

preserve old dichotomies in new guises.¹ The prevailing hypothesis is that Judaism, however and if ever defined, regarded women as weak-willed, wanton and, in general, worthless.

Jeremias, who presents an *appendix* (not surprisingly) on the 'Social Position of Women' in *Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus*, sets the agenda; he speaks of Judaism's

very low opinion of women, which is usual in the Orient where she is chiefly valued for her fecundity, kept as far as possible shut away from the outer world, submissive to the power of her father or her husband, and where she is inferior to men from a religious point of view... Only against the background of that time can we fully appreciate Jesus' attitude to women.²

Similarly, Elisabeth Meier Tetlow depicts a 'Judaism in the first century [that] had emerged from the oriental patriarchal tradition in which women were considered the property of men, with no rights, no role in society except childbearing, and no education'.³ Such orientalizing of the Jews serves to distinguish them culturally and ethnically from Jesus and his followers.⁴ This

1. There are notable exceptions to this observation; see especially Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's sustained comments on the problem of anti-Jewish exegesis in *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992). See also B.J. Brooten, 'Early Christian Women and their Cultural Context: Issues of Method in Historical Reconstruction', in A.Y. Collins (ed.), *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Literature* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 65-91; *idem*, 'Jewish Women's History in the Roman Period: A Task for Christian Theology', in G.W.E. Nickelsburg and G.W. MacRae (eds.), *Christians among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 22-30.

2. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 375 (Appendix, pp. 359-76). Jeremias notes, 'there were plenty of disdainful opinions expressed on women. It is striking to see how these opinions outweigh opinions of high esteem, which were by no means lacking' (p. 375). The same comments may also be applied to the Christian canon and patristic corpus, but Jeremias does not make this comparison here.

3. E.M. Tetlow, *Women and Ministry in the New Testament: Called to Serve* (College Theology Society; Lanham, MD: UPA, 1980), p. 6.

4. See, for example, L. Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM, JESUS, AND WOMEN: YEAST OF EDEN*

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Contemporary investigations of the historical Jesus, particularly those which address his cultural setting, are in a state of ferment. A rising trend in Jesus research has shifted away from Jesus the eschatological prophet concerned with temple, law, theology, and the people Israel. Increasingly popular is a construct derived in good measure from the Q source, which portrays Jesus as a Mediterranean peasant sage most closely associated with Cynic social observations. Reconstructions of second temple Judaism have appropriately moved away from the constructs of 'normative' or 'catholic'; their replacement, formative Judaism, was initially developed to convey the lack of monolithic practice and theology. In some present Jesus research, however, formative Judaism's diversity has dissolved into an amorphous ethos virtually indistinguishable from its Hellenistic gentile neighbors. Yet these various studies have remained consistent on one issue. Unlike the diverse views of the man and his cultural matrices, the view of Jewish women in antiquity has remained as solid as Mrs Lot.

Where feminist analysis had been in the vanguard of disciplinary rethinking in literature, social theory and cultural theory, the question of women has remained the handmaiden in most studies of second temple Judaism and the historical Jesus; when it does appear in the more recent works, it serves to

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rhetorical move suggests that Palestinian Jews of the second temple period are different not only in attitude but race from those who follow Jesus. The church, in turn, (implicitly) escapes the confines of orientalism for the blessed freedom of Hellenism. The appeal to the Orient is an appeal to an ideological construct that opposes the Christian West to the rest, to the great disadvantage of the latter. Neither the general category of Orient nor the depiction of the Jew is questioned in this move; each categorization reinforces the other, and together they buttress the West's own unreflected self-identity.

In other cases where the tactical use of the rubric 'oriental' is not employed, the strategic orientalist goals remain in place. Judaism as a worldview or a culture is still seen both as distinct from and as regressive compared to both its gentile neighbors and the followers of Jesus in its midst. This portrait is then not infrequently extended to encompass the modern synagogue and community. And indeed, at times the rhetoric draws, consciously or not, on modern stereotypes. For example, Leonard Swidler's *Women in Judaism* finds a 'dominance of a severely inferior status of women and even an intense misogyny in the formative period of Judaism' that is 'in no way weakened or deflected by evidence that there existed at the same time sincere human affection toward wives... or that there were some *domineering* Jewish women' (emphasis mine). In turn, 'since the subordinate position of women, and even misogyny, was so profoundly and intimately bound up with Judaism in this formative period, the inferiority of women and misogyny have also tended to have an overwhelming influence in the subsequent history of Judaism'.¹ This early treatment is groundbreaking in its introduction of the subject matter and is commendable, as are Swidler's other works, in its attempt to eliminate anti-Semitism and sexism from the church and society; nevertheless, it has been criticized for the dependence of its conclusion on select rabbinic citations to define the period of

On (academic) stereotyping of the Orient and its inhabitants see E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

1. L. Swidler, *Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1976), pp. 168-69.

'Formative Judaism'. Swidler, however, has not changed his approach. In his 1988 *Yeshua, A Model for Moderns*, he reasserts that 'Yeshua wanted it to be abundantly clear that his teaching, unlike that of other rabbis, was intended for both men and women' and that 'in Judaism it was considered improper, even "obscene", to teach women the scriptures'.¹

The scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s appropriates much of this model for moderns. In the entry under 'Women, NT' in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Ben Witherington suggests that 'The Palestinian Jewish culture was one of the most patriarchal in the Mediterranean crescent'.² How bad was it? It 'limited women's roles and functions and severely restricted: (1) their rights of inheritance; (2) their choice of relationships; (3) their ability to pursue a religious education or fully participate in the synagogue; and (4) their freedom of movement'.³ P.W. van der Horst observes that

[n]ot only Philo and Josephus...but also Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, Testament of Reuben, the Mishnah, and a great number of other sources present women as creatures who can easily be misled and seduced (and are easily seducing), who need to be protected against themselves, and can best be kept inside the home as much as possible.⁴

1. L. Swidler, *Yeshua, A Model for Moderns* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1988), pp. 93, 84.

2. B. Witherington III, 'Women (NT)', *ABD*, VI, p. 957. This sort of comparison serves only a polemical or apologetic purpose. So R.S. Kraemer: 'Greek and Roman culture can hardly be characterized as inherently less misogynistic than Israelite culture (on what scale would we measure such things, and for what purpose?)...'. See *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 193-94.

3. Witherington, 'Women (NT)', p. 957-57.

4. P.W. van der Horst, 'The Role of Women in the Testament of Job', *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 40 (1986), p. 278; reprinted in *idem, Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), p. 99. Van der Horst explicitly follows Swidler's *Women in Judaism* as well as L. Archer, 'The Role of Jewish Women in the Religion, Ritual and Cult of Graeco-Roman Palestine', in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*

Susanne Heine speaks of the 'strict observance of the precepts of the law expanded casuistically by the Jewish scribes [and] therefore women like Lydia must have found Christian faith even better and more in accord with their hopes'.¹ Similarly, Léonie Archer's *Her Price is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine*² devalues her subject.

