The nature of their role included a submission to their family with devotion, care and respect. It was not a submission of slavish character. It is true that they did not have as much freedom as their male counterparts in domestic, social, and legal aspects of society; however, there was a degree to which they still had some rights. Managing the private quarters of the house was their responsibility. They also gained more and more presence in the public spaces of the house over time. Their legal authority was majorly subjected to supervision of their close male relatives, but certain rights were granted to them in specific circumstances. When wives and mothers, for example, appear along with their family in publicly visible records, they were not relegated to the background simply because of their gender. Even though the evidence available to us represents a small number of inscriptions, which constitute exceptional situations, they are proof of factors such as social class and marital status contributed to women's public appearance. The evidence for the lives of Ephesian married women denotes submissive wives, but respect was central, and this was required to be reciprocal.

III. The Perception of Marriage in the Early Christian Ephesian Writings

Household relations, particularly involving wives and husbands, attracted much attention in the early Christian writings. The behavioural patterns that were expected from the spouses not only regulated the desired Christian union, but also helped to build a reputation for the early Christian community within wider society. As an indication of the importance of this task, regulations regarding household members are reiterated in a number of letters. This section will commence with the authorship discussion of these letters. The outcome of this discussion will enable us to conclude how we will approach the letters. The cohesiveness of the early Christian writings with Greco-Roman culture constitutes the first part of our argument. This thesis will argue that the authors of early Christian writings employed elements of Greco-Roman culture in their texts. We will demonstrate the similarities between early Christian texts and
Greco-Roman culture from different perspectives. The extent to which early Christian authors engaged with their surrounding culture, and interpretation of the term ‘Christianization’ in modern scholarship will be examined as a part of our discussion. Other aspects of the discussion will include the different rationales that scholars propose to be behind the early Christian writers’ usage of Greco-Roman culture. We will also discuss the issue of divorce of non-Christians.

The equality of man and woman in early Christian marriage will be dealt with in the following section. We will assert that in the early Christian community the male and female in a marital couple were not socially equal. The final section will consider letters from bishops, which assess the relationship between husband and wife. We will also refer to passages from 1 Corinthians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Peter, the Letter of Ignatius to Polycarp, and the Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians.

a. The Authorship Argument

Most of the letters we employ in this chapter have been subjected to numerous discussions. Colossians, Ephesians and 1 Peter are examined by many scholars in terms of the identity of their authors, and place and date of their composition. Almost each suggestion for the identity of the author of each letter presents a different possibility for when and where the letters were written.

The letter to the Colossians is believed to be non-Pauline by most scholars.293 It was addressed to Colossae, located 100 miles from Ephesus. If Paul is chosen as the author of the letter then it is believed to be written either from Ephesus or Rome while he was a prisoner. While suggesting that the letter was composed during the Ephesus imprisonment would require an earlier date of the mid-50s AD, a later composition date (60s AD) is required if Rome is taken as the place of composition.294 Scholars who prefer deutero-Pauline authorship for the letter consider the latter option as the most viable one.295 The letter to the Ephesians is also discussed by scholars in regards to the identity of its author. While the letter is mostly regarded as a deutero-Pauline text,296 there are arguments in favour of Pauline authorship as well.297 The place the letter was addressed is more controversial than its origin. The letter was probably not addressed

294 Dunn, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 40.
295 MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, p. 9. Dunn, The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, pp. 40-41.
296 MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, pp. 6, 16; Shkul, Reading Ephesians, pp. 3-5.
297 Cohick, Ephesians, pp. 5-27.
to Ephesus initially. The majority of the witnesses omit the words ‘in Ephesus’ in Ephesians 1:1. Scholars have argued that the letter was aimed to be read out in several churches rather than one. However, even if it was a circulating letter addressed to several different groups of ‘saints’, it is important that there are manuscripts stating that the letter was addressed to Ephesus. This was probably because it remained in Ephesus for a long time, and, indeed, Ephesus may have been its final destination. The letter is usually dated to between 80 and 90 AD. The close contextual, and perhaps geographical relationship between the two letters has led many scholars to believe that Ephesians actually relied on Colossians.

The authorship of 1 Peter has also been questioned by scholars. While there are several reasons to doubt that Peter wrote the letter, some scholars have regarded him as the author. Others have accepted Peter not as the composer of the letter but as a supervisor to those who penned it. The letter is addressed to a number of churches in Asia Minor, and the date is believed to be around the end of the first century AD, if Peter is not opted for as the author. That Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, on the other hand, is not disputed. The letter was written from Ephesus to Corinth in the 50s AD, and is always attributed to Paul.

While the scholarship on Ephesians and Colossians is divided over whether or not to identify the author of these letters as Paul, we are interested in a different discussion. For the purposes of this thesis, what is important is that Ephesians and Colossians represent the same ideology as the other letters in terms of the relationship between a man and a woman.

That 1 Cor. 7:1-16 and Eph. 5:21-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1 and 1 Peter 3:1-7 share a common view of marriage is questioned from several different angles by scholars. Margaret MacDonald examines Colossians and Ephesians in relation to each other, and states that Colossians, contrary to Paul’s earlier works, presents a household code that is “so clearly embracing the conventional household ethics of the Greco-Roman

298 Cohick, Ephesians, p. 33; MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, p. 17.
299 MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, p. 18.
302 Davids, The First Epistle of Peter, p. 10; Green, 1 Peter, p. 10.
303 Davids, The First Epistle of Peter, pp. 9-10.
world.” According to the MacDonald, 1 Cor. 7, which promotes celibacy, paints a very different picture of marriage than Col. 3 (and therefore Eph. 5 and 1 Peter 3). This argument not only implies that the 1 Cor. 7 passage does consider marriage as a viable life-style, but also places 1 Cor. 7 in contrast to both Greco-Roman culture and the passages from Colossians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza states that 1 Corinthians and Colossians are not compatible. Schüssler Fiorenza argues that whereas the author of Colossians borrows Greco-Roman ethics in order to establish Christian ethics, in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:33-36 Paul implies that he favours the equality of husband and wife in marriage but he cannot implement it because the surrounding culture would not support such a custom. Keeping in mind that 1 Cor. 11 and 14 passages will be treated in following chapters, as even though they are related to the issue of marriage we believe their main topic lays elsewhere, it is clear that Schüssler Fiorenza believes that the authors of the two letters had different viewpoints on marriage and the relationship between the early Christian community and Greco-Roman culture.

While all of the issues referred to above about a married couple’s equality and Greco-Roman culture will be examined more deeply in the following sections, we will mention some aspects here in order to address issues surrounding authorship. Col. 3:18-4:1, Eph. 5:21-6:9, and 1 Peter 3:1-7 focus on household relations. The husband-wife binary is discussed in addition to those between master and slave and father and children binaries to varying degrees in the three letters. Eph. 5:21-33, Col. 3:18-19, and 1 Peter 3:1-7 in particular discuss the marital couple. As we will investigate in further below, these verses were intended to regulate the behaviour between the couple. The common theme of these passages is the wife’s submission to her husband, and the husband’s love for his wife. The other passage in question about marriage, 1 Cor. 7, starts with a report Paul had received about men abstaining from their wives. He associates this action with sexual immorality and refers to actual cases in previous verses. In the following verses Paul spends tremendous effort to explain why and how people should protect themselves from sexual immorality. According to Paul, marriage, just like celibacy, is a tool to achieve this protected state, and one or the other should be employed depending on the person’s perseverance with the temptation for wrong doing. Paul is open to the idea of marriage; in fact it is his “go to” response for those

304 MacDonald, Colossians and Ephesians, p. 8.
307 The issue will be dealt with on pp. 108-110.
who cannot live their lives away from immorality while they are single. Paul would rather that everybody remained celibate like him, but is aware that not all can live such a life (1 Cor. 7:7). He does not reject marriage outright as he needs it for the Christian community to maintain an ethical life. MacDonald states that Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor. 7 is not against marriage: “– for Paul, the more important opposition seems to have been between celibacy/marriage and immorality.”308 We suggest that the verses concerning the married couple in 1 Cor. 7, Eph. 5, Col. 3, and 1 Peter 3 aim to deal with different aspects of the marriage. Whereas 1 Cor. 7 attempts to prevent immoral tendencies within the community by reminding the congregation of their marital and sexual responsibilities to one another, the other set of letters does not mention any temptation for wrong doing and focuses on behavioural obligations of the couple. None of the passages state that they are against marriage, and do not display a hostile opposition to the custom that Greco-Roman culture deemed vital for social existence. Therefore, even though they approach the subject from different positions, all the letters mentioned above present complementary opinions on the subject of marriage.

1 Cor. 11 provides a window into Paul’s view of the social standing of men and women. The chain of heads, which is established in 1 Cor. 11:3 and later adapted in Eph. 5, reflects how Paul believes both the social and marital relationship between two individuals should work. We will argue in the next chapter that in 1 Cor. 11 it is clearly stated that wives should take their husbands into consideration while behaving in public, because a woman’s head, i.e. her husband, is the person who is responsible for her actions. Even though the passage does not directly imply a domestic setting, we are safe to assume that the authoritative chain of heads would be valid in the household as well, as the household acted as a miniature form of society. When 1 Cor. 11 is considered in terms of its treatment of the husband-wife relationship alongside Eph. 5, Col. 3, and 1 Peter 3 we see a startling resemblance in their approaches. This similarity allows us to argue that Paul, Peter and whoever penned Ephesians and Colossians, had much in common.

The identity of the authors of those disputed letters is not an argument we wish to take sides in. The author of 1 Peter will be referred as Peter; however, the authors of Colossians and Ephesians will not be referred as Paul to avoid confusion.

b. Christian, Greco-Roman, or Both?

The correlation between the early Christian writings and Greco-Roman evidence is our main interest in this thesis. We have searched for similarities and differences in the perceptions of women in Greco-Roman culture and early Christian writings. In order to establish any connections between the early Christian writings and their surrounding culture we first examined our Greco-Roman and Roman evidence. This investigation not only sheds light on our research questions, but contributes to some of the current scholarly discussions about the Christianization of Greco-Roman culture, particularly in terms of the equality of husband and wife in marriage.

The archaeological evidence from Ephesus provided us not only with gravestones, but also archaeological information about the domestic lives of the Ephesian people. The chaste and moderate wife motif surfaced particularly in the domestic evidence; however, although gravestones offering special praise to women were limited in number, the analysis of the inscriptions did support our case.\(^{309}\) Archaeological remnants from Terrace House 2 dating to much later dates than our initial time span proved that there was an ongoing tradition of keeping the identity of the devoted Greco-Roman wife alive, contradicting Bruce Winter’s argument that over time women had became less traditional and more liberal.\(^{310}\)

All the evidence from Ephesus in particular, and the Roman/Greco-Roman world in general, has enabled us to interpret the social standing of ancient Ephesian women in marriage. We argue that the model of marriage for a woman in Greco-Roman society was taken up and Christianized by the early Christian authors in order to build a Christian ideal of marital union.

In order to analyze the common aspects between Greco-Roman and early Christian marriage we will consider the various questions that scholars have asked concerning how or why early Christian authors have employed ingredients from their surrounding culture. Our first subsection will concentrate on scholarly approaches to the Christianization process, with the following subsections investigating the different arguments scholars have made for the ways early Christian authors employed Greco-Roman culture.

\(^{309}\) Please see pp. 81-82.
\(^{310}\) Please see pp. 79-80.
1) Attitudes towards Christianization of Greco-Roman Customs

The passages we will investigate in this chapter, relating to the Christianization of Greco-Roman marriage customs, consider how Christian values infiltrated Greco-Roman marriage, and required a couple to uphold established customs with new purposes. We will argue that the amount of similarities between the early Christian writings and Greco-Roman evidence supports the idea of early Christian authors possessing full awareness of their surrounding culture. In terms of our argument about the submissive wife model in Greco-Roman culture and the early Christian writings, we will see that whereas social pressure encouraged the application of the devoted wife figure, Paul and authors of other letters brought the concept of spiritual conferment to the Greco-Roman traditions.

Carolyn Osiek and Margaret MacDonald argue that because of the very logic of Christianization, there is a limit to how much the authors borrow Greco-Roman customs. Even though they do not elaborate on how much they think this limit stretches, the authors seem to think that the Christian elements in Ephesians stand as a boundary to the Greco-Roman cultural values which would allow the church “to assimilate into society”. In our opinion identification of those elements as a boundary does not reflect their proper function in the text. The Christian character of the letters does not act as a limiter for how much of the existing culture is mirrored. Addition of Christian values to the customs of an existing cultural system acts as a revaluation for Greco-Roman customs; it provides spiritual justification for certain actions.

When Osiek and MacDonald propose the abovementioned argument, their main focus is the discussion of household relations in Ephesians 5:21-33, which the author begins with a reciprocal exhortation, rather than addressing a particular spouse. The author of Ephesians demands that the married couple ‘be subject to one another,’ becoming more focused in the following verses. After directly asking wives to be submissive the author describes a chain very similar to that in 1 Corinthians. The two chains, however, are not exactly the same. In 1 Cor. 11:3 we read παντὸς ἄνδρος ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστιν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἄνηρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός, while in Eph. 5:23 we read ὅτι ἀνήρ ἐστιν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικός ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος. In 1 Corinthians Paul intends to establish an authoritative hierarchy in order to express who is responsible to whom, whereas in Eph. 5 the relationship of the married couple is likened to the one of

311 Osiek, MacDonald and Tulloch, A Woman’s Place, p. 126.
Christ and his church. Christ is the head of every man in one text and of the church in the other. Carolyn Osiek concludes that the comparison offered in Eph. 5 does not carry the characteristics of a metaphor but works as a simile, expressing the likeness between the husband and wife and Christ and church, rather than suggesting that the former binary actually becomes the latter. In addition to Osiek's observation we add that 'the church' in Eph. 5 refers to the Ephesian congregation, which included women. However, we should remember that Christ has already become the head of men, and consequently women, in 1 Cor. Men take precedence as they are regarded as socially superior. In Eph. 5 the issue is how the church is submitted to Christ and how Christ cares about the church; the passage does not intended to actively promote the superior character of man. After cementing how wives should submit to their husbands 'in everything' (Eph. 5:24) by giving the church's submission to Christ as an example, husbands are instructed to love their wives as “Christ loved the church” (5:25). Therefore, the simile operates mutually. Just like Ephesians, the letter which is said to be its inspiration brings theological justification to a wife's submission to her husband. In Colossians 3:18 the submission of the wife is regarded "as is fitting in the Lord" and husbands are instructed not only to love their wives but also not to treat them harshly (Col. 3:19). The statement leaves no doubt that the submissive wife motif was not simply a social custom expected of the early Christian community, but rather a tradition that became imbued with religious/spiritual significance.

Osiek and MacDonald have identified the role of the submissive wife in the household in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. We have found further supporting literary evidence from the Roman world and in archaeological evidence from Greco-Roman Ephesus. After adopting the submissive wife motif the author of Ephesians then Christianizes it with the 'simile' of husband-wife and church-Christ binaries. In this manner the author of Ephesians fully confesses that he accepts the values of his society, and promises this behaviour will be rewarded with Christ's blessing. Greco-Roman traditions are not replaced, therefore, but transformed into acceptable ideals for the early Christian community.

313 The congregation in Ephesians has been interpreted as the universal church and never as the local community (MacDonald, Colossians Ephesians, p. 16). However, in our opinion the audience of the letter could have considered themselves as the local part of the universal church as a whole. It would mean a more involved understanding of being a member of the Christian community.
314 Osiek, MacDonald and Tulloch, A Woman's Place, p. 120.
2) Motivation behind Christianization of Greco-Roman Customs

Lynn Cohick states that in terms of marriage Ephesians does not mirror its surrounding culture, but rather pursues an environment where wives are not treated as socially inferior to their husbands. She claims that the author wished to prevent the assimilation of the early Christian community. We have argued that the view of marriage held by the authors of the abovementioned letters was the same as that within wider that Greco-Roman society. Respect and subjection to her husband, and care and loyalty to her family, were the characteristics that the authors expected from an early Christian wife. The author of Ephesians also demands that husbands be loving and caring towards their wives. This would be becoming in the eyes of the Lord because it is how Christ cared for the church, and would build a foundation for mutual subjection to one another, which was the ideal. In this sense it was the author’s principle to preserve the traditional concept of family common in wider society. Moreover, we do not believe that the actions of the author of Ephesians would have prepared the ground for ‘assimilation’. Even if the letter provided us with a completely different picture of family life than of its day, we still would argue that this would not be sufficient reasoning to claim that the author was trying to maintain continuation of the congregation and to avoid the early Christian community be absorbed by the society. The new presented faith, in a new god and in Christ, would be adequate to distinguish the Christians from their wider society. Furthermore, the authors would not attempt to duplicate such core values of marriage, family, and household if he thought it posed a danger to the identity of the early Christian community.

On the issue of marriage in Ephesians Minna Shkul agrees with Cohick. She argues that early Christian culture provided wives with better living standards than were typical of their day, and “Ephesians’ Christianness gives the socially inferior ‘something to feel good about’, even if they could not expect their social conditions to improve.” We must establish that even though some of the scholarship argues that the life of an ancient Greco-Roman woman was regarded as socially and economically less fortunate than that of a man, our modern standards should not be used to evaluate the social conditions of Greco-Roman culture. Russ Dudrey criticizes arguments about the “social injustice” concept, which speculate that the social situation of women was disadvantaged and unfortunate in the Greco-Roman world. He not only argues that this

315 Cohick, Ephesians, pp. 127-142.
316 Ibid, p. 128.
317 Shkul, Reading Ephesians, p. 209.
social model is not properly constructed\textsuperscript{318} but that it is incorrect to assert that it was a responsibility for the church to tackle the "social injustice" of its day; "as if in its nascent form the church had the power to work such a program of social and political reform."\textsuperscript{319} It is true that as a newly developing community the early Christian congregation would not be able to alter social dynamics, however, we still argue that the authors of the letters would not blindly follow the values and customs of society just because they thought it would be difficult to tackle them. Moreover, we have presented evidence proving that the idea of marriage for women in the Greco-Roman world did not consist of pure injustice. Although she did not enjoy equality with her husband, a wife was protected by the laws enacted in Ephesian legislation, which defended the rights of a wife before a marriage and after in case of a divorce.\textsuperscript{320}

David Park, on the other hand, argues for a parallel between the Greco-Roman world and the early Christian writings. He states that "Paul apparently recognized that the social system of his day would not change and prescribed in Ephesians practical rules that would enhance the existent marital system."\textsuperscript{321} However, Park still believes that there was only one difference between the ideology of the author of Ephesians for marriage and that of his surrounding culture – the husband’s love.\textsuperscript{322} Park proposes that this factor added a caring element to the responsibilities of the ‘head’ in addition acting as an authoritative figure. The problem with this theory is that it suggests that prior to the letter to the Ephesians loving husbands were not existent in Greco-Roman Ephesus! To the contrary, we have provided evidence of wives being praised by their husbands in their epitaphs.\textsuperscript{323} There are also other examples available from various locations in Hellenistic Egypt.\textsuperscript{324} Therefore, a husband's love for his wife was not entirely absent in Greco-Roman marriages.

The careful treatment of marriage by early Christian authors confirms the topic’s value in their eyes. The role they wished the wife to undertake was essentially submissive in character. We have seen that Roman and Greco-Roman culture valued family life greatly. The importance of producing legitimate children cannot be overstated; this legislation was implemented in order to keep society “productive”.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{320} Please see p. 87
\textsuperscript{322} Ibid, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{323} Please see pp. 81-82.
\textsuperscript{324} Dudrey, “Submit Yourselves to One Another,” pp. 33-34.
\end{footnotesize}
However, we should not disregard the fact that aside from encumbering the wife with a number of responsibilities, caring for her husband and children being the primary duty, marriage provided a woman with a more acknowledged status in society than before, and it also offered a wife her own space—often domestic—within which to operate and dominate. Being subjected to one’s husband was the second important duty of a wife after being responsible for the production of a newer generation in Roman and Greco-Roman culture. For those who lived in the cities where Colossians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter were heard, to be regarded as socially inferior to one’s husband and to obey him in marriage was quite familiar.

3) Should They Divorce the Unbelieving Spouse?

As we have indicated in the introduction to this section Colossians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter are not the only letters in which the authors focus on marriage. In 1 Corinthians 7:1-16 Paul takes a significantly different angle than the letters mentioned above. The passage can be analyzed roughly in two sections; 1 Cor. 7: 1-7 where Paul talks about responsibilities of the couple towards each other regarding sexual relations, and 7:8-16, which can be summarized as the guidelines for whether or not to be married. Whereas the first set of verses draws attention to one particular marital concern, the second provide material for discussion of the parallels between Greco-Roman culture and the early Christian writings.

Paul addresses those who are married to an unbeliever and states that as long as the unbelieving spouse gives his or her consent for maintaining their marriage, there is no need to break up the relationship (7:12-13). The congregation should not worry that they are married to an unbeliever or that their children are not blessed; thanks to the believing spouse, the rest of his/her immediate family is made clean (7:14). However, if it is an unbelieving spouse’s wish to separate, it can be done (7:15). The couple should not forget that they can save one another (7:15). Not only does Paul ask for marriages between Christians and non-Christians not to be dissolved, even though it is for the sake of a more religiously devoted life, he also assures his community that they do not endanger the holy status of their children and their spouse by staying in a mixed-faith marriage. This is the greatest measure that Paul could take to protect the integrity of society as a whole and consequently the Greco-Roman tradition of family life.

Interestingly, the same verses are interpreted quite differently by scholars. Margaret MacDonald states;

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325 See pp. 108-110 for an examination of these verses.
“What seems to be beyond question is that there are serious problems in the households of believer married to unbelievers; some community members have taken the initiative in removing themselves from the situation, while others essentially have been abandoned by unbeliever who no longer consent to live with them. In an effort to extend the scope of salvation as broadly as possible, the Apostle insists that believers do all they can to remain in what must have been very difficult situations. Seen from the perspective of the unbelievers, Paul offers us one of the earliest examples of the church acting as an irritant to Greco-Roman society. The effect of his exhortations is to legitimize the existence of ‘the household divided against itself.’”326

MacDonald argues that because the wife was supposed to believe in her husband’s gods in Greco-Roman society, the early Christian community would create disturbance by allowing mixed-faith marriages. We suggest that the very action MacDonald assumes to be disturbing actually enabled early Christians to show that they were not trying to be a nuisance to society. In a mixed-faith marriage Paul advises that the fate of the marriage should be left to the unbelieving spouse. He or she who is not happy to be in a household with a Christian spouse could break up the marriage. Therefore, the Christian spouse would not be responsible for the separation and the early Christian community would not be labelled as ‘home wrecking’. Otherwise, the married believers who doubted the holiness of their marriage or their children may have attempted to leave their spouse, and the congregation would become known for their eagerness to shred the core of society to pieces. The real difficulty was for the Christian spouses, especially wives, who wanted to divorce their unbelieving partners but could not because the feeling was not mutual. Paul does not seem to be concerned by this, however, probably because earthly affairs were somewhat irrelevant in his eyes. We will see in the next chapter that Paul believed the end of the world to be near, and asked people to act as if they did not have a partner (1 Cor. 7:25-40). If the members of the congregation had problems with their mixed-faith marriages, they should be patient, because it would end soon.

Paul is not the only early Christian author who thinks that Christian wives should remain in a mixed-faith marriage. In 1 Peter 3:1-2, while Peter asks wives to be submissive to their husbands he makes it clear that this includes Christian wives who are married to non-Christian husbands. He stresses that the wife’s behaviour is

326 MacDonald, Early Church Women and Pagan Opinion, p. 192.
important not only because it was culturally appropriate, also because it could help to win over the husband to Christianity. Both Paul and Peter, therefore, express interest in keeping married couples together, and working to overcome any difficulties a mixed-faith union might cause.

We have argued here that the letters from the New Testament had a close relationship with Greco-Roman culture. The letters contain many elements which were valuable and common in the culture of their day, such as the submissive wife motif. The role of a wife carried great importance in Greco-Roman and Roman culture, and evidence from Ephesus supports this. Early Christian writings not only employed elements from their surrounding culture but also spent tremendous effort to limit disruption and make a good impression in wider society.

a. Equal or Superior?

The issue of equality of husband and wife in 1 Cor. 7, Eph. 5, Col. 3, and 1 Peter 3 occupies another large section of scholarship. We regard this argument as a natural outcome of the discussion about the relationship between early Christian writings and Greco-Roman culture. Because the submissive wife motif was common in early Christian writings as well as the surrounding culture of their time – spousal equality does not feature heavily in the letters of early Christian authors.

Different scholars have suggested that there are different degrees of spousal equality in the early Christian writings. Philip Payne asserts that there is an absolute equality between the spouses in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians. The opening verse in Eph. 5 constitutes the foundation for Payne’s argument about how the author of Ephesians perceives the marital relationship. Payne states that “Paul’s use of the reciprocal pronoun in 5:21, “submitting one to another”, indicates that he is not endorsing hierarchical social structures.”³²⁷ This is one verse where the author does not address his audience as husband and wife but uses a general tone and asks everyone to submit to each other. At first glance it does give the impression of reciprocity, but further examination reveals that this is not the case. The author addresses three groups of people in Eph. 5:21-6:9; husband and wife, children and father, and slaves and master. We will discuss the subject of husbands and wives below, but it seems fair to say that the other two pairs – children and fathers and slaves and masters – do not contain partners who occupy socially equal grounds.

³²⁷ Payne, Man and Woman One in Christ, p. 275.
In the following verses the author likens the Christ-church and husband-wife binaries to each other and this enables him to explain how the husband and wife should treat each other (Eph. 5:22-27). There are two aspects to this simile. The first aspect is the ‘head’ chain where the husband is the head of the wife just like Christ is the head of the church – “the body of which he is the Saviour.” (5:23). The second is the submission-love relationship, where husbands are asked to love their wives as Christ loves the church, and wives to submit to their husbands like the church submits to Christ. Interpretation of the ‘head chain’ hinges on the interpretation of the word κεφαλή. In our discussion in chapter 6 of the head covering issue in 1 Cor. 11 we will understand the word to have connotations of ‘pre-eminence’, ‘foremost’. However, in Ephesians 5 the word ‘head’ is paired with ‘Saviour’. It is also indicates that the husband saves his wife from impurity by loving her (Eph. 5:25-27). Payne understands the word ‘head’ to mean ‘source’ and after a lengthy discussion about how this source/Saviour pairing would be understood by the audience of Ephesians, he concludes that the husband is the source of “food, clothing, shelter, the physical source of her children, and [the wife’s] emotional source of love.” However, this meaning which sees the husband as a ‘provider’ does not fully fit with the elaborate formula constructed by the two binaries. Even if the husband was understood to be his wife’s provider and carer, this is very different to how Christ cares for the church. Without any hint of authority in the equation the system does not work.

Besides, this approach does not shed any light on the constant reminder for wives to be submissive to their husbands. Payne argues that the couple is warned about subjects in which they lack practice. We agree that early Christian authors would target points that they think the community needed to hear, however, surely the same advice would not be applied to everyone. The advice to the couple about submitting and loving each other are not parts of a mutual understanding of responsibilities. In other words, a Greco-Roman husband and wife would not be expected to carry out the same behavioural patterns to each other. Husbands are reminded to love their wives not because every other responsibility they have towards their wives, including submitting to them, are fulfilled and loving them is the only one that is left but because

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329 Please see fn. 471. Also see Seim, “A Superior Minority?,” pp. 178-179.
as a husband to love their wives, i.e. accommodate them in a loving and peaceful marriage, was a very important part for them to play in Greco-Roman culture.

Admittedly, 1 Cor. 7 (cf. Payne and Clark Wire) provides more material with which to discuss equality because of its constant reciprocal addressing of husband and wife. However, the dynamics of this discussion completely depend on one question; in what are we understanding this equality to exist? We have already discussed how we perceive 1 Cor. 7:1-16, and what we believe Paul is referring to when he talks about sexual immorality. However, Paul’s approach to the subject has led scholars like Antoinette Clark Wire and Philip Payne to assume that the approved early Christian marriage consisted of two individuals who stood on socially equal grounds. We argue, however, that what Paul in fact wants is for the congregation to refrain from sexual wrongdoings by being conscious of their responsibilities to each other.

Payne asserts that the passage “presents a remarkable picture of Paul’s vision of the equality of man and woman in marriage.”\textsuperscript{333} This view is the result of a misinterpretation of the passage, and verses 7:2-4 in particular. The fact that Paul says “let each woman have her husband” does not mean that a wife and her husband stand on equal grounds. She should give her husband his conjugal rights, just like her husband should give her hers, so that neither of them will be susceptible to backsliding. Paul’s mindset is focused on how to keep the congregation away from ethical mistakes.

Payne is not alone in his view. Antoinette Clark Wire also suggests that Paul believes a husband and wife to be equal in marriage. Clark Wire takes a different approach to the 1 Corinthians passage, and asserts that Paul’s idea of marriage involves equality. According to Clark Wire, “Paul goes far beyond what is required in Greek to make the point that men and women have the same responsibilities toward each other.”\textsuperscript{334} The author, however, fails to mention whether she understands this equality to cover the whole marriage, or just certain aspects. Furthermore, she is convinced that this equal treatment of men and women by Paul requests more from women.\textsuperscript{335} The author bases this assumption on the possibility of there being more women than men involved in mixed-faith marriages. This idea is supported by other scholars too.\textsuperscript{336} However, this cannot be interpreted as a deliberate action by Paul to burden women more than men. He may have been aware of this situation, but as we have argued

\textsuperscript{333} Ibid, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid, pp. 79-82.
\textsuperscript{336} Seim, “A Superior Minority?,” p. 169.
before, what Paul asked from the early Christian community was to protect the sacred identity of marriage.

Paul starts 1 Cor. 7 by sharing news he has received which apparently had worried him. Early Christian Corinthian men seemed to view it to be crucial to dedicate their lives to their new belief alone, meaning that they were abandoning their wives. However, the implication here is sexual abstinence, not that they were leaving their wives completely (although the former situation might have led to the latter eventually). Gordon Fee states that this abandonment could be true of wives as well. He refers to a group of possible ‘eschatological women’ in Corinth who are refraining from sexual relations with their husbands. The author justifies his assertion by saying that women are addressed first in verse 4, which concerns conjugal rights. Therefore, women must be the source of the problem. However, we should remember that Paul is writing in response to the information that he received about ‘not touching a woman’. The prologue of the passage originates from the central theme of the verses. Even if wives happened to act in a similar manner later, it was the husbands’ abstention that impelled Paul to write.

What is stressed in 1 Cor. 7:2-5 is the significance of why the married couple should not begrudge each other sexual relations. Everyone should have a spouse (7:2); the married couple should give each other “conjugal rights” (7:3) as they have authority not over their own ‘body’, but over each other’s (7:4). Even if couples decide to deprive one another, it should only be for a certain period of time. All these precautions should be taken because of the dangers of a lack of self-control, to avoid the spouses being tempted by Satan (7:5). Paul is not worried about the separation of couples per se, but rather the possible consequences of this situation, which may lead to sexual immorality. By immorality, Paul means sexual relations between people who cannot legitimately be together, such as the man living with his father’s wife (his stepmother) in 1 Cor. 5:1. Paul’s attitude towards this situation is severe and he sees it as an action which not only degrades oneself, but also harms the entire church. He is also surprised by the nature of the immorality (a step-incestuous relationship) because it “is not found even among pagans” (5:1). This statement reveals that his expectation from the

339 According to Roman law, a marriage between a man and his stepmother was prohibited. “Moreover, I cannot marry my former mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or my stepdaughter or stepmother. We make use of the word ‘former’ because if the marriage by which affinity of this
congregation surpasses their former pagan identity. A case such as this is an example of the situations the congregation should refrain from. Fee is certain that sexual immortality in 1 Cor. 7:2 refers to the prostitution from 1 Cor. 6:12-20. Although it is absolutely possible this case of prostitution of concerned Paul, it is also obvious that it was not the only instance of such behaviour.\footnote{Fee, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, p. 278.}

Paul’s intention in this passage is not to regulate social relations between the married couple. He wants to prevent immorality by keeping the couple in a legitimate sexually active relationship so that if they do not have self-control, they will not drift into an improper life-style. If they do have self-control, Paul’s initial request to the unmarried and the widows of the congregation is to remain single as Paul does (7:8). Again, however, this relies upon having a strong will (7:9). Even though Paul wishes that everybody would live like him, he does not ask the married to separate; first wives then husbands are warned not to leave their spouses, and if they already have done they should reunite (7:10-11). However, in our opinion sexual morality is not the only reason for Paul’s request to avoid separation. Notice that he advises the married couple that they may abstain from each other for only a certain time period, and then should come back together. He grants this as \textit{συγγνώμη} (concession) but not as a \textit{ἐπιταγή} (commandment) (1 Cor. 7:6). Paul says that not himself, but the Lord \textit{παραγγέλλει} (commands) the spouses that they should not separate (1 Cor. 7:10-11). He values marriage just as much as celibacy. Celibacy may contribute more to the strengthening of one’s religious beliefs, but we must not forget that these people come from a society where family held a substantial and crucial position. Avoiding marriage could not only lead to immoral behaviour, but could also damage one of the community’s major components. Paul was well aware of the family-oriented culture of Greco-Roman society.

Contrary to Payne and Clark Wire, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza reaches a very clear conclusion about the passage from 1 Cor. 7. She states that Paul spends great effort to give the married couple the same amount of responsibilities, and points out that “it would be reaching too far to conclude from this that women and men shared an equal role and a mutuality of relationship or equality of responsibility, freedom, and accountability in marriage.”\footnote{Schüssler Fiorenza, \textit{In Memory of Her}, p. 224.} According to Schüssler Fiorenza, then, in Paul’s mind women and men are equal in a marriage. It is not clear that this is what Paul means in

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[340] Fee, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, p. 278.
\item[341] Schüssler Fiorenza, \textit{In Memory of Her}, p. 224.
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this passage, however Schüssler Fiorenza argues that in other passages of 1 Cor. (11:2-16 and 14:33-36)\textsuperscript{342} it is possible to see that Paul in fact knows that the rules he introduces are ‘unequal’ and are not easy for the congregation to accept, but he proceeds to implement them anyway in order to avoid alienation of the congregation from the Greco-Roman society where husband and wife were commonly treated as ‘unequal’.\textsuperscript{343} Our main argument about early Christian authors’ employment of their surrounding culture depends firstly upon the awareness of the author of the said culture, and secondly the extent to which he finds it appropriate to borrow traditions from this culture. To think that Paul would implement rules that he would not approve of for the sole purpose of being in harmony with Greco-Roman culture is problematic. If we accept Schüssler Fiorenza’s argument concerning Paul’s mindset behind his “unequal” treatment of men and women, then our entire argument would be constructed not upon the conscious decisions of early Christian authors, but their alleged goal to desperately please their surrounding society no matter what their own beliefs. To completely mirror their cultural context is not the only aim for the early Christian writers. The writers employed cultural characteristics to the degree they thought the nascent Christian faith required, not based on how Greco-Roman society in general would feel about the newly flourished group. The fact that the early Christian community mostly fitted nicely into wider society is not an indication of social dictation by Greco-Romans, but a preference for the application of already existing customs by early Christian authors.

b. Bishops’ Opinions on Wives

Considering that we have a rough chronology for the letters of the New Testament, it is possible to observe the changing ways that they approach issues in their respective congregations (be they specific congregations or the Christian community addressed in general). The location that a text is associated with has a great impact on its contents. Through such letters, we can trace the changing experiences of the Christian community. Their needs and weaknesses – or at least as those who wrote to or about them saw it – had changed over time. Accordingly, the subjects of Christian letters became more detailed. Bishops were able to carry on in this tradition of letter writing, and also comment on the letters of the New Testament. This project does not permit us to examine each bishop’s own situation and potential motives for writing:

\textsuperscript{342} The texts will be discussed in chapters six and five respectively.
\textsuperscript{343} Schüssler Fiorenza, \textit{In Memory of Her}, p. 233.
however, we can still attempt to construct a picture of women’s lives according to the points of view of such bishops.

In his Letter to Polycarp, Ignatius devotes a small chapter (Ch. 5) to the relationship between a husband and a wife.\footnote{The letter was written by Ignatius around the early second century AD from Troas, addressing Polycarp, who was in Smyrna. Smyrna was a small town (and now is a major city called Izmir), approximately 80 km away from Ephesus.} Even though he draws upon Ephesians 5:25 he uses a different verb to describe his wishes for how wives should behave towards their husbands.\footnote{See Paul Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch and the Writings that later formed the New Testament,” in The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, ed. by Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 159-186, pp. 168-169.} Ignatius asks that his sisters should “love the Lord and be content (ἀρκεῖσθαι; to be enough for, satisfy, passive form of ἀρκέω) with their husbands physically and spiritually.”\footnote{Ignatius, Letter to Polycarp, trans. by Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), ch. 5.1, my brackets.} Likewise, husbands should love their wives as the Lord loved the church. Again, the emphasis seems to be that couples should love and care for one another, but more devotion is expected from the wife. This constitutes the essence of the Christian household as Ignatius understands it. Margaret Macdonald states that even if there was no direct reference from Eph. 5:25, Ignatius shared a goal with the author of Ephesians; “Although it is impossible to be certain if Ignatius knows the text of Eph 5 or simply shares with its author a traditional theme, it is evident that both authors greatly value the Christian couple and have the unity of the church as a central concern.”\footnote{Margaret Y. MacDonald, “The Ideal of the Christian Couple: Ign. Pol. 5.1-2 Looking Back to Paul,” New Testament Studies 40 (1994), pp. 105-125, p.117, fn. 47.} The letter also mentions the issue of celibacy, however, unlike Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, Ignatius discusses it not in the context of self-control and the risk of falling into sexual immorality, but the celibate bragging about the fact that they are able to remain pure. Ignatius sees this as a much greater problem than sexual immorality itself, claiming that “If he boasts, he is lost” (Ign. to Polycarp 5:2). There is no direct indication as to whether he is discussing married individuals or not, but because the statement appears amidst a discussion about marriage, it is highly likely that Ignatius refers to married men. The next sentence helps to clarify the nature of such boasting: “and if it becomes known to anyone other than the bishop, he is ruined.” (5:2). Ignatius evidently seeks to establish the authority of the bishops here, and says that the couple need the bishop in order for him to sanction the marriage. Without this sanctioning, the husband (probably the arrogant person) and wife would not be married according to God.
We almost never encounter passages where husbands receive a more focused warning than wives; however, it is probable that Ignatius had heard reports from Smyrna about such incidents of boasting. This may explain his urge to establish the authority of a bishop. The lack of an institutionalized clergy in the early church means that none of the letters from the New Testament mention the requirements for a 'valid' Christian marriage. Apart from the wedding, which was only ceremonial and not legally necessary, ancient sources did not record any regulations for marriage. Greek marriages started with an engagement as a private contract between two parties, which was not necessarily made public, and concluded with a wedding which did not require any legal documentation. Roman law, which was only applicable to Roman citizens, and, therefore, not all of the residents of Ephesus, did not command any regulation for it. Marriage was based on the consent of the couple, and did not even require written proof until the third century. Therefore, Ignatius’ condition for marriage not only brought the institution of marriage closer to God, as a holy union, but also stressed the authority of the bishops in the congregation, as the only ones who could make a marriage pure.

Polycarp, on the other hand, does not address any such authority issues in his Letter to the Philippians, indicating that he did not encounter any situation to necessitate such a statement. Polycarp focuses on the duties of women as wives (Polycarp to Phil. Ch. 4), and tells them to be faithful, to love their husbands and others, and to bring up their children in “the fear of God” (4:2). This is extremely important, because the duty of mothers to educate their children is very rarely mentioned in early Christian writings. Considering that taking care of her children was one of the main responsibilities of the wife in Greco-Roman culture, it is notably unusual that the advice Christian women are receiving regarding their domestic life only concerns their relationship with their husband. However, we might suggest that the aim of these Christian authors was to concentrate on the spousal relationship, believing it to be the most vital part of a household. Moreover, when parents are more responsible about their Christian duties, this consequently enhances their childrearing abilities.

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349 Evans Grubbs, Women and the Law in the Roman Empire, pp. 81-83.
350 Polycarp's letter is dated to around the early to mid-second century AD, and was written from Smyrna.
IV. Conclusion

The relationship between husband and wife has proved to be a fruitful topic for discussion in relation to the local Ephesian evidence, wider Greco-Roman and Roman evidence, and early Christian writings. Having studied our Ephesian and Greco-Roman evidence in the first section of the chapter, we have then compared Greco-Roman culture and early Christian writings. The extent in which the said writings, the letters from the New Testament in particular employed elements from their surrounding culture constituted our first argument. The second argument was formed around the ‘equality’ idea of husband and wife in the letters of early Christian authors and how the author treated the subject comparing to the culture of their day.

For local Ephesian evidence we have been able to present not only inscriptions from tomb stones, but also archaeological remains from the dwelling units of Terrace House 2. Inscriptions portrayed a social system where men and husbands in particular, preceded women. A finite number of examples showed women being praised for their good characteristics, which evidenced society’s appreciation for these values and their public display. More than 200 occurrences of the word γυνή on the inscriptions listed women/wives as secondary characters to men/husbands, and in some cases even omitted women’s names. These inscriptions almost always exhibited men as the head of the household, provider for the family, and socially superior in general. The remains from Terrace House 2 supplied more contexts to our perception of women. Even though the artefacts recovered from the dwelling units were dated later than our time period, they have proved that the devoted wife figure was still alive two centuries after our early Christian texts were written. The submissive and loyal wife/mother motif was regarded as central to society; wider Greco-Roman and Roman evidence supported this. Girls were married at young ages and as the bearers of legitimate children were encouraged by law and societal pressures to stay married or remarry.

The early Christian letters upon which we have focused in this chapter follow the same line of thought in terms of how they treat the marital and social relationship between husband and wife. The Christianization of Greco-Roman culture in the early Christian writings is the process we are interested in. We have seen that the cultural elements that the authors deemed appropriate were implemented into the letters without any alteration, but utilised for different motives. Most significantly, the submissive wife motif is taken up by Paul and the authors of Colossians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter, in addition to Ignatius and Polycarp. The expectation from wives was to submit to their husbands like the church submits to Christ. Husbands were expected to love
their wives as Christ loves the church. Whereas the former response for undertaking such characterization was to be praised by the society, in the early Christian Ephesian writings this behaviour was accompanied by the promise of approval by Christ and God. Osiek and MacDonald, however, viewed the Christian elements in the letters as an expression of the limit of how far Christianization had worked. We have argued that the Christian elements in the letters do not constitute such boundaries, but rather show how Greco-Roman culture was both borrowed and justified by the Christian authors.

Scholars have debated the differing attitudes in the letters towards the submissive wife motif. Arguing that the author of Ephesians did not employ Greco-Roman cultural elements in his letters, Cohick asserted that the author sought to prevent assimilation of the early Christian congregation into wider society. Shkul's opinion was based on the assumption of the author's intent to provide the socially inferior women of Ephesus with something to feel good about. We have suggested in opposition to Cohick that even if there was not sufficient overlap between the letters and the culture of their day on the issue of marriage, this does not mean that the early Christians wanted to be different just for the sake of it. In order to claim like Shkul that by presenting 'equality' between husband and wife the early Christian authors intended to ensure better life standards, we would have to conclude that contemporaries of early Christians were assessing their lives with norms that were not common to their day. Our modern standards cannot be used to decide whether the life of a Greco-Roman Ephesian wife was unfortunate because she was regarded as socially inferior.

1 Corinthians 7 shows Paul considering his surrounding culture in a slightly different manner. When Paul aimed to prevent sexual immorality among his congregation he spent a great deal of effort emphasising that everyone should have their spouse because otherwise those without adequate self-control could stray into ethical wrongdoings. His attempt requires addressing both men and women in the same way so that neither would acknowledge separation from their partner as necessary. As a part of his plan to keep the congregation from opting for immorality, he advises everyone to remain as they are, provided of course, they can gather the will to live an ethical life. Paul's advice about divorce includes instructions for those who have an unbelieving partner. Paul left the decision to terminate the relationship in the hands of the unbeliever. Whereas we argued that this action displayed great consideration for the importance of the family in Greco-Roman culture, MacDonald asserted that it was the biggest irritant Paul could provide for society. MacDonald's discussion about how Paul divides the household by asking one of the very important members, often wives,
to believe in a faith other than one’s partner and stay in the marriage regardless could be interpreted entirely different from the opposite perspective. It has been pointed out that Paul’s effort to encourage the congregation not to break up their marriage even in the case of a mixed-faith union, would have been appreciated by Greco-Roman society as an effort to protect its core institution.

The first part of 1 Corinthians 7 has caused many scholarly disagreements over whether Paul favours equality for the married couple. The degree to which scholars believe Paul implemented this so-called ‘equality’ has differed. Whereas Payne and Clark Wire considered that an absolute equality was applied for the couple in 1 Cor. 7, for Schüssler Fiorenza there was a limit to how far this ‘equality’ stretched. Payne's similar argument for Eph. 5 relied on translating the word 'head' as 'source'. He argued that husbands were required to be the ‘source’ of provision and protection for their wives. This meaning, however, does not fully explain the likeness between the husband-wife and Christ-church binaries implemented by Paul, and does not work with 1 Cor. 11:2-16, where Paul uses the same word. Clark Wire and Payne asserted that 1 Cor. 7 refers to equality in marriage in general, whilst Schüssler Fiorenza argued that Paul’s treatment of the couple in the passage only applies to sexual life. Our consideration of the Greco-Roman elements of the passage, has suggested that the first part of 1 Cor. 7 was strictly concerned with the couple’s intimate relationship. Paul does in fact address men and women in the same way, but it requires behaving in such a way that no one would deviate from the legitimate union. Even though Schüssler Fiorenza believes that Paul eventually wanted a marriage where both spouse enjoyed equal standing, she comments that this particular text cannot be interpreted as providing mutual ground for the couple in every aspect of the marriage.

The ideal Christian marriage that the early Christian authors envisaged is mirrored in the material evidence that survives from ancient Ephesus. We can imagine that the devoted wives of Terrace House 2 would have been viewed highly not only by their own Greco-Roman society, but in the eyes of Paul and his followers, by Christ and God as well.
CHAPTER FIVE: WIDOWS and OTHER SINGLE WOMEN

I. Why Widows, Virgins and Divorcees?

By definition ‘widowed’ is a marital status. Widowhood is a stage in one’s life that is directly related to one’s marriage. Why, then, have we not simply included widows in the previous section that examined marriage? The reason these women deserve a dedicated section of their own is the attention they were given in the ancient sources. We will argue in this chapter that the references to widows in early Christian writings imply that these women were viewed as a distinct social group. Moreover, we will suggest that the attitude expressed by the early Christian authors towards younger widows had deep roots in Greco-Roman culture. Modern scholarship, we will suggest, has failed to make this important connection.

In the first letter to Timothy widows are discussed in relation to how they should be cared for, and how they themselves should care for others. Their ‘moral qualifications’ dictate the standards for this care (1 Timothy 5:3-16). The letter argues that whereas older widows should be cared by the church, provided they meet certain criteria, younger widows should remarry in order to extinguish immoral and unbecoming behaviours. Ignatius also gives separate attention to widows in his Letter to Polycarp and Letter to the Smyrnaeans. He cautions people not to neglect the widows, just as Polycarp does in his Letter to the Philippians. However, when widows are mentioned it is not always in relation to neglect; widows are scolded on occasion as well. In his same Letter to the Philippians Polycarp also warns widows to behave properly. The Acts of Paul also records that when Paul goes to Myra to teach he stays with the widows there. While he is with them, a woman, whose younger son he had raised from dead, takes her older son to see him.