Whatever second temple Judaism may have been in terms of theology, politics, economics, or aesthetics, it was, according to this construct, generally bad for women. And, whatever the Jesus movement was, it was good for women. Oppressed, repressed, suppressed, and therefore depressed by patriarchal socio-cultural controls, Jewish women were of course attracted to the 'community of equals' of the Sophia-Christ. The gospel of this 'radically egalitarian [kingdom]... rendered sexual and social, political and religious distinctions completely irrelevant and anachronistic'.³ What good news this was! Women were

(London: Croom Helm, 1983). Yet van der Horst provides data that contradict his model; cf. his citation from Josephus, *Ant.* 15.29.5: 'Salome sent him [Cotabarus] a document dissolving their marriage, which was not in accordance with Jewish law' (p. 121 n. 44).

1. S. Heine, *Women and Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), p. 84. On Paul, W. Munro, 'Women, Text and the Canon: The Strange Case of 1 Corinthians 14.33-35', *BTB* 18.1 (1988), p. 27, labels 1 Cor. 14.33-35 part of the 'Jewish tradition, savagely anti-feminist'.

2. L. Archer, *Her Price is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine* (JSOTSup, 60; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990). More balanced, but rarely cited, is G. Mayer, *Die jüdische Frau in der hellenistisch-römischen Antike* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987).

3. J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), p. 298. See also B. Mack, *Q, The Lost Gospel: The Book of Christian Origins* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), p. 9, on the 'human community based on fictive kinship without regard to standard taboos against association based on class, status, gender, or ethnicity'. See also E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984). Although she eloquently and correctly insists that the 'feminist Christian foundation story is that of Jewish women and their vision' (p. 107), she also wonders if 'Jesus' reform of Judaism was so radical that it engendered the articulation of a new ethos' (p. 81). What

freed from the law (which in these constructs is synonymous with oppressive legalism, restricting rituals, and even priestly-based economic exploitation). Witherington again, this time in one of his SNTS monographs, states that 'Jewish women would have seen the new religious roles allowed them in Christianity as being in stark contrast to what had been the case in the Jewish synagogue or at home'.¹

This essay calls both views—of women in second temple Judaism and of women in the Jesus movement—into question. When I look back on the double constructs of the Jewish women who did and did not follow Jesus, I find that the salt of Mrs Lot has lost its taste. Representations of women have too long served as a solvent which separates out the wheat from the chaff, or perhaps better: women are constructed as the yeast which ferments the stale domestic beer of Judaism and the good, imported brew of Christianity. The results are intoxicating, but ultimately both leave a bad taste. New approaches to the period of the second temple and the person of Jesus—extracanonical research, Cynic comparisons, cultural anthropology and so on—continually reinvent both topics. Yet most reconstructions and revisions, by reiterating the traditional construct of first-century Jewish women, preserve to some degree the model of old Judaism and liberating Christianity. 'Judaism' remains distinguished either implicitly or explicitly from the orientation of those Galileans and Judeans who followed Jesus if not of Jesus himself.

As alternatives to the constructs just cited, this essay posits, first, that many second temple Judaism's were much more welcoming of women's influence and participation than is usually acknowledged. Therefore, if Jesus and/or his earliest followers are seen as offering a liberating worldview for women, then this view should be regarded as representing 'the critical feminist impulse' already present in Judaism.² To remove

then does 'Jewish' or 'Judaism' mean? Much more helpful is her *But She Said*.

1. B. Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (SNTSMS, 59; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 114, cf. p. 75.

2. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 107.

the man from his cultural origins smacks not only of theological Docetism but also of sociological anti-Semitism. Further, Jesus and the women among his earliest followers were Jewish both ethnically and culturally. While the views they held of the Jewish people, the temple, sacred Scripture and theology may have differed from those held by others (Pharisees, Sadducees, the Baptist's disciples and so on), such 'Jewish' concerns were not erased.

Secondly, some branches of the Jesus movement, and perhaps Jesus himself, may not have been quite as egalitarian as some have argued. Reformists and revitalizers, sages, prophets, and social critics have not always or even often regarded women as a marginalized group needing liberation or even incorporation; examples of reformers with liberating rhetoric but problematic attitudes to women range from Amos and Hosea to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi. Their words are interpreted by and for women as calling forth a liberationist ethos, but their intent or their focus may not have been on gender-based inequities or women's access to positions of power.

Thirdly, some Jewish women may have joined the Jesus movement without primary regard for their position as women *per se*. They may have been attracted to the message (whatever it was) for the same reasons (whatever they were) that motivated their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons.

And fourthly, a greater methodological awareness of the apologetic effects of comparison is warranted. Too frequently commentators attempt to demonstrate that Judaism, or Christianity, was somehow 'better' for women than other competing movements. The claim that one system is better than the other fails to acknowledge its own essentializing of both women and their traditions. Unacknowledged are its presuppositions: that economic, political and psychological needs are indistinguishable and unimportant; that all women have the same needs and desires; that Christianity and Judaism are ultimately monolithic systems; that those women who chose the less helpful system are misguided, coopted by patriarchy, or children of the devil. Comparison, especially in case-specific analysis, is a helpful interpretive tool for the historian. Triumphalism is not.

Diversity in Second Temple Judaism

Neither the reconstruction of Jewish culture nor the search for women's history can remain wedded to the canons of church and synagogue. Our sources must include the pseudepigrapha, archaeology and epigraphy, rabbinic texts, writings by Josephus and Philo, apocryphal, Patristic, Montanist and so-called 'heretical' Christian documents, Hellenistic materials from historians to satirists to oracles to Stoic and Cynic sayings, manuscripts from Elephantine, the Dead Sea, the Cave of Letters, Nag Hammadi, and so on. But casting the net widely is insufficient; the catch itself must be evaluated.

Even when researchers have strayed from their traditional testamentary ties, they have often been selective in their choice of texts. To Witherington's frequent citations of Ben Sira and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, counter-evidence appears in synagogal inscriptions, *Joseph and Aseneth*, the *Testament of Job*, Tobit, Judith, 4 *Maccabees*, *Pseudo-Philo*, Philo on the Therapeutrides, Josephus on gentle women attracted to Judaism (for example, *War* 2.559-61; also Helena of Adiabene) and women in the royal household (Salome Alexandra, Berenice), the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, and even the Christian canon. These sources record Jewish women's social influence, educational responsibilities, leadership roles, prophetic vocations, concern for inheritance, prayers, Nazirite vows (Helena, Berenice, etc.), activities in the public sphere, and so on. For example, van der Horst locates the final section of the *Testament of Job* 'in esoteric and mystical circles of early Judaism, of about the beginning of the Common Era, very probably also in a group in which women played a leading role'.¹

Rather than see restriction as normative, one might take a cue, if not a Q, from studies of early Christian women and argue that their Jewish sisters were not everywhere and at all times confined to the private sphere, religiously marginalized, or socially oppressed. Texts that insist upon such restrictions may

1. Van der Horst, 'Testament of Job', pp. 287-88 and 108-109.

represent reactions to women's freedom (such as the Pastoral Epistles compared to the apocryphal Acts) or androcentric idealizations (such as the Mishnah). As Schüssler Fiorenza suggests, 'Could it be that the rabbis' "reality building" and andocentric projection in the Mishnah were the response to the socio-political current within the first and second century that allowed women to question and to undermine the traditional hegemony of the patriarchal social order?'¹ That much data for Jewish women's relative freedom comes from the Hellenistic diaspora is no excuse for dismissing it in an analysis of Jesus' own cultural environment. If Philo is adduced for Jewish misogyny, then Pseudo-Philo can be adduced for women's leadership.² Moreover, Hellenism had certainly penetrated Palestine.

Of the various explanations of first-century Jewish women's hypothetically limited roles, levitical purity legislation combined with its later rabbinic elaboration remains the most popular. Recently, this explanation has received some support from the appropriation of both abstract and applied cultural-anthropological models. On the one hand, grid/group modeling has led to the classification of 'Judaism' as entirely patriarchal in practice and rhetoric. On the other, the Jesus movement is then interpreted as a voice against if not a reaction to a Jewish-Hellenistic society operating on the honor/shame model found in (principally Catholic, post-industrial) Mediterranean villages. As Crossan avers,

It is possible and instructive to take a proposed Mediterranean constant, in this case the politics of sexual honor, and study it across present space and past time and from fieldwork to biblical text. Mediterranean anthropology... can serve as a necessary discipline in situating archaeological artifacts or

1. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 59.

2. On Pseudo-Philo, see C.A. Brown, *No Longer Be Silent: First Century Portraits of Biblical Women* (Gender and the Biblical Tradition; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), and B. Halprin-Amaru, 'Portraits of Women in Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*', in A.-J. Levine (ed.), *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Early Judaism and its Literature, 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 83-106.

controlling how we imagine the long-ago lives of ordinary people....³

Jesus' hypothetical rejection of purity legislation becomes then, usually implicitly, a principal motivation for women's affiliation with his new movement.

For example, Witherington speaks of 'the all-consuming interest in purity legislation' which prohibited women 'from taking significant roles in the synagogue due to their monthly period of levitical uncleanness'.⁴ But such restriction is not, for Witherington, limited to the synagogue; he also posits that 'Jesus rejected many levitical laws about clean and unclean since he apparently fellowshipped with the unclean, allowed unclean women to touch him...'.⁵ The argument that levitical law had such an exclusionary effect on women is not supported by sources either ancient or modern. Women played a role in the public sphere from the mill to the market. Society did not shut down during their menstrual cycles.

Witherington's denial of women's synagogal activities also fails to convince. If the organization of the pre-70 synagogue is unclear, *Qal vaHomer*, how much more so women's roles within it? Next, he leaves uncited Brooten's pioneering scholarship on women's synagogal associations and leadership titles.⁶ Thirdly, since the synagogue was not a site of sacrifice or a locus of priestly matters, Witherington does not explain why purity issues would be of such concern. Even regarding the temple

1. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, pp. 8-9. Crossan's application of anthropological method is by no means unreflective. Perhaps, however, his 'proposed' might be underscored.

2. Witherington, 'Women (NT)', p. 957. See the more extensive commentary in his *Women in the Earliest Churches*, p. 160, and other monographs.

3. Witherington, 'Women (NT)', p. 958.

4. B.J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (BJS, 36; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982). Against Brooten are Swidler, *Yeshua*, p. 108 n. 9; and Mayer, *Jüdische Frau*, pp. 90-91. Mayer at least notes that women's place in synagogues is not nearly as clear as their position in the temple cult and that women did visit synagogues and take up endowments for their administration (see pp. 88-89).

there are no comments in the rabbinic literature—a notable absence given the misogyny of some of its contributors—describing the construction of the Women's Court.¹ Nor does Witherington here distinguish between the concerns of a priest offering a sacrifice and a peasant milking a goat: in the former case, a concern for purity would likely have been greater. Yet even in this comparative situation, the priest is not more 'Jewish' than the goatherd any more than a nun is more Catholic than a layworker; priests and goatherds, Sadducees and tanners fulfill different roles within Jewish society. Finally, this overconcern with purity implies both that Pharisaic practices were normative for all Jews in Palestine if not also in the diaspora and that Pharisaism had a negative view of women. Pharisaic families likely did adhere to certain purity regulations, such that during menstruation either the woman in question did not prepare meals or her family ate in a state of cultic uncleanness. However, it would be incorrect to view such practices uncritically as demeaning or marginalizing to women. Pharisaic women adhered to the same cultic regulations as did Pharisaic men; there was no distinction within the home in terms of cultic practices. Further, as Neusner has demonstrated, 'We do have ample evidence that women as much as men voluntarily undertook the disciplines of sanctification as the Pharisees understood them'.²

Witherington's view shares little in common with the 'common Judaism' recently depicted by E.P. Sanders. According to Sanders, 'purity laws affected daily life relatively little. Their principal function was to regulate access to the Temple... Because impurity was so common, Jews in general were not afraid of it, and they did not behave in strange ways in order to

1. E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), p. 57. The rites and architecture of the temple were, however, quite androcentric. On women in the synagogue, see, most recently, Kraemer, *Her Share*, p. 106.

2. J. Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 60. Neusner warns, however, that this picture derives from men.

avoid it'.¹ Although perhaps too generous toward his subjects, and perhaps finessing the question of what constitutes 'strange' behavior—what may have seemed quite normal to them may be in fact bizarre to us, as encounters between Reform and 'Ultra-orthodox' demonstrate—Sanders provides a helpful balance to Witherington. And as for Jesus' 'fellowshipping' with menstruant, the claim begs the question. No doubt such a woman's male family members, neighbors and fellow Jews in the marketplace or at the well also did so.

The Cynic construction of Jesus offers a variant of Witherington's view, but it moves even farther from Sanders's 'common Judaism'. The 'Jewishness' of this Jewish-Cynic figure is difficult to locate. John Dominic Crossan asserts:

It was obviously possible for the first Christian generations to debate whether Jesus was for or against the ritual laws of Judaism. His position must have been, as it were, unclear. I propose... that he did not care enough about such ritual laws either to attack or to acknowledge them. He ignored them, but that, of course, was to subvert them at a most fundamental level.²

By the same token, neither to attack nor to acknowledge may translate into taking something 'for granted', which is to accept it at a most fundamental level. Likely always a topic to be debated—the early church shares much in common with modern scholarship—the question of Jesus and the law cannot be so lightly dismissed since the gospel accounts do not suggest that he himself lightly dismissed it. Reinterpretation of the law (for example, logia on divorce, on celebrating the sabbath) testifies not to dismissal but to profound engagement.