What is striking here is the use of the word χήρα (widow). It is always used in the plural unless the singular is needed for grammatical reasons; χήρας (1 Timothy 5:3, Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians, ch. 6); χήρας (Ignatius, Letter to the

353 Ibid, ch. 6.
Smyrnaeans, ch. 6); χήραι (Ignatius, Letter to Polycarp, ch. 4); and χήρας (1 Corinthians 7:8). To refer to someone in the plural form in a letter could be a sign of respect, a personal writing habit, or perhaps something else entirely. These ancient sources are all composed by different authors, making it unlikely that they all had the same personal writing habit. Moreover, the widows would not be viewed as socially superior to these authors, so there would be no need to show particular respect when referring to them. This leaves us with the possibility that these ‘widows’ might be a group of people. We do not suggest a formal social group, but the impression given here is that they were together from time to time, perhaps to help each other or someone else. The authors mention above, however, complains about misbehaviour on the part of these widows.

Another issue raised in the early Christian writings is the options open to widows after their husbands’ demise. The authors describe strict conditions determining whether widows should remarry. Unmarried (divorced?) and virginal women and men are also subjected to commandments dictating whether they should marry or remain celibate. Therefore, we will include other unmarried women (divorcees and virgins) in our discussion.

II. Ephesian Widows, Virgins and Divorcees

a. Epigraphic Evidence

1) Widows and Divorcees

Legal and social circumstances did not favour widows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our search for the word χήρα in the epigraphic evidence did not produce many results. There is not a single occurrence of the word in the ten volumes of IvE. Therefore, we can see that it was not preferable for a woman to call herself a ‘widow’. However, this does not imply an absence of widows, rather, simply their choice not to socially designate themselves as such. Therefore, we need to look for other clues on the inscriptions in order to locate any widows or divorcees. We have briefly mentioned wives who commemorated their husbands and children in the previous chapter. These women contribute to the possible ‘widow’ and/or ‘divorcee’ population in the Ephesian evidence.

There are 23 such inscriptions in total, which we may infer were commissioned by widows or divorcees, and dedicated to their husbands or to other members of the
family. In 7355 of these inscriptions there is no mention of a husband (which may or may not exclude Eppia Quarta, who makes a grave for herself and possibly her husband – some lines of the inscription are unfortunately illegible; 2252), however, the inscriptions are mostly dedicated to the children of the respective women. Therefore, it is clear that these women had husbands at some point. It might be that the husband had died a considerable time ago, and the widow, who did not have sufficient funds at that time, could not dedicate a gravestone to him. It is probable that she became the sole controller of her means after she had married again. The dedicatees (children, mostly daughters) seem to have been in their adolescent years, as if a child had died particularly young it was often specifically mentioned on the inscription. Instances of this include children as old as 19.356 The other plausible explanation for the absence of a husband is divorce. It is natural that a woman would not wish to include her ex-husband in a dedication, as while death is an involuntary departure from loved ones, separation often derives from an unpleasant experience within the household. This may cause a woman to refrain from mentioning the name of her ex-husband. The difference between the two can be seen in the following two inscriptions. One gravestone (2300), which contains some illegible lines, states that the memorial belongs to Pereitas and his former wife Tatia, as well as his present wife Euthychia. When dedicating the memorial, Pereitas chose to mention his ex-wife first, indicating she was a deceased partner rather than a divorcee. This example shows the dedication of a spouse to their deceased partner even though they are now married to someone else. A different situation is presented in another inscription:

τὸ μνημεῖόν ἐστι
Ποσλίας Ἰουλείας καὶ
τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ζῶσιν.
καὶ τοῦ συνδίου αὐτῆς Μενάνδρου. ᾇ ἥ
Τάλου νιὸν αὐτοῦ. ᾇ ἥ. καὶ
Ῥωσκιλίας Εὐτυξίας γυναικὸς
αὐτοῦ. τοῦτο τῷ μνημῆον
ἐάν τις πωλήσῃ, ἀποτεῖ σει
τῇ γερουσίᾳ (1648)

355 635b, 2252, 2277c, 2556, 3255, 3260, 3467.
356 2547; “daughter lived in a proper way 19 years and 19 days.”
Publia Julia Beryla dedicates a memorial to her family, the order of the dedicatees reading as follows; her children (who are alive), her partner Menander (who is alive), his son Talos (who is alive), Talos’ wife Ruskilias Euphytias. Several inferences can be made from this list. First of all, we see that the children in the inscription are divided into two groups, the children of Julia Beryla, and the son of Menander. It is safe to assume that the children are from former partnerships with now divorced spouses. Secondly, we see that Julia Beryla is clearly financially better off than her husband, Menander, as she is the one who provided the memorial, even including her step-daughter-in-law. The third and most intriguing point lies in the word choices on the inscription. Whereas we employ the words ‘partner’ and ‘spouse’ as synonyms of ‘husband’ or ‘wife’, the wording of Ephesian inscriptions is quite more forward. The term ἀνήρ, which also means ‘man’, is the consistent word used for husband, and γυνή which also means ‘woman’, is used for ‘wife’. Inscription 1648 is the only instance where there is a different word employed to designate a spouse. Menander is identified as Beryla’s συνβίου (συμβίος) which means a person one lives with, a companion and partner. It is clear that this ‘marriage’ is the second one for both parties; however, it is hard to speculate as to why such a term is adopted. It might mean that they were not legally married; however, as we explained in the previous chapter, Roman law did not require any registration or written record for a marriage until the third century AD. In theory, Beryla and Menander should have been married. As it was Julia Beryla who dedicated the gravestone, it was at her discretion how it was worded. It is highly likely it was Beryla’s choice to use the word συνβίου, which could be an indication of her dedication to her former husband. In this case the inscription gives an example of a situation quite the opposite from that which we have previously argued for. Julia Beryla might have not wanted to use the term ‘husband’ for anyone other than her former spouse, exhibiting a case of univira.357 One inscription can only reveal a limited amount of information about its commissioner’s life. However, we see that Julia Beryla was a woman with sufficient funds at her disposal, who still chose to remarry – or at the very least to live with a new partner.

The rest of the 23 inscriptions – 16 in total –358 seem to have been commissioned by widows and consist of dedications by women to their husbands. The order in which names appear on these epitaphs is again telling. The generally accepted custom for

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357 We will argue that a broader explanation of the term allows a woman to claim to be a univira even if she marries more than one. For a discussion of the subject please see p. 128.

358 1643, 1648, 1655, 2233a, 2250, 2299c, 2306e, 2426, 2547, 3031, 3225, 3312, 3332, 3237, 3831, 4234.
inscriptions was to place those of a socially higher status first. This would often be the dedicator, if not the dedicatee. While such status is often supported with numerous official titles that the person or their family holds, in some cases there is no ‘social’ indication as to why a wife is dedicating a gravestone to her husband. The 16 inscriptions almost exclusively place the woman’s name first, without any apparent reason. It is highly likely that these women outlived their spouses. Because such a dedication would require at least some money, we may propose the opposite scenario from the 7 epitaphs discussed above. The inclusion of the names indicates the demise of the husband rather than a divorce. It also suggests the woman’s ability to control her finances, and perhaps that she did not have to remarry.

It is certain that these 23 women were separated from their husbands at the time of the inscriptions either because of death or a legal separation. The number of inscriptions does not seem substantial to draw wide ranging conclusions. However, we must not forget the fact that this number only represents a small sample of the stone work which once existed, and by no means constitutes the total number of widows at a certain time. On the other hand, the inscriptions provide examples of how a widow or a divorcee could commemorate a family member, which as we have seen offers great insight into the private lives of the Ephesian people.

2) Virgins

Virgins, unlike widows and divorcees, represent a group of women who have never been married. However, regardless of whether they were married before, virginal, widowed, and divorced men and women are addressed together in discussions of marriage in early Christian Ephesian writings. Those who were free from a spouse were advised not to acquire one; however, this was based on factors which we will discuss later on in this chapter. The word ‘virgin’ indicates a physical state. However, here we employ both its lexical meaning and its place among titles denoting marital status. In this section, ‘virgin’ means someone not only who has never had sexual relations, but also someone who has never been married. The word ‘single’ will be used as a synonym.

Considering that Roman laws were designed to promote family union, by allowing it to be formed as early as possible, and to strive to maintain this union as long as it was possible to have children, singleness was not a favourable state. There was no

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359 In some inscriptions there is only the name of the deceased person, often with a kinship designation; wife of X or daughter of X. ‘X’ may be the dedicator; however, it is not certain.
360 2306e might hint at women’s prominent families.
law stating that women had to marry when they reached a certain age. Limitation on age in marriage was only in place to regulate the earliest age possible to get married under Roman law. Even though it was legally permitted to remain a virgin, it was culturally uncommon. The age for marriage among girls remained very young, even younger in upper-class families. Therefore, the age of the recorded virgins from Ephesus is likely to be very young indeed. However, they may well not have been the only 'singles' in the city.

Children that passed away in their infancy were revered and greatly commemorated. There is not one particular word used in the inscriptions to designate children who died while they were still 'unmarried', however παρθένος is often used. For example, the memorial of Eppia Marcus (1639), which was inscribed both in Latin and Greek, and decorated with ram and cattle heads with festoons between them,\(^\text{361}\) describes Eppia as a θυγατέριος νηπία (infant daughter). While there is no indication regarding her marital status, it is safe to assume that she did not reach the age for betrothal,\(^\text{362}\) let alone the age for marriage. The same principle is valid for Tyche, who according to her gravestone was 5 years old when she died (3115). When there is no determining word or specific age mentioned on an inscription, we are often able to infer the situation of the deceased from the relief. We see Iomede Diphilus (2272) on her funerary relief,\(^\text{363}\) picking something from a tree. She is depicted as a little girl, and there is also a small slave standing next to the tree. Bassa, on the other hand, is referred to on a relief (2231)\(^\text{364}\) as παρθένος ἡ ροίς, (not just as a maiden, girl, and virgin but also a hero). Another girl whose name is illegible is depicted with the same word, παρθένος, as the virgin daughter of a father who is the treasurer of holy money (2480). This title most probably indicates a job related to the finances of the temple of Artemis. Most likely the oldest girl among the virgins in this category, which might be labelled as 'involuntary virgins', is a daughter who lived a κοσμίως (well-behaved, moderate, decent) life for 19 years and 19 days (2560). The age of 19 was old enough to get married, and even to have children in Greco-Roman society. Although it is feasible that she could have had a husband, her husband would likely have been mentioned along with her; moreover, he would have been responsible for erecting the inscription. These involuntary virgins had not chosen to stay virgins; their early demise prevented

\(^{361}\) There is a literal description of the memorial in IvE.

\(^{362}\) Roman law allowed girls to be betrothed as young as age seven. Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, p. 88.

\(^{363}\) There is a literal description of the relief in IvE.

\(^{364}\) There is a drawing of the relief in IvE.
them from starting their own family, which they might have happily preferred if they had the option. At this point, we turn our attention to the group of 'possible virgins'.

Apart from the 6 young virgin daughters above, there are 26\textsuperscript{365} inscriptions (out of 105 in total) which mention a daughter either in an honorary inscription, a dedication, or a gravestone, without any mention of a husband or children of their own. These women are often daughters of families with high status. Some of these women were daughters of fathers with specific titles, and were highly likely to hold titles themselves. Social status could have trumped marital relations, but could this lead to the total abandonment of the husband in epigraphic representation? Divorce was less likely to be displayed publically than if an individual was widowed. Although divorce should not be disregarded altogether, singleness and divorce seem to have an equal probability in this situation. \textsuperscript{5}366 of these women were priestesses of either the temple of Artemis or the Imperial cult. We do not have much information about the lives of the priestesses of Artemis in Ephesus. Strabo’s introduction to the clergy of Artemis is limited to the job description of priestesses, which is essentially to help the \textit{Megabyzi (Priests)}.\textsuperscript{367} Plutarch informs us that they serve for a particular time, but he does not specify how long.\textsuperscript{368} We know that they were not required to be celibate as some are mentioned with their families on inscriptions. Nevertheless, 5 of the probable virgins above are only mentioned with their fathers, and 6\textsuperscript{369} others do not appear to have any familial relationships.

Belonging to families of high status or respectable office would not change the fact that there was pressure from society for young girls to marry. Serving as a priestess was one reason to stay single, but this would only be for a certain period of time. The absence of prescription for marriage in the law certainly simplified matters for those who do not want to get married. Economic difficulties which widows suffered if they did not obey the laws were not a concern for virgins. Considering other possibilities for the presentation of some women as single, it would be fair to say that remaining a virgin was not impossible, but not particularly common.

\textsuperscript{365} 1017, 1030, 1066, 1072, 1138, 1570, 1590a, 2282, 2299c, 2405, 2502, 2535, 2556, 3059, 3072, 3081, 3125, 3201, 3232, 3228, 3470, 3709, 3727, 3832, 3865a, 4349.

\textsuperscript{366} 1017, 1030, 3059, 3072, 3232.

\textsuperscript{367} Strabo, \textit{Geography}, 14.1.23.


\textsuperscript{369} 1012, 1026, 1062, 1139, 3405, 3298.
b. Reputation of Widows

The reputation of widows is another issue that must be addressed. On this topic our Ephesian evidence comes not from inscriptions, but from literary evidence – namely, Petronius’ story of the widow of Ephesus from his *Satyricon* and Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon*.

1) Petronius’ ‘Widow of Ephesus’

Petronius was a first century Roman courtier in the time of Nero. His *Satyricon* is a satirical novel, which narrates stories about Encolpius. Encolpius meets an old poet Eumolpus (ch. 83-84), who later boards a ship with him (ch. 99). At dinner, Eumolpus, who is described as being a little bit drunk (ch. 109), starts to tell stories about the infidelity of wives. He relates “how lightly they fell in love, how quickly they forgot even their own sons for a lover’s sake, asserting there was never yet a woman so chaste she might not be wrought to the wildest excesses by a lawless passion” (ch. 110). Moreover, he claims that there is no need for myths and tales to support his stories, as he can provide an event as evidence from “within his own memory” (ch. 110). Eumolpus now tells the story of “the widow of Ephesus” (ch. 111-112). There is no record of Petronius visiting Ephesus; however, having been the governor of Bithynia, and considering the insistence of Eumolpus on the truth of the stories, he may very well have been there at some point. This widow was apparently a very virtuous woman, and was known even in the surrounding towns. When her husband died, she did not ill-treat herself, crying and tearing her hair out in public (ch.111). Instead she followed him to the grave and stayed there. She stayed at the grave next to her husband’s coffin and cried for days and days. She did not eat, she did not leave, and she condemned herself to death, despite the persistence of her maids and relatives. Her story became news in the city (ch.111). Eventually, a soldier, who was assigned to watch over three crucified robbers, saw the widow and went into the grave to talk to her. Their meeting convinced her to eat something after so many days (ch.111). They subsequently fell in love, and spent the night together. The maid of the widow encouraged her when she initially displayed reluctance; “Placitone etiam pugnabis amor? Nec venit in mentem, quorum consederis arvis?” A couple of days later, having been together in the grave, the widow and the

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soldier came out and saw that one of the crucified bodies was gone. His family had taken his body to give him a proper funeral, which they had been prevented from doing because he was an outlaw. When the soldier expressed his fear of the punishment he could face, the widow suggested a solution that would save him; they placed her husband’s body on the crucifix and saved the soldier from certain punishment (ch.112).

The widow was well known, virtuous, and possibly in possession of some wealth. She could afford a decent grave for her husband, she could afford a maid (only one followed her to the grave, but there were probably more who stayed at home), and she loved her husband so much that she spent days at his grave crying and refusing to eat. However, her following actions make her virtuous character open to question. While suffering with the pain of losing her husband, all of a sudden she fell in love with a stranger. The way this widow is portrayed makes her seem untrustworthy. Surely, taking one’s husband’s dead body from his grave to save a stranger was not a common act among widows. This unusual and unfaithful incident was told in order to emphasize the alleged untrustworthy character of widows.\textsuperscript{373}

The widow of Ephesus is not the only widow Petronius talks about. When Eumolpus and those who accompany him arrive in the city of Crotona (ch. 125) they meet with a fortune hunter, an old and apparently widowed lady named Philomela, who in her golden days as a young, charming lady was able to take possession of sizable inheritances. Now, having lost all her appeal, she was using her son and daughter to reach wealthy men (ch. 140). She sends her children to Eumolpus under the pretence of seeking an education, but in actuality seeks to bribe him with her daughter, only to then find out that Eumolpus is not a rich man as he had claimed to be (ch. 141).

The only information we have about the life of Philomena is that she had been a fortune hunter for a long time. She does not come from a respectable household like the widow of Ephesus, however, her behaviour is comparably vulgar. The picture Petronius paints of widows is not honourable, but rather involves a life full of promiscuity and undeserved gain.

\textsuperscript{373} Scholarship on the story of the widow of Ephesus has generally approached the work from a literary point of view. The analysis of the story is often purely literal, and sometimes involves comparison to plays or poems. For more information please refer to the articles of Daniel B. McGlathery, Robert E. Colton, Jean Kimball and David H. Greene in the bibliography.
2) Melite of Ephesus

Melite appears as a character in Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Ross Kraemer claims that nothing is known about the author, but dates the text to the second century AD. The novel mentions the story of Leucippe and Clitophon, who after they meet and fall in love, elope together and suffer an unfortunate chain of events. After many ordeals involving kidnapping and being enslaved by pirates, Clitophon goes to Alexandria, while falsely believing that Leucippe has died in the sea (5.11). Melite, a widow from Ephesus, falls instantly in love with Clitophon when she sees him in Alexandria, and asks him to marry her. Clitophon refuses due to his grief for his deceased lover, but eventually is convinced otherwise by his friends (5.11-12). In fact, whereas one of the friends tries to persuade him with Melite's beauty, wealth and love, another friend says that Melite wants to take Clitophon as master because “it would be wrong to say ‘husband!’” (5.11). The specific indication of the title Clitophon is considered for is very intriguing. We will shortly discuss the term *univira* (having married only one man) and how it was perceived in Greco-Roman society. What Clitophon's friend might actually mean is that if a widow remarried, the second husband would be regarded as a master rather than a husband, out of respect for the deceased.

Even though Clitophon agrees to marry Melite he cannot not fulfill her wishes to be with her (5.13). She treats him like a husband and puts him in charge of her wealth (5.14). When they reach Ephesus they go to Melite's house to have dinner, and on their way a slave girl throws herself at Melite's feet and begs her to buy her, which she does. We learn that the slave girl is actually Leucippe. Clitophon is made aware of this when Leucippe writes him a letter while he is having dinner with Melite (5.15-18). Having learnt that his real loved one is not dead, Clitophon does not consummate his marriage to Melite as he has promised (5.20). The events become more complicated when Melite's first husband, Thersander, whom everyone thinks had died in a ship wreck, comes back to Ephesus, only to find out that his wife has married again. Furious, Thersander beats and imprisons Clitophon (5.22-23). Melite sneaks into the prison ashamed and heartbroken, because the man she loves will not accept her. She weeps, and begs Clitophon to take her one time in exchange for setting him free. He obliges, (5.25-27) and Melite arranges Clitophon's escape from prison by bribing a guard (6.1-

After this point, the story focuses on Leucippe and Thersander, and we learn that the latter has fallen in love with the former and plots many times to have her. Eventually, the imprisoned Clitophon is cleared from all of his charges and reunited with Leucippe.

Like the widow of Ephesus, Melite falls in love with another man after her husband’s demise, although we do not know how much time had passed since she had heard about Thersander’s death. This time period could justify her feelings towards Clitophon; indeed, no one in the novel requires a long time to fall in love! However, no one criticizes Melite for her feelings, she is not accused of being a legacy hunter like Philomena, and actually treats Clitophon like her real husband. In this story we see that Melite is not portrayed as a promiscuous widow, but only a woman who is deeply in love, much like everyone else in the novel.

c.  Widows in Greco-Roman Society

As we have stated in the previous chapter, the age of Roman girls for marriage was quite young. While Roman women were married between the ages of 12 and 14, the custom for men was a lot different. The ideal age gap between the couple was 10 years. Thomas McGinn argues that 10 years is a reasonable estimation for lower class families, whereas “the gap between ages at first marriage for aristocratic spouses might shrink in many cases to as little as 4 or 5 years.” The age difference between the couple could be a major contributing factor to the large number of widows in society. In a situation where the husband is considerably older, it would be more likely for the husband to die much earlier than his wife. This means society had a substantial amount of widows, and some of them would have been quite young. The frequency of widowhood could be one reason why the widows were addressed as a distinct group in ancient sources – there were simply too many widows to ignore.

1) The Issue of Remarriage

In Greco-Roman culture the goal of marriage was to have legitimate children. We have stated already how vital for a woman’s societal status it was to be married and to have children. Augustan laws were only applicable to Roman citizens, bearing this in mind, there were many regulations about marriage and remarriage in Roman laws. A woman who had three or more children was given privileges – *ius trium liberorum*. Therefore, if a widow did not have any children when her husband died the law could

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376 D’ambra, *Roman Women*, p. 46.
force her to remarry. According to Augustus’ earliest moral laws, a widow who was between the age of 20 and 50 and who did not have a child could not stay unmarried for more than one year after her husband’s death. The duration was only six months for a divorcée, and women were penalised if they did not remarry. This regulation was relaxed by Augustus’ later Lex Papia Poppaea; the time limit was changed to 2 years for a widow and 18 months for a divorcée. On the other hand, there was also a period in which widows were forbidden to remarry. They had to wait one year after their husband’s death so that it could be ensured that a woman was not pregnant from her deceased husband when she remarried. Women faced the penalty of losing any inheritance they received from the deceased husband if they remarried within this one year period. Physically, the age limit was reasonable according to ancient physicians. Soranus states in his Gynaecology that the age of menopause is no earlier than 40 and not later than 50, on some occasions not until 60. So, it was understood as acceptable and possible for a woman to have a child right up until she was 50 years old.

Even if a widow followed the law and remarried within the permitted time period, remarriage was not straightforward. Remarriage meant welcoming a stranger into the family. The children, if there were any, would be raised by a stepfather, and any family wealth would be exposed to an outsider’s mercy. Therefore, as a result of an attempt to follow the law and perhaps regain society’s acceptance as a wife, a widow would have to risk her children’s happiness and her financial future. A widow was commonly considered a victim of a legacy hunter when she remarried. This perception alone might result in a hesitation to remarry.

What if a woman simply did not want to remarry? Widows could have had difficulties earning their keep if they did not have their own wealth, because a widow would face losing the right of inheritance if she did not remarry in the stated time. Balsdon considers the regulations of Augustus that penalize childless widows who did not remarry, and imagines a different scenario; “If a widow possessed ample means, she did not have to bother about them; she could snap her fingers at the legacies which she was debarred from receiving. If she was over fifty, the law did not affect her.”

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379 Ibid, p. 90.
380 Ibid, p. 221.
381 Soranus, Gynaecology, 1.4.20.
383 Ibid, p. 91.
384 Balsdon, Roman Women Their History and Habits, p. 208.
Therefore, being economically strong could not save a widow from the penalties, but could make the consequences insignificant to her.

There was another matter which would affect the remarriage of the widow very deeply, the desire to remain as a univira. Initially a Roman concept, being a univira (literally the one-man woman) meant having married only one man. It was a highly praised honour and was strongly recommended. Marjorie Lightman and William Ziesel describe the term as follows; “In its prescriptive form univira applied to living women who had living husbands; in its descriptive form to women who predeceased their husbands. In contrast with the prescriptive usage, which remained restricted to women of the social elite, the descriptive usage spread during the Principate to virtually all levels of society.”\cite{LightmanZiesel1977}

At first the term only applied to women who had living husbands. It symbolized the devotion of the wife to her husband. However, over time the term begins to be used for widows as well.\cite{Dixon1992} Suzanne Dixon remarks that “By the late Republic it (univira) came to be applied approvingly to widows who chose to remain single out of loyalty to their husband’s memory and their children’s interest.”\cite{Dixon1992} However, this custom and the remarriage legislation of Augustus clash; on the one hand, there is a custom which praises marrying only one man, yet on the other hand, there is a law which punishes you if you do not remarry in a certain period of time. If being a univira was acceptable for a widow who was loyal to her husband, how would it be possible to distinguish a widow who is being genuinely loyal from a widow who simply does not want to get married? A different approach to the term univira could save us from this organized chaos. McGinn in his review of Jens-Uwe Krause’s work states that Krause believes that univira is not the loyalty to one husband in one’s entire life, but rather it is about fidelity within the same marriage.\cite{McGinn1995} Therefore, a woman becomes a univira not by remaining a widow after her husband’s death, but being loyal to whoever she is married to. This approach would enable the term to be applied more clearly without disturbing public opinion or breaking any laws.