Second to issues of purity in discussions of the improved lot of women in the Jesus movement is the debate over their leadership opportunities. Again, the thesis begs the question. Witherington once more summarizes the major view:

There is no evidence that prior to Jesus' ministry Jewish women were ever allowed to be disciples of a greater teacher, much less travel with such a teacher, or instruct anyone other

1. Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 71, 76.

2. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*, p. 263.

than children. In such a restrictive context, Jesus' relationship to women must have seemed radical indeed.¹

Not necessarily. First, there is no clear evidence that Jewish women were not so permitted; what body of lawmakers established and enforced this policy? Who were those 'great teachers' who restricted their fellowship to men? Secondly, that a woman would follow a 'miracle worker' or 'prophet' would neither be miraculous nor particularly prophetic. It is unlikely that no women followed Theudas or the Egyptian or John the Baptist. Thirdly, the question of women's discipleship roles can be variously interpreted; would the women around Jesus be any more 'disciples' than, for instance, the women among the Hasidim or the Qumran affiliates? Fourthly, non-Jewish women were attracted to Judaism as they were to Christianity: these gentile women then became disciples of Judaism.² As for Priscilla, her teaching role may have sprung from her experiences in a non-Christian Jewish context.³ In turn, her apparent

1. Witherington, 'Women (NT)', p. 957. Witherington swims in the same stream as Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, pp. 375-76; 'Luke 8.1-3; Mark 15.41 and par. (cf. Matt. 20.20) speak of women following Jesus, and this was an unprecedented happening in the history of that time. John the Baptist had already preached to women (Matt. 21.32) and baptized them (citing Gospel of Nazarenes, in Jerome, *Adv. Pelag.* 3.2); Jesus, too, knowingly overthrew custom when he allowed women to follow him'. See also Tetlow, *Women and Ministry*, pp. 56, 93, on Jesus' unprecedented teaching of women. Tetlow goes so far as to suggest that 'if he had confined his teaching to synagogue and Temple, women would have been barred altogether from listening to him'.

2. Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 90, on the 'attraction of women to the oriental cults, among them Judaism and Christianity'.

3. See Kraemer, *Her Share*, p. 192, following Brooten. This argument is the converse of the common statement, best expressed by Tetlow (*Women in Ministry*, pp. 78-79), that Judaism patriarchalized the church: 'When, at the close of the New Testament period, the Christian model of servant was replaced by Jewish models of presbyter and bishop, and in the second century the Old Testament model of levitical priesthood was applied to ecclesiastical office, women came to be excluded from the official ministry of the church'. Witherington (*Earliest Churches*, p. 182) suggests that the gospel writers gave significant attention to women because 'when they wrote there was significant

itinerancy may be traced to the Claudian exile of all Jews from Rome in 49 CE.

While the appropriation of cultural anthropological schema such as an adapted grid/group analysis has some potential for generating insights about or partial understandings of second temple Judaism, it does not offer a framework 'heading off' ethnocentrism from the very outset', as one of its principal advocates, Bruce Malina, has argued.¹ Malina locates 'a sense of independence, leadership, task orientation, outward orientation, assertiveness, self-discipline, impassivity, activity, objectivity, analytic-mindedness, courage, unsentimentality, rationality, self-sufficiency, confidence, and emotional control' as 'male ends values'. In turn, the 'corresponding means values' such as dependence, non-aggression, non-competitiveness, inner orientation, interpersonal orientation, sensitivity, nurturance, subjectivity, intuitiveness, yieldingness, receptivity, and supportiveness' are seen to shape the 'female side, the underside of Hellenistic society'.² The rhetorical essentialism is then applied to Judaism:

The individual Jewish male could relate to God with female qualities (means values) in both political and kinship institutions and still serve God as male. Judaism thus reveals an embedded religious institution that offers its male adherents a type of social-psychological integration and allows them expression of the total range of human values, male and female. This means that Jewish institutions were largely, if not exclusively, male focussed. The problem for females was: how

resistance to such ideas perhaps especially amongst Jewish Christians'. Liberation appears to begin with Jesus, bypass anything 'Jewish', and reappear among gentile Christians.

1. B. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), p. iv. See the trenchant review by S.R. Garrett in *JBL* 107.3 (1988), pp. 532-34. Ross Kraemer's *Her Share* also employs Mary Douglas's model, but she recognizes the problems grid/group analysis has for reconstructing women's roles (pp. 18-21), as does A.C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). For a brief critique of the so-called objectivity of such schema, see Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, p. 84.

2. Malina, *Christian Origins*, p. 157.

can women as cultural means become ends and still remain female selves? The problem, of course, was simply and selectively unattended to.¹

Within the 'strong group/low grid' model fall all Christian canonical documents save the gospel of John. The 'radical standpoint' remaining to the rest of the canon's ideology shares with the American, French and Russian revolutions the 'desire to restructure society in order to implement genuine traditional and human values' (surely a good thing from the perspective of his American readers), and questions or even ignores the 'patriarchal and paternalistic modes' of the jural clergy; it also makes these modes 'accessible to females (embodying means values)'.² Jesus himself, according to this construct, embodies both the masculine ends values of the deity and the feminine means values accorded in Judaism to the (male) community.

Such a view ignores Jewish impulses toward, *inter alia*, mysticism, healing and wonder-working (ironically, this is precisely the 'Jewish' context in which Crossan locates his Jesus³). Similarly problematic are Malina's generally vague references to 'Jewish institutions'. Women had roles in temple and synagogue; they also had roles in that other 'institution', the home. The idea that Jewish practice and institutions might be *exclusively* male-focused is one problem; the question of what the 'female self' is—both among those who follow Jesus and for Jewish women—is another still. Beyond the jargon and some actually quite helpful observations, the upshot is the same: early Christianity for the most part provides women greater options than the Judaism out of which it sprang.

1. Malina, *Christian Origins*, pp. 158-59.

2. Malina, *Christian Origins*, pp. 184 (on radical analogies), 163. For Malina, 'at its outset Christianity was a strong group/low grid movement with non-jural standing, providing for male centeredness and male integration' (p. 162).

3. Crossan (*Historical Jesus*, p. 421) insists that 'Jewish' and 'Cynic' be weighted equally, with Jewishness being in general presented in the context of Palestinian peasant turmoil and a magician-type figure.

The Early Jesus Movement

In applying models we also need to consider the exegete's role: what is at stake for us? What confessional, feminist, scholarly baggage do we carry if not unpack? Some Christian feminism speaks of Jesus as liberating women: to their full authenticity as human beings, to a satisfying relationship with God. But liberation 'to' implicitly requires also liberation 'from'. Concerning 'liberation to', it is difficult at best to determine what 'authenticity' would have meant to an artisan woman from the Galilee. While some theologians and historians have uncritically and romantically addressed the 'to', they have expended a great deal of energy demonizing the 'from'. And that 'from' is, as Judith Plaskow noted over ten years ago, most often a negatively construed Judaism.¹ The same argument, *mutatis mutandis*, actually appears in Jewish scholarship as well. That is, some Jews proffer positive comparisons of Jewish women to their Near Eastern, Greek and Roman counterparts, which serve the same function as the Christian polemicists. The difference is that there is no one speaking on behalf of 'paganism' here to protest.²

1. In her seminal (ovarial?) article, 'Blaming the Jews for Inventing Patriarchy', *Litith* 7 (1980/5741), Judith Plaskow demonstrated that Christian feminists, seeking to reclaim Jesus from ecclesial doctrine and practices which limited their participation and sense of wholeness, recovered Jesus at the expense of Jewish women's history and of Judaism in general. Her work is generally uncited by those writing on Christian women's history. In some cases it is cited and *then* ignored. Plaskow's point has been echoed by Susannah Heschel, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Bernadette Brooten, and others. For a good example of the problem, see Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 63, in which the author's student presents the following response to Paul: 'He is so taken up with giving a good impression to the pagans that he is reverting to his rabbinic prejudices I think. As if the proper place of woman was in the home bearing children'. The 'reversion' is anachronistic and the viewpoint of the domestic sphere well known from non-Jewish Roman sources.

2. L.H. Feldman, 'Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism in the First Century', in H. Shanks (ed.), *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1992), p. 33, on War

I begin with a presupposition different from those who would claim that the culture out of which the Jesus movement emerged epitomized sexism. Yes, Palestinian Judaism, like all other contemporary Mediterranean/Hellenistic cultures, had its patriarchal and androcentric impulses. The question is one of degree. This same society did allow for women's public presence, as not only the (Jewish) sources cited above but also the gospels themselves testify: a woman from the crowd hails Jesus (Lk. 11.27); another seeks his healing powers (Mk 5.24-34 and pars.); a third participates in funerary rites (Lk. 7.11-15); several provide support (Lk. 8.1-3); another frequents the temple (Mk 12.42); one owns a house (Martha), and so on. Several of these examples could be explained as effected by Jesus' message and not as indicating the public presence of Jewish women. Yet the gospel writers themselves do not depict their appearances as remarkable.¹

Similarly, there is solid evidence for women's participation in Jesus movements. Remaining unclear is, however, the nature, the degree, of this participation.² The sayings source, Q, provides one helpful entry into the topic. For all the controversy over its existence as a separate source, its layers and its genres, as least most scholars locate the sayings usually queued under its label as originating with Jesus or his earliest followers. And many locate within these sayings the seeds of an egalitarian ethos.

From the Q materials two tropes concerning women emerge: food and sex. Or, as Luise Schottroff argues, the Jesus movement condemned the 'patriarchal household and its cultural markers: meals and marriage'.³ But unlike Schottroff, I do not

2.559-61 and the 'relatively more elevated and respected position of women in the Jewish community'. See also L. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1991), pp. 249, 257, on the 'rising status of women' in the Tannaitic period and the unexplored comparison of biblical to ancient Near Eastern marital legislation.

1. See S. Davies, 'Women in the Third Gospel and the New Testament Apocrypha', in Levine (ed.), *Women Like This*, pp. 188-90.

2. Kraemer, *Her Sinar*, p. 131.

3. L. Schottroff, 'Itinerant Prophetesses: A Feminist Analysis of the

I think that the sayings indicate a rejection of patriarchal practices. For meals, I propose that in the Q affair the women catered but that their contribution to the community was either not recognized or undervalued. For marriage, I do not see the evidence of household disruption as having led to more leadership opportunities for women. Neither the itinerant mission nor the likely commendation of celibacy necessarily led to women's increased status or freedom.

Dining Out

According to Crossan, Jesus transgressed dining conventions across status lines. He proposes that within ordinary meal settings, 'taking' and 'blessing' are the prerogatives of the master, 'breaking' and 'giving' are the tasks of the servant. Jesus, according to the synoptic gospels, assumed all four roles. For Crossan, then, 'The male followers would think more experientially of females as preparers and servers of the family food. Jesus took on himself the role not only of servant but of female... long before Jesus was host, he was hostess'.¹

The first problem is that we cannot pinpoint the background of the pericopes which depict this supper: were only men present, as the silence of the Gospels might indicate? What connections might be drawn to *seder* celebrations (for example, distributing *matzah*), or to sacrifices (distributing pieces of meat)? Nor do we know much about women's actual participation in such areas. Were women usually seen as 'hostesses' in the first place? Ironically Witherington, following Swidler, who appeals only to Strack-Billerbeck, insists that Palestinian Jewish women would not have served; this was the task of male slaves.²

A feminist ideological response would offer a different perspective on Crossan's historical imaging. The alternative Sayings Source Q', *Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont Graduate School Occasional Papers* 21 (1991).

1. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. 404. See p. 262 on egalitarian meal practices in Jesus' 'brokerless' kingdom. Malina (*Christian Origins*) offers helpful observations on the role of fasting in the Jesus community.

2. Witherington, *Earliest Churches*, p. 145. Questions of class/economics are relevant as well.

way of interpreting his view of meal performance is that Jesus has coopted women's roles. Jesus is the 'Lord of Hosts' and so not a model of egalitarianism.

On the more practical level, Kraemer offers one view that would support Crossan's conclusion on egalitarian meal practices. She proposes that the elimination of dietary laws would have more impact on women's experiences, 'since to the extent that women were involved in the preparation of food and the maintenance of cooking equipment and dishes, they would have borne the major responsibility for the enforcement and observation of such requirements'.¹ But this argument too needs nuancing. Dietary concerns (ensuring the food to be eaten was unpolluted, appropriately tithed and so on) may have been primarily regulated in the market, yet Kraemer does not extend her point to food acquisition. Further, a different spin could be put on the 'burden' of adherence to the laws of *kasitrit*: any Jew involved in dietary maintenance could point with honor and pride to such accomplishment. Take away the ritual, and one strips women of a point of honor. Thus Jacob Neusner astutely observes:

For all of the evidence of this period [the 'age of Jesus'] takes for granted that women prepared meals. Accordingly, women gained a central role in the correct observance of the rules governing cultic cleanness... It follows that women now enjoyed the power to secure sanctification.²

It is not clear that this role was positively recognized by the men in their community, nor is it clear that the women themselves appreciated the centrality of their role. But the possibility of both must remain open.

The women of Q appear in the context of food preparation, but they receive no credit for their work. 'There will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left' (Q 17.35). The verse is juxtaposed in Luke to 'two in one bed' or 'on one couch' (*klinē*)—most likely not a bed but reclining at a meal).³ In Matthew the logion is paired with a reference to

1. Kraemer, *Her Share*, p. 143.

2. Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity*, p. 59.