Remarriage was both culturally and legally a very difficult choice for the widows and divorcees of Greco-Roman culture. Whereas legal sanctions would not leave any other choice than remarriage for a young widow, cultural norms constituted a peer pressured environment for widows to remain loyal to their deceased husbands. In this

\begin{itemize}
  \item \cite{Dixon1992} Ibid, pp. 26-31.
  \item \cite{McGinn1995} McGinn, “Widows, Orphans, and Social History,” p. 619.
\end{itemize}
conflicted situation a woman had to make a sacrifice of some kind to avoid the consequences of either side. Alternative approaches to the univira perception of society may have helped to ease the cultural pressure on the woman; however, laws were precise on the issues of age and children. Financial means could not grant immunity from the law, although this would make the eventual punishment for disobedience more bearable. The lack of attention to the financial issues and the pressure on having children between specific ages strongly suggests a preoccupation with children in Roman marriage law. The widowed or divorced women were surrounded by the pressure of society, compelling them to produce legitimate children as long as they were physically able.

2) In Old Age

As we have discussed, there was the possibility for even young wives to be widowed, but it was even more probable for older women. Later on in this chapter we will see that old age is associated with the need for care in the early Christian literature. This association could help us to explain the group addressing of the widows in the early Christian Ephesian texts.

In old age one needs a companion more than ever. It may, however, be the hardest age at which to find such a companion. Aside from a widow's friends, relatives or neighbours, she might only have had her children, some who may not even have been there for her. So, how were elderly widows taking care of themselves? Dixon claims that neglect occurred more often than one might think; “...hard headed counts of surviving tombstones show that relatively few people did commemorate grandparents, and even parents were not commemorated as often as one might think.”389 The word ‘mother’ occurs 40 times in the inscriptions from Ephesus. This is not an insignificant number, but it is still considerably less than the occurrences of the word ‘wife’. Having children might have helped a widow to gain some freedom and other rights, but apparently it did not always prevent her from being alone in her old age. If a widow had some control of the family money, of course, she could find other ways to keep herself in company.

Tim Parkin states that “As widows in particular, in both the Greek and the Roman world, women in old age might in fact have enjoyed considerable authority, in practice if not also in legal theory, because they controlled the family wealth to some limited

extent – always supposing of course family had wealth in the first place.”

According to Parkin, if an elderly person does not have anybody to look after him/her, then thanks to their money they could have other people around them. He says, however, that support for this is only to be found in literary evidence, not legal: “It certainly became proverbial that wealthy and childless old men and women could expect a large host of “friends” to surround them, in the expectation that they would look kindly on these flatterers in drawing up a will and would not live too long after performing this duty.”

Seneca the Younger indicates that older people no longer suffer from loneliness and childlessness, probably because they have other kinds of company. It is important to state, however, that if the elderly became so intimate with these friends, so much that they include them in their wills then surely they were happy to have these people around. We are not dealing with gigolos here who would marry widows for their money. As Parkin has pointed out, it was about constructing a new supportive community. These widows cannot all have been wealthy, spoiled, bossy women who thought that they could buy anyone as their friends. It would not be immensely wrong to assume that these “friends” were also lonely people as well. Maybe they were widows as well, who did not have children to look after and did not have enough money to live. This last possibility opens the window to the other side of the coin and we believe it was a highly probable situation. The need for financial and sentimental support would be a major issue for poorer widows, and it would not be as easy to find companions when there was no financial incentive. Under the wings of a wealthy widow, widows in need of care would receive the help they needed and provide company to the well-endowed, but lonely older widows. This scenario certainly strengthens the notion of a specific group being addressed in the early Christian writings.

As McGinn says, “the problem of definition is complicated by the fact that in the case of the widow the stakes were high. Her status was inherently ambiguous. She was neither single-never-married nor married, but “single-having-been-married”, that is to say, sexually experienced but, ideally, sexually inactive.” The status of the widow always depended on some variables: the children, the wealth, the laws. All these variables constitute a broad picture of widows’ living conditions. The women were

widowed mostly at young ages, the laws made them remarry until they had children, or they reached the age of 50, and eventually they met as a group of similar individuals to find companionship.

d. A Brief Conclusion

There was no doubt that the widows constituted a substantial part of society. Depending on their age, remarriage was an important issue for them. We can see that the expectation for women to sustain what was deemed to be an idealized lifestyle never faded. Even when a marriage ended, they were expected to enter into a new one, until they were no longer able to have children. This regulation encouraged rather than to forced people to reproduce. First of all, there were economic factors involved in the equation. Without adequate access to her husband's inheritance, financial problems would certainly make a widow seek another solution. Secondly, considering the reputation especially of young widows, which did not necessarily contain loyalty to the memory of their husbands, adultery was also a concern. Therefore, the remarriage laws secured the population growth and morality of society by essentially threatening widows with destitution. Even though the material elements are not the only components to this reality, the sentimental luxury of staying a *univira* rather depended on the widow’s financial ability to remain on her own. Age also could have provided the emotional stability associated with having been married only to one man. If they were old enough, widows did not have to marry again. However, this brought another reality to their lives – loneliness. Either because of economic or emotional reasons, older widows were in need of company more than young widows. This was most likely the reason they sought company in a group of women who understood their plight.

III. Widows and Other Single Women in the Early Christian Ephesian Writings

Widows are discussed variously by the early Christian authors. One thing the writings have in common, however, is that their admonitions are mostly concerned with ensuring widows lead a morally acceptable life. Firstly, we turn to Paul’s opinion on remarriage in 1 Corinthians.

a. The Issue of Remarriage

Paul’s opinion on the remarriage of widows and divorcees, as well as the marriage of virgins, essentially boils down to one's responsibility to God. In general, for those who do not have a spouse, Paul advises them to stay as they are. For those who
are married, he advises the same. He advises the unmarried and the widows to stay unmarried as he is (1 Corinthians 7:8). The distinction of unmarried and widows leads to the assumption that he was addressing both the widows and people who have not been married before. However, there is no specification as to which age groups should and should not get married. Paul’s only interest is the degree of one’s devotion to God, which he explains in the next verse. The only circumstance in which they should (re)marry is if they are failing to practise self-control (7:9). To be the victim of their passion is worse than getting married in Paul’s eyes, and so marriage is the next best thing to remaining single. Paul’s only criterion here is one’s faith. The congregation is being told what is best, but the human nature of the congregation members is considered, and they are given a solution in the event that they cannot keep Paul’s ideal standards.

Paul continues in more detail later in the chapter. Stressing that what he is about to say is not the word of the Lord, but that of himself (7:25), he directly addresses virgins, saying that it is well for them to stay as they are considering the ‘impending crisis’ (7:26). The impeding (present) crisis has been mostly understood to have an eschatological association. However, as Bruce Winter argues, this particular crisis may indicate a famine. It is not impossible that a famine was seen as a part of an eschatological scenario, especially with Paul stating that the ‘present form of this world is passing away’ (7:31). For Winter, Paul seems to think that the marriage of a virgin would be a burden to her family, considering the financial restraints a famine could bring. However, we see that Paul again honours both marriage and singleness, even though he prefers to be single himself (7:27). Moreover, he sanctions marriage saying that whoever does marry does not sin. For the first time, however, he mentions consequences; marriage means trouble and concern for this life (7:28). Before Paul explains what these troubles are, we are informed of how a married person should behave. Verses 29-31 encourage people to make the most of their situation. Since a person cannot be parted from his/her spouse, and Paul allows any future marriage, a husband should act as though he does not have a wife. In other words, people who concern themselves with worldly pursuits such as marriage, mourning, rejoicing, and possessions should try to avoid them, at least to a degree, because there is not much time left for the world they are living in. Fee argues that behaving ‘as if’ you are not

394 Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 329-330.
396 Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians p. 573.
married even if you are contradicts Paul's advice in 1 Cor. 7:2-6. Paul's efforts in 7:2-6 were to show the Corinthians that they should not refrain from marriage for the wrong reasons, whereas in 7:29-31 he explains how they should behave if they could not stay single. Their abstinence from a fully married life is expected to atone for the fact that they did not commit to God completely. These sacrifices are, as Thiselton puts it, the 'middle way' that Paul is offering in order for Christians who chose to be married to stay closer to God. This does not mean that family members should abandon their worldly responsibilities; we see that Paul acknowledges the practical reality of getting married in the following verses.

In 7:32-35 we see that the weakness a person exhibits in terms of not practising self-control, which in turn directs them to marriage, later manifests itself as distraction from their loyalty to the Lord. Paul sees the responsibilities of a married man and woman as anxieties which would distract them from pleasing the Lord. However, the duties of husband and wife towards each other are not limited to physical gratification, they cover the entire private and public life of the family. Financial support, moral stability, and the social reputation of the family are but a few of the many conditions that come with married life. Paul wants the community to realise this for their own good, so that perhaps they will be able to achieve a balance in their lives (7:35).

Virgins are encouraged to remain single, even if they are betrothed, as long as they are able to control their passion. If not, then it is permissible for them to marry. Paul states that the one who marries his fiancée does well, but the one who refrains from marriage will do better (7:36-38). Widows, like other unmarried people, are free to remarry, however, this must only be ‘in the Lord’ (7:39). Even though Paul wishes for them to stay unmarried (7:40), he prescribes conditions for a marriage in case a couple decide that it is necessary. This marriage cannot be solely for their pleasure, so they will not be separated from the Lord completely.

We see that Paul’s main concern about marriage is its effect upon one’s relationship with God. Regardless of how much he stresses the essential role of singleness in order to maintain this relationship, he never disregards marriage completely; on the contrary, he formulates solutions for married couples to enable

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397 Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 340.
398 Ibid, p. 118.
399 Fee rightly dismisses the possibility of an alternative translation for a father-daughter relationship in 7:36-38. Ibid, p. 353. If we were to accept that the verses address fathers regarding their daughters, then the final imperative in verse 36, “let them marry”, would refer to a groom who is otherwise invisible in the passage, making it incoherent.
them to be closer to God. Whereas refraining from marriage was the preference for Paul, in Greco-Roman society remaining single was no simple task. For virgins, it might have been relatively easy to stay single; certainly, the evidence that we have seen suggests that there might have been adult single daughters in some families, and there were single priestesses practising celibacy. Even though opting out of marriage was condoned for people who committed themselves to faith, it is highly unlikely that society would exhibit the same courtesy towards Christianity. Virgins in Greco-Roman society could have managed any possible outcome of not marrying with more ease than the widows; however, their situation was not straightforward, as society was so keen on marriage. Nevertheless, they did not have to endure legal sanctions like widows. In a situation where a widow was forced to remarry because of financial reasons, Paul’s ‘middle way’ might have helped her to live life as she had wanted.

b. ‘Real Widows’ and ‘So-called Widows’

The author of 1 Timothy, whom we will refer to as Pastor, approaches widows from a different perspective. We will see that at the time Pastor is writing, the church has a very close relationship with widows, and his letter details very specific rules for them. Pastor begins 1 Timothy chapter 5 by advising the congregation to respect each other, old and young alike, regard everyone as family, and behave accordingly (1 Tim. 5:1-2).400 Perhaps he was concerned that the negative remarks he was about to make about young widows would influence the community negatively, and would create divergence among them. Even though the young and immoral widow motif was not a foreign concept to Greco-Roman society, Pastor may have wanted to state that he acts with the intention of the whole congregation’s well-being. Next, he advises to ‘honour widows who are really widows’ (5:3). It is clear that Pastor does not regard all the women who have lost their husbands as ‘real widows’. Honouring real widows is primarily their family’s duty; Pastor’s emphasis is particularly on the children and grandchildren of the widows – their care for their family is not only appreciated by society, but it also is a good deed in God’s sight (5:4). Encouraging children to look after their parents would also help to lighten the church’s workload in terms of helping real widows. This point also reveals a possible negligence on the part of some children in

400 1 Timothy was written to Timothy who was in Ephesus at the time (1 Tim. 1:3). Even though the author identifies himself as Paul, and Paul is indeed accepted as the author of the letter by some scholars (Towner, Letters to Timothy and Titus, pp. 94-98), we will regard the letter as non-Pauline (Lloyd K. Pietersen, The Polemic of the Pastorals: A Sociological Examination of the Development of Pauline Christianity (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004, pp. 3-14). Although Pietersen does not refer to the author as Pastor, we will do so, as the letter is considered to be one of the Pastoral Epistles.
the congregation. Another important matter is that Pastor does not restrict care by the family to a specific kind of widow; any widow deserves her family's attention. However, those who do not provide for their families are indicated to be worse than an unbeliever (5:8). If the family of a widow are able to look after their relatives, those widows should not be an extra burden for the church. The ‘supposed’ widows, who were solely concerned with worldly pleasures (5:6), were not as devoted to God as the ‘real’ widows, and were both an extra burden on the church, and a cause of division in the congregation.

We learn about the church’s relationship with the widows from a list that Pastor gives. Only widows who have been married only once (literally ‘wife of one husband’) and are older than 60 can be placed on this list (5:9). A widow’s age and marital history are not the only criteria for admission – she had to prove that she had been a good person at home, in public, and in her religious duties (5:10). In order to deserve the church’s help, she must have committed good deeds in every aspect of her life, including child rearing, shown hospitality, and been helpful both to the church and to those who needed it. Younger widows are not admitted to the list on the grounds of their desire to remarry, which detains them from Christ (5:11). Regarding the pledge which young widows violate by wanting to remarry (5:12), Marshall, Towner and Pietersen believe that widows took an oath when they were admitted to the list. However, Towner does not regard it as a vow of celibacy as Pietersen and Marshall do, as he believes this would be unnecessary for a list of women over 60 years of age. We agree with Towner that there are some circumstances unknown to us about the nature of this vow. Young widows' unfit behaviour is not limited to uncontrolable passion, but includes not doing anything useful, spending their time gossiping, and saying things that they should not say (5:13). For this reason, Pastor thinks they are better married and taking care of their families. This way they will also help to maintain the reputation of the Christian community against their ‘adversary’ (5:14). We understand the adversary to be the former members of the congregation who have deviated from their faith and are now slandering the Christians (5:15). As for the real widows, even though the church is ready to help them, it is better for those who have relatives who could help them to remain off the list, so that the church can help the more needy real widows (5:16).

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Pastor suddenly changes his formula of real widows and supposed widows, and categorises them as older widows and younger widows respectively. There had apparently been a pre-existing system in the church in order to organize its charity. It is also obvious that the widows are the members of society who need the most help. The grouping of widows in early Christian writings, therefore, does not only stem from their tendency to support and look after each other, but also from something created by the church as a result of its ‘list’. We have argued that in Greco-Roman society it was already a tendency for widows with financial means to attract company either with financial and/or sentimental incentives. We have also stated that it was highly probable that widows who were less fortunate would be among those friends wealthier widows took care of. After more and more widows joined the Christian faith, the congregation had become more aware of their situation, encouraging the church to take on the responsibility of looking after the widows who were in need. Although it does not mention any sort of ‘list’, the Acts of Paul also refers to widows in a way which indicates a defined group. At the end of the fourth chapter Paul heals a man called Hermippus, who then goes to his mother and tells her about his recovery. His mother takes Hermippus “to the widows and Paul”. The reference to widows in the plural reveals that ‘the widows’ were indeed some sort of group. Lack of further details prevents us from commenting more on the sentence, but it is possible that these widows may have been on Pastor’s list. This also means that there may have been many widows in society who fitted the description of Pastor’s ‘real widow’.

Pastor’s definition of ‘real widows’, however, is a bit hazy. According to Pastor not all the older widows are real widows – they have to be over 60 years of age, a univira, and well mannered. All of the young widows are categorised as ‘supposed’ widows, however. There may have been other older widows who were well mannered, but below 60 years of age, and/or had been married more than once, but there is no mention of them. However, there is no alternative for young widows; they are all associated with bad behaviour. It is possible to see traces of the remarriage law for the widows and divorcees in this passage. However, it cannot solely be the law that is inspiring Pastor to make his statement. He has introduced spiritual factors into the admission of the widows to the list. First of all, being old enough to not have to remarry is not sufficient – good characteristics are also a vital element. Secondly, he praises having been the wife of only one man, a univira, yet this was not easy to accomplish for a woman who was widowed for the first time when she was younger. At this point, a

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403 Acts of Paul, ch. 4.
flexible understanding of *univira* may help to avoid confusion. Otherwise, by asking young widows to remarry, Pastor excludes certain women from the list forever. Moreover, a real widow could have had possessed the necessary characteristics all along, but been forced to remarry because of other circumstances. Therefore, loyalty to whichever husband a woman is married to at the time is a more logical explanation than one which requires her to commit to only one man for her entire life.\textsuperscript{404}

Thirdly, Pastor seems to be affected by the reputation of the young widows much more than the law. Whereas the evidence we have presented on the reputation of widows has mostly concerned morality, Pastor complains about their laziness and gossiping. Being idle is not merely spending the day without doing anything; rather, it is a symbol for young widows’ negligence of their household responsibilities, instead choosing to spend time saying things that they should not say.\textsuperscript{405} The actions which Pastor considers as being inappropriate, therefore, encapsulate all sorts of different immoral behaviours on the part of young widows. Winter comments on the household responsibilities of women and their apparent dismissing of their duties, such as spinning and weaving.\textsuperscript{406} Absence of a husband triggered the irresponsible actions of young widows, which suggests that the husband was the controlling force in a family. Pastor urges young widows to remarry in order that they will not fall into idleness due to the lack of a controlling male influence. Pastor’s more formal classification of widows leaves certain things unexplained, but it seems that he saw it necessary to draw a line somewhere, as the numerous variables in the lives of widows would have been difficult to account for, and the church needed a systematic way of helping this group of women.

The alleged “order” of the widows is one of the most discussed parts of 1 Timothy. Margaret MacDonald proposes that there was a formal office for widows in the early Christian community and Pastor’s list refers to enrolment into this office.\textsuperscript{407} Even with the contribution of other early Christian writings such as the works of bishops, however, we find no evidence of this. The way Pastor explains how the list works relies on the age and behaviour of widows. He specifies which characteristics a

\textsuperscript{404} We agree with Towner that the term denotes “marital fidelity” (*Letters to Timothy and Titus*, p. 346), but Pietersen provides two alternative meanings: “married only once” and “faithful to her husband” (*The Polemic of the Pastorals*, p. 124, fn. 68). The translation “faithful to her husband” fits particularly well with our argument.

\textsuperscript{405} For a modern day case study on the place of gossip in women’s lives, see Deborah Jones, “Gossip: Notes on Women’s Oral Culture,” *Women’s Studies International Quarterly* 3 (1980), pp. 193-198.

\textsuperscript{406} Winter, *Roman Wives Roman Widows*, pp. 133-134.

widow should have in order to receive help but does not attach any new responsibilities to the widows now that they are on the list. His sole concern is widows who would be cared for by the church because it is related to the financial expenditure of the church. Bishops take a similar stance to Pastor, either compelling the community to help widows in need or warning widows about their behaviour. The early Christian authors do not give any discernible indication as to an official order of widows, and as such we argue against the idea that such an order existed. Paul Trebilco does not support the idea of a “ministerial order” but still continues to refer to the list Pastor mentions as “an existing order...in which widows are “enrolled”.” 408 Although he does not elaborate as to whether he thinks this “order” comes with any responsibilities towards widows other than of a ministerial nature, his explanation of the passage indicates that Trebilco thinks of the list as a system which is set up to help widows in need.409

It is surprising that scholars do not always correlate Greco-Roman customs and early Christian writings when considering the issue of widows – discussion is often limited to the remarriage law. While Pastor’s list is more comprehensive than other Greco-Roman material on care for older widows this clearly was not a new concept. It was simply joining the Christian faith and becoming a member of the congregation which made these widows a responsibility of the church. Before this they probably took care of each other as best they could. The relationship between Greco-Roman and early Christian attitudes towards widows surfaces more explicitly in the discussion of young widows. Pastor definitely was not the first person to associate younger widows with inappropriate behaviour – these associations had been made long before. Neither the group references to older widows nor the imputations aimed at younger widows were invented by the early Christian author – they were simply an extension of wider Greco-Roman culture.

c. Bishops’ Opinions on Widows

Ignatius and Polycarp agree that widows need the help of believers. In both his Letter to the Smyrnaeans and Letter to Polycarp, Ignatius stresses the importance of assisting widows. In the Letter to Polycarp Ignatius says “Do not let the widows be neglected. After the Lord, you be their guardian” (4.1). We have seen in Pastor’s church list that it is the responsibility of a believer to help and care for widows because it is becoming to the Lord. Ignatius does not require any qualification for the widows to be

408 Trebilco, The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius, p. 523.
409 Ibid, pp. 523-527.
befriended or assisted. On the contrary, he exhibits a holistic view towards the widows and states that the Lord is their first friend. In fact, in his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, while he tells of how the unbelievers will be condemned, he identifies having no care for widows as one of the characteristics of an unbeliever (ch. 6). In this regard, he excludes from the congregation a Christian who does not look after a widow in their family. It is clear that Ignatius respects widows highly. In the salutation section of the *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, he states that he salutes “the virgins who are called widows”.\(^{410}\) There is more than one possibility for what Ignatius could have meant by this phrase. Charlotte Methuen states that Ignatius might have either designated the widows as virgins in order to indicate their chastity, or there were women who had never been married but were acting as widows and benefitting from the same protection. Methuen dismisses the first option on the grounds that Ignatius would have constructed the phrase differently if he meant this, perhaps instead saying something like “widows who are called virgins”, or “the widows who live as virgins”.\(^{411}\) Although this would show the respect Ignatius clearly has for widows, the second option fits better with the lifestyle of the widows who do not marry again.

While Ignatius does not refer to any necessary exhortation to widows, Polycarp in his *Letter to the Philippians* both advises the congregation to care for widows and advises widows to be more careful about good manners.\(^{412}\) Polycarp asks widows to exhibit behaviour that would qualify them for Pastor’s list (ch. 4). Even though gossip is again an issue, there are other bad habits which widows seem to be accused of, such as false-witnessing and love of money. There is no age differentiation for the addressees; Polycarp only asks them to refrain from worldly desires. Despite the negative comments on widows’ actions, Polycarp also respects them and pleads for their care. In fact, he not only considers taking care of a widow a characteristic of a believer, but also includes it among the duties of a presbyter (ch. 6). To help the widows, then, becomes a constant task for the church. Regarding virgins, Polycarp makes a different statement to Ignatius, and refers to virgins as a separate group independent from the widows. He says that virgins must live a decent life. Polycarp is the first among our sources who implies a specific group of virgins. As we have stated already, it may have been possible that virgins were great in number as well as widows.


\(^{412}\) We acknowledge that there are questions about the authorship of this letter, however, we will regard Polycarp as the author and will not become involved in an authenticity argument here. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), pp. 275-276.
IV. Conclusion

We have argued that scholarship has neglected to investigate the cultural background for early Christian statements regarding care of widows, remarriage, and the reputation of young widows. We have shown that all of these issues existed in Greco-Roman society prior to their mention in the early Christian writings. However, scholarship has been reluctant to highlight the correlation between these writings and the wider society in which they were composed. We have to realize that the early Christian authors are not the first in treating the matters about widows. Perhaps without explicitly mentioning it, modern scholarship comments on the subject of widows as though the issue has no background. We have seen that discussions about both older and younger widows have roots in Greco-Roman society, and taking this knowledge into consideration can help us to understand the motivations of early Christian authors better.

We have explored several different aspects of the lives of widows as evidenced in the early Christian writings. Our main concerns have been the reason for the notion of a distinct group in references to widows, the issues concerning their remarriage, and their reputation. As we have seen, none of these matters can be examined in isolation. While only applicable to Roman citizens Roman law had prepared a strict set of rules for women who separated from their husbands or had lost them. The laws aimed to encourage family union and to maintain social cohesion by preventing adultery. The logic was to keep young widows in a position to bear children until they were no longer able. Actions to the contrary were penalised with economic difficulties, which eventually obliged young widows to obey the laws. Older widows were free from these sanctions; their problems were more sentimental, as it was harder for them to find companions to take care of them. Therefore, meeting with other older widows benefitted them.

Society's expectation for a woman to belong only to one man was challenged by the laws, but the multifaceted description of the term *univira* enabled it to be applied to different situations. The evidence for the reputation of widows remains only fictional; however, the stories of these promiscuous women still help us to construct the world they lived in by providing clues to the inspiration behind these works. The evidence for virgins is more substantial, but the ambiguity of the term made our interpretation inconclusive. The word 'virgin' is not used as a definition for one's status in Greco-Roman society, apart from for those who had passed away in infancy.
The early Christian authors focused on different aspects of widows' lives and never disregarded the Greco-Roman setting they were living in. Remarriage of widows, divorcees, or virgins was not favoured, but it was acceptable. Remarriage was always the second choice, but it was also revered as a social and religious union of man and woman. This also provided an escape route for those who could not afford the legal penalties of remaining single. Some early Christians attached an age limit to remarriage, which again coincided with Roman law. Pastor admitted widows aged 60 and over to a list set up by the church to help women in need, and essentially gathered them as a social group. This list allowed them to be 10 years older than the legal limit for remarriage. On the other hand, young widows were asked to marry again and have children. There was no age limitation for them, and the foundation for this request differed from the law. Younger widows were encouraged to remarry not because of their age, but because of their unbecoming behaviour. Polycarp, however, discusses the bad habits of widows regardless of their age and encourages them to abandon behaviour which does not fit with their Christian identity. The early Christian authors essentially aimed to enable the community to live according to their faith without feeling like outsiders in Greco-Roman society. The intention of the early Christian authors was to produce faith-based solutions to current social problems. The requests and expectations of people in these letters are often the same as those found in non-Christian Greco-Roman sources, but this correlation only survives at the authors' discretion.
CHAPTER SIX: WOMEN in SOCIAL LIFE

I.  The limits of Social Life

So far we have explored ancient Ephesian women's worlds as daughters, wives, mothers, and widows. All these roles have something in common; they are all mainly confined to the domestic sphere. The term "domestic" does not determine the limits of these roles, but certainly helps to identify their significant characteristics. A mother is a mother regardless of her location – she had responsibilities towards her children both in and outside of the house. Whereas this title is a duty at home, it becomes an identity in the public sphere. Outside of the domestic setting, a mother was defined not by the duties involved in raising her children (such as teaching them manners, nursing them, and schooling them), but simply by the act of giving birth. A woman's identity as a bearer of legitimate children was vitally important in ancient society. Her role was evaluated by the contribution she made to wider society – i.e. the production of children.

In this chapter we will examine women's existence in the social sphere. This is a wide ranging field, and it will first be necessary to establish some parameters. The existence of women in social life is acknowledged in two ways in our Greco-Roman and early Christian sources. Firstly, women are mentioned by name, either in the greeting sections of letters or in a way that informs us about an activity that a woman has performed. Whereas the singular occurrence of a woman's name in the letters merely indicates her existence in the community, more detailed references often provide a better insight into the nature of women's social presence. Prisca (or Priscilla) is a unique example in this regard. Alongside her husband Aquila, Prisca seems to operate with Paul, travel, and take an active part in the early Christian community. We will argue that Prisca has taken part in public activities with her husband, and can therefore be understood as acting within the social sphere. More general references to women's public life come in more detailed forms. We will see that early Christian writings were more interested in women's physical appearance in the community than their contribution to society. Paul and Pastor advise women in their letters about proper dress code in public, and the symbolism it carries. We will argue that while issuing warnings about how women should dress themselves, early Christian authors take into consideration the symbolism of particular garments in Greco-Roman society and how their usage or non-usage was perceived by members of wider society. We will also discuss that local Greco-Roman evidence carry significant importance in interpreting
early Christian Ephesian writings and employment of irrelevant sources would lead to inaccurate conclusions. This issue will especially be discussed against scholars like Philip Payne and Bruce Winter.

In 1 Corinthians (11:2-16) Paul focuses on the head coverings of men and women while praying and prophesying. He presents an authoritative hierarchy that filters down from God to Christ, man to woman, and husband to wife. Paul argues that men offend their ‘head’ by praying with their heads covered and women offend their ‘head’ by praying with their heads uncovered. This complex passage forms one of the most debated issues of New Testament studies. Praying and prophesying are clearly faith-related actions: they are about forming a relationship with God. However, these actions are also performed within a community. Early Christians met in houses, and even though one’s house is a private domain, during Christian gatherings this private domain would be transformed into a public/semi-public space. Choosing whether or not to cover your head at a church gathering, therefore, involved a consideration of how you would be perceived publically. Consequently, the actions such as head covering, when being done in church gatherings, would be considered as actions which would affect public perception of a person. In fact, how someone dresses affects opinion about them through other people’s observation, and, therefore, the existence of other people is necessary for one’s visual appearance to make a contribution to one’s identity. The discussion of veiling in 1 Corinthians will be a central text in our consideration of the role of dress in social life.

There are other warnings concerning clothing in other letters from the New Testament. In his first letter to Timothy (2:9), Pastor exhorts women to dress modestly and not braid their hair elaborately. The same exhortations occur in the first letter of Peter (3:3-4). Here, the author takes particular care to emphasize that the inner beauty of a woman is more important than her outer beauty. He suggests that she should try to adorn her soul, not her hair and body. Why is there a special interest in these texts in the way that women dress? The issue is clearly the public appearance of women. The symbolism of their preferred clothing had the power to influence opinion about their roles in society as a whole. It could shed light on other aspects of a woman’s life and even give a false impression about morals or sexual availability. We have discussed that even though Greco-Roman women were not as visible as their western counterparts at home, their participation in the public quarters of the house had become greater over time, alongside that in public spaces.
Although it is not directly discussed in any of the Ephesian early Christian texts we will offer an account of women's public presence in Ephesus as it is recorded in various other sources. Such appearances include women involved in personal benefactions, such as those who donated money to buildings or foundations, and women who held office titles in the city.

II. Women in Social Life in Ephesus

a. The Appearance of Women in Ephesus

To quote T. A. J. McGinn; “In classical antiquity, you were what you wore.” Every single item of clothing and every accessory could carry a different meaning, even several meanings when worn in alternative combinations. We do not intend to discuss in detail every item of women’s clothing from every social group. The main focuses of the clothing-related exhortations to women in the New Testament is veiling, modest dress, and hair styles. Our primary concern here, therefore, is the women who wore the veil, and adopted extravagant clothing and hairstyles. If we are able to identify those who were involved in these practices, we will be able to better evaluate the importance of women's physical appearance in Greco-Roman Ephesus.

1) Women's Head Coverings

As far as Ephesian evidence is concerned on the subject of head coverings, examples are not extensive; however, archaeological remains are more helpful. There are three funerary reliefs, all exhibited in the Selçuk Museum, where a veiled woman is depicted. In the first of these reliefs we see a veiled woman sitting on an engraved chair with a footstool under her feet, indicating a high social status (Figure 3). There is a tree in the background with a snake entwined round it and a man, whose head is missing, holding what is probably an offering dish. In the second example we see an unveiled woman reclining on a kline (a long sofa on which people would lie and dine) and eating (Figure 4). There are two slaves in the room and two other women, probably from the household. The woman on the right of the kline is also wearing a veil. The second relief is a good example of how much the ancient evidence reflects reality. As will be discussed in this chapter, the veil carried strong symbolism in the Roman and Greco-Roman society. Its usage was regarded as a sign of a woman’s modesty, and so it can be argued that the ancient evidence reflects a social ideal by overstating the tendency of women to wear the veil. However, if this is the case we might expect the deceased

413 Winter, Roman Wives, Roman Widows, p. 4.
woman (the reclining diner) to have been wearing the veil, as she is the focus of the relief. The third relief portrays a woman named Olympia who has pulled her *himation* over her head and is holding the collars, leaving her right arm inside the *himation* while doing so (Figure 5). The inscription below the relief reads as follows: “Olympia Diocleios wife of Eucleus of Aristocleius”. In addition to these funerary reliefs there are four statues situated on the site of the Ephesian ruins. There are four statues of women in front of the Library of Celsus which represent the characteristics of Celsus. They are inscribed with the following names: Σοφία (wisdom) (Figure 6), Αρετή (virtue) (Figure 7), Επιστήμη (knowledge) (Figure 8) and Ἐννοια (better judgment) (Figure 9). Among these female characterizations Αρετή and Επιστήμη are depicted as wearing the *himation* on their heads. The head of Επιστήμη is missing, however, it is still possible to see part of her *himation* around her neck. Σοφία is depicted with a bare head, and it is difficult to comment on the appearance of Ἐννοια as her head and right arm are missing.

It is interesting that even imaginary women were portrayed as veiled in Ephesus. For a deeper understanding, however, we must expand our search and investigate the Roman and Greco-Roman traditions on veiling.

In Greek culture a woman’s *himation* generally served as a veil. The *himation* was an outer garment worn on top of the inner clothing (*chiton*), and was used to cover the head by pulling the back part of the fabric onto one’s head. In Roman society, a veil, which had various names according to its size and purpose (a *palla*, a *ricinium* or a *rica*, simply a rectangular shawl), was used to cover the head. The *ricinium* was used as a mourning veil and the *rica* was worn by priestesses. The *palla* was the most common garment. According to Judith L. Sebesta, a *matrona*’s whole costume, her *stola*, *vittae* and *palla*, symbolized her * pudicitia* (modesty). Of all these garments the *palla/himation* carried the most symbolism, and has subsequently become a popular topic of discussion in scholarship on the Roman Empire. It was considered a sign of chastity and modesty, and, therefore, was worn by the devoted wife. We have already demonstrated that marriage was central to a woman’s public identity. If we consider

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415 Balsdon, *Roman Women Their History and Habits*, p. 252.
the importance of the institution of marriage, then the significance of the veil, a garment associated with wives, becomes apparent.

Mary Boatwright claims that “The veiling of some women in the imperial Greek East and in North Africa corresponds to the legal, literary, and philosophical preoccupation among the elite with the virtuous, modest wife, the pious and silent woman whose main task was to care for her husband and children.” To wear a veil was not compulsory. We know of no clothing-related law demanding that married women (or any women for that matter) wear a particular garment, but this does not make its meaning any less important. Sometimes unwritten traditions could be more demanding than written laws. Plutarch discusses head coverings in *Roman Questions* when he answers the following query: “Why do sons cover their heads when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound and men with their heads uncovered?” Plutarch replies that this may be because “the unusual is proper in mourning, and it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered (Ἐγκεκαλυμμέναις).” Later on he provides an anecdote from Sulpicius Gallus to prove his point.

The veil was a symbol of what marriage brought to a woman – i.e. her virtuous identity. It acted as a symbol of marriage itself; like a wedding ring, it was something which enabled people to recognize a married and honourable woman. Therefore, the absence of the veil from a married woman could lead people to imagine that the wife did not care about being recognized as virtuous, or that she did not recognize her husband’s authority. Plutarch claims that Sulpicius Gallus, a consul in 166 BC, divorced his wife because she had gone out unveiled. Valerius Maximus reports that Gallus had justified his actions thus:

To have your good looks approved, the law limits you to my eyes only. For them assemble the tools of beauty, for them look your best, trust to their closest familiarity. Any further sight of you, summoned by needless incitement, has to be mired in suspicion and crimination.

Gallus considered the veil as a symbol of his wife’s commitment to him, and by failing to wear it in public his wife violated his trust. It may even be that she took off her veil with the intention of Gallus divorcing her. Sebesta states that Gallus’ wife “omitted

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418 Plutarch, *Moralia; Roman Questions*, 14 (traditional 267A).
419 Ibid, 14 (traditional 267A).
her veil, she in effect excluded herself from the rank of matron, and Gallus’ divorce was a ratification of the exclusion her bare head had expressed.”421 Whether or not she had anticipated the consequences of her actions, this anecdote provides a very good example of the significance of the veil.

Kelly Olson, however, claims that the literary evidence does not portray the actual appearance of a married woman, but an exemplary form.422 Furthermore, she says that the great majority of female portrait busts display the head unveiled.423 According to Olson, there were no rigid lines between the classes in terms of dress, and, therefore, it is not possible to attribute a certain piece of clothing to a particular class as a whole.424 The evidence seems to largely support Olson – no piece of clothing was exclusively linked to a certain class (there were, of course, uniforms for office-holders and military members). The veil was not a uniform – a wife did not have to wear it – however, many chose to because of the associated meaning. The lack of archaeological evidence depicting veiled women in Corinth indicates that not all Greco-Roman wives wore it. Coins have been found depicting Livia as veiled – that is how the empress wanted to be pictured. We also have portraits of women with bound hair and on some occasions wearing head bands.425 As Cynthia Thompson has pointed out, it seems the women in Greco-Roman society had a choice of whether to wear the veil or not.426 A veiled woman, however, was considered as honoured and loyal to her husband.427

The problem with Olson’s argument is her handling of the literary evidence. There is no way to absolutely distinguish the evidence which portrays an ideal from the evidence that presents the general situation. A consideration of the existing literary evidence, both fictional and factual, provides us with reason to think that women were actually using the veil as a garment. Moreover, none of Olsen’s points lead us to

424 Ibid, pp. 401-402.
426 Ibid, p. 112.
427 Lloyd Lewelyn-Jones also attributes the same function to the veil by establishing a connection between the veiling custom and the shame and honour code in ancient Greek culture. See *Aphrodite’s Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2003), pp. 156-173. However, although the idea of women preferring the veil in the Greco-Roman culture was supported by the author, his way of treating the subject brings a question of doubt with it. The author discusses the custom of veiling in the ancient Greek world from 900 BC to AD 200, however, he chooses to compare the available examples from the ancient world to the modern tradition of veiling in the Muslim world, and does not fully take into account the cultural differences.
underestimate the significance of the symbolism of the veil. Even though some women might have not worn the veil this does not affect the way it was perceived. It was thought to symbolize virtue, modesty, and other good characteristics of a Greco-Roman wife, and the number of women who used it could not change what people thought of the veil. Therefore, we need to take this reality into account when we analyse the Christian literary evidence that talks about the veil.

It has also been suggested that the veil was not just a status symbol, but was also used for devotional purposes. Unfortunately we do not possess any evidence regarding the physical appearance of the priestesses in Ephesus; however, the information about the lives of the Vestal Virgins is much more detailed. The Vestal Virgins served to keep the fire alive at the heart of the temple of Vesta in Rome. Vestals did wear the veil, including during sacrifices. They did not only attend the rituals but also took an active part in blood sacrifices. They were virgins, and their attire with stolae and vittae resembling a matrona’s dress was arguably similar to that of a bride. Vestals were afforded great honour and privilege which most women did not have. Women were not allowed to actively participate in any part of a sacrificial ritual. Rituals were always exercised and supervised by men. In fact, women were considered as unfit for performing sacrifices by the ancients. Vestals were a major exception among women in terms of their place in religious rituals. Their total number remains a subject for debate, but there were only six Vestals at any one time. Their use of the veil was to symbolise their chastity and modesty as priestesses, rather than their active part in religious gatherings.

In order to be able to interpret the ‘veil’ passage from 1 Corinthians in a better light, we must also consider men’s veiling traditions in order to understand Paul’s different requests of men and women.

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2) Men’s Head Coverings

Paul does not direct his warnings only to women but to men as well. He claims that the use of the veil by men and the removal of the veil by women offends both men’s and women’s ‘heads’. We will argue that Paul implies something different than physical heads when he uses the word. Although Paul mentions both men and women in relation to head coverings, as Richard Oster discusses, it has been argued that Paul only includes men to ensure a balance in his argument, not because men were actually practising such customs. However, archaeological data does not support the suggestion that men did not cover their heads, as we will see in the discussion below.

Figure 10

Our first example for men’s head coverings is from Ephesus. The relief of Marcus Aurelius, Hadrian, young Lucius Verus, and Antoninus Pius is exhibited in the Ephesos Museum in Vienna as a part of the Parthian Monument (Figure 10). In this relief we see that Hadrian (standing in the middle) and his adopted son Antoninus Pius capite velato, 

with Marcus Aurelius and young Lucius Verus (the adopted sons of Pius) standing bare
headed. What makes this scene relevant to a sacrifice is the relief exhibited next to it,
where we see a man preparing cattle, probably for sacrifice (Figure 11).

There are several instances where we can see a man with his head covered and
establish the reason for this. A man’s head cover was a part of his toga. The toga was a
rounded woollen garment worn originally by both men and women. Men would wear it
without an undergarment. The dress was not exclusive to adult men until the second
century BC. By the time of Augustus a woman wearing a toga was considered a
prostitute.433 A man could use the rear part of his toga as a head covering by pulling it
onto his head. Using a part of your toga as a head cover was called capite velato, and
was common among men. A man would cover his head in religious rituals, mainly in
sacrifices.

However, perhaps the most significant piece of archaeological evidence for a man
with his head covered is an enormous statue of Augustus which was exhibited in a
building at the end of the forum of Roman Corinth.434 This statue, where Augustus is
depicted capite velato, is no exception, and according to Gordon there are around
twenty other statues portraying Augustus as a sacrificant in Rome and other
provinces.435 In this statue Augustus is looking slightly to the right. His toga is draped
over his head and the edge of his head cover falls to the rear on his right shoulder and
piles up on his left shoulder. His hand, which is missing, was probably holding a patera
– a dish used in a ritual context. That Augustus is depicted capite velato and holding a
patera signify that he was involved in a sacrificial ritual, just as a Roman magistrate
commonly would be.436 The image of Augustus assures us of the purpose of capite
velato as the ritualistic head garment for a person involved in a sacrifice, and
appropriately suits his office as chief-priest, as he had become pontifex maximus in 13
BC.

Another item evidencing capite velato is a frieze from the south wall of the Ara
Pacis Augustae. The frieze displays the members of the Imperial family in togati. Marcus
Agrippa can be seen with his head covered, followed by Livia, also with her head

433 Shelly Stone, “The Toga: From National to Ceremonial Costume,” in The World of Roman
Costume, ed. by Judith L. Sebesta and Larissa Bonfante (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,
435 Richard Gordon, “The Veil of Power: Emperors, Sacrificers and Benefactors,” in Pagan Priests:
436 Ibid, p. 211.
covered. The rest of the family are represented with their heads uncovered, and include Tiberius, Antonia Minor and Drusus the elder. This scene suggests that Marcus Agrippa was in a ritual of sacrifice, probably associated with the altar. The whole family is portrayed as attending the ritual, however, only Marcus Agrippa was *capite velato*. This indicates that not all the people who took part in a sacrifice would cover their heads – it was exclusive to those who took an active role. Rituals of sacrifice in public were always practised by men. Important rituals were headed by magistrates who were sometimes assisted by priests. The head of the family, either the father or husband, acted as the priest in the private rituals of domestic cults. The head of the sacrifice ritual was expected to cover his head. In domestic and public rituals, priests followed that rule. Some priests were even expected to cover their heads outside of ritual contexts. The *Flamen Dialis*, for instance, had to wear a cap, a *galerus*, whenever he stepped out from his house. However, *capite velato* was not a uniform as such, so was not just for official priests, it was for any man undertaking the *role* of a priest. As Oster argues, it was more of a devotional act, and was not necessarily confined to sacrifice. It was a symbol of a man's commitment to his deity and also a part of the ceremony of prayer. Praying, prophesying, and sacrificing were different elements of the relationship between a person and their god/s. The actions and rituals performed may be different in every case but the intention is the same. Consequently, the media employed would remind of a certain phenomenon; i.e. either a priest's cap, or a dish for offering, or a head cover would carry significance and would denote a person's devotion to a god.

3) **Women’s Apparel**

Whereas Paul’s warns women about the absence of the veil, Pastor (1 Timothy 2:9-10) and Peter (1 Peter 3:3-4) chastise women about their excessive hairstyles and dress. As we have already stated, a woman's apparel was a sign of her respected status. Her *palla* or *himation* was an important part of this symbolism. In addition, a garment such as a *stola* might be worn, which would require a very long length of fabric. Whereas the clothing itself reflected a wife’s devoted character, the quality of the fabric was an obvious sign of a woman’s economic class. Expensive jewellery likewise was a status symbol. Unlike clothing, not only the images but also the objects themselves

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438 Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” p. 248.
441 Ibid, p. 504.
could survive until today. When Terrace House 2 was hit by the great earthquake in AD 270/280, it was under renovation, and, therefore, not too many personal items were found on site. However, among those which were found are hair pins made out of bronze and bone, which were possibly used to gather the hair together in a stylistic way. Jewellery has been also found, including gold rings, glass beads, bangles, and pieces of necklaces.\textsuperscript{443}

It is safe to say that not only Pastor and Peter, but Greco-Roman society as a whole expected and revered ‘modesty’ from women. Among a few examples of the endearing phrases we see in Ephesian inscriptions three wives were praised as \textit{σεμνός} (revered/respected) (3083 and 4357) or \textit{κόσμιος} (moderate/respectful) (3461). Bruce Winter, commenting on how elaborate jewellery and hairstyles were preferred by promiscuous women and prostitutes, mentions a similar gravestone intended to distinguish the deceased as respectable: “She did not admire fine clothes, nor gold, when she lived.”\textsuperscript{444} Humility was expected of a wife in every aspect of her life, and as we have seen this included her attire as well.

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\textbf{b. The Roles of the Women in Society in Ephesus}
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Public or official activities of women are not specifically mentioned in our Ephesian early Christian texts. Their social presence in these writings is mostly limited to greetings, salutation, and occasionally other sections of the letters where they mentioned name by name (Acts 16:1, 6-7, 12-13, 15). Sometimes they are praised for their faith (2 Timothy 1:5), and sometimes they are appreciated because they open their house for prayer, or allow their house to become a house church (Acts 16:16-18; Colossians 4:15; Ignatius, \textit{Letter to Polycarp}, ch.8; Polycarp, \textit{Letter to the Philippians}, ch.14; Papias, ch.6). In addition to these sources, there are several women involved in the Apocryphal \textit{Acts of John} and \textit{Paul}. Women are often participants in the miracles, sometimes performing miracles themselves, and some of them become companions to John or Paul.

Of course, all of these examples are related to the religious sphere, and also the domestic sphere, as the background for the events was almost exclusively a \textit{house} church. However, location does not alter our definition of social roles, especially given that houses in Greco-Roman society consisted of both public and private areas;

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\textsuperscript{443} Ladstätter, \textit{Yamaç Ev} 2, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{444} Winter, \textit{Roman Wives, Roman Widows}, p. 100.
\end{flushright}
therefore, it was possible to be within the public sphere at your house. The Christian congregation gathered in houses, but the meeting was still a public event.

Women’s social activity in Greco-Roman Ephesus is a vast topic. Their existence in the public sphere, the nature of their roles and their relationship with their families on the public stage are an elaborate range of subjects which need to be worked through delicately.\footnote{Riet van Bremen, in The Limits of Participation, presents an invaluable study in this regard. Her book exhibits detail in classification and care when interpreting the archaeological evidence.} If we recall the comments of Cornelius Nepos on how Greco-Roman culture, in comparison to Roman culture, seems to be far less tolerant about women going out in public, it would not be hard to imagine that the same attitude would be adopted regarding women in public office. This restricted view on women’s ability to operate publicly seems to have changed after the first century BC, especially with the effects of Romanization. It is possible to confirm the public appearance of women in Ephesus largely through inscriptive evidence.