3. K.M. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the*

two in the field. Because Q has the tendency to pair men's and women's activities (for example, the mustard seed and the leaven; Q 13.20-21), the reference to the women may well have stood beside one if not both of these two statements. In each case, the point is the same: 'one will be taken and the other left'. The point is not that women's daily work is valued. Rather these passages testify to a sexual division of labor. Luke, or perhaps Q itself, also encodes a second message: women prepare the food; men eat.¹ A similar displacement of women's food preparation appears in Luke's marginalizing of Martha's concern with service (10.38-42).²

Q's one explicit description of women's labor exemplifies the negative valuation accorded her food production. The parable of the leaven (Q 13.20) bursts with negative images: yeast, in the symbolic vocabulary of Judaism and the early church, represents moral corruption; the woman's 'hiding' (*krypto*) rather than kneading leaven suggests that her manual labor is underhanded,³ and the process she cooks up is one of decay.

Synoptic Tradition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), p. 134, on the 'traditional roles of men and women in the context of ancient meal customs'. For a reconstruction of this saying see C.N. Jefford, 'The Dangers of Lying in Bed: Luke 17.34-35 and Parallels', *Foundations and Facets Forum* 5.1 (1989), pp. 106-10.

1. If woman's work underlies the references to spinning and weaving in the parallel saying (Q 12.27), so Schottroff ('Itinerant Prophetesses', p. 5), once again her labor is devalued. She is either in possession of the resources needed by her community (cf. Lk 15.3-10) or she cannot provide for them. If she does so provide, her efforts are not valued: clothes are not to be a concern. On inclusion of Lk. 15.8-10 in Q, see J. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels, Synopsis, Critical Notes, and Concordance* (Foundations and Facets Reference Series; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1988), pp. 176-77.

2. Corley, 'Place at the Table', pp. 162-65. 'The role of women in the context of early itinerant missionary practice is to host the itinerant preachers. They are discouraged from concerning themselves with the diakonia that is the activity of men' (p. 162, in reference to Lk 10.38-42).

3. As Bernard Brandon Scott (*Hear Then the Parable* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989], p. 236) notes, the figurative use of 'hiding' to describe the process is elsewhere unattested. Following Scott is Crossan (*Historical Jesus*, p. 280). See the alternative but unconvincing

Unfortunately, the parable has become sufficiently domesticated that its negative valences are often overlooked. A helpful modern hermeneutical shift would be to associate yeast with the infection of the same name and thereby regain the connotations of women's dis-ease.

One could argue that the parable revalues both leaven and women by equating women's labor with divine activities.¹ One could read, as Crossan does, with the *Gospel of Thomas*, which compares the woman, rather than the yeast, with the Basileia: 'The Kingdom is like a certain woman. She took a little leaven, concealed it in some dough, and made it into large loaves'.² But those negative images keep rising given the context of the saying. For example, Crossan includes among the 'original sayings' yet another pericope from the *Gospel of Thomas*: 'The Kingdom is like a certain woman who was carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on the road, still some distance from home, the handle of the jar broke, and the meal emptied out behind her on the road. She did not realize it; she had noticed no accident. When she reached her house, she set the jar down and found it empty'.³ The woman in this 'Jesus source' is hardly portrayed in a positive manner. Combined, the parables present an image of women's incompetence: the former puts too much yeast into her dough; the latter spills her grain.

Other aspects of food production are coopted by Q's men. Just as Jesus is the good host, so the father exemplifies the good parent who gives his son an egg, fish and/or bread (Q 11.9-13 [Mt. 7.7-11]).⁴

Even the order—as it is usually reconstructed—of the sayings material undermines women's role in food production as well as the value of food production itself. In Q's Temptation, Jesus

discussion in Schottroff, 'Itinerant Prophetesses', pp. 6-7 and n. 17. The attention of the reader is directed less to the woman's hands than to the yeast.

1. Schottroff, 'Itinerant Prophetesses', p. 6.
2. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. xxi.
3. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. xxi.
4. Schottroff, 'Itinerant Prophetesses', p. 5; *idem*, 'Wanderprophetinnen: Eine feministische Analyse der Logienquelle', *EvT* 51 (1991), pp. 332-44.

acknowledges that bread is not the sole requirement of life (Q 4.4//Deut. 8.3: 'Man [*sic*] shall not live by bread alone') Yet his own ability to produce bread—from stone rather than from yeast and flour—is not doubted. If bread is not the staff of life, how much more so is it not the distaff. The structure—bread first from stone, then from flour and yeast—parallels the Genesis creation. The male deity and his surrogate give birth to woman in a pristine, painless manner; she will recreate the ordinary act, but her reproduction is messy, uncontrolled and accompanied by blood; the blood is analogous to yeast in its association with taboo power and decay. So, in contrast to Jesus, women make bread, but surreptitiously and from decaying elements. Even before we encounter the parable, we are predisposed to dismiss the importance of the woman's work. For Q, the real work is done by the deity, by his son, or by that son's male surrogates. The deity provides the 'daily bread' (Q 11.3).

Woman's marginal representation in turn leads to questions about the economic and social conditions for the production of Q material. Schottroff reconstructs a Palestinian society and Jesus movement in which displaced women found themselves in extreme poverty. Yet Jesus himself is known for wine consumption and enjoying a good meal (Q 7.34), and banquets are a common trope of the source. The ethic of Q is more one of voluntary renunciation of possessions than of famine and poverty.¹

Gospel references to food and meals do more than signal wishes for the goodies of the eschatological banquet, evoke host-guest relations, or indicate types (such as the upwardly mobile) with whom the Jesus people associated their lord or with whom Jesus actually associated. To provide food is a sign

1. See L. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1986; originally published as *Jesus von Nazareth—Hoffnung der Armen* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978], pp. 54-88); ET p. 2. See also Schottroff, 'Wanderprophetinnen', p. 4 on Q 11.3 as indicating a 'land of hunger'. See the brief but helpful commentary in R. Uro, *Sheep among Wolves: A Study on the Mission Instructions of Q* (Aynales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1987), p. 134 n. 69.

of honor. And, in Q rhetoric, the honor belongs to men.

Lying In

Moving from meal to marriage, contemporary studies reveal a similar apologetic treatment of women in the Jesus movement. First, most scholars assert that marriage and procreation were obligatory for all Jews. Then, they assert that Jesus' teaching about 'the ability to be single for the sake of the Kingdom opened the door for women to assume roles in the Jesus movement other than the traditional domestic ones ... Herein we see the liberating effect the teaching and life of Jesus had on women...'¹

Related to the interest in celibacy is the thesis that the breakdown of the (patriarchal) family among the followers of the Jesus movement permitted, if not forced, women to join the wandering charismatics who proclaimed the good news and lived the life of freedom. Since the gospel evidently splintered families, so this argument goes, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, now with no home or at least no welcome within it, took to the road.