Van Bremen states that majority of the titles associated with women were “predominantly religious, ceremonial and/or eponymous: the prytania, stephanephoria, demiourgia, hipparchia and the eponymous archonship (archeine or archis –always wife of an archon) and basileia.”\footnote{Ibid, p. 55.} In Ephesus two of the most common public roles women undertook were gymnasiarchos and prytanis. The office of prytania, which was mostly held by women in Ephesus, was a semi-religious office. The office holder was an executive of the βουλή (a council of citizens appointed to run the daily affairs of the city). They were also responsible for providing sacrificial animals, oil for the lighting in festivals, the supervision of sacrifices, and the distribution of sacrificial meat to the public. These responsibilities were valid for the office, regardless of the gender of the holder.\footnote{Ibid, p. 65.} The gymnasiarchia was mainly a financial obligation and may have been associated with a public or religious office i.e. priesthood. The duties included the supervision of a gymnasion, and/or financial responsibility for its running, such as supplying oil etc. It is important to know whether men and women – as a married couple or as individuals – were involved in office to the same degree. There are thirty seven female office holders in Ephesus listed by van Bremen from IvE.\footnote{47 (has 5 different women with titles), 47. 1. 13, 47. 1. 15, 234, 488, 508, 617, 729, 892, 893, 897, 896, 956, 980 (has 2 different women with titles), 983, 985, 992a, 1004, 1017, 1030, 1044, 1047, 1060, 1063, 1066, 1074, 1500, 1989, 3072, 3233, 3239a, 3247.} In addition to those of the prytania and/or gymnasiarchia we see that priestess offices were very
common. More than half of these women are mentioned with their parents, as their families, all very prominent, had held a particular office for generations. There is an obvious link between the holding of social offices and familial status in these inscriptions. Furthermore, thirty one of these women are presented without a husband, indicating that a husband was not necessary for a woman to participate in public work.

For the most part, scholarship is concerned with the fact that women held offices or contributed financially to public constructions not because they were at the disposal of power and money, but because they were married to somebody who was. Ramsay MacMullen, for example, discusses coins minted with high-priestesses’ names on them. However, he argues that those women possessed the title simply because they were married to high-priests. The same logic follows in the holding of offices; prytanis and gymnasiarchos titles follow a line in the family – they are handed down from generation to generation. MacMullen highlights the difficulty of determining the nature of women’s offices, “since apparently in the eastern provinces women sometimes received titles solely through being the wives of office-holders.”

To what extent, then, is this considered a public contribution? As far as physical activity is concerned, women were present with either religious or secular office titles or both. They took part in the ceremonies, attended festivals, and performed the duties that their titles required.

MacMullen mentions a single coin depicting a female as grammateus. However van Bremen states that “It is correctly noticed, nevertheless, that women are rarely found in roles like that of grammateus, which would require their speaking in public. They are to be seen but not heard.” She also dismisses the only example MacMullen refers to, argues that the person on the coin is actually a man and states that it is not rare, but almost impossible for women to appear in an “active administrative and representative post” such as this one. This data leads us to a picture where a woman smiled and waved in a public festival while her people distributed the oil for her; a situation perhaps all her family had been in at some point.

G. M. Rogers suggests that women did not hold offices by themselves until around the middle of the third century AD. According to Rogers, whereas women only appeared in the Ephesian inscriptions as daughters, wives, or priestesses up until the

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451 Secretaries of various kinds; generally not responsible magistrates, though like them appointed for a year only, by election or by lot.
452 Ibid, p. 216.
third century AD, after this time, when the city started to have financial difficulties, they started to become visible on their own as benefactors. When a city could not afford the maintenance of buildings and new constructions, this was an opportunity for women to invest in the city on their own, not as someone else’s relative. They now appeared on the inscriptions as the sole benefactor. Whether or not the city saw well-endowed women as a last hope, we do not know. There is no apparent reason why the city would not give these women chance to invest before. It seems that the city’s desperate need of money created more opportunities for investment and the women took advantage of this. Rogers also opposes the idea of women only benefitting from joint office titles and benefactions thanks to their husbands or fathers. According to Rogers, it is certainly possible to deduce from the existing evidence that women also acted on their own and not on behalf of someone. He also mentions the existence of a small number of inscriptions from the first three centuries AD which do not support the common view. We find two inscriptions compared by Rogers as the proof of this case. The first example he gives is from AD 89/90 and displays a dedication from the priestess of Artemis, Helvidia Paula (or Pauleina). The second one is from AD 114/115 dedicated by the city. A comparison of the layouts of the two inscriptions reveals a very similar pattern. The fact that the first inscription has a female benefactor does not affect the design; they are prepared in the same manner regardless of the gender of the people they are erected for. This is a proof that it is not necessarily correct to assume an inscription describes a woman only as a joint office holder/benefactor. The inscriptions were treated like any other benefaction record. Even though the evidence is outside of our time period, the inscription which records the contribution of the Christian woman Scholasticia to the extensive restoration of the baths (which is now named after her) in the 4th century AD is another example of a woman’s contribution to Ephesus’ buildings.

Another example of a sole donor is Claudia Metrodora, a woman from the island of Chios, just off the coast of Ephesus. She seems to appear in several high office positions. Metrodora had many titles and ran many events in Chios. She gave a banquet for the city, held the title of agonothete (financer and supervisor of a festival or a game), held the title of gymnasiarchia four times, distributed oil for a festival, donated

457 Wiplinger and Wlach, Ephesus 100 Years of Austrian Research, p. 62. lVlE 453.
money for the construction and adornment of a public bath, and twice held the highest office title of *stephanophoros* (a title given to magistrates in some Greek cities who had been granted the honour of being allowed to wear a wreath or garland on public occasions). All these prominent roles required membership of a high status family and great wealth. Metrodora had both, being from an eminent family in Teos and later adopted by an influential citizen of Chios. While her background provided her with the resources to act in such high offices, she was not mentioned with either her biological or adoptive fathers, but was able to act independently. She also appeared in Ephesus later on in her life. Her name is found in a building inscription in Ephesus, along with her husband’s. The inscription is both in Latin and Greek and was found in the *agora*.

There are small leaf drawings between some sentences:

Dianae Ephesiae, Divo Clau[dio, Neroni Claudio Caesari Augusto

[[Germa]nico]] (leaf), Agrippinae Aug[ustae], civita[ti Ephesiorum]

[--------------- (leaf) cum Claudia Metro]dora uxor[e

[Αρτέμιδι Ἐφεσίᾳ, θεῷ Κλαυῦῳ, Νέρωνι Κλαυῦῳ Καῖσαρι Σε-Βαστῷ [[Γερμανικῷ]] (leaf), Ἀγριππεῖνη Σ [ε] Βας [τῇ, τῷ Ἐφεσίων 

dήμῳ]

[--------------- ἐκ τῇδιν ἱδίων κατασκευάσας

ἀνέτηκεν (leaf) σὺν Κλαυῦῳ Μητροδῶρᾳ τῇ γυναικί (3003)

For Ephesian Artemis, the deified Cladius, Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Agrippina Augusta, and the people of Ephesos, 

[.....] erected (this building) at his own expense and dedicated it together with his wife Claudia Metrodora.

Riet van Bremen agrees with Rogers in terms of the joint office holders’ discussion and states that women did not hold offices just through being married to an office holder. For instance, in the case of a *gymnasiarch* we see that the couple was involved separately in the economic office responsibilities. The same amount of financial contribution was made both by the wife and the husband to the office, which

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shows an active role on the women’s part.\textsuperscript{460} However, the author stresses that she is
not happy with a job description which portrays women as totally ‘independent’.\textsuperscript{461} As
van Bremen rightly argues, that these women were actively taking part in the social
sphere was not unusual in Greco-Roman culture. We have seen so far that this society
preferred women to be submissive, modest, chaste, and well-mannered. The distinctive
point here is that these women all came from high-class families. Their status and
wealth enabled them to hold offices, to make donations, and to carry out financial
responsibilities. When their connection to a line of elite class of office holding relatives
is analysed we see that they were almost exclusively acting out a familial responsibility:
“...in the cities of the Greek East there will have been an additional consideration in
that, ideally, daughters were provided not only with an adequate dowry, but also with
sufficient wealth to carry out the financial obligations which their civic roles brought
with them, and which their family name presupposed.”\textsuperscript{462}

c. A Brief Conclusion

The complex issue of women’s public life in Greco-Roman society has not
received sufficient attention in scholarship. Social class had a major influence in the
degree of women's involvement in the public sphere. Women's existence was
dependent on their identity as members of prominent families. Their gender and
perhaps abilities were not considered as much as they would be in a domestic context.
As women, they were not significant in the social sphere as they were in the household.
They had formal, ceremonial, distant, and sometimes stagey roles in public, whereas
their domestic duties were much more sincere, involved, and devoted. However, it is
still noteworthy that women were allowed to hold these offices. Nonetheless, there is a
frequency in some particular office titles which women undertook. Even offices such as
the gymnasiarchia, which incorporated more ‘masculine’ responsibilities related to the
gymnasium, were considered appropriate for a woman to undertake. However, there
was a limit to the ‘masculine’ nature of their positions. For instance, as a prytanis officer
they were to supervise the sacrificial ceremonies but not to take an active part in them.
The possibility of them appearing in an administratively active role was dismissed
altogether. In this regard, their gender was considered. Being a woman did not
withhold them from social life, but rather determined its limitations.

\textsuperscript{460} van Bremen, \textit{The Limits of Participation}, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{461} Ibid, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid, p. 247.
Whereas their official presence was mostly associated with their wealth and status, their physical appearance was regarded as a reflection of their personality. Their garments and adornments were seen as part of their roles as women and had become a symbol of their expected manners. Their veil especially was more than a garment; it was treated as an object that imposed deeper meanings. Modesty and simplicity were revered as well as the veil, complementing the virtues of respectable women.

III. The Social Life of Women in Early Christian Ephesian Writings

Evidence for women’s public existence in the early Christian writings is limited. We are essentially dealing with occasional references to individual women and exhortations about their lives. Women’s public offices are not mentioned in Ephesian early Christian sources. In the letter to the Romans (16:1-2), however, we see Paul urging the community in Rome to welcome Phoebe, who is a διάκονος and προστάτις (a deacon or minister, and benefactor), and clearly has an important place in the Christian congregation. Even though Phoebe is significant for this study in that she shows roles women could occupy in Christian congregations in Corinth, which presumably could also be true of Ephesus, we will not rely on the evidence from Romans as it is geographically irrelevant.463

a. Named Women Connected with Asia Minor

We have seen that public presence of women in Greco-Roman society was complicated in the sense that they acted neither absolutely independently nor with total reliance on a man. Even though they appeared in a number of different offices, some with a religious nature, the real reason for their representation was financial contribution to the activities associated with their offices. The women who are mentioned by name in early Christian writings are acknowledged for their material services to the Christian community alongside their notable faith.

We are introduced to Timothy’s parents in Acts. Timothy was in Lystra when Paul visited the city. His mother was Jewish by blood but was a Christian believer, and his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). Paul takes Timothy with him to join his missionary journey and has him circumcised, (Acts 16:3) meaning that he was at least symbolically

463 For a comparison of Phoebe with two other Greco-Roman benefactors please see Kearsley “Women in Public Life in the Roman East”.

160
closer to his father’s Greek roots rather than his mother’s Jewish heritage. When we encounter his mother again in 2 Timothy (1:5) she is mentioned by name. Pastor addresses Timothy (2 Tim. 1:2-7), wishes him goodness, and reminds him of his faith in God. We learn that this faith originated from his grandmother Lois (possibly his maternal grandmother as she is mentioned with Timothy’s mother) and his mother Eunice. Timothy’s family were among Christian believers for generations, and the emphasis implies that this ‘faith’ may have entered the family through Lois.

Apart from the women mentioned for their great faith, there are women whom the Christian authors include in the salutation sections of their letters, indicating an appreciation for the women’s presence and perhaps their work for the congregation. Lydia is a woman from Thyatira, who according to Acts, Paul met in Philippi when they went to the river to find a place of prayer (Acts 16:11-15). We are not informed of the reason, but there were women gathered by the river. Lydia, who is a purple cloth dealer, hears Paul talking and converts to the Christian faith. She and her household are baptized and she invites Paul to stay at her house afterwards. There is no implication of the existence of a husband, and the mention of Lydia’s job indicates that she may have been a widow. The people who were baptized with her are described as ‘her’ household. The other women she was meeting might very well have been other widows.

Chloe is another woman reported to have a large household. She is mentioned to Paul by some people who are referred to as των Χλόης (those who are of Chloe) (1 Corinthians 1:11). They were probably members of her household or people working for her, possibly Christians, as they reported to Paul what was happening in the congregation at Corinth. Kate Cooper proposes two possibilities about Chloe’s identity. She suggests that Chloe could have either been a pagan householder of great financial means with Christians in her household, or a distinguished member, and possibly the leader of a Christian community in Corinth which Paul considers to be either a rival or an ally. Any comments about Chloe’s identity are largely speculation, as we know next to nothing about her; however, we argue that the first alternative is more probable. As Cooper point out, Paul does not elaborate on his mention of Chloe with a word of praise like he does with other members of the Christian faith whom he cites in his letters, which is quite significant. Furthermore, if she was a leader of a Christian

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community that Paul did not agree with, he might have mentioned her in the following verse, which condemns people taking pride in belonging to different leaders (1 Cor. 1:12). Witherington argues that Paul’s apprehension is due to possible division among the congregation. Paul must have thought that dedicating one’s faith to a single teacher was not right. Fee, however, claims that Paul is frustrated because people were trying to outdo those taught by a different teacher by saying that “I belong to...” However, we argue that 1 Cor. 1:13-17 implies that no one should divide their attention for anyone, including Paul, as Christ is the one who died for them. Therefore, we suggest that Chloe was an influential and financially powerful pagan woman who would accommodate Christians under her roof.

Nympha is another woman who was specifically mentioned by name (Colossians 4:15). Like Lydia and Chloe, Nympha offered her house/hold for the service of the church. When Paul sends greetings to her he identifies the congregation as the church in her house. It is apparent that the home of Nympha was used as a house church.

Claudia was a companion of Pastor when he wrote 2 Timothy, as she is one of the people who sends greetings to the Christians who were with Timothy in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:21). The work of Claudia and her companions must have been known by the Ephesus congregation, as she and the others are all mentioned by name.

The role of women within their household surfaces in the letters of bishops as well. As we have seen above, women who were mentioned by name in the early Christian writings were often considered the master of their household, although this might have originated from the fact that they were widowed. In Ignatius’ Letter to Polycarp we read of a woman who is not a widow but is thanked alongside her children for her assistance: “I greet all by name, and the wife of Epitropus with the whole house of herself and her children.” Ignatius does not mention the name of the wife of Epitropus – this may be because he does not remember it or did not know it. However, we can still see the possible authority of a woman in her house. So far, all the women we have discussed have contributed to the Christian mission in one way or another.

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467 Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 58-59.
468 Ignatius’ Letter to Polycarp, trans. by Bart D. Ehrman (Cambridge: Massachusetts; London: England: Harvard University Press, 2003), ch. 8.2. So far we have preferred Michael Holmes’ translation for the letter, however, in this instance we use Bart Ehrman’s version because Holmes translates τὴν τοῦ Ἐπιτρόπου as “the widow of Epitropus,” and there is no justification for this. Ignatius uses the word χήρα in this very letter (ch. 4.1), and, therefore, there is no reason that he would refrain from using it again if in fact Epitropus’ wife was widowed.
Their faith, active work and/or hospitality gained the gratitude of the authors. Even though their power over their husbands was debated, their social presence was never regarded as odd in early Christian writings. Ignatius apparently had never met the wife of Epitropus or had interacted with her so briefly that he did not remember her name. Ignatius does not present an attitude against women’s public visibility as later in the chapter he salutes a certain Ἀλκην as τὸ πνεύμα τοῦ μοι ὁμοίωμα (literally ‘the name desired by me’; ‘my dearly beloved’), indicating that he regards her very highly (*Letter to Polycarp* 8.3). Therefore, even though the wife was either not present or did not contribute much to the gatherings of the congregation in her house, it was acknowledged that the services provided by her household and her children were under her control. Another unnamed woman is the sister of Crescens, mentioned in Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians*. Crescens is the scribe, or possibly the carrier of the letter and Polycarp is asking the congregation in Philippi to take care of Crescens’ sister when she arrives in the city (ch. 14).

**Prisca & Aquila / Aquila & Priscilla**

Prisca and Aquila are no doubt one of the most remarkable couples in the New Testament. Their missionary work with Paul is mentioned and appreciated in many different books and letters of the New Testament and even in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. According to Acts Aquila and Prisca were of Jewish origin living in Rome, Aquila being a native of Pontus (Acts 18:2a). They were exiled from Rome by the Emperor Claudius and went to Corinth. They were lived and worked with Paul’s company because they were tent makers like him (Acts 18:2b-3). They later travelled along with Paul towards Syria and remained in Ephesus when they stopped there (Acts 18:18-19). We know that they were with Paul in Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians and hosted a house church there (1 Cor. 16:19). Pastor also says that they were in Ephesus when he authored 2 Timothy. The couple may be mentioned in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles as well. In the Coptic fragments of the *Acts of Paul* the Ephesus episode includes Paul’s journey from Smyrna to Ephesus, where he lodges with Prisca and Aquila.

Prisca and Aquila not only worked, lived, travelled, and risked their lives for Paul (Romans 16:3-4), they also actively participated in explaining Christian values to those who were ignorant (Acts 18:26). Their life and mission, together with Paul, never

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469 They are referred to as “Prisca and Aquila” in some verses and “Aquila and Priscilla” in others.

470 They are mentioned in the greetings section of 2 Timothy alongside Claudia (4:19-20).
included only one of them; they are always mentioned in the sources as a couple. Furthermore, in some references Prisca is cited first. All these references show that Prisca was a prominent figure in Asia Minor among the early Christians. Her case is remarkable, as her name is never apart from Aquila’s name in the texts.

The public presence of women in early Christian writings resembles to those in Ephesian Greco-Roman evidence in a way that it is not always possible to guess what their exact role was in a situation. However we can deduce from the limited amount of information we gather from the early Christian writings that the fundamental reason why early Christian women were acknowledged differs from Greco-Roman data. The first and foremost characteristic of a woman named in an early Christian writing is her faith, whereas in Ephesian inscriptions we see that women were recorded as a source of money. We can see the Christianization of Greco-Roman customs here; a woman’s limited public existence was dependant on her financial means and family connections in Greco-Roman Ephesus, but it was her service to the church and loyalty to her faith that made her worthy of acknowledgement in early Christian writings.

b. Head Coverings in Early Christianity

In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul establishes an authority chain beginning with God, followed by Christ, man and finally woman. He states that God is ‘head’ of Christ, Christ is ‘head’ of man, and man is ‘head’ of woman. (1 Cor. 11:3) It is here that he addresses his concerns about head coverings. The issue Paul raises does not concern only women. He asks men to pray or prophesy with their head uncovered and woman to do so with their head covered. If this is not observed, he claims, shame will be brought upon their ‘heads’ (i.e. Christ for a man, and a husband for a woman). The

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471 Fee translates κεφαλή as ‘source of life’, as it is often rendered from Classical Greek (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 502-504). Payne also believes that the word means ‘source’ (Man and Woman, One in Christ, pp. 117-137). Witherington argues that the order symbolizes the line of creation (Conflict and Community in Corinth, p. 235). While these authors base their arguments on the several different meanings of the word ‘head’ in the ancient world, Thiselton presents by far the widest investigation of the word’s meaning and although giving each meaning some credibility he decides that it is best translated with a ‘preeminent, foremost’ connotation (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 812-822). Our understanding relies not only on Thiselton’s argument but also on the fact that ‘authority’ makes most consistent sense throughout the passage.

472 The debate as to whether Paul is referring to long hair or a covered head in 11:4 has attracted much attention. Payne asserts that ‘long hair’ is preferable over ‘covered head’ (Man and Woman, One in Christ, pp. 166-169) because he argues that Roman and Greek women often did not wear their head covered (please see fn. 478). However, we have presented literary and archaeological evidence that contradicts his opinion. In his detailed discussion Thiselton (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 823-828) has concluded that while ‘long hair’ is a viable option, ‘covered head’ gives more clarity to the passage. Fee (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 497) concurs, and Witherington does not even consider ‘long hair’ as a possibility, and dismisses it right away (Conflict and Community in Corinth, p. 232).
setting for this request, ‘praying and prophesying’, is both religious and public; prophesying would have generally been performed in public, but praying of course could have often happened in the domestic sphere. Before we move on to discuss the reason why particular actions by men and women would offend others in a specific context, we should establish what Paul means by ‘heads’.

We initially learn that “Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). However, in the following verses Paul includes other ‘heads’ in the discussion which somewhat complicate matters. Paul says that "Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head" (1 Cor. 11:4-5a). We believe that the heads which should be covered or uncovered are people’s literal heads. However, the head which one could possibly bring disgrace upon is a metaphorical head. Paul uses ‘head’ to indicate two different meanings. His choice of words fits into the argument perfectly – since ‘head’ both defines the upper part of the body and a person who is in place of authority. Paul makes it very clear that “Christ is the head of every man and God is head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). Therefore, it is not problematical to understand who the ‘head’ of men is. Although the chain of heads is perfectly comprehensible until this point, the usage of the word ἀνήρ confuses things because it means both ‘man’ and ‘husband’ in Greek.

We translate the word in the first part of verse 3 as ‘man’ for two reasons. Firstly, in a chain of order where the inferiors would feel respect and responsibility towards their superiors, as Christ does before God, it would be absurdly restrictive to think only married men were worthy enough to be Christian. Secondly, this kind of discrimination among people would cause many problems which would destroy the unity Paul was trying to build in his congregations. Besides, being married was regarded as an inferior choice by Paul (1 Cor. 7:8-9), so it is unlikely that he would favour people who chose a lifestyle he did not particularly advocate. In the second part of verse 3 we translate the word as ‘husband’. Legally, and in most cases socially as well, a woman’s ‘existence’ was dependent on a male in Greco-Roman society. A free Ephesian woman would be under the legal authority of either her father (patria potestas if she was single, and sine manu if she was married), her husband (cum manu), or a male guardian (tutela).473 Her male guardian could be called kyrios depending on her citizenship status.474 As a result, a woman would always have a male in her life as her ‘head’. The reason for our insistence

474 Ibid, pp. 30-34.
on the ‘husband’ translation is the average age of Roman girls at marriage, which was as young as thirteen.\textsuperscript{475} Women spent a large part of their life married, and, therefore, for a long time it was their husbands who were their closest ‘head’. Furthermore, people in Paul’s congregation were not translating the letter into English – a person whose native language was Greek would understand the range of meanings anyway. A woman who was single, widowed, or divorced would accept her closest \textit{ἀνήρ} as her ‘head’. There were far more married women in society anyway, however, so ‘husband’ makes matters simpler for us.\textsuperscript{476}

Paul explains, then, why a veil would offend others. For men it is the act of covering his head while praying and prophesying that would offend his ‘head’, i.e. Christ (1 Cor. 11: 4). Our examination of men’s head coverings in Greco-Roman culture has shown that it implied religious devotion to a god. Even though the action was not shameful in itself, it was part of a pagan ceremony which in a Christian context would offend Christ and God by its reference to non-Christian ways of worshipping.\textsuperscript{477} For women, we see that not wearing a veil carries the same disgrace as a shaved head. Therefore, a woman should cover her head to avoid such embarrassment (1 Cor. 11:5-6).\textsuperscript{478} Previously in this chapter we discussed the omission of a veil in public as a reason to be divorced by one’s husband. However, Paul’s discussion of this action indicates more than simply separation of a couple, since the shaving of hair was actually associated with adulterers in Greco-Roman culture. Dio Chrysostom states that a woman who committed adultery would have her hair cut off, and, moreover, she would

\textsuperscript{475} Hopkins, “The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage,” p. 312.

\textsuperscript{476} Both the meaning of \textit{ἀνήρ} in different verses and the reason for man’s presence in the passage has created arguments. Fee asserts that Paul only refers to men to balance his argument (\textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, p. 495). According to Fee, there is no evidence of any kind indicating men’s head cover in the ancient world (Ibid, p. 507). Witherington refers to several different pieces of evidence for men’s head covering. Additionally, he point outs that the instructions are directed both to women and men throughout the passage (\textit{Conflict and Community in Corinth}, pp. 232-234). As we mentioned earlier, there is indeed evidence for men’s head coverings, and in our view, men are addressed too strongly in the passage for them to be there merely to ‘balance’ a discussion.