Yet the data may be otherwise interpreted. References to women in Q present a domestic picture: grinding meal and baking bread.² Women do not accompany the children and Sophia (Q 7.32-35) in the marketplace.³ Q offers no pictures of

1. Witherington, 'Women (NT)', p. 958. In a less strident vein, J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. I. *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 339, 342: 'Celibacy was a most unusual lifestyle, practiced by only a few, including one or two marginal groups. But we should not be totally incredulous if the marginal Jew we pursue, a Jew so unusual in so many ways, should manifest his marginality by celibacy as well... He stood out in his day because of his easy association with female disciples and other women.'

2. See now also Schottroff, 'Wanderprophetinnen', pp. 332-33. 1. So W.J. Cotter, 'Children Sitting in the Agora: Q (Luke) 7.31-35', *Foundations and Facets Forum* 5.2 (1989), p. 79.

3. For a reconstruction of Q 7.31-35, see Cotter, 'Children Sitting', pp. 63-82. Cotter proposes that the referent in 7.31-32 evokes the world not of children at play but of the judicial courts (p. 68). This is the only negative reference to children (p. 70) in Q as well as the general Jesus

women commissioned by Jesus. Nor, outside Q, do accounts of the women at the cross, such as Mk 15.40-41, attest to their roles as itinerant missionaries, as Schottroff suggests.¹

Evidence for women's itinerant missionary work or itinerant leadership in the Palestinian community may have been suppressed, to be sure, but such evidence may not have existed in the first place. A disciple is not always a leader; a patron does not always set policy.

On the other hand, that Mary Magdalene and others, as Kraemer puts it, 'clearly exercised leadership, in the modern sense, within the earliest movement around Jesus of Nazareth' is possible.² Mary may well have been influential in one circle of the Jesus movement, but I see no reason to classify her authority as qualitatively or quantitatively different from that of the various women adduced in Jewish inscriptions and documents. Nor is it clear that she functioned as an itinerant missionary.

Implicitly denying the existence of women missionaries, Meier

tradition. Therefore, it may represent the second stage of Q, when social norms are reinforced (see below). On 7.33-34, see also L.E. Vaage, 'Q1 and the Historical Jesus: Some Peculiar Sayings (7.33-34; 9.57-58, 59-60; 14.26-27)', *Foundations and Facets Forum* 5.2 (1989), pp. 159-76. Corley, 'Place at the Table', notes that 'wailing and piping' were socially coded as women's activities, but the Q text *we have* (as opposed to what may underlie Luke) does connect children, not women, with these activities. On Q 12.42-44 as part of a collection on the theme of 'householder/servant', see A.J. Dewey, 'A Prophetic Pronouncement: Q 12.42-46', *Foundations and Facets Forum* 5.2 (1989), pp. 99-108, following R.A. Edwards, *A Theology of Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 65-66. Dewey (p. 100) further proposes that the distinction between male and female servants is a Lukan motif ('Matthew's *sundouloi* is more appropriate').

1. Schottroff 'Itinerant Prophetesses', p. 10 n. 32), arguing against Monika Fander (*Die Stellung der Frau im Markusevangelium* [Altenberge, 1989], pp. 329 onwards), who suggests that the wives of the itinerant missionaries remained at home. And she insists that the 'notion of itinerant prophets, who were economically dependent on a sedentary and patriarchally structured community, is inapplicable' to Q because there were no 'normal' family structures within the movement. See 'Itinerant Prophetesses', p. 9.

2. Kraemer, *Her Share*, p. 174, citing Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wire and D'Angelo*.

suggests that a follower like Simon Peter had to leave his mother-in-law (Mk 1.30) 'and presumably his wife (1 Cor. 9.5).¹ Yet Paul speaks of ministers as being accompanied by 'sister wives', so Meier overstates the case that women were left behind. Conversely, for Crossan the sister-wife is 'a female missionary who travels with a male missionary as if, for the world at large, she were his wife [in order] to furnish the best social protection for a travelling female missionary in a world of male power and violence'.² Meier bypasses the women-on-the-road, but Crossan runs over the description of the men: Paul speaks of Peter, and the other apostles. Peter was married; there seems little reason to want in-laws without having a spouse; likely the other Galilean men were married as well. Why then not posit, more simply, that the wives really were wives? Had they a missionary role? The evidence is unclear.

It seems to me likely that Jesus commended an inseparable, Edenic marriage: hence the wives. Just as what has come to be called the sapiential, wisdom, or even Cynic strand of Q pictures a prelapsarian innocence, where shame is eliminated, where the earthly garden provides all needs, and where social pretense is undermined, so too those who inhabit this new Eden would not be divorced. Thus also, the non-Q Mk 10.5-6, summarized in Mt. 19.8: 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so'.³

What then of the women in the Jesus movement? Some may have gone on the road with their husbands, as 1 Cor. 9.5 but not Q itself suggests. Others may have idealized the mendicant

1. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, p. 363 n. 48, and see p. 335.

2. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. 335. The two on the Emmaeus road are therefore 'one named and clearly male, one unnamed and clearly probably female' (p. xiii).

3. Jesus research splits on the authenticity of the divorce legislation. Crossan (*Historical Jesus*, pp. 301-302) posits 'gynocentric' law, with the wife's honor as protected as the husband's. Meier (*Marginal Jew*, p. 132) argues that the earliest form of the divorce legislation 'may have looked something like the Q form behind Luke 16.18/Matt. 5.32, which views divorce completely from the husband's vantage point, since in Jewish law of the time (with rare exceptions) only the husband could effect a divorce'.

lifestyle, but did not themselves participate in it.¹ Still others may have travelled independently or with other women, but once again the evidence is lacking.

Should one accept not only the existence of Q but also the hypothesis that layers can be located, one would find another means of contextualizing women's roles in early Christianity and questioning its alleged egalitarian character. For the second layer of Q, the new social paradigm is one of a settled community rather than mendicant representatives. No longer one of lilies in the field (12.27), the central image is now of houses upon the rock (Q 6.48) and the faithful steward within (Q 12.42b-46). Missionaries who had once wandered from home to home and village to village but who refrained from greeting people on the street are replaced by those (men) who inhabit stable households and who argue their case openly in the agora (3.7; 7.33-34; 11.39-44, 46, 51).² Some women then may have lost whatever localized authority they gained when their husbands and fathers returned from preaching the gospel. And, since according to Q the home lacked the status of the open road, women's domestic authority may have gone unrecognized both by the women themselves and by those who controlled community discourse. Still others may have found their houses used by the missionaries and so once again, at best, shared positions of status.

In these cases, marriage was likely preserved. As Horsley states:

We need not think literally that...families were no longer patriarchal. Nor was marriage or the nuclear family rejected or even devalued, as can be seen in the strictures against divorce (particularly by patriarchal prerogative; Mark 10.2-9, 10-12; Luke 16.18; Matt. 5.31-32).

He continues by noting that 'clearly, relations were supposed to be egalitarian in the community',³ but less clear is how this

1. Uro, *Sheep*, p. 128, following Aune and Kelber.

2. See V. Robbins, 'A Socio-Rhetorical Response: Contexts of Interaction and Forms of Exhortation', *Semeia* 50 (1990), p. 269.