\textsuperscript{477} Payne argues that the custom of wearing a head cover for men was not regarded as disgraceful in Roman culture, so it does not make sense that Paul would want to forbid it (\textit{Man and Woman, One in Christ}, p. 142.). However, what the author does not consider is the context of the usage of the said act. While in Greco-Roman culture men’s head coverings were used in religious devotion, this was in religions other than Christianity.

\textsuperscript{478} Payne argues that it was not a custom for Greek women to cover their heads, nor it was required for Roman women to have their head covered (\textit{Man and Woman, One in Christ}, pp. 152-161). Rather, he argues that Paul required them to tidy up their hair. Not only have we discussed literary sources which refer to Roman women’s head covering customs, but archaeological evidence from Ephesus has shown that there was indeed a tradition of women covering their heads in Greco-Roman culture. We have never claimed that it was compulsory for any woman to wear a head cover; however, this does not change the fact that it had symbolic and contextual meaning for society.
have to become a prostitute.\textsuperscript{479} Therefore, Paul holds the woman who does not use the veil, a symbol of marriage, in the same regard as an adulterous woman, and says that she should cut off her hair as well. Wearing the veil is the only way to prevent this undesirable situation.\textsuperscript{480}

The next three verses not only provide more reasons for the wearing of the veil but also further explain the authority chain from the beginning of the verse: "For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection (or glory) of God; but woman is the reflection (or glory) of man. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man" (1 Cor. 11:7-9). The chain is not only authoritative but takes into account an emotional co-dependence between man and woman. The implication here is that proper application of the head covering customs would spare individuals from offending their ‘heads’. From this point of view the authoritative chain appears to be bidirectional between man and woman. However, later on we see that this is not intended to create equality in power between husband and wife, as the wife must have a symbol of authority on her head all the time (1 Cor. 11:10), but to indicate the equal responsibilities men and women are expected to undertake before God (1 Cor. 11:11-13).\textsuperscript{481} Paul stresses that men and women are equal in their duties as Christians because “all things come from God” (1 Cor. 11:12). However, they are naturally and socially different and they need to behave accordingly. Just as the use of a head cover carried different meanings for men and women, long hair was viewed differently on men and women too. While long hair is becoming to women it is culturally unacceptable for men (1 Cor. 11:14-15). This statement both socially differentiates the genders from one another and reminds men and women that they are both identical and different simultaneously.

If we consider the Greco-Roman setting for head coverings which was discussed earlier it is possible to better understand Paul’s different requests from men and women. We have seen that a head cover for men – \textit{capite velato} – was used in sacrificial ceremonies, and signified reverence to a deity. Wearing a head cover was a component of pagan ritualistic worship; it was part of Corinthian Christian men’s former life. Converting to a new belief system is a life changing incident. Even if a person has

\textsuperscript{480} The evidence we have presented outweighs Fee’s argument about the masculine connotation of shaven hair disgracing women (\textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, p. 511).
\textsuperscript{481} Witherington, \textit{Conflict and Community in Corinth}, p. 238.
changed their state of mind their previous ways of life do not disappear instantaneously. The men in the congregation in Corinth were following the Christian faith but they were also practising customs from their former religion. We cannot know if they were utilising their former beliefs knowingly. Nevertheless, their attendance at a church congregation with their head covered as if they were sacrificing to idols was not helping what Paul was trying to build – a unified church. Paul wanted men to understand that practising their former customs would offend Christ, because it is now Him they are praying to. These men may have not realised that what they were doing was wrong, but this does not change the fact that as far as Paul was concerned, carrying out traditions which belong to Roman religion while practising as a Christian was not acceptable.

As for women, we have seen that a veil was considered a symbol of the married, chaste, responsible, and moderate wife. It denoted a visible link between the wife and the husband. Women’s head coverings were related to the social aspect of praying and prophesying. Unless there were Vestals amongst Paul’s congregation (which is obviously not likely), the women in his congregation were not using the veil as a religious object in rituals. These women had responsibility towards their ‘heads’, i.e. husbands. The veil which they used as a status symbol was a representation of their position in their family as a wife and mother. Therefore, omitting the veil while in public, for example in an assembly, would in effect visibly shun her husband.

Scholars have expressed very different views on the reason for Paul’s requests about head coverings. Payne asserts that Corinthian women chose to untie their hair in public to express their socially free status (Man and Woman, One in Christ, pp. 169-171) and Paul warned them to tie their hair up as a type of ‘head cover’ because it is more graceful for them to appear in such manner (Ibid, pp. 204-207). On the subject of men’s head coverings Payne argues that because long hair was considered effeminate it was degrading for men (Ibid, pp. 200-204). Fee argues that we cannot really know the real reason behind Paul’s request from men and women (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 510). According to Witherington, women praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered exhibited their ‘glory’, whereas only God’s glory should be reflected in prayer (Conflict and Community in Corinth, p. 237). As for the men, he presents the same theory as ours, stating that Paul would not be happy seeing men practising pagan customs in the congregation (Ibid, p. 238). In terms of men’s head coverings, Thiselton also refers to pagan customs, but connects the issue to self-respect. The author mentions that for men, covering the head means devaluation, which not only shames the man himself but also the “one to whom that person is responsible”, i.e. Christ (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 827). His argument for women follows the same direction as ours and connects head covering for woman to their respectful status in society. A woman’s refusal to cover her head denoted sexual promiscuity, which shamed her family (Ibid, pp. 828-829). Although he follows the same reasoning with us in terms of women’s head coverings in Roman and Greco-Roman societies, Bruce Winter develops his argument concerning this issue around the idea of ‘New Roman Women’, which we do not entirely agree with (Roman Wives, Roman Widows, pp. 77-96). Please see p. 43 for our assessment of the author’s argument.
The hierarchy chain starts with God and continues through Christ to men and finally women in the assembly. Each member of this chain carried responsibility towards the one above them. Paul focused on praying and prophesying because these were the actions that were performed in Christian gatherings. For men, these gatherings were part of their personal and pious connection to Christ, their head. For women these gatherings were also an occasion on which their domestic status would be apparent. A wife's inappropriate behaviour would leave the husband in a difficult situation.

c. Women’s Apparel in Early Christianity

Women’s veils were not the only garment or accessory they were warned about. Both Pastor (1 Timothy 2:9-10) and Peter (1 Peter 3:3-6) chastise women over excessive hair ornaments and expensive clothing, and both of them seem to relate this issue to submission, particularly the acceptance of their husbands’ authority.

After directions on praying in the second chapter of 1 Timothy, Pastor asks men to pray “without anger or argument” (1 Tim. 2:8) for it would be right not to become involved in anything worldly and abrupt while praying that might distract them from God. Whereas men are advised about anger management women are advised to refrain from lavish hairstyles, expensive jewellery and clothing, and instead dress modestly (1 Tim. 2:9). It was indeed common that women, especially those with families that could afford such luxuries would adorn themselves with expensive jewellery. Jewellery such as gold rings, glass beads, bangles, and pieces of necklace have been found in Terrace House 2, even though the houses were not occupied when an earthquake trapped the items in the debris.\(^{483}\) It is possible to see gender differentiation in these verses. We have seen that women were warned about their gossiping or idleness (1 Tim. 5:13), but not once are women scolded about anger coming between them and their faith. Women are attributed more feminine distractions than men, possibly based on what had been reported from the congregation. Pastor recommends ‘good deeds’ to women instead of immoderate outfits. This kind of appearance is not only seen to interfere with praying, but also damage the reputation of a Christian woman.

According to Bruce Winter the reason Pastor warns women so explicitly is the tendency of ‘New Roman Women’ to act more liberally than they used to, and this ‘tradition’ was spreading farther as Roman rule expanded its territories.\(^{484}\) We have

\(^{483}\) Ladstätter, Yamaç Ev 2, p. 180.
\(^{484}\) Winter, Roman Wives, Roman Widows, pp. 98-100.
discussed several times that Winter’s argument for the ‘New Roman Woman’ is not convincing. Our problem with his theory lies in the extent to which this ‘movement’ was influential. We have discussed that Winter’s approach of employing evidence from all over the Roman Empire in order to interpret early Christian texts without any regard to local context of the writing presents overly general results. 

Cultural perceptions could differ between societies, and, therefore, one needs to be careful when generalising about Greco-Roman customs as a whole. The author argues that because of the Romanization process “there was no substantial distinction between a major city of Asia Minor, Roman Corinth and Rome itself.” This statement, therefore, becomes the justification for why the author does not pay any attention to the locality of the evidence. Winter believes that the influence of ‘New Roman Women’ had reached the farthest limits of the Empire, and that Roman culture more generally was in full effect everywhere. The correlation between the Greek and Roman cultures within the hybrid ‘Greco-Roman’ is a complicated manner, and we have argued that there is more ‘Greek’ than ‘Roman’ in the Greco-Roman Winter argues for. Therefore, we suggest that the influence of ‘New Roman Women’ was not as extensive as Winter asserts. On the subject of women’s apparel in 1 Tim. 2: 8-10 we do believe that Pastor was reacting to some instances which he may have heard about in the community; however, there is no reason to think that the situation represented an epidemic.

Peter expresses the situation more delicately and clearly. His request for modest dress among women, however, includes more components. His alternative to inappropriate clothing for women is the adornment of “the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God’s sight.” (1 Pet. 3:4). Excessive fondness for jewellery and clothing is again seen as distraction from dedication to God. However, inner beauty is not the only characteristic with which women can adorn themselves. Submission to their husbands had been considered as a ‘beautiful’ behaviour for a long time, stretching back to Sarah and Abraham (1 Pet. 3:4-5). Accepting the authority of the husband was revered as the best quality a wife could have, both in Greco-Roman culture and the early Christian community. Worldly attractions were considered to be the worst enemy of one’s loyalty to God.

Furthermore, the women who preferred extreme hair styles and expensive ornaments and clothes in Greco-Roman culture – the promiscuous women and prostitutes – surely must have had a great effect on the perception of these dress

485 Please see pp. 42-43.
486 Winter, Roman Wives, Roman Widows, p. 97.
487 Davids, The First Epistle of Peter, p. 118.
customs. This kind of lifestyle would damage both one’s relationship with God and also one’s reputation in early Christian society. Therefore, it provided an opportunity to the early Christian authors to try and avoid possible defamation from opponents to the Christian movement. One other intention of advising women to adopt simpler fashions could be to prevent the jealousy of other women who could not afford expensive pleasures. Paul and the other authors were trying to create a united congregation with a sense of equality before God, and division surely would not help their mission. Their requests would not only minimise the class distinction between congregation members but also make non-Christian husbands happy considering the connotations of women’s excessive apparel. Therefore, one piece of simple advice about clothing would be seen to help society’s pious, communal, and moral progression.

IV. Conclusion

The social existence of women in early Christian society is confirmed by our literary evidence. Women were not kept away from social gatherings, rather they were often the cornerstones for church gatherings as they hosted congregations in their houses. The gratitude of the authors to these women who provided a roof for the early church and possibly assisted its development in many other ways establishes a meaningful place of women in society. However, there were always limitations for women in terms of power and authority, whether in a domestic or social setting.

One way for a woman to gain greater social acknowledgement in Greco-Roman society was through wealth. Women could hold official titles, but this came with a certain amount of social expectations. Their social or official works provided women with public recognition, but culturally they were always considered as dependent on a male. A prominent family name and fortune enabled women to appear in public, but even so there were limitations; they were allowed to hold many public offices but not all of them. In a sense, early Christian women’s public works such as hosting the house churches also depended on economic factors, because they would not be able to accommodate the congregation or help them otherwise if they could not afford it. However, the appreciation of the early Christian authors for such assistance was never solely due to the social status of these women. They were commended for their faith in God, and their generosity was viewed as a consequence of their piety.

On the subject of women’s apparel in public, we have challenged various scholars’ approaches to Greco-Roman evidence. We have argued that the warnings of Paul and
Pastor about the use of different garments are based on the contextual meaning of these items of clothing in Greco-Roman society. Early Christian authors implemented rules on how to use head coverings or how to dress appropriately in order to prevent actions which would be deemed disgraceful by wider society. Scholars like Philip Payne and Bruce Winter have enabled us to argue for the importance of selecting appropriate comparative evidence when examining early Christian writings. We have seen that locally and contextually relevant Greco-Roman evidence provides us with the most accurate data to aid our interpretation of the early Christian writings. Payne and Winter, for instance, despite having paid rigorous attention to primary evidence for the social environments of the early Christian writers, have failed to reach accurate conclusions due to overly generalised views of Greco-Roman culture resulting from a failure to localise their evidence.

In terms of men’s authority over women Greco-Roman and early Christian cultures take similar stances. In Greco-Roman culture, a woman’s attire functioned not simply to cover her body; its symbolism would reveal much about her identity. It is not surprising that in a society based on reputation, women in particular would pay particular attention to the way they dressed. We have seen that the more extravagant styles were associated with promiscuity, while simplicity and covered heads were associated with honourable behaviour. In particular, the veil symbolised both respect and a sense of belonging to a family. The association between head coverings and marriage was so strong that omission of the former could lead to destruction of the latter. Once again, early Christian authors successfully Christianized Greco-Roman norms, picking up on the importance of the veil and modest clothing for women, and asserting their importance for symbolising commitment to both one’s husband and God.
CHAPTER SEVEN: TEACHERS

I. Why Teachers?

One might understandably think that this chapter is going to discuss education for women in Ephesus. Our concern, however, are the teachers, not the students. There are various references to women’s teaching activity in the early Christian writings. The first, and most direct reference occurs in 1 Timothy. Pastor states: “I permit no woman (or wife) to teach or to have authority over man (or husband); she is to keep silent” (1 Timothy 2:12). The verse raises many questions, which we will discuss in detail later on in the chapter. What concerns us here is the nature of the teaching activity. The co-text surrounding the verse begins with advice for men to pray without anger and argument. Attention then turns to women. Following some advice about appropriate clothing for women and the behaviour which is “proper for women who profess reverence for God” (1 Tim. 2:10), Pastor turns his attention to learning. He instructs women to learn in silence and forbids women to teach (1 Tim. 2:11-12). What kind of ‘teaching’ was Pastor talking about? Does it have any relation to school teaching as we know it, or does it simply concern learning for religious purposes? Pastor’s chooses the verb διδάσκω (I teach), and it is unclear as to whether he refers specifically to teaching as a profession. The verse resembles 1 Corinthians 14:34, where Paul forbids women to speak in churches, although there is no reference to teaching there – Pastor may have taken this point a step further. For this reason 1 Cor. 14:33-35 will also be considered in this chapter, in order to discuss any possible correlation. Women must have attracted Pastor’s attention in some way to be banned from teaching. Maybe Pastor was not pleased with the custom of women being involved in the teaching profession, if there was such a custom. Alternatively, some women may have committed malpractice in their profession. Either way, we are primarily interested in what disturbed Pastor about the activity of women’s ‘teaching’.

In the course of our discussion we will argue against scholars such as Philip Payne and Ben Witherington about the authorial intent of 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. We will assert that the subordination which is asked of women in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 refers to a wife’s submission to her husband, rather than her submission in a learning environment as Payne argues. We will also argue in opposition to Witherington that both passages are aimed at regulating women’s behaviour in public, which would automatically concern their husband. Although the passages mention women being
vocal in religious gatherings, we will argue that Paul and Pastor were primarily concerned with the fact that these meeting were public events.

The Apocryphal Acts of Paul also refers to female teachers. In the third chapter of the Acts of Paul, Paul gives Thecla permission to teach the word of God. According to Tertullian, the author of the Acts of Paul aims to legitimize women's teaching and baptizing,\(^{488}\) because these customs were uncommon and needed support. While these examples all concern religious teaching, our investigation will not be limited to this type of instruction, and will consider all kinds of teaching that women might have been involved in.

## II.

### Teachers in Greco-Roman Society

When it comes to female teachers in Greco-Roman society, we have very few sources. Bruce Winter argues that there is no evidence that women were working as paid teachers at a home or at schools.\(^{489}\) However, there is some evidence for women’s teaching activity not in Rome, Athens or Asia Minor, but in Roman Egypt. Ephesus does not provide any evidence on this topic – there is not a single reference in the inscriptional evidence to anyone (man or woman) acting as a teacher. Eve D’ambra refers to the remains of a mummy, which seems to belong to a young woman called Hermione Grammatike.\(^{490}\) We know her name and her title from a well preserved mummy portrait, which portrays her with a modest hair style and pearl earrings. D’ambra translates her title as ‘teacher of Greek grammar’ and states that "some scholars have interpreted the inscription as merely referring to Hermione’s literacy, but others have noted that teachers of Greek in Roman Egypt were highly respected for their efforts in preserving Hellenistic traditions and were honoured for their accomplishments, thus, the title “grammatike” given to the deceased teacher."\(^{491}\)

Dominic Montserrat argues for Hermione's literacy but not her employment as a teacher.\(^{492}\) Montserrat argues that because of the lack of other similar examples of this kind of title it is not possible to conclude that the title means ‘teacher’. Rather, he argues that the title might simply praise her education, rather than her service in education. Education was an expensive service in the ancient world, and given her style


\(^{489}\) Winter, Roman Wives, Roman Widows, p. 116.

\(^{490}\) D’ambra, Roman Women, p. 135.

\(^{491}\) Ibid, p. 135.

of burial we know Hermione was from an elite family; it may have been, therefore, that her family wanted to pay tribute to her learning and celebrate her literacy.\textsuperscript{493} Rafaella Cribiore agrees with Montserrat on the translation of \textit{Grammatike}.\textsuperscript{494} Cribiore thinks that the issue is unclear but she claims that there is supportive evidence in another inscription which mentions a certain \textit{Grammaticus Latinus}. \textit{Grammatike} may, therefore, still be a title for a teacher. According to Cribiore "In the Greek-speaking world, several terms distinguished an elementary teacher: \textit{grammatistes}, \textit{grammatodidaskalos}, and \textit{didaskalos}."\textsuperscript{495} She argues that the latter two terms were more frequently used in Egyptian papyri, but \textit{didaskalos} still caused some confusion because it did not only mean 'teacher' but was also used of some handicraftsman who took on interns. Cribiore offers more concrete titles for female teachers, who were either mentioned as \textit{ἡ διδάσκαλος} (lady teacher), or with a shortened version of a title such as \textit{deskale} or \textit{he deskalos}.\textsuperscript{496} While we do not possess any sources for teachers in or around Greece or Asia Minor, the surviving evidence in Roman Egypt is fascinating. One of the reasons for this may be the convenient climate of Egypt for the preservation of papyri. Cribiore gives several examples of papyri where female teachers are mentioned. In a letter from AD 99, for instance, a certain Apollonous writes to her husband who is out of town for military service, and says that the children are doing fine with the \textit{deskale}.\textsuperscript{497} In another papyrus a certain Sarapias is referred to as a \textit{deskale}.\textsuperscript{498} In a letter from the second century AD, which was found in a town near to the ancient Egyptian city Tebtunis, a certain Diogenes writes to the manager of her estate and asks him to see the son of 'woman teacher'.\textsuperscript{499} Another letter from between the second and third centuries AD was sent from a caring mother in Alexandria to her children Ptolemaios and Apollinaris, and among the list of people who send their greetings she mentions the \textit{deskalos} Athenias.\textsuperscript{500} These letters are undeniable evidence for women’s teaching activity. Whether it was at homes or in schools, there were female teachers who were responsible for children’s education. Most probably, because there were not many female teachers, they were known only within their neighbourhood. The phrase ‘son of the teacher’ is evidence for this. The identity of the ‘woman teacher’ remains unknown to us, but it may be that again, she was known within her own locale. Having something

\textsuperscript{493} Ibid, pp. 225-226.  
\textsuperscript{494} Cribiore, \textit{Gymnastics of the Mind}, p. 79.  
\textsuperscript{495} Ibid, p. 51.  
\textsuperscript{496} Ibid, p. 81.  
\textsuperscript{499} P. Mil. Vogl. II. 76. Cribiore, \textit{Gymnastics of the Mind}, p. 81.  
in short supply does not necessarily make it valuable, but it does make it noticeable. However, as Cribiore states, while they may have stood out more at the time, accounts of women teaching in Greco-Roman society are rare in the literary evidence.\textsuperscript{501}

So far, we have discussed teaching as a profession. However, the professional sphere was not the only area in which women were teaching. They were performing this job in the domestic sphere as well, and for free. As a mother, a woman had to educate and discipline her children. We have already mentioned the important role of a woman as a mother. She had all sorts of responsibilities towards her husband and to her children, and one of these responsibilities was to educate the latter. Women were not paid for this of course, and the children probably did not have a curriculum, or anything systematic resembling what they would have had at school. Even so, this domestic schooling was a type of education. Ancient authors paid great attention to this aspect of domestic life. Cicero says that “it does certainly make a great difference what sort of speakers one is daily associated with at home, with whom one has been in the habit of talking from childhood, how one’s father, one’s attendant, one’s mother too speaks.”\textsuperscript{502} Quintilian argues that parents, not just fathers but mothers as well, should be highly educated, since they have a remarkable influence on their child's education.\textsuperscript{503} Vitruvius claims that he feels obligated to thank his parents for his education, which enabled him always to want to learn more.\textsuperscript{504} The mother’s ‘teaching’ role in the house, therefore, cannot be underestimated.

**A Brief Conclusion**

Hermione Grammatike, the deskalos Athenias, and the deskalos Sarapias, are remarkable examples of women involved in the teaching profession. However, our understanding of female teachers is still limited. Because only a very few women were educated to a level sufficient enough to be a teacher, the profession was not common among them. Literary evidence tends to neglect those who managed to go to school and eventually become teachers. As stated above, evidence for female teachers in Asia Minor, including Ephesus, is lacking. This does not mean there were not any women involved in teaching in this region; on the contrary, the evidence for female teachers from Roman Egypt makes it possible that their contemporaries were indeed teaching in Asia Minor.

\textsuperscript{501} Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, p. 83.
III. ‘Teaching’ in the Early Christian Ephesian Writings

There are a few direct references to women participating in some sort of teaching activity in our early Christian sources. In 1 Timothy, Pastor prohibits women from teaching (1 Timothy 2:12), and in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles the author, through Paul, gives permission to Thecla to teach the word of God (ch.3).

Pastor begins chapter 2 in of 1 Timothy with instructions concerning prayer. These instructions are not mere guidelines for how to pray, but are in fact reminders of the responsibilities of Christians as believers. Pastor concentrates on the issues which he believes distract men while praying, such as anger and arguments (1 Tim. 2:8). Next, he advises women to avoid dressing in excessively elaborate attire (1 Tim. 2:9). In the previous chapter we discussed the requests for abstention from lavish hair and expensive adornments, and argued that these stylistic accessories were considered distractions from God. Because these kinds of embellishments were not appropriate for married and respectable women in Greco-Roman society, where the symbolism of clothing was highly important, they were interpreted as shameful both on a wife and her husband.

In the verses following 1 Timothy 2:9 Pastor changes course, and tells women “to learn in silence with full submission”. He goes on to say “I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent” (1 Tim. 2:11-12). After men are reminded of their duties as believers towards God, women are told that they should not forget the important place of God and their husbands in their lives. Refraining from elaborate dress and teaching activity are two ways in which they are required to do this.

We must first consider Pastor’s use of terminology. We have rendered ἀνδρός and γυνή as ‘man’ and ‘woman’ above, and like Witherington, we argue that this translation is more consistent for the passage than husband and wife. Nevertheless, we will still suggest that the passage is aimed at wives, as most women in Greco-Roman society had a husband. We will argue that the real issue in this passage is not women’s teaching in particular, but their behaviour towards their husbands. It is clear that the women Pastor refers to are operating in public, otherwise dress codes would not be an issue. Witherington argues that what is considered here is specifically behaviour in

worship.\textsuperscript{506} We agree that 'worship' is the appropriate concept for the passage, however, we will assert that the public aspect of the gathering is more important than the religious aspect of this particular issue. From the verse which tells women to study in silence we also learn that the 'society' here is the Christian congregation. Asking grown women to study in silence cannot be because of a concern for noise, such as one might imagine with schoolchildren. Towner argues that the 'quiet' state represents respect for the teacher in the congregation, which is appropriate considering the relationship between the submissive, silent learner and the authoritative teacher.\textsuperscript{507} Moreover, the rest of the verses clearly state that submission and authority are at issue. Philip Payne thinks that the submission which is asked of women is not to their husbands, but to the act of learning.\textsuperscript{508} We do not believe that Pastor makes a deliberate attempt to associate 'learning' with 'submission' in 1 Tim. 2:11, however, he does state in 2:12 that "women are not permitted to have authority over men but to keep silent". If silence is the opposite of not being submissive, then the 'noise' women were making (i.e. the problems they had been causing) could have been the questioning of their husbands' authority. This could have easily occurred if women were publicly disagreeing with what their husbands were saying. Scholars have suggested different reasons for this kind of behaviour. Pietersen argues that women were affected more easily by the false teachings of the opponents and involved in activities that they should not have been, such as teaching.\textsuperscript{509} Towner suggests another possibility – the increasing trend of particularly wealthy women undertaking more prominent roles in society (i.e. the 'new Roman women').\textsuperscript{510} We have stated already that even though there were apparent problems in the congregation in Ephesus (such as the excessive apparel of women referred to in 1 Tim. 2:9-10) we do not fully commit to the 'new Roman woman' argument. The extent of the situation would not have escalated this dramatically in Greco-Roman society; if it had, we would have evidence more strongly indicating the situation. Besides, as is stated by Towner, the local situation does not provide us with any significant clues about women's teaching activities more broadly.\textsuperscript{511}

We have seen that even though social existence was not impossible for women in Greco-Roman society, they were not vocal among the community; even the offices they held did not require public speaking or administrative decisions. As women, they were
not seen fit to declare opinions publicly, especially when men were present. Therefore, if the women in Pastor's congregation were discussing their concerns among people this would not be considered appropriate. This would be especially true if their intention was to publically correct their husbands, which is what we suggest Pastor means by 'teaching' in relation to women. We argue that Pastor observed women publicly disagreeing with and lecturing their husbands, and sought to put a stop to this. Pastor's choice of word (διδάσκειν) is significant. Teaching was regarded as a much respected profession, and it was very rare, close to impossible in Asia Minor, to find cases of a woman teaching others. Moreover, as we have stated previously, public speaking was not an accepted activity for women. For this reason, when Pastor chose not to use verbs meaning 'argue', 'correct', 'reply', or 'discuss', for instance, he increases the degree to which the women he refers to would have been viewed as disrespectful. Moreover, Pastor reveals that he considers 'teaching' and 'having authority over man' as equally inappropriate for women, by prohibiting both in the same sentence.

Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 seem to stem from the same issue. In fact, Pastor may even have developed his convictions based on Paul's opinion.512 Paul establishes some ground rules for worship, beginning with a request to his congregation to be respectful of each other in church gatherings, accepting even those who speak in different languages. He advises that such foreign speech should be translated, and even if it cannot be interpreted the congregation is encouraged to listen anyway, and remain silent. The same courtesy is expected for those who prophesy or speak in the gathering (1 Cor. 14:26-33). Paul does not permit women to speak at all, however, they should remain silent and be subordinate. If there is anything else they want to learn they should ask their husbands at home, “for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church” (1 Cor. 14:34-35). Witherington renders the situation as a small disturbance, and says that Paul was not comfortable with women turning the service into a 'question and answer' session with their possibly inappropriate questions.513 It is probably true that the situation did not constitute anything major. For Witherington, much like Pastor in 1 Tim. 2, Paul is addressing a problem with church order.514 We argue that Paul saw women's actions not as problematic for the order of the service...
directly, but as disrespectful towards their husbands, which would be deemed inappropriate in public and could disturb the gathering. When asking women to remain silent Paul sets up subordination and the failure to remain quiet as antonyms.\textsuperscript{515} We are not informed directly who or what women were protesting against by speaking up in church, but it is implied later that it is their husbands. Paul allows women to ask questions at home, however, so it was not curiosity about the Christian faith that was raising women’s voices in public. It is also unlikely that women were appearing at gatherings without their husbands. It was deemed inappropriate to speak, ask questions, and perhaps even to offer insight on a subject or query one’s husband’s view in public. Kate Cooper argues that the women Paul wants to be silent are the listeners in the congregation, not those who are prophesying.\textsuperscript{516} The passage itself, however, does not give enough details to make this distinction. In 1 Cor. 11:2-16 Paul mentions women who prophesy and does not indicate that there is any tension between these women and others. However, in 14:33-35 Paul uses more inclusive language and includes any women who ‘speak’.

Paul and Pastor’s attempts to silence the women in their congregations are not aimed at withholding them from religious education. They are free to ask their husbands anything at home, and perhaps even speak with other female members of the community in private or outside the church. What they are discouraged from is a public presentation of disrespect of their husbands. Pastor bases his secondary placement of women on the creation of Adam and Eve: “for Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Tim. 2:13-14). Therefore, woman is deemed not only to be submissive and culturally dependent, but also naturally inferior and characteristically easily deceivable. Creation, therefore, supports the social norm. Women are advised as to their limitations and place in society, and Pastor describes the proper lifestyle for women: “yet she will be saved through childbearing provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (1 Tim. 2:15). It is possible to interpret the pronoun in this verse both as referring to the women who raised their voice in the church towards their husbands, and as the women who simply need to learn a lesson from the harsh scolding of these women. The first group may understand this as the consequence of their unbecoming behaviour, while the second group may consider it a warning. We have stressed numerous times the importance of childbearing for a woman in Greco-Roman society.

\textsuperscript{515} Ibid, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{516} Cooper, Band of Angels, p. 32.
women to bear children. Even for widows the age limit for not having to marry again was the age at which it was believed women could not physically get pregnant. The early Christian authors agreed with this phenomenon and understood the most desirable roles for women to be dedicated mothers and submissive wives. Modesty was also considered hugely important for women. Pastor summarizes the identity of a Greco-Roman wife and emphasises that child bearing in particular, and living a proper Christian life more generally, should be the main interest of a woman.

Although it was culturally uncommon for a woman to teach, Paul and Pastor are more concerned about women who publicly challenge the authority of their husbands. However, we do not believe that it would be approved of for women to teach, as it was not the general custom, and required public speaking, which was not considered appropriate by early Christian authors. Other passages in which women are reported to have been acting as sources of knowledge indicate that the prohibition of such behaviour was related to the social aspect of church gatherings, rather than their religious character.

Priscilla, who is mentioned alongside her husband Aquila in Acts is a prominent example of an early Christian woman who undertook teaching activity. In Acts 18:24-28, immediately after Paul has left Ephesus for Syria, we are introduced to a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. Apollos was well educated in the scriptures, but only knew the baptism of John. While he was speaking in the synagogue one day on these issues, Priscilla and Aquila heard him and approached him privately, proceeding to instruct him in the Way of God more accurately. Priscilla accompanied her husband on this occasion, and perhaps many others, because they are always reported as working together. The author of Acts is not uncomfortable with this, and Paul does not wish to limit Priscilla’s involvement on the many occasions that he refers to them. Should we consider Priscilla’s account as an exception, or was her teaching acceptable because it was done privately? There is no indication that Priscilla’s situation is an anomaly, but the setting of the event involving Apollos is certainly relevant. It is specifically indicated that Apollos was taken aside, implying a private conversation, not a public gathering; Priscilla was not speaking in the presence of the crowd that Apollos was addressing.

Another example from the Apocryphal Acts of Paul complicates matters. In the third chapter of the work Paul goes to Iconium (3.1) and there a young girl named Thecla hears him speaking about God (3.7). Thecla, despite being engaged, decides to

517 For more discussion please see pp. 163-164.
dedicate her life to chastity and follow Paul (3.25). Thecla follows Paul – albeit against his wish – wherever he goes, and after an adventurous journey, surviving several punishments by performing miracles (3.26-39), Thecla finds Paul in Myra (3.40) and he grants her the right to teach, instructing her to “go and teach the word of God” (3.41). As we have stated, the author of this work is unknown, and as Tertullian argues, it has been considered an attempt to legitimize women’s teaching and baptizing.\textsuperscript{519} Thecla, in fact, baptizes herself in the story. However, we do not know anything about her teaching career, as when the third chapter finishes the focus returns to Paul. Even though the author aims to keep women’s teaching activity at the centre, this is not fully achieved. The relationship between Paul and Thecla is portrayed platonically, with Thecla’s passion for Paul lingering on the borders of obsession and Paul never truly paying attention to her desires. One might think that the permission granted to Thecla to teach was a way for Paul to be rid of her. However, this would conflict with the alleged intentions of the author. Although the authorship of the work is not certain, and the odd layout of the story interferes with the message of the subtext, it is the only text which advocates women teaching in the public sphere.

\textbf{IV. Conclusion}

In this chapter we have explored a different aspect of women’s public life and its limitations. Thanks to a few references in the early Christian writings we have been able to investigate the importance of women’s ‘teaching’ in the social sphere. Being a teacher was an occupation which was almost exclusively undertaken by men in the Greco-Roman world. We saw in the previous chapter that women were always kept away from the public offices that would require public speaking. Although it was not an office title, being a teacher necessitated addressing groups. Therefore, apart from some examples from Roman Egypt, we have not found any solid evidence for teaching as an occupation for women.

Even though the Greco-Roman world has not left much evidence for female teachers, we have seen that ‘teaching’ in the early Christian writings did not simply refer to that which occurred in a classroom. We have established that both the Greco-Roman and early Christian cultures agree on women’s submissiveness and the limitations of the wife and her responsibilities. The ‘teaching’ that is referred to by Pastor is employed in the same sense as the ‘speaking’ that Paul refers to. Both actions were forbidden for women in church gatherings, and both authors reminded women to

\textsuperscript{519}Tertullian, \textit{On Baptism}, ch. 17.
be subordinate. What the authors were actually attempting to limit, we have argued, was women’s challenging of their husbands’ authority in public. Contrary to Payne’s assertion, the subordination which is asked of women in 1 Tim. 2:11-15 is in relation to their husbands, not the act of learning. Witherington, asserted that 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 are not in fact about familial relationships, but about church order. However, we have argued that what really disturbed Paul and Pastor was how women acted in public religious gatherings towards their husbands. Any inappropriate behaviour of a wife in a public gathering reflected poorly on her husband. As long as women did not damage their husbands’ reputation publicly, they were free to ask the things they wanted to know at home. Women’s freedom was limited in the social sphere in order to protect their reputation and the status of their husbands. Women were to live their lives as was considered appropriate by their culture. Just like wider Greco-Roman society, women’s public existence in the early Christian community remained visual, rather than verbal.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

In this thesis we have examined the lives of Ephesian women through their various different roles, from the perspectives of both Greco-Roman sources and early Christian writings. We have considered women as wives, mothers, widows, teachers, and publicly visible members of society. The Greco-Roman data we have studied has enabled us to establish a foundation for the women (and men) referred to or implied in the Ephesian early Christian texts. By comparing the two perceptions of women offered by Greco-Roman and early Christian evidence from Ephesus and its surrounding area we have been able to provide fresh interpretations of the sources. Of course, these two sets of sources present different women, and we have not traced a particular woman’s personal experience of converting to Christianity. Rather, our study sought to compare the representation of women by sources from different cultures.

Reading early Christian texts, particularly New Testament passages, in their ancient contexts is by no means a new approach in scholarship. However, we have seen that most of the attempts to investigate the social settings of early Christian texts lack the sharp focus that they require. The sources such scholars utilise are often too far removed from Greco-Roman culture and imagine an inaccurate environment for the Christian writings. This thesis has provided evidence mostly from Ephesus, and has employed additional non-Ephesian Greco-Roman sources with caution, to contribute to our general understanding of Greco-Roman society. With more local evidence and a more specific focus on the lives of Ephesian women we sought to construct the most accurate atmosphere for the early Christian Ephesian women.

Before we began to investigate the lives of early Christian women, however, we needed to establish their social environment, which required an analysis of the effects of the Romanization process in Ephesus. After the arrival of Roman administration in Ephesus the Hellenistic culture of the city gradually combined with the new Roman culture and developed into an Ephesian hybrid. We have seen that the degree of Romanization was not the same everywhere; Ephesus was a city which created its own style of Greco-Roman culture. Even though it was possible to see many Roman elements in the hybrid culture, Greek culture never truly left the city, and surfaced in various different places. Terrace House 2 is perhaps the greatest example of this indigenous blend of cultures. The distinctive nature of this relationship between Roman and Greek culture emerged particularly in our discussions about the exhortations to women in the early Christian literature. The significant relationship
between Greek and Roman culture reinforced the importance of selecting local evidence to construct a background for early Christian writings.

In regards to that discussion we have seen that Bruce Winter's notion of the 'new Roman women' argued for a more liberated status in society for a group of high status western Roman women, and assumed these women had a significant influence on their male-dominated eastern Greek counterparts. The theory also argues that the harsh tone of the Christian writings towards women originates from a society-wide downfall of morals in the Greco-Roman world, which was initiated by these 'new Roman women'. However, we have argued that alongside the women whose behaviour warranted a warning from the early Christian authors, the ideal of the traditional devoted wife was still alive in the Greco-Roman world, and particularly in Ephesus. This theory, of course, raises questions about the authorial intent of the early Christian writings. If it was not western customs influencing Ephesian women to the degree that the Christian writers felt the need to chastise them, then what was it? The basis for these warnings, we believe, was the cultural legacy of the Romans. However, we have argued that the extent of this moral decay was not as extreme as Winter argues; we have also proved that it was not society-wide. The reason for the harsh comments in the sources can be attributed to various small incidents, which may have only occurred a couple of times. By addressing the problematic members of the group specifically, the early Christian writers hoped that these individuals might decide to change their behaviour, or at least realise the ramifications of it. Therefore, the kind of exhortations we have seen in the early Christian writings did not necessarily stem from problems with Greco-Roman society as a whole. As a result we have seen that employing contextually improper sources in order to interpret early Christian writings could result in reaching to conclusions that would not reflect an accurate representation of women in the writings.

Determining the degree of the effects of Romanization in Ephesus has enabled us to establish a clear context for the early Christian writings. Consequently, the comparison between the two perspectives has become easier as well. We started our analysis with domestic roles of women in Ephesus.

Greco-Roman society was family-oriented. The age of marriage was very young for women, and their entire lives were designed around the institution of marriage. Therefore, we have mostly focused on the role of a woman as a "wife". We have seen in our epigraphic evidence that more than half of the references to women were of wives.
The inscriptions have proved nothing out of the ordinary, and indicated that wives almost always came in second place in the statements on tomb stones, reflecting their husbands' authority. Positive characteristics of spouses were also valued and praised. Paul, being completely aware of the culture in which he lived, honoured marriage (1 Cor. 7:1-40). However, it was clear that his responsibility was not to Greco-Romans but to God. He favoured singleness because it was the purest and most focused state of dedication to God; marriage would bring all sorts of worldly responsibilities, which would only distract the person from their faith. Although marriage was his second choice as a lifestyle for the congregation Paul did not promote celibacy as a compulsory act, being sensitive to the cultural climate his congregation were used to. He often reminded wives and husbands of their responsibilities towards each other.

In terms of the marital relationship, the most significant ongoing tradition from Greco-Roman to Christian culture was the submissive wife motive. The motif of a dedicated wife and caring mother was highly regarded in Greco-Roman society. To obey her husband was one of the ordinary responsibilities of the Greco-Roman wife, just like caring for her children or attending to the running of the household. Early Christian authors emphasize the necessity of a woman being subject to her husband (Eph. 5:22-28; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1). This was deemed to be appropriate behaviour in God's view. The characteristics of an ideal wife outlined by the early Christian writings were in line with Greco-Roman cultural norms, but the responsibilities of a wife were not towards society anymore, but towards God.

In light of the Greco-Roman evidence and the attitudes of the early Christian authors we have argued that several aspects of married life in the early Christian community can be explained better. We have argued against the common scholarly view that the early Christian writings differed sharply from each other and discussed that they in fact follow a parallel path on the subject. In terms of the argument of whether early Christian authors borrowed cultural elements from Greco-Roman culture into their writings we have approached the issue from several different angles. In relation to the Christianization of Greco-Roman customs we have argued that scholars such as Carolyn Osiek and Margaret MacDonald misinterpret how Christianization actually worked. Moreover, we argue that these scholars have misunderstood which elements in the letters constitute Christianized Greco-Roman customs and which ones are already Christian norms. We have argued against scholars like Lynn Cohick and Minna Shkul who assert that the early Christian writings do not agree on the issue of marriage, and in fact had very different motivations. We not only
argue strongly in favour of the existence of Greco-Roman elements in the early Christian writings but also suggest that the arguments of Cohick and Shkul concerning the alleged motivations of the early Christian authors are weakly constructed. On the topic of divorce between a Christian and non-Christian we have once again argued for harmony between Greco-Roman culture and the works of early Christian authors. We have discussed that Margaret MacDonald’s view on the relationship between the said culture and the writings leads to inaccurate conclusions on the subject. The examination of the Ephesian early Christian writings on the subject of marriage has also brought up the issue of equality between the couple in the early Christian community. As we have argued in favour of the idea that early Christian authors borrowed Greco-Roman cultural elements in their writings, we have defended the idea that the early Christian writings do not treat the married couple as complete equals. Our investigation here brought us into dialogue with scholars such as Philip Payne, Antoinette Clark Wire, and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who have defended the idea of equality between the couple in the early Christian writings. Proper examination of Greco-Roman culture and establishing an accurate background for the early Christian writings has resulted in fresh perspectives on how we interpret these writings on the subject of marriage.

In our investigation of widows and other single women we considered the issue of re-marriage for widows and divorcees, the notion of widows as a distinctive social group and the reputation of widows. Re-marriage was common in Greco-Roman society due to the frequency of young widows resulting from the traditional age difference between the couple. Young widows were ‘encouraged’ by the law to remarry. Penalties were imposed for those who did not remarry, and these applied until women were past childbearing age. We argued that the reputation of widows was another factor in directing them towards remarriage. Ancient writers portrayed Ephesian widows as promiscuous and prone to pursue sexually immoral adventures. Older widows, on the other hand, faced financial problems and/or loneliness. Life for an elderly woman was difficult in Greco-Roman society. We have argued that this difficulty brought many older widows together in order to provide better living conditions for each other, and perhaps good company. In this way lonely widows who were wealthy enough to take care of other would receive the company they longed for and widows who were not able to support themselves and had no one to look after them would receive shelter and help. Therefore in terms of older widows, there was sometimes a sense of togetherness in the Greco-Roman society.
The issue of widows is treated elaborately in 1 Timothy 5:1-16, which prescribes how older widows should be cared for, seeks to identify young widows who should remarry. We can see that the Christianization of cultural norms was again at work. Pastor focused on the same young widows which Roman law wanted to remarry because they were still able to have children and were culturally vulnerable. Pastor declared these women should get married again, not because their singleness was an obstacle between them and a safe home and future children, but because their youth would detain them from a deeper dedication to God. Marriage was seen as a secure environment to keep widows away from the self-indulgent lifestyles which were condoned by society. We have argued that the reputation of younger widows in Greco-Roman society was a major factor in Pastor’s approach to younger widows. For older widows, it appears that the church had certain criteria which these women needed to meet in order to receive help, which are listed by Pastor.

We have argued that on matter of both younger and older widows, scholarship tends to assume that the early Christian authors were the first people to deal with widows, and that Greco-Roman society leaves little trace of them. To the contrary, there is literary Ephesian Greco-Roman evidence which describes younger widows as promiscuous, much as they are described in the early Christian writings. Not only the reputation of younger widows but also the group sense in references to older widows has bases in Greco-Roman society. In opposition to scholars like Margaret MacDonald and Paul Trebilco we have argued against the idea that there was an official order of some kind set up for older widows in the early Christian community.

The next chapter of the thesis dealt with the subject of women’s social life. On the subject of women’s physical appearance in public we have seen that behaviours which would not be accepted among Greco-Romans more generally were also discouraged by the early Christian authors (1 Cor. 11:2-16; 1 Tim. 2:9-10, 1 Peter 3:3-4). Certain accessories and clothing styles were advised to be used, and others to be avoided, depending on the implication that the particular article carried in Greco-Roman society. The deeply established cultural background of a congregation would not have changed overnight. Besides, the Christian congregation had its own motives for asking women to dress modestly. While these behaviours were deemed appropriate by society, they also had become the required characteristics for a proper Christian woman. The issue of head coverings has played a huge role in this argument. A head cover was an article of clothing which carried great importance for both men and women in Greco-Roman society. Supported by the archaeological evidence from
Ephesus, we have argued that the covering of the head was a common custom employed by men and women in different contexts. Different settings brought different symbolisms for men and women, which required contrary reactions from the early Christian authors. We have suggested that Paul acted on the perception of head covering in Greco-Roman society, and formed his instructions accordingly.

We have interacted with many scholars, on the subject of head covering in particular, arguing against their assertions on many different points. Philip Payne, Gordon Fee, Ben Witherington, Anthony Thiselton, and Bruce Winter all offer different perspectives on the issue of head coverings, in particular the reasoning behind the warning for women, but not men, to observe this practice while praying and prophesying. We have discussed that the motivations Payne, Fee, Witherington, and Winter argue as being behind Paul’s attitude towards head coverings are insufficient. We have argued that it is vital to consider the Greco-Roman roots of the head covering tradition when interpreting 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

Our final chapter focused on the teaching activity of women. The request for women’s silence in church gatherings (1 Cor. 14:34-35), which were essentially the first public meetings for the church congregation, reveals the early Christian authors’ views on women’s public existence. Women are also banned from teaching and having authority over men (1 Tim. 2:11-12). We have argued that the abnormality of women occupying vocal social roles such as teaching in Greco-Roman society influenced the early Christian authors’ views about women’s presence in the congregation. In 1 Timothy, Pastor employs the verb ‘to teach’ (διδάσκειν) to symbolise women’s public activity in the congregation, and associates it with trying to publicly overpower their husbands. As ancient evidence has shown, women’s involvement in teaching activity was rare in Greco-Roman society. Therefore, Pastor simply forbade women from a role which was already atypical for them. Teaching in the congregation involved being vocal in society, which was considered as one of the characteristics of having authority over others. Claiming authority over men, especially one’s husband, was condemned in Greco-Roman culture and early Christian society. Scholars often interpret these passages as being related to teaching activity itself, and question whether the attitude of the early Christian authors was based on isolated incidents. We have argued against Ben Witherington and Philip Payne, who argue for these passages to be specifically teaching related. Rather, we have argued that these passages limiting women’s contribution to church gatherings and banning the activity of teaching were actually concerned with women publically displaying respect for their husbands.
Our comparison between early Christian literature and Greco-Roman evidence on the lives of Ephesian women has generated two conclusions. Firstly, we have seen that even though the Greco-Roman history of Ephesus and the Christian history of Ephesus can be studied separately, these two subjects need to be combined in order to accurately evaluate the lives of early Christian Ephesian women. Secondly, it has been demonstrated that Greco-Roman cultural norms had a greater impact on the composition of early Christian sources than has been previously assumed.

Our investigation into the lives of early Christian Ephesian women has exhibited both slight and radical changes in our perspective of the sources. On the one hand, Greco-Roman society and the early Christian community attributed very similar values to women in many different areas of society. Women in Ephesus did not face dramatic changes in terms of social norms when they were first introduced to Christianity. Early Christian authors employed Greco-Roman values to a degree which they saw appropriate. On the other hand, however, while early Christian sources maintained cultural norms very similar to those of Greco-Roman society, the authors of the sources specifically emphasised that the congregation's responsibility was towards God now.

A comparison of the Greco-Roman and early Christian sources from other cities from Asia Minor mentioned in the New Testament would be a valuable future topic of research. Equally, it would be fruitful to undertake a broader research project on the lives of the Ephesian congregation.
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