3. R.A. Horsley, *Sociology and the Jesus Movement* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 123.

would function: is egalitarianism practiced within the marriage? Among the families within the movement? Indeed, although absent from the Q source, the various synoptic statements on lust and on divorce would also support such a patriarchally modelled reconstruction of the early Jesus movement. If lust is a problem and remarriage is a temptation, then one result of these concerns might be a sheltering of women.

These observations on the continuity of marriage do not, however, translate into the thesis that members of the early Jesus community engaged in sexual relations. Marriage and celibacy are not mutually exclusive.¹ The thesis that Jesus and/or his immediate, Jewish followers commended the celibate lifestyle does not, however, either distinguish Jesus substantially from others in the Jewish world or necessarily open new avenues of power to women. Celibacy was practiced by a variety of first-century Judaism, including the Therapeutides/Therapeutae (Philo, *Vit. Cont.* 13) and some among the Essenes (Josephus, *War* 2.121; *Ant.* 18.21; Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 14-17). Geza Vermes² notes in an excursus entitled 'Prophetic Celibacy' that women were forbidden to soldiers on campaign (1 Sam. 21.5; 2 Sam. 11.11), that participation in the sacrificial cult required abstinence from intercourse (Exod. 19.15; cf. 19.9-10); and that temple ministers as well as those taking part in the cult regulated their sexual lives (CD 12.1-2 [on pilgrims]; Josephus, *War* 5.227). Women may have had leadership positions among the Essenes, and Philo observes the cultic activities of the Therapeutides, but it is not clear that celibacy *per se* led to these positions: celibacy may have been attendant to, rather than the cause of, women's activity.³

1. Against Heine, *Women in the Early Church*, who cites 1 Cor. 9.5 as indicating that Jesus and his followers were not celibate. On the possibility of missionary couples' celibacy, see also Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 169.

2. G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), citing also, on Moses, b. 5ab. 87a; *Sifre Num.* 12.1 (from Zipporah's viewpoint), *Vit. Mos.* 2.68-69. See also Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, p. 376.

3. For the connection of women, asceticism and eschatology, see now Kraemer, *Her Share*, p. 199.

The Q view of procreation and children is metaphorical rather than practical. Images of children are illustrations for adult behavior: 'Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt. 18.3; cf. Lk. 18.7).¹ No mention is made of actual pregnancy and childbirth, and in other early materials procreation is an eschatological problem or is devalued. For example, Paul wishes that all could be as he is: celibate (1 Cor. 7.8-9). Matthew's Jesus speaks of 'eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt. 19.12). According to Lk. 11.27-28, 'A woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to [Jesus], "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who listen to the word of God and keep it!"'²

Moreover, Q defines motherhood away from the biological, and parental roles are once again coopted by men. The parent is 'Abraham as our father' (Q 3.8), and even his role as progenitor is dismissed: 'God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham' (Q 3.8). For the sayings source, seed is from the mustard plant, not the man. The only productive mother is Wisdom (Q [Lk.] 7.35), who replaces the human mother ('woman') of John the Baptist (Q 7.33-35).³ And even her maternal role is assumed by Jesus, who 'would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings' (Q 13.34-35). For Q, Wisdom is stripped of her autonomous power. Q 7.35 reverses the presentation of Wisdom in

1. What becoming like children actually means is unclear. The traditional view is that a child connotes newness, humility and innocence. Yet Crossan posits that 'to be a child' was to be a nobody, with the possibility of becoming a somebody absolutely dependent on parental discretion and parental standing in the community' (Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. 269). Support for his view derives implicitly in his text from earlier references to Egyptian, pagan, practices of exposing infants. More helpful is his observation (p. 267) that 'a kingdom of children is a kingdom of celibates'.

2. On this pericope, its parallels and its possible Q origin, see Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels*, pp. 96-97.

3. Luke reads 'Wisdom is vindicated by her children' (Lk. 7.35); Matthew reads 'vindicated by her work' (Mt. 11.19).

Sir. 4.11 as a 'defending mother' and in Wis. 10.14b as 'a powerful patroness/advocate of the unjustly accused'. The roles of dominant and victimized are thereby inverted; Wisdom becomes the mother who must be justified by her children.¹ Wisdom remains fully in the male realm (cf. Q 7.35) as it proceeds from the Father (Q 10.21-22) to the disciple of the teacher (Q 6.40).

These observations on food and sex present a picture of Q far from the theologically and exegetically popular community of equals. If gender egalitarianism was at the heart of Jesus' movement, it is lost to the sayings source. Rather, Q may represent a community externally reviled and internally confused following the shift from mendicancy to settled life, if not earlier by its charismatic leader's death. This group needed order. And it found this order within its own ranks. The Q community defined and maintained itself by controlling the one group within its power: women.

Hermeneutically, the various sayings in Q on serving, on subverting social convention, on conforming attitude to action liberate women today. Historically, the form of liberation they offered may have been otherwise perceived. To the outsider, the life of women in an ultra-orthodox Jewish community is restricted. To many insiders and especially to the convert, life in a Williamsburg, just like life under Islamic law or life in a Carmelite convent, is liberating. Such regulated societies provide for all their members order, meaning and sanctification in daily existence; a distance from the outside (profane) world that distracts and detracts from the sanctified life; strong women-based support groups (that is, sisterhoods); and the developed traditions that overcome or at least counterbalance the patriarchalism involved in the community's institution and maintenance. Regulation of clothing, action, relationships is even found by some to counteract the far-too-frequent abuse and violence against women. Of course the potential for abuse remains, of course in an ideal world women would not be subject to sexism, oppression and violence, and of course many women—socialized into such groups—are dreadfully unhappy.

1. So Cotter, 'Children Sitting', p. 79.

But one woman's blessed freedom is another's profane if not profanity-filled world.

The women of the Q community may well have been extremely happy, but not, I think, because they were 'liberated' from a purity-obsessed, institutionally restricted, patriarchal Judaism. Nor am I convinced that their celibacy removed them from their traditional roles (since there were children in this early group) or necessarily led to new leadership opportunities.

Did Jesus then offer good news specifically to women? Did women react positively to his pronouncements because they found in his message a freedom denied to them by Judaism? Was the Palestinian Jesus movement egalitarian? Or was it patriarchal Judaism itself that turned Jesus' egalitarian vision into the gendered, marginalizing movement that this particular reading of Q reflects?

If Jesus were an eschatologically inclined prophet who proclaimed the elimination of gendered hierarchies, then he failed on two counts: the end did not come; oppression remained in the communities that proclaimed his name. But just as those words attributed to him inspire the liberation of all peoples—and just as they were spoken to a Jewish audience with the images and insights of Jewish tradition but adapted and adopted by Gentiles—so too today women of various persuasions can unite to reclaim those words of liberation. The past may not be able to reveal the ideal, egalitarian community, but investigation of the texts (if not the texts themselves) offers a means of creating one yet.